

ABSTRACT

JAMES A. GARFIELD AND RUTHERFORD B. HAYES: A STUDY IN STATE AND NATIONAL POLITICS

by

John Thomas Houdek

The original intent of this study was to focus upon the Hayes-Garfield relationship and the role they played in national and state politics during the years from 1876 to 1881 -- the period of their closest association. It soon became apparent, however, that a careful consideration of their development to 1876 was necessary for one to understand, as well as compare and contrast, their personalities, character, values, ideals and political behavior. Certain phases of John Sherman's long political career which directly involved Garfield and Hayes are also examined in some detail. This dissertation is based principally upon the rich and extensive Garfield, Hayes and Sherman collections, as well as on the papers of such contemporaries as William Henry Smith, Warner Bateman, James Comly, Charles Foster, Jacob Cox and Murat Halstead.

Obvious similarities in the lives of Garfield and Hayes tend to obscure equally significant and fundamental differences, both of kind and degree, that set them clearly apart. Unlike

Hayes, Garfield knew the meaning of want and felt its blighting influence from youth into early manhood, even as a prominent congressman he lacked Hayes's financial security. He remained sensitive, perhaps inordinately so, to the advantages enjoyed by one who, like Hayes, was born into comfort and gentility. Throughout his life Hayes was the more circumspect of the two and his abiding fear that some associate's scandalous conduct might besmirch his good name did much to shape his political behavior. Garfield was not, like Hayes, a thoroughgoing Radical and while Hayes remained preoccupied with war-born issues, Garfield quickly sensed that monetary and financial questions would become major issues in the future and set out to master these subjects. Hayes abandoned Congress for the governorship in an era of waning executive power, an office Garfield and Sherman scorned, but which Hayes viewed as a stepping-stone to the presidency. While Garfield sought and won national prominence and decision-making power in the dominant branch of the federal government, Hayes found contentment in Columbus building a modest but solid record that reflected his commitment to small government and limited legislative activity. For Hayes politics was an avocation, for Garfield a vocation.

After 1876, the fortunes of the two men were closely linked. Garfield played a major role in the election settlement, an event that has yet to be adequately assessed. Although Garfield expected to be a candidate for the-Senate, at Hayes's request he remained in the House where he became minority leader.

As Hayes unfolded his plans for the South and civil service reform, Garfield swallowed his misgivings, supported him loyally and struggled to prevent an open party revolt. Neither Garfield nor many of his contemporaries fully appreciated that the motives behind Hayes's policies were far more political and expedient than idealistic. Garfield's influence with the President reached a high point in 1879 during the Democratic attempt to emasculate federal election laws. During this struggle Garfield proved his mettle as a House leader while Hayes not only frustrated an attempt at legislative coercion, but reasserted his commitment to the defense of Negro political rights. Although Hayes did not expand presidential powers, he made a significant contribution as a self-assured and steady defender of presidential prerogatives, especially in the matter of appointments.

In the struggle to succeed Hayes, Garfield found himself in the unwelcome dual role of dark horse and key figure in the hopeless bid for the nomination by the cabinet member closest to Hayes -- John Sherman. In the exciting convention of 1880, Garfield emerged as a leader in the successful fight to overturn the unit rule; this victory resulted in a deadlocked convention and the nomination of Garfield rather than Grant. Three chapters are devoted to the struggle for succession and its aftermath.

His final months in office saw Hayes make the last of his several unavailing pleas for civil service reform legislation and congressional aid in enforcing the civil rights amendments.

During the same period his freely given advice to Garfield regarding campaign tactics, cabinet-making and the temperance issue are a further revelation of Hayes as a shrewd and realistic political practitioner.

Hayes generally approved the course of the abbreviated, but promising Garfield administration, although the Star Route investigation left him troubled. Meanwhile, in his frequent assessments of his own presidency, Hayes left further evidence of the importance of political considerations in the policies he pursued. Following his successor's assassination, he headed the committee that raised the money and chose the site for the Garfield Memorial.

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INTRODUCTION

The late nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of Ohio and Ohioans as a strikingly potent force on the American political scene. Throughout the Civil War era and for decades thereafter they would, as Presidents, Cabinet members, Justices of the U. S. Supreme Court, Senators, Congressmen and Governors, play a remarkable role in the shaping and direction of national affairs. Ohio herself was a kind of United States in microcosm and perhaps this offers the most satisfactory explanation of why she and her sons enjoyed such political prominence. Her political life was uncommonly vigorous and here the two party system flourished with a rivalry so intense that elections were often decided by the slimmest of margins. This vitality was fostered by the presence of two blocs of relatively homogeneous voters reflecting their predominantly Northeastern or Southern origins and strongly committed to one or the other of the major parties. For many years one of the subjects of this study, James A. Garfield, represented just such an enclave, the staunchly Republican Western Reserve. Ohio politics also tended to polarize around the rival cities of Cleveland and Cincinnati, the latter the setting for Rutherford B. Hayes's entry into public life. John Sherman, whose long career in politics is intertwined with those of Garfield and Hayes, reflected the political expediency

demanding of an Ohioan bent upon long tenure in the United States Senate.

Garfield and Hayes, whose careers converged especially during the period from 1876 to 1881, rank among the most prominent Republican politicians of the Gilded Age. The political history of this era has all too often been represented as a dreary wasteland, peopled by selfish and short-sighted cynics at the beck and call of major business interests and preoccupied with perpetuating the bitterness of the Civil War for purely partisan purposes. During recent years, historians have begun a long needed re-examination of these years and this has paid dividends in the form of a more accurate, balanced and sympathetic picture of a much maligned era. This re-appraisal will not turn the traditional picture upside down; it will not transform the era's political leaders into flawless statesmen -- but it will substantially modify the tendency to dismiss this as an age of political cynicism. It is hoped that this study of Hayes and Garfield will cast further light on the Republican scene during the postwar years.

The initial intent of this dissertation was to focus upon the Hayes-Garfield relationship during the years from 1876 to 1881 -- the years of their closest association. It quickly became evident, however, that a careful consideration of their lives before 1876 was imperative if one was to understand properly, as well as compare and contrast, their personalities, character, values, ideals and political behavior. While examining these earlier years as well as those of the presidential

period, I have relied chiefly on the abundant primary sources in the Hayes and Garfield collections, as well as the papers of contemporaries like John Sherman, William Henry Smith, Warner Bateman, James Comly, Charles Foster, Jacob Cox and Murat Halstead.

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CHAPTER 1

BUCKEYE BEGINNINGS:

THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF HAYES AND GARFIELD

When the lives of Garfield and Hayes are compared, it might appear to the casual observer that the similarities easily outweigh the differences. Both were native Ohioians, sons of New England pioneers drawn westward by the promise of a more abundant life. Each grew to manhood in a fatherless home, but each young man was deeply influenced by a strong-willed mother. Equally able as students, they finished their formal training in the culturally rich atmosphere of New England and exhibited an uncommon scholarly bent for the rest of their days. By the outbreak of the Civil War, they had gained some prominence within their respective communities and professions, had joined the young Republican party and had been elected to public office. They entered the war as officers in Ohio volunteer units, took part in sharp and bloody actions and distinguished themselves in the service of the Union; an experience which had a deep and enduring impact on both men. Their military service won rewards for them in the form of election to the House of Representatives and significant advantages during later political contests. After the passage of years

had brought a substantial measure of prominence within the Republican party (three terms as Ohio's governor for Hayes and leadership in the House for Garfield), one succeeded the other as his party's compromise candidate for the presidency and reached that office after close elections.

Such obvious similarities in the personal histories of Hayes and Garfield tend to obscure equally significant and fundamental contrasts, both of kind and degree, that set them clearly apart. Hayes grew to manhood in a household where the somewhat stifling atmosphere created by his mother and beloved sister was tempered in a salutary fashion by the forceful character of a substitute father and benefactor, Sardis Birchard. Sophia Hayes's brother contributed a masculine influence and viewpoint, financial security and the advantages of his wide-ranging business and financial contacts. When major decisions were to be made, especially if they involved Hayes's career, Sardis's opinion was often decisive. Nor was this potent and pervasive force removed by Sardis's death in 1874, for Hayes inherited the bulk of his property and succeeded him as the comfortably fixed squire of Fremont. Garfield enjoyed no such benevolent relationship. This is not to say that he grew up bereft of the sympathetic attention of family and friends, quite the contrary, but rather that he simply received nothing approaching the advantages provided for Hayes.

But the contrasts between the early years of the two extends beyond the impact or absence of a benefactor to the general area of the environment in which each developed.

Although both boys were pioneers' sons, Hayes was the product of a semi-urban frontier rather than the hard-scrabble rural setting of the Garfields. Perhaps the difference between farm life on the Western Reserve and life in the small town of Delaware appears to be of slight importance, but this is not true. Whether one considers housing, income, security, surroundings or educational opportunities, it is clear that the young Hayes was in the superior position. He grew up in a two story brick home, in a family with an above average income, his youth was marked by security and stability and a sound private school education was provided for him at the proper time. Garfield knew the meaning of want and felt its blighting influence from his youth into young manhood -- even as a prominent congressman years later, he had not yet entirely escaped from financial insecurity. He was sensitive, perhaps excessively so, to the advantages that came to one born into comfortable and genteel surroundings. Late one evening, while campaigning for Hayes during his presidential bid, Garfield was introduced to the candidate's early life:

. . . I lay in bed & read Howell's life of Hayes to the 53rd page. I am charmed with it, and with Hayes. His student life is a revelation to me, which endears him to me very much. He had this advantage over me, that he was never oppressively poor. I have this morning seen the house where he was born. It is a substantial brick building -- now used as a furniture shop and far better than any mother or I ever had until I built ours at Washington. They had property enough to start him to school early, so that he graduated four years younger than I did. My favorite theory of

hereditary influence is strongly illustrated in his case.¹

Garfield's log cabin origin and canal boat days may have been political assets, ideally suited for the rhapsodizing style of campaign biographies and stump speakers, but the subject himself was scarcely nostalgic when reflecting upon the want and crudeness of those early years.

Nor was this the only occasion upon which Garfield would lament his disadvantaged youth. Some fourteen years earlier, during the Civil War, when such recollections had not yet been mellowed by time and political achievement, he had unburdened himself to his close friend, Harry Rhodes, as follows:

As I look them (the years) over (it was his thirty-first birthday), I am made very sad and can hardly tell why. To some men the fact that they came up from poverty and single-handedness is a matter of pride. There is, at times, a little touch of gratification in my heart at what I have accomplished, but on the whole, reviewing it all, I lament sorely that I was born to poverty and allowed to catch up any or no chance habits of mind, body, morals and manners, and in this chaos of childhood seventeen years passed before I caught up any inspiration which was worthy of manhood, or which would lead me to begin to find the path of manhood and life. Precious 17 years in which a boy with a father and some wealth might have become fixed in manly ways and have attained half of all the preliminary work of books.

Later, in the same letter, he declares that "I would, God knows my heart, this hour joyfully surrender all I have attained could I have 17 years of my beginning replaced by the same number under the skillful hand of an able man, both in purse,

¹James A. Garfield to Lucretia Garfield, Sept. 20, 1876. Garfield Papers, Library of Congress. Hereafter cited as Garfield Papers.

head and heart (Sardis Birchard neatly fits this description). Let us never praise poverty, for a child at least. Better be poor in old age than at the time when money can buy culture of soul." Garfield's lamentations may appear melodramatic and overdrawn, but it would be difficult to escape the conclusion that these formative years left him marked in a way that he was painfully aware he could never fully erase. Garfield came out of a rude and unsophisticated environment -- Hayes was the product of security and gentility. Garfield grew up, but Hayes was reared.²

Although both men were college trained, their educational history emphasizes the contrasts of their formative years. For Hayes, bright, able, favored with a comfortable and stable middle class background, college was an unchallenged prerequisite for gentlemanly pursuits. His academic preparation began in a small private primary school in his hometown, after which he was guided for a time by a local lawyer who had formerly tutored at Yale. In 1836, at the age of fourteen, he entered Norwalk Academy for a year's study, followed by another year at Isaac Webb's Preparatory School at Middletown, Connecticut. Hayes might well have stayed on in the East and entered Yale as his Uncle Sardis and others strongly advised, but his mother was determined to place him closer to home in what she believed was a more strongly religious atmosphere. Thus, he entered Kenyon College at Gambier, Ohio, soon after his

²Nov. 19, 1862, in Frederick D. Williams, ed., The Wild Life of the Army (East Lansing, 1964), pp. 181-82.

sixteenth birthday. Kenyon, a well-established school of the genteel tradition, had the distinction of reaching into the South for many of its students. The southern contingent had been dwindling as sectional animosities mounted, but Hayes contacts with well-born southern classmates during these years were to make a lasting impression on him. Here he formed a close and enduring friendship with the militant southerner, Guy Bryan, that would survive the Civil War. As the peace-maker in an intersectional row within a campus society, Hayes anticipated his later efforts as President and private citizen to promote intersectional harmony and cooperation at the national level.

During these pleasant Kenyon years, many facets of Hayes's character, interests and inclinations come into clearer focus. His intellectual equipment was obviously top rate, but despite a very strong academic record, capped by valedictory honors, he avoided the scholarly pose and seemingly attempted to conceal rather than parade his ability. His wit was quick, his personality sunny, his love of good times genuine, but he was unusually level-headed and mature at the same time. Hayes was active in student affairs, outgoing and popular, yet careful in his choice of intimate friends, several of whom would remain close to him for the rest of his life. In this sense he differed from the young Garfield who was more anxious to be liked and quicker to allow familiarity which he sometimes came to regret. While in Washington during the Civil War, Garfield's wife would advise him to shield himself with "a little more reserve in the new circles to which you are now

being introduced. Be a little more select in your choice of companions, and admit no one to intimacy who is not at least your equal." There is no evidence to indicate that Hayes ever stood in need of such counsel. At Kenyon, Hayes became an active and skillful debater and as his interest in public speaking and politics grew, his Whiggish sentiments, undoubtedly fostered by the distinct Whig bias of Kenyon, became more pronounced. He also displayed an introspective turn of mind, as many a diary entry reveals. Several times during this period he expressed discontent with his progress and application and reasserted a powerful determination to attack his work with renewed vigor. The diary habit, which he shares with Garfield, often furnishes revealing insights into his rapidly maturing character, e.g., a healthy sense of self-appreciation, a susceptibility to flattery, a generous supply of common sense and an abiding determination "to acquire a character distinguished for energy, firmness, and perseverance."³

While young Hayes had progressed along a smooth, well-plotted course, Garfield, nine years his junior, enjoyed few of Hayes's advantages during his formative years. His primary training followed the typically irregular catch-as-catch-can style of the rural public schools of that day. After a few sessions in district schools, intermingled with substantial

³Lucretia Garfield to Garfield, Oct. 8, 1862, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, p. 158 n. 42 and Rutherford B. Hayes Diary, June 19, 1841, in Charles R. Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Rutherford B. Hayes (5 vols.; Columbus, 1924), I, 57.

doses of manual labor (which Hayes would much later conclude was good for a young man), he found employment on a canal boat out of nearby Cleveland. After a few weeks on the water, nature interceded in the form of a severe attack of malaria which drove him home. Upon recovering, he determined, thanks to the urging of his mother and the financial assistance of his older brother, to continue his education. At this cross-road in his life, the seventeen year old Garfield was about to undertake, in terms of educational experience, what Hayes had matter-of-factly completed at this age. For the better part of a year, but with several interruptions, Garfield studied at a nearby Free Will Baptist institution, Geauga Seminary. From here he was drawn to Hiram and the Eclectic Institute, "a superior academy" recently founded by the Disciples of Christ, where he remained from 1851 to 1854. During these hectic years, one finds very little that can be compared with the relaxed and self-assured atmosphere in which Hayes pursued his education. Poverty still plagued him and work was essential for his maintenance. He began with manual labor, including carpentry and then moved on to the demanding duties of a district school teacher, laboring under circumstances reminiscent of those Edward Eggleston would later describe. While still enrolled as a student at the Eclectic, he began conducting classes at that school and before he left for the East to earn his bachelor's degree, he had become a regular member of the faculty.

Until he entered Williams College in 1854, Garfield attended schools that were raw and unsophisticated in comparison

with those to which Hayes was sent. But if the curriculum at Hiram often fell short of college calibre, the intensity of Garfield's application did much to offset this disadvantage. Like Hayes, he possessed a first-rate mind, plenty of determination, an active and curious intellect and energy to match his resolution. But his development was circumscribed by the intensely sectarian and intolerant Disciple community in which he moved, an atmosphere the religiously uncommitted Hayes would have found unbearable. Garfield would experience nothing akin to the relatively cosmopolitan Kenyon until he broke away from Hiram. In the meantime, he was deeply involved in his sect's activities as a teacher, a lay leader and often as a preacher. He was sheltered from the outside world, reassured by his widening circle of friends and admirers ("brothers and sisters"), and often severely critical of those whose views or conduct differed from those of the smug Disciple society. But this chapter in Garfield's history ended with his decision to complete his education at Williams. In the unfamiliar and far richer New England atmosphere, his well-entrenched attitudes and patterns of response were challenged, while his relationship with his church and community underwent a subtle, but ultimately significant modification. Under the benign influence of President Mark Hopkins and an able faculty, his intellectual horizons were expanded, his outlook grew gradually more secular and tolerant and his curiosity found satisfaction and encouragement. He responded to this challenge (as he had to earlier schooling), with an unfeigned eagerness and

enthusiasm. On the other hand, Hayes's determination (which he, like Garfield, often reenforced with self-admonishing diary entries) apparently sprang as much from a sense of duty as from a natural taste for scholarship so noticeable in Garfield's character. Hayes recognized this gift for and bent toward scholarship and after Garfield's death observed in his diary that he had "just read President Hinsdale's account of Garfield as a student and teacher. Here was his strength. In both capacities he was a model. He had large faculties -- memory, analysis, fluency, the debating faculty; ..."4

Hayes too, had left Ohio for the East to finish his training. Well before leaving Kenyon, it had been decided that he would prepare for a legal career, and so in the fall of 1842 he began the standard reading program in a Columbus law office. He diligently followed the accepted course of reading for several months, goading himself all the while with a methodical and censorious diary account of his progress. The self-taught approach left much to be desired and late in the summer of 1843, Hayes entered Harvard's Dane Law School. There under the tutelage of men like Joseph Story, he took good advantage of a formal education of a calibre available to very few of his contemporaries. What is more, his experience was not confined exclusively to legal studies, for he sampled the offerings of George Bancroft, Richard Henry Dana, Jared Sparks and

⁴Hayes Diary, Feb. 21, 1883, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 110.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow as well as the political oratory of Daniel Webster, John Quincy Adams, Rufus Choate and Robert Winthrop. As yet, he was only mildly interested in politics, but his ambition "to listen to some of the great lights of New England" drew him to many political rallies. Of all the orators he heard at these meetings, he was most impressed with Webster. As he solemnly declared in his diary: "Daniel Webster has been styled 'the godlike' in derision. But if any man born of woman deserves the epithet, it is Daniel Webster."⁵ Hayes would never see fit to revise his estimate of Webster and would thereafter often use him as a yardstick by which to measure the stature of contemporary politicians such as Garfield.

Like the Garfields, the Hayes family had its roots in New England, where a number of kinfolk still lived. It was natural for Hayes, who like Garfield was very conscious of his New England ties, to spend nearly two weeks of his first winter vacation while at Harvard visiting his grandmother, uncles and cousins in Vermont. After returning to Cambridge, he redoubled his efforts as he neared the end of his first year at Dane Law School. This might have marked the end of his formal training, but he was determined to put in one more term and so after a summer in Ohio, he returned to put the finishing touches on his legal training. Near the close of his Harvard sojourn he made this revealing diary entry, an entry that helps one understand both the young and the mature Hayes:

⁵Hayes Diary, Nov. 14, 1843, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, I, 126.

In two or three weeks I shall leave the Law School, and soon begin to live. Heretofore I have been getting ready to live. How much has been left undone it is no use to reckon. My labors have been to cultivate and store my mind. This year the character, the whole man must receive attention. I will strive to become in manners, morals, and feelings a true gentleman. The rudeness of a student must be laid off, and the quiet deportment of a gentleman put on, not merely to be worn as a garment, but to become by use a part of myself. I believe I know what true gentility -- genuine good breeding -- is. Let me but live out what is within, and I am vain enough to think that little of what is important would be found wanting.⁶

Although such reflections, such estimable resolutions, are scarcely unique to one of Hayes's position and era (similar entries can be found in the diaries of Garfield and other contemporaries), they do reflect a prominent feature of his character, a primary motivating force in both his private and public life: a preoccupation with exhibiting at all times and under even the most trying circumstances "true gentility -- genuine good breeding." This determination set him apart from many of the period's so-called politicians and in the postwar era established his kinship with the eastern-led reform element -- those of the genteel tradition. For many, this prominent characteristic would enhance his attractiveness as a candidate for public office, especially during an era marred by political corruption and impropriety. It would also give a genteel, quasi-reform tone to his administrations at Columbus and Washington. On the other hand, while his "good breeding"

⁶Hayes Diary, Jan. 1, 1845, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, I, 162.

was advantageous to Hayes as lawyer, soldier or "capitalist", it served to limit his effectiveness as a party leader, kept his legislative achievements modest, and ultimately alienated a goodly portion of the Republican party from him while he occupied the White House. He became "a true gentleman", but only partially fulfilled his political promise, perhaps because he lacked Garfield's instinct for politics, a characteristic whose growth may have been atrophied by Hayes's pre-occupation with the "manners, morals, and feelings of a true gentleman."

Like Hayes, Garfield completed his undergraduate work with distinction. He graduated from Williams as one of its best scholars and returned to Ohio to what appeared to be a secure and untroubled position of leadership at Hiram. His place was guaranteed, he seemed destined to make his mark as an educator, and his eastern education and academic bias promised to bring his smooth and steady advancement. But as with Hayes at the same point in life some dozen years earlier, this period of Garfield's life was by no means untroubled. Certainly Garfield received more satisfaction from his teaching than did Hayes from his first years as a lawyer, but he was not wholly content with the role of a mere teacher. He was a pusher, a man on the make and he soon had his eye on the principalship of the Eclectic. Shortly after his return from Williams he won that position, although the cost in terms of

broken friendships, suspicion and animosity was rather high.⁷ Not yet active in politics outside the Eclectic, his penchant for church and campus politics nevertheless betrayed a growing inclination toward such activity, and had since his Williams years become considerably more interested in public questions. But unlike Hayes, he was not naturally drawn toward politics early in life; on the contrary, he had scorned such activity until his Williams experience. And although the Reserve was a hotbed of antislavery activity, Garfield could conclude after some consideration that the "simple relation of master and slave is not unchristian."⁸ Even as late as his departure for Williams he appeared to have been largely unmoved by the great sectional issue. He continued to see much in politics that disturbed and repelled him, yet his interest was clearly emerging and we find him applauding the achievements of the young Republican party. Thereafter, his commitment to the antislavery cause and his interest grew apace.

One might argue that Garfield's bid for a political office -- three years after his return to Hiram -- was a natural development, although one in which his growing antislavery sentiments acted as a catalyst, but his ambition, self-confidence, gregariousness, fondness for speaking and debate

⁷During the contest for the principalship both Garfield and Norman Dunshee, a veteran Eclectic teacher, had their supporters in the board of trustees and the college community. Moreover, Dunshee and others accused Garfield of scheming to get the post and feelings ran high in both camps.

⁸Garfield Diary, Sept. 29, 1850, in Harry J. Brown and Frederick D. Williams, eds., The Diary of James A. Garfield (2 vols.; East Lansing, 1967), I, 60.

all pointed toward political activity well before the Williams years. His success there as a campus leader, student editor, debater and speaker suggested a broader and more secular theatre of operations than that which continued to absorb his energies and satisfy his ambitious nature. After returning to Ohio, he initiated his break with past preoccupations by speaking for the Republican party in the Fremont campaign. During the next two years, thanks to his preaching, some highly successful debates with an advocate of spontaneous generation and evolution, and his leadership and teaching at Hiram, he became a familiar figure to a substantial number of the area's residents. He also found himself hankering for public office. This ambition, coupled with growing dissatisfaction with the limited challenges and opportunities offered the teacher-administrator, led a group of friends who knew his mind to call upon him to bid for the Republican nomination for state senator -- a race thrown wide-open by the death of the party's leading candidate. This step was clearly in line with Garfield's inclinations and after securing the blessing of Hiram's trustees and teachers (support that was as important politically as it was for his peace of mind), he easily won the prize. With a new goal before him, he charged toward it with great energy and enthusiasm, betraying in the process his powerful predisposition for the politician's life and satisfying those instincts that had heretofore found but temporary and insufficient outlets.

1859 was a good year for Garfield and his fellow Ohio Republicans. The returns gave him the election by a wide

margin and his party control of the statehouse, house and senate. Although his career in the senate was cut short by the Civil War, the experiences of his short stay at Columbus were to have an unusually potent and pervasive influence on his future. He was taken away from a familiar but confining environment and thrust into a challenging and unfamiliar world where his political mettle promptly would be tested. Garfield proved that he had an aptitude for politics and soon appeared at sufficient advantage to attract some attention from the press, and more significantly, from two major political figures: Salmon P. Chase and William Dennison, each of whom would have a hand in shaping and forwarding his political career. He also began to win some friends and allies within his own age group: some were rising young politicians, some were newspapermen and others were the behind the scenes workers who wanted no elective post for themselves, but were indispensable to the office-seeker. His brief stint in the senate also encouraged him to consider taking a further step up the political ladder. The young senator had not only demonstrated considerable skill on the stump and in the senate chamber, but it was also apparent that he possessed a talent that might be crucial to his advancement: an instinct for politics.

Soon after his return to Ohio in 1845, Hayes had moved to Lower Sandusky (later Fremont) where his Uncle Sardis was a solidly established merchant and land speculator. Under his uncle's watchful eye, he established a partnership with another young lawyer and for the next two years vegetated while his practice languished, his health declined and his depression

deepened. His condition disturbed both Hayes and his family, so much so that he turned to volunteer service in the Mexican War as an attractive avenue of escape and recuperation. The prospect of a military interlude was no mere passing fancy, and after enlisting the aid of prominent friends he bid for a lieutenancy in one of the companies being formed at Fremont. His hopes were dashed when the two physicians whose counsel he had promised to follow declared that such an adventure would be a foolhardy move (one gave him no more than six weeks in the Mexican climate). Therefore, the disappointed Hayes recharted his course and spent a summer visiting relatives in New England. He returned to Fremont considerably strengthened, but another year of being mired in the same old ruts left him in such a state that a rest and a change in climate seemed imperative. So it was that he and his uncle undertook a journey to the Texas ranch of his Kenyon classmate and lifelong correspondent, Gay Bryan. His diary and letters during this sojourn provide ample evidence of the pleasant and restorative effects of these months. What is more, young Hayes's glimpses of southern civilization made a lasting impression that would color his views of the South and Southerners for many years to come.

By the time he returned to Ohio, Hayes was convinced that his health and general prospects required him to abandon Fremont for a more promising and challenging locale. Cincinnati was his choice. The bustling metropolitan atmosphere of the 'Queen City' contrasted sharply with the dullness and provincialism of Fremont. This city, where North and South met and mingled, had fostered a lively social and cultural life

into which Hayes eagerly plunged. He joined a literary club, went to lectures, attended church services and renewed his friendship with several college chums who were on their way to becoming established lawyers. As he put it in his diary, he was "now living again as a student, with abundant leisure and few cares. Why may I not, by a few hours spent in systematic study, regain all I have lost in the last three or four unfortunate years spent or wasted at the North?" But his regrets were not easily or quickly removed despite the fact that his professional prospects were looking up and his personal problems receding. Nevertheless, he continued to lament over the "waste of those five precious years at Sandusky! Shall I recover what I have lost?," he wondered.⁹

During his Cincinnati years he continued to strengthen his intellectual resources and expand his social experience without necessarily modifying his basic outlook and values. He read a great deal, but not only in the law, for his reading ranged over the areas of literature, history and philosophy and included the further study of German. He apparently believed that "Western lawyers, Cincinnati lawyers, do neglect too much what is termed learning, scholarship. Let me read and reread the best poets, as Shakespeare, Milton, Byron; the model prose writers, or speakers rather, as Burke, Webster," he resolved.¹⁰

⁹Hayes Diary, Jan. 25 and Jan. 31, 1850, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, I, 279 and 280-81.

¹⁰Hayes Diary, Dec. 17, 1859, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, I, 546.

His use of "best" and "models" is revealing. Then, as later in life, he was preoccupied with quality, character, excellence, well identified and established authority -- the criteria he might use to evaluate men, their opinions and their conduct. This was useful to one whose social life continue to expand. Once or twice each Sunday he attended church and he became an active member of the Literary Club, where he enlarged his acquaintance with prominent or soon to be prominent Cincinnatians, among them several who would later hasten his political rise. In order to forward himself professionally and improve his public delivery, he frequently addressed Odd Fellows' meetings and appeared as a moderate temperance speaker. He also joined in the political contests of the day, although he did not yet display any inclination to become a candidate. His Literary Club's sponsorship of a lecture program afforded him an excellent opportunity to hear, talk with and size up such notables as Ralph Waldo Emerson. His impressions of this celebrated figure are as interesting for what they reveal as to Hayes's keen critical faculties as for what they say about Emerson. He wrote thus:

He strikes me, contrary to my preconceived notions of him, as a close, keen observer rather than a profound thinker. There is no logic or method in his essays or lectures. A syllogism he despises. The force of a connected chain of reasoning his mind seems incapable of appreciating. There is no such thing as one of his thoughts following from another. The natural result of this lack of logic is that one finds it next to impossible to grasp and hold fast to what he says. When you leave the lecture-room you remember that he said many witty, sensible, pretty, and some deep things, but you feel at a loss where to begin in attempting to recall them. The whole lecture seems but

a bead-string of suggestions, fancies, ideas, anecdotes, and illustrations, having no connection except that they are upon the same subject. They are all either quaint, paradoxical, sensible, humorous, or have some other element which gives them interest if no positive value.¹¹

From a social and intellectual standpoint alone, it is clear that the move to Cincinnati represented a wise, if belated change. But Hayes's professional prospects also grew brighter, although rather slowly. After almost a year in his new location, we find Hayes writing despondently that "two years must find me with a living and increasing business or I quit the city and probably the profession." However, this brief period of dejection, magnified perhaps by the Fremont fiasco, was followed by a steady upswing in his fortunes. With the arrival of 1852, he could cheerfully write: "So begins the new year. Rather prosperously with me. Money and friends more abundant than ever." Hayes was on his way. Soon he began to impress the members of the bench and bar, particularly for his work during the trial of a woman accused in a sensational double murder. His defense of this obviously deranged young woman before the Ohio State Supreme Court on grounds of insanity won the reversal of a lower court decision and what Hayes had fought for -- her confinement in a mental institution rather than execution. Thereafter, Hayes was associated in other important criminal and civil cases, and in the most famous of these contests joined with Salmon Chase to

¹¹Hayes to Fanny Platt, June 12, 1850, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, I, 313.

save a Negro girl from reenslavement. After five years in the Queen City, he had achieved a large measure of success and an enviable reputation among his peers that warranted this rather smug diary entry: "I cannot but look back with a feeling of gratification, not to say pride, I told Uncle Sardis that in five years I believed that he and every other friend I had would be glad that I had gone to Cincinnati. It is enough to fill me with pleasant feeling that I am sure that my hope has been realized." After the passage of another five years, he had grown yet more contented and pleased with his achievements, but no less concerned as to his respectability and public image. "Without any extraordinary success," he wrote, "without that success which makes men giddy sometimes, I have nevertheless found what I sought -- a respectable place. Good!"¹²

By this time Hayes had also become quite active in political affairs, pursuing an interest that began with the campaign of 1840 during his student days. From then on, although his interest and involvement might fluctuate from campaign to campaign, he remained a staunch Whig, eventually an anti-slavery Whig, until the birth of the Republican party. But neither as an increasingly active anti-slavery Whig, nor as a "charter member" of the Ohio Republican party, did he give the impression that he would become more than a loyal party worker. While his interest in political affairs was genuine and his

¹²Hayes Diary, Jan. 5, 1852; Dec. 25, 1854 and Dec. 24, 1859, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, I, 404; 475 and 547.

commitment to party strong, he brought a measure of aloofness and disinterestedness to the political side of his life that set him apart from the 'typical' party man. It was only when the slavery problem emerged as the paramount issue that one senses a change in Hayes's stance. "I was an earnest and active Republican 'from the start'," he would later recall, "and aided in the organization of the party in Ohio in 1855. An anti-slavery Whig before that date, I took no interest or part in the Know Nothing movement to which I was opposed on principle; but believing slavery one of the great evils and crimes of the country, I enlisted in the first party which was organized to oppose it with any prospect of success, with my whole soul in the work."¹³

His interest in politics had quickened under the impact of the growing slavery crisis, yet it was, as it would always be, an activity that was tempered by a certain restraint and governed by a priority system which was not open to amendment. In his diary in the 1850's, he wrote: ". . . my sense of duty determines me to keep on in the path I have chosen -- not to dabble in politics at the expense of duty to my family and to the neglect of my profession, but to do what I can consistently with other duties to aid in forming a public opinion on this subject which will mitigate and finally eradicate the evil." Although clearly recognizing that slavery was an evil,

¹³Quoted in Charles R. Williams, The Life of Rutherford Birchard Hayes (2 vols; Boston, 1914), I, 106 n.

he was unable to respond solely on an emotional basis, his character and scholarly bent demanding something more. It was necessary to "study the subject," Hayes declared, and in so doing he showed that he shared Garfield's inclination to examine a major issue with care before taking a public stand on it.¹⁴

Hayes made his debut as an office seeker in a successful bid for the city solicitorship of Cincinnati in 1858. In that year the City Council chose Hayes, the American party nominee, to fill out the unexpired term of the recently deceased solicitor. Hayes was only one of several evenly matched candidates for the post and the Council needed more than a dozen ballots to reach its decision. Hayes began with a mere four votes, yet he eventually secured eighteen votes and victory. What some would call the Hayes luck had apparently begun to do its work. Six months later he won the unanimous support of Cincinnati Republicans for a full term as solicitor and emerged the winner in an election in which he outpolled every other candidate on his party's ticket. Soon there was talk of a position on the state Supreme Court, but he quickly squelched such speculation. He was too content with the easy burden of his municipal post and his substantial law practice "not working hard, not working much," he confided to his Uncle Sardis. "I earn my salary, I am sure, and am therefore conscience clear. I have read a good deal this winter -- more than usual -- some history, some poetry, some religion, biography, and miscellaneous

¹⁴Hayes Diary, Oct. 30, 1856, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, I, 503.

matter; but no novels and no politics. I am intending to go into politics and novels as soon as I finish three or four books that I have now on hand. I never enjoyed life better."¹⁵

From this time on, as private citizen or office holder, Hayes maintained this well-ordered leisurely manner of living that bespoke dignity, gentility and self-assurance. He had no taste for the frantic pace in law, politics or business. He had no wish to achieve "extraordinary" success as a lawyer, only the assurance that he had the respect of his fellow lawyers and citizens and a measure of financial security; there was no inclination to emulate the style of his chief political idol, Daniel Webster. Neither did he find a steady fare of rancorous political exchanges, bitter partisan struggles, conspicuous bids for preference, shrewd maneuverings and a pre-occupation with patronage and expediency to his taste. The atmosphere in which the professional politician flourished, his techniques and tools, were not much to his liking. For the refined young lawyer, public service promised to complement neatly his professional activities, while in later years it seemed to stem from a combination of noblesse oblige, the challenge of a difficult contest, a hankering after the prestige that accompanied high office, party loyalty and perhaps the feeling that political preferment was a proper reward for service rendered to country and party. Moreover, he seemed to view an elective office as an end in itself (a garment to be

¹⁵Hayes to Sardis Birchard, Feb. 4, 1860, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, I, 551.

carelessly worn and then cheerfully shucked), as much as a means to an end. He retained a strong sense of duty, but once in office the law of diminishing returns soon began to operate, his enthusiasm flagged as he tired of his public and party responsibilities and became increasingly uneasy about the possible besmirchment of his reputation by subordinates in whom he had placed his trust. Whether he was a congressman, governor or president, he was soon yearning for the pleasures and freedom of private life.

As the nation drifted closer to war, one finds Hayes campaigning perfunctorily for Lincoln, but clearly disturbed over his candidate's chances for a clear-cut victory. "I cannot get up much interest in the contest. A wholesome contempt for Douglas, on account of his recent demagoging, is the chief feeling I have," he confessed.¹⁶ But as Ohio's October elections neared, he became a more active and enthusiastic campaigner. His party's showing in the states voting in October removed some of his doubts as to victory in November, but they were quickly replaced by a growing concern over the 'ultra South' and the threat of secession in response to a Republican triumph. If South Carolina and a few more states broke away, Hayes speculated in his diary, would other slave states eventually follow suit or would the "influence of the conservative States draw back into the Union or hold in the Union the ultra States? I think the latter. But at all events I feel as if

¹⁶Hayes to Sardis Birchard, Sept. 30, 1860, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, I, 564.

the time has come to test the question. If the threats are meant, then it is time the Union was dissolved or the traitors crushed out."¹⁷ By this time, Garfield had settled on the second of these alternatives, but his strong Unionist sentiments notwithstanding, Hayes clung to the hope of a peaceful adjustment of sectional differences as 1860 drew to a close. By the beginning of the new year he had put such hopes behind him and concluded that secession and a civil war were within sight; nevertheless he feared "disunion and war less than compromise." The nation could survive these blows and if necessary the free states could carry on by themselves and would make "a glorious nation," he concluded. "I do not feel gloomy when I look forward," this diary entry continues. "The reality is less frightening than the apprehension which we have all had these many years. Let us be temperate, calm, and just, but firm and resolute. Crittenden's compromise! No, no."¹⁸ A few weeks later he repeated the belief, shared by other moderates, that the seceded states might well be allowed to depart in peace and that such a solution would not "prove that the experiment of popular government is a failure," but rather that "the experiment of uniting free and slaveholding States in one nation is, perhaps, a failure. Freedom and slavery can, perhaps, not exist side by side under the same popular government.

¹⁷Hayes Diary, Nov. 6, 1860, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, I, 566.

¹⁸Hayes Diary, Jan. 4, 1861, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, II, 2.

There probably is an 'irrepressible conflict' between freedom and slavery."¹⁹ As a member of the citizens' committee to escort Lincoln to Cincinnati on his way to be inaugurated, Hayes declared himself pleased with Lincoln's moderate and wary attitude, his unwillingness to be drawn into either a "radical" position on the slavery issue despite pressure from Cincinnati Germans or toward a compromise on the extension of slavery as others urged. "This gave me great satisfaction," he recorded, for Lincoln's combination of strength, patience, moderation and kindness was consistent with what Hayes would continue to admire in public servants and seek to embody in his own public career.²⁰

Although the Republican party secured the White House as a result of the 1860 contest, they were beaten in many a local contest during the spring of 1861. So it was in Cincinnati, where faced with a coalition of Democrats and Know-Nothings, Hayes anticipated the failure of his bid for a second full term as city solicitor. He accepted his defeat philosophically and took comfort in the fact that he had, nevertheless, polled the largest vote of any Republican on the municipal ticket. Moreover, a letter to his Uncle Sardis just prior to the poll reveals what became the typical Hayes attitude toward public office. He wrote as follows:

¹⁹Hayes Diary, Jan. 27, 1861, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, II, 4.

²⁰Hayes to Sardis Birchard, Feb. 15, 1861, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, II, 5-6.

"I have got out of the office pretty much all the good there is in it -- reputation and experience. If I quit now, I shall be referred to as the best, or one of the best Solicitors, the city has had. If I serve two years more, I can add nothing to this. I may possibly lose."²¹ He was attracted to politics, yet scarcely in the fashion of a typical politician and office-seeker. This and much higher offices would give him a chance to serve, to fulfill an obligation he sincerely felt was his, but public offices were more significantly a means by which one's reputation and prestige might be enhanced in a socially and personally acceptable manner, a valuable experience that one should seek, but always with gentlemanly good taste and bearing. To gain an office in such a way (at least to be convinced of this in his own mind), seemed almost more significant than gaining the office itself. And then there was that nagging fear that he would not get through his term in office without injury to his reputation despite his own exemplary conduct. A clean record is important to most officeholders, but with Hayes it was of paramount significance and seemingly as crucial as what he achieved while occupying the office. Few of his contemporaries were as sensitive as he was on this point.

The coming of the Civil War touched off a chain of events

²¹ Hayes to Sardis Birchard, March 29, 1861, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, II, 7.

in which both Hayes and Garfield were caught up -- events which reshaped and influenced them in a deep and lasting fashion. The fall of Sumter convinced Garfield that "a long and sanguinary war"²² must follow, a war that could not and should not "stop short of complete subjugation."²³ Soon he was using all his "leisure time in reading military science and the campaigns of Napoleon and Wellington." But his attention was not focused solely on the war and soldiering -- he was also contemplating the next step in his political ascent. Just before declaring his interest in Napoleon and Wellington, he had told his wife: "If I should go to Congress we would move there for the winter. (Isn't this a fine specimen of unhatched chicken?)"²⁴ He never succeeded in divorcing himself from his powerful political ambitions -- perhaps never wished to -- and thus his military history would be deeply colored and significantly shaped by political considerations.

Although Garfield was quick to offer Governor Chase his "services in any capacity he may see fit to appoint me," he hardly intended to begin his military service as less than a colonel; indeed his hopes leaped as high as brigadier general.²⁵

²²Garfield to Lucretia Garfield, April 14, 1861, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, p. 7.

²³Garfield to Harry Rhodes, April 14, 1861, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, p. 6.

²⁴Garfield to Lucretia Garfield, April 14, 1861, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, p. 8.

²⁵Garfield to Harry Rhodes, April 17, 1861, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, p. 9.

He also viewed the time he would spend in the army as a service to the Union and to himself as well, a sound investment that might pay handsome dividends in the political arena before the conflict was settled. With this in mind, he declared that should he enter the army, "he ought to have at least as high a position as a staff officer."²⁶ Garfield's initial campaign for the command of a volunteer regiment being raised in his neighborhood ended in frustration, although surely not because of any coyness on his part. After several months had passed, during which he turned down an appointment as a lieutenant colonel, he accepted a commission at this rank in a regiment that was still to be raised. In commenting upon this decision, he wrote to his mother that his "reasons for going into the army . . . (were) many, but chiefly because the men of military experience were most all now in the service, and still more were needed for the new regiments. The Governor wrote to me again and I felt it would not be manly or honorable for me to stay away from the contest longer." He added that he "did not go from any mere desire to be in battle and gain a name," yet one is tempted to say that he was engaging in just a bit of self-deception in this regard.²⁷

The task of filling the ranks of his paper regiment, the Forty-second Ohio Infantry, fell to Garfield and his energy

²⁶Garfield to Lucretia Garfield, May 5, 1861, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, p. 13.

²⁷Garfield to Eliza Garfield, Aug. 30, 1861, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, p. 33.

and talents (well suited to such an undertaking) brought it to a successful conclusion after three months of concentrated labor. He then threw himself into the chore of readying himself and his men for the field and his energetic approach soon paid off in a well-trained and equipped regiment whose affection he had won through an even-handed and sympathetic handling of his troops. He also set about preparing himself, as would many another green citizen-soldier, by studying the works of the masters of military science who had shaped the tactics of his professional fellow officers. His lack of professionalism was perhaps not without its advantages, for he was less susceptible to the sometimes stultifying influence of military school preparation. As a well qualified judge of his military achievement puts it:

At a time when the nation's ranking military officers brimmed with maxims expounded in Henri Jomini's Precis de l'art de la guerre and placed particular emphasis on the conquest of territory, Garfield insisted that the true objective of an army was the destruction of the enemy's army. To save the Union, he believed it was necessary to subjugate the South,-- not by taking her cities, girdling her with expeditions, or blockading her ports, but by pulverizing her great armies. To achieve that goal he appreciated the importance of concentrating against the foe, using surprise tactics, and making adequate provision for security; but above all he stressed the efficacy of offensive operations. By word and deed he left little room to doubt his faith in the offensive as the king of the battlefield. In his campaign in Eastern Kentucky his was the aggressor force; in the Shiloh-Corinth campaign, in which he had no independent command, he deplored the snail-paced advance of the Union armies; as Chief of Staff in the Army of the Cumberland he urged his commander to strike, strike, strike; and from the opening gun he insisted that the Union must wage a war of conquest. For an amateur soldier he showed remarkable understanding

of the nature of the military challenge the nation faced and of what was needed to meet it.²⁸

As a unit of the Army of the Ohio, Garfield began campaigning in eastern Kentucky in the winter of 1861, eventually as the commander of the Eighteenth Brigade. As he put it revealingly, General Don Buell, his commander, "said (and I fully agree with him) that he would much have preferred to have me with him in the grand column, but yet he said I would have a much greater chance for distinction."²⁹ As in the case of Hayes, who was then serving in western Virginia, he was participating in a side show, the outcome of which would have little effect on operations in the major theatres. Nevertheless, if Garfield's victory here in January 1862, over an opposing force of Confederates in the Sandy Valley was of limited significance as a part of the larger picture, it brought him rewards commensurate with a victory of major proportions. Not only did he receive congratulations from the commander of the Army of the Ohio, but he was also praised by General George McClellan. The press, especially that of Ohio, was most generous in its treatment of his exploits and he himself was scarcely self-effacing while giving his correspondents a full survey of his work in the Sandy Valley. Within two weeks of his victory, the ambitious young colonel received (thanks in part to the efforts of friends as highly placed as

²⁸Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, xvi-xvii.

²⁹Garfield to Harry Rhodes, Dec. 17, 1861, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, pp. 49-50.

Secretary of the Treasury Chase) what he craved most of all and believed he had earned -- the rank of brigadier general. He was now equipped in terms of prestige and title with that which could and would in the near future lift him on to the national political stage and influence his political fortunes for the next twenty years. Surely he was cognizant of how easily he could serve both his political future as well as the cause of the Union without hypocrisy or the appearance of self-serving and those interested in his political advancement were quick to remind him of this fact. With but minimal effort on his part, Garfield, the politician-soldier, could watch his stock rise with each properly publicized blow he struck against the forces of disunion and slavery. Hayes was not blind to such facts, but as we will see, he was more than content with his military duties and quite willing to wait until the war's end before trading his command for a seat in Congress.

During the spring and summer of 1862 Garfield saw further action at Shiloh, Corinth and in northern Alabama as a part of Buell's army, but despite the significance of these campaigns, he grew increasingly discontented and restless, a condition that was aggravated by deteriorating health. As early as mid-February, we find him complaining to his wife that he had "for a few days been feeling more depressed than at any time since" entering the army. "For many reasons," the letter continues, "personal to myself, I have been feeling that I would be glad to be out of the perplexities of war and enter again the pursuits of peace, but I am perfectly aware that a few weeks

of quiet would make me desirous of being in the strife again."³⁰ Garfield told one correspondent: "I sometimes think I should like to be in my old seat again, but if I were I suppose I should pine for the activity of the field." Such fretfulness frequently visited him if he suspected that his upward course had hit a snag, was about to be reversed, or if the prospects of further advancement in his present line of endeavor had dimmed. To Garfield, the military direction offered by the President and his chief professional and non-professional commanders alike appeared shot through with serious flaws. He complained of "the constant, timid croaking of a lot of officers who (are) not willing to risk anything for the sake of success."³¹ Furthermore, he suspected the West Pointers among them of secretly harboring treasonous pro-slavery sentiments. "My heart and hope have been down in the depths since I came here (Tennessee)," he wrote. "I find an attempt so persistent and almost universal that I have come to believe there is something amounting to a conspiracy among the leading officers, especially those of the regular army, to taboo the whole question of anti-slavery and throw as much discredit on it as upon treason." He found himself "coming nearer and nearer to downright abolitionism" and declared: "Before God I here second my conviction that the spirit of slavery is the soul of this rebellion, and the

³⁰Garfield to Lucretia Garfield, Feb. 15, 1862, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, p. 68.

³¹Garfield to Wallace Ford, Feb. 14, 1862, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, p. 67.

incarnate devil which must be cast out before we can trust in any peace as lasting and secure. It may be a part of God's plan to lengthen out this war till our whole army has been sufficiently outraged by the haughty tyranny of proslavery officers and the spirit of slavery and slaveholders with whom they came in contact . . ."³²

Garfield's growing political ambitions also served to upset him, for he imagined his chances of winning a seat in Congress were threatened as the public's attention shifted away from mere brigade leaders and centered on his superiors in Buell's army. He found his "position . . . in some respects very unpleasant" and lamented thus: "I don't feel as though I can personally accomplish much where I am, but yet will try."³³ His spirits seemed to rise, however, when friends at home urging him to bid for the Republican nomination from his district. He confessed that he "should be pleased to take part in the legislation of the next few years. If the people should of their own motion see fit to call me to that place, of course I should be greatly pleased. . ."³⁴ After hearing more of the movement to secure his nomination he wrote home as follows: "I am free to confess that I would like to be a member of the next one (Congress). Please write me more about it. If the

³²Garfield to Harry Rhodes, May 1, 1862, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, pp. 89-90.

³³Garfield to Harry Rhodes, May 1, 1862, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, p. 90.

³⁴Garfield to Harry Rhodes, May 19, 1862, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, p. 98.

people of the district should see fit to elect me of their own choice, I shall be gratified." As if in anticipation of the kind of criticism sure to come his way, he quickly added: "I remember to have promised Almeda (Booth, a close friend) not to use the military as a stepping stone to political preferment, and I shall make no effort. But if the people want me, they can say so even if I should not be out of the army till December."³⁵

Within two weeks Garfield's unhappiness with his present prospects as a part of the Army of the Ohio had so increased that he could unburden himself to Harry Rhodes, one of his chief political boosters in this way:

. . . I do not feel comfortable in (the) present surroundings. You have divined the situation perfectly. While a battle was imminent, I felt my duty to meet the issue was paramount to every other consideration. If now the war in the west is substantially ended, and its future operations are to consist of holding positions here and there, and keeping down guerillas (precisely what Hayes seemed contented to do), then I shall feel that I can much better serve the country in some other capacity. Let the war be what it may, if I am to serve under such a weak and narrow man as I now obey, I shall feel that I am doing the country but little good and myself but little credit. I confess freely (that) as a matter of choice I would greatly prefer a seat in Congress to my place in the army, or indeed to any place which West Point management will be likely to assign me. So much for my preferences.³⁶

But Garfield also recognized that any move on his part to

³⁵Garfield to Harry Rhodes, May 28, 1862, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, p. 104.

³⁶June 10, 1862, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, p. 112.

reach toward his political goal would surely be misunderstood and might be his undoing. "I believe I entered the service with patriotic motives," the restless and troubled volunteer protested to Rhodes, "and in good faith, and with no small struggle made in offering of myself. I cannot for a moment think of taking any course which may even by inference throw a shadow of suspicion upon those motives as being for political or demagogical purposes. And should I resign, go home and seek the nomination to Congress, it seems to me that the whole year's work would be misconstrued."³⁷ He explained his position to another close friend and political mentor, Harmon Austin:

"To remain in the army and follow the military as a profession was never any part of my plan. I have always intended and still intend to resign my commission as soon as the active work of the war is done. It seems to me that the successful ending of the war is the smaller of the two tasks imposed upon the government. There must be a readjustment of our public policy and management. There will spring up out of this war a score of new questions and new dangers. The settlement of these will be of even more vital importance than the ending of the war."

What is more, Garfield continued, "I do not hesitate to tell you that I believe I could do some service in Congress in that work, and I should prefer that to continuing in the army."³⁸ His eyes were already focused on the exciting and critical work of reconstruction.

At this point, Garfield's worsening health came to his

³⁷ June 10, 1862, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, p. 112.

³⁸ June 25, 1862, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, p. 118.

rescue, and following the advice of his doctor he took a leave which brought him home in time to mend both his health and his political fences. It was during his convalescence that the Republicans of his district met to fill out their ticket. With an ailing, but ambitious candidate close at hand, his allies and advocates prepared for their contest to block the nomination of the incumbent. Meanwhile, Garfield remained true to the tradition or superstition that the office must seek the man and like Hayes and others of this persuasion, he was equally dependent on the open and energetic efforts of intimates who knew their man's carefully concealed aspirations. Unlike the other five candidates for the nomination, he did not appear at the convention, but his disinterested posture may well have been an asset rather than a liability. His military accomplishments were still fresh in the minds of Western Reserve residents who were likewise familiar with him as a teacher, preacher and sometime state senator, whose now powerfully held anti-slavery sentiments would strike a sympathetic chord among many in this longtime hotbed of abolitionism. He won the nomination by a slim majority and only after a hot and protracted struggle. A seat in the next Congress was now assured, but he had mixed feelings about the prospects of holding such an office, confessing that he scarcely knew "whether to be sad or gratified." He predicted that the next four years in Congress would "probably be as fatal to political longevity as the war is to personal life and health." "I would not, however," he went on to say, "wish to be cowardly and shirk

the responsibility of thinking and acting because the times are dangerous. So I shall try the rough sea, if the bullets will let me alone."³⁹ Congressional life would prove a "rough sea", but he was probably exaggerating its dangers a bit in order to forestall those who might accuse him of abandoning the battlefield for a safer and more secure line of endeavor.

Of more immediate importance, however, was his as yet uncompleted military obligation -- an obligation he was honor bound to complete, although hopefully somewhere other than in the Army of the Ohio. At this point his dilemma was resolved by a call to Washington by Secretary of War Edwin Stanton for reassignment, a development in which one sees the hand of his friend Salmon Chase. Thus it was that Garfield reached Washington well before he had expected to, where circumstances kept him unassigned, but with a promise of another promotion, for four months. At last he was in the center of things, the house guest and protege of Salmon Chase, brought into contact with leaders in all walks of life, intrigued by a capital seething with political tensions while the nation's leaders struggled desperately to repair their faltering war machine. He was in his element: dipping into national politics, excited by its most seductive features, power, prestige, challenge and ferment, but as yet unmindful of the heavy toll exacted from those who became professional politicians. Perhaps this interlude completed his break with Hiram's world (it was a

³⁹ Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, Sept. 12, 1862, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, p. 135.

seperation; never a divorce) and set him upon the path he would thereafter follow.

But if Garfield found much pleasure and excitement in Washington, such rewards were a good deal offset by his mounting uneasiness and frustration as one proposed assignment after another failed to materialize. Nevertheless, deep as was his concern with his own future it was overshadowed by the pessimism he felt for the cause with which his fortunes were linked. From Washington he wrote in October 1862: "If the Republic goes down in blood and ruin, let its obituary be written thus: 'Died of West Point.' Unless help comes soon, that ignominious death will stare us in the face. For myself, I say in all sincerity I have no wish to survive this republic . . . I am passing through a terrible ordeal of personal suffering over the whole matter. I cannot believe I shall be kept here much longer. The first day I came Stanton offered me Western Virginia (Hayes's theatre) but I resolved I would not choose but let them put me where they pleased."⁴⁰ He was somewhat cheered by the size of his majority in his congressional contest, which he thought was "the largest majority of anyone in any state, so far as I have seen." But a proposed operation against Charleston in which he was to have a prominent role was held up and he was soon longing to return to

⁴⁰Garfield to Harry Rhodes, Oct. 5, 1862, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, pp. 153-54.

Ohio. This, however, was out of the question for he "could not bear to be seen home again without having been in the field first," he confessed.⁴¹ Then as his Washington stay dragged on into the new year, concern over the possible need to resign his seat in Congress because of his military status was added to his growing list of worries. Finally, after four months of frustration, he was sent west to join General William Rosecrans's Army of the Cumberland for what would be his last tour of duty.

Rosecrans sized up his man with great care over a period of some weeks and apparently pleased with what he found, offered him the post of chief of staff or a division command. Garfield's decision was complicated by his election to Congress, for as an aspiring politician he sensed the impact his choice might have upon his future. He elected to take the staff position, but he did not rest easy with his decision, for now his military reputation would tend to rise or fall with that of his commander. He put the matter thus before making his decision: "By taking that position I should make a large investment in General Rosecrans, and will it be wise to risk so much stock in that market." As chief of staff, and one who hoped to be "a kind of alter ego"⁴² to his commander, Garfield was favorably situated to "go to work thoroughly and vigorously

⁴¹Garfield to Lucretia Garfield, Nov. 16, 1862, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, p. 180.

⁴²Garfield to Harry Rhodes, Feb. 14, 1863, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, p. 234.

to make as much out of this army" as he could.⁴³ Indeed, his commitment to a strategy of modern warfare, his decision to take his seat in Congress a year hence ("I would like to help fight the wild beasts in that Ephesus.") and his anxiety over his reputation and possible disqualification, dictated prompt and decisive action against Bragg's Tennessee forces. But Rosecrans's procrastination and the timidity of his fellow officers bedeviled Garfield, who in a mood of despair declared that on the eve of a well-planned and apparently acceptable offensive "there seemed to fall down upon the leading officers of this army as suddenly as a bolt from the blue a most determined and decided opinion that there ought to be no immediate or early advance. Officers who to my certain knowledge were restless and impatient for a forward movement became suddenly conservative and cautious, and think masterly inactivity the chiefest of virtues."⁴⁴ Finally, late in June 1863, the Union forces began a series of actions which by summer's end had wrested Tennessee from Confederate hands. Thus far Garfield's "investment" in Rosecrans was paying belated, but handsome dividends. However, the chief of staff was only temporarily appeased; he was soon unhappy again over Rosecrans's failure to follow up his recent victories. In a letter to his powerful friend Salmon Chase, he criticized the delay that had

⁴³Garfield to Lucretia Garfield, Feb. 26, 1863, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, p. 240.

⁴⁴Garfield to Harry Rhodes, June 11, 1863, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, pp. 275-76.

preceded the recent victorious campaign and carefully explained that his pleas for "most vigorous activity" had fallen upon deaf ears. He should, he said, "never cease to regret the sad delay which lost us so great an opportunity to inflict a mortal blow upon the center of the rebellion." Worse still, the Army of the Cumberland was again inactive, he complained, and so far Rosecrans had "been singularly disinclined to grasp the situation with a strong hand and make the advantage his own." Garfield protested that although he loved "every bone" in his commander's body, yet he was forced to confess that "even the breadth of . . . (his) love . . . (was) not sufficient to cover this almost fatal delay" in following up their recent victory over Bragg. When Rosecrans began his tardy advance he encountered a powerful Confederate counteroffensive at Chickamauga which forced him to retreat to Chattanooga. The Union's summer successes were now partially annulled. Tennessee remained in Union hands, but the Confederate army had not only escaped destruction, it had bounced back to rout what Garfield had called "in many respects by far the best (army) the country has ever known."⁴⁵

The reversal at Chickamauga, throughout which Garfield had labored wisely and heroically, led to Rosecrans's dismissal. Garfield, on the other hand, was left with an improved military reputation and a promotion to major general. His personal reputation was somewhat tarnished, however, for one day he

⁴⁵ Garfield to Solomon Chase, June 27, 1863, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, pp. 289-90.

would be blamed for his chief's dismissal. He had begun to criticize his chief as a military leader under the influence of his growing frustration prior to the opening of the battles that had won Tennessee for the Union. Next he took his case to Chase on the eve of the offensive that ended at Chickamauga. This reversal simply underscored Garfield's critique of his commander and gave his strictures unexpected weight and prominence. Through Chase this letter had reached Lincoln where it became a part of the growing body of criticism of Rosecrans, criticism that undermined him with the administration and contributed to his dismissal. To some degree, Garfield's conduct in this affair was but the culmination of more than two years of persistent and outspoken attacks on West Point leadership and views. Apparently, he also believed that as a congressman-elect he was obliged to prod his fellow officers into action while exposing what he considered costly and inexcusable delays and blunders. He did so in letters and conversations so timed and worded as to enhance and protect his reputation. Moreover, as his time in the field grew shorter, his frustration grew proportionately. Golden opportunities to crush the enemy appeared, yet he and the Union were denied the fruits of a decisive victory because his associates allowed them to pass unexploited in spite of his pleas for prompt action.

While Garfield's letter and subsequent interviews with Stanton and Lincoln did not decide Rosecrans's fate (except in the eyes of the commander's strongest partisans), they stand as regrettable, perhaps indefensible, acts on the part of a

presumably loyal subordinate and trusted friend. Moreover, this affair is illustrative of a recurring and troublesome problem concerning Garfield's character as it was seen by contemporaries whose opinions can not be dismissed out of hand. Such widely separated but comparable incidents as his successful bid for the principalship of the Eclectic, the dismissal of Rosecrans, and his role in the struggle for the GOP nomination in 1880 reveal an inordinate ambition, a nagging sense of insecurity and a bent toward scheming and intrigue that he could not always restrain or mask. On such occasions he was led to employ the tactics of an opportunist, tactics that implied a certain insensitivity to the possible consequences of his conduct and raised painful questions in the minds of some participants and observers in regard to his personal integrity and moral courage. An introspective man, Garfield was probably alert to such flaws in his character; possibly he had them in mind when he wrote the following lament to an intimate friend in 1862:

It (his development) has been a sad task, painfully toiled at, and with but poor success. Hardly a day passes in which I do not find sad traces of the 17 years" chaos; hardly a day when some fortunate young son of early opportunities does not make me feel my inferiority to him in things whereof I lament, but must always lament. Such experiences make me feel a sympathy with Spartacus.

Reduce the questions of life to fight, storm, or any main strength operations and Spartacus and I can stand up erect. Possumus esse reges (we can be kings), but in the thousand little things of life, in the under-currents of the soul that should flow in the channels of virtue and high-minded royal honor, how sadly weak and inferior I feel. I can and do, by the sheer brute force of outer sense and religious obligation, keep myself in the path of morality and public respect, but it does not come

to me as an easy natural current whose fountain was opened in the far-off years of youth and whose flowery banks have become the sweet Eden of my life. I must do with a gladiator's strength what those thrice fortunate souls (Hayes, for example?) could do as a matter of fixed habit from sweet choice.⁴⁶

Unfortunately, Garfield's censors were reenforced in their view of his shortcomings by his occasional but honest ambivalence in matters of public policy. Understandable, even laudable in retrospect, his moments of indecision or wavering would lead Hayes to record in 1883 that Garfield was "not firm, not a moral force. He leaned on other -- could not face a frowning world; his habits suffered from Washington life. His course at various times when trouble came betrayed weakness." Hayes concluded by declaring that his "vacillation when leading the House, place him in another list from Lincoln, Clay, Sumner, all the other heroes of our civil history."⁴⁷

For the moment, however, all was well with Garfield. His services at Chickamauga had won him a major generalship and shortly after that battle he had received orders that relieved him of his military responsibilities. He and his recent commander were still fast friends and the latter was most complimentary as he reluctantly freed him for duty in the coming session of Congress. His anxiously sought after and jealously guarded military reputation secure, he now faced the pleasant prospect of a reunion with family and friends before testing

⁴⁶ Garfield to Harry Rhodes, Nov. 19, 1862, in Williams, ed., Wild Life of the Army, pp. 181-82.

⁴⁷ Hayes Diary, Feb. 21, 1883, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 110.

his mettle on the legislative battleground.

At this moment, Hayes was still deeply involved in a contest with the Confederates in West Virginia, where he served throughout most of the war. Along with many other Cincinnatians he had received Lincoln's call for volunteers with "unbounded enthusiasm" and a sense of relief. He contributed the resolutions for the city's major rally while personally rejoicing in the new militancy and unity. "We are all for war," he told his Uncle Sardis, and he liked it, for "anything is better than the state of things we have had for the last few months. . ."⁴⁸ Perhaps his happiness was enhanced by the fact that here was a golden opportunity for the military adventure he still yearned for as well as an excuse to leave a profession that was beginning to lose its attractiveness. He had come to feel that the law denied him some of the independence he demanded, and perhaps he also believed that the point of diminishing returns had been reached insofar as its rewards were concerned. Moreover, he had lost his position as city solicitor when he and the entire Republican slate had gone down to defeat in a recent city election. He was leaning toward a closer association with his uncle in Fremont, a development that the latter was anxious to effect. But the opening shots of the Civil War changed all of *this* and Hayes, while resisting the temptation to volunteer

⁴⁸ Hayes Diary, May 10, 1861 and Hayes to Sardis Birchard, April 15, 1861, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, II, 16 and 9.

at once, took the lead in organizing and directing a drill company drawn from his Literary Club. By mid-May he had reached his decision. It was his belief, he announced, that "this was a just and necessary war and that it demanded the whole power of the country; that I would prefer to go into it if I knew I was to die, or be killed in the course of it, than to live through and after it without taking any part in it."⁴⁹ In this struggle, Hayes declared some two months later, "I could not feel contented if I were not in some way taking part in it. I should feel about myself as I do about people who lived through the Revolution, seeing their neighbors leaving home, but doing nothing themselves -- a position not pleasant to occupy."⁵⁰

Hayes entered the service of the Union as a major in the Twenty-third Ohio Volunteer Infantry in June of 1861 and did not resign his commission until four years later. The Twenty-third was a three year or duration outfit, whose officers (Garfield might have been one) were appointed by the Governor, William Dennison, rather than being elected by the troops. Like Garfield, Hayes was without military training or experience, but made good use of the available literature to repair his deficiencies. He obviously relished the work of organization and training and soon won the affection of the men

⁴⁹ Hayes Diary, May 15, 1861, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, II, 17.

⁵⁰ Hayes to Sardis Birchard, July 21, 1861, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, II, 39.

serving under him. At the very outset of his service, he was under the command of the man with whom Garfield completed his tour of duty, William Rosecrans. It was late in July when Hayes's regiment moved out of Ohio and into western Virginia to replace departing short term troops in the work of holding territory, protecting railroads and routing a sizeable force of guerrillas. He found himself limited to such minor operations for the better part of the war, although he would distinguish himself in two major actions: the Antietam campaign, in which he was wounded in the battle of South Mountain, and in Philip Sheridan's campaign in the Shenandoah Valley in 1864. Although Hayes was anxious to test himself under fire, this experience was denied to him for several months when Rosecrans appointed him adjutant general. But eventually he requested and received a fighting assignment in which his gallant leadership and daring won him a promotion to lieutenant colonel -- a rank he considered more prestigious than those brigadierships handed out as political rewards. He had good reason to believe that this and later promotions were earned on the battlefield and could not, therefore, be impugned. When he was eventually elevated to major general near the war's end, he was certain that he had paid for his laurels in full on the battlefields of "the divinist war ever waged."⁵¹

Although Hayes "spent most of his war years in . . . West Virginia, a kind of pocket away from the main conflict, where

⁵¹ Hayes Diary, Feb. 25, 1887, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 312.

reputations were hard to make," he retained a bouyant spirit and an optimistic and cheerful outlook despite conditions that would have set Garfield to grumbling.⁵² Even when his duties as adjutant general kept him from what he craved, Hayes was still delighted with life in the army. "I think," a letter to his sister's husband ran, "I have never enjoyed any period of my life as much as the last three months. The risks, hardships, separation from family and friends are balanced by the notion that I am doing what every man, who possibly can, ought to do, leaving the agreeable side of things as clear profit."⁵³ In contrast to Garfield's frequent bouts with illness and persistent miseries, he believed he "was never healthier" in his life than during these years. When he heard of newspaper reports of suffering among the troops, he testily declared they were "exaggerated." "The truth is," he said, "it is a rare thing for a good soldier to find much cause for complaint."⁵⁴ Throughout his army years, in both letters and diary, one finds him employing a cheerful tone and laudatory adjectives to describe situations that others must have painted in darker colors. What is more, in battle it seemed to his comrades that he led a charmed life as he escaped death time and again despite the unusual risks he took while leading his men. He

⁵²T. Harry Williams, ed., Hayes: The Diary of a President, 1875-1881 (New York, 1964), xv.

⁵³Hayes to William Platt, Oct. 9, 1861, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, II, 113.

⁵⁴Hayes to Sophia Hayes, Nov. 9, 1861, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, II, 143.

did not escape unscathed, however, for he had several horses shot from under him and was wounded some five times, on one occasion seriously enough to require a two months' recuperation. At this point, friends and relatives urged him to use this opportunity to leave the army, but he was determined to resume his duties and did so.

Hayes's heroic conduct on the battlefield was not only a source of satisfaction to him, it was also welcomed by friendly newspapermen, especially his politically potent friend William Henry Smith, a journalist who would soon be elected Ohio secretary of state and eventually head the Western Associated Press. These journalists were pleased to use their press power to enhance their friend's availability. Finally in 1864, Smith and others collaborated to present him with the nomination for the House from the Cincinnati district. Hayes undoubtedly believed he deserved the reward, but at first he neither declined nor accepted the honor, deciding instead to "let the thing take its own course. . ."⁵⁵ Later, he allowed his name to be used, but as he told his uncle: "As to that candidacy for Congress, I care nothing at all about it -- neither for the nomination nor for the election."⁵⁶ But he was not all that indifferent, as his comments to Smith reveal: "My thanks for your attention and assistance in the premises.

⁵⁵ Hayes to Sardis Birchard, July 30, 1864, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, II, 488.

⁵⁶ Hayes to Sardis Birchard, July 30, 1864, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, II, 488.

I cared very little about being a candidate, but having consented to the use of my name I preferred to succeed."⁵⁷ One can be sure that he now "preferred to succeed" in the contest, but to his everlasting credit (and his political advantage) he sharply dismissed the suggestion he leave his post to campaign for Congress. "An officer fit for duty who at this crisis would abandon his post to electioneer for a seat in Congress ought to be scalped."⁵⁸ These sentiments, wholly genuine, would be put to good use in this campaign and in future contests, including his bid for the presidency in 1876.

Hayes's victory at the polls was personally satisfying, for like Garfield he had hoped someday to sit in Congress, but he was far more content than Garfield with his work in the army and showed no inclination to abandon a position which was intensely satisfying. After receiving news of his election he told his wife that "my particular gratification is much less than it would be, if I were not so much gratified by my good luck in winning 'golden opinions' in the more stirring scenes around here. My share of notoriety here is nothing at all, any my real share of merit is also small enough, I know; but the consciousness that I am doing my part in these brilliant actions is far more gratifying than anything the election

⁵⁷ Hayes to William Henry Smith, Aug. 24, 1864, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, II, 497.

⁵⁸ Hayes to William Henry Smith, Aug. 24, 1864, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, II, 497.

brings me."⁵⁹ This comment seems to reflect Hayes's desire to maintain an independent stance, aloof and unstained by the "notoriety" of some of his fellow officers, jealously guarding his good name while resting content in the knowledge that he was earning laurels while enjoying this experience more than any other he was to have during his lifetime. Unlike Garfield, he had not sampled legislative life first hand, yet he probably had concluded that a congressman's work would be far less exciting, less rewarding and a good deal more risky, for here one might suffer from guilt by association or be forced to share a collective guilt if one's party or a faction thereof was caught in error or wrong-doing. Moreover, he was convinced that at the moment the task of crushing the rebellion was more significant than the doings of Congress and more satisfying to his self-image.

Their wartime experiences led both Hayes and Garfield to express similar opinions concerning West Point leadership and the problem of the Negro. About the time the latter had begun to voice his doubts as to West Pointers, Hayes too, was expressing milder reservations as to the supposed superiority of *these* professionals. Perhaps the recent 'disasters and discouragements will make the ultimate victory more precious," he declared. "But how long? I can wait patiently if we only do not get tricked out of victories. I thought McClellan was to mend all this. We have had our last defeat; we have had

⁵⁹ Oct. 21, 1864, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, II, 528.

our last retreat," Hayes reflected. He thereupon remarked philosophically: "Well, well, patience. West Pointers are no better than others."⁶⁰

Hayes's opinion of emancipation also underwent a change. "I am gradually drifting to the opinion that this Rebellion can only be crushed finally by either the execution of all traitors or the abolition of slavery." He had concluded that it was wiser to allow

. . . the border States, in which there is Union sentiment enough to sustain loyal State Governments, dispose of slavery in their own way; abolish it in the permanently disloyal States -- in the cotton States -- that is, set free the slaves of Rebels. This will come, I hope, if it is found that a stubborn and prolonged resistance is likely to be made in the cotton States. President Lincoln's message, recommending the passage of a resolution pledging the aid of the general Government to States which shall adopt schemes of gradual emancipation, seems to indicate that the result I look for is anticipated by the Administration. I hope it is so.⁶¹

As to Lincoln, Hayes was considerably more generous in his comments than was Garfield. "Lincoln is perhaps not all that we could wish, but he is honest, patriotic, cool-headed, and safe. I don't know any man that the nation could say is, under all the circumstances, to be preferred in his place." His optimism was seldom dimmed despite frequent Union setbacks. His outlook was pretty well summed up in his remark that he thought it would "come out all right. Wars are not

⁶⁰ Hayes Diary, Oct. 29, 1861, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, II, 127.

⁶¹ Hayes Diary, March 27, 1862, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, II, 213-19.

finished in a day." Perhaps he had in mind what he termed "croakers and grumblers -- people who do more mischief than avowed enemies to the country."⁶² He might well have so labeled Garfield had he read some of the latter's correspondence.

After serving with distinction and with an admirably cheerful mien Hayes resigned his commission just four years after enlisting. It had been a good four years and he had fulfilled an old yearning to become a genuine military hero. More than twenty years later he confessed: "I am more gratified by friendly reference to my war record than by any other flattery. Of course I know that my place was a very humble one -- a place utterly unknown in history. But I am also glad to know that I was one of the good colonels." He left the army a brevet major general, but he noted that it was his "feeling, often expressed" after becoming a colonel, that he preferred "to be one of the good colonels to being one of the poor generals." He was so "decided" in his opinion that he "often considered the question of declining promotion to the brigadier-generalship,"⁶³ and had sometimes regretted that he ever accepted it. One can be sure that his political supporters harbored no such regrets as General Hayes, a "prime political prospect" prepared to join General Garfield in Ohio's congressional delegation.⁶⁴

⁶² Hayes to Lucy Hayes, Oct. 19, 1861, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, II, 120.

⁶³ Hayes Diary, May 13, 1886, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 287.

⁶⁴ Williams, ed., Diary of a President, xvi.

CHAPTER 2

WINNING LAURELS IN WASHINGTON AND COLUMBUS

In December, 1863 Garfield entered the tense and troubled atmosphere of the Thirty-eighth Congress. He had resigned his commission before taking his seat, yet his reluctance to abandon a now familiar and rewarding field of labor (perhaps reinforced by pangs of conscience) made him hope that he might also continue his military service, and the President and Secretary of War promised to hold an opening for him. He may have appreciated that he was of greater value to the administration in the House than in the field, but this did not bring him peace of mind. Just as at earlier crucial junctures in his life, he was left fretting as to whether his was a wise decision. By the spring of 1864, he was speculating that if the Union should suffer "disaster", he must rejoin the army. "I am greatly tried by the question of my duty to the country," he wrote, and "have for several days been feeling that I have hardly the right to hold back from the country the success and experience I had in the service. . . ." But mingled with Garfield's stout patriotism, one suspects, was the fear that a lucrative endeavor had been prematurely abandoned before it

had been used to maximum advantage. However, such disturbing thoughts gradually faded as he became absorbed in legislative activities that would prove to be more consistently stimulating and satisfying than life in the Union army.¹

Garfield's army experience had not been, as it had been for Hayes, the high point of his life, making all that followed essentially anticlimactic. It had been an exceptionally profitable and maturing experience for him, a time of transition during which he had completed his divorce from earlier pre-occupations. It was the take-off point in his political career. He was now a member of Congress: he had reached a goal that had been in his thoughts for at least six years. In a letter written on 'Congress' paper in January 1857, he had asked in a postscript if it was not "prophetic that my last word to you ended on the picture of the Congress Capital?"² Prophetic or not, his brief experience in the Ohio Senate suggested what would soon become clear: political activity provided an avenue for Garfield's ambition and an occupation that satisfied his self-concept, challenged his intellect, and absorbed the bulk of his restless energy as had no other line of work.

When Garfield took his seat in the House, he enjoyed

¹ Jacob D. Cox, *Military Reminiscences of the Civil War* (2 vols., Cincinnati, 1900), II, 6 and quoted in Theodore C. Smith, *The Life and Letters of James Abram Garfield* (2 vols.; New Haven, 1925), I, 370.

² Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, Jan. 15, 1857, in Mary L. Hinsdale, ed., *Garfield-Hinsdale Letters: Correspondence between James Abram Garfield and Burke Aaron Hinsdale* (Ann Arbor, 1949), p. 17.

advantages that were unknown to most freshmen congressmen. He was fresh from the field of battle where he had earned a promotion to major general and been lavishly praised by his commander, he had been called to the House by the President and he was patronized by a powerful Secretary of the Treasury. What is more, he represented a safe district within a key state in a body where political longevity yielded rich dividends. With such credentials, it was not surprising that he should at once be placed on the prestigious Committee on Military Affairs. General Robert Schenck, the fellow Ohioian who chaired this committee, soon initiated Garfield's congressional baptism by assigning him the delicate and burdensome task of revising the conscription law. But such an undertaking was welcomed by one who had claimed: "In some small degree, I represent on this floor the Army of the Republic. . . ." With characteristic zeal, he plunged into his assignment, lamenting only that a "long absence from political life has left me sadly behind in all current political learning and I must make up for it by hard work." He quickly repaired this deficiency and soon his diligent and studious approach would mark him as one of the hardest working members of Congress. He not only gave his very best to committee work, but also took to the floor to speak on a variety of topics outside the province of committee assignments, often at the behest of less outspoken colleagues. He discovered, however, that his loquaciousness and "polished periods" were doing him injury among his weary listeners. Thereafter, he curbed himself and developed a plainer,

instructive style that won laurels for him in the House and on the stump. "It was not willful oratory coming out of his temperament", a colleague recalled, "but it was a large and massive power of presenting facts and inferences."³

The opening session of the Thirty-eighth Congress found Garfield's party divided into several unstable factions. A very substantial majority were moderates, but as the months passed their strength was eroded as a smaller, but aggressive band of radicals grew stronger. Fewer still were those of a conservative persuasion and those who might be labeled moderate radicals. Garfield's record in his first congress places him squarely in the radical camp.⁴ He was, for example, an earnest advocate of confiscation on the grounds that this would dislodge slavery's principal support and break the malevolent influence and overweening power of the great planters. "It is well known," he argued during a debate on confiscation, "that the power of slavery rests in large plantations; that the planter's capital drives men to the mountains, where liberty always loves to dwell, and to the swamps and by-places of the South; but the bulk of all the landed estates is in the hands of the slave-owners who have plotted this great conspiracy." Looking to the future, he predicted that "if we

³Congressional Globe, 38th Cong., 1st sess., p. 403; Garfield to Lucretia Garfield, Dec. 21, 1863, in Smith, Life and Letters of Garfield, I, 365-66 and Garfield Scrapbook No. 64 (Charles Foster interview). Garfield Papers.

⁴David Donald, The Politics of Reconstruction, 1863-1867 (Baton Rouge, 1965), pp. 87, 89.

want a lasting peace . . . we must put down its guilty cause; we must put down slavery; we must take away the platform on which slavery stands -- the great landed estates of the armed rebels of the South. Strike that platform from beneath their feet, take that land away, and divide it into homes for the men who have saved our country." The rebellion would be put down, he concluded, "when you take away its chief prop, slavery and landed estates." What was demanded, he implied, was a far-reaching social revolution which would effect an "economic liquidation of the old planter aristocracy."⁵

Garfield entered the House with a view of Lincoln that put him in essential agreement with the Radicals. Nevertheless, when Lincoln pleaded the necessity of a new and effective draft law, he unhesitatingly supported the President and the army. Moreover, as the time to choose a presidential nominee drew near, his radicalism was laid aside in favor of political realism. Although he believed that the party "could do better" and with John Sherman supported Chase's bid for the nomination, he soon abandoned the effort, telling Chase that to continue the struggle "could only distract the party." The administration had fallen well short of his expectation, yet "it would be a national calamity to alienate the radical element from Mr. Lincoln. . . ." As in the case of his later disenchantment with Grant's administration, he would not openly give aid and

⁵Congressional Globe, 38th Cong., 1st sess., p. 404 and Kenneth Stampp, The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877 (New York, 1965), p. 42.

comfort to divisive elements that threatened his party's survival.⁶

A radical, but scarcely a docile follower of his faction's leaders, Garfield essayed an independent, sometimes an idealistic course within the loose framework of the Union party. House leaders did not command his voice and vote and on more than one occasion he challenged the majority of his party and the whole House as well. Thus, while he favored generous bounties for reenlisting veterans, he spoke and voted against a bill prolonging the life of the bounty system for volunteers, although his was but one of two dissenting votes. Later he successfully insisted that volunteers enlist from their home districts rather than from those paying a larger bounty. In a like manner he opposed his own committee's bill reinstating the rank of lieutenant general with its accompanying resolution calling for Grant's promotion to this rank. Amid the debate on the draft bill, he sharply rebuked the House for eliminating, by a better than two to one margin, a clause abolishing the commutation provision (whereby a draftee could avoid service by paying a three hundred dollar fee). Satisfying as such independence might have been he soon came to appreciate the wisdom of greater flexibility, caution and the pragmatic approach in legislative affairs. This change was predictable, for unlike Hayes, but like so many others including the President, he "lacked that inward serenity enjoyed

⁶Garfield to Harmon Austin, March 4, 1864 and Garfield to Colonel Dumars (?), Feb. 25, 1864. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

by those who never question their own values or doubt their moral rectitude. . ."⁷ But this course, too, could and would prove hazardous. During his first session, Garfield saw fit to accept less than a whole loaf on the question of equal pay for white and Negro soldiers, but only after consistently voting for equality. Some of his constituents promptly took him to task for failing to insist on all or nothing. Smarting under this attack, he answered his critics by spelling out what became his legislative philosophy. If reasonably certain that the House would reject a measure in the form he desired, he would feel it necessary to grant "some concession. . . for the sake of getting as near it as we could." In a letter to a district editor, the young congressman explained, "I only desire to use a wise discretion and not lose a practical good for a remote possibility of something better."⁸ He clung to this approach throughout his legislative career, yet it was precisely this posture that led some to conclude that here was a man who lacked backbone and moral courage.

By the end of his first session, Garfield knew that a significant number of his Republican constituents were displeased with their new representative. Some were upset because he had not insisted upon equal pay for Negro volunteers, others accused him of being lukewarm in his support of radical

⁷Stampf, Reconstruction, p. 37.

⁸Congressional Globe, 38th Cong., 1st sess., p. 2472 and Garfield to William C. Howells, June 18, 1864. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

reconstruction measures and still others were disgruntled by a rumor that he favored and perhaps had helped to draft the Wade-Davis Manifesto. He replied to his censors in a bold speech before the nineteenth district's nominating convention. After denying any connection with the Manifesto, he bluntly set forth his personal declaration of independence:

Abraham Lincoln was not my first choice. (He had supported Chase until his bid was defeated in party caucus and then had carefully steered clear of the Cleveland convention that nominated Fremont.) I made no factious opposition however to his nomination at Baltimore. . . . I hold it to be my privilege under the Constitution and as a man to criticize any acts of the President of the United States. I cannot go to Congress as your representative with liberty restricted in this respect in any degree. If I go to Congress I must go as a free man. I cannot go otherwise and when you are unwilling to grant me my freedom of opinion to the highest degree I have no longer a desire to represent you.⁹

The convention responded to their young congressman's idealized conception of his office with a renomination by acclamation. It was a speech that he might not have dared to make in a more closely contested district, as for example, Hayes's Cincinnati constituency. But Garfield's performance was, nevertheless, one in which he and his wife would continue to take extraordinary pride. During the ensuing campaign he stumped with typical energy and enthusiasm, smiting the Democrats hip and thigh despite advice that he temper his partisanship. The result was an endorsement by a margin of nearly three to one over his Democratic rival.

Garfield returned to Washington to find that the

⁹Quoted in Smith, Life and Letters of Garfield, I, 379.

considerable success of Union arms had sharply altered the military picture, for now it was the Confederate outlook that was bleak. Once again he voted in harmony with a now strengthened radical faction and mirrored its harsh assessment of the Lincoln administration. Dissident elements on the Western Reserve again accused him of failing to represent accurately his district's sentiment. Garfield responded to his critics by reiterating his conviction that he must be a representative in the fullest sense of the word, not a mere robot. He must be able to exercise his own judgment, employ his intellect, not simply echo the shifting and contradictory sentiments of his constituents. He spelled out his views in the following manner: "I believe a representative should get all the light on every matter of public importance that his position enables him to and then speak and vote in such a manner as will, in his judgment, enhance the best interests of his constituents and the whole country." Should the voters persist in their criticism and find him to be "deficient in ability, judgment or integrity" they might correct the situation by replacing him. But so long as he held office, he concluded, "his course should be guided by his own judgments, based upon the suggestions of his constituents and all other attainable information."¹⁰

The emotion-charged issue of civil rights for Negroes would offer him ample opportunity to apply his interpretation

¹⁰Quoted in Smith, Life and Letters of Garfield, I, 332 (open letter to his constituents, April 7, 1865).

of representative democracy. With the war's end, this problem had begun to weigh heavily on Congress, with the suffrage question perhaps the crux of the matter. Garfield was "fully persuaded that some degree of intelligence and culture should be required as a qualification of suffrage," he told the House, "but let it apply to all alike," he warned his colleagues. "Let us not commit ourselves to the senseless and absurd dogma that color of the skin shall be the basis of suffrage, the talisman of liberty." He acknowledged that it was "perilous to confer the franchise upon the ignorant and degraded; but if an educational test cannot be established, let suffrage be extended to all men of proper age regardless of color."¹¹ His view of the question coincided neatly with that of Hayes when he entered Congress and reflected their great faith in the beneficial influence of education. But these two gentlemen were undoubtedly more radical on the Negro question than a goodly number of their fellow Ohioians, including their mutual friend and Republican gubernatorial nominee, Jacob Cox.

Cox had been Garfield's warm friend and correspondent ever since their days together in the Ohio Senate and for a time he had been Hayes's commander in western Virginia. Although urged to bid for the governorship himself, Garfield had supported his friend, but soon found himself disturbed and embarrassed when the latter's view of the Negro question came to light. Cox,

¹¹Burke A. Hinsdale, ed., The Works of James Abram Garfield (2 vols.; Boston, 1882-83), I, 87.

who eventually argued for a separate black American state, told Garfield that the Confederate South would accept the Thirteenth Amendment, but would surely "be a unit against Negro suffrage." If this were made a prerequisite for their readmission, he continued, they could appeal to the country that they were now fully in step with middle western and western states in their treatment of Negroes. He concluded that if the party made suffrage the issue, they would be beaten in the upcoming election, "for the Army, although grown radically anti-slavery, has nevertheless increased instead of diminishing pride and prejudice of race, and will not go with you."¹² The nominee's analysis was discerning, for as late as 1870 it was with considerable risk that the GOP went before the country with the Fifteenth Amendment since it was more likely to lose than to gain Republican votes in several key northern states, including Ohio.¹³ Cox spoke for many Northerners, especially soldiers who had seen southern duty, when he called Garfield's attention to the "irreconcilable conflict of races at the South." This conflict and the army's attitude were "patent" facts, he insisted, and in view of this it was important that they confer before the campaign in order to arrive at some mutual accord on the question.¹⁴ In a letter to Cox, Garfield

¹²Jacob Cox to Garfield, July 21, 1865. Garfield Papers.

¹³John and LaWanda Cox, "Negro Suffrage and Republican Politics: The Problem of Motivation in Reconstruction Historiography," The Journal of Southern History, XXXIII (August, 1967), 303-330.

¹⁴Jacob Cox to Garfield, July 21, 1865. Garfield Papers.

suggested it would be premature to decide reconstruction policy at this time and Cox responded that this was "precisely" his idea of the wisest approach during the campaign. This strategy would be successful, he predicted, intimating that it might well undercut those Copperheads who were employing racist appeals to lure away Republican veterans, while simultaneously encouraging the radicals to more extreme policies.¹⁵ As Cox's views became known, they stirred up a hornet's nest of opposition among those of a radical persuasion on the Western Reserve and elsewhere. One of Garfield's constituents insisted that it "may be wise to make conditions upon which men may vote, but never, while negroes are free, can you make color one of those conditions."¹⁶ But Cox mirrored the feeling of far more Ohioans than either Garfield or Hayes were wont to admit. For the time being racial conservatism prevailed and Cox swept into office with a far larger majority than would Hayes in the two succeeding gubernatorial elections, while the legislative contests secured the House and Senate for the party by majorities of two to one. Perhaps with these results in mind, Garfield concluded that if Congress were unwilling to insist upon universal suffrage, the next best policy would be exclusion of the rebel states for the time being. He was also given to understand from correspondents in the South that the

¹⁵Garfield to Jacob Cox, Aug. 5, 1865. Garfield Papers. Letterbook. Jacob Cox to Garfield, Aug. 9, 1865. Garfield Papers.

¹⁶Harmon Austin to Garfield, Aug. 6, 1865. Garfield Papers.

suffrage issue was hurting the party there and that in states like Louisiana the secessionists had taken over once more. This, in addition to reports of the abuse of the freedmen, may have both strengthened and weakened Garfield's radicalism.¹⁷ As the radical element in Congress grew and began to unfold its reconstruction plans, he was placed in an awkward position. Unlike Hayes, a consistent and thorough-going radical, he probably worried as to whether or not Stevens was proposing "a new revolution," as Cox put it.¹⁸ He continued to look upon himself as a radical, although he would compile a moderate voting record on key reconstruction issues brought to a roll-call vote. In Ohio, his party remained badly divided on the suffrage issue and only after a long wrangle at their 1866 state convention did they unanimously adopt a resolution "endorsing the Declaration of Independence" as a compromise move. At the same moment, Garfield was given to understand that the Republicans of his area were staunchly radical in their outlook.¹⁹

Although he was genuinely concerned with the vexing political and social problems arising from the War and its aftermath, Garfield did not choose to follow the acknowledged

¹⁷Garfield to Jacob Cox, Aug. 5, 1865. Garfield Papers. Letterbook. Lionel Sheldon to Garfield, Nov. 21, 1865. Garfield Papers.

¹⁸Donald, Politics of Reconstruction, pp. 96, 100 and Jacob Cox to Garfield, Jan. 1, 1866. Garfield Papers.

¹⁹James Comly to Garfield, Jan. 17, 1866 and William C. Howells to Garfield, March 26, 1866. Garfield Papers.

party chieftians and make them his major interest during the Reconstruction era. At least as early as the campaign of 1865, he had begun to follow through on an interest in financial and monetary affairs that steemed from his contacts with Chase and his friends during the fall and winter of 1862. He and the Secretary had "conversed a good deal on currency," he had written at the time, and he had also "read a good deal on the subject." His studies included the "great debates of Webster, Calhoun and Benton," he continued, and took him into English history as well. He then ventured to predict that "the great currency question will be renewed with new and interesting features resulting from our huge national debt. . . ." ²⁰

When a bad ankle forced him from the stump in 1865, he reported that he used the time to "read the history and philosophy of the tariff question very thoroughly" and followed up his study with a lecture on 'The Mercantile System' at Poughkeepsie, New York. During the following winter, he recorded with obvious satisfaction, that his wife had given him "the credit of doing more continuous study of the voluntary kind since we came here than she has ever known me to in the same length of time." He had been concentrating on "Paper Money and the Currency," he wrote, and found the subject to be "very full of live ideas and issues." ²¹ Moreover, he began to demonstrate that his

²⁰Garfield to Harry Rhodes, Dec. 7 and Nov. 2, 1862. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

²¹Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, Oct. 14, 1865, in Smith, Life and Letters of Garfield, I, 389 and Garfield to Harry Rhodes, Jan. 22, 1865, in Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Letters, p. 73.

assignment to military affairs did not prevent him from pursuing his growing, perhaps by this point, his primary interest in finance. His initial contributions from the floor were modest, but by the final session of the Thirty-eighth Congress, he was participating in nearly every discussion of taxation, currency and banking.

When the Thirty-ninth Congress met in December 1865, Hayes joined Garfield in the Ohio delegation. The Republicans were by now divided into several factions -- Radicals, Stevens Radicals, Independent Radicals, Moderates and Conservatives -- on reconstruction issues. The radical element had grown in numbers and power since Congress had last assembled and now outnumbered the Moderates and Conservatives. Hayes quickly identified himself with Stevens and his allies; indeed, his voting record places him among the dozen odd Ultra-Radicals during his brief stay in the House. Garfield's record on the same key reconstruction measures places him in the moderate's camp during these years, although he continued to think of himself as a good Radical. Both men accepted the congressional plan of reconstruction and Hayes told his Texas friend Guy Bryan "that if we carry these elections, this plan contains the best terms you will ever get -- and they should be promptly accepted." Hayes's credentials as a Radical were unimpeachable. He loyally followed his faction's leaders, voted regularly and predictably, yet on not one occasion did he participate in the debates on reconstruction that dominated his term of service. He may have felt that some Radical proposals

were too harsh and unwise, but except for a vague hints of this, he kept any such thoughts strictly to himself.²²

Garfield began his second term in Congress with the intention of pursuing in earnest his interests in finance. With this in mind he took the unusual step of asking to be taken off the Committee on Military Affairs and assigned instead to a committee where he could, as he put it, "study finance." This, he was convinced, would be the paramount question for years to come and with the enthusiastic support of Chase and Secretary of the Treasury Hugh McCulloch, he was placed on the powerful Ways and Means Committee.²³ He continued to keep abreast of contemporary scholarship concerning financial matters and frequently searched the economic history of the United States and Great Britain for the light it might shed on contemporary fiscal and monetary problems. Certainly, the attractiveness of his chosen field stemmed in part from the fact that it lent itself so naturally to scholarly analysis. This suited his inclinations well, as it allowed him once more to be both a scholar and a teacher. For as Hayes wrote after his death: "Here was his strength. In both capacities he was a model." He excelled in "memory, analysis (and) fluency," Hayes

²²Donald, Politics of Reconstruction, pp. 95-104; Hayes to Guy Bryan, Oct. 1, 1866, in Williams, Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 32; Hayes to Russell Hastings, May 20, 1865, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, II, 584; Hayes to Lucy Hayes, May 16, 1866 and Hayes to William Dickson, Jan. 19, 1867, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 25, 33.

²³Garfield to Harmon Austin, Dec. 13, 1865. Garfield Papers. Letterbook and Smith, Life and Letters of Garfield, I, 390.

declared, and Garfield consciously and conscientiously employed these assets and skills to achieve leadership in finance.²⁴ But this scholarly approach was not for Garfield an unmixed blessing. It robbed him of the smug self-assurance of those whose views were primarily acts of faith and it denied to him the comfort of adopting simple solutions for complex problems. He was inclined to compromise when he might better (from a purely partisan standpoint) have stood firm -- and he sometimes defended a minority opinion when it might have been more expedient to retreat. Moreover, he was persuaded to follow a moderate course when discussing related issues like the tariff, despite the attractiveness of a doctrinaire approach and to modify his opinions when consistency won the most applause. He sometimes found that his views were too advanced for the times and offensive to those who, in an era of partisan excess, failed to appreciate the implications of his approach to questions of public policy.

During this session, the conflict between the radical element and President Johnson grew more heated. Both Garfield and Hayes hoped some understanding might be arrived at. After visiting the President at Johnson's request, Garfield observed that he hoped that the GOP might work in harmony with the President. "I gave him the views of the earnest men, North, as I understand them," Garfield continued, "and we tried to

²⁴Hayes Diary, Feb. 21, 1883, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 110.

look over the whole field of the difficulties before us. Sumner and Boutwell and . . . some foolish men among us are all the while bristling up for a fight and seem anxious to make a rupture with Johnson. I think we should assume that he is with us, treat him kindly, without suspicion and go in a firm, calmly considered course, leaving him to make the breach with the party if any is made. I doubt if he would do it under such circumstances."²⁵ But soon the moderate and conciliatory young congressman found himself torn between Johnson's request for support and radical pressure to support congressional reconstruction plans. While Hayes soon concluded to follow a radical course, Garfield deferred his decision as long as possible and tried to steer a moderate course. Although the President was "fast falling into the hands of our enemies," Garfield wrote, he nevertheless "tried to take ground for both him (Johnson) and Congress to stand on."²⁶ After the rupture occurred, he initially followed his moderate inclinations, spoke very little and did not, like Hayes, support Ashley's resolution calling for an investigation of Johnson's conduct nor for Steven's resolution demanding the creation of the Joint Committee of Fifteen. He abstained during all three roll calls on the Steven's resolution and voted in the minority to lay Ashley's resolution on the table; he supported the

²⁵Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, Dec. 11, 1865, in Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Letters, pp. 76-77.

²⁶Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, Feb. 13, 1866, in Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Letters, pp. 73-79.

latter when it came before the House in the following session. He came to believe that Johnson's impeachment would probably be a desirable thing, but believed conviction by the Senate was not then possible. Yet he was sure that impeachment would seriously upset the country and wrote to a friend that "as a question of policy" he considered such a move to be "ruinous both to the party and to the general peace of the country." For the time being, he persisted in his moderate course. "I am trying to do two things," Garfield explained to Burke Hinsdale, "viz. be a radical and not be a fool -- which, if I am to judge by the exhibitions around me, is a matter of no small difficulty."²⁷ In hope of solving his dilemma and satisfying his real interests, he determined to concentrate largely on questions of finance, while quietly following what he considered a "radical" course.

Garfield's nomination to a third term seemed a foregone conclusion, but unlike Hayes, he encountered some little difficulty. He had not been sufficiently extreme on reconstruction issues for some voters; he was accused by others of being a free trader; his role in the Milligan case²⁸ upset

²⁷Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, Jan. 20 and Jan. 1, 1867, in Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Letters, pp. 94, 88.

²⁸"... he appeared before the Supreme Court of the United States as the associate of the distinguished Democrat, Jeremiah S. Black, and others, in ex parte Milligan, a case which made constitutional history. Garfield's side represented the petitioner Milligan, who had been sentenced by a military court during the war. The major issue before the court was the competence of military courts in wartime to try civilians in areas remote from the war zones where the regular courts were open. The decision was for the petitioner." Brown and Williams, eds., Diary of Garfield, I, xlix-1..

many of his supporters and even Cox warned him that he must pay more personal attention to key constituents. However, he was cautioned that "the most violent & telling opposition," as one advisor put it, arose from his nearly solitary support of an unpopular conscription bill which also enjoyed the support of Secretary Stanton and General Grant.²⁹

While the nomination was hanging fire, Garfield moved to defend himself against his critics, especially those who attacked him for his role as a defense counsel in the Milligan case. While he surely aided his cause with some of his constituents, it was pointed out to him by a discerning supporter that the unthinking majority would continue to say: "I want no man in Congress that will apologize for traitors."³⁰ His attempt to be a thinking man's tribune was to be no easy matter. For while his constituency might be relatively well educated, its partisanship tended to give it tunnel vision on any question that became a political issue. Thus, as would happen time and again, Garfield was driven into a defensive posture as he undertook to explain and justify himself before his constituents.

Despite his determination to be an independent representative Garfield achieved only a portion of the autonomy he craved. He could not escape the need to compromise, to accept

²⁹Jacob Cox to Garfield, May 4, 1866 and Harmon Austin to Garfield, June 12, 1866. Garfield Papers.

³⁰Harmon Austin to Garfield, July 2, and July 20, 1866. Garfield Papers.

a half-a-leaf in legislative matters -- and at times he would also feel compelled to support what was essentially the lesser of two evils. Thus, for one reason or another, he was forced to live with and practice expediency. Hayes, on the other hand, escaped the necessity of frequently defending and explaining himself, although he cherished his independence no less than did Garfield and believed himself to be essentially independent. By virtue of breeding and ample means, by following the safer route of state politics, by choosing his issues carefully and often simply maintaining a discreet silence, he largely escaped the problems and dangers that Garfield's character and political situation predestined for him. Hayes also chose the executive role in an era of limited and declining executive power, while Garfield sought and won decision making power in a strong and increasingly powerful branch of government. Finally, by making his public life merely "episodes", as he called them, Hayes would come much nearer to realizing their common desire for autonomy and peace of mind.³¹

While Garfield's interest in congressional activity was quickening, Hayes was frankly looking for a way to escape to Ohio. His experience in Washington had been far from satisfying. He dreaded the necessity of living apart from his family after four years of frequent wartime separations. Unlike Lucretia Garfield, Lucy Hayes was not of a mind to live in

³¹Hayes to William H. Smith, Dec. 19, 1881, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 56.

Washington and soon Hayes was writing to her that "'Politics is a bad trade' runs in my head often. Guess we'll quit. . . ." It was "lonely and bad," he complained to her, and there was "nothing in the small ambition of Congressional life or in the gratified vanity which it sometimes affords, to compensate for separation from you."³² He saw himself as a kind of glorified errand boy for his constituents -- men and women who were pre-occupied with pensions, claims and federal employment, petty matters of great moment only to the petitioners.³³ He found some pleasure in supporting his party's programs, especially in securing the fruits of the Union victory, but his vote was usually unneeded and he did not choose to test his influence in debate. Perhaps he began to feel as if he had been demoted to the ranks after having received "laurels" as a leader of men in a great conflict. He might have become a House leader and then moved on to the Senate, but he did not care to sacrifice the necessary time; his district, moreover, was not as safe as some.

And yet, although he was an unaggressive congressman, Hayes seems to have gained considerable respect among his colleagues during his short stay in Washington. During the 1876 presidential campaign, Garfield remarked that upon

³²Hayes to Lucy Hayes, July 9, 1865; March 29 and June 17, 1866, in Williams, ed., Diaries and Letters of Hayes, III, 2, 21, 27.

³³Hayes to Lucy Hayes, Jan. 10, 1866 and Hayes to Murat Halstead, Feb. 2, 1866, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 13, 16.

entering the House, Hayes was determined "not to make the mistake of talking too much and he became the most patient listener in the Capitol. When it was known that he advocated the passage of a bill, it was pretty sure to pass. 'Hayes says it's all right' was a valuable endorsement," Garfield claimed.³⁴ Be that as it may, his committee assignments were undistinguished and certainly not likely to bring him to the attention of the House and the country as were Garfield's. He was chairman of the Joint Committee on the Library, yet he spoke of it as "one of the no-account committees in the public sense" though admitting that it had "some private interest." He spoke jestingly of it as his "Fine Arts Committee" controlling as it were "the whole bouquet business." But to his uncle Sardis, he confessed that his duties were pleasant and involved "no labor worth mentioning." But, he cautions his uncle, this letters "is for your private contemplation," concluding that "the dodge is rather a lucky one as I now see it."³⁵ His committee did, however, make significant contributions to the expansion of the Library and such work did in fact coincide very nicely with Hayes's life-long interest in books and Americana. For the most part, however, his Washington years failed to meet his expectations, modest as they were.³⁶ Moreover, he probably

³⁴Williams, Life of Hayes, I, 281.

³⁵Hayes to Sardis Birchard, Dec. 11, 1865 and Hayes to Sophia Hayes, Feb. 4, 1866, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 10-11, 17.

³⁶Hayes to Sardis Birchard, Feb. 2, 1867 and Hayes to Lucy Hayes, June 17, 1866, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 40, 27.

was troubled by what he saw and heard of the less than exemplarily conduct of some colleagues and their associates -- and he feared that although he would remain personally pure, his spotless record might be stained by the process of guilt through association. He quickly formed an unflattering opinion of Washington life and then and there concluded that it was not conducive to the cultivation of those characteristics he most admired. Years later, after he had returned to Washington as chief executive, he would remark that Garfield's long stay in this unhealthy environment had had a demonstrably detrimental influence upon him.³⁷

As the time drew near to choose a candidate for the governorship of their state, Garfield, Hayes and Cox found themselves placed in political juxtaposition. Early in 1867, both Hayes and Garfield came under pressure to bid for the honor, as it was assumed that the party would either reject the incumbent because of his racial views or he would voluntarily step aside. Garfield was determined to stay with his present line of work and clearly believed the role of a House leader was within his grasp, and greatly preferable to the governor's largely ceremonial functions. He visited Columbus and found "an almost universal desire among the Senators and Representatives that" he enter the contest, he wrote, but he told them he "would not think of it, and they must say no more about it." He also confessed to a friend:

³⁷Hayes to Austine Snead, April 25, 1881, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 10.

". . . I have some hope that in a few years more I may make myself strong and a power in the field I am cultivating." He therefore called upon his friends in the Assembly to support Cox, for although he admitted that Cox wasn't in all respects the man they wanted, yet he made a good governor.³⁸ The incumbent however, soon took himself out of contention, there-upon setting the stage for Hayes's entry into the contest. At first, he remained properly noncommittal, but as the pleas for his candidacy grew more urgent and numerous, he found himself "really puzzled" as to what course to follow. "This is the truth as I now see it: I have no ambition for Congressional life." And Hayes wrote, "I have no ambition for Congressional reputation or influence -- not a particle. I would like to be out of it creditably. If this nomination is pretty likely, it would get me out of the scrape, and after that I am out of political life decently. On the other hand, I ought not and will not resign my seat in Congress to be governor unless the people of my district approve it."³⁹ Press support for his nomination grew, his friends, especially those from Garfield's district, became more insistent, and finally as county delegate elections took place his selection became a certainty. Moreover, once the state legislature had ratified the Fourteenth Amendment and proposed a Negro suffrage amendment

³⁸Garfield to Harmon Austin, April 22, 1867. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

³⁹Hayes to Sardis Birchard, Feb. 2, 1867, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 39-40.

to the state constitution his "chief personal objection" to running, as he had put it, was removed and he made ready to abandon Congress despite substantial opposition among his constituents. "I do not regret the new step," Hayes observed. "It gets me out of worries I shall be glad to be rid of."⁴⁰ He thereupon easily won nomination to an office that few of his peers cared to bid for.

Although he had supported the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment, Governor Cox had been an embarrassment to many Ohio Republicans because of his conservative racial views. Nevertheless, he reflected the majority opinion on the Negro suffrage issue in the state for several years to come. Hayes sensed this, yet it did not discourage him from cleaving to a radical line throughout the campaign even though on election night he would blame his apparent defeat partly on his radical stand. He won the election, however, by a very slim margin although the Democrats easily took control of the legislature and the voters of his old congressional district chose a Democrat to succeed him. What is more, the proposed state suffrage amendment was spurned by a fifty vote margin, thereby underscoring voter sympathy with Cox's point of view. It was clearly a personal victory for Hayes, but perhaps all the more satisfying for just that reason.

Garfield had been traveling in Europe while Hayes campaigned for the governorship and when he returned to his

⁴⁰Hayes to William H. Smith, May 23, 1867 and Hayes to Sardis Birchard, June 20, 1867, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 42, 45.

congressional duties he found the contest between Johnson and Congress far more heated. He steered shy, in so far as possible, of the drive toward impeachment and instead followed his interest in financial issues. The impeachers first attempt to gain House support for their action was defeated with Garfield voting with the majority against the measure despite his apprehension about the reaction this might evoke in his district. Meanwhile, he pursued his chosen speciality, steeping himself in the literature of fiscal and monetary history. "I laid myself out to study very thoroughly the history of English finance, during the Napoleonic wars;" Garfield recalled years later, "went over the debates and the speeches and the writers of the time and then traced it down through our own Revolutionary times, Hamilton's time, Jackson's time, until I had made a very thorough study, keeping copious notes as I went along of what I read."⁴¹ He emerged from this experience an even stauncher advocate of sound money, resumption and contraction; and he was an outspoken supporter of the contractionist policies of Secretary of the Treasury McCulloch. Hayes, although a sound money man, had differed with him on contraction and had voted with the majority against Garfield and the McCulloch approach. On matters of tariff legislation, Garfield tried to steer a course between extreme protectionism and free trade. Again he was much influenced by his study of history and the contemporary academic discussion of the tariff issues, He

⁴¹Smith, Life and Letters of Garfield, I, 400-01.

stated his position well when he argued in these words:

"Duties should be so high that our manufacturers can fairly compete with the foreign product, but not so high as to enable them to drive out the foreign article, enjoy a monopoly of the trade and regulate the price as they please."⁴² He was consciously staking out his position in finance, although he was not yet in reach of what he aspired to -- the chairmanship of Ways and Means.

As his 1868 congressional contest approached, Garfield found himself in trouble at home once again. During the final impeachment proceedings in the House he had been absent for some days, returning just in time to cast an unneeded vote against the President. But in his district it was rumored that he had failed to be present for the vote and he was again compelled to defend himself. The fact that his absence from the House was occasioned by his association with the prominent Democrat Jeremiah Black, Buchanan's Attorney General, as a counsel in a lawsuit, led to even sharper criticism. It was commonly held, an advisor warned, that he "had not done much that the people can see," and many say they fear you are sympathissing (sic) too much with Judge Black &c &c &c."⁴³ His most determined opponents introduced Ben Wade's name into

⁴²Hinsdale, ed., Works of Garfield, I, 205.

⁴³Harmon Austin to Garfield, April 5, 1868. Garfield Papers.

1. *Chlorophyll a* (Chl *a*) is the primary photosynthetic pigment in most plants and algae. It is a green pigment that absorbs light energy in the blue and red regions of the visible spectrum.

2. *Chlorophyll b* (Chl *b*) is an accessory pigment found in green plants and algae. It absorbs light energy in the blue and orange-red regions of the visible spectrum.

3. *Carotenoids* are a group of pigments that include carotenes and xanthophylls. They absorb light energy in the blue and green regions of the visible spectrum.

4. *Xanthophylls* are a type of carotenoid that absorb light energy in the blue and green regions of the visible spectrum.

5. *Anthocyanins* are water-soluble pigments that give plants their red, purple, and blue colors. They absorb light energy in the blue and green regions of the visible spectrum.

6. *Flavonoids* are a group of pigments that include flavones and flavanones. They absorb light energy in the blue and green regions of the visible spectrum.

7. *Anthoxanthins* are a group of pigments that include anthoxanthins and flavonols. They absorb light energy in the blue and green regions of the visible spectrum.

8. *Anthocyanins* are a group of pigments that include anthocyanins and flavonols. They absorb light energy in the blue and green regions of the visible spectrum.

9. *Anthocyanins* are a group of pigments that include anthocyanins and flavonols. They absorb light energy in the blue and green regions of the visible spectrum.

10. *Anthocyanins* are a group of pigments that include anthocyanins and flavonols. They absorb light energy in the blue and green regions of the visible spectrum.

the prenomination struggle and Garfield countered by offering to step aside in favor of the popular veteran. Wade then assured him that he would not enter the contest, although this did little to dampen the spirit of the anti-Garfield forces.⁴⁴ He was accused of taking his European trip at government expense when he was badly needed in the last state election campaign and of being too friendly with Johnson's unpopular Secretary of the Treasury, Hugh McCulloch. Garfield was attacked for being a partner of Jeremiah Black (a partnership agreement had been prepared, but was never entered into) and finally of failing to vote for the articles of impeachment. His opponents carried their fight into the nominating convention and there the struggle became especially vicious. "Your good name was dragged in the mire considerably," wrote one observer. He was accused of being a "drunkard, a whoremonger" and of going abroad to seek a cure for a disease that resulted from what his critics referred to as his "sins at home." He was a gambler, a "rake" and had become "immensely wealthy out of jobs and fraud," his enemies claimed, and was therefore unfit for his office.⁴⁵ Despite these attempts at character assassination he was renominated and then elected by a healthy margin.

In the Fortieth Congress, Garfield was returned to the Military Affairs Committee as its chairman, instead of being

⁴⁴Garfield to Lyman Hall, June 10, 1868 and Garfield to J. D. Ensign, June 9, 1868. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

⁴⁵Edward Fitch to Garfield, June 13, 1868 and Harry Rhodes to Garfield, June 25, 1868. Garfield Papers.

[illegible]

given the chairmanship of Ways and Means as he had hoped. His staunchly held contractionist views and his stand on the tariff precluded his appointment to the latter committee at this time, and he took the setback in stride and began making major speeches reviewing financial issues despite his committee assignment. By the fall of 1868 he had gained sufficient stature in the House to be considered by some as a possible candidate for the speakership. For the time being his more ambitious friend, James G. Blaine, who sought and received Garfield's support, had the inside track in the contest. Garfield's eyes were focused on Ways and Means and he had reason to be optimistic about his chances. "I am sure that it could well be of advantage to you to have someone in the chair," Blaine had written him, "on whose friendship you can rely -- and I trust you can rely on mine."⁴⁶ Meanwhile he continued to build his reputation as an expert on monetary and fiscal policy, corresponding with students of financial issues like Edward Atkinson and David Wells and receiving their plaudits and those of his plain-spoken and idealistic friend, Jacob Cox. "I am proud of you," wrote the latter, "for . . . taking your course on finance & political economy generally together with your pluck in upholding the dignity of your intellectual convictions . . . and you can be very sure indeed that one friend at least thinks you 'deserve well of the country.'"⁴⁷

⁴⁶Nov. 10, 1868. Garfield Papers.

⁴⁷Edward Atkinson to David A. Wells, May 15, 1868 and Jacob Cox to Garfield, Dec. 3, 1868. Garfield Papers. Garfield to Harry Rhodes, May 7, 1868. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

Garfield had also begun to mellow and shed some of the idealism of the youthful congressman. The following comments reveal something of the hard realities facing the active legislator and they provide a partial answer to those who found fault with his work and spoke disparagingly of his lack of moral courage. "There are many things done here which to a man not in the whirl and pressure of Congressional life, must seem stupid and absurd," he told a friendly, but doctrinaire correspondent, "--but it must be borne in mind that we are all the time confronted with the question, what can be done -- not what would be well to do if we were able to do what we please." He was still, however, restive under what he considered the attempts of constituents to dictate to him or restrict his freedom as a legislator. With a touch of haughtiness, he remarked that it was his fixed opinion that he bore to "his constituents a relation similar to that of a lawyer to his clients." His duty was to "watch and defend their interests -- but to use his own judgment in reference to the particular method of doing so." He was similarly reluctant, as was Hayes, to 'seek' so much as a renomination to office. To have knowingly "worked for myself and failed," Garfield wrote, would be painful indeed. And although he was recognized as an unusually effective and popular stump speaker, much in demand outside his district, he also disliked winning voter support for himself by "palaver, and by begging them to give me their votes. . . ."43

⁴³Garfield to _____ Wilder, June 13, 1868; Garfield to W. T. Spear, June 24, 1868 and Garfield to Harmon Austin, June 24, 1868. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

He preferred to win his constituents votes with his congressional record.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the Democratic control of the Ohio legislature, Hayes had found the governorship to be quite to his liking. Certainly he was not pleased when the legislature selected his recent gubernatorial opponent, Democrat Allan Thurman, to succeed Ben Wade in the U. S. Senate nor with its attempt to repeal Ohio's ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment. But as a governor without veto power he could not justly be criticized for the enactment of unpopular legislation by either party; neither could the censorious find fault with him if his recommendations came to naught. In contrast to his congressional experience, he was obviously contented in Columbus. "I am enjoying the new office," Hayes told uncle Sardis. "It strikes me at a guess as the pleasantest I have ever had. Not too much hard work, plenty of time to read, good society, etc., etc. . .," he concluded cheerfully.⁴⁹ Even with his limited authority, he enjoyed a much greater sense of achievement and felt far more at ease than when a member of the House.

He was nominated for a second term in 1869 and again took to the stump against a powerful Democratic opponent and presidential aspirant, George Pendleton. Hayes was a careful student of rhetoric whose study of the leading orators of the past and keen observation of contemporary masters "gave him a life-long

⁴⁹Jan. 17, 1868, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 51.

appreciation for what he called 'elocution' . . . , " according to a study of Hayes as a public speaker. Although he was not a scholar in the classical sense as was his friend Cox, he was well versed in U. S. political and constitutional history. His approach to the problems of his era reflected an historical perspective and he frequently buttressed his line of reasoning with pertinent quotations embodying legal and historical precedents. As a speaker, this tendency was one of his strong points; another was his preference for the plain style of public address. This bias neatly reflected and complemented his style as a private citizen and a public figure. Contemporaries did not view Hayes as a great speaker, yet he seemed to reach his audiences both with his message and the impression that he was "scrupulously conscientious and . . . honest in all his purposes. . . ." What he had to say seemed both creditable and sincere and perhaps it was this quality as much as the 'issues' that tipped the scales in his favor in one closely contested election after another.⁵⁰

During the campaign against Pendleton in 1869, the suffrage issue continued to occupy a prominent place. The Ohio legislature had just refused to ratify the Fifteenth Amendment and the voters had again rejected a suffrage amendment to the state constitution by a considerable margin. The Republicans

⁵⁰Upton S. Palmer, "An Historical and Critical Study of the Speeches of Rutherford B. Hayes" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1950), pp. 638-39. Hayes to Manning Force, April 18, 1871, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 140.

campaigned on a platform endorsing the Fifteenth Amendment while maintaining a discreet silence on the money issue. But Garfield, who had been battling for soundness in the House against heavy odds, made it the motif of his campaign speeches despite the rising tide of inflationism in the GOP. John Sherman and Oliver Morton were two of the more prominent Republicans who leaned in this direction at the moment. Pendleton, of course, made money the central theme of the Democratic campaign since he was a powerful and influential advocate of the so-called 'Ohio Idea'. Hayes was seemingly not troubled by any doubts on the financial question, nor was he tempted to desert 'soundness' for the sake of expediency. He came to his financial opinions naturally, and unlike Garfield his orthodoxy was an article of faith only and was not significantly influenced or reenforced by study. But neither the greenback issue nor the suffrage debate were sufficient to enliven an essentially dull campaign or arouse the apathetic electorate. Hayes won reelection, but by only some 7,500 votes and although his party now controlled the legislature, the reform Republicans of the Cincinnati area held the balance of power in that body.

Hayes's duties during his second term, continued to suit his taste in politics. The office did carry with it a certain dignity, independence and social prerogatives. In Columbus he had the stage to himself and the power and prestige, limited as it was, came with the office and did not have to be fought for as it did in the House of Representatives. He had first

entered the office bent upon making a reputation as a governor with backbone and proudly recorded when his second term was drawing to a close that he was "making a reputation for firmness . . . all around." He was equally anxious to make his mark as an uncommonly even-handed and good governor and left office believing he had fulfilled his hopes. As he told his uncle Sardis, "true or not, the common remark is that I am the most esteemed of the governors within memory of people living." Yet on the very first day of his "freedom", as he called it, he betrayed an abiding fear of somehow being touched by scandal. "For a week or two past," Hayes confessed, "there has been a feeling with me that something might happen to cast a shadow on the four years of good fortune in the governor's office."⁵¹ In his diary he recorded that public life "has been on the whole pleasant. . . But for ten years and over my salaries have not equalled my expenses, and there has been the feeling of responsibility, a lack of independence, and a necessary neglect of my family and personal interests and comfort. . ."⁵² What is more, the issues that had once stirred him were being overshadowed by the emerging issues that Garfield had set out to master. Thus "the great questions which have so occupied my thoughts and enlisted my feelings," Hayes reflected, "the great questions of freedom

⁵¹Hayes to Sardis Birchard, Jan. 18, 1871 and Jan. 9, 1872, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 128, 190.

⁵²Hayes Diary, Dec. 31, 1871, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 185.

for the slaves and the unity of the Nation, liberty and nationality are now settled." It was, as he viewed it, irrevocably established "that all men are to have in this country equal civil and political rights. . . ." Moreover, those "small questions of today about taxation, appointments, etc., etc., are petty and uninteresting," he confided to his diary. And he could not consider after participating "in the glorious struggle against slavery during the last seventeen years, now to endure the worry and anxiety belonging to political life for the sake of honors of office merely, and without subjects interesting me deeply involved in the struggles."⁵³

Hayes's record as governor was solid but modest and accurately reflected his commitment to small government and limited legislative activity at every governmental level. As a Republican with Whig antecedents, he felt that it was to his credit that he had avoided extreme partisanship in his appointments and placed 'good' Democrats on state boards. He recorded that although he "was assailed as untrue" to his party, the experiment proved successful.⁵⁴ In the matter of appointments and in his general conduct as governor, he revealed his genteel conservatism and anticipated his approach to his duties as president a few years later. This is not to claim

⁵³Hayes Diary, March 16, 1871, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 135.

⁵⁴Hayes Diary, Jan. 9, 1872, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 139.

non-partisanship for Hayes, for he was by his own admission a stout party man, but rather to point up that he probably recognized the essential balance of the two parties in Ohio and the nation during his era.

As governor, the position of Hayes on financial questions was decidedly conservative. He sought to preserve economy in government at both state and local levels and was especially troubled by the evidence in Ohio of the municipal corruption and ballooning expenditures that accompanied the beginnings of America's urbanization. Although he had told a correspondent that "all sorts of reforms are desirable in our tax and revenue laws", this was the type of work that he considered "petty and uninteresting" and he left office without undertaking such reforms. He took some cautious steps in the direction of civil service reform and prided himself on the quality of his appointees. However, he called for but did not receive the constitutional provisions supporting the limited use of the merit system.⁵⁵ Thus his civil service reforms were of limited effectiveness and duration just as were similar efforts during his presidency.

Hayes also endorsed state regulation of railroads in an era of growing agitation for closer government supervision of enterprise. But for the most part, he was characteristically

⁵⁵Hayes to Charles Nordhoff, April 5, 1870 and Hayes Diary, March 16, 1871, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 94, 135. Harry Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes and His America (Indianapolis, 1954), p. 246. Daniel R. Porter, "Governor Rutherford B. Hayes," Ohio History, LXXVII (Winter, Spring, Summer, 1968), 68.

cautious and loyal to the common belief that the government's regulatory role in the economy must remain limited. He was not, however, blind to the growing inequality of wealth, the amassing of great fortunes by the few and their misuse of power. But unlike Garfield, he made no mention of a need for a program of taxation based on the sources of wealth, nor did he show any partiality toward the troubled farming class. Indeed, he was himself busy amassing a modest fortune in a growing number of real estate ventures during the 1870's. Hayes did champion with some energy, however, remedial legislation of a humanitarian sort -- the outgrowth of an abiding commitment to good works. His administration witnessed the enactment of Ohio's first coal mining safety code and he gave careful and compassionate attention to penal reform, the Soldiers' Orphans' Home, the Board of Charities, a graded prison, prison enlargement, improvement of penal discipline, the Girls' Reformatory, and mental health facilities. He studied penal problems with especial care, sought out expert opinion and brought about or paved the way for real improvement in the treatment of offenders of all types. Hayes also led the fight to use Ohio's Morrill Act lands for the establishment of the future Ohio State University, against powerful forces that wished the funds to be divided among the several existing schools. In his own eyes, however, his major achievement was securing, by the narrowest margin, legislative approval of the Fifteenth Amendment. Republican leaders in Washington kept their eyes on this struggle in Ohio, for they

knew the strength of racism there and elsewhere and appreciated the risk they had taken in urging this amendment. As a result, Hayes received a good deal of praise from the nation's capital for his role in gaining ratification by a key Republican state. He was pleased and proud of his contribution and seemed to consider it the capstone of the entire reconstruction effort.⁵⁶

His political fortunes continued to look promising as his term of office drew to a close. By March 1871 he knew that he stood a better than even chance of returning to Washington as Sherman's successor in the Senate. But while he did "not expect or desire to withdraw from all interest and participation in passing events," he declared, he was simply "out of the race for promotion." He told those who urged him to challenge Sherman that he would "not be a candidate and shall avoid being made one, for the senatorship or for any other high office." While his attitude stemmed in part from a desire to give more attention to family and business affairs, it also reflected a wariness of associating himself with a sinking ship, in a moral sense: the Grant administration. "The Administration of Grant has been faithful on the great questions of the rights of the colored people," he reflected, "and has been successful in dealing with the debt. These are the great matters, and for this the people ought to sustain it." But he considered the Santo Domingo affair to be "a

⁵⁶Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes, pp. 246-48 and Porter, "Governor Hayes," pp. 67-69, 73-75.

blunder" and concluded that the "personal affairs of the Administration . . . (had) been badly managed in many instances." Grant's acceptance of gifts, his promotion of the givers, his quarrel with Sumner and the latter's removal from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee were deeply disturbing to Hayes. This led him to write, like Garfield, that "for the first time . . . sober people" wondered if Grant should be renominated, although "the wise heads" had up until recently insisted that he must be chosen again. He believed that "such advisers as Chandler, Cameron, and Conkling . . . (were) too influential with Grant." Such men were "not safe counsellors," he insisted. "I hope that the disasters sure to follow this," his diary continues, "will make them pause and reflect. Otherwise a new candidate, or defeat, -- perhaps, defeat in any event, -- awaits the Republican party in 1872."⁵⁷ This might well be the best time, personally and politically, to occupy himself with private pursuits. In his diary he wrote: "'He who lives a great truth is incomparably greater than he who but speaks it.'" Was this not what Hayes was aiming for in both his private and public life? Yet the very act of holding office, especially higher office, put one in a position of depending upon the integrity of others whose conduct might injure one's good name and reputation. Thus he would continue to take an interest in politics and would "very likely be a candidate for

⁵⁷Hayes Diary, March 16, 1871, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 135-36 and Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes, 246.

subordinate positions," he declared, but his ambition was used up. "Out of public life is independence," he confided to his wife. "There may be times of loneliness and lack of excitement, but the general result must be good . . ."58 Perhaps he had simply and shrewdly laid aside his ambition until a more propitious time.

⁵⁸Hayes Diary, April 10, 1871; Hayes to John Hopley, April 29, 1871 and Hayes to Lucy Hayes, May 7, 1871, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 138, 141, 142.

CHAPTER 3

ADVANCEMENT AND ADVERSITY

During Hayes's Columbus years, Garfield continued his climb toward financial leadership in the House, but not without some difficulty. By 1868 his monetary views had left him "standing nearly alone among western members," he wrote, and under fire at home, too.¹ By early 1869, however, he found that his financial views were gaining support in Congress and many who had opposed him only a year earlier were now in his camp, although nearly every resumptionist had his own plan and could see no other. Garfield himself had come to be concerned that the gold premium was falling too rapidly and favored a slower, but still steady course toward resumption. His tariff views continued to create problems for him and grumbling district iron men accused him of abandoning protection for free trade. He denied their accusations of tariff heresy and reiterated his belief that ultra-measures simply would prove to be their undoing. His efforts from the floor of the House were now attracting more attention, especially his stoutly partisan replies to 'Southern Brigadiers' and his

¹Garfield to Joseph Hawley, July 26, 1868. Garfield Papers.

frequent clashes with his chief northern antagonist, Ben Butler. Both Cox and Hayes had congratulated him on his efforts against Butler. Hayes wrote to tell him that it was "absolutely necessary that on such occasions (the debate on Butler's motion to censure Ben Wade) somebody should have the pluck to talk truth and sense, and it is a fortunate circumstance to have a man of position and ability to do it."²

Some Ohioians again pressed Garfield to bid for the governorship in 1869, reasoning that he would "thoroughly rouse the enthusiasm of the party throughout the state," as one correspondent assured him, was essential to Republican success that year. But he would have no part of it and led his organization in the nineteenth district in support of Hayes for a second term; then as a delegate to the state convention, he supported the incumbent in what Hayes termed a "capital speech." The Governor hoped he would make "arrangements to speak for the Committee during the canvass at a long list of meetings" and the State Executive Committee echoed these sentiments, suggesting however, that he spend more time in those areas where his friends had not yet heard him speak. Perhaps the chairman of the Committee, who was very well disposed toward Garfield, but cool toward Sherman, had a senatorial bid in mind for him, for at this time Garfield was receiving encouragement from other correspondents to challenge the none-too-popular John

²Hayes to Garfield, Feb. 18, 1869. Garfield Papers.

Sherman and his efficient organization.³

Garfield's attempts to ease the minds of the protectionist element in his district had failed and they continued to hound him because of his apparently unorthodox views. One such critic, a Mahoning Valley iron man, confronted him with a favorite protectionist argument. A tariff reduction, he reasoned, struck "the hardest blow upon the working classes of the country." It would necessitate a shut-down of iron works or at the very least a "large reduction in the prices of labor" in order to meet the competition of lower European wages. Garfield was advised by sympathetic supporters that the tariff question was indeed a crucial issue and they doubted that he could be reelected if he voted for a reduction. In the minds of the protectionists he was suspect, for while compiling an essentially protectionist voting record, he had associated with known tariff reformers, refused to take an 'ultra' stand and accepted downward revision as an ultimate goal. It seemed to be "high time you understood each other," wrote an old friend, but it was difficult for the iron men and others whom Joseph Medill called "the High Tariff Maniacs" to understand that Garfield was no free trader. One big district iron producer probably apoke for many of his fellow protectionists when he was quoted as declaring that "scholars, thinking men, and fools all favor

³N. P. Bailey to Garfield, May 13, 1869; Hayes to Garfield, June 26, 1869 and R. D. Harrison to Garfield, July 23, 1869. Garfield Papers.

free trade, but the practical men are protectionists."⁴

Essentially futile as it would be, for years Garfield continued the effort to clarify his position on tariff questions. Late in 1869 he pointed out that exorbitant profits, such as those reaped by the tariff sheltered salt interests, had already brought on a sharp public reaction. It would "be a fatal mistake," he warned the officers of a Youngstown firm, "for our manufacturers to resist every proposed modification or reduction of the Tariff. . . ." Free trade or at least a policy of moderation was gaining strength among congressmen from the Northwest, as was a policy of moderation in New England. If he were truly a free trader, he would then "insist on such a general increase in the tariff rates as to make them prohibitory," Garfield advised another iron man, for "the reaction from that policy would bring free trade in a very short time." He neatly summed up his dilemma with the lament that "it is very much easier to be extreme than it is to be judicious."⁵ The old matter of his independence as a representative was also involved, since it appeared to him that the ultraprotectionists wished to own and manipulate him like a puppet. But if he could not be "their free representative," he assured a close friend, that he would rather "not be their representative at all."

⁴Brown and Bonnell & Co. to Garfield, Dec. 16, 1870; Harmon Austin to Garfield, Jan. 23, 1869; Joseph Medill to Garfield, March 1, 1870 and Harry Rhodes to Garfield, April 21, 1870. Garfield Papers.

⁵Garfield to Brown and Bonnell & Co., Dec. 22, 1869 and Garfield to James Ward & Co., Harris Blackford & Co. and Thomas Carter, Dec. 29, 1869. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

For it was patent, he observed, that "many of these men want a Representative that they can own and carry around in their pantaloons pocket." A moderate, but not a crippling, reduction designed to undercut the free traders, appeared to him to be the soundest course to follow. He recognized that his moderate course would alienate free traders and extreme protectionists alike, giving him a heavy load to bear in his bid for re-election in 1870. He entered this contest reluctantly, wishing that he might escape to private life, but he was rewarded with a decisive victory after having opposed ultra-protectionism throughout the campaign.⁶ Moreover, the outcome of that year's congressional contests convinced him that the revenue reformers' cause had generally gained strength. Therefore, he was reassured in his opinion, he told Blaine, that the Republican party should hold to a moderate course, "with the ship's head pointed toward" the reformers' view of the question.⁷

With yet another victory behind him, his friend Blaine in the Speaker's chair and as a recognized specialist in financial questions, Garfield had ample reason to be optimistic concerning his promotion to the chairmanship of Ways and Means. Blaine had, in fact, come as close "as he ought to" to telling him the post was his, Garfield confided to Cox, and such would surely be the case unless outside pressure prevented it. He was most

⁶Garfield to Francis Servis, Jan. 28, 1870; Garfield to Harmon Austin, Jan. 31, 1870; Garfield to R. P. Cannon, March 19, 1870 and Garfield to Harry Rhodes, May 30, 1870. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

⁷Oct. 20, 1870. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

confident in late 1870, but by the time Congress reconvened in 1871, he was not nearly so certain. Blaine was under "heavy pressure" from protectionist interests to keep him off the committee, he reported to Cox, and had therefore broken precedent and deferred his appointments until Congress would meet again in December. "The impression is gaining ground," concluded Garfield, "that he is tricky." Blaine kept him strictly in the dark as to his intentions and while he made no effort on his own behalf, he received steady and substantial support from Ohio and elsewhere. But even some of these friends and supporters believed him to be "in sympathy with the anti-protectionists," as one correspondent warned him.⁸ As it turned out, the considerable and hearty backing he enjoyed among known revenue reformers was support he might well have done without, for by mid-summer it appeared that the 'safer' Henry Dawes was to be tapped for Ways and Means. Garfield consoled himself with the thought that given the Republican party's "shattered condition", the tariff issue was unlikely to be dealt with so as to "benefit the country, or confer any honor on the Committee." By summer's end his faith in Blaine had been well undermined and he seemingly cared far less for the post than he once had. Then when he discovered that the committee would have a protectionist majority were he made its chairman, he was relieved to be made chairman of Appropriations,

⁸Garfield to Jacob Cox, Oct. 25, 1870 and March 23, 1871. Garfield Papers. Letterbook. John Q. Smith to Garfield, Aug. 21, 1871. Garfield Papers.

thus escaping what he believed would have been a "humiliating position." Indeed, developments during the life of this Congress convinced him that the blow had been a blessing in disguise.⁹

During the fall and winter of 1871-72, Ohio's three most prominent soldier-politicians, Hayes, Garfield and Cox, were reluctantly drawn into a struggle over the senatorial seat held by John Sherman. As the bitter contest waxed and waned, elements of the unstable and disunited anti-Sherman forces polarized in turn about each of these mutual friends. None of the trio professed to hold Sherman in high esteem. Only recently, Garfield had declared that he had "never been more disgusted with Sherman than during this short Session. He is very conservative for 5 years and then fiercely radical for one." His radicalism regularly surfaced during the year of his re-election. Garfield also professed to find "disgusting" the tactics employed by "the official gang of understrappers" who were "at work setting up the Sherman job." He had "no stomach for a fight that . . . (had) such elements of nastiness in it," Garfield declared, despite his belief that the majority of Ohio's "thoughtful men" were against Sherman.¹⁰

Although it developed that none of the three would openly challenge Sherman for his office, each would have accepted the

⁹Garfield to Samuel Bowles, March 31, 1871 and Garfield to William C. Howells, Dec. 12, 1871. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

¹⁰Garfield to Harry Rhodes, April 21, 1871 and Garfield to Jacob Cox, Aug. 14, 1871. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

honor under the proper circumstances. Garfield, for example, was flattered by the attention of those who sought to pit him against the incumbent, but he preferred to remain in the House for two more years, when Thurman's term would end. At that time, he assured one of his supporters, he could with "no impropriety" seek the post. Soon, however, he was being even more strongly urged to enter the contest and his pleasure over reports of stout opposition to Sherman in Cleveland and elsewhere was barely concealed. He concluded, nevertheless, to pursue a non-committal course, yet he wished to be kept well informed as to significant developments. He was unwilling to precipitate a break, but if one appeared imminent, he believed that he "ought to have something to say, about who shall be chosen." He had lost none of his ambition, his yearning for preferment, and like Sherman, but unlike Cox and Hayes, he was not above laying a few 'wires' of his own. Like Cox, he was genuinely repelled by the Shermanites' use of 'King Caucus' to restrain and discipline legislators, robbing them of just that independence which these two men held dear.¹¹ They evidently believed the defeat of Sherman would deal a severe blow to the use of the caucus system for dictatorial purposes. Hayes, on the other hand, who managed to preserve his independence within party lines, acted consistently in this contest to sustain the caucus as a necessary piece of party machinery.

¹¹Garfield to Halsey Hall, Oct. 25, 1871; Garfield to Jacob Cox, Nov. 7, 1871 and Garfield to Francis Servis, Dec. 12, 1871. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

As anti-Sherman sentiment grew, Cox, who was gaining favor as a possible stop-Sherman candidate, wrote to Garfield that if he "were disposed to make a fight" for the nomination, he would not consider the "odds as discouraging." An open fight by one of the three was imperative, for as former governor William Dennison correctly noted, the Senator's real strength lay in "the absence of any well defined opposition." With this in mind, Sherman's forces were basing "everything on the necessity of upholding the caucus rule," Garfield was told. But as he in turn suggested to Cox, this ploy could easily be made to fail, to which the latter replied that while either of them "could do it, . . . (it) would no doubt require precisely the active effort to organize an opposition which neither" of them would undertake.¹² Nevertheless, some members of Grant's official family were fearful that Cox might indeed make an open and successful bid for Democratic help and in this manner defeat Sherman. "We don't want Cox here as an opponent of the Administration and by Democratic favor," a spokesman for Secretary of the Interior Columbus Delano informed Hayes. If Sherman's defeat appeared likely, either Dennison or Hayes must be ready to "step in and unite our friends in the Legislature," he cautioned. Hayes replied to his anxious correspondent that he himself gave no credence to such rumors and followed this up

¹²Jacob Cox to Garfield, Oct. 17, 1871; William Dennison to Garfield, Nov. 11, 1871; Garfield to Cox, Nov. 1, 1871 and Jacob Cox to Garfield, Nov. 21, 1871. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

with a reassuring letter to John Sherman.¹³

When the Republican legislators gathered in caucus, Sherman was quickly declared his party's choice, although some eight members who voted for him declared they would not be bound by the decision. Thus as the time of reckoning drew near, either Garfield, Hayes or Cox was still in a position to snatch the office from Sherman's grasp. As the maneuvering continued, Garfield's friends and advisors provided him with a rather confusing picture of affairs at Columbus, along with an abundance of conflicting advice. And in spite of urgings to the contrary, he first freed one supporter to act according to his own best judgment and then sent the following message to seven legislators from his own district: "Your dispatch came last night. I have taken no part, whatever, in the Senatorial Contest, have written to no member, except yesterday to Conrad." He told this group that he believed "the law of 1866 was designed to remove the choice of senators, from the Caucus, to the Legislature, but of that you must judge. Do as you think best about presenting my name. No others of you have any authority from me." He was not optimistic about his chances, but believed his quasi-candidacy could, to use his words, "do no harm." On the contrary, it might well have put him in a very embarrassing position and laid him open to sharp attack for aiding and abetting the saboteurs of Republican unity: he

¹³M. D. Leggett to Hayes, Nov. 9, 1871; Hayes to M. D. Leggett, Nov. 15, 1871 and Hayes to John Sherman, Nov. 18, 1871, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters, III, 173-175.

again seemed to have been engaging in his familiar little game of self-deception. Apparently he wished to maximize his chances of taking all the marbles without risking any of his own and without shouldering the responsibility of openly challenging Sherman. Some found fault with Garfield for failing to go "squarely into the fight," he complained to a friend, but he might also have been censured for failing to take himself "squarely" out of the struggle as did Hayes and Cox. He later confided to an intimate friend that "the Democrats tendered to me their unanimous vote and enough republicans to elect, with the help of democrats, expressed themselves willing to bolt from the Caucus domination." But he perceived that he "would be considered as placed under obligations, and therefore declined," Garfield remarked.¹⁴

Cox had steadily supported independent action, and any Republican challenge to what he called "King Caucus". Yet he crippled the effectiveness of partisans by discouraging each and every attempt to bring him into the fight. He steadily "refused any & all proffers of an understanding with the Democracy," he assured Garfield.¹⁵

Hayes too, flatly refused to have anything to do with the revolt against Sherman and his use of the caucus, despite the urgent pleas of two midnight legislative emissaries who told

¹⁴Quoted in Garfield to Halsey Hall, Jan. 5, 1872. Garfield Papers. Letterbook. Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, Jan. 11, 1872, in Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Letters, p. 185.

¹⁵Jacob Cox to Garfield, Jan. 12, 1872. Garfield Papers.

him that he could be elected if only he would allow them to use his name. But he avoided like the plague any association with the Democracy. He urged upon his callers "the importance of not splitting the Republican party; of electing a Republican President once more, at least; that the defeat of Grant now was to give the Government to the enemies of the recent amendments and to unsettle all." He concluded by telling his visitors: "I can't honorably do it, and there is no use talking. . . ." The experience left him certain that the office could have been his and obviously pleased that his refusal had, as he boasted to his uncle Sardis, given him "position, and, true or not, the common remark is that I am the most esteemed of the governors within the memory of people living."¹⁶

Sherman came away from the struggle victorious once again, although Garfield, Hayes, or Cox might well have upset him. Cox reported to Garfield that he had "learned in a perfectly authentic way that it was thought the union could be most easily effected upon" Garfield. But the anti-Sherman Republicans and their Democratic sympathizers were stymied in their efforts when the Republican Lieutenant Governor and presiding officer gavelled down their attempted mutiny. Cox was "absolutely certain that Sherman wd. not have been elected except for the act of the Lt. Gov. in interrupting the change of votes, after it had begun & had been carried forward sometime

¹⁶Hayes Diary, Jan. 10, 1872 and Hayes to Sardis Birchard, Jan. 9, 1872, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 190-91.

under his own recognition." He assured Garfield that "had the changes gone on, enough Republicans wd. have changed to decide agt. Sherman, & had the Democracy all voted for me, these Republicans would have done so, or would have so voted as to postpone the election and then compare votes." Cox said that he was certain of the accuracy of his report. Garfield was disgusted by the tactics of the lieutenant governor, pointing out to Cox that an appeal might be made to the U. S. Senate.¹⁷ For his own part, he probably agreed with friends that he was better advised to wait and bid for the senatorship held by the Democrats. As it was, he had maintained his loyalty to the party and its power structure and had come away with enhanced popularity after a significant show of strength.

With his term ended, Hayes left Columbus and the governorship with a distinct sense of relief -- he was once again an "independent" citizen of Cincinnati. He turned from politics to the pursuit of business interests, mainly land speculation in Ohio and Minnesota, plus a bit of dabbling in railroad promotion in the hope that a projected Toledo to Columbus line might enhance the prosperity of his future home, Fremont. He borrowed heavily from affluent relatives to support his land purchases, determined to assure a secure and comfortable existence for himself and his family. Perhaps he also hoped to make his mark as a shrewd, but upright businessman on the order of his long dead father -- the very best businessman his

¹⁷Jacob Cox to Garfield, Jan. 12, 1872. Garfield Papers. Letterbook. Garfield to Jacob Cox, Jan. 16, 1872. Garfield Papers.

undeniably successful uncle Sardis had ever encountered.

But while stepping out of public life was a simple affair, staying free of political commitment proved to be difficult. Against his wishes, he was made a delegate to the 1872 Republican National Convention, but while he was not at all eager to join in an unqualified endorsement of the Grant administration, he concluded that it would "be smoother to go than by resigning to get ranked with the Greeley men (the dissident Liberal Republicans). . . ." As a member of the platform committee at Philadelphia, he drew up most of that document and returned to Ohio clearly pleased by the unexpected harmony and enthusiasm he had witnesses.¹⁸ He was now receiving many letters calling upon him to bid for the nomination to his old congressional seat, but his stock reply was that it was simply "out of the question". He believed that after having declared his intention to several active candidates in the field, he could not now honorably even so much as mention that only a draft would bring him out. He was nominated, however, despite his protests and although he attempted to withdraw, he was told that to do so would be disastrous to his party. He could not "get out of it creditably," he insisted to an intimate friend, although it was "distasteful" mainly for reasons of a "private nature." Yet it also tickled his ego. The candidate confessed

¹⁸Typescript of the Memoirs of Thomas Donaldson, May 1872. Hayes Memorial Library. Hayes to Sardis Birchard, May 14 and June 10, 1872, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, pp. 203-04.

to his diary that "the whole thing is, I confess, flattering."¹⁹ Another unsolicited nomination -- another laurel to add to those already won.

After a week of campaigning, Hayes concluded, realistically, that the outcome was more in doubt than he had initially believed. The second district was a Greeley stronghold and Hayes, certain that Greeley must be defeated, did not putt his punches. Once at it, he enjoyed the work, perhaps because he anticipated defeat and looked forward to being "free" within a short time. He preferred victory, but was not anxious about it, for as Hayes remarked in his diary, "I don't want to go to Washington"; the nomination itself and his very willingness to undertake the contest was satisfaction enough. Well before the campaign concluded, he anticipated his defeat (apparently few other did), but scarcely the disasters suffered by his party at every level in the Cincinnati area. The magnitude of the setback was such that it left "no personal sting," he insisted. Grant's victory in Ohio a few weeks later was solid consolation; Hayes, moreover, took great pleasure in the fact that he had not only run well ahead of his ticket in October, but had outpolled Grant, as well.²⁰

¹⁹Hayes to Sardis Birchard, July 24, 1872; Hayes Diary, July 25; Aug. 7 and Aug. 8, 1872 and Hayes to Manning Force, Aug. 10, 1872, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 203, 207, 209-10.

²⁰Hayes Diary, Sept. 8, 1872; Hayes to Sardis Birchard, Sept. 8, 1872; Hayes Diary, Oct. 4, 1872; Hayes to Sardis Birchard, Oct. 6, 1872; Hayes Diary, Oct. 19, 1872 and Hayes to Webb Hayes, Nov. 8, 1872, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 212, 215, 216, 218.

Hayes's steady party loyalty was not overlooked by the Grant administration, although it might better have been. In March 1873 he was surprised to find he had been appointed Assistant Treasurer for Cincinnati. His initial reaction was one of gratification that he had been so remembered. It enabled him, he wrote, "to decline an office of profit" as he was about to leave Cincinnati for Fremont, and it would allow him to "leave with a well-rounded political record." But he was actually piqued by the pettiness of the reward. The only reason to accept the President's offer of such an office, he scornfully recorded in his diary, would be "as a means of keeping hunger from the door. After what I have been and had and done, it would be small potatoes to grasp this crumb." Yet he took quite another line in a letter to his wife. She should not "feel otherwise than flattered," he assured her, for this was "the most important office in the West." And most important of all, "the glory of it" was that he could and certainly would decline this "good office." His declination and appreciation were soon forwarded to Grant, but he was denied the pleasure of rejecting the offer by the witless and provoking action of Sherman in requesting that the appointment go over his confirmation by the Senate. He was confident this step did not stem from hostility nor was injury intended, he assured the Senator, yet it "was calculated . . . to injure me and to wound my feeling, and frankness requires that I should say that I think you were in error in your views of duty under the circumstances. The incident was closed with an

apologetic letter of explanation from Sherman and apparently it left no hard feelings, or so it seems.²¹

During the final months of Hayes's second term, Garfield had found himself faced with another unwanted, but persistent effort to bring him into the gubernatorial contest, this time as the successor to Hayes. Garfield records that the Governor had, in a recent conversation, urged "that the necessities of the case in our next campaign, would require me to make the sacrifice." But the office was by no means suited to his tastes, he protested, his salary would drop by \$1000, his law practice, a much needed supplement to his congressional salary, would have to be abandoned and he would surely leave Columbus "almost broken financially." He tried to discourage his eager supporters, but as the party's outlook grew darker, the pressure to make the bid mounted. Press support grew, and the State Committee Chairman wrote to him that after a careful survey of the situation he felt that there was no one who had "so many warm personal friends . . . who will give you their support for Governor if it will be accepted." Some even claimed that in the absence of a positive declination, a nomination by the people was not unlikely. He was begged not to remove himself irrevocably from the race, for with him at the head of the ticket, the party would then attract the young voters ("the past four years we have not been able to do so.")

²¹Hayes Diary, March 26, 1873; Hayes to Lucy Hayes, March 27, 1873 and Hayes to John Sherman, April 2, 1873, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 233, 234, 236.

and this was clearly imperative if both the executive and legislative branches were to be controlled. Others wrote in a similar vein or, like former governor William Dennison, offered their aid.²²

But Garfield's eye was fixed upon congressional preferment and supporters like Dennison agreed that the chairmanship of Ways and Means was preferable to the governorship. Some correspondents, however, reasoned that his election as governor would assure his certain promotion in the near future, but he remained skeptical. Sherman and Schenck had arrived in the Senate (actually the latter had not been a senator) via another route, he responded, and he was unwilling to be "removed from the line of Congressional promotion" at this time. Some also urged Garfield to take the governorship and then immediately challenge Sherman for his seat from a position of greater strength. Even those who admitted to him that the governorship "could have no especial charm for a gentlemen of your ardent temperament and active turn of mind" were sure that party needs would demand this sacrifice of him. On the other hand, a few close friends vehemently insisted that he must not allow himself to be pressed into service, for there was but the slimmest chance of a Republican victory and if he was victorious, he would be stepping down rather than up the political ladder. It was even rumored that Sherman's friends

²²Garfield to William Ritezel, Dec. 22, 1870 and Garfield to _____ Reuben, March 24, 1871. Garfield Papers. Letterbook. Richard Harrison to Garfield, Dec. 24, 1870 and William Dennison to Garfield, Dec. 24, 1870. Garfield Papers.

had initiated this boom so as to remove Garfield as a possible contender for the Senate. Garfield had no intention of trying for the governorship, but there was political capital to be gained from the situation. He seems to have agreed with his chief political advisor who gave him the following intelligence: "The truth is that no good man wants it. The office went a begging when Hayes was first elected for that very reason."²³ Garfield continued to solicit the advice of trusted friends at Columbus, perhaps because he wished to discover just how his entry into the contest might affect his chances in the senatorial struggle, should he decide to enter that contest. Then, despite continued encouragement, he firmly declined to have any part of the governorship and Hayes's good friend, Edward Noyes, took the nomination and ultimately the office.

Like Hayes, Garfield had come to have strong reservations concerning the Grant administration well before the party made its decision to stay with the incumbent. In the fall of 1870, the reform-minded Jacob Cox had resigned his post as Grant's Secretary of the Interior. As he paraphrased it in a letter to Garfield, he had informed the President that his "committal to civil service reform seems to be a load you do not choose to carry, so here's my resignation." The split between the President and the independent-reform Republicans had begun to widen. As a supporter of civil service reform

²³Garfield to Harry Rhodes, Jan. 28, 1871. Garfield Papers. Letterbook. William Ritezel to Garfield, Jan. 10, 1871 and Harmon Austin to Garfield, Jan. 29, 1871. Garfield Papers.

and a friend of Cox, Garfield's reaction to this event was predictable, but surprisingly harsh. It was "a clear case of surrender" by Grant, he replied to Cox, "to the political vermin which infest the government and keep it in a state of perpetual lousiness." Would that he, too, might seek refuge in the legal profession from the "noise and nastiness" in the offing, he lamented to his friend. The party would need "all its prudence and wisdom in steering clear of the dangers ahead," Garfield warned Hayes at this time. There was, indeed, considerable public support of Cox, but although Grant made a bow in the direction of reform in his annual message, neither Cox nor Garfield harbored much hope for reform progress under his leadership. It appeared to Cox that orthodox Republicans were bent upon excluding their reform brethren from office. He cited an attempt to secure a Superior Court judgeship for a well known Ohio revenue reformer which Hayes himself had recently blocked, declaring, according to Cox, that he would "under no circumstances appoint him. . ." But then Hayes could write off the Cox episode and Santo Domingo, too, as "merely sensations of the day" which would not alienate the people "as long as the Administration is right on the South and the Democracy wrong."²⁴ And so it seemed.

Shortly after leaving Grant's cabinet, Cox informed

²⁴Jacob Cox to Garfield, Oct. 24, 1870. Garfield Papers. Garfield to Jacob Cox, Oct. 25, 1870 and Garfield to Hayes, Dec. 10, 1870. Garfield Papers. Letterbook. Jacob Cox to Garfield, Nov. 21, 1871. Garfield Papers. Hayes to Charles Nordhoff, March 13, 1871, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 133-34.

Garfield that he had become involved in "forming a little organization of Revenue Reform & Civil Service Reform Republicans" in Cincinnati. The Liberal Republican movement was taking shape. A week later, he hastened to reassure Garfield that he and his associates hadn't a third party in mind, for this was a spontaneous development, chiefly aimed at encouraging a "better & freer style" of political discussion. As the liberal movement gained strength and the disenchantment with Grant's administration increased, Garfield began seriously to consider leaving politics in favor of law and the financial security it promised and he craved. His loyalty to the party was strained, and although never in real doubt, he obviously had no stomach for the work of white-washing a soiled administration. "I have kept close to my work," Garfield confided to a close friend, "and tried to keep entirely out of politics. . . ." He confessed to the same correspondent that "very few republicans in Washington personally" desired Grant's nomination or believed it best for country and party. And yet most would support him if they must and Garfield was one of these troubled and reluctant partisans. "It would be a great blessing to the party," he said, "if we could select another man." In a letter to Cox, he betrayed his essential agreement with those he referred to as some of the party's "best men" that Grant could not be returned to the White House, and he predicted that the incipient liberal movement would undoubtedly

"accomplish a great deal of good."²⁵

Meanwhile Garfield had assumed his heavy responsibilities as chairman of the Appropriations Committee, approaching his tasks as systematically and objectively as possible, searching for the "laws" that influenced government expenditures. His heavy work load and conscientious approach kept him laboring for an average of more than fifteen hours a day from February until mid-May in 1872 and more "crushing hard work" lay ahead. Yet he believed that he had "never been so successful. . . ." He continued to support civil service reform, but found it discouraging that Congress should treat it with what he called "contempt." He foresaw that the Republican party was moving into an era of storm and stress and predicted to a friend that perhaps 1872 would witness its "last victory, if not its first defeat." The GOP's best hope, he reckoned, "lay in the people's fear that with the Democrats in power, the work of the last several years would be undone."²⁶ Hayes and a good many leaders shared this belief. Indeed, it was an article of faith and the rallying cry of countless Republican campaigns during this era. In the campaign to select his successor as governor in 1871, Hayes had insisted that the "important question" was

²⁵Jacob Cox to Garfield, March 20 and March 27, 1871. Garfield Papers. Garfield to William C. Howells, April 10, 1872 and Garfield to Jacob Cox, April 8, 1871. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

²⁶Garfield Diary, Jan. 19, 1872, in Brown and Williams, eds., Diary of Garfield, II, 9; Garfield to Harmon Austin, May 10, 1872; Garfield to Sam Hayward, April 19, 1872; Garfield to William Farrar, April 27, 1872 and Garfield to Sam Hayward, April 19, 1872. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

could the Democrats "safely be trusted" to "faithfully obey and enforce the Amendments" if they took control of the national government on the heels of an Ohio victory? No, he declared, for they were neither "sound" nor "to be trusted." Yet only a little later, he wrote to his friend Guy Bryan in Texas that the tide of "sectional bitterness" was ebbing and would never flow again. "The old strifes are about to end," Hayes assured him. "An era of good feeling prevails here to a degree not seen before in fifty years."²⁷ One wonders how he could pen these sentiments after concluding a campaign in which his speeches were predicted upon the essential disloyalty and shiftiness of the Democrats -- a contest which could only have aroused rather than soothed sectional animosity and suspicion.

Although he was surprised at the outcome of the Liberal Republican gathering, Garfield did not take the Cincinnati nominations lightly. It was ironic, but the course of events there had gone "far to maintain the caucus system in all its viciousness," he wrote to the disappointed Cox. Yet, he continued, if the Republican convention had "the foresight and courage" to dump Grant for a unifying figure, all might be well. But the outcome at Cincinnati had for the time being doomed tariff reform hopes, although the prospect for improvement had been bright when Congress convened, Garfield claimed. Greeley's

²⁷Hayes Diary, June 12, 1871 and Hayes to Guy Bryan, Dec. 24, 1871, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 147, 180.

nomination had "destroyed utterly all hopes" of the kind of revenue reform Cox and others had in mind when the movement was begun. Garfield believed that a substantial number of reforms were indeed necessary and sympathized with the Liberals' major aims, he felt they should be made from within the party structure.²⁸

Hayes, as has been mentioned, was not blind to the errors and shortcomings of the Grant administration, which he called "many and mortifying." But in spite of guarded references to independent attitudes and the "new parties and new divisions . . . in plain view ahead", he would have nothing to do with the break-away movement. While he agreed with Greeley on amnesty and had much in common with the genteel reformers who were prominent in the Liberal effort, he was determined to exercise his independence within party lines. And as a private citizen he could, as he undoubtedly anticipated, retain the confidence of both stalwarts and reformers far more easily than he could have as an officeholder in a time of unrest, upheaval and realignment.²⁹

With political activity set aside for the moment, Hayes was able to continue his pursuit of "buying, selling and improving real estate," as his diary describes it. It is instructive to note that even as a capitalist (and this is how

²⁸Garfield to Jacob Cox, May 14 and Sept. 14, 1872. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

²⁹Hayes to Charles Nordhoff, March 13, 1871; Hayes to Guy Bryan, Dec. 24, 1871 and Hayes Diary, March 28, 1875, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 134, 180, 269.

he described himself) he was ever the scrupulous gentleman, declaring that he did "not intend to take advantage of people's necessities" and would pay only a fair price for his purchases. In Ohio, his attention centered on Toledo where he hoped rising land values might make his share in several joint ventures worth no less than a million dollars in fifteen to twenty years. Another joint investment in land and a building in Duluth brought him heavy debts and some worry, but even at that and without the security he inherited from his uncle Sardis, he enjoyed the kind of ease that Garfield would never know.³⁰

Following his unsuccessful congressional campaign, Hayes had returned to Fremont and his uncle's estate, where he could enjoy the leisure, independence and home which perfectly suited his genteel middle class inclinations. Hereafter politics would be more than ever before an avocation, almost a diversion or hobby -- an outlet for his strongly developed sense of noblesse oblige and nourishment for his fair-sized ego. The scope of his land dealing continued to expand during 1873 and 1874. He shared ownership of considerable mineral rights and acreage in West Virginia and put the value of his Toledo and Columbus holdings at a quarter of a million dollars. By 1873 he was moving steadily toward his stated goal of creating a solid estate for himself and his family. But he worried, too, for he found himself managing a debt of over forty-six thousand dollars and was anxious lest he be driven into a corner.

³⁰Hayes Diary, April 22 and 30, 1873, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 238, 241.

Although he was a debtor, he was in no wise tempted by the spreading inflationist doctrine, declaring that he could shoulder his burden without special relief, and was pleased that Grant had vetoed the so-called inflation bill.³¹ He continued to take an active interest in politics, too, and gave his party all the aid he could from the stump, particularly during the 1874 campaign.

During his congressional service, Hayes and more than a few of his colleagues -- including Garfield -- had mirrored the enduring American faith in the improvability of man and the possibility of accelerating that process through education. By 1875 this emphasis on the efficacy of education and beneficent powers of time had become for Hayes twin panaceas for his nation's Negro and immigrant problems. In a letter to Buy Bryan he declared "that the most important thing in Texas, as everywhere else, is education for all", hastening to add, however, that he opposed forcible integration. The Southern dilemma was hardly unique, for mushrooming northern cities also had large uneducated masses to contend with. The thing to fear, he told his friend, was "the evil of rule by ignorance" which must be countered not by political disenfranchisement of this group (thus abandoning a national commitment), but by leading the unenlightened toward full partnership in public

³¹Hayes Diary, Sept. 13, 1873; Hayes to Amos Birchard, April 21, 1874 and Hayes to Manning Force, April 27, 1873, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 248-49, 255-56.

affairs. "The whites of the South must do as we do," he gently chided Bryan, "and forget to drive and learn to lead the ignorant masses around them." He believed that he and his Texas friend were now closer together than when they had been schoolmates at Kenyon and he predicted that they would "probably soon vote the same ticket." But, he hastened to add, this would come to pass only if the hope of slavery's return in some other guise was forever abandoned.³²

The implication appears to be that so long as vestiges of the old South and the lost cause were kept alive, that section was not to be fully trusted to hold the reins of national government. In spite of a desire for sectional harmony and their personal good feeling toward individual southerners, Hayes, Garfield and men of a similar persuasion demanded proof positive of their former enemy's good intentions. A kind of deposit of earnest money must be made before the thought of a Democratic administration would be tolerable. Yet surely they were troubled as the years passed by the repetition of the sectional theme in its most exaggerated and bitter form. Hayes and especially Garfield fastened upon other themes by the mid-seventies, and correctly anticipated major issues of the near future. They cautioned that fresh political motifs must be considered. But given the essentially even balance of power between the two parties during the twenty years following 1875, the sectional theme was unusually seductive and steadily paid

³²Jan. 2, 1875, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 262-63.

handsome dividends at the polls. Party loyalty and faith in party 'principles', however vague and vapid, drew party regulars back to the familiar themes time and again, and eased the minds of those whose consciences told them sectionalism was essentially divisive and lacked creditability.

Late in the summer of 1872, the Credit Mobilier scandal broke upon the American scene like a whirlwind, leaving political wreckage scattered in its wake. Garfield for one, was struck a stunning blow. He had anticipated that this company spelled trouble some time earlier, and deemed it fortunate, as he told a friend, that he had "never fully concluded to accept" Oakes Ames's offer of Credit Mobilier stock and so had not received any dividend. The money that had passed between the two men, he contended, had been a loan from Ames to him some years earlier following his European trip. He told his friends that stock had been offered, but that after a warning from Jeremiah Black, he had turned down the offer. In a letter to an intimate friend, he wrote as follows: "Whatever may have been the follies, and blunders of my public career, it is a satisfaction to me to be perfectly conscious that I have done nothing of which my best friends can feel ashamed, or anything which my worst enemies can justly condemn." This may have been accurate, but friends would feel chagrined and critics would feel their strictures were justified as they contemplated his conduct. As one of his closest friends put it, more than a

few of his supporters believed that he "ought to have told the whole story from the time Ames approached" him to the end of the episode.³³

The full story, which his friend and Washington journalist Donn Piatt had from Black more than two years before the scandal broke, was apparently less incriminating and damaging than the half-truths and incomplete statements made by Garfield. And as friendly, but candid allies of Garfield informed him, public opinion was running strongly in Ames's favor during the first months of the episode, simply because it was felt that he had made a "clean breast" of things. Perhaps the most lamentable feature of the affair was the impact it had on Garfield's closest friends -- those men who willingly undertook the painful task of defending him in his district. One of the most faithful supporters spoke for them all when he wrote: "While I have no doubt of your purity, I have been made very sad, that you have been placed in a bad light before the country. We have all looked to you as a model of truth & noble manliness, & you will consequently suffer more in public estimation than if you had before been looked upon in a doubtful light." He concluded by admonishing him that "whatever you do, take care of your conscience even at the expense of your reputation." Garfield would have been well advised, personally, and politically, to have adhered strictly to this sage

³³Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, Dec. 31, 1872, in Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Letters, p. 202; Garfield to Frank Mason, Jan. 9, 1873. Garfield Papers. Letterbook. Burke Hinsdale to Garfield, Jan. 20, 1873, in Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Letters, p. 209.

counsel. As it was, his reputation continued to suffer, even among those people who saw nothing wrong in what they understood had happened, primarily because his denials seemed to them indicative of a lack "of true courage to confess the truth." Despite the concerted efforts of his defenders and his own often repeated explanation, he was informed that "while very few regard you as convicted nearly all regard you as under a cloud." This cloud continued to dog his footsteps, sometimes at a distance, yet seldom failing to cast its shadow across his path. "You must fight it out until you outlive it or out grow it," his chief political advisor told him. It proved to be sound advice.³⁴

The fight waxed and waned over the next eight years, but this blot upon Garfield's record proved to be indelible. And in later years, as in 1872-73, he was "more censured for denying" a transaction with Ames, he was assured, than he would have been had he "frankly acknowledged it & claimed the purchase was made in good faith that it was all right." This was, in fact, "a double hit, not only at your sagacity & judgment but still greater at your integrity," he was told. "In short it is often said, 'I do not blame him half so much for taking the stock as for lying about it after he had it.'"³⁴ This kind of judgment lent weight to the persistent charge that he was

³⁴Donn Piatt to Garfield, Sept. 29, 1872; John Robison to Garfield, Feb. 1, 1873; Harmon Austin to Garfield, Feb. 6, 1873; John Robison to Garfield, Feb. 9, 1873 and Harmon Austin to Garfield, Feb. 6, 1873. Garfield Papers.

wanting in moral courage and backbone and could not as Hayes would put it, "face a frowning world."³⁵

On the heels of this bruising experience came the so-called Salary Grab, a decision to increase retroactively legislative, executive and judicial salaries through a rider attached to an appropriations bill. The public reaction to the increase in congressional compensation was exaggerated and unreasonable and nowhere was it more violent than in Garfield's district. After vigorously opposing the salary rider, he had voted for it in the end, arguing that only thus could the appropriation measure win approval and an extra session be avoided. When word of his action reached Ohio, the initial reaction of one correspondent was to call it "the finishing stroke" to Garfield's once promising political career. Garfield, in turn, was ready to abandon his post "in disgust" and leave "a field where ten years of earnest, honest work goes for nought in the face of one vote. . . ." He admitted it might be judged "a mistake", but it was "honestly made" after having voted no "less than fifteen times" against the salary provision. He argued that a final nay vote could not possibly have changed the outcome. He was quite aware that he stood within the "shadow" of Credit Mobilier, but as he summed it up in one letter, "I was determined I would not do a cowardly act because of that shadow; nor would I, on

³⁵Harmon Austin to Garfield, Feb. 6, 1873. Garfield Papers. Hayes Diary, Feb. 21, 1883, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 110.

account of it, shrink from what seemed to my duty."³⁶ It was as if he was bent upon disproving the accusation that he lacked moral courage and backbone and was thus unfit to serve in the House and act as one of its leaders. But by his action in this matter, he simply added weight to the argument that he was wanting in backbone and did not have the courage of his convictions.

Garfield's justification of his course may have satisfied some of his "thinking" friends, one advisor informed him, but there was not "one in ten" who would ever be satisfied with his explanations. And he was now warned, if he accepted his extra pay, all would surely be lost.³⁷ He did deny himself the additional salary shortly after it was approved, but he did not do so at once and in conjunction with a public statement of the reasoning behind his final vote. Therefore he and his advisors felt such an announcement must then be delayed for a time, lest he appear to be acting under duress. Like most of his colleagues, he had been stunned by the violence of the public's reaction and realized too late that explanations backed up by self-denying declarations should have come at once.³⁸

³⁶Harmon Austin to Garfield, March 4, 1873. Garfield Papers. Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, March 19 and March 21, 1873, in Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Letters, pp. 218, 221. Garfield to Harmon Austin, March 22, 1873. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

³⁷Harmon Austin to Garfield, March 23, 1873 and Thomas McLain to Garfield, March 24, 1873. Garfield Papers.

³⁸Harmon Austin to Garfield, March 27, 1873. Garfield Papers. Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, March 19, 1873, Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Letters, p. 218. Garfield to Henry Fassett, April 5, 1873. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

What is more, Garfield's stand was conditioned by his view of his position as an independent representative -- an idealistic, high-minded, but politically inexpedient notion, even in a relatively 'safe' district.

The double burden of Credit Mobilier and the Salary Grab appeared to be too heavy a load to be borne without collapse. Township delegates gathered to nominate constitutional convention delegates from his district approved a resolution asking for his immediate resignation. And while it was asserted that only one-quarter of the county's Republicans would support this demand, he was told by one informant that "99/100ths" of his party would censure him for his vote. Harmon Austin again neatly summed up the situation when he wrote as follows: "The chief argument among the masses is that you preached reform in expenses & was (sic) elected with understanding & contract that you were to have 5000 & then on the last day after all your work was done you voted yourselves \$2500 more & that they say is stealing." Probably few of his constituents realized the connection between Credit Mobilier and his vote for salary increases. The appropriation bill contained provisions, which he had staunchly supported, designed to strike an effective blow "against those who had already robbed the Pacific railroad" at the government's expense, he explained. Therefore, he reasoned, had he "attempted to defeat the bill on its final passage . . . (his) vote might have been construed into a willingness to prevent a prosecution of plunderers" with whom his name had been linked. Moreover, as Appropriations

Committee chairman, he insisted that he was uniquely charged with the responsibility of putting such bills through the House, notwithstanding its grave shortcomings. It came down to a matter of priorities, but unfortunately the majority of his constituents did not judge them as did Garfield. To vote against the bill "merely to avoid criticism," he contended, "would have been an inconsistent and cowardly act. . . ." He would not apologize for a vote he still approved of, but admitted to having made his "full share of blunders and mistakes" and perhaps this act "added another to the list."³⁹ His published defense of the salary vote, and an announcement that he had denied himself extra pay, was followed by an extended pamphlet review of the Credit Mobilier affair. He was confident that he had now put before the public a strong brief on his behalf that would serve to counteract the efforts of journalists like Charles Dana to crush him.

By mid-summer, Garfield appeared self-assured, predicting that at that moment he could win renomination and re-election. Recent events had created a powder-keg-like situation and the "salary increase was the match that lighted the fuse," he told one friend. It was a tangible thing that everybody could understand, he continued, but it was not as most thought "the chief cause of their rage." His re-election, however, still

³⁹Harmon Austin to Garfield, March 27, 1873; Thomas McLain to Garfield, March 29, 1873; Harmon Austin to Garfield, March 30, 1873 and Garfield, "To the Republican Voters of the Nineteenth District," Hiram, April 21, 1873 (1st draft, dated Hiram, April 1). Garfield Papers.

remained in doubt; moreover Garfield, a powerful stump speaker, was chagrined to find that Governor Noyes and the State Central Committee were giving him the cold-shoulder in the 1873 state campaign. The man for whom there had been more calls during the last gubernatorial contest than for any other speaker found it hard to hold himself in check and bear this treatment with equanimity. When the Republicans met with defeat at the polls, he found himself sharply assailed in the press and charged by some with the responsibility for his party's setback.⁴⁰ His prospects for promotion, once so bright, had also been dealt an exceedingly heavy blow during the preceding year. Edwin Cowles, editor-publisher of the Cleveland Leader, had intended to back Garfield for the presidency in 1876, he told Blaine, but that was now out of the question no matter "how pure and innocent" Garfield might be. One might reasonably assume that without these scandals, Cowles would not have been alone in his intentions. It also lends added interest to speculation engaged in by Garfield's intimate friend, David Swaim. After conversations with Garfield touching upon the next presidential nomination, and a bit of personal reconnoitering, Swaim suggested that someone was anxious to knock Garfield effectively out of contention for highest party honors. He had concluded, he wrote to Garfield, that "Blaine had put up a job to kill off a few prominent men who would likely be in his way in the future"

⁴⁰Garfield to John Q. Smith, Aug. 5, 1873; Garfield to Harmon Austin, Sept. 19, 1873 and Garfield to William C. Howells, Oct. 27, 1873. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

and he was "still inclined to that belief. . . ." The investigation itself had been instigated with Garfield's prior knowledge and encouragement.⁴¹

When Garfield returned to Washington that fall, he feared that he might be made to suffer when it came to committee assignments. He was heartened, therefore, when the Ohio Republican members unanimously supported his reappointment as chairman of Appropriations. After being reassigned to that important post, he immediately let it be known that despite its unpopularity, he must and would pursue an austerity program in his committee: the depressed national economy demanded it. Once again, he found himself regularly working some fifteen hours daily, but it was to some purpose for he soon announced proudly that a ten million dollar reduction over 1873's appropriations had been achieved and departmental estimates reduced by some fifteen million.⁴² As Garfield pursued his stated goal of trimming federal expenses, he succeeded in stirring up a hornets' nest in his own district. How could he think of reducing Ashtabula's harbor appropriation when other Lake Erie ports were being "allowed the full estimates," complained one unhappy constituent. Moreover, at the very same moment, he

⁴¹Edwin Cowles to James G. Blaine, Nov. 25, 1873 and David Swaim to Garfield, March 29, 1873. Garfield Papers. Garfield Diary, Dec. 1, 1872, in Brown and Williams, eds., Diary of Garfield, II, 120.

⁴²Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, Nov. 24, 1873 and Jan. 8, 1874, in Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Letters, pp. 252-53, 271-72. Garfield to Simon Wolcott, Feb. 27, 1874. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

was warned that since "your friends are urging your renomination on the ground of your superior ability to help them it makes your situation still more embarrassing. . . ." The plight of the thrift-minded congressman was in no wise enviable. On the one hand the powerful Columbus Postmaster and editor, James Comly, must be reassured that postal appropriations were safe, and yet Garfield would be asked by another correspondent to believe that "rigid economy in all governmental affairs was heartily endorsed by all" of his constituents. To add to his woes, and in spite of his known concern over inordinate railroad power and the emerging threat of monopoly power in general, the Granger movement in his district was gaining momentum and seemed destined to become yet another thorn in Garfield's side.⁴³

As convention time approached in his district, the threat of a sharp fight for renomination began to recede, but then quite suddenly the prohibition issue assumed frightening proportions and on top of this the Democratic controlled legislature seemed bent upon redistricting Garfield out of his safe haven.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, his optimism concerning renomination and re-election grew, although his hopefulness was more than matched by his reluctance to undertake the battle his less optimistic supporters believed was imperative. In a letter

⁴³Harmon Austin to Garfield, Feb. 11, 1874 and Enos Brainerd to Garfield, Feb. 13, 1874. Garfield Papers.

⁴⁴George Ford to Garfield, April 10, 1874; Halsey Hall to Garfield, April 12, 1874 and Harmon Austin to Garfield, April 16, 1874. Garfield Papers.

to Cox, Garfield wrote that he "sincerely longed to be out of public life", and he was obviously deeply distraught by the stinging press attacks upon him. He stayed on only because the defense of his "good name" demanded it, he insisted. The combination of overwork and personal agony also had its physical repercussions, in the form of an affliction his doctors labeled "neuralgic dyspepsia." At this point he queried his supporters as to the advisability of a European trip -- to be taken at campaign time! Not only was he seriously considering such a venture, but he was thinking of associating himself with an American investment scheme in Europe of doubtful character, one that promised to involve him in a Schenck-like scandal. It might very well compel him and his "friends to carry another weight," one of his friends hastened to warn him. Yet the trip might save him from a personally distasteful and protracted campaign of self-defense, offer the much needed rest and rehabilitation, and perhaps financial rewards as well. But with the truly admirable support of loyal friends, he undertook an onerous task and after easily winning renomination, carried the election by a reduced, but substantial margin. "Quite a feat", wrote his friend and neighboring congressman, Charles Foster, for he had been "subjected to the most merciless fire within. . . (Foster's) recollection."⁴⁵ Garfield might well

⁴⁵Garfield to Jacob Cox, March 20, 1874. Garfield Papers. Letterbook. Garfield Diary, June 25, 1874, in Brown and Williams, eds., Diary of Garfield, 11, 340. Harmon Austin to Garfield, June 29, 1874 and Charles Foster to Garfield, Oct. 20, 1874. Garfield Papers.

feel he had won a vindication and could now freely consider a return to private life -- in the near future.

Victory did much to brighten his political outlook and buoy up his damaged spirits, yet he was not optimistic as to his party's future. The congressional contests had given the Democrats control of the House for at least the next two years and matters like the continued employment of federal troops in the South for political purposes threatened future injury to his party. The fall and winter of 1874-75 witnessed an explosion over the interference in Louisiana's political affairs by General Sheridan and his troops. The Negro had undoubtedly been suffering dreadfully in that state, where his rights had been violated with impunity, Garfield admitted, but Sheridan's actions might "turn the tide of public indignation against him and the administration."⁴⁶

Genuinely upset by the episode, Garfield was initially critical of Sheridan's conduct, but kept his counsel in the House -- apparently much to the satisfaction of his constituents. Charles Foster, a member of the committee Congress sent South to investigate the affair, was quoted as declaring that if Grant was to support the carpetbag regime for two more years, and this seemed probable, it would be "utterly out of the question to elect a Republican President in 1876." Both Foster and Garfield believed the intemperate use of military

⁴⁶Garfield to Harmon Austin, Jan. 9, 1875. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

force was politically self-defeating, not only in the South, but in the North as well. As the 'facts' of the case were developed, support in Ohio for Grant's course grew, and perhaps many Republicans, who like Harmon Austin saw "serious wrong on both sides", came to believe that "success in 1876 depends upon the revival of the spirit of 1868 -- and letting the people see the rebellion is still as rank as ever in the Southern heart."⁴⁷ Garfield's sympathies were with the suffering southern Negroes, but mingled with this feeling was an appreciation of the political benefits the GOP might reap, thanks to southern misconduct. He had predicted during his campaign for re-election in 1874 that Democratic control in the South would bring back rebellion with a vengeance. He even came to speak out in defense of Sheridan's conduct and followed this up with a blast against a hot states' right speech made by Georgia's Ben Hill -- a speech which was received with excessive praise.⁴⁸

In Ohio, at least, the party did seem to be recovering nicely from its 1873 setback. Garfield openly favored Hayes for the gubernatorial nomination in 1875, and referred to him as "an unexceptionable man" who had "run so well in all parts

⁴⁷Unidentified clipping in Charles Henry to Garfield, Jan. 10, 1875 and Harmon Austin to Garfield, Jan. 15, 1875. Garfield Papers.

⁴⁸Garfield to Harmon Austin, Jan. 9, 1875. Garfield Papers. Letterbook. Orlando Morgan to Garfield, Jan. 27, 1875 and Irvin McDowell to Garfield, Feb. 9, 1875. Garfield Papers. Smith, Life and Letters of Garfield, I, 593-595.

of" Ohio that it was probable that he would do so again. He was genuinely pleased when the Ohio GOP chose Hayes as their standard bearer, especially since it was reported that this would bring many Liberal Republicans back into the fold for this crucial contest. Not only the nomination, but the party's sound money platform cheered him, for now, he declared, the Republicans ought surely to take control of the state from the Democracy. He wrote to Hayes of his efforts to secure support for him in northern Ohio and of the out-of-state speakers he hoped to bring into the contest. While in Washington, Garfield told the nominee, he would urge the National Committee "to make strenuous efforts to raise money for our campaign, so that nothing may be wanting to push it with vigor." As to campaign tactics, he predictably urged a forthright stand for monetary 'soundness', confident that the gains made on that issue would easily outweigh the losses. He campaigned as much as his temporarily impaired health would allow and concluded his effort satisfied that he had done his best in his own area, where he declared, he was now "stronger . . . than ever before." Politically, he was well along the road toward recovery, but what he termed as "the bread and butter question" was again troubling him. A point of no return was drawing near for Garfield as far as his career in politics was concerned and yet if he moved soon enough, he could assure his financial security and attend personally to his childrens' education, too. "That done, I could re-enter public life with a freer mind and without that anxiety which so constantly pursues me now," he reflected. The

idea of a permanent resignation from politics was not in his plans.⁴⁹

Less than two years after Hayes left active political life, he had once again been chosen to head the Republican ticket in his state. When the legislative caucus came out strongly for him he was flattered, for he believed a third term for an Ohio governor was unprecedented. To his diary he admitted it was "a feather" he would be pleased to sport. But his investments demanded close attention, GOP hopes for October seemed dim and yet he was quite prepared to fight and lose if the "cause was wholly and clearly good and important," he declared. But he had his doubts. Like his Liberal brethren, he did not "sympathize with a large share of his party's leaders," he confessed to his diary. What is more, he hated "the corruptionists" headed by Ben Butler, doubted the "ultra measures relating to the South" and was genuinely disturbed by the talk of a third term for Grant. It was also suggested that a victory would give him good position in the contest for the presidential nomination in 1876 and this struck a responsive chord. The thought had surely crossed his mind, his ambition not being dead, although he could not help but be aware that he stood fairly well back in his party's ranks as a national figure. Thus he responded to the idea with this comment to his journal: "How wild! What a queer lot we are becoming! Nobody is out of reach of that mania." To an intimate friend who assured him

⁴⁹Garfield to John Q. Smith, April 16, 1875; Garfield to Hayes, June 24, 1875 and Garfield to John Q. Smith, Oct. 30, 1875. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

a third term at Columbus would make him the next President, he admitted he would like the governorship again, but was anxious to secure financial independence, too. He could not become a candidate for the nomination, he insisted, and his decision was "final." Business affairs must for now take precedent over politics.⁵⁰

The urging continued, however, and although he told himself he was "no less averse" than ever, Hayes was available. If those in the race should withdraw and if the convention should, with full knowledge of his preference, call upon him to make the bid, he would abide by their decision. "A general demand by the party that has honored me so often," diary entry ran, "I regard as a command which I must obey." In politics as in the army, he was the uncomplaining and obedient soldier, ever ready to do his duty. But at the same time, he was an egoist of sorts, who cherished the prospect of just such a call and was keenly aware of the possible political consequences of an election to a third term. The nomination, however, could not be sullied: the avowed candidates must voluntarily abandon the field in his favor. He would not be a party to an open contest with the major contender, Alphonso Taft, and so informed his spokesmen in Cincinnati. This was all they needed to know. They skillfully maneuvered Taft into an untenable position, robbed him of much of his support and won the nomination for Hayes. A mutual friend of the two men thereupon

⁵⁰Hayes Diary, March 28 and April 14, 1875 and Hayes to William Bickham, April 14, 1875, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 269-70.

moved that the decision be made unanimous (which was important to Hayes) and the job was completed. Hayes, genuinely disturbed lest his reputation be endangered by the tactics used, had moved to protect it by writing a letter declining the honor. This proved unnecessary, however, for Taft's son himself asked that Hayes be chosen by acclamation and that, Hayes recorded complacently, "was splendidly carried." He was certain that he had done all he could to prevent his own nomination and help his opponent and could not justifiably be held responsible for his defeat.⁵¹ His reputation was still safe. Once again he had remained true to his conviction that one must wait to be called upon to bid for an office -- a commonly held belief in which ethics and superstition were intermingled with the 'lessons' of American political history.

Hayes quickly settled upon the issues that must take a prominent place in the coming campaign. The Ohio GOP must "rebuke the Democracy by a defeat for subserviency to Roman Catholic demands," he declared to his diary.⁵² He apparently hoped that the party could concentrate on demonstrating that the Democracy could not be trusted with the reins of power

⁵¹Hayes Diary, May 31 and June 3, 1875, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 273-74.

⁵²Hayes Diary, June 3, 1875, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 274. The Democratic controlled legislature had enacted legislation providing that every person confined to state prisons and hospitals should be allowed to choose the type of religious service he wished. All were to be provided with generous and equal facilities for religious purposes. The bill was intended to make possible the appointment of Catholic priests as State chaplains. Heretofore only Protestants had held this post.

while steering clear of national issue like the money question which would soon, nevertheless, become the major issue in the contest. But after receiving Garfield's opinions on the question of campaign tactics, he replied by saying that "your ideas are precisely mine." The inflation question, which Hayes had at first hoped to play down, would have to be fought out in Ohio even though it would cost the party votes. This issue would come to overshadow the significant, but essentially regional, religious question. Developments in Ohio were carefully watched by Republicans in neighboring states like Pennsylvania, where the GOP hoped to benefit in terms of strategy and impact from the Ohio experience. Out-of-state speakers from both parties entered the fray and Ohio Republicans quickly called upon the party's best stump men to come to the aid of their hard-pressed brethren. "I trust you will make your arrangements," Hayes urged Garfield, "to give us all your time until the election. We need it." What was most required was the help of the party's foremost advocates of soundness and this meant national figures like Garfield, Sherman and the repatriated Carl Schurz. Sherman opened the campaign with Hayes and to him the candidate admitted that he had not so much as seen a copy of the Resumption Act.⁵³ The key to success, he believed, was to hit hard on the twin issues of "honest money

⁵³Hayes Diary, June 4, 1875, in Williams, ed., Diary of a President, pp. 5-9. Hayes to Garfield, June 22, 1875. Garfield Papers. Hayes to John Sherman, June 29, 1875, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 282.

and no sectarian interference with the schools." Hayes campaigned diligently, but he was experiencing financial setbacks himself and said jokingly that "nothing but inflation will relieve me for the next months." As election time approached, he was disturbed by the mounting number of defections of Republicans to the inflationist camp, apparently in response to the impact of hard times. Wages had begun to fall sharply in Ohio, while the retail price of staple food items remained at pre-depression levels.⁵⁴

On election day Hayes recorded that he was as "nearly indifferent, on personal grounds, to the result . . . as it is possible to be." He preferred victory, he admitted, but this would bring a push for the presidential nomination and a nomination "would make" his "life a disturbed and troubled one" for months to come. Moreover, defeat for the party in 1876 was "almost a certainty." He did, in all likelihood, prefer the "quiet life" he had chosen in coming to Fremont from Cincinnati. The election's outcome was in doubt for some time and he believed the Democrats were "bent on counting him out", but he won by a slim margin after all. The margin of victory seems to have been reduced by the influx of New York financial aid for the Democrats and the influence of the New York press

⁵⁴Hayes to William Bickham, July 10, 1875 and Hayes to Charles Nash, Sept. 12, 1875, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 284 and 293. Forrest W. Clonts, "The Political Campaign of 1875 in Ohio," Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, XXXI (1922), p. 46 n.

among Ohioians.⁵⁵

As soon as the outcome was confirmed, the rural Ohio press began touting Hayes as the party's best hope in 1876. His correspondents, too, began to talk about the office, adding in almost the same breath the reminder that this office in particular must seek the man. The man's friends of course might work toward that goal and as early as October 1875 one of them was predicting that Morton, Conkling and Blaine might well kill each other off, thus clearing the way for Ohio's favorite son, Rutherford B. Hayes.⁵⁶

⁵⁵Hayes Diary, Oct. 12 and 17, 1875, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 295. Clonts, "Campaign of 1875," p. 87.

⁵⁶Manning Force to Hayes, Oct. 18, 1875. Hayes Papers.

CHAPTER 4

THE "GOOD GOVERNOR" REWARDED

During the months following his victory, the movement to make Hayes the Republican presidential nominee gained momentum in Ohio and began to attract a modest amount of attention elsewhere. But Hayes, true to his "rule and preference" and to a powerful American political tradition, was determined to maintain a passive demeanor -- to be a "mere onlooker", as he put it. Those who had sought the presidential office seldom won it, a close friend warned him, "and Morton, Conkling, Blaine, who might as a means of defeating each other in the end unite on you, would fight against you, if you should become too prominent before the convention meets." During the next twelve months, the wisdom of this advice and the Hayes campaign strategy that embodied it, was amply demonstrated. His gubernatorial victory had given him a chance for the nomination, Hayes believed, and made it certain that Ohio would make him her favorite son, but he was determined to play his hand carefully and covertly. He appeared almost fearful that interest

in him would "die out with the subsidence of interest in the recent election." And, as if anxious to immunize himself against the sting of a probable defeat and what Garfield had termed the humiliation of working for oneself and being defeated, he declared that he intended "not to mix in it, or heed it; to go right along as if no such talk existed." Perhaps his attitude was designed to impress upon his supporters the need for diligent effort on their part.¹

Jacob Comly, editor of the Columbus Journal and postmaster of that city, was one of Hayes's closest and most useful friends during this period. He and William Bickham of the Dayton Journal steadily kept Hayes's name before the people during a time when his candidacy had yet to attract much firm support. Comly, who had been one of the first to suggest the presidency to Hayes, was exceedingly careful to inspire good will rather than animosity among the leading contenders and their partisans, precisely the strategy Hayes himself followed. "The question of a second choice," the Journal insisted, "in this case is of first importance." And although he was tolerant of leading state figures with presidential ambitions, Hayes himself was critical of those second ranking figures who thrust themselves forward to let all know they were available. After all, as governor he had purposely avoided allusions to national

¹Hayes to Guy Bryan, April 23, 1876; Hayes to William H. Smith, April 23, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 316 and Manning Force to Hayes, Oct. 18, 1875, Hayes Papers. Hayes to Manning Force, Nov. 2, 1875, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 297.

politics except when a constitutional amendment was before the legislature.²

While the Governor's political prospects were being decided, Garfield had returned once again to the question of leaving office to pursue -- perhaps temporarily -- a full time career in law. Eager as he was to provide for his family's financial security, he readily admitted there was ample reason for him "to be glad to continue in public life." In a letter to Harmon Austin, he spelled out two reasons for remaining in the House: "I am regarded rather as the leader of the sound currency doctrine and shall be glad to help make it triumphant. Furthermore, if the Republicans carry the next Presidency, it is very likely that any position I might desire, would be open to me in the Administration." This would appear especially likely if Blaine became President. He was also being advised by Austin that his prospective Cleveland law partner had a rather unsavory personal reputation and to join him might constitute yet another "mistake" on his part. Moreover, the political situation in the nineteenth district was improving and another victory there was necessary to achieve full political rehabilitation. Garfield was likewise well aware of the Hayes boomlet and perhaps was anticipating that if Hayes were nominated, there would be heavy pressure put on him to stand for re-election. But for the time being, his party was out of power in the House, he had lost his chairmanship and been

²Ohio State Journal, Jan. 8, 1876, p. 2.

transferred as a minority member to Ways and Means. He was now simply a senior opposition leader and still overshadowed and outshone by Blaine. What is more, he was uncertain as to just how effectively he would function in his new role and whether it would suit his tastes in politics. Perhaps he agreed with a close friend who suggested he might not be at his best in this role because he was too sensitive and lacked the pugnacious qualities of a Blaine. "Had it ever occurred to you that you and I would be more 'effective' if we were of coarser make?" the friend wrote. In reply, Garfield acknowledged that he, too, had considered the matter and admitted that it might be true.³

In January 1876 John Sherman entered the picture by endorsing Hayes's candidacy in a letter that received considerable press attention. Hayes was pleased, yet at the same time piqued, by Sherman's statement that "he (Hayes) was not greatly distinguished in the army." The candidate admitted this was "perfectly true in the sense in which Sherman intended it should be received." He had not risen above a division command, yet "in his grade he was distinguished." He followed this diary entry with a nine point summary of his service record, probably intended for political use by his boosters, although it also has the appearance of an effort to reassure himself

³Garfield to Harmon Austin, Nov. 3, 1875 and Harmon Austin to Garfield, Oct. 31, 1875. Garfield Papers. Letterbook. Burke Hinsdale to Garfield, Jan. 4, 1876 and Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, Jan. 7, 1876, in Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Letters, pp. 326, 329.

that Sherman had failed to do justice to his 'golden years'. "In more than fifty engagements, large and small," Hayes noted proudly in his diary, "he (Hayes) was always conspicuous for personal daring, self-possession, efficiency. That is a piece of brag, but I think it does not overstate." Despite Sherman's heavy-handed candidness, Hayes fully realized the value of this letter and especially its quick endorsement by General Sheridan, who suggested his ticket: Hayes and Wheeler. But he was "ashamed" to ask, the candidate confided to his wife, "who is Wheeler?" W. T. Sherman also approved of his brother's letter. "I agree with you that no one should be President unless he was with us heart and soul in the Civil War," he wrote to Senator Sherman, "and Hayes fills the bill perfectly."⁴ If the General's words reached Hayes they must have pleased him enormously.

But no one in Washington, Garfield claimed, knew quite what to make of the Sherman endorsement, save that it was intended to put an end to talk of a third term for Grant. It was thought that Sherman did not believe the Hayes movement would amount to much except to keep the Ohio delegation united. Garfield assessed the situation in this way:

. . . When they find that Hayes cannot be nominated, its result will be valuable. It is also thought that the letter precipitates Hayes's candidacy at so

⁴Hayes Diary, Feb. 1, 1876 and Hayes to Lucy Hayes, Jan. 30, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 302-03, 301. William T. Sherman to John Sherman, Feb. 1, 1876, in Rachel S. Thorndike, ed., The Sherman Letters (New York, 1894), p. 347.

early a day as to make his chances of success less. I do not find that the mention of his name excites much enthusiasm outside of Ohio. He would make an eminently respectable President, and I should be glad on many accounts to see him elected. Still, he certainly would not be the strongest man we could choose. If we could unite the Ohio delegation, and succeed in giving the vote of our State to Blaine as a second choice, I think it would be a good thing. At all hazard Morton should not be nominated; it would be ruinous.⁵

Following Sherman's letter, the G. A. R. also put its stamp of approval on Hayes's candidacy. His stock was rising, but he concluded realistically that the movement was as yet confined primarily to "Ohio and Ohio people." William Henry Smith, surveying political prospects in the Northwest, reported that "except to Ohio friends here you are not known as an old-time Republican: Taft has been spoken of much more frequently than you have -- but usually for the second place." He hoped Sherman's letter would change this and, like Sheridan, suggested a Hayes and Wheeler ticket. But the anticipated solid support of his own state and the possibility of a deadlocked convention turning to him, made Hayes all the more certain that passivity was "on all accounts" the wisest policy. By early February, he considered his nomination to be possible, but "not at all probable." He obviously cherished the widespread and growing support in his own state, but still refused to believe he would develop much strength as a first choice outside of Ohio. During the first six weeks of his third term at Columbus, not a day passed that did not bring letters and

⁵Garfield to "Dear Captain", Feb. 5, 1876. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

visitors, sometimes "a succession of callers" on the subject. His replies were typically brief and guarded -- perhaps he was letting his silence work for him, just as it had in similar situations. While he did not encourage his boosters, neither were they discouraged save when they spoke of "efforts at organization or management" for it would not do for a "passive candidate" to have anything to do with such undertakings. All of the talk about him centered upon his availability, he insisted. "Let availability do the work then," he told his diary.⁶

As a friend and supporter of Blaine, Garfield was put in something of a tight spot by the Hayes candidacy. Blaine men among his correspondents advised him that Hayes aroused little spontaneous enthusiasm, but deserved Ohio's solid backing, at least initially. Garfield, too, believed that a united delegation was imperative, but hoped they would turn to "a second choice" if they found Hayes had no choice. "So far as I know," Garfield wrote to a Michigan friend, "Blaine is the favorite second choice with most of the people of Ohio. . . ." On the other hand, he observed that the country had "never been so near the time set for Presidential nomination, with so much uncertainty in both parties in regard to their candidate." It was his conviction that "Ohio ought not so commit herself to any one man that she cannot act with reasonable freedom and

⁶Hayes to Lucy Hayes, Jan. 30, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 301. William H. Smith to Hayes, Jan. 29, 1876. Hayes Papers. Hayes to Guy Bryan, Feb. 10, 1876 and Hayes Diary, Feb. 15, 1876, Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 304, 305.

prudence in regard to the choice when the time comes." And while admitting that Hayes would do well in Ohio as a presidential nominee, he doubted that he would do as well outside of his state as would a man who was more widely known.⁷

Garfield continued to consider retirement, although those who spoke or wrote to him about it discouraged him from leaving politics. His interest in politics remained keen. He hoped to become a delegate-at-large to the national convention, as some of his correspondents had already suggested. If this proved impossible, he wished to be a member of his district's delegation, but only if this met with the approval of his 'friends'. At the same moment he was being advised that the drift of public sentiment was that he should be a delegate-at-large. He deeply feared Morton's nomination, considering him "totally unfit, both morally and politically" to be the Republican standard bearer. Apparently he felt that Ohio should give Hayes a very fair opportunity at the convention, but then as a unit, stand ready to transfer their vote to Blaine or perhaps to Bristow. Yet he did not fully trust Blaine nor approve of his methods. As for Grant, Garfield openly opposed a third term bid and had voted for the anti-third term resolution in December 1875 which the Democrats had sponsored.⁸

In the House, Garfield was adjusting to his role as an

⁷Garfield to Frank Mason, Jan. 28, 1876; Garfield to W. A. Hudson, Feb. 5, 1876 and Garfield to Harmon Austin, Feb. 9, 1876. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

⁸Garfield to Harmon Austin, Feb. 9; 4 and Jan. 24, 1876. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

opposition leader, and soon finding an opportunity to demonstrate his prowess. Blaine, with the hope of boosting his presidential stock, had purposely baited the Democrats with a harsh attack on Jefferson Davis during a debate on an amnesty bill, blaming him for what happened at Andersonville and other southern prisons. Ben Hill of Georgia took the bait and in a fiery rebel reply defended the Confederacy and its President. This set the stage for a rejoinder by Garfield, who was determined to demonstrate that he could give a Blaine style performance while avoiding what he considered Blaine's error in losing his temper. He worked up his speech with some care, satisfied that it was "one of the most successful" he had ever made. In his effort, he repeated, with additional corroborative evidence, Blaine's accusations. He hoped to keep his temper, "crush" Hill's arguments and yet display a generous attitude toward the South. "Nearly all the Democrats admit that my speech was fair and in good temper," he reported to Austin proudly. Unlike Blaine, who had demanded that Davis be excluded from amnesty, he followed a more conciliatory approach. He spoke as follows:

Let me say at the outset that so far as I am personally concerned, I have never voted against any proposition to grant amnesty to any human being who has asked for it at the bar of this House. Furthermore, I appeal to gentlemen on the other side of me in this hall many years whether at any time they have found me truculent in spirit, unkind in tone or feeling toward those who fought against us in the late war.⁹

⁹Garfield Diary, Jan. 12, 1876 and Garfield to Harmon Austin, Jan. 16, 1876. Garfield Papers. Hinsdale, ed., Works of Garfield, II, 219.

Blaine made another strong attack on the following day, but Garfield believed he again failed to keep his temper and hurt himself by being "aggressively personal. . ." Although Garfield had declared during his speech that no congressman could "regret more sincerely than he did the course that the debate" was taking, he later concluded it had served a valuable purpose. The people had been awakened to the real attitude of the Confederate south and surely he had never received such general and generous praise. Yet he was disturbed, too, that a single speech should do more for his reputation than had years of work with financial questions. "Now of course," Garfield assured a friend, "I regard my financial work as better intellectual work than this." Be that as may, his stature as a partisan spokesman in the House now rivalled his reputation as a leader in finance, but he did not wear the mantle comfortably. He seemed troubled by the whole turn of events, and shortly afterwards could be found recording the following sentiments in his journal: ". . .I prefer to keep silent for a while in accordance with my own views of policy and also in accordance with a good letter I received today from Dr. Hopkins, speaking in the kindest terms of my Amnesty speech (the reply to Hill) and suggesting that I ought not to speak as often as I have formerly done." He promptly replied to his former mentor, explaining and justifying the purely partisan effort he had heretofore avoided during House debates.¹⁰

¹⁰Garfield Diary, Jan. 13, 1876; Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, Jan. 18, 1876; Garfield Diary, Feb. 3, 1876 and Garfield to Mark Hopkins, Feb. 5, 1876. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

As it became apparent that Hayes would receive the solid backing of the Ohio state convention, Blaine advised Garfield and other pro-Blaine Ohioians not to pit him against the Governor, but to keep him in mind as a second choice. Meanwhile Garfield was being told that Hayes's chances were improving and that he was the likeliest choice in the event that Blaine, Conkling and Morton eliminated each other. That it was necessary for Garfield to tread cautiously is borne out by the following statement from W. D. Bickham, who was a friend of his, but a staunch Hayes man, too. "Some of the papers," he wrote to Garfield, "are using your name freely as an antagonist of Hayes, and a partisan of Blaine; that you intend to organize your district for Blaine & c. I don't believe a word of it. Have you any objection to writing me about it."¹¹

Late in February, Garfield was cautioned that many Ohio Republicans now favored the repeal of resumption and advised that a moderate stand on the money question would attract more votes than would an unyielding one. This prompted him to inquire of Hayes as to "the drift of sentiment among our friends in Ohio." Hayes responded that he had been too busy to keep track of the drift of public opinion, but it was his "notion" that the real battle was "to be between inflation and sound currency" and that they "need not divide on details, on methods, or time when. The previous question will again be irredeemable paper as a permanent policy, or a policy which seeks a return

¹¹Garfield Diary, Feb. 23, 1876 and William Bickham to Garfield, Feb. 28, 1876. Garfield Papers.

to coin. My opinion is decidedly against yielding a hair's breadth." At this point, one is reminded of a comment made by Garfield some five years earlier on the money question. "I am satisfied that it is like astronomy," he told a friend, "in this, that our first views are generally wrong. I feel far less certainty in my positions now than I did two years ago. The subject is very complicated in itself, and from its connection with party politics is beset with difficulties on all sides." At issue "is not simply what is the true theory of finance," he insisted, "but what can be done with all the political and business forces now operating on the country."¹²

Hayes seemed to imply that Garfield, a consistent and fairly courageous supporter of a return to specie payments, needed strengthening on this question. With an air of flattery mixed with reproach, he reminded him that the attitude of their fellow Republicans would "depend on the conduct of our leading men. It is for them to see that the right sentiment is steadily upheld. We are in a condition such that firmness and adherence to principle are of peculiar value just now. I would 'consent' to no backward steps," he admonished his friend. His concluding advice must have appeared naive to one who had not led Hayes's essentially sheltered existence. "To yield or compromise is weakness, and will destroy us," the Governor continued. "If a better resumption measure can be substituted

¹²Garfield to Hayes, March 2, 1876. Hayes Papers. Hayes to Garfield, March 4, 1876. Garfield Papers. Garfield to Charles Henry, Dec. 31, 1871, in Frederick A. Henry, Captain Henry of Geauga; A Family Chronicle (Cleveland, 1942), p. 239.

for the present on, that may do. But keep cool. We can better afford to be beaten in Congress than to back out." He concluded by cautioning Garfield that his letter was not to be used or quoted by its recipient -- an injunction which made it a bit easier to be so positive and unyielding.¹³

Early in March, 1876, Garfield journeyed to New Hampshire where he delivered some seven speeches in a vigorous stumping tour through the Granite State. He enjoyed considerable success in handling his audiences and returned to Washington greatly refreshed and exhilarated. When the Republicans won a victory by a larger majority than he had expected, he attributed it mainly to the blatant "rebelism of the present House of Representative." On the other hand, most of the GOP's troubles had resulted from Grant's having employed "military rather than civil methods in chosing (sic) a cabinet, and in appointments generally," he concluded. At about this time, Hayes was giving a friend his opinion that Washington doings were injuring both parties. "Both are, therefore," he wrote hopefully, "more and more disposed to look for candidates outside of that atmosphere."¹⁴

As the time for Ohio's Republican state convention approached, John Sherman wrote to Hayes from Washington of the "great fear" there that Ohio would follow Indiana's lead and make a

¹³Hayes to Garfield, March 4, 1876. Garfield Papers.

¹⁴Garfield Diary, March 9, 14 and 15, 1876. Garfield Papers. Hayes to D. K. Smith, March 9, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 307.

currency plank that was "not sound and square in favor of specie resumption." To do so, he warned, "would be a fatal mistake" that would bring defeat in several nominally Republican states. "Garfield tells me," he continued, "that our position on the currency question and the reactionary tendency of the 'Confederate House' saved us in New Hampshire." Since Senate duties would probably prevent his attendance and his "presence might invite antagonism," he hoped Hayes and his friends would work for soundness. In his reply, Hayes insisted that there was not "the least danger" that the platform committee would veer in the direction of inflation.¹⁵ The convention would adopt a sound, but somewhat softened plank on the troublesome issue.

By late March, Hayes was noting with satisfaction that the bulk of Ohio's county conventions had adopted resolutions favoring him and that probably all their delegates favored his candidacy. Benjamin Bristow seemed to be their second choice, he observed with little enthusiasm, for while he admitted that the Whiskey Ring affair had given him "prestige as the representative of reform" -- he was not "sure" Bristow was to be preferred above all other candidates. The 'passive' and indifferent Hayes then made this revealing journal entry:

It will be a small disappointment for me to give up my chances. With so general an expression in my favor in Ohio and a fair degree of assent elsewhere, especially in States largely settled by Ohio people,

¹⁵John Sherman to Hayes, March 18, 1876 and Hayes to John Sherman, March 20, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 308-09.

I have supposed it was possible that I might be nominated. But with no opportunity, and no desire, to make combinations, or to lay wires, I have not thought my chance worth much consideration. I feel less diffidence in thinking of this subject than perhaps, I ought.

He was supremely, perhaps naively, confident that he could handle the chief executive's role with relative ease. "It seems to me that good purposes and the judgment, experience, and firmness I possess, would enable me to execute the duties of the office well. I do not feel the least fear that I should fail. This all looks egotistical," he admitted, "but it is sincere." Garfield, who on the other hand, had been in a better position to evaluate the demands placed upon a president, had stated flatly that Hayes "certainly would not be the strongest man" the party could nominate.¹⁶ He apparently felt that to elevate Hayes to the presidency would be to spread his talents and capacity rather thin.

Garfield claimed that a considerable "number of prominent men" in the capital wanted him to go as a delegate to Cincinnati, but he did not "personally care much about it," he told a close friend. He had at first wished to be at Columbus when Ohio made its decision and then to be a delegate to the national conclave. But despite urging to the contrary, he asked Austin that his name be withdrawn were he proposed as a district delegate to Cincinnati, although he would still accept a position

¹⁶Hayes Diary, March 21, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 309. Garfield to Charles Henry, Feb. 5, 1876. Garfield Papers.

as delegate-at-large. Austin's warning that it would be a "severe" contest in which he was very likely to suffer further political wounds undoubtedly influenced his decision. It was not only the recent scandals and his friendship for Blaine that placed him in a vulnerable position, but some friends were even then speaking of him as a possible dark-horse candidate.¹⁷ He was ultimately appointed a delegate to the state convention from Portage county, whose convention passed no resolution on a nominee, hence leaving him in an uncommitted position on the crucial question. But he was unable to go to Columbus because Ways and Means was at that time considering a tariff bill which demanded his close attention. When it appeared that Noyes and Sherman were to be the Ohio delegates-at-large, he was warned that Hayes would be putty in their hands. "I hope the time will soon come," wrote a district newspaperman, "when that gang of Bummers will disappear from Ohio politics." Obviously there was no love lost between certain of Garfield's supporters and those of Hayes and Sherman -- added reason for a pro-Blaine man to move with caution. His refusal to be a district delegate was personally a wise move that would please those who "otherwise would have complained," Austin assured him, for the following reasons:

There is a very deep & decided feeling on the part of a large number of people of this district, that Hayes is the best man in the nation for our next

¹⁷Garfield to Charles Henry, Jan. 24, 1876; Garfield to Harmon Austin, March 18, 1876; Harmon Austin to Garfield, March 2, 1876 and George Ford to Garfield, March 11, 1876. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

President and so strong is that feeling that any moderate support of him, on your part, would at once array them against you. The feeling is also entertained by a large number that he is not your first choice & if you should be a delegate, & he should fail to get the nomination, you would be largely in their judgment, chargeable with the responsibility, and of course would provoke a new element of opposition to you.¹⁸

In his anxiety to aid Blaine, Garfield had underestimated Hayes's strength and the skill of his management and nearly committed himself to a course that might have dealt another heavy blow to his political standing and his personal integrity. His friends who attended the convention, reported that they ready to withdraw his name were it presented, because of opposition to him from his own district. "The feeling for Hayes was very determined from every part of the state, & came direct from the people, and Ohio will stand for him until he is nominated, or there is no possible chance, and there seems to be a firm belief that he is to be our next president," this report continued. Perhaps Hayes had failed to carry the state by an overwhelming margin in 1875, but his great personal popularity at the grass roots level was not to be doubted, and it appeared that Blaine could count on no help from Ohio until his nomination was a certainty. Garfield admitted to Austin that his advice had been "wholly right" and declared he was "exceedingly glad" his name had not been brought forward. "The Managers of that Convention were evidently jealous of all men who were known to be intimate friends

¹⁸Halsey Hall to Garfield, March 21, 1876 and Harmon Austin to Garfield, April 26, 1876. Garfield Papers.

of Blaine or Bristow, and if I had been elected, it would have been after a sharp opposition," Garfield concluded. He had not been interested in being a delegate to either convention, he told another friend, and would have gone only "for the sake of helping friends (Blaine, surely) when the second choice came as come it must."¹⁹

But Garfield was not the only national figure who encountered opposition at Columbus. Hayes had been most anxious to have Sherman lead the Ohio delegation at the national convention. Yet when his name was presented it aroused such response that the manager of the Sherman forces withdrew it. And when a few votes were still cast for the Senator, his spokesman was forced to point out that he had withdrawn it by Sherman's authority. Hayes wrote consolingly to Sherman that it had been "the general wish" that he head Ohio's delegation, and assured him that he would have won the honor "by acclamation if it had not been withdrawn." It was a bit of a blow and an "annoyance" to Hayes, for Sherman had been the only man he "felt at liberty to commend," he confided to Bickham and he "was certainly disappointed" at this turn of events. Perhaps it was simply indicative of Hayes's inability to exert effective political discipline and leadership over those who were attached to him as a man and a popular governor -- one who represented his party well, but did not, perhaps did not care, to lead it. He

¹⁹Wallace Ford to Garfield, March 30, 1876; Garfield to Harmon Austin, April 7, 1876 and Garfield to Charles Henry, April 7, 1876. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

contented himself with noting that the incident would "be understood by all who" wanted to understand it, while the remainder could never be satisfied.²⁰

The convention had "instructed the senatorial delegates and requested the district delegates 'to use their earnest efforts to secure his nomination'," Hayes recorded in his journal. And this had been done with a spirit and sincerity which was "certainly very flattering." He again noted that he had "discouraged rather than encouraged" the effort on his behalf and would now be pleased if "he could in some satisfactory way drop out of the candidacy." He spoke of the "embarrassment" of his position and although confident that his equanimity would carry him through it, he repeated that he "would like to be out of it." It would appear that Ohio's solid support, which had come after he was certain he had "done absolutely nothing" for himself, was all he really desired! This final honor from the people of his state, empty though it would be without victory at the convention, would apparently be as satisfying as the office he then held, scorned though it was as a 'glorified clerkship' by men like Garfield and Sherman. But despite his professed desire to bow out, he wrote Edwin Cowles, the pro-Blaine editor-publisher of the Cleveland Leader, that he had the "right . . . to considerate treatment" by Ohio's delegation. "If I am to be voted for at all, and as long as

²⁰Wallace Ford to Garfield, March 30, 1876. Garfield Papers. Hayes to John Sherman, March 31, 1876 and Hayes to William Bickham, April 1, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 310.

I am voted for at all," Hayes queried, "may I not reasonably expect the solid vote of the State?" However, when a "considerable number" of delegates favored withdrawal, he wished it to be done quickly, insisting that he was "so indifferent that he could speak of this matter as impartially as if another man were involved."²¹ How powerfully the notion that the office must seek the man gripped him and how often it seemed necessary to reenforce his conviction that he was only a passive competitor!

Hayes also denied that thus far the "management" by his friends had been a significant factor in his success, in fact he insisted that if his nomination's success hinged on this his "chances (could) be put down as zero." The most he could hope for would be that "the march of events" might proceed "undisturbed by friendly management either wise or otherwise." Yet he was by no means indifferent to the tactics of his supporters and gave the following advice to one of them, William Bickham: "You must also see that, as I well know, some of my best friends are Bristow men. If others lose temper, we must not. Your idea of keeping in position to support the nominee without anything to recall, or to give aid to the common adversary, is a sound thing."²² Such concern seemed to belie

²¹Hayes Diary, April 2, 1876 and Hayes to Edwin Cowles, April 6, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 310-12.

²²Hayes to William Dickson, May 3, 1876 and Hayes to William Bickham, April 26, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 317-18.

his professed indifference to the course of the contest.

He was clearly very much pleased when Garfield wrote to congratulate him on his "bearing" during a trying time. And perhaps in part because of his hopes for Blaine, Garfield suggested that the Governor's "friends ought not for some time yet, to make an aggressive fight, nor involve . . . (him) in any antagonism" which was precisely the strategy Hayes and his boosters were pursuing. Ohio should back him solidly and bide their time until the "break up which must come as the weaker candidates drop out," Garfield counseled. When Garfield, writing early in May, declared that he wished to "repeat with more emphasis than before . . . that we are all delighted with the sensible and masterful way in which you are bearing yourself," Hayes was touched. It is a compliment". . . I prize more than the prospects of success, -- if I can continue to deserve it," one of his journal entries ran. It was his hope, he replied to Garfield, that he might keep his head and avoid "doing or saying anything unjust or even uncharitable towards competitors or their supporters. . . ." And happily for Hayes, this turned out to be politically the very wisest course he could have followed. Garfield had also allowed that Hayes was steadily gaining support with those he referred to as "our most thoughtful people." These were precisely the people whose approval Hayes would consistently cherish most of all -- in and out of office.²³

²³Garfield to Hayes, March 2, 1876. Hayes Papers. Hayes Diary, May 7, 1876 and Hayes to Garfield, May 17, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 318-19.

Shortly before the Mulligan Letters affair broke upon Blaine, Hayes was forewarned by William Henry Smith that something was in the offing. Hayes had replied to his friend that he was "glad" that no one active in his campaign had been involved in bringing this matter before the public. He did not know, of course, that Smith and a number of mutual friends in the Western Associated Press had played active roles in trying to stall Blaine's drive for the nomination. "Nothing is to be gained by pulling down, and if there was," he cautioned shrewdly, "let it be done by somebody else." He counted it fortunate that he was as he saw himself, "a mere locker-on . . ."

Garfield, too, had heard something of the allegations from Blaine himself on the very day Smith had forewarned Hayes. Garfield's recollection of his own experience with the press was painfully fresh in his mind and he sympathized with and made ready to aid his friend. He admired Blaine's handling of the issue before the House, predicting that his hopes at the convention depended upon the effectiveness of this singular performance. Garfield had been supporting Blaine in his presidential aspirations since the latter discussed his intentions with his character. Early in April 1876, he confided to a friend that he wished "Blaine was less of a politician" and concluded that Bristow was "a higher (type) of man" and one whose "election would need no apology." Then on the eve of the convention, he admitted to the same intimate friend, that Blaine was "by no means . . . (his) ideal of statesmanship." Nevertheless, he insisted, a Blaine administration would be

"honest and brilliant", far better than Grant's and "very much better" than if Morton or Conkling were elected. He said nothing about what one could expect from Hayes.²⁴

Garfield expected that Blaine would be the nominee. He expressed his pleasure at Mississippi Republican's support of Hayes, but assured them that Blaine was their steady friend despite feeling to the contrary. If Hayes could not be nominated, he hoped the South would come to Blaine's aid as they would "find him an able and firm defender of their rights." By mid-May, he considered that the race had "narrowed down to Blaine in the front rank and Hayes in the second." But he continued to aid his fellow Ohioian, nevertheless. Shortly after he was elected chairman of the Veteran Soldiers National Association, he suggested to Hayes that he might arrange for the convention of the Association to be held in Cincinnati at convention time, so as to aid Ohio's favorite son. Hayes replied confidentially that such a gathering "would have an influence on the result" of the convention's work, thus he must not "meddle" with it. But he added, steps should be taken to see that the veterans acted in concert once the nominations were made. Garfield thereupon decided to call a business meeting instead of a public gathering in order to lay plans for the "future work." Hayes, meanwhile, came to believe his prospects

²⁴William H. Smith to Hayes, April 18, 1876. Hayes Papers. Hayes to William H. Smith, April 23, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, 315-16. Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, June 8, 1876. Garfield Papers. Western Reserve Historical Society. Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, June 8, 1876, in Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Letters, p. 334.

were improving, although he thought Elaine had not been seriously hurt by the Mulligan affair and that his delegate strength was such that his nomination was "not improbable." He then set down the following reflections in his journal:

As a candidate before the people, his newly acquired wealth, his schemes for getting the nomination, and his connection with the money interests depending for success on legislation, will damage him. But with two or three hundred delegates in his favor, will not all of the loose odds and ends gravitate to him? It so seems. If he fails, the next (probability) is a combination for selfish ends to make a candidate among the friends of the leading candidate. This would not be in my favor. My independent position, aloof from bargaining, puts me outside of the list from whom the managers will select. It is only in the contingency of a union between those who look for availability in the candidate and those who are for purity and reform in administration, that I am a probable nominee.²⁵

It was a shrewd evaluation that belied his supposed political naivete' and indifference toward pre-convention maneuverings and it neatly illustrates his self-image as well.

Within two days of this entry, he was writing to tell Sherman that his presence at Cincinnati would "specially gratify" him. While he did not intend to abandon his "passive" attitude, he assumed that it might become necessary to withdraw his name. "To be able to act on this and other possible questions," Hayes urged, "it is important for me that I have friends of experience and sound judgment on the ground, by whom I can be advised of the exact condition of things and of

²⁵Garfield to Charles Clark, April 17, 1876; Garfield Diary, May 16, 1876; Hayes to Garfield, May 7, 1876 and Garfield to Hayes, May 12, 1876. Garfield Papers Letterbook. Hayes Diary, May 19, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 319-20.

the proper course to be taken." A week later, he confided to his diary that his mind turned to political affairs "a good deal, and yet not anxiously or uneasily." He continued to appear far more concerned only that he "pass creditably through the ordeal" than that he come away with the prize. When sounded out by the Republican Reform Club, he declined to write "for publication" because this would violate his rule against "promoting" his own candidacy. But to his diary, he averred that he was "in print fully and explicitly" in support of the Liberals' stand for monetary soundness and reform of the civil service. Since he took no active part in the campaign on his behalf and nothing but optimistic reports came across his desk, he could remain contented that he was "so untouched by this whole business."²⁶

Meanwhile, in the House, Garfield continued to oppose what he deemed the unwise and blundering tactics of the Democrats. Thus he vigorously fought their determination to reduce drastically diplomatic and consular appropriations for South America and the Far East. This was shortsighted economy, he argued, and it would strike a crippling blow at a valuable and inexpensive service. He also attacked Speaker Randall for now recommending substantial reductions in the appropriations bill after opposing cuts during the past years. And he carried on his fight against any measures aimed at inflating the currency.

²⁶Hayes to John Sherman, May 19, 1876; Hayes Diary, May 26, 1876; Hayes to Gouverneur Carr, May 25, 1876 and Hayes to William H. Smith, May 31, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 320-23.

The brilliance of Blaine's parliamentary maneuvers frequently impressed him, but he was moved to record that he "showed more partisanship" than he liked to see.²⁷

But legislative affairs were not the only matters that occupied Garfield's time. When William Dennison came to him with the story of Bristow's troubles with the Grant administration, Garfield advised that Bristow "stand in his place until he was turned out and under no circumstances resign." Perhaps with Cox's experience in mind, he called attention to "the evil consequences to him and the party" should he quit his post. He continued to mull over a law partnership in Cleveland, but this mid-May diary entry indicates very simply, where his affection lay. "My presence here has been wanted, I hear, in the debate which Blaine had with Lamar. I am glad to have been missed and am glad to return." When the Democratic controlled Ways and Means Committee turned to tariff revision, he gave his closest attention to preventing what he deemed was their determination to "break up the present tariff. . ."²⁸ In committee, he voted against the tariff proposal of the Democrats on the ground that it was too extreme and poorly constructed, although he had noted earlier that he favored "a policy about midway between the doctrine of the two parties, with slow progress toward the Democratic view." In

²⁷Garfield Diary, Feb. 3 and March 22, 1876. Garfield Papers.

²⁸Garfield Diary, Feb. 9 and March 14, 1876 and Garfield to John Robison, April 11, 1876. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

theory, at least, he was not yet trustworthy on this issue. For a time, he thought that Grant's "eyes . . . (had) been opened to the fact that mischievous people have been associated with him." But this optimism was short-lived and he soon reverted to his customarily critical view of the General's leadership, as when he noted in his journal that Don Cameron's nomination for Secretary of War had "surprised and disgusted" him.²⁹

The attacks initiated by the New York Sun on Blaine in reference to the Fort Smith and Arkansas railroad and the Northern Pacific railroad bonds served to draw Garfield even closer to his friend. After having so recently passed through a time of trouble during which he, too, had been severely handled by that paper, and given his belief that the popular press had become irresponsible and prone to character assassination, he instinctively sympathized with and stood ready to aid Blaine. At first he feared that the Northern Pacific affair would mean Blaine's defeat, although he hoped this would not be so. He had discussed Blaine's presidential hopes and prospects with him several times during the past twelve months, often at the latter's request, and he was "depressed" by this series of attacks on him. He watched "the progress of these assaults upon Blaine with anxious interest." After a lengthy conversation with Cowles about Blaine's situation, he concluded that it appeared doubtful that he could "recover

²⁹Garfield Diary, March 21; April 11; Feb. 28 and May 22, 1876. Garfield Papers.

from the Mulligan complications."³⁰ But Blaine's defense of himself on the floor of the House gave him second thoughts. "I have never witnessed so dramatic a scene since I have been in the House," his diary reads. "It may give Blaine the nomination. The feeling tonight is that it will, though I am not so sure of his election as I would be glad to be." Did he again have in mind the unpleasant need to apologize for a candidate? Three days later he called on Blaine, who told him he had received 150 letters of support from all parts of the nation. Garfield had by now concluded that he might well be chosen after all, although he realized that "some doubt the effect of these letters upon his success as a candidate. He certainly is not the highest type of reformer. Hardly a reformer at all," he admitted. Then as if to reassure himself about this friend, whom he did not fully trust or know, he recorded on the eve of the convention that he was certain Blaine would give the nation "an honest and brilliant administration." The following day he conferred with Bristow, perhaps at Blaine's suggestion and encouraged a friendly relationship between the two candidates. He argued that "they were naturally allies" and apparently Bristow agreed with him.³¹

The balloting at Cincinnati began on June 16, with 378 votes required for a nomination. Blaine received 285 on the first ballot; he was followed by Morton, Bristow, Conkling and

³⁰Garfield Diary, May 27; 30; June 1 and 4, 1876. Garfield Papers..

³¹Garfield Diary, June 5; 8 and 9, 1876. Garfield Papers.

Hayes with 125, 113, 99 and 61 votes respectively. After four ballots, Blaine's total had risen by only seven votes and on the next roll call, Michigan left the Blaine camp to give Hayes an additional 22 votes. Blaine's vote on the sixth ballot stood at 308, while Hayes trailed at a distance with 113 after Indiana had abandoned Morton in his favor. Next, Bristow was taken out of the running in favor of Hayes, after which New York and Pennsylvania swung behind the Ohioian to give him 384 votes and the prize.

A number of known factors combined to make Hayes's victory possible. In the first place, there was the man himself and his unblemished public and private record. He was General Hayes, who possessed a solid war record and maintained a strong identification with its veterans. He had made two successful fights for soundness against powerful Democratic gubernatorial opponents and he was on friendly terms with the Grant administration, yet under no obligation to it. Jacob Cox summed it up admirably:

General Hayes as a soldier had been modest one, but his courage had been tested, and had shone more nobly with the demands upon it. He had in civil life been a strict party man, but in his votes in Congress, and in his acts as Governor, he had solved his doubts in favor of the purest principles and of the most honest course. He had avoided collisions and had followed acknowledged leaders, but he had never allowed party devotion to compromise his personal integrity. He had never been willing to break out of party lines, but he had given countenance and assistance to reform in every way short of this. His whole life had been one of unostentatious but pure morality, and no one could come very near him without learning that he was a man to whom no corrupt proposal could be made, and who

would not tolerate corruption.³²

Not only was Hayes's record greatly to his advantage, but the management of his campaign was especially astute and effective. It "was a model of discretion, conducted with extreme care not to give offense to anyone," Murat Halstead recalled years later. "There were Blaine men and Bristow men in the Ohio delegation, but they never got an excuse to get away from the Ohio men." What he called the strategy of "conciliation won," he concluded. But the combination of an ideal compromise candidate and skillful management would not have yielded a victory save for fortuitious circumstances over which the Hayes people had little or no control. The Mulligan affair had dealt Blaine, directly and indirectly, a sharp blow. William Henry Smith had a small hand in breaking this story, but so did H. V. Boynton, Richard Smith, Murat Halstead and Joseph Medill from Bristow's camp and W. R. Holloway of Indianapolis, who was a Morton supporter. These powerfully situated men hoped to weaken Blaine by making the letters public, but none wished to earn the enmity of Blaine's partisans by having the deed traced to their doorstep. However, they were not adverse to seeing one of their co-conspirators blamed. And indeed, Bristow's camp was blamed by many Blaine men. On the very day William Henry Smith had informed Hayes of the plan to 'expose' Blaine, the latter had summoned Garfield to his side to hear an informant tell of a plot by Conkling and his

³²Jacob D. Cox, "The Hayes Administration," Atlantic Monthly, LXXI (June, 1893), 822.

associates to injure Blaine by insinuating a conflict of interests involving him and the Fort Smith and Little Rock. And at Blaine's request, Garfield had prepared and signed a "statement of the conversation in full" for his use.³³

Blaine's collapse three days before the convention opened weakened his position by calling his physical and mental health into question and it left his campaign floundering during a crucially important period. The split between the Bristow and Blaine forces became an unbridgeable gulf after Mrs. Blaine turned Bristow away when he came to call on her stricken husband -- because she, like many Blaine partisans, still blamed him for initiating the recent attacks on her husband. Garfield thereupon conferred with Dennison and Bristow in an effort to protect Mrs. Blaine from newspaper publicity, discussing among other things the statement Bristow and Dennison were to make public. He also busied himself with frequent visits to the Blaine residence and after the Senator recovered his senses a day before the convention began its work, he called Garfield to his side to consult with him. Ohio undoubtedly entered into their conversation, for "there were at least 16 men . . . in the Ohio delegation who were for Blaine," the manager of the Bristow forces at Cincinnati later reported. But they were

³³Murat Halstead, "Recollections and Letters of President Hayes," *Independent*, LI (February 16, 1899), 486; Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes, pp. 284-85 and Garfield Diary, April 18, 1876. Garfield Papers.

"held fast by the fact that Hayes was before the Convention."³⁴

Bristow seemed to pose the most serious threat to the hopes of Hayes, yet his actual strength was very limited. He had attracted a fair body of supporters, but they were attached to him as "Bristow 'the symbol of Reform' and not as Bristow the man," and Schurz told Hayes as much after the convention had adjourned. He had found most of his support among conservative Easterners and a number of the nation's most powerful newspapermen. H. V. Boynton, the leader of this band, had lured Richard Smith and Halstead from Blaine's camp into the Bristow organization, and they in turn recruited Joseph Medill and Samuel Bowles. Many other journalists came to Bristow's aid, as did many Liberal Republicans, although not all were optimistic that a man who had gathered as many avowed opponents as Bristow could be nominated. As his biographer concludes, although "Bristow's spirited warfare against corruption had endeared him to the masses and gained him the backing of the 'best and weightiest' elements within the party, his chances for the nomination were practically nil. Even his supporters admitted that 'nothing short of a miracle' could force him through the convention." His forces were ineffectively organized and inexperienced and their role in bringing out the Mulligan letters ultimately hurt their own candidate as well as his chief rival. Finally, Bristow himself was unenthusiastic

³⁴Garfield Diary, June 11; 12 and 16, 1876. Garfield Papers. John M. Harlan to Benjamin H. Bristow, June 19, 1876. Bristow Papers. Library of Congress. Microfilm copy in Hayes Memorial Library. Hereafter cited as Bristow Papers.

about his candidacy and made but a feeble effort to give it the leadership necessary to make it more than a short-lived boom, or "bubble", as it has been called. Nevertheless, he brought a modest body of delegates to the convention whose votes were denied to Blaine, Morton and Conkling, but who readily moved to the Hayes column at the critical moment. On the other hand, it appears highly unlikely that supporters of that trio of Stalwarts would have frustrated Hayes's hopes by going over to Bristow in the event of a convention deadlock.³⁵

Michigan's switch from Blaine to Hayes on the fifth ballot "caused a stampede among the Bristow forces," John Harlan assured his law partner following the convention. It appeared that Blaine men would vote for Hayes, but not for Bristow while Bristow's Michigan friends believed that Blaine must be stopped at all costs. "The union of that delegation on Hayes was a surprise to us," Harlan reported, "and as soon as it was done I felt that our case was hopeless." He claimed that Indiana's failure to come over to Bristow prompted the Michigan delegation to make their break to Hayes. As far as the Indiana delegation was concerned, James Tyner and his friends claimed that he was mainly responsible for their state's switch to Hayes on the sixth ballot.³⁶

It is not difficult to understand why a reformer like

³⁵Edwin B. Thompson, "Benjamin Helm Bristow" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1940), pp. 330, 342, 373.

³⁶John Harlan to Benjamin Bristow, June 19, 1876. Bristow Papers.

Bristow would stand little chance of winning the Hoosier vote, but why was Blaine denied their support? In 1871, Blaine had given Tyner to understand that he would be made chairman of the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads if he was chosen speaker. Blaine became speaker, but then denied Tyner the appointment he coveted, and with an eye to the 1876 convention, used the post in an attempt to curry Simon Cameron's favor. Tyner thereupon angrily confronted the Speaker and was reported to have made the following threat: ". . .I shall be a delegate to that convention; I shall go there to prevent your nomination, and I shall use every power that I have to prevent it, and I think I shall be successful." Despite Blaine's offers of the English mission for Morton and a cabinet post for Tyner, the latter, in a closed caucus, persuaded Indiana to go for Hayes.³⁷

Following Indiana's decision, Bristow's delegates were freed to Hayes, as Harlan took his partner out of the contest. Although the Kentuckian had failed, the effort on his behalf had been instrumental in stopping Blaine, and had thereby contributed to the nomination of the reform-minded Hayes. Bristow, however, believed that Harlan had acted too hastily, but his complaint does not appear justified. It appears, however, that Harlan did have some kind of understanding with Hayes's managers. Whether it can be linked to his appointment to the Supreme Court by Hayes is highly questionable. "I don't

³⁷E. J. Edwards, "Reminiscences of James G. Blaine," Chautauquan, XVII (1893), 47-48.

believe you could have nominated Bristow without part of the Blaine vote," Bowles later told Halstead. The plan was to demonstrate that Blaine could not be nominated, but the anti-Blaine forces were also fearful of prolonging indecision beyond five or six ballots. Conkling's New York delegation tried for an adjournment after the sixth ballot, but were defeated. Thereafter both the New York and Pennsylvania delegations caucused and Conkling delivered his state's votes to Hayes, while Pennsylvania withdrew her favorite son, and cast 30 votes for Blaine and 28 votes for Hayes. Since Hayes won with only five votes to spare, Pennsylvania's decision was crucial and her rejection of the unit rule was blamed for Blaine's defeat. However, Blaine's managers had consistently fought the unit rule and the support they had received in their effort had been vital to the growth of Blaine's strength after the first roll call. Pennsylvania's delegation had agreed at one time, however, to follow the majority once their favorite son was dropped, but Blaine's managers could not then re-establish what they had urged the state to abandon.³⁸

Hayes had correctly predicted that if Blaine failed, he himself was the likeliest compromise nominee. Yet he continued to confide to his diary that failure would "be a great relief -- a setting free from bondage." The responsibilities that would

³⁸Thompson, "Benjamin Bristow," pp. 371-72 and Samuel Bowles to Halstead, June 22, 1876. Halstead Papers. Cincinnati Historical Society. Microfilm copy in Hayes Memorial Library. Hereafter cited as Halstead Papers. Frank B. Evans, Pennsylvania Politics, 1872-1877: A Study in Political Leadership (Harrisburg, 1966), pp. 261-62.

accompany were sobering. It would be a heavy burden, he concluded, although it would not be "overpoweringly strong." When Blaine sensed his impending defeat, Garfield records that Blaine immediately dispatched his congratulations, a message that "for a few moments quite unmanned me," wrote Hayes. Availability, management, the unbridled march of events and perhaps the Hayes 'luck' had combined to do their work. "Friday has been a lucky day for me before," the nominee observed to his diary.³⁹

The first order of business for the nominee was his letter of acceptance -- a document that was especially important, given his position as a compromise candidate. At first he was inclined to be characteristically brief, believing that it was merely a formality. Well before his nomination he had been reminded by Cox that the Liberals would not only make civil service reform a campaign issues, but would "insist on its execution afterward." Cox again called Hayes's attention to the importance of reform, immediately after the convention concluded its work. The key question of the day, he wrote, was, could "Hayes free the Presidential office from the management and practical control of the machine politicians." The candidate's uprightness alone was insufficient, he warned; he must also make his intentions clear, develop a program for reform and hold to it resolutely if he hoped to win reform support.

³⁹Hayes Diary, June 16, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 326 and Garfield Diary, June 16, 1876. Garfield Papers. Hayes Diary, June 18, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 326.

The next administration would be evaluated on the basis of its reform achievements. "The President who will devote a term to that (civil service) reform," Garfield noted in his diary, "& make it sure will stand among the foremost benefactors of his country."⁴⁰ Cox's fellow Liberal, Schurz, also hastened to advise Hayes that civil service reform merited a prominent place in his Letter. Hayes replied that he wished to make it "the issue of the canvass -- to be perfectly explicit, decided, and square, but brief in regard to it," and indicated he was considering a single term declaration as well. Garfield added his voice to those of the Liberals in urging the importance of the reform issue. He wrote to Hayes of his hope that he would "not fail to make a pointed allusion to the reform of the Civil Service" in his Letter. "All classes of Republicans are looking for your letter with great anxiety," he assured him, "for more than any other year of our history, the campaign will turn upon your exposition of the platform." Both Garfield and Schurz urged Hayes to emphasize resumption and Hayes did use the essence of Schurz's suggested bold statement on the question.⁴¹

Well before his Letter appeared, Hayes had written to

⁴⁰Hayes to John Sherman, June 23, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 328; Edward A. Huth, "President Rutherford B. Hayes; Civil Service Reformer" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Western Reserve University, 1943), p. 70 and Garfield Diary, July 7, 1876. Garfield Papers.

⁴¹Hayes to Carl Schurz, June 27, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 329; Garfield to Hayes, July 1, 1876 and Carl Schurz to Hayes, June 20, 23 and July 1, 1876. Hayes Papers.

Garfield that he hoped his statements on resumption and reform would meet with his approval. When the Letter did appear, Garfield commented in his diary that it was indeed "a very clear and sensible document." He assured the candidate that "all our friends who believe in good government are rejoiced," while its critics were the very men whose approval would "be a damage to the cause." Hayes himself labeled it "bold and honest" and thought that although it would "offend some and cool the ardor of others", the people as a whole would receive it well. Most important of all, he concluded with his customary self-assurance, it was "the true course." He had promised to put a stop to the system of congressional patronage and pledged himself to a single term as a vital first step in that direction.⁴² Most Stalwarts were apparently not seriously offended by what they took to be but an expedient move designed to bring many dissident Liberals back into the fold and separate Hayes from what he would call "the unfortunate methods and men" of Grant's administration. But anxious as he was to divorce himself from Grantism, he did not wish to alienate the President and his people. Thus when Thomas C. Platt came to Columbus with the information that Grant was angry because he understood the single term pledge to be a reflection upon him, Hayes hastened to explain himself to the President.

⁴²Hayes to Garfield, July 8, 1876 and Garfield Diary, July 10, 1876. Garfield Papers. Garfield to Hayes, July 11, 1876. Hayes Papers. Hayes Diary, July 8, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 333.

"Nothing, I assure you, is further from the fact," the candidate explained in a letter to the President. "In addition to the reason given in the letter," Hayes continued, "there was another which had much weight with me." He was, he said, "not a prominent candidate outside of" Ohio while "at least four" of the losers were more prominent than Hayes. Moreover, "five leading candidates" were younger than the nominee and thus might "all reasonably expect to be candidates" four years hence, he reasoned. "It seemed to me therefore that nominated as I was, it would tend to unite and harmonize their friends if it were certainly known that I would not be in the way four years from now." This would "surely strengthen" the Hayes administration, he concluded.⁴³ But just how, one is moved to ask? Hayes was not insincere in revealing his reasons for making the one-term pledge, but he did omit a third and most important motive for this seemingly selfless and expedient move: he simply had no desire to serve for more than four years and was already dreading even this much bondage. Moreover, it was the kind of gesture which he relished, and he was sure it would contribute to his good reputation.

While Hayes was preparing his Letter, Garfield was coming to a decision on the question of his retirement from public life. The beginning of summer found him not only weary, but "greatly distressed" as he rested in Ohio among friends and

⁴³Hayes Diary, Dec. 18, 1879 and Hayes to Ulysses S. Grant, July 14, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 582, 334.

discussed his future course. It appeared "almost necessary," he told his diary, to seek re-election "partly to aid Hayes in Ohio, & partly to seal up the charges which were not altogether given over two years ago." On July 1, he noted that his reception upon returning to the House had been "very pleasant and cordial" and that his brief contribution to the debate then in progress "was welcomed" by friendly colleagues who assured him that he had "been greatly needed." It comes as no surprise that he thereupon recorded his decision to stand for re-election, with the following words:

I do this with great reluctance; for I really want to get out of Congress; but don't quite see how I can in the midst of this Presidential Campaign. I am not at all happy in the prospect of continuing in Congress. In fact I have been greatly depressed at the prospect of this unsettled mode of living with my large family. If we lose the next Congress, I will certainly resign next year. This I record for a memorial.

His anxiety for his family was genuine, yet he knew he had vacillated in the face of the question for years. Moreover, he appreciated, without fully understanding, the tenacious hold politics had upon him. He was made unhappy both by the thought of retirement and that of re-election. "Inconsistent human nature," he mused.⁴⁴

On July 1, Garfield informed Hayes that he would probably

⁴⁴Garfield Diary, June 22; July 1 and 2, 1876. Garfield Papers.

stand for re-election, but would definitely give all the time he could afford to what promised to be "a very hard and close contest. . . ." On the same day, he informed his good friend and advisor, Harmon Austin, that he could "quietly" let it be known that he would run again. Perhaps he wished Hayes to understand that he was almost persuaded to make the sacrifice on his account alone and it seems likely that he was soliciting a direct request from Hayes that he stand for re-election. Undoubtedly, he felt an obligation to his party and a fellow Ohioian, but Blaine's defeat had left him uncertain as to what his position might be in the event of a Republican victory. With Blaine in the White House, he might well have expected to be a major figure in the administration, but how would he stand with Hayes? They were on friendly terms, but he was scarcely an intimate friend and his preference for Blaine at the convention had been an open secret. Was he seeking to establish a closer relationship with Hayes, a certain sense of obligation on the candidate's part, in the hope that this would give him position with a Hayes administration? He certainly gave friends the impression that his decision had either been made after Hayes had solicited his aid or that at the very least that it had been significantly influenced by Hayes's wishes. Hayes did express his hope that Garfield would run again as well as the hope that he would meet soon with the campaign's managers to map strategy.⁴⁵

⁴⁵Garfield to Hayes, July 1, 1876; Garfield to Austin, July 1, 1876 and William K. Rogers to Garfield, July 10, 1876. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

Blaine's elevation to the Senate also affected Garfield's decision, for it led his friends in Congress "to insist very strongly" that he stay on, he assured a friend. And while he cautioned Austin that a message urging him to stand for re-election "must not be made public", he nevertheless sent it along with the suggestion that it be used "confidentially" within his inner circle of friends and supporters. To a good friend and district editor, he wrote that although he "was strongly desirous of withdrawing" from politics, Hayes wanted him "to stand again" and moreover his friends were "very desirous" that he remain in Congress. He also had the speakership in mind when he made his decision. Thus he confided to Austin that with Blaine going to the Senate and Wheeler paired with Hayes, a Republican House victory would clear the track for him. "The fact that this has been spoken of by so many friends," he continued, "shows how strong the feeling towards me is here, where I am best known." Former governor Dennison was one of those who told him that he should be the speaker were the Republicans to win control of the House in the coming election. With his decision made, Garfield became eager that his bid for re-election be well managed and urged Austin not to "hesitate to incur any expense for travel and time you may think best to get a full & fair expression of the popular will." He would, however, take no direct part in winning renomination, although he desired a strong endorsement that would forestall the nomination of an independent candidate and the very

considerable "scratching" that had occurred in his last contest.⁴⁶

As the presidential campaign gained momentum, Hayes's Letter of Acceptance proved to be a significant campaign document, although it had but little influence on the conduct and strategy of the campaign. It may be assumed that he neither expected nor desired to be closely identified with this operation. As in the case of the campaign for his nomination, he preferred to be a bystander and await the victory that would put him in a position to exert himself with more effect. Those who held the reins of national party power were, after all, not his kind, and the tactics they encouraged or tolerated were not to his liking. But he had made his position clear and he felt confident that although the campaign represented a blatant contradiction of the letter and spirit of his statement of acceptance and all he believed he represented, his reputation was safe. It was as if he thought of himself as a passenger on a train on the way to the White House, managed by a crew that was necessary to a successful trip, but whose conduct had no real significance for him beyond this piece of work.

Some of his liberal supporters, however, were not contented to let matters take their course. When Schurz complained to him that officeholders were being assessed as usual, Hayes replied (and surely he could not have believed this

⁴⁶Garfield to Hayes, July 1, 1876; Garfield to William C. Howells, July 19, 1876; Garfield to Harmon Austin, July 4, 1876; Garfield to Halsey Hall, July 1, 1876 and Harmon Austin to Garfield, Aug. 2, 1876. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

himself) that he did not "think" this would be encouraged by the National Committee. "We can (and are doing it) commit the party to right doctrines by resolutions of clubs, meetings, and the like, until there will be left no basis for the objectors. But I suspect the main thing is to be like flint when action (for reform) is had," he wrote. "Beyond that I do not see how I can act efficiently," Hayes pleaded, betraying his essential powerlessness. His eyes were focused on the future and in a later message to Schurz, he assured him "that if ever I have charge of an Administration this whole assessment business will go up 'hook, line and sinker'." And to an old friend he naively wrote that "with the party fully (!) committed to the reform," implementation would "not be as difficult" as its opponents claimed it would be. "I hate assessments," he declared early in August to William Henry Smith, for they were "all wrong" and would surely do "more harm than good."⁴⁷ Schurz, still less than satisfied with Hayes's response to his complaints, continued to bother the candidate on the subject, while Hayes patiently assured him that he had put a stop to "all the practices you complain of within my reach." But as one scholarly study notes, "the system of political assessments reached its height" during this very campaign. Perhaps in exasperation Hayes pointed out in an unfinished and unsent note to his liberal friend, that "worse things" than

⁴⁷Hayes to Carl Schurz, July 24, 1876; Hayes to Carl Schurz, Sept. 15, 1876; Hayes to William Dickson, July 14, 1876 and Hayes to William H. Smith, Aug. 10, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 335, 358, 333-34, 343.

assessments had been reported to him. Some weeks later, he professed to be surprised at Schurz's claim that government workers in Washington were being assessed, although he paid no heed to Schurz's pleas that he publicly denounce "all practices not in entire harmony" with his Letter. He merely assured him that he hoped soon to discuss the situation with Cox, and that Schurz might rest easy, for if elected he could be trusted to fulfill his promises faithfully. "No political, no partisan duty, (if such things can be called duties!) -- at any rate, no partisan or personal service shall be required, or allowed to be required of public officers," he resolved.⁴⁸

Two days after his first exchange of letters with Schurz on the subject, Hayes wrote to Richard McCormick, his only contact on the National Committee, reminding him of his public pronouncement on "what ought to be required of office-holders" and enclosing a clipping asserting that assessments were sanctioned by the Committee. If this was true, he wished them to know that it was "a plain departure from correct principles and ought not to be allowed. I trust the committee will have nothing to do with it," he concluded, undoubtedly sure that his protest would fall upon deaf ears, particularly since McCormick himself had little influence within the Committee. A week later, he informed Schurz of his action and

⁴⁸Hayes to Carl Schurz, Aug. 25, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 352; Dorothy G. Fowler, The Cabinet Politician: The Postmasters General, 1829-1909 (New York, 1943), p. 157; Hayes to Schurz, Aug. 25 and Sept. 6, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 352, 354, 354 n.

of his decision to confine himself only to such protests. He did, however, go so far as to send Schurz a copy of his letter to McCormick, cautioning him that it was "for private use only" until he should approve its publication.⁴⁹ But this was as far as he would go in mollifying Schurz and those for whom he spoke. And Hayes would not have gone this far had it not been for reform pressure and his desire to keep as many liberals in his camp as possible and attract new recruits.

Meanwhile, he continued subtly to encourage Schurz to pursue other themes, those which Hayes clearly believed were politically more potent and would pay bigger dividends on election day. An undue emphasis on reform issues might alienate important elements within the party whose support was essential to his success. Indeed, Hayes was walking a tight rope during these months and was keenly aware of the problems he faced as the compromise candidate of a party whose prospects for victory appeared dim. He had to win over or appear to be captured by those liberal dissidents who had bolted the party in 1872, but who had not as a whole identified with him before his nomination. They were essential to a GOP victory, yet his relationship to them must be carefully controlled so as not to offend men like Garfield who spoke for many party regulars when he commented that while he was pleased to have them returning to the fold and joining in the effort to elect Hayes,

⁴⁹Hayes to Richard C. McCormick, Sept. 8, 1876 and Hayes to Carl Schurz, Sept. 15, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 355, 357.

they had no "right to assume the leadership of" the party and "dictate to those who have bolted."⁵⁰ Hayes had to cultivate his relationship with the reform element with care, for he also had to contend with the Stalwart element and the Grant clique, who occupied key positions in the party organization and held the reins of power in this campaign. These men were, by and large, anathema to Hayes, yet they, too, were as necessary to him as he was to them and an uneasy facade of harmony had to be maintained. But Hayes was well suited for this difficult role and he handled it with more ease than one might suppose -- because he was in fact, type cast for it. During the campaign leading to his nomination, he had been a model of discretion, conciliation and dignified reserve, a man bent upon offending no one. This was the Hayes approach, it was his political style and it not only worked admirably for him during the presidential campaign, but it saw him safely through the bitter contest that followed.

The work of Congress dragged on for some two months after the presidential nominations had been made, and quite naturally much that was said and done there was calculated to influence the outcome of the campaign. During this period, Garfield gained substantially in stature and, without knowing it, took important steps toward assuming a prominent role in the post election contest and in the Hayes administration. Hayes's Letter had not only pleased Garfield, but he was

⁵⁰Garfield to Jonathan Scofield, July 1, 1876. Garfield Papers.

flattered that his suggestions had apparently influenced its composition. While he believed the GOP choice met with general approval, if not with the enthusiasm that "some others (Blaine?)" might have engendered, he concluded that it was "perhaps the safest choice." He was bothered, however, by the fact that he did not know Hayes as well as he did the front runners at Cincinnati. But as he met and questioned men who knew him intimately, he came to feel "better about the Governor's qualities," as he put it in his diary.⁵¹

As the campaign got under way it became increasingly apparent that neither the GOP nor its nominee were to be constrained by the elevated tone of the Letter of Acceptance. Hayes had declared to Schurz that civil service reform was to be the issue, and his Letter implied that he wished to hasten the reconciliation of the North and South. Yet he made no significant attempt to encourage party regulars to emphasize the reform issue in the campaign, and merely contented himself with reassuring reform spokesmen that all would be well -- if only he was victorious. As to the South, he used his evaluation of the trend of public opinion in Ohio to justify a departure from the spirit of his Letter. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, he insisted in a letter to Schurz, "a vast majority of 'the plain people' think of this as the main interest in the

⁵¹Garfield Diary, July 7 and 10, 1876. Garfield Papers. Garfield to Charles Henry, July 22, 1876. Charles E. Henry Papers. Hiram College. Hereafter cited as Henry Papers. Garfield to William C. Howells, July 19, 1876 and Garfield Diary, July 15, 1876. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

canvass: A Democratic victory will bring the Rebellion into power." After Garfield had delivered his widely and lavishly praised reply to Lamar, Hayes joined in the applause, assuring him that it would "do good." For, he argued, "our main issue must be It is not safe to allow the Rebellion to come into power. . . ." This and Tilden's unfitness for the office put the Democrats on the defensive and reflected "a decided and growing" popular opinion. After receiving a copy of the speech from Garfield he repeated his opinion that this was the "true issue", as the common people viewed it.⁵²

While visiting him in Columbus in mid-September, Garfield recorded that he was favorably impressed with Hayes's "clear analysis of the movements of the Campaign" including his belief that the sectional issue now overshadowed all other issues in voters' minds. While dining with Hayes and Schurz, he undertook to "show Schurz how the war issues were dwarfing all others." And as Hayes put it in referring to Garfield's inclination to bring the silver question forward, they "need not, facing the Solid South, borrow any troubles about details of the money controversy. . . ." Since they had won a major victory for sound money in 1875, Hayes insisted they "might undertake the greater task of pacification under the enforcement of the amended Constitution," Murat Halstead recalled

⁵²Hayes to Carl Schurz, Aug. 9, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 340; Hayes to Garfield, Aug. 5 and 12, 1876. Garfield Papers.

years later.⁵³ It is obvious then, why Hayes saw nothing inconsistent about emphasizing the danger of rebel rule, while promising to promote intersectional harmony. This would be impossible if the challenge of the 'Solid South' was not defeated.

It was at this time that Hayes called Schurz's attention to what he believed had become the two major campaign issues: "the danger of a 'united South' victory, and Tilden's record as a reformer." He reminded another correspondent that they were the emerging pre-occupation of both the press and the stump speakers, and it was a telling approach, he declared. "Our strong ground is the dread of the solid South, rebel rule, etc., etc.," he insisted in a letter to Blaine, and urged him to emphasize this on the stump. "It leads people away from 'hard times'!" which, he had decided by September, was the GOP's "deadliest foe." After visiting with Blaine, during his swing through Ohio, he found that they were in nearly perfect agreement as to the South. "By conciliating Southern whites, on the basis of obedience to law and equal rights, he (Blaine) hopes we may divide the Southern whites, and so protect the colored people," Hayes recorded in his journal.⁵⁴ This was to be the essence of his southern policy as president.

⁵³Garfield Diary, Sept. 17, 1876. Garfield Papers. Halstead, "Recollections and Letters," p. 488.

⁵⁴Hayes to Carl Schurz, Sept. 15, 1876, Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 358; quoted in Gail Hamilton, Biography of James G. Blaine (Norwich, 1895), p. 422 and Hayes Diary, Oct. 4, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 364.

Hayes's closest friends and political aides steadily emphasized the sectional theme during the campaign. One of the chief architects of the Hayes victory in Cincinnati, William Henry Smith, was a leading advocate of bloody shirt tactics during the presidential campaign. This was the ploy that aroused western Republicans when nothing else worked, he assured Comly late in August. The latter was urged to telegraph Robert Ingersoll to abandon Maine and with Noyes arouse Ohioians to the dangers of rebel rule. Yet, unaccountably, Hayes apparently counted on carrying some of the Confederate South and in early July had urged Garfield to stir up the Congressional Campaign Committee on this matter. It was urgent that he see what the party could do in North Carolina, for there was no time to lose. Hayes was certain that if Garfield visited that state, he could "do great good."⁵⁵

As the campaign gained momentum, Hayes's diary and correspondence also provide occasional glimpses of his equivocal attitude toward the presidential bid. First of all, he hoped to remain as completely passive as possible, preferring to hear neither good nor bad campaign reports. Victory was manifestly less important than maintaining his self-respect and a clear conscience. He wrote "the following honest words" to one of his oldest and most intimate friends: "Now that the flush of gratification upon the nomination is about at an end,

⁵⁵Edgar L. Gray, "The Career of William Henry Smith, Politician-Journalist" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1950), p. 87 and Hayes to Garfield, July 8, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 333.

I begin to prefer the independence of a private citizen." He asserted that he would be the "most contented" defeated candidate in U. S. history. And in a letter to Lucy Hayes, he confessed that when by himself, he "always" wished to be "a quiet private citizen again." Defeat would fulfill this wish and he "almost" hoped for it. "Independence is such a comfort and blessing. . . ." Yet on this very day he was instructing a friend to solicit from John M. Forbes the financial help that was deemed imperative were Indiana to be saved.⁵⁶ Late in September, he noted in his journal that the presidency would "be a sore trial. Health, comfort, happiness, all imperilled, if not sacrificed" while he could find much "satisfaction" in defeat. Nearly a month later, he claimed he was "almost indifferent" about the outcome and could find "many reasons for thinking defeat a blessing." He was sure he would stand by his Letter, he told his diary, "but what conflicts and annoyances would follow!" He had lost some of his earlier optimism and naivete as to the problems facing a reform president and he was now beginning to be a bit uneasy. "I do not fear my pluck or constancy a particle. But to be deceived by rogues, to find many a trusted reformer no better than he should be -- here would be humiliation and troubles without end."⁵⁷ It was

⁵⁶Hayes to Schurz, Aug. 9, 1876; Hayes Diary, Aug. 13, 1876; Hayes to Lucy Hayes, Aug. 13, 1876 and Hayes to William Rogers, Aug. 13, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 340, 344-45.

⁵⁷Hayes Diary, Sept. 24 and Oct. 22, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 363, 370.

precisely his hypersensitivity to such dangers that left Hayes an uneasy officeholder and which at once limited his tangible achievements as an executive, but enabled him to make those intangible contributions that reflected a lifetime of modest but pure public service.

By August, the outlook for the Republicans had grown markedly bleaker. After Schurz had sent him a very grim estimate of affairs, Hayes replied that the greater the odds against success, the "nobler" would be the effort. Schurz insisted that although "an upright, able, and well-meaning gentleman," Hayes had been consistently loyal to Grant and was so indebted to the Stalwarts that they would hold the reins of power during his presidency and make his Letter of Acceptance a mere scrap of paper. Schurz pleaded with him to shatter this impression with some sort of public statement, but Hayes would not break his self-imposed silence. By mid-August, it was apparent that the party was in serious trouble in Indiana. During a lengthy conversation with Morton, Hayes was told that if Indiana was lost in October, defeat in November was nearly certain. Using election figures, Morton demonstrated the essential balance of party strength in Indiana ever since 1860. He also claimed that four-fifths of the growing voter strength of the Greenback party was being drawn from Republican ranks. Hayes quoted Morton as saying that "money and speakers" were necessary to carry the state -- about \$100,000 from outside of the state as compared with some \$55,000 in 1872. After hearing this sobering appraisal, a depressed Hayes made the

following journal entry:

On the whole, his talk was not encouraging. The use of money, I have little faith in, and I am confident no such large sum can be raised. I mean to get through cheerfully and firmly and with clean hands. If defeated, there will be no bitterness in the disappointment, and I shall have my self-respect and an approving conscience.

Schurz's and Morton's pessimistic reports shattered the comforting illusion nourished by Hayes and his intimates that all was well. The nominee did not care to "give much thought to the prospects" of the campaign and "preferred not to know much that would either depress or elate."⁵⁸ Certainly he did not want to become involved in the potentially dangerous and nasty business of funding raising. He found the passive, aloof, cautiously optimistic posture comfortable and comforting and insofar as his reputation and equanimity were concerned -- much safer. He wanted victory, but he did not wish to go beyond encouraging and suggesting themes to stump speakers, and doing what he could to compensate for the National Committee's mismanagement.

Following the Morton interview, he wrote Conkling to say he was "anxious" to have his help in Indiana and Ohio as soon as possible. He went out of his way to flatter the egocentric

⁵⁸Hayes to Carl Schurz, Aug. 9, 1876; Carl Schurz to Hayes, n. d.; Hayes Diary, Aug. 13, 1876 and Hayes to Carl Schurz, Aug. 9, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 340, 341-42, 343-44, 340.

New Yorker, assuring him that his state could still decide the contest even if Indiana was lost, but implying that if he came West, Indiana might yet be saved. "Your presence here will impart to our canvass life and enthusiasm," Hayes wrote, "and insure that energetic effort which brings out a full vote and commands success." Even if Conkling appeared in only the major urban centers, Hayes would consider that he "placed the country and all of us under great obligations." Years later, he implied that Conkling's retirement "to his tent in a fit of sulk" had been a significant factor in the election's outcome.⁵⁹

Hayes also urged, through an intermediary, "liberal. . . exceptionally liberal appropriations" for Indiana by the party organizations in Illinois and New York with some success. He first telegraphed and then wrote Blaine, informing him that the great rally to be held at Warren, Ohio, where he was to speak, might well be the "turning point" of the entire canvass. Garfield had campaigned in Maine at the request of Hayes and the National Committee with the understanding that Blaine, Frye and Hale would reciprocate. Hayes warned Blaine that Garfield would "dare not face the people of Warren (he did not explain why)" and the meeting would have to be cancelled if he failed to appear. "This would be very disastrous,"

⁵⁹Hayes to Roscoe Conkling, Aug. 15, 1876 and Hayes Diary, June 29, 1888, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 347 and IV, 396.

wrote Hayes urgently.⁶⁰

Garfield, who had been laboring diligently for Hayes and his own re-election was drawn to Hayes through his reading of his friend Howell's campaign biography as this diary entry reveals: "I find my heart warming up towards Hayes very much, since I find how true and thorough he was in Student life and habits. It is a joy to speak for a man whose stuff and spirit one can wholly & cordially approve of."⁶¹ Did Garfield perhaps have Blaine in mind when he wrote this?

The Ohio election results in October did not serve to encourage a cheerful outlook. Overall the party made gains, but the Democrats took Cincinnati and environs and two close friends of Hayes, Stanley Matthews and Manning Force, lost congressional races. On the other hand, Hayes was pleased by the victories of McKinley, Cox, Garfield, Foster and others whom he considered "cronies" and who, he believed, would support civil service reform and financial soundness. Garfield and his backers were satisfied that he had finally recovered from the blows received in 1872-73 and now stood "completely vindicated" as Austin put it. Garfield, meanwhile, was counting on the speakership if the Republicans carried the House.⁶²

⁶⁰Hayes to James Root, Aug. 22, 1876 and Hayes to Blaine (telegram), Sept. 20, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 351, 261.

⁶¹Sept. 19, 1876. Garfield Papers.

⁶²Hayes to Carl Schurz, Aug. 17, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 346 and Harmon Austin to Garfield, Oct. 23, 1876. Garfield Papers.

Hayes blamed the vote losses in Ohio towns and cities on the depression and recognized that the use of the Catholic-school issue had hurt the party among Catholic immigrants. It worried him that his opposition to "Catholic & all sectarian interference with political affairs" had been construed to mean he opposed suffrage rights for foreigners. The latter charge was given added force when Hayes was endorsed by the nativist Order of the American Alliance, and when his secretary replied that the candidate was "deeply gratified" by their action. This, in addition to the Ohio gubernatorial candidate's association with the temperance movement, undoubtedly cost the Republicans votes and contributed to the defection of German voters, including former lieutenant governor Jacob Mueller. Garfield, who had predicted a close contest as far back as July, warned late in October that the outcome was "now dangerously close."⁶³ But Hayes assured the Secretary of the National Committee that "all non-Catholic foreigners" had remained loyal and that the party's majority could be doubled "in November without effort." He believed that Wisconsin was "safe" and that the party stood "as well as ever with the Germans." Indiana had gone to the Democrats, as he had anticipated, but the outlook for November was much better.⁶⁴

⁶³Hayes to Richard McCormick, Oct. 14, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 367; Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes, p. 312; Garfield to Austin, Oct. 23, 1876. Garfield Papers.

⁶⁴Hayes to Richard McCormick, Oct. 14, 1876 and Hayes to William H. Smith, Oct. 14, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 367, 368.

Hayes had been especially anxious about Ohio, since those who urged his nomination most strongly had argued that Ohio was necessary for victory and Hayes was the only man who could surely carry that state. "After all this," wrote the candidate, "the loss of Ohio in October would have been a sore mortification." He confessed that he could take a defeat in the presidential race "far more philosophically . . . than the loss of Ohio in October." He was most concerned with the Republican performance in his own ward, the town of Fremont and his county and congressional district. He now recorded with satisfaction that they had done "very handsomely" and he considered the results a "gratifying" endorsement by Ohio and his neighborhood. He now was sure that he would encounter no difficulty in carrying his own state in November. He was concerned, however, with what he termed the "know-nothing charges" made against him. But these were "more than met (not by denial or explanation) but by charging the Democrats with their Catholic alliance," Hayes explained to a friend. To this end, the Grey Nun's Act of Governor Tilden's administration (legislation authorizing Catholic schools to issue public-school teacher certificates) had been worked up for general distribution as a campaign document. It was a "very effective" and "complete reply," wrote Hayes approvingly. But the accusers were not silenced, he did find himself denying the charge and it undoubtedly cost him votes in November.⁶⁵

⁶⁵Hayes Diary, Oct. 15, 1876; Hayes to William H. Smith, Oct. 20, 1876 and Hayes to W. S. Ridgway, Oct. 24, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 368-69, 369, 370-71.

Hayes might have appeared optimistic, but his facade of cheerfulness concealed a growing feeling of apprehension. He not only spoke of defeat, but for the first time mentioned the possibility of a "contested" election and a resulting "conflict of arms." He was greeted by large crowds while visiting the Centennial exhibits in Philadelphia on Ohio Day, October 26, and delivered six short talks there without, as he phrased it, "saying anything" he might regret. But he returned to Ohio "feeling that with the probabilities of fraud and violence -- fraud, North; violence, South -- the chances are that we shall lose the election." However, he immediately made reference to what was already known as the 'Hayes luck'. "My luck is the other way," he reassured himself, and indeed it appears that his experience as a soldier and a politician had convinced him he was the beneficiary of a special providence. Garfield, too, noted that he had never felt so unsure about the outcome of a presidential contest.⁶⁶

During the final week of the campaign, Hayes continued to refer to defeat as a very real possibility, admitting now that the Democratic triumph in Hamilton County (Cincinnati), had denied his "friends the prestige of victory" and might mean "the difference between victory and defeat." Of course, he insisted, the October setback had been "due to bribery and re-peating", just as a defeat in November could be attributed

⁶⁶Hayes Diary, Oct. 22 and 29, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 370, 371 and Garfield Diary, Nov. 7, 1876. Garfield Papers.

mainly to "hard times." Both he and Garfield believed that the depression would lead men to vote for a change in Washington, and Garfield saw a historical parallel between 1876 and the situations in 1836, 1848 and 1856. But Hayes emphasized that hard times made it easier to hire men to violate election laws and defeat would come, "if at all, by crime -- by bribery and repeating North and violence and intimidation in the South."⁶⁷ It was as if he were preparing himself for a disputed election, readying himself to believe that he would have won a clear-cut victory had law and order prevailed.

⁶⁷Hayes Diary, Nov. 1, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 371-72 and Garfield Diary, Nov. 6, 1876. Garfield Papers.

CHAPTER 5

COMPROMISE YIELDS A TARNISHED VICTORY

The election did not settle the Hayes - Tilden contest -- rather it touched off yet another struggle that lasted until the eve of Hayes's inauguration and tested the mettle of the two candidates. Both parties claimed the electoral votes of South Carolina, Florida and Louisiana. Hayes needed every one of the contested votes for victory; Tilden needed but one. Although 'visiting statesmen' went south to see that the three states' returning boards did their work 'properly' (Garfield was one of those sent to Louisiana by Grant), Congress still had to resolve the dilemma of several sets of double returns and with a Democratic House and a Republican Senate, constitutional guidelines were of little help. Therefore a compromise was struck creating a bi-partisan Electoral Commission (Garfield was one of its members) to determine which set of returns should be counted. Its decisions awarded every disputed vote, and hence the presidency, to Hayes despite efforts in the House to block the count's completion. Throughout this struggle Garfield occupied a center stage position as a major force in the effort to put Hayes in the White House. He also had a hand in some of the behind-the-scenes maneuvering and

so-called 'bargains' that facilitated the peaceful settlement of a struggle that might have taken a dangerous turn. Hayes, meanwhile, maintained a passive pose throughout these trying months, although he was aware of much that was done on his behalf, often giving such activities his tacit approval and encouragement. He also busied himself with cabinet making chores and arrived at significant decisions that would guide his administration's approach to civil service reform and the southern problem.

As the returns trickled in, Hayes's belief that the odds favored the Democrats seemed to be borne out. Despite his optimistic predictions, even Ohio was not delivering the anticipated majority. "The effect was depressing," he admitted. Later on in the evening, a report of sizeable Tilden majorities in New York city led Hayes to conclude that there was no longer "a chance for Republican success." Personally, he took this apparent setback calmly and cheerfully. Unlike some of his party's leaders, he did not subscribe to the notion that economic recovery depended upon a Republican victory, not did he anticipate "any great or permanent injury" to the nation's "financial affairs", but he did believe the cause of civil service reform, too, would receive a severe setback. As on election day, he reiterated his conviction that the South would "be the great sufferer", for it would "drift toward chaos again." The cause for which he had enlisted years before, and which he had once believed secure, was now endangered. Following his supposed defeat, he lamented that now "the

Amendments will be nullified, disorder will continue, prosperity to both whites and colored people will be pushed off for years."¹

He was especially anxious about the southern Negro: what would the future hold for him? His prospects appeared grim and forboding, to say the least. It is indeed tempting to write off the use of bloody shirt tactics in 1876 as the triumph of expediency over idealism or as a bit of political demagogery. But did this not also reflect a sincere and deeply felt concern on the part of men like Hayes and Garfield for the welfare of the Negro, the South as a whole and the nation's future, as well? Keeping the major aims of the Civil War and radical reconstruction in mind, as well as recent rebel speeches in Congress, is it so difficult to square the encouragement of such tactics with the professions of his 'letter'? The desire for a Republican victory likewise reflected, among other things, Hayes's conviction that he "could do more than a Democrat to put Southern affairs on a sound basis."²

The incomplete returns of Tuesday evening forecast defeat, but as more complete tallies became available on Wednesday, the picture brightened and the suspense mounted. The Republican National Committee claimed the presidency by a single electoral vote by virtue of victories in Louisiana, South Carolina

¹Hayes Diary, Nov. 11; 7 and 11, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 375, 373, 376.

²Hayes Diary, Nov. 11 and 12, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 376-77.

and Florida. The Democrats also claimed these states. Hayes, however, believed that Florida belonged to the Democrats, although he had "no doubt both fraud and violence intervened to produce the result." This was undoubtedly true in "many Southern States," he concluded. He was prepared to accept defeat, finding comfort in his belief that the Republicans and "fair-minded men" knew and "history" would surely record, that "by fraud, violence, and intimidation and by a nullification of the Fifteenth Amendment", his party had been robbed of a legitimate victory. It was a foregone conclusion that Hayes and the GOP would find and accept evidence of Democratic misdoings -- it remained only to find a suitable means of legitimatizing their claim of victory. Meanwhile, Hayes continued to insist that a fair election in the confederate south would have given him not simply a slim, but a substantial, majority in the Electoral College. There is no reason to believe he was insincere in this conviction. Had the Fifteenth Amendment "been obeyed and enforced," he wrote ten years later, the Republicans "would have had a majority of the popular vote of the country and at least 203 electoral votes to Tilden's 166." And they would have carried not only Louisiana, Florida and South Carolina, but Alabama and Mississippi, as well.³

For the moment, however, Hayes appeared resigned to defeat, consoled by his belief that on personal grounds it was

³Hayes Diary, Nov. 12, 1876; Hayes to Schurz, Nov. 13, 1876 and Hayes Diary, Dec. 10, 1886, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 377-78, 378 and IV, 297.

altogether preferable to success -- but not for long. At this point, a telegram from Dennison claiming that Hayes was "undoubtedly elected" and South Carolina, Florida and Louisiana would be carried despite Democratic efforts to the contrary, revived his hopes. He immediately took steps to make Dennison's dispatch public and thereafter began claiming that "undoubtedly, a fair election in the South would have" produced a substantial electoral and popular margin and that given "a fair canvass" victory was yet possible.⁴

Like Hayes, Garfield had initially anticipated defeat, but he, too, became somewhat more hopeful as claims of GOP majorities in some southern states appeared in the press. "It would be strange, indeed," he mused in his diary, "if Hayes should carry it by one majority. The people, who indulge a touch of superstition, say it is like his luck; that he has always squeezed through by a small majority, and will do so now." But "the people" were not alone in this feeling; Hayes, too, appears to have believed his luck would carry him through to victory.⁵

During the week following the election, Republican party managers busied themselves seeing to it that Hayes's 'luck' would work once again. The National Committee's claim of victory and 185 electoral votes immediately touched off an

⁴William Dennison to Hayes (telegram), Nov. 12, 1876 and Hayes to William H. Smith, Nov. 13, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 378, 379.

⁵Garfield Diary, Nov. 8, 1876. Garfield Papers.

extended and violent exchange between the two parties and encouraged party leaders to take steps calculated to make good their claims. As Hayes knew, his hopes rested with the Republican controlled returning boards and their authority to review and reject district returns -- perhaps a sufficient number to give him all the electoral votes in dispute and a narrow victory. Under the direction of Postmaster General James Tyner, five special agents and the Second Assistant Postmaster General were sent south to watch over the canvass in the three disputed states. Meanwhile, the Department of Justice, under Attorney General Alphonso Taft, an Ohioian, was busy countering Democratic efforts to take these states away from the GOP. William Chandler telegraphed Governor Daniel Chamberlain of South Carolina and Stephen Packard, Republican gubernatorial candidate in Louisiana, and Senator S. B. Conover of Florida, who were apprized of the situation, urged to be vigilant and hold their states for Hayes. They replied confidently that Hayes had carried their states and very shortly the Republican press was making unqualified claims of victory.⁶ Even without the often mentioned joint efforts of Zachariah Chandler, William Chandler and the New York Times, the Republicans would certainly have moved to secure Florids, Louisiana and South Carolina for their candidate. But their efforts did serve to revive and unite a dejected party organization, prepare the nation for a Republican victory snatched

⁶Fowler, Cabinet Politician, p. 161; James Comly to Hayes, Jan. 8, 1877 and Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes, p. 319.

from the jaws of defeat and forward those activities that ultimately secured the disputed electoral votes for Hayes. Such efforts also served to re-enforce the cry of fraud against the Democrats, which men from Hayes on down were already prepared to take up.

Like Hayes and Garfield, Grant at first anticipated defeat, but when the outcome appeared in doubt and upon Governor Kellogg's request, he called upon prominent party leaders to visit New Orleans to witness and report on the work of the returning board. When Garfield received the President's telegram asking him to undertake this mission, he declared himself to be "a good deal embarrassed." First of all, he believed Grant was exceeding his presidential powers to so act and that as his agent, he would be placed in a highly vulnerable position. "Second, I did not know who else was going," he wrote to Hinsdale, "and I might find myself associated with violent partisan Republicans who would attempt to count our side in per fas aut nefas." Although he was convinced that the Democrats were guilty of criminal acts during the election, he was not as yet prepared to believe a fair canvass would automatically produce a Republican victory. And perhaps he recognized that neither presidential candidate could be inaugurated without arousing cries of fraud (if it was Hayes) and intimidation and violence (if it was Tilden). Some four years earlier, anticipating a disputed election someday, Garfield had attempted unsuccessfully to secure a resolution calling upon the House Judiciary Committee to determine "what legislation

was necessary to provide for a contest of the election of presidential electors." And, he reported to Hinsdale, Senator O. P. Morton had also tried and failed to get Senate action on this matter. Now the problem was compounded and he succinctly outlined the dilemma his country faced in this way: "We are now on the verge of a double difficulty. The first and immediate one is this: what shall be done to secure an honest and faithful count and return of the votes actually cast? At the present moment it seems that the result hangs on the count of the vote of Louisiana; and the Democratic party asserts that the Governor . . . and his Board of Canvassers will not act honestly in the premises, but will count Hayes in at all hazards."⁷

Two days after Garfield penned these remarks, Hayes wrote to Schurz that should he "feel like going to Louisiana, it would gratify" him were he to do so. Schurz did not make the trip. Sherman went to New Orleans, but he was unhappy with his role as a "visiting statesman." In a written letter to his wife after arriving in New Orleans, he made this abundantly clear with these words:

I have been assigned a much more conspicuous position here than I wished and am almost sorry that I came. We are acting only as witnesses but public opinion will hold us as partisans. . . This whole business is a thankless, ungracious task not free from danger entirely unofficial and at our individual expense. . . I frequently regret that I ever came. Grant in 8

⁷Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, Nov. 11, 1876, in Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Letters, pp. 340-41.

years did not remember my existence until he had this most uncomfortable task to perform and then by his selections forced me to come.⁸

Garfield and his colleagues had arrived in New Orleans in mid-November, whereupon they quickly rejected a Democratic offer to join them in urging the election board to count and report only those votes actually cast, instead of votes legally cast, the goal to which the Republicans were committed. Thereafter, a committee representing each of the political parties observed the returning board's proceedings while individual observers like Garfield heard testimony and prepared briefs bearing on certain parishes, to be presented to the board. "Much of the testimony is hearsay," Garfield admitted to his diary, "but there is enough lawful evidence to startle me with the strength of the case to be made." What he found strongly re-enforced his inclination to believe the Democrats had stolen the election.⁹

After returning to Ohio, he described his Louisiana experience to Burke Hinsdale in this way: "I have been in what seemed a different world from ours -- a world in which the modes of thought and action are, in many respects, un-American and un-Republican." On the basis of a careful study of the situation, Garfield continued:

⁸Hayes to Carl Schurz, Nov. 13, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 379; John Sherman to Cecilia Sherman, Nov. 20; 24 and 25, 1876, quoted in Jeannette P. Nichols, "Rutherford B. Hayes and John Sherman," Ohio History, LXXVII (Winter, Spring, Summer, 1968), 132.

⁹Garfield Diary, Nov. 15 and 25, 1876. Garfield Papers.

I can only say that, making all due allowances for the exaggeration which partisanship and the sense of personal wrong naturally make, I know of nothing in modern history so destructive of popular government, and so shocking to humanity as the conduct of the Rebel Democracy during the four months that preceded the late election in Louisiana. They acted upon a preconceived plan and intended to do just enough violence and murder to accomplish their purpose and no more. But in their zeal they so far over did it as to make a remedy possible.

This evaluation coincides with the conclusion drawn by the author of a recent study of the Louisiana campaign, who speaks of the Democrats resorting to "a campaign of terrorization." Garfield was certain that Hayes had won a clear majority of the legitimate ballots, but he admitted to Hinsdale that he would have insisted "upon throwing out the vote of these parishes if there were nothing depending upon it in reference to a choice of President." His experience left him certain of the Republican case, he assured Hayes, yet he feared it would be "impossible for . . . northern people to understand how difficult a thing it is for anything like regularity and order to be brought out of such chaos as this, in a few days." He pleaded for patience while "the mill of the law" did its work.¹⁰

But the Republican case was not left to depend upon legal methods alone. Hayes's longtime friend and supporter, William Henry Smith, dispatched as a representative, a Chicago business man Charles Farwell, to New Orleans before the arrival of the

¹⁰Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, Dec. 4, 1876, in Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Letters, pp. 343-44; Fanny Z. L. Bone, "Louisiana in the Disputed Election of 1876," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XIV (1931), 564 and Garfield to Hayes, Nov. 23, 1876. Hayes Papers.

'visiting statesmen'. Smith later assured Hayes that Farwell was their "right hand man in Louisiana and it was he who first reached Kellogg and Packard. . . and thwarted the Democrats." Moreover, since election time, Farwell had "furnished \$20,000 to keep Kellogg's Collector of Taxes from being indited (sic) and matters from being aired in court," Smith claimed. Thereafter Packard's and Kellogg's behavior had been determined by Farwell's promises to them, Smith asserted shortly after the Hayes administration had been launched. Garfield does not appear to have made promises to critically placed Louisiana Republicans, but among his associates who were accused of busying themselves with such efforts was John Sherman. Election supervisors David A. Weber and James E. Anderson later claimed that during interviews with the Senator and in an exchange of letters they had received assurances that their cooperation would not go unrewarded, even to the point of making provision for them to leave Louisiana if need be. Sherman not only reassured Hayes that Louisiana definitely belonged to their party, but characterized Returning Board members J. Madison Wells and Thomas C. Anderson as "thoroughly honest and conscientious" as far as he could determine. He further commended Anderson to him as one who had acted "conscientiously and judiciously" during this crucial interval, as Hayes phrased it in his diary.¹¹

¹¹William H. Smith to Hayes, Dec. 5, 1876; Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes, pp. 465-66 and John Sherman to Hayes, Nov. 23, 1876. Hayes Papers. Hayes Diary, Nov. 26, 1876 in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 381.

Hayes's reaction to Sherman's report from New Orleans was to reply that he felt as the Senator did "about the whole business," insisting that a "fair election" would have brought them no fewer than forty southern electoral votes. But certain as he was that he deserved victory, Hayes was clearly worried that his supporters might try "to defeat one (Democratic) outrage and fraud by another." He cautioned Sherman that "there must be nothing crooked" on the part of their party. Perhaps it was his anxiety over the possibility of a tainted victory and perhaps shrewdness as well, that prompted him to confide to Schurz that defeat would "be a relief."¹²

But even before a decision had been rendered in Louisiana, he was visited by a New Orleans newspaperman who claimed to give him the authentic views of no fewer than three prominent southern politicians: Lucius Q. C. Lamar of Mississippi, Senator John Gordon of Georgia and Wade Hampton of South Carolina. He was certain to be inaugurated, the South simply wanted peace, honesty in federal offices, and would put up no fight, he was told. They claimed to favor the guaranteeing of Negro rights, wanted no promises from Hayes, but nevertheless would support him insofar as they could while remaining within the Democratic structure. Hayes replied by reassuring his informant that his 'Letter' "meant all it said and all it implied."¹³ This

¹²Hayes to John Sherman, Nov. 27, 1876 and Hayes to Carl Schurz, Nov. 26, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 381-82, 381.

¹³Hayes Diary, Dec. 1, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 382-83.

conference was but one of the earliest examples of why Hayes would grow progressively more optimistic about solving the 'southern problem' if only he was granted the opportunity.

On December 4, with their work in New Orleans completed, Garfield, Sherman and four of their colleagues paused on their way to Washington to report fully and in person to Hayes. They advised him that the Republicans who had visited New Orleans were unanimously of the opinion that he was legally entitled to Louisiana's electoral votes. They reported, as Hayes noted:

That largely more parishes and polls ought to be thrown out for violence and intimidation than was necessary to elect the whole Republican ticket, state and national; that a fair election would have given the Republicans not less than thirteen to fifteen thousand majority; that the intimidation was deliberately planned and systematically executed by means of rifle clubs organized in the parishes selected for the process of intimidation known as 'bull-dozing.'

He had once harbored some doubts as to Louisiana, but as he commented to Schurz, his "conversations with Sherman, Garfield, Stoughton and others settled the question" with him.¹⁴

Yet the question was not really settled with satisfactory finality then or later in the minds of many of his contemporaries. Moreover, Hayes's own frequent allusions to the subject in his diary and letters betray a nagging modicum of doubt and embarrassment on his part -- as when he emphatically declared in an 1885 letter that he had "never had any doubt as to the legality or the fairness of the final result." Not

¹⁴Hayes Diary, Dec. 5, 1876 and Hayes to Carl Schurz, Dec. 6, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 384-85, 386.

only had Garfield, Sherman and their associates given him their personal assurances "in the strongest terms," Hayes wrote, but "more than this, one of the ablest and most influential Democrats in the country (Hancock?), who was perfectly familiar with the inner history of the whole affair on the Democratic side, told me that no intelligent or candid man of his party could claim the election of the Democratic party if he conceded the validity of the Fifteenth Amendment." This gentleman contended that had the Negro vote been included, Hayes would have been entitled to even more southern states. As far as Louisiana is concerned, a careful study of the situation there documents the use of fraud, violence and intimidation without restraint by both parties and makes clear that the Republican controlled state political machinery was a decisive factor in delivering the state's vote to Hayes. It is impossible to say just what a fair and legal poll might have produced and it seems reasonable to conclude that no partisan or non-partisan body could at the time hope to determine to what candidate her electoral votes belonged.¹⁵ But the fact remained that Louisiana's returning board and those in South Carolina and Florida made their decisions in favor of Hayes. He therefore seemed assured of victory by the margin of a single electoral vote -- but the struggle had really only begun.

¹⁵Hayes to Hugh Campbell, Feb. 16, 1885, quoted in Hayes Diary, Feb. 16, 1885, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 191 and Bone, "Louisiana in the Disputed Election," pp. 564-65.

Meanwhile, Republican liberals were voicing their doubts about the Louisiana settlement. "I am unhappy in the involuntary belief," Cox admitted to Schurz, "that we cannot sustain the action of the Louisiana Returning Board, & that we are in danger of what seems to me almost fatal, the inauguration of Hayes by fraudulent returns." Hayes was not under the influence of the "right advisers," he asserted; thus the policy of drift had now taken over. Schurz replied that he shared Cox's feeling of apprehension and had tried to persuade Hayes that he should publicly demand "a settlement of the presidential question by some other means than the mere use of party power. . . ." He viewed the action of the returning boards as "to say the least, suspicious." But while Hayes appeared to agree with him "in the abstract" continued Schurz, he doubted that the Governor was doing anything "to influence the counsels of the party at Washington. . . ." He reiterated his conviction that Hayes was simply permitting "things to drift", but this, he had not yet learned, was precisely the passive role which Hayes preferred.¹⁶

In each of the three vital states, the decision for Hayes was challenged and Congress received not one, but two sets of returns. Moreover, a technicality brought two sets of electoral votes from Oregon, and the possibility of an additional

¹⁶Jacob Cox to Carl Schurz, Dec. 25, 1876. Schurz Papers. Library of Congress. Microfilm copy in Hayes Memorial Library. Hereafter cited as Schurz Papers. Carl Schurz to Jacob Cox, Dec. 28, 1876. Cox Papers. Oberlin College Library. Hereafter cited as Cox Papers.

and deciding vote for Tilden no matter what happened regarding the southern contests. An atmosphere of mutual recrimination quickly developed and partisanship reigned supreme. Garfield had predicted that the New Orleans committee's report to Grant, would undoubtedly be "bitterly" attacked. "Doubtless we are ourselves partisan in making it," he candidly admitted in his diary, "but we have sought to exhibit the truth." He was not happy, however, with Sherman's insistence upon including praise for board members in their report, a sentiment he shared with the Representative from Hayes's district, Charles Foster. Meanwhile House Democrats had taken the offensive, and on the advice of friends who argued that he was needed in Washington, Garfield declined an appointment to a committee to visit Florida. Significant divisions within the Democrat party, divisions which astute Republicans would exploit, were revealed when a proposal to impeach Grant was resisted in caucus by Ben Hill and other prominent southern delegates. "Wise management may break the strength of the Southern Democracy," Garfield speculated. The Republicans "ought to have the old Whig element" at their side in the upcoming struggle, he continued, thus anticipating what became an essential element in Hayes's effort to split the white South politically. This hope, which they shared with other party members, was carefully cultivated by men like Casey Young of Tennessee, who let Garfield know that some fifty Democrats might rally to Hayes's side if only his southern

policy proved satisfactory to the South.¹⁷

Shortly thereafter, Garfield was urged by Representative Alpheus Williams of Michigan, writing on behalf of Young, to make a speech in the House outlining his views of how the South would fare under a Hayes administration. Williams had been told that the South wanted reassurance from a man of Garfield's stature and relationship to Hayes, that the latter's course would truly be "conciliatory & tend to harmonize the unhappy state of feeling there, growing out of party division upon the color line" and that as President, his course would "give the South a good government . . ." Once again the promise that fifty southern Democrats would unite with House Republicans was used as bait. Williams urged that with the Democrats struggling for unity, the GOP should lose no time if they intended to split the opposition. Garfield forwarded William's letter to Hayes with the following comment: "I think one of the worst things in all our past management of the South, has been the fact that we have not taken into our confidence, and united to our support, a class of men, whose interest are identified with the South, and who will help divide the white people politically." He thereupon outlined in some detail a speech he proposed to make dealing with the GOP claim to the presidency and the economic and political program a Republican chief

¹⁷Garfield Diary, Dec. 6, 1876. Garfield Papers. Garfield to Hinsdale, Dec. 26, 1876, in Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Letters, p. 349 and Charles Foster to James Comly, Dec. 10, 1876. James Comly Papers. Ohio State Historical Society. Hereafter cited as Comly Papers. Garfield Diary, Dec. 7 and 11, 1876. Garfield Papers.

executive could be expected to pursue.¹⁸

Despite the violent words and sensationalism commonly used by the speakers and the press during this critical period, Garfield believed the situation in mid-December afforded his party reason for cautious optimism. Amidst the commotion, purposely generated and maintained by House leaders like Samual Randall and Fernando Wood with the hope of forcing the election into the House, Garfield perceptively advised Hayes that "two forces are at work. The Democratic business men of the country are more anxious for quiet than for Tilden; and the leading southern Democrats in Congress, especially those who were Whigs, are saying that they have seen enough and don't care to follow the lead of their northern associates. . . ." He had very recently been told by several of his "most thoughtful" fellow Republicans that this was an opportune moment to divide the Democrats, "at least . . . on their policy of violence and resistance." But action must be taken quickly. He did not believe that anything like fifty southerners would act with the GOP, and indeed, he was unsure as to exactly "what sort of assurances the South" desired. But while emphasizing that no one should be "the custodian of . . . (Hayes's) policy and purposes . . . or have any power to commit or embarrass" him, it would be most helpful if those southern opponents of extremism could "in some discreet" manner be reassured of Hayes's good intentions toward their section. He reported that "several

¹⁸W. B. Williams to Garfield, Dec. 11, 1876. Garfield Papers. Garfield to Hayes, Dec. 12, 1876. Hayes Papers.

Southern men have said, within a week, that in matters of internal improvements -- they had been much better treated by Republicans than they were likely to be by the Democrats -- and they talk a good deal about the old Whigs having been forced, unwillingly, into the Democratic party."¹⁹

And yet Garfield was not optimistic that the southern conservatives would enjoy much success in checking the influence of the more militant northern Democrats. However his skepticism did not discourage 'bargain minded' southerners, and they persisted in their efforts through the early months of 1877. He was soon being urged by another self-appointed Dixie spokesman, Albert J. Kellar of the Memphis Avalanche, to make a speech on southern policy, thereby capitalizing on an incipient division within the southern bloc. Garfield, however, remained cautious and unconverted, in part because he did not fully trust such men as Kellar and Young. Nevertheless, he continued to hope for southern aid in forestalling any serious threat to the ratification of Hayes's election and his peaceful inauguration. But even so, he also worried that the cry of fraud might rob a Hayes administration of its prestige and effectiveness from the very outset.²⁰

Meanwhile, in the House, he busied himself resisting Tom Scott's Pacific railroad bill, although such a stand was not likely to attract the support of internal improvements-minded

¹⁹Garfield to Hayes, Dec. 12, 1876. Hayes Papers.

²⁰Garfield Diary, Dec. 13 and 18, 1876 and Garfield to Harmon Austin, Dec. 15, 1876. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

southerners to him and his party. Comly's report to Hayes of a conversation with Garfield (fresh from a meeting of the Pacific Railroad Committee) and Foster on this subject is instructive.

Both Garfield and Foster regret (Comly wrote) that the Republican party was so squarely committed against further subsidies as to prevent them from advocating the building of the Texas Pacific R. R. by the help of Congress. They thought a large following might be gained for the Republican party in the South by favoring this road, and both assented that Texas might be made a Republican State by advocating the road. Garfield said he had made a serious breach in the Southern Democratic line by advocating an appropriation for Galveston harbor which was defeated by the objection of Holman. Both said they had no doubt of being able to build up a strong southern following for a Republican Administration, by advocating such Southern public improvements as has been granted to the North during the war. They regretted that the whole business of subsidies to railroads had been brought into disrepute by the injudicious fostering of small local lines, while Pacific roads had paid a thousand fold for aid extended to them.²¹

Hayes himself avoided commitments, private or public, and wisely maintained an open and friendly attitude toward his many callers and correspondents. He rejected suggestions that it might be necessary to visit Washington, for he wished to "take no active part in present complications," he advised Sherman. And in response to Garfield's letters, he stoutly maintained that he was "wholly uncommitted on persons and policies" beyond what those letters and statements already made public contained. Then in a neat reversal of his campaign views and with pacification evidently on his mind, he

²¹Garfield Diary, Dec. 20, 1876. Garfield Papers. James Comly to Hayes, Jan. 8, 1876. Hayes Papers.

assured Garfield that now "the war feeling has no hold in Ohio worth a moment's consideration." Hayes also refused to be drawn into the scheme designed to assure his election and inauguration, then (December) being hatched by William Henry Smith, his journalist allies and Colonel Kellar. He absolutely would not be "committed to details," he insisted in a letter to Smith, although he had given high priority to restoring "peace and prosperity to the South. . . ." He informed this intimate friend that those "two things I would be exceptionally liberal about are education and internal improvements of a national character." He concluded this letter by flatly declaring that a preoccupation with politics and "too little attention to business" had been "the bane" of that section.²² Hayes appeared to hope that his administration might find politics in adjournment as he took the lead in healing wounds caused by the war and its aftermath.

Despite continuing pressure from well-intentioned friends, Hayes clung to his determination to avoid becoming entangled in efforts on his behalf. Thus he rejected the suggestion, as had Garfield, that he appoint a personal representative to speak for him in Washington -- volunteers would have to suffice. However, he did reassure his friends in the capital, that their "equitable right" to Louisiana was "indisputable." He clearly wished to avoid like the plague any association with schemes designed to put him in the White House. There

²²Hayes to John Sherman, Dec. 17, 1876; Hayes to Garfield, Dec. 16, 1876 and Hayes to William H. Smith, Dec. 24, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 392, 390, 393.

were already a sufficient number of Ohioians present in Washington who could "give such facts" as to his "general ways of thinking and action," he believed. This would suffice to achieve everything that was "right and practicable," Hayes declared emphatically in a letter to Edward Noyes. And as he was well aware that he was being accused of scheming to secure the presidency, he found it comforting to know "how unfounded all such" allegations were. Hayes was not, however, completely inactive. He was at pains to counter Conkling's influence and reassure Grant of his cordial friendship. This is borne out by the following excerpt from Comly's report to Hayes upon his return from his mission to Washington on the Governor's behalf:

I then told him (Grant) there was one point upon which I was authorized to speak to him confidentially, by authority; and I repeated your language to me, about your staunch friendship for the President from the time of Fort Donelson down to this day; and about your desire to avoid anything that could seem to be a reflection upon the President that there was not one chance in a million that you would appoint Bristow to a Cabinet position, in view of the fact that he had made himself so personally obnoxious to the President and to so large a section of the Republican party. The President was much gratified at this assurance, and showed strong emotion. It was plain that he had not been without the need of assurance, and that the doubt in his mind had been skillfully manipulated by somebody.²³

As December wore on, Garfield became increasingly fearful that the Democrats might just go so far as to use force to achieve Tilden's inauguration. Yet he also anticipated that the Republicans might receive some "unexpected help" from

²³Hayes to Samuel Shellabarger, Jan. 2, 1877; Hayes to Edward Noyes, Dec. 31, 1876 and Hayes to A. D. Shaw, Dec. 31, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 399, 397, 398. James Comly to Hayes, Jan. 8, 1877. Hayes Papers.

southern Democrats (although he remained suspicious of their good faith), if only they were carefully handled. Among those negotiating with southerners, with the idea of dividing the Democrats along sectional lines, fostering the growth of southern Republicanism and guaranteeing Hayes's inauguration, were William Henry Smith and several of his journalist allies who had worked either for the nomination of Hayes or Bristow. Their chief southern contact was Colonel Andrew Kellar, owner-editor of the Memphis Avalanche, a Confederate veteran who bitterly opposed Tilden and wished to encourage the growth of conservative Republicanism in the South, while at the same time aiding the southern Negro. In December, Kellar came to Washington where he joined forces with another journalist, Henry V. Boynton, in an intensive campaign to rally southern congressional support of Hayes. By December 21, they were confidentially assuring Smith that Ben Hill and Casey Young plus some thirty southern House members were with them. Smith was warned, however, that southern loyalty must be purchased with a federal subsidy for Scott's projected Texas and Pacific Railroad. Smith and his associates appeared much surer that this scheme was both workable and dependable than did Garfield, who was cognizant of what was going forward on this front.²⁴

Meanwhile, Comly, who was busy in Washington on behalf of

²⁴Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, Dec. 18, 1876, in Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Letters, pp. 347-48 and Gray, "Career of William Henry Smith," pp. 119-24.

Hayes, had been told that the South was "ready to meet any overtures of peace half way," for, thanks to northern extremists and charges of corrupt bargains between southern Democrats and northern Republicans, the split within the Democracy was "widening rapidly." Ben Hill was a leading representative of this conservative southern faction, informants assured Comly, while Lamar, who was "the center of this sentiment" was now prepared to cooperate with the GOP. If only Hayes could be persuaded to make some public overture to these dissidents before they returned home for Christmas recess, all might be well. But Hayes could not be persuaded to abandon his silence and held tenaciously to his conviction that "the true position" was "'hands off.'" Moreover, he recognized with unqualified pleasure that he had succeeded in remaining a passive contender -- very nearly a mere bystander.²⁵ The power and responsibility for settling the dispute lay in Washington and with Washington figures, where and with whom he counted for little either as a person or as a meaningful influence.

The perplexing question facing Congress was how to deal with the double sets of returns from the disputed areas. According to the Constitution, the president of the Senate

²⁵W. H. Roberts to James Comly, Dec. 14, 1876. Comly Papers. Hayes to A. D. Shaw, Dec. 31, 1876, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 398.

was to count the electoral votes, but no guidelines were provided for the handling of double returns. Had neither major candidate claimed an electoral majority, it would have been up to the House to choose the President, but this had not happened. Between 1865 and 1876 the House had in fact assumed the power to deal with this dilemma, by the passage of Joint Rule 22. By virtue of its provisions, if either house rejected a state's votes, they would simply not be counted, and if this left no candidate with a majority, the choice would then be left up to the House of Representatives. The rule was readopted by the Democratic House in 1876, but not by the Republican controlled Senate, thus robbing Congress of a device that had been used to deal with double returns in the 1872 presidential contest. Thus a new decision, acceptable to both parties, as to how the count should proceed was now imperative.

Hayes himself strongly favored a count by the Vice President, who might be expected to accept only the Hayes votes from the states in dispute. After carefully studying earlier electoral counts, Garfield turned states righter in an attack upon House Democrats' attempt to have the Louisiana returning board arrested and brought before the House on contempt charges. He accused the Democrats of undertaking a "fatal assault upon whatever there may be of sovereignty in the thirty-eight states." It was better to allow Tilden's election by fraudulent means, he argued, than to violate the constitutional limitations placed upon the federal government in regard to

presidential elections. Hayes apparently agreed. While disclaiming any desire to "influence" the activities of his supporters in Washington, he confided his opinion to Sherman, declaring that "everything in the nature of a contest as to electoral votes is an affair of the States." Sherman believed that an appeal to the Supreme Court from "any decision of" the Vice President was "the only constitutional solution of the difficulty." He admitted immediately, however, that this would necessitate House approval which could not be won.²⁶ A compromise solution was in the offing and seemed destined to win approval. If this was so, Hayes told his journal, the election's outcome would undoubtedly be influenced to his disadvantage. Meanwhile, he operated on the assumption that he would be the victor and therefore continued to work on his cabinet and his inaugural address. Perhaps he took heart from Comly's report that Conkling had actually conceded his victory, and only had doubts as to how it should be verified.²⁷

While Sherman, Garfield and most of Hayes's supporters pressed for a decision by the president of the Senate, powerful interests pleaded for a compromise solution to end a state of affairs they considered to be most damaging to the nation's

²⁶Hayes to John Sherman, Jan. 5, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 400 quoted in Smith, Life of Garfield, I, 627; Hayes to John Sherman, Jan. 21, 1877 and John Sherman to Hayes, Jan. 18, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 406, 405.

²⁷Hayes Diary, Jan. 21 and 17, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 404, 402 and James Comly to Hayes, Jan. 8, 1877. Hayes Papers.

economy. This compromise proposal took the form of a fifteen member electoral commission with five members each selected by the House, the Senate and the Supreme Court. The decisions of this extra-constitutional body would be determined by a simple majority and would be binding unless rejected by both houses of Congress. It therefore appeared that only the threat of a filibuster stood in the way of a final decision by inauguration time.

Garfield along with other friends of Hayes was greatly distressed by this turn of events. He had considered the compromise committee a "mistake" to start with and disgustedly commented that they might "better go back to the days of the Roman Augurs at once and inspect the entrails of a calf and the flights of birds." He also feared Conkling might yet turn against them and "lose us the Presidency", suggesting that Conkling's bitterness stemmed from his poor showing at the convention and the party's failure to carry New York state. Hayes was of the same opinion. Comly had already received "proof that there was already active danger" in Conkling's attitude toward the matter of the count. For his part, Sherman objected to Conkling's appointment to the compromise committee (Ferry claimed it was wise to give him an interest in the matter), although he himself had turned down the Vice President's offer to appoint him to the committee on the ground that it would be "impolitic." At this point, Garfield attended an urgent gathering of Hayes men -- Sherman, Taft, Dennison and Comly, at which Sherman reported that Conkling would not

support their position on the electoral count. Comly informed Hayes that after some discussion, the conferees decided to expand their group "very cautiously taking in only thoroughly reliable and discreet friends." When it was suggested that southern Republicans should be seen, Sherman remarked heatedly, "I will do anything I can, but I'll be damned if I do that. I can't talk with those fellows -- don't know how to get at them. Somebody else must do it." Thereupon Attorney General Taft volunteered (with a wink) that given his official relationship to them, he might have considerable success with such negotiations.²⁸

Throughout January, Garfield was involved in conferences with other party leaders, working to counter Conkling's influence in the Senate and to secure Grant's recognition of the Packard government lest it collapse. "So another snag is pulled," he commented, after Grant had acted to shore up the Republican regime in Louisiana, "but a heavy load is laid upon Hayes, if he comes in." His diary entry for the following day, when the 'defection' of Conkling and others appeared certain, shows him distressed and yet refusing to give up hope. His initial impression of the Joint Committee's recommendation was that it constituted "a surrender of a certainty" which he feared would mean that hereafter the final determination in the choice of a president would always lie with Congress. Garfield found "political sentiment . . . greatly divided" on the compromise

²⁸Garfield Diary, Jan. 4 and 5, 1877. Garfield Papers.
James Comly to Hayes, Jan. 8, 1877. Hayes Papers.

bill and he analyzed its reception thus:

The businessmen of the Count(r)y are clamorously in favor of it. They care more for results than for methods. More for an escape from present evils than for a time enduring rule of action. On the contrary, extreme partisans oppose the bill because it makes the result uncertain, which they believe can be made certain without the bill. I incline to oppose the bill for its faulty, and probably unconstitutional method -- and for the evil which may result from it hereafter.²⁹

Both Hayes and Sherman were unhappy with the turn of events. The former considered the Electoral Commission unconstitutional and "a surrender, at least in part of our case." He insisted that unless it met with two-thirds approval in the House and Senate, "the President's veto ought to prevent it from becoming a law." But Grant had in fact encouraged Conkling to secure its adoption and had no thoughts of a veto. Sherman, too, was fearful that the Democrats would "have all the advantage" in the selection of Commission members and would surely choose "bitter partisans." Moreover, Senate Republicans were "in the power of men who" opposed his election, he confided gloomily to Hayes. "I cannot be mistaken in attributing this hope to Conkling and others whom I suspect but must not name," Sherman concluded.³⁰

Garfield was especially concerned over the situation in Louisiana and his fears were compounded when Grant informed

²⁹Garfield Diary, Jan. 14; 15 and 18, 1877. Garfield Papers.

³⁰Hayes Diary, Jan. 21, 1877 and John Sherman to Hayes, Jan. 18, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, 404, 405.

him that he believed that Packard could not be maintained in power and would be run out of the state immediately after the election was decided. Garfield was concerned over the Louisiana dilemma, for he could not "see how the vote for electors and that for Governor" could possibly be separated. He understood, however, from a New Orleans correspondent that the inauguration of Hayes would be generally well received there if Nichols was allowed to come in as governor; and that Louisianians would not support any violent resistance undertaken by their northern brethren. At another gathering of Ohio Republicans about mid-January, a poll revealed that of the participants, only Foster "decidely favored" the compromise bill, while one colleague remained undecided and the remainder opposed the measure. Foster explained to Hayes that he had always discounted the Democratic "threats" and was "persuaded now with Watterson" that the Democracy would not resort to violence and that for this reason Watterson had supported the compromise.³¹

But Garfield remained unconverted, declaring in his journal that he was "more than ever" convinced it was "a dangerous" bill which he was determined to fight with all his power. And as he prepared his argument against its passage, he conferred with William Evarts, who assured him that it was indeed constitutionally indefensible. He also tried to shore up Blaine,

³¹Garfield Diary, Jan. 20, 1876 and Lionel Sheldon to Garfield, Jan. 13, 1877. Garfield Papers. Charles Foster to Hayes, Jan. 21, 1877. Hayes Papers.

whom he thought was "wavering in regard to the bill", by shrewdly reminding him "that the West would never forgive the East, if they deserted" them on this issue. In a letter to Hayes he passionately denounced what he labeled the Senate need only have backed Ferry, for the "danger of violent resistance" to Hayes's inauguration "had absolutely passed away. . . . House Republican committee members "would never have agreed to the bill but from the conviction that enough Republican Senators would follow Conkling to leave Ferry without support." He continued hopefully, if their party lost "a great advantage" they were left with "an even chance -- possibly more than even" of success. Republican committee members were "confident" of victory under the compromise and he was being urged by Republicans favoring the bill not to oppose it since they wished to place him on the Commission.³²

Despite stout opposition, the compromise measure won House approval. Before its passage, Garfield had spoken for over an hour in a fruitless but self-satisfying attempt to defeat the commission bill. The efforts of Smith, Boynton and their journalist and railroad allies to block the bill were likewise futile. Although over two-thirds of the House's Republicans voted against it, some party members, including Foster, were among the 191 Representatives supporting the bill.³³

³²Garfield Diary, Jan. 20; 22 and 24, 1877. Garfield Papers. Garfield to Hayes, Jan. 19, 1877. Hayes Papers.

³³Garfield Diary, Jan. 25, 29 and 30, 1877. Garfield Papers. Henry Boynton to William H. Smith, Jan. 26 and 30, 1877 and J. R. West to William H. Smith, Jan. 19 and 22, 1877. William Henry Smith Papers. Indiana Historical Society. Hereafter cited as Smith Papers.

Hayes adjusted to the turn of events easily, remarking philosophically that "what Congress and the popular sentiment approve is rarely defeated by reason of constitutional objections." Furthermore, he reflected that "after a full and public hearing", defeat before the Commission would by no means be "mortifying" although victory would "be in all respects more satisfactory." On the day the Supreme Court selections to the Commission were announced, he wrote in his diary that while preferring victory, he was certain "that for our happiness failure is to be preferred."³⁴

Garfield was flattered and not really surprised when a party caucus selected him as one of the members of the Commission he had so recently and vehemently opposed. His good Democratic friend, Jeremiah Black, urged him to decline the honor, citing his staunch opposition to the compromise and the fact that he was already committed on Louisiana. Garfield admitted that he might indeed, "be embarrassed" by accepting the honor. But after consulting with friends, he discovered that he "could not withdraw without displeasing" Republican congressmen and so determined to allow the matter to take its own course, secure in the belief that if the House rejected him, none of his party would accept a seat on the Commission. When some twenty Democrats did refuse to vote for him, he professed to believe they had done him "a service." He recorded with satisfaction that it was a fact "that an overwhelming

³⁴Hayes Diary, Jan. 26 and 31, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 409-10, 411.

majority of the foremost Democrats of the House voted for me, . . . (while) a few Confe(de)rates and Northern Extremists of no particular weight in the House voted against me."³⁵

The Senate and House appointees, as expected, left the Commission evenly divided between the two parties, but the selection of five Supreme Court members seemed certain to give the Republicans the advantage, for the Court contained only two acknowledged Democrats. For a time, however, it appeared that David Davis might insure a degree of impartiality as the odd man, but he was elected to the U. S. Senate from Illinois before the compromise cleared the House and immediately declared he was unavailable for such duty. After several protracted meetings, Joseph Bradley, a Grant appointee, became the fifth court member. The Republicans were understandably pleased, although Hayes's intimate friend, Stanley Matthews, would later claim that party leaders knew that Davis, too, would have been with them. But so were the Democrats, including Bradley's Democratic colleagues on the Court, for they had the utmost faith in his impartiality.³⁶ After all, Tilden needed but one electoral vote to triumph, and the odds were distinctly in his favor.

Florida was the first case to be referred to the Commission from the joint session of the two houses. The

³⁵Garfield Diary, Jan. 27; 29 and 30, 1877. Garfield Papers.

³⁶Williams, Life of Hayes, I, 537 n. 1 and Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes, pp. 366-67.

decisiin in this case turned primarily upon the question of whether or not the Commission should 'go behind' the returns. On February 7, after nearly a week of arguments by Democratic and Republican couselfs, the Commission made its first decision -- a preliminary opinion regarding the admissability of what Garfield called "extrinsic evidence." The vote followed party lines, leaving Bradley to cast the deciding opinion. After some minutes of suspense, he reached the point in his presentation of that opinion that revealed he had aligned himself with his Republican colleagues. "I read the arguments in the Congressional Record and can't see how lawyers can differ on the question," Hayes noted in his diary. Yet it was strictly a partisan division, he mused, demonstrating "the strength of party ties." The outlook now appeared much brighter, he admitted, and his supporters were "very confident of success." Shortly thereafter, Florida's vote did go to Hayes by what would become a familiar eight to seven decision. Predictably, an angry Democratic House rejected the ruling, but this was a futile gesture, since the Republican controlled Senate voted it approval. The frustrated Democrats heaped criticism on Bradley, eventually going so far as to suggest that he had been bribed to vote for Hayes.³⁷

In the case of Louisiana, the Commission again refused to go behind the returns. The outcome was not a forgone con-

³⁷Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes, pp. 369-71 and Garfield Diary, Feb. 1, 1877. Garfield Papers. Hayes Diary, Feb. 8, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 413-14 and Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes, pp. 372-73.

clusion, however, and Garfield considered the eleven hour session at which the ruling was finally made, to have been his most enervating experience since Chickamauga. Bradley again read his opinion last, and, Garfield records, they "had no hint of the conclusion to be reached until Bradley was twenty minutes into his speech. The suspense was painful, and the efforts of members to appear unconcerned, gave strong proof of the intensity of the feeling." His decision actually brought a sigh of relief to his listeners. At least to this point, it does not appear to have been a cut and dried affair. Hayes remarked that there was "still some doubt, but apparently very little, of the result."³⁸

In the Oregon case, a technicality involving only one of the three electors was involved and this time the Commission ruled unanimously against the certificate of the Democratic elector, just as Garfield had predicted. They then accepted the vote of the Hayes elector, giving Oregon to the Republicans by an eight to seven decision.³⁹

The Democratic claim to South Carolina was admitted to be especially weak since Hampton had made no effort on Tilden's behalf. The Democrats attempted, therefore, to have both the Hayes and the Tilden certificates disallowed, thereby invalidating the state's presidential contest altogether and denying to Hayes votes necessary for his success. They even

³⁸Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes, p. 374 and Garfield Diary, Feb. 16, 1877. Garfield Papers. Hayes Diary, Feb. 17, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 416.

³⁹Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes, p. 376 and Garfield Diary, Feb. 21, 1877. Garfield Papers.

went so far as to admit that Democrats had in fact intimidated Negro voters there. The Commission unanimously rejected the Tilden electors, but again reflected their essential partisanship on the question of hearing evidence on the charge that this was not a free election. In doing so, they frustrated an attempt to throw the election into the House for a final settlement. By the same eight to seven division, South Carolina's votes were allotted to Hayes. It was now only necessary for the two Houses to complete the count to give Hayes a 185 to 184 electoral vote victory over Tilden. But this process could be stalled by a Democratic filibuster in the House and March 4 might well arrive without a declaration of Hayes's election.⁴⁰

House Democrats had already employed delaying tactics earlier in the count and GOP leaders were deeply troubled. On February 13, Garfield noted that it was obvious that the Democrats hoped to "delay the decision as long as possible." He pointed out that "they vote for the longest time, the longest recesses and the most frequent adjournments." Then on February 17, Speaker Randall went so far as to refuse to recognize the secretary of the Senate, thus enabling his party to move and approve a recess so that a vote on the Commission's Louisiana decision would be delayed until at least the 21st. Garfield remarked in his diary that the Democracy seemed bent upon preventing the business at hand, although "some of the better men

⁴⁰Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes, pp. 375, 377.

among" them explained they simply wanted "time to cool down the fiery spirits of their extreme men." Garfield had long since advised Hayes that the GOP had less to fear from southern Democrats than from their northern colleagues. For, he wrote, "the leading southern Democrats in Congress, especially those who were old Whigs, are saying that they have seen war enough, and don't care to follow the lead of their northern associates who, as Ben Hill says, 'were invincible in peace and invisible in war.'" A recent study by Thomas B. Alexander of southern Whigs of this era, concludes that while but a handful would abandon their Democratic ties to support Hayes, many quietly accepted his inauguration. This conclusion is based not only on editorial opinion in many southern newspapers, but also on numerous letters -- some of them addressed to correspondents who sent them on to Hayes. Alexander is led to question C. Vann Woodward's heavy emphasis on the significance of the Texas and Pacific Railroad lobby in countering and disarming militant southerners. "Considering the fact that many southern Whig leaders had all through the reconstruction years denounced the northern Democratic leadership, a more detailed study of the individual old-line Whigs in Congress might well establish the conclusion that the Southern bloc would have acted as it did in 1877 had there been no railroad lobby involved," he concludes.⁴¹

⁴¹Garfield Diary, Feb. 13 and 17, 1877. Garfield Papers. Garfield to Hayes, Dec. 12, 1876. Hayes Papers. Thomas B. Alexander, "Persistent Whiggery in the Confederate South, 1860-1877," Journal of Southern History, XXVII (August, 1961), 324-25.

Taking advantage of the brief respite they had won, the Democrats met in caucus on the evening of February 17 to make certain strategy decisions. Randall boldly urged his party "to support legislation making the Secretary of State the acting President until another election could be held." He argued that the House should adjourn each day without taking action until the Senate agreed to this proposition. If the Senate refused, the failure to complete the count by March 4 would necessitate another presidential election. Among the considerable number of hard-liners supporting Randall, it was reported, were "south and border states representatives who were repelled by or had reservations regarding the political and economic concessions." Hayes's friends were holding out. But Randall and his militant allies were out-numbered and defeated "by an alliance of southern and business minded Democrats who wanted the count completed. . . ." The majority decided to await the Commission's Oregon decision before determining their response.⁴²

When Oregon was called and awarded to Hayes, Randall again came under heavy pressure from angry Democrats. The militants were bent on stalling the count with a filibuster and in caucus Randall seemed fully committed to their tactics. He sharply attacked southern colleagues for bargaining with Hayes's friends and warned that there was no guarantee that as president Hayes would honor these promises. After a heated discussion, the filibusterers once again failed to win party approval of their

⁴²Evans, "Pennsylvania Politics," pp. 300-01.

strategy. However, bargaining southerners did begin demanding firmer pledges of concessions from the Hayes people. And although they lacked caucus support, the militant minority believed themselves to be free to pursue their tactics; after all, Randall was obviously in their camp and he was the presiding officer of the House.⁴³

For the next two days, Randall did nothing to disappoint his militant associates, and they generally had their own way. Then on Friday, February 24, an attempt to prevent a vote on the Oregon decision by adjourning until 10 A.M. the following Monday, was easily defeated. An irreconcilable thereupon moved an adjournment until 9:30 on Monday, an objection was raised, and Randall quite unexpectedly sustained it, ruling the motion dilatory and out of order. The House went into an uproar with numerous members reacting "violently to this arbitrary disregard of House rules," a recent study of Pennsylvania politics reports. "Many pounded and slammed their desks, others mounted their chairs and shouted for recognition, while still others rushed forward to the speaker's desk." But the decision held and the count proceeded. As Garfield noted in his journal, the decision on the initial motion "was a saving vote." Randall's ruling came, as Jacob Cox put it, "at a well-chosen moment, when the temper of the House was likely to rally to him" -- as the vote on adjournment had just revealed. During the days that followed his decision, Randall was under much

⁴³Evans, Pennsylvania Politics, p. 301.

pressure. Both Republicans and Democratic businessmen pleaded with him to end the unsettled state of affairs by completing the count, spelling out in no uncertain terms the seriousness of the situation and the unanimity of business opinion on the question.⁴⁴

Although the militants persisted in their filibustering tactics, the count went on with the House vainly rejecting the South Carolina decision and then moving on as far as Vermont before adjourning. On the following day, March 1, the count resumed in an unimaginably wild House session, with the irreconcilables "more determined than ever," Garfield recorded. The militants were in fact losing strength, for the interruption of the count engineered by Abram Hewitt had won, as he hoped it would, a guarantee of Democratic control of Louisiana. Moreover, Randall successively put down all efforts to delay House action despite bitter minority opposition, including that of three-fourths of Pennsylvania's sixteen Democratic representatives.⁴⁵ Randall's private explanation for his conduct during these critical days ran as follows: "If I had done differently, I would have been ruined and disgraced -- a small matter when compared with the future certainty of the disintegration of our party and as I believe to be followed by an

⁴⁴Evans, "Pennsylvania Politics," pp. 301-03 and Garfield Diary, Feb. 24, 1877. Garfield Papers. Cox, "Hayes Administration," 824.

⁴⁵Evans, "Pennsylvania Politics," pp. 303-04 and Garfield Diary, March 1, 1877. Garfield Papers. Evans, "Pennsylvania Politics," p. 304.

end of liberty in the Country & a succession of military elections." The most careful recent study of Randall's conduct at this time concludes that when the count had proceeded so far that it was a matter either of completing it or resorting to violence, Tilden sent a telegram to the Speaker approving the completion of the count. As he had done earlier when he supported the compromise bill after initially opposing it, Randall yielded to Tilden's views. Randall's seemingly contradictory behavior, therefore, stemmed from his faithfulness to an irresolute leader and attests to his stout partisanship. He was also influenced by his own personal economic interests insofar as the negotiations involving Hayes's friends, the Scott interests and certain southerners, were concerned.⁴⁶

Although he had opposed aid to the Texas and Pacific railroad and was alarmed by the effort to form a coalition of southern conservatives and northern Republicans, Randall was distinctly sympathetic toward the propositions advanced by Hayes's supporters. He had been a consistent friend and defender of the South and its interests and wished to foster the growth of his party and support for himself in that section. What is more, he had "many influential business friends and supporters in both parties" and was most sensitive to the political situation's unsettling effect on the economy and to businessmen's desire for a peaceful solution of the problem. He himself stood to profit from such a solution, for he had

⁴⁶Quoted in Evans, "Pennsylvania Politics," p. 306 and Evans, "Pennsylvania Politics," pp. 307-08.

formed a clandestine partnership with a New York businessman designed to promote the building of an Ohio railroad. Late in January 1877, his partner informed him that the working out of a contract for the construction of an added ninety miles of the railway -- an agreement that would net the partners bonds worth some \$100,000 as well as between 300 and 500 acres of coal bearing land -- depended upon the peaceful completion of the count.⁴⁷

It has been customary since the publication of C. Vann Woodward's Reunion and Reaction, to emphasize the work of the Texas and Pacific lobby, allied with Hayes's Western Associated Press friends, in explaining why southern congressional leaders like Lamar, Reagan, Singleton and Hill did not join their irreconcilable colleagues in preventing the Ohioian's inauguration. But in his perceptive account of Watterson's role in the settlement, Joseph Wall contends that the South deserves no particular blame nor praise for countering the filibuster. A study of the roll call on motions designed to hold up the count shows that a larger percentage of southern and border state representatives than northern Democrats supported stalling tactics. It was only after Louisiana congressman Levy, a consistent backer of the filibuster, told his fellow southerners that Hayes spokesmen had given him "'solemn assurances'" of Hayes's conciliatory intentions toward the South, that the percentage of southern Representatives

⁴⁷Evans, Pennsylvania Politics, pp. 307-08.

supporting a filibuster fell slightly below that of their northern colleagues. Wall concludes by insisting that no simple or sharply drawn explanation (like that of Woodward's) suffices to explain the conduct of the several congressmen during these hectic weeks a sound and persuasive conclusion.⁴⁸

Perhaps the historian will forever be frustrated in his attempts to find an adequate explanation for the complex and contradictory series of events that mark the count's completion. And as Watterson himself noted, there were those "double constructions possible to men's actions, the contradictory promptings, not always crooked." Then there are those highly publicized events like the Wormley Conference that tend to mask and mislead more than they reveal.⁴⁹

If one is denied a wholly satisfactory explanation of why the count was completed in time, an eyewitness, James A. Garfield, provides us with a fine account of the last hours of the drama:

At times there was more violence and disorder than I have ever seen in the House. Beebe of New York sprang upon the desk and screamed with all his voice. Wisconsin was reached and filibustering resumed, then I took more part in managing our side and got the corners of the filibusters' plans and at a few minutes after four o'clock in the morning a final vote was reached and they were defeated.

A short time later, the Senate joined the House and their task was completed -- Hayes was declared duly elected to the presidency.⁵⁰

⁴⁸Joseph Wall, Henry Watterson; Reconstructed Rebel (New York, 1956), pp. 161-64.

⁴⁹Quoted in Wall, Henry Watterson, p. 163.

⁵⁰Garfield Diary, March 1, 1877. Garfield Papers.

CHAPTER 6

AN INAUSPICIOUS BEGINNING:

A 'NEW DEPARTURE' TAKES SHAPE

A new approach to the southern problem and the initiation of an equally controversial effort at Civil service reform dominated the first nine months of the Hayes administration. The President's cabinet selections touched off an outburst of criticism within his party that grew to crescendo proportions as his generous policy toward the South failed to bring the hoped for Democratic response. By December a serious split had developed between the GOP and Hayes -- a rift that was aggravated by the President's determination to redeem his civil service pledge in his own fashion. Throughout these trying months Hayes maintained a calm bearing and an optimistic outlook while party friends like Garfield swallowed their misgivings, supported him loyally and struggled to prevent an open revolt against Hayes by Republican congressmen.

The 'peaceful settlement' that awarded Hayes the presidency did not insure a peaceful transfer of power and a veil of apprehension and forboding hung over Washington as March 5 approached. On March 3, House Democrats pushed through a resolution declaring Tilden to be the lawful victor. The Republicans,

under Garfield's leadership, decided to offer no opposition, although Garfield soon found himself questioning the wisdom of that decision. He feared the Democrats, who he admitted were "very bitter", might then "make their resolution the basis of some revolutionary proceeding." Meanwhile, the House rushed to complete vital appropriations legislation that had been side-tracked by the presidential contest.¹

By March 14, only the Army bill remained unfinished, primarily because the Democrats insisted upon a provision banning the employment of federal troops in Florida or Louisiana. Garfield and the Republicans stoutly resisted this clause while the Democracy in turn refused to accept the bill without the ban; thus the session ended with the Army unprovided for. It was hardly an auspicious background against which to launch an administration pledged to reconciliation and harmony. During the waning hours of the session, Garfield had asked his Democratic colleagues if they thought it "wise and prudent and magnanimous" to demand a provision whose passage would excite old suspicions and fears in view "of evidences of a better understanding" and "renewed efforts to bury the bitterness of the past. . ."² It was a sincere query, for Garfield was not fond of rancorous partisanship, and shared Hayes's desire to foster intersectional reconciliation and harmony. But his seasoning in the national arena left him cautious and skeptical.

¹Garfield Diary, March 3, 1877. Garfield Papers.

²Congressional Record, 44th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 2248.

Thus he never embraced the exaggerated and essentially naive hopes Hayes and the uninitiated would cling to in the face of rebuffs and rejection.

Hayes's remarks as he left Columbus for Washington signaled that the southern question was to be the first order of business once he took office. His generous intentions and good will toward the South had been a prominent feature of his 'Letter' although his unhesitating encouragement of bloody shirt tactics seemed to belie these conciliatory phrases. But with the election behind him, he began to speak and write of amending the southern situation through education and internal improvements. "My anxiety to do something to promote the pacification of the South is perhaps in danger of leading me too far," he suggested in a letter to Schurz. Without wishing to "reflect on the use of military power in the past," he continued, Schurz could be sure that all of that would end under a Hayes administration save only in "emergencies" which he did not again anticipate. He said nothing of the Negro, but was most concerned with stimulating southern economic revival through "education, emigration and immigration (and) improvements", although agreeing with Schurz that they must proceed gradually and with caution. Hayes willingly admitted, however, that he was "not anxious to assume" this responsibility although "the South was more on . . . (his) mind than anything else." The objective seemed clear enough to him, but he was indecisive and unsure of the means to be employed. "Perhaps we must be content to leave that to time -- taking care not to obstruct

time's healing process by injudicious meddling," he concluded.³ And while he remained quite certain of his hopes for the South, a consistent and effective policy eluded him.

Hayes approved of the efforts of close friends like Comly, Matthews, Smith and others to revive Whiggism in the South under the Republican banner, thus giving the party a national rather than a sectional base; he approved as well the building of an accord between GOP moderates and Democratic conservatives. Furthermore, it was hoped this might end southern party divisions along the color line, giving the GOP a southern wing that did not "depend upon the Negro for its main strength and that could command the respect and support of Southern conservative whites." Cox reported that in a mid-January conversation with Hayes, the latter had asked for his frank opinions on the South and replying with equal candidness, had agreed "very cordially" with Cox's views. Cox summarized his own opinions as follows:

. . . our Republican administration & leaders are responsible for the continuance of the "color line" in the South, because a right policy would have abolished it - that things cannot & must not go on so -- that means must be found to gain support from a considerable fraction of the native white population there, even at the risk of some temporary offense to negro leaders, because the permanence of the rights of the blacks themselves must depend upon the cessation of a struggle between the races -- that this can be done without imperilling any of the rights of the blacks or diminishing the full effect of the constitution as amended, but implies only frank decisions as to their present fitness & availability for the more important class of offices. I urged,

³Williams, Life of Hayes, II, 4 and Hayes to Carl Schurz, Feb. 4, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 412-13.

& he received very kindly, the suggestion that if inaugurated, he should make at an early day an official tour through the South both to see & be seen and to thus declare in act the opening of the era of real peace.⁴

Thus the main features of Hayes's policy as it was ultimately worked out were in his mind by mid-January.

Those endeavoring to enlist southern aid to effect Hayes's peaceful inauguration and a political realignment in the South, had spoken of offices, perhaps a cabinet level appointment for that section and generous economic attention, including federal aid to a southern trans-Mississippi railroad. Hayes was most anxious "to get support from good men of the South, late Rebels. How to do it is the question," he remarked in his diary in mid-February. Personally, he said, he had the "best disposition towards the Southern people, Rebels and all." He was even considering a souther Democrat for his cabinet, yet who "among the capable and influential good men" there would accept the offer? Former Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston came to his mind, but this was a question that demanded more thought. After a meeting with Frederick Douglass and James Poindexter on the souther question, at which his ideas met with their approval, he reaffirmed his determination to assert firmly and maintain the constitutional rights granted the Negro. But he did not say how he hoped to fulfill this promise.⁵

⁴Vincent DeSantis, "President Hayes's Southern Policy," Journal of Southern History, XXI (November, 1955), 476 and Jacob Cox to Carl Schurz, Jan. 26, 1877. Schurz Papers.

⁵Hayes Diary, Feb. 17 and 18, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 416-17.

Later in February, after friendly southern congressmen had been disturbed by a hostile article appearing in the Ohio State Journal, which it was thought reflected Hayes's views, he considered making a short talk to allay their suspicions. As he recorded it in his journal, the undelivered speech pledged to the South that he would assuredly be guided by the spirit of his 'Letter'; in truth, if he were now composing this document, he "would give . . . the Southern question greater emphasis." He appreciated southern longing for "peace" and "repose", but first of all to realize these goals, the civil rights amendments must "be sacredly observed and faithfully enforced," he insisted. Secondly, he was anxious "to do what may constitutionally be done to make them again prosperous and happy." But the situation demanded "economy, honesty, and intelligence" in the administration of local affairs, and a program that would end sectionalism and "tend to wipe out the color line." Business and industry, immigration and education all wanted encouragement. "We do not want a unified North nor a united South," he pleaded in conclusion, but rather "a united country."⁶

In his inaugural the South was given precedence over all other subjects. He emphasized the importance of its problems and the need for effective and equitable solutions. But as his pre-inaugural reflections revealed, he entered office without a firm commitment to a specific route by which he might

⁶Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes, p. 383 and Hayes Diary, Feb. 25, 1877, Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 421.

reach his self-determined goals, although his remarks clearly implied a hands-off policy toward the South. As for the Negro, he seemed to be putting southerners, especially his "good men of the South", on their honor to uphold the freedman's rights and to guarantee them a role in the reunited nation, although not necessarily a large role in government. He emphasized his belief that the federal government had a "moral obligation" to confirm and shield the Negro in his rights. It was as if he wished to demonstrate that he had no intention of abandoning a cause for which he had fought as a soldier, a congressman and a governor. He emphasized the need for national rather than sectional unity and implied that southern problems were most likely to be solved through education, federally aided if necessary, and the simple passage of time. The southern economy also demanded attention, Hayes noted, but he went no further than to allude to the "considerate care" of the federal government, "within the limits prescribed by the Constitution and wise economy."⁷ The indecision and caution expressed in his letter to Schurz seemed now to govern him and those who, like the Texas and Pacific lobby, had hoped for more, were disappointed.

Although Grant's administration had come close to eliminating the last vestiges of military reconstruction, removal of the small army units propping up Republican governments in

⁷James D. Richardson, ed., Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897 (10 vols., Washington, 1907), pp. 442-44.

South Carolina and Louisiana was left to Hayes. It constituted his first major dilemma. Characteristically, he acted cautiously and only after much deliberation, although he had no real choice in the matter. Perhaps he would have preferred to support, for at least a time, both Chamberlain and Packard. Tom Donaldson, a close family friend, arrived at this conclusion after a conversation with Lucy Hayes in August 1877.

Donaldson remarked that he would have supported the Republican claimants, to which she replied: "Why, what could Mr. Hayes do but what he did? He had no army." In October of that year, Donaldson recorded that the President told him after seven years of using the army, Grant, in the face of sharply reduced Republican strength in the South, recognized that this approach would have to be abandoned. "This was the condition when I came in as President," Hayes told Donaldson, "so I had to act promptly. Besides, if my plan fails our party will be aided by it and the Independents stopped from further talk. In addition the House was against me and I had no army, and public sentiment demanded a change of policy," Hayes continued, calling attention to a circumstance often overlooked in studies of his era. "'Neither the Republican nor Democratic party now has control of the country,'" he observed, according to Donaldson, "'and for many years there has been an element working between the lines of the parties and this element holds the balance of power in the country.'" This faction enjoyed a priority in his thinking, for if they could be satisfied, victory in 1880,

with southern aid, might be assured.⁸

But after two weeks in office, Hayes remained undecided as to how to end federal military presence in Louisiana and South Carolina. He was determined that the army should not be used for political purposes in the future, but he was not yet ready to order them to abandon their assignments. The Democratic claimants, Hampton in South Carolina, and Nicholls in Louisiana, had won de facto power without resorting to violence; in fact they had pledged themselves to peace and had maintained it despite intense pressure from extremist colleagues. Yet Hayes may have wished to have stronger guarantees that Republicans in these states would not suffer under Democratic rule. Furthermore, it was clear that neither Packard nor Chamberlain would voluntarily surrender his claim, as hopeless as their situation appeared, and both expected the President's aid and support.⁹

As he continued to search for the most expedient solution to his problem, Hayes was heartened by the nomination of his close friend Matthews to fill Sherman's vacated Senate seat. This appeared to him to be "an endorsement of the policy of peace and home rule -- of local self government." As one southerner suggested, his section's conservatives did not look for a northern "surrender", but simply unchallenged white supremacy in local government. But Hayes was troubled, on the

⁸Memoirs of Thomas Donaldson, Aug. 28 and Oct. 17, 1877.

⁹Hayes Diary, March 23, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 429.

one hand, by the news that "a number of Southern Republican members" were about to defect to the Democrats and on the other hand by the opposition of those he labeled "ultra Republicans" to a "liberal policy toward late Rebels. . . ." He thereupon listed these possible approaches to the Louisiana and South Carolina dilemma: a second election; a decision by the state legislatures; the recognition of Packard and Chamberlain, who would then be left "to their own state remedies"; or the withdrawal of the troops and the situation left "to take care of" itself. He was sure that the troops must go, but remained uncertain and distressed as to how the Republican claimants should be handled. He turned to his cabinet for advice. All except Devens "seemed indisposed" to support Packard with the army. Evarts advised that the states, not the army, must settle disputed elections. Hayes himself, according to his diary, was convinced that "the people" would no longer tolerate the maintenance of one of two rival governments with federal troops. "If this leads to the overthrow of the de jure government in a State, the de facto government must be recognized," he concluded matter-of-factly. But the official family unanimously decided to send only an investigative commission to Louisiana.¹⁰

Hayes remained convinced that it was not his "duty" to settle disputed state elections with federal forces, although as president, he was bound to preserve federal "authority" and

¹⁰Hayes Diary, March 16, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 427 and J. W. Porter to John Sherman, March 10, 1877. Hayes Papers. Hayes Diary, March 16 and 20, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 427-28.

peace between the several claimants. Local self-government, as he defined it, meant "the determination by each State for itself of all questions as to its own local affairs." Did this mean he was ready to abandon the Negro? Quite the contrary. "The real thing to be achieved is safety and prosperity for the colored people," he insisted. Both Congress and the public were clearly opposed to military solutions and longed for the restoration of racial and sectional harmony; this however could be achieved "only . . . by peaceful methods."¹¹

About this time, Garfield confided to Whitelaw Reid that after "an abundance of kind talk in the direction of pacification . . . what was needed was a positive and unmistakable act of pacification." Hayes undoubtedly shared this sentiment, but he would not be hurried. A month later, Garfield assured Reid that "everything" now depended upon the South's willingness to "reciprocate." "The practical test is whether they will give Hayes the organization of the House," he continues. He was not hopeful, but Hayes remained optimistic.¹²

Meanwhile, the President continued to harbor the hope that the dilemma in the two states might be solved by making "one government out of two. . . ." But in case this could not be realized, if compromise proved impossible, the administration would be forced, except for peace-keeping purposes, to

¹¹Hayes Diary, March 23, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 429.

¹²Garfield to Whitelaw Reid, March 14 and April 10, 1877. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

"adopt the non-intervention policy" he had contemplated. The hoped for 'adjustments' were to be made through the use of the investigative commission and by calling Chamberlain and Hampton north to confer with the President. Although the troops were certain to be withdrawn, it is evident that southern extremists remained suspicious that pre-inaugural understandings were about to be repudiated.¹³

Chamberlain and Hampton did not receive identical treatment at the hands of the President. As early as March 7, Hayes had indicated to Hamilton Fish that Chamberlain would not be sustained, although he was considering him for the marshalship of the District of Columbia (the office later awarded to Frederick Douglass). Later that month, when Chamberlain arrived in Washington, he found that Hayes's views had not changed and that his case was hopeless. Hampton, who had assured Hayes by letter in December 1876 that peace and the rights of all citizens were being preserved in his state, reassured him upon reaching Washington, that "the rights" and the interests of all would be protected and secure. After receiving his invitation to confer with Hayes, Hampton gave the President his "assurance that no proscription shall be exercised here on account of political opinions; that no discrimination shall be made in the administration of justice; and that all citizens of both parties and both races shall be

¹³Hayes Diary, March 23, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 429 and R. C. Tucker, "Life and Public Service of E. John Ellis," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXIX, 736-37.

regarded as fully protected by, and amenable to, the laws." In his letter of invitation, Hayes had conveyed his wish to end the federal military presence as soon as possible. After their cordial meeting and before leaving Washington, Hampton made yet another written pledge to Hayes, apparently repeating those verbal promises made during their conversation.

I repeat therefore (Hampton wrote), that if the Federal troops are withdrawn from the State House, there shall be on my part, or that of my friends no resort to violence, to assert our claims, but that we shall look for their maintenance solely to such peaceful remedies as the Constitution and laws of the State provide. I shall use all my authority to repress the use or exhibition of force, in the settlement of all disputed questions, and this authority shall be exercised in such a manner that the peace shall be preserved.

This was precisely the kind of pledge Hayes wished to receive. A federal military presence was no longer justified and those remaining problems should be settled under "the constitution and laws of the State." He therefore directed Secretary of War McCrary to order the removal of the small body of soldiers from the Statehouse at Columbia. Now only Louisiana remained to be redeemed.¹⁴

Although the decision to send an investigating commission to Louisiana to expedite a settlement did not come until March 20, Hayes had apparently approved this approach some weeks earlier. Fish, who consistently encouraged Hayes to pursue a

¹⁴Allan Nevins, Hamilton Fish; The Inner History of the Grant Administration (New York, 1936), p. 859; Wade Hampton to Hayes, Dec. 28, 1876; March 26 and 31, 1877, in Hampton Jarrell, Wade Hampton and the Negro; The Road Not Taken (Columbia, 1949), pp. 171, 173-74 and Hayes to George W. McCrary, April 3, 1877, in Williams, ed., Life of Hayes, II, 52-53.

moderate policy was asked to join the commission, but refused, noting that Vice President Wheeler and Thurlow Weed had already done likewise. "It looks to me," Fish complained in his diary, "like a makeshift to gain time and occupy the public attention, or an expedient to find someone or something to share the responsibility" of the administration's decision and serve as a scapegoat for whatever public or party criticism it spawned. He assured Hayes, through Evarts, that the troops would have been removed had Grant remained in office.¹⁵

The Louisiana Commission, a fact-finding body, was intended to effect Hayes's wish to "make one government out of two in each State." Nicholls had already made considerable progress toward this goal, by winning control (without violence) of the state supreme court and the state senate, thus fostering the formation of one legislature. This body, it was hoped, could then 'adjust' the remaining problems, thus relieving Hayes of an onerous task. When the commission reached New Orleans, they found Nicholls in unchallenged control of the senate, but not the house. By shrewd bargaining, however, enough Packard men were won over to give Nicholls undisputed possession of the house as well. The Democratic legislature thereupon adopted a resolution pledging, much as had Hampton, to "accept in good faith . . . in letter and spirit" the reconstruction amendments; to enforce "the laws rigidly and impartially"; to promote "kindly relations between white and

¹⁵Andrew Kellar to William H. Smith, March 23, 1877. Smith Papers. Nevins, Hamilton Fish, pp. 859-60.

colored citizens"; and to promote equal education for both races. They further promised that the Nicholls administration would "discountenance any attempted persecution, from any quarter, of individuals for past political conduct." In a letter to the commission, Nicholls, too, pledged himself to these commitments. The commission responded by recommending that Hayes immediately order the troops withdrawn. He quickly followed their advice. Meanwhile, the Packard legislature cautioned and resolved to give up the fight, counseling Packard to follow suit.¹⁶

With the troops removed, Hayes now anticipated peace, and of equal importance, "security and prosperity for the colored people." The pledges bearing on the Negro that came in response to his new departure policy left him in a cheerful mood. "I am confident this is a good work," he observed to his diary. But, he added cautiously, "time will tell." He had taken a calculated risk and was prepared to be disappointed, yet he hoped it would serve to advance sectional good will and cooperation. Hayes, who strongly believed that economic recovery would be hastened by the restoration of political tranquility, was encouraged in his experiment by the nation's businessmen. A meeting of New York commercial and financial figures early in March enthusiastically backed the President's views on the South. Another gathering of that city's financiers called for

¹⁶B. F. Lathrop, ed., "An Autobiography of Francis T. Nichols," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XVII (1934), 254-56; Memoirs of Thomas Donaldson, Oct. 18, 1882 and quoted in Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes, pp. 429-31.

troop removal in a letter to Evarts. To the west, Merchants and Cotton Exchanges joined in approving resolutions requesting the removal of federal troops. These sentiments were echoed by commercial and financial organizations and interests in Philadelphia, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland and Minneapolis. The commercial press in the North joined in such appeals, pointing out, for example, the grave injury being done to the economy in South Carolina and Louisiana as evidenced by conditions in Charleston and New Orleans.¹⁷

So far, Hayes's policy had followed the course charted by Cox in their January meeting -- during which he had "agreed very cordially" with this liberal Republican's views. Furthermore, in line with Cox's suggestion that he "make at an early day an official tour through the South", he and members of the official family did make a goodwill speaking tour of over two weeks' duration through Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia and Virginia in September 1877. Earlier, in August, he had travelled for eight days in Vermont and New Hampshire, speaking spontaneously and seeking "to impress the people with the importance of harmony between different sections, States, classes, and races, and to discourage sectionalism and race and class prejudice." His views neatly paralleled those of Cox, whose opinions on the southern problem he had earlier solicited. "The lapse of time has so far consolidated and established the

¹⁷Hayes Diary, April 22, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 430 and Stanley P. Hirshon, Farewell to the Bloody Shirt: Northern Republicans and the Southern Negro, 1877-1893 (Bloomington, 1962), pp. 31-32.

political rights of the Negroes," Cox's argument ran, "that their separate organization as a party is no longer essential to their safety. On the contrary, it is the cause of their greatest danger. The whites of the South will recognize the political equality if this does not threaten to continue the rule of a class distinguished by race . . ." But if the color line was not removed from the picture, Negroes throughout the South would find that, as in Mississippi, their political rights existed in name only and with the intention of enlarging the congressional representation of the South's "real governing class. . ."¹⁸ Hayes was pleased with his New England trip, but he returned from his southern swing positively jubilant. "Received everywhere heartily," despite a frank discussion of the primacy of the civil rights amendments and the need to upgrade public education, he recorded in his diary. "The country is one and united! I am very happy to be able to feel that the course taken has turned out so well." He had sought the good will of the 'good men' of the South and honestly believed he had won it. The "vital steps" had been taken, he told a friend, and as for whatever the outcome might be, Hayes would rest secure in the knowledge that he had "meant well."¹⁹

¹⁸Jacob Cox to Carl Schurz, Jan. 26, 1877. Schurz Papers. Hayes Diary, Aug. 26, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 442, and Jacob Cox to Hayes, Jan. 31, 1877. Hayes Papers.

¹⁹Hayes Diary, Sept. 6, 1877 and Hayes to William M. Dickson, April 22, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 443, 431.

One of the "results" Hayes anticipated was Democratic help in making Garfield the speaker of the House. He had been encouraged in this hope as early as February 17, when Smith confidentially informed him that if Key received a cabinet post, conservatives in Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi and Texas would "follow him and support" the Hayes administration. Nine southerners were already "pledged" to help the GOP elect Garfield speaker, either by giving him their votes or by absenting themselves when the House convened, Smith assured him. On the very same day, Garfield met with Sherman to talk over the makeup of Hayes's cabinet. Sherman appeared to want the Treasury post, while favoring Garfield as his successor in the Senate. "Just now the road forks for me," Garfield mused -- along one route lay the speakership, along the other a senatorship. He was not inclined to be very hopeful concerning the former, but others were considerably more optimistic and encouraging. There had been some speculation that Garfield might join Sherman in the cabinet, but Hayes had no such intentions. When Ohio legislators from Garfield's district were sounded out on the senatorship by a friend, the pollster told Garfield it was interesting to see how many still harbored reservations based upon the 1873 scandals. Characteristically, he decided to let "events take care of themselves" and apparently did so.²⁰

²⁰William H. Smith to Hayes, Feb. 17, 1877. Hayes Papers. Garfield Diary, Feb. 17, 1877; Thomas McLain to Garfield, Feb. 20, 1877 and Garfield Diary, March 11, 1877. Garfield Papers.

When Hayes arrived in Washington, he had asked Garfield to stay on in the House, where he believed Garfield could for the moment "be more useful in the work of pacification of the country, which his administration has undertaken," Garfield telegraphed a leading supporter in the Ohio legislature. He would not, therefore, be a candidate for the Senate. Hayes repeated his request in later conversations, averring a belief that he could help Garfield organize an administration House. Apparently Garfield had not yet given Hayes his answer, for he records only that he "promised to consider the matter and talk with him again." The fact was that he "was a little nettled" that the President should be so anxious to put his intimate friend Stanley Matthews in the Senate seat vacated by Sherman, seemingly at his expense. He undoubtedly felt slighted and ill-used, in view of the yeoman service he had performed in securing the presidency for Hayes. But he quickly caught himself, confessing to his diary that his momentary pique was unreasonable: no doubt Hayes "sincerely" wished his help and he was duty bound to give it. Meanwhile the advice from Ohio was that it would be wiser to remain in the House and aim for the Senate in 1880 than to oppose Matthews in the legislative caucus. But the situation was complicated when Garfield learned that he had enjoyed a lead over Matthews in a pre-caucus poll. He candidly analyzed his state of mind as follows:

I recognized in myself an infirmity of will in choosing what to do in reference to the Senatorship. It is a choice, not of evils, but of goods,

with many contingencies attached to each. On the whole, I am attracted by the suggestion to do the unusual thing of declining the senatorship, and staying in the House.²¹

Hayes was indeed "very anxious" that he assume the leadership of his party in the House, Garfield reported, after yet another conference with the President. Hayes even went so far as to put his request in the form of a letter, which Garfield was free to publish. On the following day, he telegraphed supporters in Ohio, indicating he had bowed to Hayes's wishes. He undoubtedly hoped that his sacrifice would be properly appreciated by the Ohio electorate; but, he speculated, the public would "quite as likely . . . charge it to timidity about making the canvass as to any other motive." He was now urged to endorse one of the remaining contenders, but resisted the temptation.²²

Then, just three days after accommodating Hayes, the President, apparently fearing Matthews might be beaten, had second thoughts. He told Garfield that "he did not want an inexperienced person like Howland nor a hostile one like Taft," Garfield records, "and did not know but I had better be a candidate." A perturbed Garfield declined, pointing out that he

²¹Garfield to Thomas McLain, March 1, 1877 (draft of telegram); Garfield Diary, March 5 and 6, 1877; Myron Streator to Garfield, March 7, 1877; Garfield Diary, March 10, 1877 and Thomas McLain to Garfield, March 8, 1877. Garfield Papers.

²²Garfield Diary, March 10; 11 and 12, 1877. Garfield Papers.

had already committed himself irrevocably.²³

Matthews won the contest, but Garfield and many of his friends believed the honor could have been his. Yet this would have required him to meet Matthews in a sharp, head-on fight, rather than seek the kind of accommodation Ohio's major political figures preferred when two or more of them discovered they were on a collision course. Moreover, he had not been truly certain that he could win the nomination until after his decision had been made and others, too, shared his doubts. Apparently many of his friends also wished to see him remain a representative and in a position to be of greater service. But Garfield obviously resented Hayes's meddling, believing he might have missed his chance of becoming a senator. He complained to a friend that he considered the President's request "hardly just", but concluded it was advisable to "be more generous than the rest of them. . . ." His "generosity", however, should pay some dividends and he reiterated his hope that his supporters would "appreciate the sacrifice" he had made in the face of "almost certain" victory. Several Ohio friends were asked to advise him of the peoples' reaction.²⁴

It is common to put forward the hope of making Garfield speaker with southern aid as the explanation for Hayes's intervention in the senatorial contest. But Hayes seemed to

²³Garfield Diary, March 14, 1877. Garfield Papers.

²⁴Garfield to Charles Henry, March 13, 1877. Henry Papers. Garfield to Harmon Austin, March 14, 1877. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

emphasize the help Garfield could give him, especially with pacification rather than the speakership itself, during their conversations. Privately, Hayes was also most anxious to reward Matthews for his service before the Electoral Commission, which he believed had determined the outcome of the contested election. Because of this and Matthews' behind the scenes negotiations with southern leaders prior to inauguration, as well as their intimate friendship, the President viewed Matthews' senatorial bid as a means of gauging the northern response to his pacification policy. When Matthews was nominated, he recorded, as noted above, that this was indeed "an endorsement of the policy of peace and home rule -- or local self government." Could he have felt the same way had Garfield been the party's nominee? Was Hayes also operating on the assumption that he would have an opportunity to promote Matthews to the Supreme Court, thereby giving Garfield a second opportunity to move up the political ladder?²⁵

During a long talk with Matthews early in April, Garfield found him troubled both as to his "standing in the party" and his election to a full term in the Senate. He distinctly preferred a place on the Supreme Court to the senatorship and believed his wish would be fulfilled in the near future. Apparently he also wanted the assurance that Garfield would not compete with him for the Senate and perhaps this led him to

²⁵Hayes Diary, March 23, 1889 and March 16, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 458-59 and III, 427. Garfield Diary, April 2, 1877. Garfield Papers.

speak optimistically of Garfield's chances of taking the speakership and to promise his aid to that end. Years later, Hayes spoke in his diary of contributing to, if not controlling, Matthews nomination and election to the Senate. Moreover, following his election, the new Senator gave Garfield an account of the affair. According to Garfield's diary, Matthews told him that he had not considered bidding for the senatorship "until Hayes suggested it, that he replied it naturally belonged to Garfield who would probably be nominated at any rate." Hayes replied "that that could be amicably arranged." This led Garfield to conclude that "after all, the public view is the correct one, that Hayes inaugurated his candidacy."²⁶ He left not further comment on the affair, but his belief that he had been a convenient sacrifice must surely have been re-enforced by Matthews' confession.

In mid-March, a House Republican caucus had made Garfield its unanimous choice for speaker. He was not optimistic as to his chances for victory, for despite predictions to the contrary, he fully expected the Democrats to organize the House. So did the perceptive Charles Foster, who with Matthews had been deeply involved in negotiations with certain southerners to insure the completion of the count. It was also about this

²⁶Garfield Diary, April 2, 1877. Garfield Papers. Hayes Diary, March 23, 1889, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 458 and Garfield Diary, Nov. 24, 1877. Garfield Papers.

time that Andrew Kellar, a party to these negotiations, was assuring William Henry Smith that men like Lamar and Gordon were undependable and that time was needed during which Key must be firmly supported and also given power over federal appointments in the South outside the Post Office. But Garfield's contact with southerners made him dubious that Hayes's policy would encourage a realignment in southern politics. "I fear party lines cannot be obliterated by generosity," he reflected, hoping nevertheless, events would prove him wrong.²⁷ However, another party to the anti-filibuster effort, S. C. Boynton, remained hopeful, assuring Garfield that Hampton would aid the GOP in organizing the House and that Hampton and the President had discussed the matter during their meeting. But was Garfield the man upon whom Democrats would unite? Charles Foster, who represented Hayes's home district, told Garfield that he had been approached by a man claiming to speak for 28 southern Democrats who, this spokesman averred, would support Foster for the speakership "in a certain contingency, and upon certain conditions (Foster did not elaborate) named by him." According to this gentlemen, he was the only Republican who could be elected. Meanwhile, the abundance of press speculation on the speakership was becoming "very absurd and annoying," a vexed Garfield recorded. He remained essentially pessimistic, although he believed the speakership to represent a means of

²⁷Garfield Diary, March 9; April 6 and 9, 1877 and Charles Foster to Garfield, March 30, 1877. Garfield Papers. Andrew Kellar to William H. Smith, March 20, 1877. Smith Papers. Garfield Diary, March 27, 1877. Garfield Papers.

testing the sincerity of those southerners who supported Hayes's approach. If they were to give Hayes the House, the President might score a success. "If not," he observed, mirroring the mood of many Republicans, "his friends North will not tolerate a continuance of his Southern Scheme."²⁸

Indeed, after only a month in office, a skeptical party was prepared to revolt unless their President's policy produced immediate clear-cut political gains. In answer to criticism of his course in Louisiana, brought to his attention by his intimate friend William Henry Smith (who confessed he felt "deeply for our good old Republicans" whose minds were "filled with doubts"), Hayes replied that he shared Smith's feelings on the matter. "If anything can be done to soften this to the really good men involved I will be glad to do it," the President wrote. His reference to "really good men" is significant. He was not particularly anxious concerning those he considered extremists or corruptionists. The decision in Louisiana was the "only possible" course and it was "for the best," he insisted to Smith. He was confident that "all wise and good people sooner or later" would agree with him. "I shall not forget my duty to the staunch Republicans," he assured friends. Both his party and the Negro would benefit from his experiment, he hoped.²⁹

²⁸Garfield Diary, April 4, 1877; Charles Foster to Garfield, March 21, 1877 and Garfield Diary, April 6, 1877. Garfield Papers.

²⁹William H. Smith to Hayes, n. d. and Hayes to William H. Smith, April 22, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 431-32.

Moreover, while abandoning the use of federal troops, Hayes was by no means abandoning the civil rights amendments, and beginning with his 'Letter', he had consistently insisted that they be obeyed and enforced. Smith himself had been under pressure from Charles Farwell, who, it seems, had "promised (Packard and his friends) that they should be sustained" and was now outraged at their abandonment and asked Smith to say so to Hayes. The Republican party's objectives remained constant, but the approach and the emphasis were undergoing a basic alteration. With but one exception, the President's policy of harmony and the building of a native white Republican party in the South, was adopted by his nineteenth century Republican successors.³⁰

But the party's response in Hayes's time was as Cox had predicted it would be in his January letter. "Selfishness" and "honest but narrow partizanship" would combine to stymie his efforts, Cox had warned Hayes. There will be "doubts & fears thrust at you, your fidelity to principle may even be questioned, but you will triumph & the world will then regret that it doubted," he had written reassuringly. Cox had not only shown remarkable prescience as to the reception that would greet 'the policy', but had accurately anticipated Hayes's view of the affair. The Hayes course had not been without its defenders, however, for it was publicly upheld

³⁰Charles Farwell to William H. Smith, March 6, 1877. Smith Papers. Vincent P. DeSantis, "President Hayes's Southern Policy," p. 494.

by Stalwart Senator Morton of Indiana and by former President Grant. During his last days in office Grant had concluded, under Fish's urging and despite heavy pressure to the contrary, to leave the decision as to Louisiana to Hayes, lest he commit his successor to a distasteful policy. He did however, write as follows to Packard on March 1, frankly expressing his views as to Packard's claim to office: "I feel it my duty to state frankly that I do not believe public opinion will support longer the maintenance of State Government in Louisiana by the use of the military, and that I must concur in this manifest feeling." In view of this judgment, it is understandable that after leaving office Grant declared that he would have acted just as Hayes did regarding federal forces in New Orleans.³¹

Hayes was clearly troubled by the view that he had betrayed both the Negro and his party. Even his appointment of Frederick Douglass as marshal of the District of Columbia was regarded "as a sort of vicarious atonement for the abandonment of the Fifteenth Amendment" and as an act of appeasement by some critics. On the other hand, the District bar was "in a state of mind" over his choice, Hayes recorded. One set of "ultra Republicans" attacked his leniency toward former Rebels, while extreme Democrats fumed over the recognition of Negroes. "I suspect I am right in both cases," he concluded as his characteristic self-assurance returned. He believed the

³¹Jacob Cox to Hayes, Jan. 31, 1877. Hayes Papers. Nevins, Hamilton Fish, pp. 855-56.

people, at least the 'best people' were with him and determined to maintain a cool and detached attitude -- a non-partisan approach. Both in newspaper interviews and private correspondence, Hayes sought to reassure the people with respect his continuing loyalty to his party and the cause of Negro rights. Typical of his attitude, was a note to W. D. Bickham in which he expressed his pleasure at a recent piece in the latter's Dayton paper on the southern problem. He wrote as follows:

I know how sore a trial this business is to staunch anti-slavery veterans like you. I expect many to condemn. I shall not worry or scold if they do. I know they mean well. It is a comfort to know also that I mean well. It will, I trust turn out that I am right. If not, I am a sound Republican still and always.³²

Public criticism of the Hayes approach by leading stalwarts had begun soon after he had taken office. Responding to rumors that by prior arrangement Packard would not be recognized, Blaine commented caustically in the Senate that if Packard was not legally entitled to his office, neither then was Hayes. Even the President's friends, Garfield included, were troubled on this account. The same question had been raised when Hayes met with the outgoing Grant Cabinet for advice and counsel. Fish records that Cameron, Robeson, Taft and Chandler all argued for recognition of Packard's government, and "Chandler, with some indiscretion, remarked

³²Benjamin A. Quarles, "The Public Life of Frederick Douglass" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1941), p. 279, Hayes Diary, March 16, 1877 and Hayes to William Bickham, April 22, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 427, 431.

to the President that the Packard Government was chosen on the same vote on which he was declared elected President. Gov. Hayes rebuked him, and several members of the Cabinet simultaneously interposed, manifesting disapproval of this great indecency."³³

Early in April, former Senator Benjamin Wade, an old-line abolitionist and radical who had seconded Hayes's nomination at Cincinnati, bitterly assailed the President's policy in a letter reprinted later that month in the New York Tribune. Referring to his long record as an exponent of emancipation and justice for the Negro, Wade began by saying he had been led to believe that Hayes agreed with completely. "But I have been deceived," Wade lamented, "betrayed, and even humiliated by the course he has taken to a degree that I have not the language to express." He spoke of Hayes's conferences with "two of the worst malignant enemies" of the Negro to be found in the South, at which he sought the best means of placing "these colored people under the iron heel of their most bitter enemies, and reduce them to a condition unfortunately worse than before they were made free." To so abandon them "would be a crime as infamous" as re-enslavement, and this after Negro lives had been risked to give Hayes the power he was now misusing. Hayes also appeared to be contemplating the destruction of the GOP. "Some have attempted to excuse him by saying that he 'means well,'" Wade concluded contemptuously,

³³Nevins, Hamilton Fish, p. 858.

"but hell is paved with just such good intentions." Old abolitionist leaders like Garrison and Phillips also attacked the administration for abandoning the Negro and when the Republican National Committee met in April, only Foster came to the President's defense.³⁴

However, Garfield like most GOP leaders, was willing to give this new departure a fair trial, but the truce would end when the House convened in special session in October and the speakership was decided. Garfield himself was frequently visited by those with schemes for organizing a Republican House, but he continued to be most skeptical. Nevertheless, liberal Republicans like Cox remained hopeful. Time was of the essence, Cox advised Garfield, and asked his help in delaying the calling of a special session of Congress until Fall. Hayes must be given a chance, for although the initial efforts did appear "to favor the Southern Democrats -- the division of the old white element there must come later," he argued. With the passage of time, the likelihood of electing Garfield speaker would grow, Cox concluded, and the disposition of the speakership could be considered a fair test of southern good faith. Hayes, too, remained optimistic, and in a lengthy conversation on April 3 with Garfield and Matthews, declared he was "willing to favor internal improvements in the South, including the Southern Pacific Railroad, if that will bring Southern support

³⁴Quoted in Hirshon, Farewell to the Bloody Shirt, pp. 34-35.

to the Administration and make it worth while."³⁵

Southern Democratic leaders and the party press responded to the troop removal and Hayes's generosity toward them in filling federal offices, by lavishing praise on him and his policy. As one correspondent pointed out to Garfield, they followed it up with pleas for continued party loyalty. For a brief period following his inauguration there was a flurry of speculation over rumors that Hayes intended to enlist the aid of former Whigs and Douglas Democrats in reviving his party in the South. An abundance of letters giving examples of Whig unhappiness at being a part of the Democracy and invariably including patronage advice filled Hayes's incoming correspondence until federal appointments were nearly finished. Even the staunchest southern Democrats like Representative E. John Ellis of Louisiana were anxious that Hayes and his northern brethren be placated and abuse of them stilled. "Our hopes of levees and Pacific Roads and Brazilian Mail Lines is in Hayes," Ellis reminded his brother. "Every consideration of interest dictates that we court and woo him. We will do this if the papers will aid us." It appears that Hayes would have been pleased to see the House choose a Republican speaker, preferably Garfield, but was quite unwilling to enter into any bargains to this end.³⁶

³⁵Garfield Diary, April 6 and 9, 1877; Jacob Cox to Garfield, April 18, 1877 and Garfield Diary, April 3, 1877. Garfield Papers.

³⁶Alexander, "Persistent Whiggery," 305-29; Tucker, "E. John Ellis," 739 and John Defrees to Garfield, May 4, 1877. Garfield Papers.

Garfield and members of his circle were not sanguine and one may doubt that Hayes was truly as hopeful about his chances of bringing off a realignment of southern politics as he sometimes appeared. He confided to a good friend and advisor on April 22 that while the vital steps" in his southern policy had been taken, he believed that southerners would "not yet, if ever, desert their party organizations." Yet some ten days later, he painted a picture filled with the rosiest optimism for the editor of the Dayton (Ohio) Journal. "The pacification policy still gains," he wrote. "I am confident it will secure North Carolina, with a fair chance in Maryland, Virginia, Tennessee, and Arkansas, and am not without hopes of Louisiana, South Carolina, and Florida." But a New Orleans friend insisted to Garfield that it was "utterly impossible" for a Republican nominee for the speakership to get so much as a single Democratic vote from Louisiana. Another Ohioian living in Savannah assured him that the solid South could not be split by the President's policy.³⁷

Hayes's enthusiasm was probably more than a trifle cooled by the report Jacob Comly brought back from Louisiana later in May. Comly had undertaken an extended fact-finding mission to New Orleans to aid the administration in making federal appointments in Louisiana and to assist in the building of the nucleus

³⁷Hayes to William Dickson, April 22, 1877 and Hayes to William Bickham, May 3, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 431, 432. Lionel Sheldon to Garfield, May 5, 1877 and James Atkins to Garfield, Aug. 10, 1877. Garfield Papers.

of a native white Republican party there. However, after surveying the scene, he found to his great surprise that the solid South was rapidly emerging and that his party's prospects were nil. He was disgusted, he told his wife, by the blatant political selfishness he observed and the utter lack of appreciation of Hayes's policy; but remained certain 'the policy' was essentially correct. Upon his return he composed a lengthy report in which he encouraged Hayes in his experiment, but advised him that "any appointment to conciliate any element must be first asked for by that element. Even taking its most prominent representative man, and appointing him for the purpose of conciliation, will produce the opposite effect, if made without their motion." Yet Hayes continued to believe, as an autumn diary entry put it, that the southern question seemed "to be on a good footing." His nomination to the Board of Trustees of the Peabody Education Fund by its southern members pleased him, as did his unanimous selection as a trustee. This proved his pacification policy was "approved by the whole country," he observed with satisfaction.³⁸

But once the House had returned in mid-October to act on the Army appropriation measure left uncompleted in March, it became obvious that the South had failed the first test of its sincerity. Democratic ranks held firm as Randall was chosen

³⁸Eugene Kleinpell, "The Life of James M. Comly," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1937), p. 170 and Jacob Comly to Hayes, May 27, 1877. Hayes Papers. Hayes Diary, Oct. 4, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 444.

speaker over Garfield by a strict party vote. If Hayes was upset by this event, he did not let it be known. Indeed, he reminded himself that in his first annual message, he must "congratulate the country on the fact that the pacification, on the basis of the Amendments, has gone forward so well." Perhaps the impression that he anticipated practical results from his approach had been misleading; perhaps all he had really hoped for was literally pacification and reconciliation. As Tom Donaldson insisted years later, Hayes had repeatedly explained his policy to him and in essence "it was mainly to put the South on its good behavior." He knew it would fail but in so doing it would silence liberal dissidents and ensure a GOP victory in 1880.³⁹

A breach in Democratic ranks might have been opened had Hayes personally taken decisive steps to build a coalition between liberal Republicans and conservative Democrats, but he preferred a cautious policy of personal non-involvement. Moreover, while Postmaster-General Key tried indirectly to influence the President's conduct by forwarding letters from southern correspondents describing the political instability there, he refrained from pressing Hayes to capitalize on the situation. Key's biographer explains the situation in this way:

Too handicapped by Hayes's lack of insight into the Southern problem of political realignment, and too limited by his own concern over a balanced handling of the demands of political expediency and the needs of civil service, Key failed to contribute his full

³⁹Hayes Diary, Oct. 18, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 448 and Thomas Donaldson to William H. Smith, Nov. 5, 1877. Smith Papers.

share to forcing the Administration into decisions necessary for the Southern victory.⁴⁰

Hayes had written that "'the let-alone policy' seems now to be the true course" as early as his 1875 gubernatorial campaign. He had undertaken his experiment firm in the belief that southern Democrats would not then, perhaps would never, abandon the Democratic organization. He hoped, nevertheless, for their aid in his efforts to reform the civil service, perhaps by forming a temporary union with the liberals and thus overcoming the resistance of the stalwarts. He considered that the "vital steps" in his effort to resolve the southern dilemma had, by late April, been taken. Now, with this accomplished what should he undertake next, he asked himself. Southerners felt "in good temper" toward him and would "look kindly" on his civil service reform intentions, he assured a friend. It was to this work that he now turned his energies, while maintaining an attitude of watchful waiting toward the South. He was now prepared to return to the work to which he had given precedence in his 'Letter' -- reformation of the civil service.⁴¹

Hayes's southern policy had come under sharp, but sporadic fire between March and October, but when not a single southerner supported Garfield's bid for the speakership of

⁴⁰David Abshire, "David McKendree Key; A Study in Reconstruction Politics" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Georgetown University, 1958), p. 396.

⁴¹Hayes to Guy Bryan, July 27, 1875 and Hayes to William Dickson, April 22, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 286, 431.

the House, the President came under a heavy and stinging attack. He was forced to admit that it was "now obvious" that the opposition of both House and Senate Republicans to this administration was "very decided." In his diary he analyzed the targets of his critics -- the Cabinet, his civil service directive and his patronage policy. The latter he admitted, constituted "a total departure from the principles, traditions and wishes of the party." He clearly recognized that he was attempting a fresh approach, in seeking to build Republicanism in the South without resorting to traditional tactics. He recognized that only a few Republicans favored all of his pacification measures, although he believed most supported at least some part of his program. Garfield reports that a mid-October meeting of some twenty Republicans at Sherman's revealed "great differences of opinion in regard to the President's policy" with the distinct likelihood of a split in Republican ranks.⁴²

In the Republican controlled Senate, his party was already in revolt. On November 10, a caucus was called to consider their grievances regarding appointments and southern policy. Senator Edmunds, the new majority leader, since Morton's death, presided and took a neutral and conciliatory stand while Matthews, Dawes and Hoar came to the defense of the President. The caucus finally elected to send a grievance committee to the White House. As its chairman, Edmunds was to inform the

⁴²Hayes Diary, Oct. 29, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 449. Garfield Diary, Oct. 19, 1877. Garfield Papers.

President of the Judiciary Committee's intention to report out Democratic nominees unfavorably where acceptable Republicans were available. In the words of Edmunds, Hayes's views were "more suggestive of a political dreamer than of the sober sense of a statesman." As a result of his approach, a strong Republican party would eventually emerge in the South, the President contended. He would continue, in the matter of appointments, to choose Republicans of quality if available, if not, he would nominate worthy Democrats. According to Edmunds, he broke in at this point saying that a Democrat would never win his support unless he unequivocally supported the war amendments and promised to enforce them scrupulously upon his confirmation. Hayes colly replied that as he saw it, the oath taken by federal officeholders was quite adequate.⁴³

Some observers believed that Hayes was repeating Andrew Johnson's southern policy. Henry Adams wrote to Henry Cabot Lodge that it was "Andrew Johnson over again, with more respectability and a better balance of parties." Samuel Smalls of the Atlanta Constitution, who had been Johnson's private secretary, claimed Johnson's policy had now been justified by Hayes's course. Even his cabinet reflected his identification with Johnson's approach, Smalls claimed. He noted that Evarts had supported Johnson's southern policy and that Thompson, Schurz and Devens, too, had endorsed his course -- the course

⁴³Selig Adler, "George F. Edmunds" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1936), pp. 173-74.

Hayes was now pursuing.⁴⁴

In spite of such uncomplimentary comparisons and a continuing barrage of criticism, Hayes remained confident that he was correct. Indeed, he was heartened by some of these strictures, believing that they simply proved the correctness of his course. What is more, he was certain that "a large majority of the best people (his kind of people)" were in complete agreement with him. He wrote that he was pleased with the "favorable comment from independent papers . . . and notably the religious newspapers", but admitted that the majority of both Democratic and Republican journals were critical and his congressional supporters were few. However, he considered himself a "non-partisan President" and it was to be expected that as such he would "be feebly supported, if at all, in Congress or by the press," he declared. Not only did staunch GOP partisans find his course distasteful, but Democrats, too, were not inclined to back enthusiastically an administration they had not elected, he admitted. It would now be his purpose, therefore, "to keep cool" and respond to critics genteely while clearly demonstrating his "sincerity and firmness."⁴⁵

But the administrations's policies were in serious trouble

⁴⁴Hayes Diary, Oct. 24, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 449, Henry Adams to Henry C. Lodge, Dec. 2, 1877, in Worthington C. Ford, ed., The Letters of Henry Adams (2 vols., Boston, 1930-38), I, 303 and Memoirs of Thomas Donaldson, Nov. 29, 1877.

⁴⁵Hayes Diary, March 12 and Oct. 24, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 450.

even in Ohio. Following the Republican state convention, over which he presided, Garfield reported that they had "got through in fair shape" but inflation sentiment was swelling and numerous party members had been injured by Hayes's southern policy. Moreover, he was not especially optimistic concerning GOP prospects in the October contests. Indeed the results were a disappointment. The Democracy easily won the governorship and took control of the house and senate by healthy margins. One of Sherman's chief political lieutenants, Warner Bateman, reported that everyone was "astonished" at the outcome and although he claimed that Ohio remained Republican, there was "widespread indifference and dissatisfaction." The depression and labor unrest hurt the party, Bateman observed, but more importantly, Hayes's southern experiment "was distasteful to many, and some openly voted the Democratic ticket (as) an expression of their disgust, while still more staid at home." The situation was, Bateman said, "aggravated by a half-hearted defense" of the southern policy by some campaigners, and "a general ignoring" of the matter by a majority of those who stumped the state. Thus Garfield, who made some three dozen speeches, seems to have made money and finance his theme (which took some courage) while saying very little about Hayes and the South.⁴⁶

In his analysis of the election, Garfield emphasized the voter apathy common in an off year contest, as well as "the

⁴⁶Garfield to Albert Riddle, July 30, 1877. Garfield Papers. Letterbook. Warner Bateman to John Sherman, Oct. 11, 1877. Warner Bateman Papers. Garfield Diary, Aug., Sept. and Oct., 1877. Garfield Papers.

effects of the Civil Service Policy and the dissatisfaction with the southern policy." One might fairly assume that an examination of that fall's contests in other northern states would reveal a similar response to Hayes's approach to the southern question. But Hayes appeared untroubled by the rebuff his party received in Ohio and elsewhere and would admit to errors in only one area. Because of his "anxiety to complete the great work of pacification" he had "neglected to give due attention to removals." This had brought "some bad appointments", some "mistakes" in removals and "delays in action." But he would now undertake to correct these matters.⁴⁷

Late in October, Garfield undertook to "speak very plainly" to Hayes on party affairs and especially the southern policy. According to his diary, he told the President that during his southern tour,

he proffered pacification and good will but nowhere spoke as though he did it as the representative of the people who elected him. He thus made his friend fear, and his political enemies hope, that he was acting as though he was not in alliance with his party, and when the South praised him, they dispraised his party. It would have been more just and more politic to have associated his party with his proffers of good will.

Assuredly this was a major weakness of Hayes's highly personal, 'non partisan' approach during his first year in office, but it was quite consistent with his earlier political history. Obviously it contributed to the belief that his Republicanism

⁴⁷Garfield Diary, Oct. 10, 1877. Garfield Papers. Hayes Diary, Oct. 24, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 450.

was suspect -- a view that pained and annoyed him. Garfield followed up his criticism by showing Hayes a resolution he proposed to introduce if the Democrats took up the southern question. As he described it, the resolution, which met with Hayes's approval, combined "approval of pacification with a full recognition of the rights of all classes under the amended constitution."⁴⁸

If Hayes was disappointed that the South had failed to help organize an administration House he concealed his feeling very well. A trip to Richmond late in October left him convinced that the South contained "thousands of intelligent people who . . . (were) not Democrats and who would like to unite with conservative Republicans of the North." These forays into the South visibly bolstered his spirits and reassured him of the ultimate wisdom of his new departure. Early in November, he used his diary to note a number of topics for consideration in his annual message to Congress. Among these items he included "improvements, railroads and levees(?)" But he was referring to what was already going forward in these areas and no mention of future internal improvements was to be made in the message he delivered to Congress in December. Clearly Hayes was instinctively wary of subsidies and fearful of the corruption that sometimes followed in their wake. Eager as he was to help promote southern prosperity, his enthusiasm was tempered by sober second thoughts and the advice of men like

⁴⁸Garfield Diary, Oct. 26, 1877. Garfield Papers.

Schurz. He had toyed with the idea of federal promotion of internal improvements, education, immigration and emigration, but in a February letter to Schurz he revealed what had by March become his true (and natural) position. "Perhaps," he wrote, "we must be content to leave that to time -- taking care not to obstruct time's healing processes by injudicious meddling. I will think of it."⁴⁹ A month later, in his inaugural address, he had made it clear that despite the efforts of Smith, Boynton, Kellar, Dodge and the Scott interests, the President had no intention of becoming involved with a federal subsidy for the Texas and Pacific railroad. Huntington's subsequent demonstration that he could build a southern line without federal aid simply re-enforced Hayes in his views.

Nevertheless, those who had been involved in the pre-inaugural negotiations and 'understandings' continued to expect or at least hope that Hayes would come out in support of a subsidy. As noted above, in an April discussion with him and Matthews, Hayes had, according to Garfield, indicated his willingness to support "internal improvements in the South, including the Southern Pacific Railroad" if his help was likely to win "Southern support to the administration to make it worth while." Southern spokesman like Henry Watterson as well as Hayes's Texas friend Guy Bryan reported that the President would

⁴⁹Hayes Diary, Nov. 3 and 5, 1877 and Hayes to Carl Schurz, Feb. 4, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 450, 413.

aid the Texas and Pacific project.⁵⁰ Thus Hayes appeared to have reversed himself on internal improvements, but in reality he was convinced that with the removal of the troops and the securing of pledges from the Hampton and Nicholls governments, the essential measures of his policy had been undertaken. He now intended to focus his attention on civil service reform while he awaited the South's response to his gestures of goodwill. Contrary to what he said or seemed to say, Hayes really had little faith in the efficacy of subsidies as a means of triggering Democratic defections.

Late in November, Governor Zebulon Vance of North Carolina assured Tom Donaldson that the South was already solid and that while southern Democrats appreciated the withdrawal of troops and the recognition of party members, the hope that this would persuade Democrats to vote "the Republican or Hayes ticket" was without foundation. Furthermore, he claimed that South Carolinians were indifferent toward the Southern Pacific project which he, an anti-subsidy man, branded as "a scheme to help Tom Scott", as it then stood. Hayes was being petted and misled, he continued, by those who, claiming to understand the South, assured him that Democratic support was forthcoming and that the old Whigs were alive again.⁵¹

Certainly the thesis that Hayes abandoned his stand on

⁵⁰Garfield Diary, April 3, 1877. Garfield Papers. C. Vann Woodward, Reunion and Reaction; The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction (2d ed., rev.; Garden City, 1956), pp. 243-44.

⁵¹Memoirs of Thomas Donaldson, Nov. 27, 1877.

federal aid because the Democrats failed to give the administration control of the House does not stand up. He had never truly abandoned the 'hands-off', non-interventionist course he had determined upon before entering the White House. Moreover, this was the 'safest' approach for one who lived in dread of something akin to a Credit Mobilier scandal besmirching his administration. Surely he did not consider himself committed to any specific policy by the efforts and suggestions of Smith, Boynton, Kellar and their allies. H. V. Boynton, for one, was bitterly disappointed by Hayes's course on internal improvements, but in commenting on this caustic journalist's criticism of him, the President declared that Boynton knew, "of course, very little of what was expected. The truth is, I had no confidants in regard to it."⁵² In other words, those who led some southerners to expect generous federal aid from a Hayes administration only assumed or imagined they were in a position to deliver on their assurances. The interpretation they and others placed upon the vague expressions of the 'Letter' and the Inaugural Address were unwarranted. Furthermore, they were misled (perhaps purposely?) by Hayes's brief flirtation with subsidies during his first weeks in office. He had in fact, shifted much of his attention from southern affairs to civil service reform by mid-summer, and by the fall and winter of 1877-78, reform centering on the New York Custom House, had upstaged pacification.

⁵²Hayes Diary, April 11, 1880, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 594.

CHAPTER 7

UNDER FIRE BUT PUSHING ON

During 1878 the criticism of Hayes grew widespread and intense, while the President, although stung, stubbornly held to his unpopular policies. A silver purchase act was easily repassed over Hayes's veto with a majority of his own party deserting him. Moreover, the first two rounds of the custom house struggle went to Conkling and though Hayes had his own way once Congress adjourned many reformers remained dissatisfied. And although a Democratic investigation designed to discredit Hayes recoiled on its instigators, the success of the Democrats in the off-year elections, the emergence of an undeniably solid South and the violation of the Negro's political rights in that section confirmed Hayes's critics in their condemnation of his southern policy. The year would draw to a close with the gulf between the President and his party as wide as ever, but with Hayes self-assured and finding cause for optimism.

As the policies of the Hayes administration began to take shape, it became apparent that his independence extended not only to his party, but to the reform element as well. He refused to be shackled either by his fellow Republicans or the

the reformers. Although the latter desired a thorough house-cleaning in the 'departments', he was not so inclined. His appointment policy, as Schurz and Evarts helped him develop it, was hardly revolutionary. He spoke of an eight year term for civil servants and this, coupled with his failure to 'turn the rascals out', meant the retention of officeholders who were utterly unacceptable to reformers and the very antithesis of all they had been fighting for. As the months passed, the reformers' estimate of the President rose and fell by turns as he or his department chiefs either met or failed to meet reform expectations. Thus Schurz's effort in the Interior Department were well received, while the Postoffice, Treasury and Navy Departments were quite another matter. As noted previously, Hayes was preoccupied with the southern question immediately after taking office, but he was soon able to give reform more personal attention. The investigation of the New York Customs House by the Jay Commission is a case in point. Its revelations of wrongdoing, inefficiency and spoilmanship were by no means startling to the well-informed, but the President's failure to remove the chief spoilsmen, Chester Arthur and Alonzo Cornell, was a shock. Obviously, John Sherman's presidential aspirations and his less than lukewarm attitude toward reform were a factor here, although like Sherman, Hayes, too, preferred gentle persuasion to vigorous action.¹

¹Ari Hoogenboom, Outlawing the Spoils: A History of the Civil Service Reform Movement, 1865-1883 (Urbana, 1961), pp. 148-53.

Hayes, however, was by no means finished with the subject of reform and first in a May 26th letter to Sherman and later in his famous Executive Order of June 22nd, he made this quite clear. In the Sherman letter, he announced his agreement with the recommendations made thus far by the Jay Commission. He wrote in part as follows:

It is my wish that the collection of the revenue should be free from partisan control, and organized on a strictly business basis, with the same guarantees for efficiency and fidelity in the selection of the chief and subordinate officers that would be required by a prudent merchant. Party leaders should have no more influence in appointments than other equally respectable citizens. No assessments for political purposes on officers or subordinates should be allowed.

In the June 22nd 'Order' which was to apply to all Departments, he simply repeated portions of his letter to Sherman:

No officer should be required or permitted to take part in the management of political organizations, caucuses, conventions, or election campaigns. Their right to vote and to express their views on public questions, either orally or through the press, is not denied, provided it does not interfere with the discharge of their official duties. No assessment for political purposes on officers or subordinates should be allowed.

Although reformers were quick to demonstrate their pleasure at this turn of events, they still cautioned that tireless enforcement was imperative if anything was to be gained.²

But if reformers took heart at the revival of their cause, party regulars believed this order dealt a crippling blow to party politics in America. They argued that they

²Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the Presidents, VII, 451-52 and Hoogenboom, Outlawing the Spoils, pp. 153-54.

would be hamstrung were the President's directive strictly obeyed. Assessments constituted a dependable and significant source of funds for the party treasury and the thousands of party faithful in public offices were important cogs in the party's machinery. Cries of protest and disbelief went up all along the line, from congressmen to postal clerks. And these strictures sprang not only from considerations of party and the threat to partisan vitality and efficiency. Friends of reform like Garfield were upset on yet another count. Writing to Burke Hinsdale in September 1877, he argued for his view in the following manner:

I believe my criticism of Hayes' Civil Service order is sound though it is difficult to make the criticism without being misunderstood. There is too much proclamation in his method. If he found his subordinate officers meddling unwarrantably in machine politics he could have corrected it by a few examples. Instead of that he has issued a general order which interferes with the undoubted rights of citizens. Streater has a right to a voice in nominating township, county, and state officers and the exercise of that right does not interfere with his duties as P.M. at Hiram. Of course the case is different where 8000 people from all parts of the Union are serving the United States in the city of New York and combine to run the politics of that city. He was right, in interfering there. Again, his order, as a matter of prudence, has injured the cause of reform and alienated many from its support. It is the business of statesmanship to wield the political forces so as not to destroy the end to be gained. Take it in a larger view: The 70,000 federal office holders are among the most active citizens in political matters. If they are sponged out as a political force, it weakens our system at its weakest point, namely: in the nomination of candidates. The number of citizens who attend primary meetings is already too small. Hayes's order makes it smaller still, and increases an apathy which is already dangerous. The ambition to hold an office which a man is fit for is an honorable one and I am glad that ambition increases political activity.

Hayes weakens it and offers no substitute.³

If the reformers were heartened by the appearance of Hayes's 'Order', they were less than pleased with the administration's handling of Customs House reform at New York. Hayes's initial strategy included the promotion of Arthur out of New York and into the consularship at London, with his Naval Officer Alonzo Cornell similarly well cared for. But the Collector declined to be maneuvered out of the most lucrative of all federal posts and Cornlee followed suit. Nor was Conkling willing to sit on his hands while his chief appointee was sacked, whatever the President's motives might be. The imperious Senator would need help, but allies were easily found in his own machine, the Senate, among his increasingly disgruntled fellow congressmen, and last but not least, in Hayes's own Cabinet. John Sherman's eye was already fixed on the White House and he was eager to win over this politically potent arm of the Treasury to his side and gain its undivided loyalty.⁴

The watchwords became harmony, conciliation and balance. No one, least of all Sherman, must be 'embarrassed' -- the Secretary's standard word for describing a variety of circumstances he wished to avoid. If Evarts, who seems also to have had presidential hopes, was indeed a prime mover in this affair, then let him be soothed by an appointment, but not at

³Sept. 10, 1877, in Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Letters, p. 377.

⁴Hoogenboom, Outlawing the Spoils, p. 157.

the expense of Arthur and the Conkling forces. It seems that such concerned parties as Evarts, the reformers, William Henry Smith, Arthur, and Conkling were not amenable to Sherman's wishes. None but Sherman and Hayes were willing to accept half a loaf. Then as reform pressure mounted and evidence of corruption grew more impressive, Hayes, faced with a stubborn Arthur and Cornell, moved into the reform camp as well.⁵

By the fall of 1877 the issue was joined and there was little hope for a compromise. The Customs House would be re-organized and Arthur and Cornell would be replaced. Conkling's response was predictably violent and abusive, but it was not the administration, but New York Republican unity, that suffered most severely. When Hayes's appointments were made public, political considerations took precedence over reform desires. The appointees were not clearly of a reform stripe, but politicians, who, like the President, were clean, sober public servants and sound party men. With the struggle shifted to the Senate, the contest grew more heated. Arthur chimed in with the claim, not without some foundation, that he too, had practiced a form of civil service reform as Collector. Well before the special session of Congress had adjourned, Conkling had won the first round of the fight when his Commerce Committee spurned Hayes's nominees.⁶

Meanwhile, the civil service order had been watered down

⁵Hooogenboom, Outlawing the Spoils, pp. 157-58.

⁶Hooogenboom, Outlawing the Spoils, pp. 158-62.

significantly in the name of expediency and to meet the political needs of the reform element. Secretary of State Evarts, with an eye to the future, showed unusual concern for the wishes of the Illinois and Pennsylvania delegations to Congress as regarded their preference among nominees to represent the United States in Germany and Great Britain. Such action flew squarely in the face of the President's determination to assert his independence of Congress in making appointments, despite Conkling's recent victory. The mildness of the reform proposals in Hayes's Annual Message of 1877 was likewise disheartening. His request for executive discretion in appointments was neither what reformers wanted, nor what Congress would accept; and his call for an appropriation for the moribund Civil Service Commission was hardly indicative of the sweeping reforms he had led the Independents to expect.⁷

Hayes recognized that he had given reform insufficient attention, and he sketched out the following ideas for a special message on the subject. "There should," he wrote, "be legislation (which) would relieve Congressmen from all responsibility for the appointments. They must neither seek to control, nor even influence appointments." In the absence of such legislation, he must of necessity work out and issue rules. Officeholders must be prevented from actively managing political affairs, he continued, and examinations used to fill lesser positions. He favored the retention of all worthy

⁷Hoogenboom, Outlawing the Spoils, pp. 163-64.

officeholders for "their terms" and the formulation of regulations.⁸ Although these concepts had and would to a considerable degree guide Hayes's executive conduct, the special message on civil service reform was never to be delivered. What is more, the subject was not so much as mentioned in his second annual message a year later.

Thus far the Hayes approach to reform had aroused discontent among the several factions of spoilsmen, the reform element and the Hayes men alike. Members of the latter group, like Garfield and Cox, were sharply critical of the failure of the President to develop a sound and meaningful reform program. In answer to Garfield's inquiry, Jacob Cox submitted the following assessment of Hayes's efforts.

You will see from my speech here (Toledo) last night that I see very clearly the need of the President's going further, & systematizing with Congress the modes of appointments. I had a talk with him on the subject, saying that in my opinion we could not rest on the chances of the personal desire of the President to further a reform, but must have systematic reductions of his patronage as well as that of others. He said that when we meet in Oct. he would try to have an understanding with those who 'meant business' in the matter & would cooperate in what seemed right.

Let us accept the position that M.C.'s are divorced from patronage, then take the next step that the Prest. must be put substantially in the same category, & as a recompense give Cabinet officers seats in the house, & we shall then have ministerial government with proper responsibilities attached. Don't let us go back, & it will be going back if we let the clamor for something like the old fashioned distribution of spoils get the upper hand. No one can be more annoyed personally than I am here by some of

⁸Hayes Diary, Dec. 6, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 452.

the immediate results but I brave it cheerfully in the hope that we shall get over.⁹

Early in December 1877, Hayes again submitted his customs house nominations to the Senate, declaring to a chief supporter in the struggle, William Henry Smith, that it was now a question of "Senatorial usurpation." Ultimately, he believed, "the claim of a single Senator to control all nominations in his State will be found so preposterous that it will fall of its own weight." He thereupon congratulated Smith (and indirectly himself, too) on Smith's confirmation as Collector at Chicago despite the opposition of both Illinois Senators to the removal of his predecessor. The New York contest moved Hayes to reflect that the initial and "most important step" in the reform effort was the defeat of Senatorial dictation. Perhaps he should not demand that every major appointee agree with him on this question, but that all who wished to be considered Republicans in good standing simply accept the party's national civil service plank. He admitted this requirement was perhaps rather extreme, yet were the struggle to continue, he would give it consideration.¹⁰ Needless to say, he never adopted so radical an approach.

By mid-December, round two of Hayes's contest with Conkling and the Senate was over. General E. A. Merritt, who was on good terms with both Conkling and Arthur, was confirmed as

⁹Jacob Cox to Garfield, Sept. 16, 1877. Garfield Papers.

¹⁰Hayes to William H. Smith, Dec. 8, 1877 and Hayes Diary, Dec. 9, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 453.

surveyor. But Theodore Roosevelt, Sr., Arthur's replacement, and L. Bradford Prince, Cornell's designated successor, were handily defeated, with only six Republican Senators voting to confirm them. Although disappointed, Hayes vowed that the struggle would be resumed, for he was certain of the correctness of his position. Thanks to senatorial courtesy, the Senate had allowed itself to be held captive by Conkling, he insisted, but that hold would ultimately be broken. He regretted that a serious breach had developed between him and his party, but he did not feel responsible and would endeavor not to aggravate the situation unnecessarily. While anxious to promote reform, he was quite unwilling to destroy or irreparably harm party unity and organization in the process.¹¹ He by no means forgot his political responsibilities as the titular head of the GOP.

Now that a soft approach had been tried without success, Smith urged Hayes to assault "the abuses in New York in earnest." He was especially vehement concerning the frauds perpetrated there in the levying of duties which gave New York merchants a sizeable advantage over their competitors in Chicago and other ports. He earnestly recommended that the fight against Conkling be put on this basis as a means of stripping him of some of his support. In the meantime, Hayes, obviously troubled by the rift between himself and his party,

¹¹Hayes Diary, Dec. 12, 1877 and Hayes to Manning Force, Dec. 12, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 454.

was searching for a means of restoring GOP unity. Perhaps the Cincinnati platform offered "the best means" upon which to reunite the party, he speculated, and if a problem arose over the interpretation of this plank then his 'Letter' and past state platforms should be consulted. It was as if Hayes was searching for documentary proof of his rightness, while forgetting the essentially utilitarian rather than ideological or covenantal role of the platform in American politics, and overlooking the fact that he and the liberal-reform element were virtually alone in their literal reading of such documents as iron-clad pledges. He was at pains to reassure George W. Curtis that his own loyalty to the reform cause was unflagging, and he solicited Curtis's counsel in the preparation of his proposed message on reform.¹²

At the same time, Hayes was obviously stung by accusations that he was being untrue to his party despite so many years of conspicuous loyalty and service. It appeared, according to Henry V. Boynton, that the opponents of the President were trying to make him out to be another Andrew Johnson and to organize his party against him in both houses of Congress. Indeed, it was true that Hayes's friends could not be counted on to make even a half-hearted defense of his administration and policies. In the House, there were perhaps fifteen to twenty members who, while believing Hayes to be a sound

¹²William H. Smith to Hayes, Dec. 13, 1877; Hayes Diary, Dec. 18, 1877 and Hayes to George Curtis, Dec. 31, 1877, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 455-56, 456, 457.

Republican, objected to his attack on machine style politics because he failed to discriminate between the merely objectionable and the corrupt organizations and, as Boynton phrased it, "the legitimate and necessary organization of the party." These congressmen were not yet actively opposing him, but their genuine anxiety over the future of their party's structure made them vulnerable to those who argued that the GOP could be saved only by uniting it against Hayes.¹³

Meanwhile, Hayes had concluded that the best defense against insinuations of disloyalty was a good offense, i.e., a presentation of his interpretation of the Republican party, "its genius, mission and duty."¹⁴ This approach silenced but few critics and attacks centering on his reform efforts, his Republicanism and the southern policy grew more intense. He was made painfully aware that while he represented his party, he did not in fact lead it; and this in spite of his conviction that the "best people" were with him in his struggle. For the moment, he was a man without a party.

Garfield had returned to Washington and his role as minority leader with reluctance that January, remarking that the "financial craze" had again fastened itself upon the American mind and he was once more left "fighting for financial honor against the majority" of his party and many members of the Ohio delegation, as well. After over a decade of championing

¹³Cincinnati Daily Gazette, Feb. 1, 1878, p. 5.

¹⁴Hayes Diary, Jan. 19, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 458.

'soundness', he had wearied of the struggle. He admitted that it might yet be enjoyable and challenging if it involved and valued "logic, reason, (and) sense", but instead, he lamented, it was "a fight of interest against honor -- the brute force of votes against knowledge." What is more, Hayes did "not seem to be master of his administration," Garfield was compelled to conclude, and he feared that he had overestimated the President's "force & nerve. . ."¹⁵

Indeed, the strain had begun to tell on the President and a frequent visitor to the White House reported that he aged markedly during these months. "I have a dull headache at night," Hayes admitted to his diary. "No severe pain. Nothing acute, but it leads me to ask, what does it mean?" He continued to sleep as well as usual, and his discomfort was gone by morning, yet the headaches had "rather increased the last few weeks," he recorded.¹⁶

One is reminded at this time of trial for Hayes, of the dilemma that plagued Garfield throughout his public life. While considering retirement in 1876, he had sought Jacob Cox's advice and in recalling their conversation years later, Cox averred that Garfield "fully realized that he could not speak his own thoughts or advocate or support the measures he really believed to be the best for the country, but was limited to doing the best he could consistently with maintaining his

¹⁵Garfield Diary, Jan. 7 and 19, 1878. Garfield Papers.

¹⁶Hayes Diary, Jan. 27, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 458-59.

position in his district and his party." Hayes, of course, firmly believed a man was handicapped seriously if he came to the presidency by way of Congress.¹⁷ But given his unenviable position in the winter of 1878, a longer tour of duty in the House might have worked to his advantage and to the advantage of the reforms he so earnestly sought to effect.

To add to Hayes's woes, inflationist sentiment had gained such momentum among the people and in Congress that a silver coinage bill was destined to reach his desk sometime in February. Although the House bill's free coinage provision would be removed in the Senate, it nevertheless seemed to Hayes that he must not approve the measure. During an extended discussion of the bill with Garfield, he told his House spokesman that he hoped the measure would pass untempered by amendments, so that he might have a still solid basis for a veto. Garfield voted against the measure in the House, but it passed by a better than two to one margin. He had, in his own words, "stood alone in Ohio", in fact "there were but half a dozen noes in the whole Mississippi Valley." The President's young friend and frequent White House guest, William McKinley, was one of those who knuckled under to inflationist pressure from his district. In the Senate, Matthews, too, defected to the silverites. The silver bill drew majority support from both parties in Congress, although the

¹⁷Jacob Cox to William H. Smith, July 14, 1885. Smith Papers. Hayes to Austine Snead, April 25, 1881, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 10.

voting in the northeastern delegation testified to the continuing sectional influence in that body. In New England alone, a majority of both parties opposed it, as did the Democrats from the Middle Atlantic states whose Republican representatives were evenly split on the issue.¹⁸

Like Garfield, Hayes did not oppose silver coinage in toto, and would not "veto a bill which guarded the rights of creditors and operated in futuro," but this bill stained and tainted the nation's credit, he maintained. As a debtor nation, low interest rates were impressive to us. "Expediency and justice both demand honest coinage," he concluded.¹⁹

Vying for the public's attention with the silver bill was the trial in New Orleans of Thomas C. Anderson on election fraud charges. The former parish elections supervisor had been a key figure in the dispute over Louisiana's electoral votes. This event dealt a severe blow to Hayes's southern policy, for it appeared to him to violate the pledges made by Nicholls and his legislature that no such prosecutions would be undertaken. Yet he continued to have faith in the Governor's "honor," he insisted, knowing full well that he simply had no other choice in the matter. Although Hayes's confidence in the South's good faith was fading, he clung stubbornly to his policy of pacification. But for others this was the last straw. Garfield reacted with an angry outburst

¹⁸Garfield Diary, Jan. 19 and 28, 1878. Garfield Papers. Hannah G. Roach, "Sectionalism in Congress (1870-1890)," American Political Science Review, XIX (Aug., 1925), 512.

¹⁹Hayes Diary, Feb. 3, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 459.

in a letter to a friend in New Orleans.

The policy of the President (he wrote) has turned out to be a give-away game from the beginning. He has nollied suits, discontinued prosecutions, offered conciliation everywhere to the South, while they have spent their time in whetting their knives for every Republican they could find. I am tired of this kind of warfare and now propose to fight them whenever they make an attack.

Some two weeks later, Garfield notes that he "criticized the President's course kindly but plainly" in a speech that appeared to make an uncommonly "strong impression on the House" and won the approval of members with opposing views. It appeared that Hayes was not of presidential stature and suffered from what Garfield called "the worst infirmity, the fear of being influenced" by fellow Republicans of greater stature and strength, and so cut himself off from the aid all chief executives so sorely needed. Garfield's speech was an attempt to "kindly and gently . . . open his eyes."²⁰

By mid-February, the Senate had passed a modified version of the silver bill and returned it to the House. There, extreme silverites tried to block the measure because of the Senate's moderating amendments, but it passed easily. Garfield spoke but briefly during the House debate on the bill, simply expressing, as he recalled in his diary, his "belief in bi-metallism and . . . regret that this bill, though improved by the Senate would not bring the two metals into equipoise." He thereupon voted with the majority in support

²⁰Hayes Diary, Feb. 15, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 459; Cincinnati Daily Gazette, Feb. 13, 1878, p. 1; Garfield to Lionel Sheldon, Feb. 12, 1878; Garfield Diary, Feb. 19 and March 3, 1878. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

of the Senates amendments and then, joined by a handful of westerners, supported a fruitless attempt to table the measure. But although he had remained as loyal to soundness as Hayes, he nevertheless lacked his chief's self-confidence, remarking that time would tell whether his vote had been well-advised or not. Actually he believed that the bill would lead to "some good results" and did not view its passage as a tragic mistake.²¹

Hayes had "given the subject some study and much anxious reflection," he confessed to his diary and had concluded to veto the measure although he fully expected to be overruled by Congress. He thought of softening his rejection by outlining the kind of silver measure he would approve, but, in fact, limited himself to expanding upon his major objection to the bill, i.e., that it constituted a violation of the national faith and credit. While he, too, wished to increase silver coinage, it must be done by issuing "silver dollars of full value, which will defraud no man," his veto message ran. After reading the message to his Cabinet, he found that only Thompson squarely opposed his course and although Sherman and McCrary feared a veto, they could see no alternative. Privately, Sherman believed a veto might damage his own presidential prospects. Moreover, he had word that the Greenback movement was catching fire in Ohio and GOP prospects in the coming elections

²¹Garfield Diary, Feb. 21, 1878 and Garfield to Harmon Austin, March 3, 1878. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

were not bright.²² The Secretary's uneasiness also reflected the view of August Belmont, who disliked the bill, but favored its approval lest the financial community suffer a severe jolt. Sherman thought Hayes might merely withhold his signature, but this suggestion was dismissed by the President. Evarts, whom Hayes consulted while writing his veto message, along with Key, Devens and Schurz, all backed him in his decision. In the face of heavy pressure from within his party and strong opposition among the voting public ("You can have no idea how our friends were stampeded at the critical moment," he told Smith), the President refused to authorize what he considered to be "dishonest."²³

At the very least, his action gained for him the approbation of the party's sound money element, including many who until then had been critical of his administration. Moreover, it demonstrated to doubters, wrote Smith, who was busy with the organization of a hard money league, that he possessed the courage of his convictions. This praise was especially welcomed by one who prided himself on his steadfastness and what his generation liked to call 'moral courage'. Hayes never ceased to take pride in this veto and when, in a Harper's

²²Hayes Diary, Feb. 17, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 460; Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the Presidents, VII, 488; Jeanette P. Nichols, "John Sherman: A Study in Inflation," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXI (Sept., 1934), 187 and James Robinson to John Sherman, Feb. 21, 1878. Sherman Papers.

²³Hayes Diary, Feb. 26, 1878; Dec. 20, 1885 and Hayes to William H. Smith, March 6, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 461-62; IV, 257 and III, 465-66.

Weekly article published in 1885, Sherman was given credit for the decision as well as for the veto message, he was clearly disturbed. He wrote to Sherman asking for a brief statement of correction from his hand which he in turn could pass on to George W. Curtis. Thus far he had scrupulously avoided answering such charges personally, he noted with pride, and he preferred not to break his silence now. Although Hayes closed his letter by assuring Sherman that he was delighted with the "wide and good fame that you more than deserve", it was clear he was not about to add to it at the expense of his own jealously guarded reputation.²⁴

The silver act was easily repassed over the veto, with Garfield being the sole Ohio Republican voting to sustain the President. Garfield remarked to his diary that Hayes had not only been "unable to influence a single vote, but lost some votes in each House. He has pursued a suicidal policy towards Congress and is almost without a friend."²⁵

The veto served as a fitting capstone to a crowded and troubled year in office. As the President evaluated the past year (that seemed "but a day"), he reflected that he had tried to fulfill his obligations. The leisurely pace at Columbus had not, however, prepared him for the pressure and pace of life in Washington. "The crowd of business, the urgent

²⁴William H. Smith to Hayes, March 4, 1878. Hayes Papers. Hayes Diary, Dec. 20, 1885 and Hayes to John Sherman, Dec. 21, 1885, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 256-57, 257.

²⁵Garfield Diary, Feb. 28, 1878. Garfield Papers.

misrepresentations poured into my ears by men who ought to be trustworthy," he lamented, had "led to mistakes -- serious mistakes -- mainly in appointments. . . ." He remained confident, however, that on the whole he had been correct and took pleasure in his conviction (and it was well founded_ that he had "been firm and self-possessed on the most difficult and trying occasions." Yet, he candidly admitted, he "was not liked as a President or in Congress."²⁶

But Hayes was wont to draw solace and strength from opposition and criticism in a way that other men fed upon praise and acceptance. His advice to Garfield at the time of the Credit Mobilier and Salary Grab episodes illustrates his philosophy as an officeholder. Hayes recalled that he had encouraged Garfield with the following words: "Garfield, cheer up; don't go around moping; it amuses and encourages your enemies, because they see you are annoyed. All men who are in the lead must be abused, and abuse does a public man good; so cheer up; you will come out all right." He claimed that Garfield had thanked him for his counsel and encouragement time and again over the years.²⁷

The President's course had met with some approval, too, and he placed an inordinate amount of emphasis on the reception his efforts had engendered, North and South, from those he considered to be the "best people." As to the majority, he

²⁶Hayes Diary, March 1, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 462-63.

²⁷Memoirs of Thomas Donaldson, Oct. 21, 1886.

would be satisfied to submit to "the judgment of the sober second thought -- of the people." He hastened to assure his Texas friend, Guy Bryan, that newspaper rumors to the contrary, the Louisiana prosecutions had not altered his approach to the southern problem in the very least. His letter continues thusly:

I am confident and my confidence grows stronger, that I decided wisely at the beginning, and that my true course is to keep straight on. Good men who are prudent and thoughtful will do nothing to increase irritation, and will do all they can to promote harmony. Sectionalism and race antagonism are decreasing. Each new outbreak of either is feebler than its predecessor.²⁸

Despite his emphasis on and the continuing controversy over civil service reform and the southern policy, Hayes claimed to believe that monetary questions were now the paramount issues. It would be soundness versus inflation for a time, he predicted, but the party would close ranks and minor sources of disunity would be overlooked once the GOP had absorbing issues upon which they agreed, questions which would set them apart from the Democracy. According to Garfield, Hayes told him the party "could be reunited in opposition to inflation" and asked for his help in the New Hampshire con-

²⁸Hayes Diary, March 1, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 463 and E. W. Winkler, ed., "The Bryan-Hayes Correspondence," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXVII (April, 1924), 311-12.

test. Garfield took advantage of the occasion to advise the President bluntly that if he wished to enjoy "any influence" in the party a part of his reform program had to be abandoned. Whereupon Hayes replied by likening "the Situation with Lincoln's unpopularity in Congress!" After a dinner party at Blaine's, at which the administration was presumably 'dissected', Garfield recorded that he was amazed at how thoroughly Hayes had "lost his hold upon his party."²⁹

For the moment, Hayes and the bulk of his party were at logger-heads and with the exception of independent or religious journals, the nation's partisan press was openly hostile. But as he noted coolly, it was not remarkable that "a non-partisan President or Administration" should find little favor with congressmen and journalists. However, not only were partisan Republicans critical, but he was forced to admit that those Democrats toward whom he once looked for help found "no interest in heartily supporting an Administration they did not elect." Although it was wishful thinking, he maintained that his party had grown stronger rather than weaker as a result of his efforts. This was a time of political floundering, "a period when old questions are settled, and the new are not yet brought forward," he concluded perceptively. "Extreme party action," he declared, "if continued in such a time would ruin the Party. Moderation is its only chance. The party

²⁹Hayes to William H. Smith, March 6, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 466; Garfield Diary, March 1 and 2, 1878, Garfield Papers.

out of power gains by all partisan conduct of those in power."³⁰ Hayes was looking to 1878 and more particularly to 1880. There was obviously a method and a theory behind what some saw as political madness or at best naivete.

Not only were Hayes's powers of political analysis impressive and penetrating, but as Tom Donaldson remarked some years later, there was as much politics per square inch in his makeup as in any man. Murat Halstead, a friend and a perceptive observer of Hayes since their Literary Society days in Cincinnati, insisted, his facade of indifference toward 'politic-ticking' concealed a shrewd and calculating drive for political preferment. He let his boosters enjoy an exaggerated evaluation of their contributions and along with others probably accepted his 'luck' as a factor in his success. In reality little was left to chance and much more was cleverly anticipated than met the eye. He remarked to Garfield in 1878, that the latter's major political error had been to turn down a bid for the governorship in 1867 (an office which he should yet seek), intimating all the while, Garfield reports, "that it was the surest road to the Presidency."³¹ This seems to bear out Donaldson's and Halstead's claims.

Perhaps by way of reassuring himself, Hayes recorded in his diary that taken together, his first year's efforts had

³⁰Hayes Diary, March 12, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 466-67.

³¹Memoirs of Thomas Donaldson, May 6, 1879 and Garfield Diary, July 23, 1878. Garfield Papers.

"produced results." To the South, it had brought "Peace, safety, order . . . to an extent not known for half a century." The riots growing out of the great railroad strikes had been handled with dispatch, without a striker being shot, and his Mexican policy had been both forceful and fruitful. As to civil service reform, he had avoided neoptism, a clear departure from Grantism, while "machine work . . . in caucuses or elections" by civil servants had ended and "Congressional dictation resisted -- for the most part successfully." He was proud that in his first year he had removed fewer people than any president since J. Q. Adams and that officeholders now enjoyed an appropriate degree of security. He took particular pride in his judicial appointments and in those diplomatic officers appointed or retained by his administration. He even took note of "Bureau officers", including unhappily, the arch-spoilsman James Tyner, among those appointees in whom he and presumably his country and party could take justifiable pride. Soundness had also been upheld against a rising tide of inflationary pressure and his administration was remarkable for its unusual "purity and efficiency."³²

Hayes hoped, however, that when friends of reform supported him, they would not be too demanding. By necessity his cabinet had to contain men without reform backgrounds and

³²Hayes Diary, March 12, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 466-67.

disappointments were inevitable as traditional practices died hard. "With the cheap money craze and the bloody-shirt policy on my hands at the same time," he recalled in a letter to Curtis in 1885, "with the first attempt to rescue the civil service from party leaders", the situation was far different from that presently faced by Grover Cleveland.³³

For various reasons, friends of reform were dissatisfied with the President's reform efforts. It was precisely Hayes's "vague notions of Civil Service Reform, & his wretched practice upon it," observed Garfield, that had been the major cause of his unpopularity. Perhaps he would soon be forced to state publicly his differences with the President's policies and practices, he speculated early in March. Meanwhile he was inclined to agree with those who believed the administration had "been an almost fatal blow to his party." As for reform achievements, the staunch reformer and admirer of Hayes, Jacob Cox, also admitted to a deep disappointment in the President. According to Garfield, Cox told him that Hayes "had utterly failed to accomplish anything in the way of Civil Service reform -- and that could be defended by any class of politicians." The feeling grew stronger, Garfield concluded ruefully, that Hayes was simply too small to fill the presidential shoes.³⁴

³³Hayes to George Curtis, Jan. 5, 1885, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 182.

³⁴Garfield Diary, March 3 and 4, 1878. Garfield Papers.

While others found fault, we find Hayes taking heart from the results of New Hampshire's March election, which brought victory to what he called "the administration ticket", despite the opposition of one of his bitterest critics, W. E. Chandler. He was therefore encouraged to be increasingly loyal to the cause of reform. And yet it was far from pleasant to see "friends made sour" when he failed to heed their desires. What is more, the criticism he had suffered during his first year had not been exactly "comforting, to say the least," he said. But he found comfort in reading J. Q. Adams's diary, which he thought demonstrated that James Monroe faced nearly identical problems during his presidency. He found strength in his belief, re-enforced by the New Hampshire results, that "the second thought of the best people" was behind him in his efforts.³⁵

He continued to trust that the legal action taken against members of the Louisiana Returning Board would come to a fair and just conclusion, although he was almost alone in his belief. In the event of a favorable outcome, he must confer with "judicious" congressmen to consider how best to carry out the reform planks of the 1876 platform. He resolved to call soon for the civil service report Dorman Eaton was preparing and then attempt to press ahead with the work of reform.³⁶ His intentions remained good, but the kind of vigorous,

³⁵Hayes Diary, March 13 and 15, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 468.

³⁶Hayes Diary, March 16, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 469.

systematic and cooperative effort he had in mind would not come to pass. His diary and letters offer no explanation of his inaction save his belief that 'the people' were not yet ready to put the weight of popular opinion behind legislative reform measures.

When Louisiana's Supreme Court overturned the decisions against returning board members, Hayes placed the most favorable interpretation upon its ruling. Although the decision was based on a technicality, he chose to view it as the triumph of "the best public opinion" over the hostility of the "ruffian class, the implacables (the Bourbons among them), and the press. . . ." The better people of the South had won out over the violent element: pacification had begun to bear fruit. He had something more than mere politics in mind. He was equally concerned, as well he might be, with the restoration of the nation's economic health and this called for national harmony, unity and a kind of new era of good feelings, he reflected in his diary. Surely this goal has not been given sufficient emphasis by those examining the motives behind his pacification policy.³⁷

Hayes's remarks in his diary concerning his reform achievements and his intention to step up his efforts reflected in part the growing reform discontent with his failure to make a thorough job of it. Hayes received his severest blow

³⁷Hayes Diary, March 21, 1878; Hayes to Lucy Hayes, March 21, 1878 and Hayes Diary, March 22, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 470-71.

when William Henry Smith tendered his resignation as Collector at Chicago in protest over the failure of the reform effort to get off the ground in Sherman's domain. The President was genuinely upset at this turn of events and after discussing Smith's grievances with the Secretary, hastened to assure him that he "thought" Sherman too, concurred on Smith's principal complaints. He did not accept the resignation, believing that after "full explanation" his friend would change his mind. Meanwhile, he hoped the affair would not be made public. In the event Smith remained unsatisfied, it was Hayes's "earnest wish" that they confer before Smith made a final decision.³⁸ The President was justifiably disturbed, for if Smith carried out his intentions, the administration would receive a serious blow, especially in the eyes of reformers. Powerful journalist allies of Smith and the Western Associated Press would likely rally to his support and Hayes would lose what little press backing he enjoyed. Reform leaders like Curtis, who were already discontented with Hayes, would probably open fire in earnest. He might well find himself divested of much of the support of the 'best people' who meant so much to him.

With Eaton's report expected within the month, Hayes set down in his diary those reform ideas he wished to emphasize. First, he hoped "to seperate office-holding from political management." This he felt had been for the most part achieved thanks of his June 22nd order which had been "very generally

³⁸Hayes to William H. Smith, March 27, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 472.

obeyed." He admitted that some obedience was "nominal rather than real", but federal officials usually claimed they obeyed it and the handful of exceptions were not significant enough to necessitate action. It was now up to Congress to enact legislation laying down rules of conduct for office-holders. Secondly, the "legitimate and constitutional exercise" of the President's appointive powers must be re-established. Its usurpation by Congress was for the moment being largely abandoned, he contended. Most congressmen had admitted that they should not resort to dictation and all but a few had abandoned attempts to so much as "influence appointments." He conceded that the change had created "irritation and misunderstanding;" yet it was most advisable to relieve congressmen of the terrific clamor of hordes of office seekers. Executive efforts were by themselves inadequate, he admitted; effective legislative action was both possible and imperative. Thirdly, legislation was needed to provide a system for determining office seekers' qualifications and on the other hand to detail a just and proper basis for dismissal of incumbents. Hayes also wished to see Cabinet members given seats in Congress and the revival of the Civil Service Commission with an adequate appropriation. Since Congress had not acted to advance the desired improvements, he concluded, "the principles avowed" by the Democratic and Republican conventions could simply not be given "a fair trial." Nevertheless, as chief executive, he considered it to be his "duty" to apply these principles insofar as possible, and he repeated his conviction that the

majority of the public would sustain him.³⁹

Although Hayes continued to be at odds with the majority of his party in Congress, he eagerly seized upon whatever seemed to hint at a change of heart toward his administration. Thus he was pleased when a GOP congressional caucus meeting early in April declined to adopt Senator Aaron Sargent's resolution condemning Hayes's June 22nd order and asking him to withdraw it. This informal gathering had taken place at the home of John Sherman, who had agreed to convey its wishes to Hayes. The participants were supposed to reflect fairly the various shadings of congressional opinion on reform and this seems to have been true. A substantial majority argued that party health and effectiveness demanded the use of patronage for political purposes and that congressional control of patronage was logical, while the President, through his cabinet, should only arbitrate disputes over appointments. As Cox recalled, the bulk of the conferees dismissed Hayes's efforts at "reform as theoretically pretty and even ultimately desirable, but wholly visionary and impractical."⁴⁰

It was now the Senate versus the Republican party on the issue of senatorial patronage prerogatives, Hayes believed. If office holders were allowed to manage political affairs, men would be selected primarily on the basis of political skill and although the service would expand, business efficiency

³⁹Hayes Diary, March 30 and April 1, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 473-74, 476.

⁴⁰Cox, "The Hayes Administration," pp. 828-29.

would decrease. "The Howe and Sargent system is that Senators shall make office-holders and that the office-holders shall make the Senators." Then betraying the strong vein of political expediency that underlay his advocacy of reform, Hayes asked how many victories the GOP could win with such a philosophy. The public would mount a cry against office-holders and "the party on the wrong side of the question would go under," he cautioned.⁴¹

Hayes's supporters at the aforementioned caucus were of a similar opinion. According to Cox, "a very small but determined minority forced the meeting to face the explicit terms of the party platform and the pledge of the President's letter of acceptance as repeated in his first regular message. They asked which party would likely bear the penalties of hypocrisy and pharisaism, if, by organized effort, they should succeed in repudiating these pledges." The meeting broke up without taking any formal action and Hayes was spared the receipt of an anti-reform ultimatum that would surely have done serious damage to the reform effort.⁴²

While acknowledging that his 'order' had left the party discouraged during the past fall's campaigns, Hayes contended that the office holders' places in the party organization had now been taken by men who brought a much needed vitality and energy with them. The election victories in Rhode Island and

⁴¹Hayes Diary, April 13, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 477-78.

⁴²Cox, "The Hayes Administration," p. 829.

New Hampshire demonstrated this, he claimed. The people had long been restless under the lash of office-holders, and complaints against their rule were all too common. Moreover, "Jefferson and the earlier statesmen" were against it, as were "Clay and Webster and other Whig leaders," wrote this latter-day Whig. He felt certain that Sargent and Howe did not "represent the best sentiment of the party" on this crucial issue and accepted the view that ninety per cent of Milwaukee's Republicans objected to Howe's stand. After all, he had received a petition protesting Howe's Senate assault on his policy endorsed by that city's "best Republicans."⁴³

And while Hayes did not excuse the "mistakes in methods" or require that his approach be used, he did insist that the goals remain constant. If a better approach was offered, he stood ready to adopt it, but the goal he had defined must not be forsaken. Civil servants must confine themselves to their assigned duties and not form into "political machines." The president's power of appointment might be governed by Congress to promote "honesty, efficiency, and economy," but it "must not be transferred to the Senate." This would be unconstitutional and with office-holders dictating to rather than serving the people, the GOP, "a party of principle" would be seriously injured. Shortly after this, during a long talk with Garfield, Hayes reviewed his appointees, claiming as Garfield recalled with more than a trace of disbelief, that

⁴³Hayes Diary, April 13, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 478.

"they would compare favorably with those of any of his predecessors." The President again reflected his high regard for the opinion of 'the best people' and added that he also enjoyed the unanimous support of both the Protestant press and college presidents.⁴⁴

Hayes's pacification and civil service policies continued to meet with more opposition than favor, but he persevered, confident in the correctness of his views and sure of the support of a genteel elite with which he had long identified. He was reminded that one of these gentlefolk, the old Whig Robert Winthrop, had said in effect, that everyone had a hand in forming public opinion and so all could, to some extent, be held accountable for its temper and direction. Perhaps this view shaped Hayes's concept of his role as a political leader, for he closed this diary entry with the following suggestive quotation, apparently from Winthrop: "Opportunity, powers, and the employment of them."⁴⁵ Does not this provide a key to understanding Hayes's self-image as chief executive in Columbus and Washington?

There is every indication that his unusual sense of self confidence seldom deserted him while in office and then only briefly. Upon receiving notice of his nomination in 1876 ("the great moment of my life"), he recalled, he had "felt a

⁴⁴Hayes Diary, April 13, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 478-79 and Garfield Diary, April 19, 1878. Garfield Papers.

⁴⁵Hayes Diary, April 21, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 479.

sense of responsibility -- a sobered feeling", but this emotion was crowded aside by a more characteristic attitude. Given sound judgment, "with a cheerful and elastic temper, with firmness, with an honest purpose to do right, and with some experience in affairs," he recorded, he could handle the presidency well. However, the burdens of the presidency and perhaps well concealed doubts as to the wisdom of his course had begun to exact their toll and by mid-April of 1878 one friend described him as looking weary and worn out.⁴⁶

If reform and the southern policy brought grief in their wake, Hayes could take satisfaction from the substantial progress being made toward resumption. While remarking upon the success of the Treasury's recent \$50,000,000 bond offering, he noted that the gold premium had nearly disappeared and de facto resumption by election time would surely be "a feather in our cap."⁴⁷ Shortly after taking office, Secretary Sherman had begun building up the gold reserve, a prerequisite for resumption, by means of loans and the accumulation of surplus revenues, until the Treasury held over \$130,000,000 in coin on hand for resumption purposes at the end of 1878. Ironically, the very act of creating a large reserve tended to buoy up the premium on gold, thus making the preconditions for resumption's attainment harder to achieve. Although Sherman contributed

⁴⁶Hayes Diary, April 28, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 480 and Memoirs of Thomas Donaldson, April 18, 1878.

⁴⁷Hayes Diary, April 14, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 479.

significantly to the achievement of resumption, he undertook no effort to lower the price level, a basic obstacle to success. The ratio of American to English prices had been too high for successful resumption in 1876, but by 1877-78, American prices had fallen sufficiently to have allowed for resumption had there been an inflow rather than a substantial outflow of capital during those years. Thus in the absence of a determined policy of deflation, resumption took place as soon as the conditions for success were present. However, in all fairness to Sherman, in this time of deflation the Treasury's resistance to demands to expand the money supply was comparable, as one scholar points out, "to the pursuit of deflationary measures at a time of price stability. The inflationist movement is ample evidence that this fact was understood at the time," he concludes.⁴⁸

When Clarkson Potter introduced the resolution that paved the way for his committee's investigation of the recent presidential contest, Hayes immediately labeled it the work of "Tilden Democrats" assisted by Stalwarts "of the Chandler sort." A study of the northern congressional Democrats of this period indicates that he was essentially correct in his analysis. The joint caucus, in which the proposed investigation was debated, witnessed a collision between northerners in search of issues for the campaigns of 1878 and 1880 and southerners who

⁴⁸James K. Kindahl, "The Economics of Resumption: The United States, 1865-1879" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1958), pp. 58-60.

were pleased with pacification and did not want it upset. Although their effort failed, Casey Young of Tennessee presented an amendment to the Potter resolution declaring that it was not their (the southerners) intention to challenge Hayes's title to his office.⁴⁹

Hayes not only dismissed the investigation as a purely partisan venture that would recoil upon its organizers, but he also condemned it as "revolutionary", designed to overturn the decision made by the Electoral Commission with congressional approval. Moreover, it would upset the business community, hinder pacification, revive sectionalism and deepen the "color line." The whole affair was but a cheap Tammany Hall maneuver, he contended, and would serve only to injure the South where only "peace, education, improvements, and immigration" were desired. The southerners who were supporting the resolution were simply obeying a caucus decision, Hayes told Guy Bryan. He found comfort in his belief that "the better brethren" of both parties and every section despised it. Characteristically he placed his faith in southern gentlemen like Lamar, Stephens and others, who had prevented their "section from being swept into a most disgraceful performance."⁵⁰

⁴⁹Hayes Diary, May 14, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 481 and Albert V. House, "Northern Congressional Democrats as Defenders of the South During Reconstruction," Journal of Southern History, VI (Feb., 1940), 69.

⁵⁰Hayes Diary, May 14, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 481 and Hayes to Guy Bryan, July 27, 1878, in Winkler, ed., "Bryan-Hayes Correspondence," p. 315.

Hayes, who shared Garfield's concern for education, was concluding about this time that this undertaking constituted the nation's "greatest present . . . concern." What is more, it offered the most effective antidote for the "evils now most dreaded." The widest and most equitable distribution of property was a problem in every civilized nation, one diary entry ran, but "as a rule, where education is most general the distribution of property is most general." To increase and distribute knowledge, he insisted, was to increase and distribute wealth. An equal opportunity to hold property was best guaranteed by providing equal educational opportunities.⁵¹ Hayes thinking along these lines not only agreed with the thinking of contemporaries like Garfield, but would find a good deal of support among today's students of American economic development as well as from the leaders in the so-called second era of reconstruction.

In preparing for a talk at a coming visit to Hampton Institute, Hayes noted that the freedman required "something more than the learning of the school house." To be sure illiteracy had to be defeated, yet "industry, self-reliance, self-control, economy, thrift . . . (were) of still great importance. Progress of the Negroes might best be judged by their material achievements, he believed.⁵² He said nothing

⁵¹Hayes Diary, May 15, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 482.

⁵²Hayes Diary, May 19, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 482.

of political and social achievements, persuaded perhaps that these would follow naturally in the wake of their economic progress. As to economic progress it would best be hastened by holding to a pacification policy that allayed sectional and racial animosities while stimulating business recovery and general economic growth.

The decision to investigate the presidential contest in Louisiana and Florida along with the accusations made against Noyes and Sherman were certainly upsetting to Hayes despite an outward appearance of indifference. Still he took heart, he told his absent wife, because Hampton and other southerners were openly critical of Potter's efforts and because he sensed that some once hostile Republicans were now "in a better temper." Garfield found that his party was indeed beginning to draw together in the face of the Democratic challenge. Hayes, too, probably surmised that the investigation would do more to reunite the party and the administration than anything he was either willing or able to do. Moreover, signs of southern goodwill like the letters written by Alexander Stephens and Postmaster General Key at this time strengthened his belief that the better element of that section wanted no part of this affair.⁵³

Despite his continuing conflict with Conkling over the

⁵³Hayes Diary, May 19, 1878 and Hayes to Lucy Hayes, May 20, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 482, 483; Garfield to Harmon Austin, May 20, 1878. Garfield Papers. Letterbook. Abshire, "David M. Key," pp. 405-06.

Custom House appointments, Hayes refused to be drawn into a personal quarrel with the New York senator. After mentioning to James Tanner, the pension lobbyist, and others that Butler and Conkling were commonly believed to be the instigators of the Potter business, he was asked by Tanner to furnish verification of the charge so that it could be used against Conkling. Hayes replied that the rumor might not be true, but accurate or not, he wanted no part of a personal assault on the Senator. "My course is not based on personal grounds," his letter to Tanner concluded. In an 1889 diary entry, he recalled that while he had done as much as possible for reform, for the welfare of the South and for monetary soundness, he had never forgotten party obligations. "I appointed Stalwarts and supported Stalwarts whenever it would harmonize or strengthen the party -- my own personal preferences notwithstanding." He had acted out of the belief that "all good measures would suffer" were the party defeated in 1880. "Result, a great victory in 1880" -- a victory for which he clearly took considerable credit.⁵⁴

As the 1878 congressional campaigns got underway, Hayes kept a wary eye on the South. His public pronouncements on the late war remained conciliatory, too much so in the view of some. At a Newark, Ohio, soldiers' reunion, it bothered Garfield that in his speech the President mentioned nothing

⁵⁴Hayes Diary, July 27, 1878; Hayes to James Tanner, July 27, 1878 and Hayes Diary, Sept. 12, 1889, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 491 and IV, 508.

of "the rightness of our cause." Garfield sought to correct this omission by emphasizing it in his short talk to the veterans. Hayes continued to look for administration gains in the South and was pleased with Andrew Kellar's progress in his bid to represent the Memphis district, but regretted somewhat that the candidate had gotten "mixed up with soft money. . . ." Yet if this served to divide the South's solid front this rigid opponent of inflation conceded, he thought the GOP might greet it warmly.⁵⁵

As the tempo of political activity increased, Hayes once more assured himself that civil service reform had made some headway under him. Assessments were no longer permitted even by anti-reformers. Civil servants had generally stopped interfering "in party management" and no political duties were required of any officeholder. Yet according to a careful study of the Postoffice Department, the President "was very naive if he really believed that his executive order had changed the management of the party or had freed officeholders from political assessments." For example, that spring the secretary of the party's congressional committee, George Gorham, appealed to all federal officeholders earning over \$1000 a year to contribute voluntarily a minimum of 1% of their salary for campaign purposes. The circular Gorham used was no different from the one used before Hayes undertook his effort to reform the postal service and end assessments. Of the \$106,000 raised

⁵⁵Garfield Diary, July 22, 1878. Garfield Papers. Hayes to William H. Smith, Aug. 5, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 495.

by the committee in 1878, some \$93,000 was 'contributed' by federal employees. Hayes himself, of course, held that 'contributions' were quite proper; only assessments were taboo. The circulars used in raising money had never spoken of mandatory assessments. For that matter, the Postoffice Department had laid down a rule against assessments, but allowed voluntary contributions, the year before Hayes entered office.⁵⁶

During the 1878 campaign Hayes fully supported a heavy emphasis on the money question, including the stand taken by Maine's Republicans who simply ignored the administration and campaigned on an 'honest money' platform. "Not a lisp or suggestion in favor of Hayes. . .," Blaine boasted to William Chandler. But the President chose to liken the contest to his 1875 campaign, declaring that soundness was "now the real issue before the country" and the only really significant question then facing the nation. But as the Nation had commented early in July, it appeared from many a Republican platform that the Civil War was not yet over; that the federal government was in imminent danger of seizure by a group of revolutionaries, and "in order to foil them all other subjects must, and very properly, be neglected." By mid-August, however they reported with satisfaction that Galusha Grow in Pennsylvania and Benjamin Harrison in Indiana were emphasizing economic and financial questions in their gubernatorial campaigns. From Ohio,

⁵⁶Hayes Diary, Aug. 6, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 495 and Fowler, The Cabinet Politician, p. 171.

the State Republican Chairman reported to Sherman that the money issue had overshadowed "all other questions, and must be met" -- a view confirmed by other Ohioians.⁵⁷

During the fall of 1878, the President and a large party journeyed to the West Coast, returning with the feeling that the trip had "strengthened" his administration, although his reception, Hayes thought, also proved it was "already strong." A few days later he observed that a year and a half of "abuse" and "honest but severe criticism" had not soured Lucy and him. He was certain that his regime was stronger than ever before and that his "appeal to the people on grounds of a non-partisan character" had been crowned with success. He may have been right, but the fact remains that his name was seldom mentioned during the campaign and stumpers like Garfield concentrated on the twin themes of sound money and equality for all citizens under the law.⁵⁸

Out on the hustings, Garfield found the "soldier feeling much revived," explaining it as a "reaction" to Hayes's southern policy. He also observed that Hayes was received without much enthusiasm by Ohio crowds that Fall. Garfield, on the other hand, seems to have been met with warmth and enthusiasm

⁵⁷July 31, 1878. William C. Chandler Papers. Library of Congress. Microfilm copy, Hayes Memorial Library. Hereafter cited as Chandler Papers. Hayes Diary, Aug. 8, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 496; The Nation (July 4, 1878), 1 and (Aug. 5, 1878), 88 and James Robinson to John Sherman, Aug. 10, 1878. Sherman Papers.

⁵⁸Hayes Diary, Oct. 1 and 5, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 500, 501. Garfield Diary, Aug. 21, 1878. Garfield Papers.

and from all parts of Ohio came calls for his services as a speaker. He carried his campaigning into Maine and Massachusetts as well, dwelling there on the dangers of greenbackism and inflation. He was greatly pleased with the campaign (although not necessarily its outcome) and with the generous reception he had received. Meanwhile, Ohio's Republicans continued to doubt Hayes's Republicanism and the State's party chairman asked Sherman if the President could not make a boldly partisan exhortation "declaring that Democratic success would be a calamity. . ."⁵⁹

One might suppose that the rosy optimism of Hayes's diary entries following his western excursion was born of a belief that all was well in the southern states, too. But in one of these entries he recorded that South Carolina's Negro congressman, Joseph H. Rainey, had reported to him that the employment of "intimidation and violence" to deny Carolina Negroes their political rights was widespread. Hayes responded to this intelligence by noting that South Carolina's political grouping remained along the color line. Most white men were Democrats and most Negroes were Republicans, yet there was "no political principle in dispute between them." It was simply a matter of the former having "the intelligence, the property, and the courage which make power" while the bulk of

⁵⁹Garfield Diary, Aug. 28 and Sept. 17, 1878; James Robinson to Garfield, Aug. 12, 1878; Garfield Diary, Sept. 2-10, 1878 and Garfield to Lucretia Garfield, Sept. 2, 1878. Garfield Papers. James Robinson to John Sherman, Aug. 1, 1878. Sherman Papers.

the latter were "ignorant, poor, and timid." In his estimation, the situation would not improve until the white people were divided. He mentioned nothing about remedying the situation through federal intervention to protect the Negro in his constitutional rights, but merely turned again to his pet theme of monetary and fiscal soundness.⁶⁰

At about this time, Hayes became concerned that his good friend William Henry Smith was working and worrying to the point of a break-down. Hayes's response to this situation would not in itself warrant attention, but that it seems to reflect not only his sincere concern for a close friend, but something of his political philosophy as well. "Don't allow these things (custom's service problems) to worry you. Do the best you can without too much labor or friction and let them go at that," he cautioned. "Let things work themselves out. Turn over to others some of your labors," he admonished his friend.⁶¹

Hayes was pleased with the outcome of the October elections, apparently having feared that they would not "turn out so well. . . ." Nevertheless, the so-called "Southern outrages" of that fall's campaign upset him, as well they might, and he determined to repeat his long-standing views on the subject of civil rights in his second annual message to Congress.

⁶⁰Hayes Diary, Oct. 5, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 501-02.

⁶¹Hayes to William H. Smith, Oct. 6, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 502.

The "good people," he said in his diary, insisted on equal justice for all and an end to the denial of political rights on a racial basis. Indeed, one such leader, Wade Hampton, had made a genuine effort against heavy odds to keep his pledge to protect the Negro in his rights. Hampton's most recent biographer avers that his "chief political struggle during his term as governor of South Carolina was to be with the Gary (an extreme racist) faction and the Gary point of view toward the Negro. Ironically enough, however, it has been Hampton and his fellow 'aristocrats' and 'Bourbons' who in the North have unjustly borne much of the onus for the exclusion of Negroes from the political life of the state," this study continues. It would seem, therefore, that Hayes's trust in the conservative Democrats of South Carolina was not entirely misplaced, for while they retained power they safeguarded a number of the Negro's civil rights despite heavy opposition.⁶²

Although the November returns gave the Democrats control of the Senate and an increased majority in the House, dashing any hopes of splitting the solid South, Hayes claimed the outcome was "very gratifying. . . ." New England's support of monetary soundness and the decisive defeat of Ben Butler ("the most dangerous and wicked demagogue we ever had," Hayes thought) was satisfying. It was his belief that in the northern states, his party was, with the possible exception of 1866, more

⁶²Hayes to William H. Smith, Oct. 7, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 503 and Jarrell, Wade Hampton, pp. 120, 162.

vigorous than in any year since the Civil War. According to a confidential report by Richard Smith to Sherman, the party had never been in better shape for a campaign. The agitation over Hayes's policies, Smith claimed, had subsided because he was being almost entirely ignored, politically speaking. This left the anti-Hayes Republicans without a target and sufficiently well pacified to close ranks with an eye to victory in 1879 and 1880. Perhaps this was what Hayes had really hoped for after all -- a resurgence of Republican strength and unity in the North that would culminate in presidential and congressional victories in 1880.⁶³

Hayes, Sherman and Garfield did not agree in their assessments of the election in the South. While frankly admitting the emergence of a "substantially solid" South, Hayes observed that the Republicans were hurt by poor organization and voter apathy. He also reiterated his conviction that there could be no expectation of a favorable outcome in the South until the whites were divided, for given their poverty, ignorance and timidity, the Negroes simply could not "stand alone against the whites." Sherman's response to the abuse of the Negro was much harsher than his chief's. "The first imperative duty of the people of this country," he told a political lieutenant in Ohio, "is to put down in some decisive way this wholesale barbarism of a people who are, after all, nothing but pardoned

⁶³Hayes Diary, Nov. 6, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 508 and Richard Smith to John Sherman, Dec. 21, 1878. Sherman Papers.

rebels" now using force to seize greater political power at the expense of the constitutionally granted rights of the freedmen. After hearing Blaine's Senate speech reviewing southern conduct during the recent election, Garfield commented that Blaine would have done well to contrast southern behavior "with their professions to Hayes -- that if let alone, the negro would be fully protected."⁶⁴ One can be certain that many a Republican, including Hayes himself, was ruefully reflecting on this very matter.

The President determined to refer to the election's outcome in his Annual Message as a judgment against "all revolutionary schemes" and as evidence of support of reform and progress toward resumption. "It is in one word a verdict against Butlerism," he said. Although he regretted that the better people of the southern states had been denied a place in the Democratic sweep through a lack of organization, he was certain that "many good and conservative men" had emerged victorious. Moreover, it was likely that most of them in their minds and opinions opposed Butlerism, which, he repeated with obvious relish, had just received a sharp condemnation from the better elements in Massachusetts and the other conservative northern states. To his way of thinking this meant that a majority in the next Congress would be in agreement with his

⁶⁴Hayes Diary, Nov. 6, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 508-09. John Sherman to Warner Bateman, Nov. 16, 1878. Bateman Papers. Garfield Diary, Dec. 11, 1878. Garfield Papers.

views on three key issues.⁶⁵

About a week later, he appeared less optimistic. Although "Potterism" was dead, he admitted that "Butlerism -- cheap money schemes" were still alive. But the silver issue and the opposition to banks as creditors would presumably split the Democrats, he predicted, thus strengthening the GOP. Nevertheless, he respected the strength of inflationist sentiment and speculated that if it could be concentrated in just one party, that party might temporarily control the national government. He also seemed disturbed by reports of the wholesale denial of the Negro's political rights in South Carolina and Louisiana during the election. And this had happened, he pointed out, in spite of the solemn pledges made in 1877.⁶⁶

The concept of the southern Negro as a ward of the federal government had in fact been abandoned, although Hayes remained a firm friend of the Negro and continued to call for the guarantee of his constitution rights. Unfortunately he and his party lacked the strength in Congress to enforce the war amendments; their abandonment of the Negro was in consequence far more complete than was intended. Moreover, northern white public opinion was cool if not openly hostile to a vigorous civil rights policy. Although Hayes's policy aimed at bringing conservative white southerners into the GOP camp,

⁶⁵Hayes Diary, Nov. 6, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 509.

⁶⁶Hayes Diary, Nov. 12, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 509-10.

he was likewise anxious to increase, if possible, his party's following among Negroes. He was most certainly sensitive to and distressed by the abridgment of the freedman's rights, but he placed his faith in the division of the whites and in the educational and economic progress of the black man rather than federal intervention; for this, he believed, was most likely to bring the Negro a full partnership in American society.

CHAPTER 8

PRESIDENTIAL POLICIES VINDICATED?

The fifteen months following his second annual message witnessed a dramatic improvement in Hayes's standing with the GOP. In his second message, Hayes deplored the violation of the civil rights amendments during the recent southern congressional contests and called for their strict enforcement as he would again a year later. Early in 1879, he courageously rejected Congress's solution to the Chinese problem and moved to resolve it diplomatically. Later that year he waged a battle with the Democrats over appropriations bills' riders designed to emasculate federal election laws. As Hayes determinedly vetoed one rider-encumbered measure after another, his badly divided party regained its unity and drew closer to him as his popularity soared. After calling for congressional enactment of civil service reforms in his third report to Congress, Hayes turned his attention to the Isthmian canal question. Throughout these busy months, Garfield proved his mettle as House minority leader and presidential advisor, especially during the crucial struggle over the riders.

The generally optimistic tone of the state of the union message appeared by and large to have met with a good reception,

Hayes thought, although he anticipated that the extremists, both North and South, would greet it with derisive remarks. When Fernando Wood launched a sharp attack on the President's discussion of civil rights violations in the South during the 1878 elections, Garfield immediately came to Hayes's defense. This touched off a sharp exchange during which other Republican House members found themselves defending the views of one they had more often criticized and derided. But the bitterness of the "Stalwarts and irreconcilables" and "the extreme sectionalism" of the Bourbons would undoubtedly keep him company until he left office, Hayes recorded with resignation. He remained sure, nevertheless, that his southern policy was correct, remarking that if the expected resignation of Attorney-General Devens took place, he would, if Republican Stalwarts would allow it, move to appoint A. H. H. Stewart to the post. But, he lamented, "the probability is that the attacks on such a course by the bitter brethren would damage the good cause of pacification more than his appointment could benefit it."¹ As it turned out, Devens did not resign, yet it seems fair to assume that despite disappointments arising out of the South's treatment of the Negro, Hayes was by no means prepared to put aside his determination to allay sectionalism and take up the bloody shirt. He was unswervingly committed to building southern Republicanism by appealing to the respectable and

¹Hayes Diary, Dec. 4, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 513 and Garfield Diary, Dec. 2, 1878. Garfield Papers. Hayes Diary, Dec. 4, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 513.

conservative South and believed nothing could be done (consistent with his principles) that would win the good will of extremists of either party.

Garfield continued to view Hayes's hopes for the South with pessimism. In his opinion (and in that of many a Republican), southern affairs could not "be adjusted in a day, or a year" and perhaps he feared, a generation would not suffice. This brings to mind Blaine's efforts in 1877 to make Hayes see that he was indulging in a gross over-simplification of complex, persistent and deeply rooted problems. Taking his cue from the President, yet obliquely critical of him too, Garfield advised his party in the House that they could not "repeat the recent old issues in the old forms." Personally, he favored a debate on "the election outrages in the South, (but) it should be on the new basis of affairs -- i.e., after the tender of local self-government."²

The protracted contest over the confirmation of Merritt and Burt remained unsettled as the new year opened and perhaps because of this Hayes again resolved to take up a general reform effort. Reform could and would be successful only if congressmen were stripped of their patronage prerogatives, he insisted in his journal. He was therefore determined to make civil service reform the motif of a special message to accompany Dorman Eaton's anticipated report (he had failed to so much as mention reform in his second message), if and when Merritt and

²Garfield to Hayes, Dec. 20, 1878. Hayes Papers. Garfield Diary, Dec. 10, 1878. Garfield Papers.

Burt won confirmation. Meanwhile, the public too, "must be educated to expect and require" its representatives to refrain from appointing civil servants, while constituents must in turn expect no such favors from their congressman. Furthermore, congressional abstention must apply to both major and minor appointments, Hayes believed. The continuing struggle with Conkling was essentially "a test case," he insisted; thus it took on a special significance.³

In his Recollections, Merritt recalls some enlightening details concerning his appointment. He had just arrived at his home in Potsdam, New York, when a telegram recalled him to New York City to confer on a vital matter with an emissary from Washington. In New York, John Defrees, a close friend of Hayes, explained the proposed changes at the Custom House and offered him the collectorship. Merritt initially rejected the offer, believing the "action at the time . . . very sure to increase the factional controversy" in the New York GOP. He also doubted his ability to handle the post given the "bitter hostility that would be engendered" since Arthur was chairman of New York City's Republican Committee and his friends filled almost every important Custom House post. Defrees returned to the capital, but Merritt was asked to stay on in New York until he should receive further word from Washington. Sherman telegraphed the following day arranging for a meeting with Merritt at the Fifth Avenue Hotel, at which

³Hayes Diary, Dec. 8 and 16, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 513-14, 514.

he agreed that the proposed action was poorly timed, but pointed out that Hayes "was stronger than the people supposed", determined and "personally" wished Merritt to take the collectorship. Merritt asked for twenty-four hours to think over the offer. Sherman also sketched the anticipated course of action should Merritt refuse and named alternative candidates for the post.⁴

Although agreeing that Hayes's intentions were ill-advised, Sherman urged Merritt to accept the offer and asked him to "formulate (his) thinking" on the matter. The Secretary agreed with Merritt, but declared that Hayes was determined and would not "listen to . . . his advice." Should Merritt's views reach Hayes, another man might be tapped without awaiting Sherman's return. Therefore these views were not forwarded to Washington, and Sherman again pressed Merritt, as a personal favor, to accept the appointment. Since the city's press had "condemned" the initial action against Arthur and Cornell, Merritt now paid a late night call on Reid to explain matters to the powerful editor. He returned the following morning, at Reid's request, and was told that while Reid disapproved of the planned removals, Merritt would, if he accepted, receive friendly treatment. Later that day Merritt did accept the appointment and then at once visited Arthur to explain the circumstances and why he had agreed to the proposed change. He told Arthur that "a change had been determined upon and that . . . (his) policy would be

⁴Edwin A. Merritt, Recollections, 1828-1911 (New York, 1911), p. 110.

to continue all that part of the Custom House force which were performing their duties." He and Arthur remained friends despite Arthur's ouster.⁵

As a personal friend of Arthur, Sherman later explained to Justin Morrill, he had "preferred to try to execute the reforms proposed with him in office rather than with a stranger" and Hayes had agreed to this approach. Slowly it became clear, he continued, that neither the Collector nor the Naval Officer sympathized with the Jay Commission's advice and were not only able but meant to block "their fair execution."⁶

By mid-December 1878, it appeared that most senators preferred confirmation, yet a majority of Conkling's colleagues either hesitated out of deference to their chamber's traditions or because they feared retribution by the haughty New Yorker. But by January Merritt was reporting to Sherman that there was general support for confirmation at Albany and among the New York congressional delegation; furthermore, Cornell now wished to withdraw from the contest. As the struggle dragged on, Hayes's judgment of his protagonist became increasingly severe. Conkling was similar to Ben Butler, but "more powerful because he . . . (was) vindictive and not restrained by conscience," he concluded. In keeping with his belief that a legislative career was poor preparation for an executive, the President noted that "the most noticeable weakness of Congressmen

⁵Merritt, Recollections, pp. 110-11.

⁶John Sherman to Justin Morrill, Dec. 14, 1878. Sherman Papers. Letterbook.

is their timidity. They fear the use to be made of their 'record.' They are afraid of making enemies. They do not vote according to their convictions from fear of consequences."⁷ Throughout this scornful critique runs the implication that where congressmen were timid and fearful, Hayes was courageous and forthright. It is likewise apparent from this and other recorded opinions, that he considered the executive office to be the preeminent branch of government and one whose occupants were on the whole superior to legislators who labored in a polluted and debilitating atmosphere that left them tainted and sadly lacking in moral courage.

Despite the disappointments, defeats and dissension that had plagued him throughout 1878, Hayes's Christmas diary entry was characteristically cheerful. "We are prosperous; our main ideas more acceptable than ever," he wrote. It was true that the economy was recovering, but it can be doubted that his "main ideas" had gained much support among the politicians. Perhaps however, he was referring to the party's rank and file, and who is to say, keeping 1880 in mind, that his estimate was wholly erroneous. Resumption seemed a certainty, he continued with understandable pride, but when he declared that his "Southern policy (was) safely vindicated" one finds it difficult to grasp his meaning. Neither the results of the 1878 contests nor the violence and intimidation that accompanied them in some

⁷Edwin Merritt to John Sherman, Jan. 11, 1879. Sherman Papers. Hayes Diary, Dec. 16, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 514.

areas of the South justified this statement. The GOP lost six seats in the House and one in the Senate, while the party's southern branch was gravely weakened. In 1876, the party had carried 125 of the 294 southern counties with black majorities; in 1878 they took but 62.⁸

The northern Republican press freely charged southern Democrats with the use of murder, fraud and a variety of criminal acts in gaining their victory. Most assuredly, there was a dramatic falling off in the number of Republican ballots cast in 1878 as compared with earlier elections. The remnant of the hoped for partnership between conservative white southerners and the GOP was all but demolished. There had been, according to one eminent scholar,

. . . a sudden wave of agrarian radicalism in 1878 that swept the South out of control of conservative leaders and into temporary alliance with the West. Southern farmers of the Jacksonian tradition who had submitted to the leadership of the Whig-Democrats only in the emergency of Redemption now grew restive and unhappy. The millenium of subsidies promised by the Redeemers failed to materialize, and the depression deepened.

Meanwhile, Republican attacks on Hayes's southern policy became increasingly numerous and bitter following the November elections. Even Hayes was quoted as confessing to an interviewer from the Washington National Republican that he was "reluctantly forced to admit that the experiment was a failure. The first election of importance held since it was

⁸Hayes Diary, Dec. 25, 1878, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 516 and DeSantis, "President Hayes Southern Policy," p. 492.

attempted has proved that fair elections with free suffrage for every voter in the South are an impossibility under the existing condition of things." Nevertheless, he did not blame the Bourbon leaders in whom he had placed his faith, but southern whites as a whole and especially the "ruffian" element.⁹

In his second annual message, as in private, Hayes did not speak as if he believed that his "experiment" had been a "failure." He was forced to admit, however, that what had happened in certain southern congressional districts and generally throughout South Carolina and Louisiana forced one to conclude that the Negro's constitutional rights had been "overridden and their participation in the elections not permitted to be either general or free." Therefore, Hayes not only called upon Congress to investigate the election of its members, but repeated his determination, as announced in his first message, to uphold the civil rights amendments. He declared that "whatever authority rests with me to this end (to inquire into and punish violations of federal election laws) I shall not hesitate to put forth. . ." ¹⁰

However, he concluded his discussion of the topic on a positive and hopeful note. He claimed that while total unity and an era of good feelings were not yet at hand, the tide was

⁹C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913 (Baton Rouge, 1951), p. 47 and National Republican, Nov. 23, 1878, quoted in Hirshon, Farewell to the Bloody Shirt, pp. 49-50.

¹⁰Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the Presidents, VII, 494.

certainly running in that direction and with growing strength. Public opinion would, despite political partisanship and state and sectional loyalties, demand that throughout the United States citizenship should "mean one and the same thing and carry with them unchallenged security and respect."¹¹ Perhaps in Hayes's mind, both the conduct of the recent campaign and its outcome seemed a qualified -- a relative -- success -- better than some had predicted, but not as bad as others had foreseen. Moreover, his interpretation of the northern contest could be viewed as a vindication of his policy. He also seemed quite content to serve out his term without doing any more than consolidating what he believed were his gains. One gets the impression that he viewed his work as essentially completed and that nothing new was either contemplated or, for the moment, needed.

The last round of the New York contest began early in 1879. Under pressure from William Henry Smith and using information gathered by Smith's friends, Sherman effectively answered Arthur's protest against his dismissal. In so doing, Sherman successfully conveyed the impression that he had been wholly committed to the cause of reform from the very outset. Meanwhile, Hayes was looking to one of his favorite authorities, James Madison, to find support for his case against senatorial dictation. Merritt and Burt were finally approved by the Senate, but only after a sharp debate and only with the

¹¹Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the Presidents, VII, 495.

aid of Democratic votes. Hayes chose to emphasize the thirteen Republicans who had voted with him this time and the several others who were reputed to be favorably disposed toward his appointees. He viewed the victory as signaling a significant shift in senatorial opinion in his favor while dealing a telling blow to Conkling.¹²

He hastened to congratulate and assure Merritt (and Burt, too), that the Custom House was to be run "on strictly governed business principles" as set forth in the Civil Service Commission's recommendations. In the matter of removals and appointments, Merritt was to be "perfectly independent of mere influence. Neither my recommendation, nor that of the Secretary of the Treasury, nor the recommendations of any Member of Congress, or other influential person, should be specially regarded," Hayes cautioned the new Collector. In filling special positions, Merritt was expected to exercise a personal preference, but this was to be strictly limited. Moreover, none were to be ousted simply because of their close ties to Arthur nor appointed because they were administration men. In a letter to Burt, Hayes asked him to confer with Merritt and Graham and formulate rules, consistent with the recommendations of Grant's Civil Service Commission, for the conduct of their duties.¹³

¹²Hayes Diary, Jan. 22, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 518-19 and Andrew Kellar to William H. Smith, Feb. 8, 1879. Smith Papers. Hayes Diary, Feb. 4, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 519.

¹³Hayes to Edwin Merritt, Feb. 4, 1879 and Hayes to Silas Burt, Feb. 6, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 520, 520-21.

Hayes seemingly was as anxious to have the Custom House administered in an efficient and businesslike manner as he was to have sound civil service rules introduced. For that matter, to him and others, reform was fundamentally a means of achieving such efficiency and soundness. Moreover, it was Hayes's fond hope that the experiment in New York City would convince all but implacable machine men of the efficacy of reform. After all, as he had told the Senate, this office collected over two-thirds of all customs revenues. But he believed that no sweeping or enduring reforms were possible until the public ceased demanding favors from their representatives. In order to establish truly sweeping and enduring reforms legislative action was imperative, but this in turn would not be forthcoming while congressmen busied themselves winning appointments for their constituents. He hastened to add that it was not for him to dictate "rules for the personal conduct" of congressmen in such matters and whether volunteered or solicited, he would "certainly give due weight to information received from" members of Congress. It was in the public's interest to free their representatives from "all responsibility for appointments" and this depended mainly on the citizenry itself. His diary reflections on reform continues:

Let government appointments be wholly separated from congressional influence and control except as provided for in the Constitution and all needed reforms of the service will speedily and surely follow. Impressed with the vital importance of good administration in all departments of government, I must do the best I can unaided by public opinion, and opposed

in and out of Congress by a large part of the most powerful men in my party.¹⁴

This was to remain Hayes's view of his position on reform throughout the remainder of his term in Office. And it helps to explain why he made but little effort to secure reform legislation and confined himself instead to executive communications, 'sound' appointments and to encouraging and supporting his cabinet members in the good work. It was the best he could do, but he hoped that his efforts would win converts among the politicians and the public in order that a more comprehensive and permanent program might be forthcoming.

Reformers however, had been led to expect much more in the way of concrete achievements. "In direct proportion to the clearness and completeness of Mr. Hayes's avowals as to his reform purposes," wrote Edward Cary in the International Review, "have been the disappointment and discouragement which have been produced by his entire neglect to carry them out." The President had been weak, irresolute and demonstrated an "utter incapacity to understand his opportunities and duties." Of his cabinet members, only Schurz had a clear understanding or a strong commitment to methodical reform. Only one rule had been announced thus far -- the order of June 22nd -- which Cary dismissed as "worthless" as a practical measure. Not only had the President made enduring contributions to reform,

¹⁴Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the Presidents, VII, 511 and Hayes Diary, Feb. 14, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 521.

Cary insisted, but he had actually hindered the cause by merely appearing to understand reform needs and by failing to fight for reform legislation.¹⁵

Hayes took steps to answer such severe critics when he approved a set of modified rules worked out by Merritt, Burt and several other officers in New York. Then a body of rules by which appointments, promotions and dismissals would be governed at the New York post office were approved by the President, and promulgated by Postmaster-General Key on May 1. These regulations were sent out to postmasters in large cities across the country for their adoption, although subject to amendments they believed necessary.¹⁶

Nevertheless, Hayes's reform efforts had fallen short of the comprehensive and radical program of the purists. He believed, however, that he had made a sincere and significant attempt and had done his best despite obstructionism, indifference, and outright hostility. And while his reforms lacked permanence and might not outlive his administration, it is doubtful that Congress could have been moved to pass a civil service act during his term in office. Thus he confined himself, perhaps realistically, to executive action and here his achievements were sometimes modestly successful, although more often unencouraging. A careful study of the New York Customs House makes the point that there was no means of implementing

¹⁵Edward Cary, "The Administration and Civil Service Reform," International Review, VI (March, 1879), 228-30.

¹⁶Huth, "President Rutherford B. Hayes," pp. 228-29.

the rules and "no central authority responsible for their execution. As a result, very little was accomplished on a practical level outside New York and possibly Boston." What is more, Sherman disapproved of Merritt's and Burt's rules, although he did enforce them.¹⁷

When in response to the outcry over the considerable influx of coolies, the House and Senate enacted Chinese exclusion legislation, Hayes sympathized with Congress's purpose, for he too, was anxious to stem this "labor invasion" It could not be properly called immigration since no women or children came, he reasoned, and considering the American record of treatment of such "weak races" as the Negro and the Indian, the outlook appeared discouraging. He predicted oppression of the Chinese, which in turn would "make hoodlum or vagabonds of their oppressors." This immigration should be discouraged, he declared, but the Chinese exclusion act appeared incompatible with the provisions of the Burlingame Treaty and if so, it must be vetoed.¹⁸

As the bill awaited final action by the House, the President concluded that it indeed violated major provisions of a treaty we had sought and which the country, including the West coast, had received with enthusiasm. The treaty had been advantageous to us, and we now had an important economic and

¹⁷William Hartman, "Politics and the Patronage: The New York Custom House, 1852-1902" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1952), pp. 225, 222-23.

¹⁸Hayes Diary, Feb. 20, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 522.

religious stake in faithfully upholding it. We were not justified in unilaterally abrogating it, especially since we had been aware of an incipient immigration problem when we pressed the agreement on the Chinese. "If we assume it to have been a mistaken policy," Hayes reasoned, "it was our policy" from beginning to end. In his mind it was clear that our good reputation, the 'golden rule' and the protection of Chinese citizens here and Americans in China, demanded he veto the bill. At the same time, Hayes recognized and appreciated the feelings of west coast inhabitants. He was ready to move with dispatch to alleviate their problem while maintaining the national faith and, he hoped, "without any real or substantial departure from" America's established attitude toward immigration.¹⁹

When Hayes called him to the White House to discuss the bill, Garfield advised a veto and came away certain that the President would so act. On the following day, Garfield voted in the minority to table the bill, while remarking in his diary that opposition to the measure was becoming very powerful. When it came, Hayes's veto met with general approval save on the West coast where it was, in his own words, "bitterly denounced" and he was even burned in effigy. Perhaps somewhat taken aback by the intensity of the reaction, he confided to his journal that a body of unassimilable, wage depressing, exclusively male immigrants "must be hateful." The situation demanded correction, for, he concluded, these people could not "safely be admitted

¹⁹Hayes Diary, Feb. 23, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 523-24.

into the bosom of our American society." But it had to be solved by following proper diplomatic procedures and he hastened to take steps in this direction.²⁰

As his administration entered its third year, Hayes found himself engaged in a sharp and protracted struggle with the Democratic majority in Congress. The Forty-fifth Congress had failed to pass the army appropriations bill and the legislative, executive and judicial appropriations bill because the Republican Senate had rejected House riders attached to these measures. The riders would have repealed the juror's test oath and the federal election law sanctioning the army's use to maintain order at the polls in national elections. Hayes immediately responded to this challenge by calling the Forty-sixth Congress into special session on March 18 to finish its work. Thanks to the 1878 elections, the Democrats now controlled both chambers of Congress, a situation they had not enjoyed since James Buchanan's first Congress. Hayes's conversations with Greenbackers in the new Congress had led him to believe they might be counted upon to unite with the Republicans against the Democratic riders. But Garfield dismissed this hope as simply "another case of the President's optimism."²¹

²⁰Garfield Diary, Feb. 23 and 24, 1879. Garfield Papers. Hayes Diary, Feb. 28, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 526.

²¹Garfield Diary, Feb. 23, 1879. Garfield Papers.

Thus far, the Republican Senate had frustrated the Democratic effort to exclude the federal government from the polls; now only Hayes stood between them and success. But from the outset he was a determined opponent, almost welcoming what he considered would be a difficult and perhaps prolonged struggle and certain that a popular majority would stand with him against "this revolutionary course. . . ." He would resist the Democracy tenaciously, not only because "the purity, the honesty, the sanctity of the ballot-box" was imperilled, but above all because it was a revolutionary attempt through legislative coercion to rob the executive of his independence and a fundamental constitutional prerogative by forcing him to approve a measure he opposed in order to secure necessary 'supplies'. He would have no part in establishing so 'dangerous' a precedent and would support unswervingly the independence of the three branches of government.²²

He was not, however, an implacable opponent of any and all modification of federal election laws. He favored their improvement, e.g., an abandonment of test oaths and the use of the army at the polls, but he refused to approve such efforts in the face of what he termed "unlawful duress and menace. . . ." Thus if a repeal of the test oaths were attached to an appropriation measure, he would veto the bill, since he was convinced this was simply a bid to "breakdown the

²²Hayes Diary, March 9 and 18, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 528-29, 529.

functions of the Executive by coercion."²³

At House Republican caucuses, Garfield, who had been the party's unanimous choice for speaker, declared that it would be their strategy "to make no trades or combinations with any party or faction or accept any official favors at the hands of this Congress but to act together as an independent united fighting minority remembering that the stake" they fought for was 1880. He advised his colleagues to abstain from introducing any legislation and oppose all measures except those germane to appropriations. His strategy won unanimous approval.²⁴

For their part, the Democrats sought and secured a three day adjournment to give their House and Senate steering committees time to settle upon a strategy. They were "much divided in sentiment," GOP Representative Joseph Hawley advised his wife. The radicals wished to transform the special session into a regular sitting of Congress, but their more conservative brethren wanted to deal only with appropriations and the repeal of election laws, he continued. The re-election of Randall as Speaker was a victory for the conservatives, yet the "extremists" were determined and self-confident and Hawley fretted that a long general session would seriously upset the business community.²⁵ As it turned out, the conservative view

²³Hayes Diary, March 18 and 21, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 530, 531.

²⁴Garfield Diary, March 17, 1879. Garfield Papers.

²⁵March 21, 1879. Joseph Hawley Papers. Library of Congress. Hereafter cited as Hawley Papers.

prevailed among the Democrats, although the more extreme element continued to be heard from.

As the Democrats readied themselves for a showdown, Hayes appeared ready to approve a repeal of the juror's test oath and the law authorizing the army's use at the polls, while admitting that the statute authorizing the appointment of marshals to keep the peace at polling places might also "require extensive modification." Nonetheless, such peace officers -- disinterested men -- were nearly indispensable, he insisted. Since the states kept the peace during state elections, was it not logical that the federal government should function similarly at the polls during national elections? Moreover, it had been amply demonstrated, as recently as the fall of 1878, "that the protection and conduct of national elections cannot safely be left to the States," he wrote. Therefore, he could not, with a clear conscience, approve the present election laws' repeal until Congress provided a substitute of equal effectiveness. As Hayes saw it, the proposed legislation admitted "the right, the duty, and the necessity for national supervision" by the federal government, while denying the means to fulfill this obligation. As for the claim that while the states might employ both civil and military force at the polls, while the federal government might only supervise and observe, this was simply unacceptable and unconstitutional, Hayes observed.²⁶

²⁶Hayes Diary, March 22, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 531-32.

The law authorizing the use of federal forces to preserve the sanctity of national elections had been passed in response to widespread frauds in New York in 1868. The 1878 contests, Hayes pointed out, demonstrated that "state regulations . . . (were) not to be relied on to secure free and fair elections" in certain states. He was convinced, in fact, that had these elections been properly regulated, the measures he objected to would not now command a majority in the House. Had there been "free and fair elections" in every state over the past several years, he contended, the Republicans would now control both House and Senate. He insisted that the Constitution conferred "supreme authority on the National Government as to the regulation of the national congressional elections" and to deny this was clearly unconstitutional. Again recent experience argued for the improvement of election laws and against simply substituting state police power for federal police power as the security force during national elections, Hayes concluded late in March.²⁷

Hayes continued to think through the contest with Congress in the lengthiest diary entries of his presidency. It was as if he were trying to provide what the congressional debates generally failed to provide, i.e., a thorough review of the questions in dispute. His diary analyses, in which he returned time and again to the judgments noted above, showed him to be a stout and uncompromising nationalist in the

²⁷Hayes Diary, March 23 and 25, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 533-34, 535-36.

Websterian tradition, as well as a jealous and determined guardian of executive prerogatives. It was "another revolutionary movement" much like the Potter hearings, he assured his friend Smith, however, were the Democrats not embarrassed by the extreme positions taken earlier by some of their fire-brandsspeakers, they would abandon the fight immediately. Instead, as he correctly predicted, there would be a prolonged struggle. "Of course, I don't care to use the military," he confided to Smith. "But the state rights heresy that the Nation can not enact safeguards for national elections, and the still more dangerous doctrine that a bare majority" of the House and Senate could take over "all the powers" of the executive branch was utterly unacceptable.²⁸

When a rider repealing the authority to use the army as a peacekeeper during elections was attached to the army appropriations bill, the rider itself did not disturb Hayes, for the army would not and could not be so employed. But this measure denied the federal government either the military or the civil power to maintain order at the polls during national elections, while it left unimpaired the states' powers. Such blatant discrimination was wrong, Hayes insisted, yet he would approve unhesitatingly legislation "preventing any soldiers whether state or national, from interfering in the elections. . . ." But as the case stood, the contest could not and should not

²⁸Hayes Diary, March 27, 1879 and Hayes to William H. Smith, March 27, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 536-38, 538-39.

be settled by compromise for it was a revolutionary proceeding. And while he stood ready "at the proper time and in the proper way" to correct the election laws' displeasing features, the Democracy's efforts so far were not deserving of consideration. He contended that it was "the true rule of legislation . . . that each measure should stand or fall on its own merits" and he reiterated his conviction that the army bill rider was clearly unconstitutional.²⁹

Garfield entered the 'riders' contest with what Anson G. McCook told a White House gathering he considered "the best speech he had ever listened to"; Hayes added that "all praised it." Hawley leaves us a vivid description of the dramatic scene in the House chamber during Garfield's effort. He had, he wrote,

never seen deeper excitement among Republicans than yesterday, under Garfield's speech. The galleries were crowded, the floor was full. Secretary Evarts and many senators were on the floor. On one side Garfield, ten feet off sat Gen. Sherman, on the other, thirty feet off sat Gen. Joe Johnston, Sherman's ablest antagonist. In his invalid wheeled chair, occasionally nervously rolling himself about the area in front of the Speaker, was Aleck Stephens, Vice President of the Confederacy. Near them was Reagan, Postmaster General of the Confederacy among forty or fifty ex-confederate officers.

Garfield's presentation "was powerful -- immensely so," Hawley concluded and his party was "at fever heat." Among the many congratulatory letters Garfield received was one suggesting that the presidential nomination might be his in 1880

²⁹Hayes Diary, March 28 and 29, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 539, 540-41.

if his affairs were properly managed. After lavishly praising him, McCook warned him against an attempt to "'bamboozle'" him into entering the Ohio gubernatorial race.³⁰

Hayes was pleased to find his party moving to his support in what he considered to be a critical struggle with the opposition. And when Evarts dismissed the whole affair as merely an attempt to create issues for 1880 and recommended that Hayes steer clear of it, the President was obviously surprised. "He doesn't seem to see that it is merely a new form of the old conflict between ultra state rights and the national doctrines," he remarked to his diary. Later in the same entry, he elaborated upon this analysis of the contest. The contest was in no way "partisan" nor was it a "question of race or color. The old question, State's rights always . . . (seemed) closely related to sectional and race conflicts, but this . . . (was) chiefly as a reminiscence. No present interest of a sectional character . . . (was) involved," Hayes insisted. He reiterated this conviction in a later diary entry.³¹

As the army bill moved through the Senate, Hayes determined to veto it without hesitation. But before sending up his rejection, he conferred fully with Garfield and gave him an advance copy of the veto message so that he might prepare a defense of it before the House. No sooner was this done

³⁰Hayes Diary, March 31, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 542-43 and Joseph Hawley to Henrietta Hawley, March 30, 1879. Anson McCook to Garfield, n. d. Garfield Papers.

³¹Hayes Diary, March 31 and April 7, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 543, 546.

then he was busy preparing another veto, this in answer to the civil appropriation bill. In both veto messages, he reproduced the substance of his diary objections to the Democratic riders. Not only did Hayes's cabinet approve of the reasoning behind his messages, but he noted with satisfaction that the unfriendly party members who pretended he might not veto the bill were now few in number " -- only the implacable -- the patronage brokers." The President's veto promised to solidify the party in his own state and render the term 'Stalwart' meaningless, for even the sharpest critics of pacification would be "appeased", Ohio's Republican State chairman assured Garfield.³²

Hayes believed it likely that the Democrats would try to pass a separate measure barring the use of soldiers at the polls. If such a bill conceded the right to employ civilian peace officers at polling places and the principle of "separate bills for general legislation," he thought he might sign it. But the Democrats soon passed a new and separate bill barring military interference at elections. "They call them war measures," he confided to his diary, "and think that as the war is ended these laws should now be mustered out." The Democracy had failed to be either "conservative or . . .

³²Hayes to William H. Smith, April 25, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 548 and Garfield Diary, April 26, 1879. Garfield Papers. Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the Presidents, VII, 523-32, 532-36; Hayes Diary, April 27 and 28, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 549-50, 550 and James Robinson to Garfield, April 26, 1879. Garfield Papers.

politically wise." Then warming to his subject, he became a soldier once more, saying, "but we don't muster out the flag nor the powers of the law and of the Constitution which enabled us to gain victory. We don't muster in again the evils that caused the war." And in a final burst of wartime spirit, he observed, "Besides, it is for the victors to say what shall remain, not for the vanquished."³³

As the protracted contest waxed and waned, Garfield drew noticeably closer to Hayes. After spending an hour with the President discussing the veto for the military interference bill, he wrote as follows to his wife: "I think I have never had so much intellectual and personal influence over him as now. He is fully with his party. . . ." And Hayes, while reflecting on the speeches made during the debate on this bill, declared that of all the speakers, Garfield had made the best presentation of the case.³⁴

Tom Donaldson reports Hayes's reaction to the Democratic effort thusly: "Now it is time to call a halt and (striking his hand on the table) this thing of States Rights has gone far enough." As Garfield remarked to his diary, Hayes was presented with "a grand opportunity to make a plea for nationalism against extreme states rights." And this is precisely what he had in mind. When the President's unyielding nationalism united with his determined opposition to the Democratic

³³Hayes Diary, May 1 and 11, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 550, 551.

³⁴Garfield to Lucretia Garfield, May 10, 1879. Garfield Papers. Memoirs of Thomas Donaldson, May 6; 7; 8 and 9, 1879.

riders, it is not surprising that GOP congressmen, many of whom had been heretofore cool if not hostile toward Hayes, suddenly underwent a change of heart. Not only had he "solidified" the GOP, wrote Smith, but he had also brought back some dissidents who had formerly "voted with the Democrats."³⁵

Immediately after the veto was read, House Republicans tried to pass a riderless army bill and fell short of a majority by only eight votes. This was significant, Garfield noted, because up until then the Democrats had claimed they had been voting for appropriations while the Republicans had been opposing them. The Democrats were left in an angry mood, Garfield explained to his wife. "Now," he wrote, "we have all voted for appropriations pure & simple -- and they have voted 'no'!" The second veto had "staggered" the Democrats, he observed and for days they were "wholly at sea."³⁶

About this time, Hayes began to take note of the sizeable emigration of Negroes from the South, commenting that its result would be "altogether favorable." He reasoned that it would tend to "force the better class of Southern people to suppress the violence of the ruffian class, and to protect colored people in their rights." The emigrants should be encouraged to fan out over the Northwest, find permanent employment and buy homes, he urged. When a young Negro educator

³⁵Memoirs of Thomas Donaldson, May 6; 7; 8 and 9, 1879 and Garfield Diary, May 10, 1879. Garfield Papers. William H. Smith to Hayes, May 10, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 552 n.

³⁶Garfield to Lucretia Garfield, May 12; 15 and 17, 1879. Garfield Papers.

from Florida called at the White House, Hayes questioned him closely, asking whether there had been evidence of an exodus of Florida blacks. No, his visitor replied, whereupon the President advised them to stay in the South, for although he recognized they were "assaulted and bulldozed" this would ultimately be corrected by "time and the North. . . ." The immigrant Negroes had suffered greatly, Hayes admitted, but the planters had been awakened to the crucial importance of the Negro's labor; and this was a necessary lesson which would benefit the black race in years to come. He concluded by assuring his youthful visitor of his deep personal concern for the Negro and of his intention to help them attain prosperity.³⁷

Early in June, Hayes learned that the Joint Democratic Caucus Committee had developed an approach to the deadlocked situation that would allow the Democracy to moderate their position without losing face. He speculated that if they meant to gain their point only by withholding a part of the needed appropriations, he doubted that he could justify a veto of their measures. If however, their aim was to restrict executive authority by prohibitions, he would again resort to a veto. Then as the Democratic plan unfolded, he found fault with them for trying to "creep out" of their difficulties "instead of squarely backing out of their awkward position or

³⁷Hayes Diary, May 25, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 553-54. Memoirs of Thomas Donaldson, July 23, 1879.

manfully sticking" it out. Since their attempt to repeal the laws they disliked had been frustrated, they would therefore try to make their enforcement impossible and unlawful. This represented yet another attempt to coerce the president, thought Hayes. At this point, with the embarrassment of many more moderate Democrats in mind, Garfield asked Hayes to look into the possibility of a compromise solution, but Hayes remained deadset against any concessions on his part.³⁸

It is not surprising that the responsibilities of the presidency had by now become a heavy and vexing burden which Hayes was ever more anxious to toss off. He and Lucy talked of their "laborious, anxious, slavish life. It has many attractions and enjoyments, but she agrees so heartily with me as I say: "'Well, I am heartily tired of this life of bondage, responsibility, and toil. I wish it was at an end! I rejoice that it is to last only a little more than a year and a half longer.'" It was one of their "greatest comforts" that he had made the single term pledge in his 'Letter'. That had been "a lucky thing," he confessed to his journal, as well as a "valuable . . . precedent for a reform."³⁹

Ohio politics again intruded upon the scene when the Democrats chose Thomas Ewing as their candidate for governor. This move, Hayes speculated, might "prove disastrous to the

³⁸Hayes Diary, June 2 and 4, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 555, 556 and Memoirs of Thomas Donaldson, May 29, 1879.

³⁹Hayes Diary, June 6, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 557.

Republicans" for Ewing was a strong and exceptionally well equipped candidate, who would try to win the united support of the Democrats and the Greenbackers, and together they outnumbered the Republicans. It was imperative, Hayes advised, for the GOP to counter attack with a vigorous campaign emphasizing the record of Ohio's Democratic legislature, financial issues and the behavior of the Democratic Congress. The latter was a most significant issue, he insisted, for it represented a "revival of the nullification and secession doctrines of Calhoun" and would offer ample grounds for censure and attack. Ewing's financial views (which were not 'sound') would, however, probably be the paramount issue -- "a real living issue," he reflected privately. It was claimed that the Ohio contest would have an important bearing on the presidential competition and that a Democratic victory would not only boost Senator Thurman's chances for a nomination, but would make it probable that his party would carry Ohio in 1880.⁴⁰

In his continuing struggle with congressional Democrats, Hayes confessed that the judicial appropriations bill which they presented to him in June, caused him some indecision. It left the executive without the means of enforcing the election laws. This alone would not justify a veto, he believed, but if its intent was nullification without repeal,

⁴⁰Hayes Diary, June 7, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 557-58 and Richard Smith to John Sherman, Dec. 21, 1878. Sherman Papers.

a veto might be necessary, even though the law would have to be applied only on a very limited scale during the coming fiscal year. For again Congress would be attempting to coerce the executive and to deny that the election laws were constitutional and necessary. He ultimately vetoed the measure.⁴¹

As the struggle drew to a close, Congress presented Hayes with a legislative appropriations bill and an army appropriations measure. He could approve the former although it was poorly written and the appropriations were insufficient, but this, he concluded, did not justify a veto. As for the army bill, it contained a clause prohibiting its use as "a police force" during elections; moreover it enjoyed bi-partisan support both in and out of Washington. Garfield, who had been carrying a heavy load as House minority leader, reported that Conkling and several of his colleagues who preferred "a breach between the President and his party rather than harmony" were trying to persuade House Republicans to reject the bill. But as Garfield explained it, they believed by supporting the bill they "surrendered nothing" for all were certain that Hayes was "bound by his previous veto messages to sign it." At this point, Garfield acted decisively to thwart Senate attempts to lead party members in the House astray by preventing the convening of a joint caucus and by pointing out in a speech that his party might "safely" follow him in supporting the measure. The bill thereupon passed through the House easily, opposed

⁴¹Hayes Diary, June 11, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 559.

by only a handful of Republicans along with some eighteen prominent Democrats who considered it "a surrender by their party," Garfield reported.⁴²

Hayes felt that his position on the use of the army at the polls, as expounded in his veto of the army bill, had now been generally accepted by both parties. The army was to be committed only if the law could not be enforced solely by civilian authorities. This had been his original position and had been the law of the land when the special session was convened and neither had changed in the interim. Hayes, therefore, accepted the legislative bill and the army bill that was enacted with no truly restrictive rider. He vetoed the judicial appropriations bill because it appeared that the Democrats again sought to nullify the election laws by preventing their enforcement. Once again it raised the question of legislative dictation and the objectionable state rights doctrine, Hayes argued, while admitting "the right and duty of national supervision by leaving untouched the supervisors." This veto, Hayes noted, seemed "to be well received by party friends" while the Democrats were "thrown . . . into the greatest confusion."⁴³

Garfield confirms that the Democrats were enraged and threatening to adjourn, in which case he understood Hayes

⁴²Hayes Diary, June 20, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 560-61 and Garfield to Lucretia Garfield, June 12, 1879. Garfield Papers.

⁴³Hayes Diary, June 20 and 25, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 561-62, 562.

would immediately call a second special session together. Were they to adjourn for a second time, Hayes would not again recall Congress, but simply "shut up the courts" according to Garfield, who admitted to his wife that he was a loss to know what would happen, although the struggle's end was near at hand. Hayes argued that the whole movement appeared about to break up and he was elated. For his part, Garfield believed the army bill's approval represented a major personal victory for him over the implacables who wished to continue "a harmful warfare which would have implied our willingness to use the Army as an ordinary instrument for running elections." Although he had run "some risk in assuming it," he observed, he felt his views would eventually meet with general approval.⁴⁴

The contest now rapidly drew to a close. An attempt to adjourn the House without making judicial appropriations was defeated handily by the GOP with the help of seventeen Democrats and the entire Greenback contingent. Meanwhile, in the Senate, Allan Thurman had done an about face and was now vigorously urging appropriations with no riders attached. After several unproductive caucuses, and just as Hayes had anticipated, a judicial bill without funds for marshals or deputy marshals and without provisions that had prompted his earlier veto, was passed. And although its riders repealed the test-oath and the non-partisan jury statutes, Hayes signed it into law.⁴⁵

⁴⁴Garfield To Lucretia Garfield, June 22, 1879 and Garfield Diary, June 23, 1879. Garfield Papers.

⁴⁵Hayes Diary, June 25, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 562.

But the struggle had not quite ended, for a separate marshals appropriation bill with the objectionable provisions of the earlier judicial bill was soon on Hayes's desk. The effect of these provisions "would be a denial to the United States of the right to execute its laws," wrote Hayes in vetoing the measure. By vetoing this bill, he in effect chose to leave the U. S. marshals and their deputies unprovided for rather than to surrender the principles he had maintained throughout four previous vetoes. Congress then adjourned and the struggle was for the time being at an end. It was generally believed that Hayes intended to reconvene Congress again, just as soon as this special session adjourned. Garfield tried to convince him that another session would be inadvisable and the President adopted his advice. "The Democrats completely abandoned the main ground which they first took," Garfield boasted to an intimate friend, "and the most sensible among them do not hesitate to admit, privately, that it was wholly untenable." Like Hayes, he believed the session had welded the party "more than anything since 1868" and this brought the promise of victory in 1880.⁴⁶

The contest left Hayes "experiencing one of the 'ups' of his political life," he remarked, for never, not even in the weeks following his nomination, had he received such fulsome praise and support. Jacob Comly, for example, believed the

⁴⁶Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the Presidents, VII, 546 and Garfield to Lucretia Garfield, June 30, 1879. Garfield Papers. Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, July 7, 1879, in Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Letters, p. 429.

party was once more safely reunited. The pacification policy had been necessary, he claimed, in order to satisfy those who had been critical of military reconstruction, for otherwise they would have deserted the party. Now all were as "stalwart as Old Zach of Michigan," he declared. The press, too, had become very flattering toward Hayes and while he thought this phenomenon would be short-lived, he relished it, believing as he did that he had earned the peoples' faith and trust. He had maintained his views against both supporters and opponents in his party, he told his diary. The former had wanted him to reject the repeal of the test oaths, the non-partisan juries provision and the prohibition of the army's use as a police force during elections. He had rejected their advice, but felt nevertheless, that he had clearly "vindicated the power of the National Government over congressional elections and the separate authority of the Executive. . . ." As a consequence the President had won "a clear-cut victory" and established "a powerful precedent against congressional encroachment on the executive power by means of appropriation riders," Leonard White has concluded.⁴⁷

Hayes, according to White, had defended his position successfully and maintained the viability of the veto. The

⁴⁷Hayes Diary, July 3, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 564 and James Comly to Captain _____, June 9, 1879. Comly Papers. Letterbook. Hayes Diary, July 3, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 564 and Leonard D. White, The Republican Era: A Study in Administrative History, 1869-1901 (New York, 1958), p. 38.

primary interest of the Democrats had not been to restrict presidential power, but to emasculate federal election laws. The use of riders was an expedient made necessary because they lacked the votes needed to pass a bill amending those laws over a veto. Their party, in fact, had long honored the concept of a strong and independent executive, as Hayes had pointed out by his reference to Andrew Jackson during the contest.⁴⁸

When Ohioians went to the polls in October to select a governor and a legislature, they would also decide whether Thurman would remain in the Senate or be replaced by a Republican. Reflecting upon this contest, Hayes admitted that while the Democrats possessed good men of ability these responsible leaders were "powerless in the presence of the bad and reckless elements of their party" or were "at least unable to control the general course of their party." By way of contrast, similar elements within the GOP were forced to "take their direction from the better elements of their party," he contended. As it turned out, Charles Foster, not Thurman, took the governorship after a campaign in which the Republicans emphasized monetary soundness and the supremacy of the national government. The Republican victory in the gubernatorial contest and a majority of legislative races represented a severe defeat for "Inflation and States rights," the President declared happily. Ohio had vindicated his position on the silver bill and his stand in the recently completed

⁴⁸White, The Republican Era, p. 38.

struggle with Congress.⁴⁹

Garfield was also pleased with the campaign and its outcome. After tirelessly stumping in Ohio for his friend Foster and Republican assembly candidates, he proudly told his wife of the recognition his efforts had won for him. "The President told me," he wrote, "that he had heard several prominent people say that my speeches are making a remarkable impression on the public -- much greater than any others' in the field." He had nearly recovered the stature he had lost in 1873-74 and once again higher political honors were in the offing. The only Ohio Republican who appeared less than completely pleased was the governor-elect, who had contributed \$18,000 to the campaign while the officeholders (perhaps taking advantage of Hayes's 'order') had contributed but \$3,000, although a second appeal had been made.⁵⁰

The outcome of the November elections had given his party "victory . . . complete everywhere in the North except in New York," Hayes recorded jubilantly. He blamed the apparent defeat in New York (the final tabulation gave the GOP four out of seven state posts) on a poor turnout because of ill-feeling toward Conkling and his nominee for governor, Alonzo Cornell. Hayes remarked that personally he had done his best "to save

⁴⁹Hayes Diary, Oct. 14 and 15, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 574-75, 575.

⁵⁰Garfield to Lucretia Garfield, Oct. 8, 1879. Garfield Papers. Charles Foster to Sidney Warner, Nov. 22 and Dec. 16, 1879. Charles Foster Papers. Western Reserve Historical Society.

the cause by urging friends to lay aside their opposition." But as it was, the Republican showing in the North was uniformly better than it had been in 1878, except for New York. And there, although Cornell took the governorship, the problem Hayes insisted, was "too much Roscoe Conkling and his machine politics." The administration might have prevented Cornell's nomination, but wisely chose to give the machine a free hand. Conkling could not, therefore, complain of administration harassment as he had in the case of the Custom House changes. Some very good men, independent of Conkling, had been nominated, William Henry Smith was told, and as friends of the administration had exercised great caution, there were left "no wounds to heal."⁵¹

The choice of Cornell to head the ticket had left some New York reform leaders like Jay deeply troubled. The administration could have prevented a nomination that was an "insult and outrage" he complained to Schurz -- one that left "the better class" of Republicans bitterly disappointed and disgusted. The appeals from Washington for all to unite behind the ticket led Jay and his colleagues to wonder if the reform pledges were now to be abandoned since the administration had been so silent on the subject. Schurz, however, hastened to assure him that Hayes had not abandoned the good work, and an apparently mollified Jay quickly passed the word

⁵¹Hayes Diary, Nov. 5, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 576-77 and George Tichenor to William H. Smith, Sept. 6, 1879. Smith Papers.

along to his associates. For his part, Hayes interpreted Cornell's victory as a gift from those Tammany men who had bolted their party and refused to support Tilden's nominees. As a result, Hayes anticipated (and with obvious relish) Tilden's defeat in the 1880 Democratic National Convention or later in the presidential race.⁵²

In his third annual message, referring to recent state elections, Hayes once again repeated his administration's determination to protect the political rights of all citizens everywhere in the nation. Garfield believed that the Negroes now "had their fate in their own hands" and once they became "self-supporting" they would eventually win "a permanent hold in the domain of citizenship." He cited their role in Virginia's senatorial contest, where they held the balance of power thanks to a divided white vote, although he regretted their sending the readjuster William Mahone to Washington. Yet like Hayes, and most of his northern brethren, he had concluded some time earlier that "the betterment of the negro race must necessarily be the work of time." His party was neither abandoning the Negro nor the civil rights amendments, but they were abandoning the notion that the freedman could be quickly and simply drawn into the mainstream of American life. Thus in his message, Hayes called upon Congress to strengthen federal election laws and urged state authorities

⁵²John Jay to Carl Schurz, Oct. 17 and Nov. 7, 1879. Schurz Papers. Hayes Diary, Nov. 5, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 577.

to cooperate in the effort.⁵³

Civil service reform had gone unmentioned in 1878, but now the President returned to the subject. He recalled his promise to submit Dorman Eaton's report as soon as it was feasible, but it had since been deemed most desirable to include in it an analysis of England's reform program. Eaton had made such a study at Hayes's request and now his comprehensive report, the completion of which had been delayed by Congress's failure to make any appropriation for the Civil Service Commission's work, would soon be put in their hands. He commended Eaton's review of the British experience to Congress and assured his listeners that his own "views . . . concerning the defects and abuses in" the civil service remained unchanged; if anything, he approached the task of reform with a heightened "sense of duty. . . ." He thereupon launched into a lengthy plea for congressional action on behalf of reform, thus giving this subject a preeminent place in his message.⁵⁴

As he entered the new year, (1879) the question of an Isthmian canal provided Hayes with an opportunity to exhibit again his powerfully nationalistic outlook. From the outset, he was determined that the United States should control the canal whether it was built in Panama or Nicaragua. It was the "most important" question before the Senate, he insisted

⁵³Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the Presidents, VII, 560-61 and Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, Dec. 20, 1879, in Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Correspondence, pp. 430-31.

⁵⁴Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the Presidents, VII, 561-66.

to his diary, at a time when Ferdinand DeLesseps and French interests seemed destined to control the projected Panama canal. The moment had arrived "when the American doctrine on the subject ought to be explicitly stated," Hayes continued, and he essayed to do just that.

In my judgment (he wrote) the United States regard the commercial communication, whether by railroad or canal, between the two oceans across the Isthmus at any of the points which have been suggested, as essential to their safety and prosperity. They wish it to be understood by all concerned that the United States will not consent that any European power shall control the railroad or canal across the Isthmus of Central America. With due regard to the rights and wishes of our sister republics in the Isthmus, the United States will insist that this passageway shall always remain under American control. Whoever invests capital in the contemplated work should do it with a distinct understanding that the United States expects and intends to control the canal in conformity with its own interests.⁵⁵

Nor was the Monroe Doctrine the sole basis for the U. S. interest. It was vitally important to the nation's economic well-being and was "essential for national defense" as well, Hayes argued in a later diary entry. So strongly did he feel about the matter, that he did not wait for his cabinet officers' opinions on the question, but simply presented the above views in cabinet session. If the canal was foreign controlled, America's "commanding and natural position among the nations would be endangered," for, he insisted, ". . . our interest in the subject was greater than that of all European nations put together." He intended to make his views known in a special

⁵⁵Hayes Diary, Feb. 7, 1880, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 586.

message to Congress, so that all interested parties might know the American position. As for his cabinet, it was nearly unanimous in its support of his position; and while Evarts did not strongly favor an immediate response, he preferred a response soon, Hayes observed. About a week later, the President reiterated his belief that a European controlled canal was simply out of the question. "Either an American canal or no canal must be our motto," he wrote in his diary.⁵⁶

In one of his few references to civil service reform that winter, he referred to his attempt to reduce "nepotism and favoritism" in the federal government and the Army. As he explained to his wife's cousin, he did not suppose he could put an end to these abusive practices in four short years, but he intended that his "example . . . (should) be a protest against it." Meanwhile, he was not himself deterred from favoring friends with federal appointments and was quite unhappy when O. P. Morton's son was rejected through the operation of senatorial courtesy. He believed this concept had been greatly weakened during his administration, but feared that it was about to be revived and was at a loss as to how he might effectively counter the trend. What is more the President's party seemed more interested in selecting his successor than in reform.⁵⁷

⁵⁶Hayes Diary, Feb. 11 and 20, 1880, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 587-88, 589.

⁵⁷Hayes to Mrs. _____, Feb. 5, 1880 and Hayes Diary, Feb. 7, 1880, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 584-85, 585-86.

CHAPTER 9

THE STRUGGLE FOR SUCCESSION

In spite of a defeat at the hands of the Democrats in state and national contests in 1878 and the party's return to what was apparently to be a narrower geographical base, a sharp and exciting struggle for the GOP presidential nomination had already begun. Grant, Blaine and Sherman emerged as the leading contenders, with William Windom, George F. Edmunds and Elihu Washburne the lesser figures in the field. Garfield was cast in the role of the not-so-dark horse; he was also a key figure in Sherman's bid for the prize.

As the Grant boom gained momentum and Blaine's support grew, John Sherman realized that his position as Secretary of the Treasury had its disadvantages. "I soon found that the fact that I held an office which compelled me to express my opinions was a drawback rather than a benefit, and, while I had the natural ambition to attain such a distinction, I was handicapped by my official position," he observed in his Recollections. "As a presidential candidate," one scholar has remarked, "Sherman acted on the assumption that he who had done most to disappoint the inflationists nevertheless could be nominated and elected, for the beneficiaries of sound

currency should see to that."¹

Indeed, as a presidential hopeful, the Secretary did carry a heavy handicap into the race, one that was not lightened as the contest grew more heated. Ohio was the late nineteenth century's unrivalled producer of presidential candidates and successful dark horses, two of whom Sherman himself helped put in the White House. Once his intentions became known, he immediately became fair game for rivals and critics who were aided and encouraged by the fact that he was unable to put together an effective organization for promotion and self-defense. He had begun his political career "as a compromise candidate," writes his most discerning biographer, "indebted to party factionalism for his place in office; and thereafter the intricate maneuvering which makes a state legislature choose such a man for Senator, left a record of misunderstandings which lessened the probability of hearty statewide support for the presidential nomination." Moreover, his political lieutenants, competent as they were at keeping him in the Senate, simply were not up to handling a presidential candidacy.²

Sherman's prospects for success were limited for other reasons as well. Perhaps most damaging of all was the growing conviction that Sherman could be neither nominated nor

¹John Sherman, Recollections of Forty Years in the House, Senate and Cabinet: An Autobiography (2 vols., Chicago, 1895), II, 605 and Nichols, "John Sherman," p. 188.

²Nichols, "John Sherman," p. 188.

elected because his own state would not give him its united support. Eastern businessmen upon whom he counted heavily appear to have arrived at this conclusion well before the convention met. His intimate connection with Hayes's administration and its unpopular policies also worked to his disadvantage. What is more, Sherman, unlike Hayes and Garfield, had not gone before the people as a candidate for nearly two decades; his "real electorate was the relatively small group in the Ohio legislature." And although he had campaigned regularly on behalf of others, he "communicated no colorful personality, no magnetic current. Rather, he remained aloof; and in some subtle way men felt, and resented, that assumption of superiority in which he privately took refuge."³

Sherman had gained a reputation for being cold, mysterious and cynical. He was tagged "The Icicle of the Treasury" or "The Ohio Icicle" and even those who were aware of his very human qualities knew he carried a heavy burden into his campaign. Immediately after leaving office, Hayes would write to his former Treasury chief as follows: "I read the parting between you and the treasury people. It was an affecting and interesting occasion. Your remarks were extremely felicitous. The notion that you are too cold in temperment will not outlast many such scenes."⁴ Unfortunately for the Secretary, the "notion" persisted.

³Nichols, "John Sherman," p. 189.

⁴Nichols, "John Sherman," pp. 189-90 and Hayes to Sherman, March 6, 1880. Sherman Papers.

Sherman's bid for the presidential nomination had begun in earnest by late 1879 and as he was careful to explain in his memoirs, he "severed all connections between . . . (his) duties in the treasury and the necessary correspondence caused by . . . being named as a candidate for President."⁵ He thereupon implies that he used his patronage power to further himself politically, but then hastens to deny this implicitly.. Yet Sherman was neither so innocent as he would have his readers believe, nor so great a blackguard as his harshest critics insisted. Certainly no clear-cut separation of official duties and private affairs existed, yet neither was the public interest seriously or consistently subordinated to his political ambitions. Nevertheless, there is evidence that Sherman used his treasury people for political work and that his appointments reflect a conscious effort to place in key positions those who would act as his political agents and supporters.

Quite unintentionally, Hayes had cleared the way for a succession struggle with his letter of acceptance -- that is, if he was taken at his word. At the end of an extended paragraph on civil service reform, he had appended this self-denying pledge:

The declaration of principles by the Cincinnati convention makes no announcement in favor of a single Presidential term. I do not assume to add to that declaration; but believing that the restoration of the civil service to the system established by Washington and followed by the early Presidents can

⁵Sherman, Recollections, II, 607.

be best accomplished by an Executive who is under no temptation to use the patronage of his office to promote his own re-election, I desire to perform what I regard as a duty in now stating my inflexible purpose, if elected, not to be a candidate for election to a second term.⁶

This declaration reflected Hayes's moralistic bent, a dread of scandal and his distaste for the time-honored congressional encroachments upon presidential independence in the matter of executive appointments. But it also revealed something of his attitude toward public life -- his view of politics as an avocation rather than the vocation it was for men like Garfield and Sherman. Yet it likewise showed him to be an astute student of American politics, who sensed that such a pledge would not only make his nomination more palatable to party professionals, but would also aid him in his bid for the presidency.

Although he said nothing about the single term in his inaugural address, his intimates could hardly have failed to comprehend that this would be but a four year performance. In a conversation with Tom Donaldson only seven months after entering office, Hayes "talked of the time when he should go out of office, retire, and the pursuits he should follow. He had no earthly use for politics after his term was done," Donaldson reports. This is not to claim that Hayes would not harbor some hope of a popular movement on his behalf in 1880. Such a demonstration by 'the people' would have been pleasant, perhaps made all the more so by a properly appreciative declination on his part. But surely he did not covet a second term

⁶Williams, Life of Hayes, I, 461.

and he was genuinely eager to be out of it, just as he had been while a member of the House years earlier. It may well be that "his strong streak of ambition had been satisfied the moment he attained office. He had really wanted not so much to be President as to have been President," observes his most recent biographer.⁷ Obviously, Hayes did not relish political life as did the many professionals who surrounded him and this fact was not lost upon the well-informed whether or not they were personally intimate with the President. Given this state of affairs, the way was cleared at an unusually early point for those bent upon winning party favor in 1880.

Hayes had hoped to avoid the embarrassments that might arise should a cabinet member become a presidential candidate, by carefully excluding (he hoped) the likely contenders from his official family. Nevertheless, its leading figure, John Sherman, began nursing presidential hopes well before the administration was a year and a half old -- as early as the fall of 1878. However, he carefully discouraged the use of his name, praised Grant and argued that so far he seemed to be the party's choice. From his New York vantage point, White-law Reid already saw Garfield as Ohio's strongest presidential prospect; but others saw a spontaneous Sherman movement rapidly gaining strength in Ohio as the year drew to a close. Meanwhile, both Sherman and Garfield were coming under pressure to bid for the governorship, a post which Hayes believed an

⁷Memoirs of Thomas Donaldson, Oct. 15, 1877 and Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes, p. 488.

important way station along the road to the White House. And as I have noted, Hayes was reported to have been "cordially in favor" of Garfield's nomination, apparently for this reason.⁸

Although neither he nor any of the other aspirants could be absolutely certain that Hayes would be a mere bystander in 1880, Sherman's intimacy with the President must have convinced him that the way would not be blocked by that gentleman. Thus assured, Sherman initiated a program designed to bring him within reach of his goal during his first year in office. Thereafter, his role in the currency struggle, his appointments, his part in the New York Custom House fight, his conciliatory attitude toward other contenders for the nomination and his attempts to manage the Ohio GOP, all betray a hope he would harbor for over a decade.

Even the most cursory survey of Sherman's initial bid for the nomination must shed light on more than the man and his methods. It necessarily involves and reveals to some degree something of Hayes and his administration, the lively and nationally significant Ohio political scene, the mounting struggle between the leading contenders for party favor and the man who emerges with the prize. James A. Garfield reluctantly, yet perhaps unavoidably, became entangled in the

⁸John Sherman to O. H. Booth, Oct. 18, 1878. Sherman Papers. Letterbook. Whitelaw Reid to Garfield to James Comly, Nov. 19, 1878. Comly Papers. Henry Moulton to John Sherman, Dec. 16, 1878. Sherman Papers. William Farrar to Garfield, Dec. 31, 1878. Garfield Papers. Cincinnati Daily Gazette, Dec. 26, 1878, p. 1 and Dec. 27, 1878, p. 1.

'wires' laid on Sherman's behalf; and he and his friends figures so importantly in the Sherman effort, that to exclude them from an account of it would serve to distort the picture seriously. Moreover, as the events of the months preceding the convention unfolded, they would seem to confirm the view that Garfield's personal and political history during the final year and a half of his life had indeed been predetermined by more than two decades of state and national political associations and activity.

John Sherman was not the only prominent Ohioian who harbored ambitions for political preferment during the Hayes years. By early December 1879, Garfield was making it clear that he badly wanted the senatorship and was not disposed to depend solely upon the benevolence of Sherman and his friends to secure it. One receives some insight into Sherman's political methods from the advice of Henry Moulton, Sherman's brother-in-law and political aide, to Garfield as to how to build legislative support in a senatorial contest. It was, as Garfield told one of his supporters, "not to work directly upon a member -- but to get his constituents to work on him, so that he will feel that the sentiment of his county requires him to act." Using this technique, Garfield was assured, Sherman often won the support of legislators personally opposed to his election. Garfield apparently took the counsel to heart, for in a letter to his close friend and ardent supporter, Charles Henry, he wrote thus: "We should have as many discreet men as possible, from all parts of the State, who are willing to do so, go to Columbus soon after the meeting of the Legislature, and bring

the pressure of public opinion steadily and discreetly to bear upon the members." Although he contemplated his departure from the House "with some sadness," he confessed, he believed his health would break if he did not "escape the responsibilities and labor of leadership" by entering the Senate. Nevertheless, he found newspaper speculation about him and the senatorship to be "premature and embarrassing" to him and his friends.⁹

In a second letter to Henry a few days later, Garfield revealed the reciprocity Sherman expected for his sacrifice in the matter of the Senate seat.

John Sherman (he wrote) is exceedingly anxious that I shall come out in a public letter favoring his candidacy for the Presidency. I have said to his friends that I am willing to aid in my proper way in giving him the Ohio delegation in the National Convention, but I do not think it wise to make any public declaration on the subject until after the Senatorial election. He is very anxious and his friends are pressing.

Perhaps Sherman and his friends, some of whom did not regard Garfield with much favor, were fearful that once elected he might pursue an independent course, supporting the Secretary only half-heartedly or worse still, move into the camp of his old friend, James G. Blaine. They understood Garfield enjoyed widespread support for the Senate and that his election was nearly certain. At the same time, he appeared eager to succeed, if possible, without Sherman's help or the appearance of 'a deal'; and he hoped to win the senatorship while avoiding the type of management that had become Sherman's

⁹Garfield to Charles Henry, Nov. 24 and Dec. 20, 1879. Henry Papers.

political trade mark. Thus while he and his friends were not idle, he was determined to stay away from Columbus while the contest was on, in spite of advice to the contrary.¹⁰

But as Garfield's election became more certain, pressure from the Sherman camp intensified. A Sherman confidant, Warner Bateman, told the Secretary that "Garfield might as well commit himself at once. . . (James W.) Robinson (Republican State Committee Chairman) had better press him when he reaches Washington to take his stand." A few days earlier, in a report to Sherman, Bateman provided an example of just what he meant.

On Tuesday evening (he wrote) I called on Garfield, as I informed you I would, and had a pleasant and frank conversation with him. He told me of his conversation with you, and of his intention to support you, said it was painful to go against Blaine, who had been his associate and intimate friend for so many years, but gave very earnest reasons why he could not support him, and explained the grounds, both personal and public, why he should support (you). I urged him to take his stand publicly and at once in your behalf, saying that in that case he would doubtless be accepted by your friends as their pioneer and leader, which would in my judgment add largely to his personal advantage in public life.

But in spite of this prodding and the **uncomfortable position** in which he found himself, Garfield stood his ground and postponed a public endorsement.¹¹

¹⁰Garfield to Charles Henry, Dec. 8, 1879. Henry Papers. William Bickham to John Sherman, Dec. 8, 1879 and Warner Bateman to John Sherman, Dec. 12, 1879. Sherman Papers. James Robinson to Garfield, Dec. 29, 1879 and Thomas Nichol to Garfield, Dec. 31, 1879. Garfield Papers.

¹¹Warner Bateman to John Sherman, Dec. 12 and 8, 1879. Bateman Papers. Letterbook.

Although the relationship between Garfield, the Western Reserve, the senatorship and Sherman's ambitions was clear enough to any Ohio voter of this era, it is less obvious some ninety years later. Garfield was the leading, but not the sole candidate for the Senate, and an easy and decisive verdict in his favor was imperative were Sherman to go to Chicago as his state's favorite son. Bateman put it this way: "I have a letter today from Henry S. Sherman, who says, among other things, that the friends of Garfield in the Reserve, will be disposed to hold you (Sherman) responsible for the vote of your friends elsewhere on the Senatorship. This is a point of some delicacy that may be increased by the action of (Edwin) Cowles (editor-publisher of the Cleveland Leader) and (John T.) Mack (owner-editor of the Sandusky Register). The first gentleman was cool and the latter consistently hostile toward Sherman and his candidacy. "If Garfield is put through as Senator without bitter controversey," W. D. Bickham advised Bateman, "He can and will, I think, help us to secure the Reserve -- for the Reserve is where the danger lies." Henry Sherman had made the following observations in a letter to Bickham:

Uncle John would probably be the choice of the Northern Ohio delegation now, but if his friends and the anti-Grant men in Cincinnati & Southern Ohio -- Halstead & others -- are going to make a fight on the Senatorship and succeed in defeating or greatly imperilling the chances of General Garfield, it will be pretty hard to get a Sherman delegate appointed to the Natl convention from the Reserve. Sherman ought

to give this some consideration.¹²

A few days later, he saw fit to modify his initial estimate.

He wrote then as follows:

I am glad to know I overestimated the feeling against Garfield, for I think (& I have been assured by a friend of Garfield) that if he is elected he will head the Northern Ohio delegation in the Convention for Sherman. At all events some of his strongest & most influential friends will work hard for Sherman. . . . If Garfield comes out strongly for Sherman he can easily carry this part of the state & will have control of Cowles of the Leader, who recently went off on a tangent for Grant.

At the same moment, Robinson was insisting to Sherman that a letter from Garfield following on the heels of his election would "help us very much."¹³

The groundwork for the candidacy of Sherman's chief rival was laid by his advocates, Senators Conkling, Cameron and Logan, while Grant was yet abroad on his triumphal and well-timed world tour. He returned to the United States in September 1879 and upon disembarking at San Francisco, he proceeded by easy stages to Galena, Illinois, and after a time journeyed on to Philadelphia. From the West Coast to the East Coast his progress was marked by demonstrations of affection and respect from enthusiastic crowds along his route. The men who hoped to launch a 'Grant Boom' could scarcely have asked for a better start.

¹²Warner Bateman to John Sherman, Dec. 31, 1879; William Bickham to Warner Bateman, Dec. 29, 1879 and Henry Sherman to Warner Bateman, Dec. 30, 1879. Bateman Papers. Letterbook.

¹³Henry Sherman to Warner Bateman, Jan. 5, 1880. Bateman Papers. James Robinson to John Sherman, Jan. 6, 1880. Sherman Papers.

Grant had as yet neither declared nor denied his candidacy publicly, but this was scarcely a problem. Those on the inside usually knew where the General stood and for others he had helpful hints. Thus it was with Hayes's old friend and correspondent, James Comly, whom Hayes had made U. S. Minister to Hawaii. In San Francisco one evening following his return, Grant sent for Comly, who was informed by the General's secretary that he was to be the first to be told about the "third term business." In the course of their two hour interview, Comly learned that Grant did not feel he was "needed for a candidate" and would do nothing to secure the honor. Comly concluded that he would accept the nomination if proffered. This information was quickly passed on to Hayes, for as Comly wrote, "I am not quite foolish enough to suppose that General Grant talked to me for any reason personal to myself. I think I was expected to write to you about it. . . ."¹⁴ Certainly Grant had no reason to vie with Hayes for the nomination and he probably wished to be certain that the incumbent would not stand in his way should he bid for a third term. But Hayes had no intention of becoming any prospective candidate's rival, least of all U. S. Grant's.

Hayes and Sherman were sharply split in their views of a third term for Grant. In an 1887 interview with Hayes, William Henry Smith had an opportunity to learn just how the President viewed the third term issue. In spite of his experience with and intense dislike for the prime movers behind the Grant boom,

¹⁴Quoted in Kleinpell, "Life of James Comly," p. 243.

. . . Hayes (wrote Smith) refused to see any great danger in again re-electing Grant, and while pledged to a single term and believing that reforms in govt. could only come through Presidents pledged to a single term, he believed worse could befall the country in the election of a corrupt, bad man. He held that Grant's nature was so honest and simple that no new precedents would be fastened upon the govt.

But Sherman's view of the matter was not so sanguine. In April 1880, he confided to Smith that "while I have the warmest personal feeling for Gen. Grant, I still think his nomination would be fatal to us in the election and therefore I ought not take any position as between him and Blaine."¹⁵

Late in 1879, Murat Halstead must have received some indication of Hayes's attitude toward Grant. In a note to the President, he advised that "it would be unfortunate for the word to go out that you prefer Grant to Blaine for next President. The next thing Blaine's friends would prefer Grant to Sherman. The second choice of everybody therefore gets everything. As the case stands the third term idea fades. . .," he concluded. After paying a call on Grant at Philadelphia in December 1879, Hayes was warned by the Springfield Republican (whose editor was friend of Halstead's) that this visit might be interpreted to mean he favored Grant for another term.¹⁶ But with characteristic propriety, perhaps keeping Halstead's advice in mind, Hayes did not make public his preference for Grant over Blaine.

¹⁵William H. Smith, Memorandum, Dec. 14, 1887 and John Sherman to William H. Smith, April 19, 1880. Smith Papers.

¹⁶Murat Halstead to Hayes, Nov. 28, 1879. Hayes Papers. Springfield Republican, Dec. 26, 1879, p. 4.

As convention time drew near, it became clear that the Grant boom was something to be reckoned with and that designating him as the "second choice of everybody" was wishful thinking. Sherman's estimate that "the indications here (Washington) are rather favorable to him" was far more realistic. Grant partisans in the federal establishment were already hard at work. One of Sherman's Philadelphia supporters complained bitterly to the Secretary that old Grant appointees in his city openly campaigned for their benefactor despite civil service rules that handicapped the Sherman effort. Garfield warned that Grant's nomination "is not only among the possibilities, but unless some decisive action is taken, it is likely to be made." Such an error could be prevented only if Blaine and Sherman cooperated, he argued, while each gathered as much support as possible. "If Blaine can carry New England and some of the Western States," Garfield reasoned, "and Sherman Ohio and some other States, Grant will hardly enter upon the struggle. . . ." Ohio, Garfield thought, would be well advised to give Sherman a solid delegation, for only thus could Grant be stopped and the state's party unity be maintained.¹⁷

Other politically astute observers were of a similar opinion as Grant's prospects improved. Halstead added that a convention in Cincinnati offered the best chance for

¹⁷John Sherman to Warner Bateman, Dec. 31, 1879. Bateman Papers. J. W. Frazier to John Sherman, Oct. 16, 1879. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

frustrating the General.¹⁸ For that matter, the call to support Sherman seemed predicted largely upon the need to stop Grant. But Grant's forces were soon to sin a significant victory by getting the convention placed in Chicago where Grant would enjoy, it was supposed, certain advantages over his competitors. Richard Smith and H. V. Boynton now grew worried over Grant's strong showing and began urging that a greater effort be made on Sherman's behalf.¹⁹

At the same time, loyal Hayes men were initiating a movement for his renomination. In a letter to Webb Hayes in March 1879, William Henry Smith claimed to see a rising feeling of gratitude toward Hayes for his service to nation and party. He believed, or wanted to believe, that this would result in his renomination and re-election. Two months later, while visiting the President, Smith and Hayes talked at length about the coming presidential race. Hayes indicated that he was aware of Smith's efforts on his behalf and said he would promptly and decisively squelch any second term movement. "You are so near to me," he admonished Smith, "that whatever you may say will be considered as coming from me, and therefore I wish you to banish all such thoughts and be discreet in what you

¹⁸Murat Halstead to William Chandler (telegram), Dec. 16, 1879 and Whitelaw Reid to William Chandler, Dec. 13, 1879. Chandler Papers. Springfield Republican, Dec. 18, 1879, p. 5.

¹⁹Warner Bateman to J. T. Brooks, Dec. 15, 1879; Warner Bateman to M. M. Granger, Dec. 15, 1879 and Warner Bateman to R. M. Steiner, Dec. 15, 1879. Bateman Papers. Letterbook. Richard Smith to William H. Smith, Dec. 27, 1879 and Henry Boynton to William H. Smith, Dec. 27, 1879. Smith Papers.

say and do."²⁰

By early January, Garfield found himself in a delicate position. His own political aspiration, the pressures from the Sherman camp and the various schemes and conflicting advice of friends were combining to make his path a thorny one. Many of his supporters held sharply anti-Sherman views, as the following analysis by A. L. Conger of Akron, chairman of the State Central Committee, indicates.

Many of your friends (wrote Conger to Garfield) are strong Grant men and I am seeking to preserve & unite the Grant men. It will be a great mistake if we give Ohio to John Sherman. The business men throughout the state are very much opposed to him. Sherman could not pull as many votes in this area as Grant or Washburne & he would be defeated in the state by an overwhelming majority as I view the matter.²¹

Sherman had gained a reputation for pursuing a markedly expedient course throughout his political career. He entered the House as a compromise candidate from a district torn by the slavery issue and had thereafter been a follower rather than a leader on issues leading to the war. He had followed a policy of drift in the quarrel with Johnson and when faced with the politically explosive money issue had veered first toward "inflation" and then back to "soundness" as political needs dictated. But after years of seeking to cultivate the good will of hostile interest groups, he arrived at 1880 without the hearty political support of the inflationists or the

²⁰William H. Smith to Webb Hayes, March 31, 1879. Hayes Papers. Quoted in Gray, "William Henry Smith," p. 161.

²¹A. L. Conger to Garfield, Jan. 2, 1879. Garfield Papers.

anti-inflationists. As one perceptive historian of Ohio politics has observed, Sherman was acutely conscious of the need to be accepted by Wall Street's men of wealth; he also understood it was vital that "his personality and adaptability to the popular cause" be recognized. He appreciated the need to indulge party leaders' special interests in the event they were to commit their party to putting him in the White House. But on each count Sherman found himself in a quandry. He simply lacked the charisma which made the candidacies of Clay, Blaine and Theodore Roosevelt a virtual certainty -- his personal history revealed "nothing stimulating or romantic" that rose above his public record.²²

Sherman sincerely believed that resumption's success and the nation's healthier economy amply demonstrated his financial sagacity. He appeared, accordingly, to believe that "his claim upon his party for its highest reward was fully vindicated."²³ But even the Secretary's native state was not united in support of his nomination -- indeed, it seemed that either Grant or Blaine was the choice of most Ohioians.

Although Garfield enjoyed wide and enthusiastic backing in Ohio in his bid for promotion, at least some of Garfield's and Sherman's friends distrusted each other. The former feared that Sherman also had his eye on the Senate and might bid

²²Clifford H. Moore, "Ohio in National Politics, 1865-1896," Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications, XXXVII (1928), 327.

²³Moore, "Ohio in National Politics," p. 324.

for it should Garfield fail to endorse him promptly. But on the other hand, some were worried that a public endorsement of Sherman prior to the election might be the only thing that would prevent a Garfield victory. Meanwhile, when opposition to Sherman boiled up in the Akron area, Sherman's brother-in-law blamed it on Garfield's friends, who he claimed thought Sherman or Hayes was working against Garfield and had "taken this measure to get even."²⁴

Sherman, although suspect in the eyes of many a Garfield man, was in fact quietly smoothing the way for Garfield's election. Thus, through Foster, Sherman persuaded Halstead to recognize the benefits he might reap from Garfield's friendship and refrain from attacking Garfield and admit that his success was a certainty. Indeed, this seems to have been the general instruction given out to pro-Sherman journalists.²⁵

But Garfield was still in an uncomfortable position -- caught in a cross fire generated by Sherman, Blaine or Grant partisans who wished to make use of him. Sherman's pressure for a public endorsement mounted and although this seems to have stemmed from his desire to counter-act an anticipated push for Grant by Taft, Matthews and other Cincinnati people once the party met in convention, it was no less onerous. And not only were Grant men seeking his backing for their candidate,

²⁴Lionel Sheldon to Garfield, Dec. 15, 1878 and Charles Henry to Garfield, Dec. 10, 1879. Garfield Papers. Henry Moulton to John Sherman, Dec. 31, 1879. Sherman Papers.

²⁵R. D. Mussey to Charles Foster, Dec. 16, 1879 and Thomas Nichol to Garfield, Dec. 31, 1879. Garfield Papers.

but the shrewd Foster wrote to Garfield to say (and the implication was clear) that Blaine was "really strong with many of our friends. . . ." ²⁶

Undaunted by the growing odds against victory, Sherman and his backers continued to build cautiously toward their goal. In Ohio, the real key to any considerable success he might enjoy involved cultivating the hearty support of influential newspapermen like Halstead, Richard Smith and Edwin Cowles. He already anticipated 'indirect' aid from Thomas Nichol and his Honest Money League not only in Ohio, but throughout the Northwest. But as Bateman told William Henry Smith, it was high time they began building an organization by establishing Sherman clubs among businessmen in New York, Boston, Milwaukee, Philadelphia and Chicago; in the last named city he hoped Smith himself would assume a leading role. Smith, already busying himself on Sherman's behalf in Chicago, Milwaukee and Madison, was urging the Secretary to appoint Nichol a revenue inspector in the Chicago district so that his superiors might "find work for him in Wisconsin, where he . . . (would) be at home." Smith also wished to know if Hayes had as yet come up with a means "for taking care of Gen. Rust. . . ." ²⁷ Obviously at least one of Hayes's closest friends and staunchest supporters did not view the June 22nd 'Order' as

²⁶Charles Henry to Garfield, Dec. 16, 1879 and Charles Foster to Garfield, Dec. 17, 1879. Garfield Papers.

²⁷Warner Bateman to William H. Smith, Dec. 3, 1879. Bateman Papers. William H. Smith to John Sherman, Dec. 3, 1879. Sherman Papers.

did his President.

When, in November 1879, Sherman decided finally that he would not make a bid for the Senate, but would seek a higher post, Garfield's position and power played a key role in his decision. Sherman wrote thus with reference to the matter:

After full reflection I concluded to write to Dayton the reason why I do not think it advisable for me to be a candidate. If there was any doubt about it the apparent concentration of opinion in favor of Garfield would remove the doubt, but without respect to this I think my course is the proper one. Having been elected three times -- as long a period as anyone from Ohio has ever held office -- it does not seem exactly right to stand in the way of others by becoming a candidate.

If Sherman had been truly candid, and it was not in his nature to be so, he would have said it was not politically expedient to stand in the way of a popular Ohioian who was certain to play a prominent and perhaps decisive role in his bid for the presidential nomination.²⁸

Meanwhile, Conger was writing Garfield as follows:

. . . we shall send you to the Senate -- but don't identify yourself with Sherman's candidacy, for we shall fight him to the bitter end -- we shall carry a number of outside Dists against him, & we ought to have the Reserve solid for Grant & with your help we can get the four Delegates at Large. Then when the time comes if we don't want to go for Grant we can carry the state for whom we please.²⁹

If by this final sentence Conger was hinting at the possibility of nominating Garfield, the latter's dilemma had become just a bit more serious than it had been to that point.

²⁸John Sherman to Warner Bateman, Nov. 3, 1879. Sherman Papers.

²⁹A. L. Conger to Garfield, Jan. 2, 1880. Garfield Papers.

Sherman had been seeking to strengthen his chances for success since taking office. In spite of Hayes's executive order, he had used his appointive power in an attempt to enlist a loyal following within his department. The revelations of the Potter Committee strongly suggest that he was instrumental in rewarding many an unworthy southern Republican, again perhaps with an eye to the future. Probably Sherman was among those whom Hayes had in mind when at the end of his first year, he complained that "the urgent misrepresentations poured into my ears by men who ought to be trustworthy have led to mistakes -- serious mistakes, mainly in appointments. . . ." In New York City, especially during the Custom House struggle, Sherman's preoccupation with the presidency emerges once more. He appears to have been working at cross purposes with Hayes at times in his effort to mollify powerful machine leaders who might play a role in his future. His support of the ousted Cornell for the governorship can not be written off as mere loyalty to a fellow Republican. For that matter, his supervision of the customs service in general leads one to believe that he viewed it as an admirably suited vehicle for the promotion of his candidacy and so used it. Thus, as one implacable Ohio critic pointed out, the Secretary was guilty of "unscrupulous and corrupt use of patronage" as evidenced by the fact that the Louisiana "returning board, their relatives & aides" drew \$46,800 as Treasury employees, while "Kellogg's

henchmen" were being cared for with posts worth \$80,000 per annum.³⁰

Indeed, Sherman's department was not known as a model of civil service purity. He had frequently come under sharp attack for allegedly manipulating the service to meet his own political needs. One such slap at the Secretary appeared in the February 19, 1880 issue of The Nation which reported that:

Secretary Sherman has been busy throughout the week debasing the public service to further his own selfish plans over a pretty wide stretch of territory, we judge from the reports of the New York Times. . . . It has discovered his hand in . . . a 'spontaneous' popular uprising of Boston merchants, and . . . in some ugly manipulations of the civil service in St. Louis. In this city he has compelled Surveyor Graham to attempt to decoy the business men into 'spontaneous' support of him, while at the same time he has kept Collector Merritt away from his business at the Custom-house in order to 'manufacture' in the northern part of the State.

Some influential figures within the eastern business community were not taken with Sherman either. Henry Lea, the historian-reformer, replying to a confidential letter from Schurz about Sherman's candidacy, declared that he had lost confidence in him while a Senator, as he seemed to "have no convictions that were not at the mercy of temporary expediency." He dismissed him as nothing more "than a machine politician" who was "perhaps a shade better than Conkling or Blaine. . . ."³¹

Evidence of Sherman's attempts to "manufacture sentiment"

³⁰Hayes Diary, March 1, 1879, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 462-63 and Lionel Sheldon to Garfield, Dec. 15, 1879. Garfield Papers.

³¹The Nation, XXX (Feb. 19, 1880), 127 and Henry Lea to Carl Schurz, Dec. 8, 1879. Schurz Papers.

in his favor can be discovered in letters passing between him and his close associates during the months immediately preceding the convention. Late in 1879, in a letter responding to Bateman's plans for organizing Sherman clubs, he wrote as follows: "It would seem you have adopted a very good plan for Cincinnati, but in New York, Boston and Chicago it was thought best not to form clubs whose general tendency was known and that is being done by independent movements." And, he added significantly, Bateman could contact Surveyor Graham concerning New York. So much for custom house reform. Late in January, Sherman discussed the feasibility of one of his political appointments with Bateman. "I know Baker very well (he wrote) and have high respect for his abilities. I could make him a temporary Inspector of Customs at \$4. a day immediately if desired, which would enable him under instructions from here to visit the different ports in that State (Minnesota). If this is desirable please advise me at once." A few days earlier, after asking Bateman to take overall charge of matters for him, Sherman advised him that "Moulton has a good office opened, and Hon. Samuel Knox who has an appointment in the Treasury from the 1st of November, can look after all matters as to Ohio."³²

In the meantime Garfield had emerged the victor in the contest for the senatorial nomination, but not without some help from Sherman partisans. Moulton, who warmly favored

³²John Sherman to Warner Bateman, Dec. 31, 1879; Jan. 28 and 31, 1880. Bateman Papers.

Garfield, confided to the Secretary that

. . . the unanimous nomination of Garfield was caused by the break in the Hamilton county delegation, and two of those who broke (out of three) declined to vote for Matthews or Taft because they thought doing so would look like opposing you . . . for the reason that both Matthews and Taft were to some extent in favor of Grant. I should be glad to have Genl Garfield comprehend this.

He also assured his chief that the caucus would have nominated him "for the Presidency with greater enthusiasm than Garfield. . . ." One can be reasonably sure that Garfield got the message as the pressure for a letter of endorsement mounted. Sherman's strength at Columbus surprised even his most loyal friends, but the threat of Blaine and even Grant had by no means been erased. The way was now cleared for Garfield to make his public declaration in favor of Sherman.

Garfield was elated at the manner of his nomination (by acclamation), writing in his diary that he believed it to be "unparalleled in the history of the state. It leaves me untrammelled by any commitments, or complications with any member of the Legislature," he observed with pleasure. And The Nation maintained that "General Garfield is one of the Republican statesmen of the day, a real orator, and whose speeches one cannot easily sketch before he delivers them -- that is, he is not a party hack, and has personal opinions and utters them." Shortly after his victory in the Republican legislative caucus, Garfield returned to Ohio; Charles Henry (one of his

³³Henry Moulton to John Sherman, Jan. 7, 1880. Sherman Papers.

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managers in the contest) provides us with this pen portrait of his exuberant spirits:

Before I had time to shake his hand, he threw both arms around me, lifted me from the floor and swung me around with his old time boyish way. He seemed so happy to be six years in the Senate where he could measure swords in a dignified and courteous discussion instead of the rough-and-tumble, witty, sarcastic Cave of the Winds of the House.³⁴

Once the senatorship was within his grasp, Garfield began to receive still more evidence of the considerable support he might expect were he to enter the presidential sweepstakes. Some correspondents even precisely predicted the deadlock and ultimate outcome of the convention as early as January. As an old friend put it, he had "heard hundred(s) say it was only the prelude to the Presidency & many demand it at once."³⁵ Garfield's bid for the Senate had been especially well-managed, observers reported, and his support was unusually strong and enthusiastic.³⁶

As his name continued to be linked with presidency, Garfield was cautioned against taking a prominent part in the Sherman effort, but this proved unavoidable. Late in January, R. A. Horr, acting on Sherman's behalf (he represented Sherman's

³⁴Garfield Diary, Jan. 7, 1880. Garfield Papers. The Nation, XXX (Jan. 8, 1880), 20 and quoted in Frederick A. Henry, Captain Henry of Geauga (Cleveland, 1942), p. 291.

³⁵Thomas Nichol to Garfield, Jan. 9, 1880; Lionel Sheldon to Garfield, Jan. 10, 1880 and Harry Rhodes to Garfield, Jan. 12, 1880. Garfield Papers.

³⁶Henry Moulton to Garfield, Jan. 7, 1880; James Robinson to Garfield, Jan. 7, 1880 and Charles Foster to Garfield, Jan. 7, 1880. Garfield Papers.

home county in the Ohio Senate), wrote to Garfield as follows: "I very much desire a public expression from you on the Presidential question, an expression that will let your friends know whether you are a candidate yourself and if you are not whose nomination you prefer."³⁷ Sherman was clearly impatient and wished to bring him into his camp in a definitive manner. He obviously hoped to nip the incipient Garfield boomlet in the bud, while giving his own presidential stock a significant boost.

But presidential talk continued to crop up frequently in Garfield's correspondence. Sherman's outlook was not bright, he was told, but in case of a deadlock, he stood an excellent chance of receiving the prize.³⁸ A friend reporting on a meeting of a county veterans' organization in Garfield district, declared that "there was not a Sherman man" among the approximately 160 Republicans at the gathering. Blaine was the favorite, followed by Grant and then Garfield, for whom ninety per cent would vote were he the party's nominee.³⁹

Shortly before Garfield's response to Horr appeared, the Springfield Daily Republican published an evaluation of Sherman as a presidential hopeful which serves to point up some of

³⁷Lionel Sheldon to Garfield, Jan. 7, 1880 and R. A. Horr to Garfield, Jan. 20, 1880. Garfield Papers.

³⁸Joseph Irwin to Garfield, Jan. 27, 1880; Joseph Howells to Garfield, Jan. 28, 1880; _____ Moore to Garfield, Jan. 28, 1880 and James Norton to Garfield, Jan. 28, 1880. Garfield Papers.

³⁹Halsey Hall to Garfield, Jan. 29, 1880. Garfield Papers.

the reasons why the Secretary's candidacy received less than an enthusiastic reception from many another party member. It ran as follows:

On all subjects besides slavery he is a man of expediency, rather than principle, ingenious at compromise, indefatigable in squaring logic to practical necessities, and hence a doer and accomplisher, where nicer men would stick at nothing less than the ideal.

He has stood with Mr. Hayes for honesty and efficiency in public service, but the organic reform of the civil service will scarcely thrive at his hands, unless he broadens and rises to a higher position under the pressure of public opinion, to which he is sensitive. It is here that he leaves something to be desired, here that his candidacy is on trial. He is the candidate at this moment who best promises to hold the substantial strength of his party, to tempt the independent vote in the absence of anything better, and perhaps to make something better possible. He is at this moment at the very top of the column of availability, but he should be the minimum. Above him there is yet a chance to name some man nearer to the ideal standard. Below him the party cannot go and hope for success.⁴⁰

This is an essentially fair appraisal, but Sherman's reform record was not the paramount question to many a Republican -- especially those in the South. In a letter to Sherman, Warner Bateman shed some light on what the southern situation demanded when he recounted a conversation with a young Arkansas Republican.

I told him concerning the recognition of Ark. Republicans (Bateman wrote) that I had no authority to speak for you but could speak of you: that you were always in favor of a pure but at the same time partizan administration; that if elected President you would be a Republican President and Republicans would be appointed to office . . . and would no doubt give your recognition and support in your local

⁴⁰Springfield Daily Republican, Jan. 13, 1880, p. 4

appointments to Southern Republicans on precisely the same terms upon which Northern Republicans would be treated. . . .⁴¹

Obviously Sherman's southern policy would not be that of Hayes.

On January 26, Garfield responded to Horr's inquiry, stating that it had to be borne in mind that Ohio remained a closely contested state, for despite an impressive GOP victory in October, "there majority over all opponents . . . (had been) less than one per cent of (Ohio's) voting population." Therefore any disunity in the coming presidential contest might prove fatal. Upon whom then could Ohio's Republican's "most effectively unite?" Garfield was certain it was John Sherman, who had "earned this recognition. . . by twenty-five years of conspicuous public service." He recognized, however, that some of his party did not share all of the Secretary's views. He hoped that others in the race would not be attacked. Ohio Republicans "should fairly and generously recognize the merits of all," he said, "but I think they ought to present the name of Mr. Sherman to the National Convention and give him their united and cordial support."⁴²

Garfield's letter of endorsement met with a mixed reception among his supporters. Some were disappointed that he had underwritten Sherman's candidacy. At least one friend thought that he had "said just enough to antagonize the friends

⁴¹Warner Bateman to John Sherman, Jan. 29, 1880. Bateman Papers. Letterbook.

⁴²Garfield to R. A. Horr, Jan. 26, 1880, quoted in Smith, Life and Letters of Garfield, II, 949.

of Grant and Blaine and not enough to satisfy Sherman's friends" or the candidate himself. Garfield for his part, hoped his letter would "put to rest the loose talk in the papers" linking him "with the presidency just enough to embarrass" him. However, friends remained united in their belief that the presidential talk would not be squelched by his statement. He was assured that "good judges" considered him "the best dark horse. Keep straight on -- you are strong where the rest are weak. So was Lincoln in 1860," he was reminded. In the meantime, steps should be taken to insure against accusations of betrayal should Sherman fail.⁴³

Some correspondents doubted Sherman's ability to secure a 'solid' Ohio delegation, but insisted that Garfield was Ohio's real favorite and could easily capture the state in a contest with Sherman.⁴⁴ Such assessments were "not mere gush, not indiscreet outbursts of superserviceable friends, not flattery," he was assured, but were "the words of truth and soberness" that simply reflected the political facts of life. As William C. Howells put it, although his own county's newspapers had come out for Sherman, this was about all that could be said on the subject. "The Sherman men are simply Sherman men. The Blaine men are enthusiastic Blaine men." But he too,

⁴³Lionel Sheldon to Garfield, Jan. 30, 1880. Garfield Papers. Garfield to Charles Henry, Jan. 26, 1880. Henry Papers. Charles Henry to Garfield, Jan. 31, 1880. Garfield Papers.

⁴⁴William Slade to Garfield, Jan. 31, 1880; H. D. Smalley to Garfield, Feb. 15, 1880 and N. B. Sherwin to Garfield, Feb. 18, 1880. Garfield Papers.

had concluded that neither of three front runners would win the prize.⁴⁵

It was clear that Sherman faced serious problems in Ohio, but his supporters continued to paint a rosy picture of his prospects. W. D. Bickham reported to Hayes that he was "surprised at Blaine's strength in Ohio, although it crops out just where it did in 1879, but not quite so vigorously." He concluded, nevertheless, "that Ohio was Sherman's and the solidarity of the delegation was not in serious jeopardy."⁴⁶ Bate-man, too, predicted that Ohio would go solidly for the Secretary.

But if the Ohio outlook appeared promising in early January to some Sherman supporters (or was made to appear so in their reports), it was obvious that all was not well in other states. Eastern friends were concerned at what they considered was a lack of energy and positiveness in the Sherman campaign. And in nearby Chicago the campaign was in the doldrums. After receiving William Henry Smith's report on the Chicago situation, Moulton replied as follows:

I did not suppose from the information that reached me that his friends in Chicago were so largely in a minority as it appears to you to be the fact. I had supposed that when it became apparent that General Grant would be out of the way as it is now practically the case, that Mr. Sherman would have a large majority of the businessmen -- of your city -- I had no idea to the contrary until I received your letter.⁴⁷

⁴⁵W. B. Spear to Garfield, Feb. 21, 1880 and William C. Howells to Garfield, Feb. 21, 1880. Garfield Papers.

⁴⁶William Bickham to Hayes, Jan. 19, 1880. Hayes Papers.

⁴⁷Henry Moulton to William H. Smith, Jan. 29, 1880. Smith Papers.

As the contest for the nomination moved into late winter, Sherman suffered further setbacks. A Sherman intimate blamed the Ohio State Republican chairman, James Robinson, for precipitating an anti-Sherman -- pro-Blaine movement by certain disgruntled Republicans and of antagonizing, "instead of managing" A. L. Conger, the State Central Committee's chairman. A few days later, Robinson complained bitterly to Sherman about Conger, whom he labeled "a . . . small souled, malignant disturber." He was trickster, wrote the angry Robinson, who by March declared that "Conger completely deceived our friends with his professions of friendship for you. He declared himself in public for you, but in every instance officially acted with the opposition." Conger's true colors are betrayed in the following excerpt from a letter he wrote to Washburne. "Since I saw you recently at your House in Chicago I have had a lively time with the Sherman men of our state who tried to force by trickery the call for our coming state convention. But I held them level, & busted that set up job. We have held our own, & shall get some Grant delegates from this state." With such 'friends', Sherman's eventual failure is scarcely surprising.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, presidential talk centering on Garfield steadily grew. During a call on him, Governor Pound of Wisconsin predicted that the Chicago gathering would be forced to choose

⁴⁸James Robinson to Sherman, Feb. 6 and March 11, 1880. Sherman Papers. A. L. Conger to Elihu Washburne, Feb. 12, 1880. Elihu Washburne Papers. Library of Congress.

a dark horse and Garfield would probably be the man. "He approved of the attitude I had taken on the subject," Garfield's diary reads, "but wished me to hold myself free from any entanglements, so that should the contingency arise to which he referred I might be unfettered." Garfield indicated that he was well aware of "the course of comments in the public press and in numerous letters" he had received in recent weeks, but professed not to take the speculation seriously. In any case, he intended to "act in perfect good faith towards Mr. Sherman and do nothing that would in the slightest degree interfere with his chances for success. . . ."49

During the following weeks, he frequently conferred with Sherman on the political situation and acted as a loyal supporter. When stout opposition emerged in northern Ohio, he agreed to help the Secretary's floundering campaign and late in February, he journeyed to Cleveland to speak and work on Sherman's behalf and against Grant. But he was not optimistic about Sherman's chances, even in his own state, declaring that it was obvious the Reserve would indeed be "very difficult to carry" for Sherman.⁵⁰

Garfield refused to encourage directly those who persisted in their efforts on his behalf. Thus when Wharton Barker called on him and revealed what he had done and planned to do to make Garfield the nominee, Garfield records that he made

⁴⁹Garfield Diary, Feb. 11, 1880. Garfield Papers.

⁵⁰Garfield Diary, Feb. 17 and 27, 1880. Garfield Papers.

this reply:

I told him I would not be a candidate and did not wish my name discussed in that connection, and if anything happened to me in that connection, it would only be in case the Convention at Chicago, should find that they could not nominate either of the candidates and I should do nothing to procure such a result, that I was working in good faith for Sherman and should continue to do so.

According to Garfield, Sherman had already confided to him that were he unable to win the nomination, "he preferred me to any other man and that he would be entirely willing to have his strength transferred to me."⁵¹

Meanwhile, Blaine's real and potential strength in Ohio was growing and his people were stepping up the pace of their activity. As Charles Foster read it, the real strength of the Blaine movement centered upon opposition to Sherman and his friends. He seriously doubted that a solid Sherman delegation was possible save through an agreement with Blaine's friends that their man would be the second choice of the state's delegation. The Governor, who had very likely sounded out the Blaine men, thought they would agree to such a proposal and "that we ought to agree to this," he told Sherman.⁵²

By this time Sherman lieutenants were busy setting up campaign committees in Cincinnati, New York, Columbus and Chicago. Treasury officials like William Henry Smith were asked to render aid and cooperation in such undertakings. The Chicago

⁵¹Garfield Diary, Feb. 18, 1880. Garfield Papers.

⁵²Charles Foster to John Sherman, Feb. 14, 1880. Sherman Papers.

committee "need not interfere with you in any plan of your own, but you might make it an instrument to assist you," the candidate advised the Collector.⁵³ In New York, the appointment of the reformer Merritt as Collector did not prevent Sherman's use of Custom House personnel, including Merritt, to help along his cause. A series of letters running from August 1879 to May 1880, brought Sherman news of the political situation in that State from the Collector. It is also apparent that those under Merritt were working for their chief.

Late in February, Foster, who was already acting with the state Sherman committee, wrote to warn Garfield that Grant's nomination would give Ohio to a "fair" Democratic nominee and reduce its Republican delegation in Congress by "at least three members. . . ." Moreover, Foster concluded:

If Grant's nomination is to be defeated, Ohio must go into the convention a solid and positive force for somebody. Sherman is a candidate, and we should with a delegation of our ablest men, support him, and continue the support discreetly and sensibly. When the time comes (if it does come) to support another, then Ohio should wheel into line solidly for him. If no antagonisms are engendered between the friends of Sherman & Blaine there is no doubt but what we can give the solid vote of Ohio to Blaine.

I wish Blaine's friends could be made to understand the situation. In fact, I think many are beginning to feel the importance of a good understanding with Sherman's friends.

From the foregoing you will understand why it is, that I have advised against the Cleveland meeting in Sherman's interest at which you were to speak.⁵⁴

⁵³John Sherman to William H. Smith, Feb. 23, 1880. Smith Papers.

⁵⁴Charles Foster to Garfield, Feb. 23, 1880. Garfield Papers.

These candid observations from Foster's pen offer further explanation of why Sherman's drive for the nomination was predestined to failure and why Foster's and Garfield's role as Sherman's advocates were not only uncomfortable, but perilous.

While Grant and Blaine shifted into high gear and the prospects of a dark horse steadily improved, Sherman's drive continued to flounder, especially in his own state. The perceptive Governor Foster offered his explanation of the problem in Ohio. He noted that the anti-Sherman sentiment was "beginning to develop itself in the form of a boom for Blaine," although Grant enjoyed but little support. Keeping this in mind, he confided to Garfield, he was "quietly laboring for (a) united delegation for S. with B. as a united second choice." Foster found such a compromise agreeable to Blaine partisans, but Sherman's enemies, who were bent upon his defeat, seemed to favor Grant and were dissatisfied with the proposition. It also appeared that there were those who wished to rebuke Garfield and Foster by defeating Sherman, thereby striking a blow against a triumvirate some believed was attempting to rule the state's party for their own selfish purposes.⁵⁵

Meanwhile, Foster had already encountered a problem involving his loyalty to Sherman -- and warned Garfield that he, too, might find himself in a similar position. He confided to Garfield that he himself was being mentioned as a vice presidential candidate with Blaine, while Garfield was a

⁵⁵Charles Foster to Garfield, Feb. 13, 1880. Garfield Papers.

presidential dark horse. Blaine supporters had been using Foster's name since December, at which time Foster had written Sherman to assure him of his undivided loyalty to him. Nevertheless, he remained anxious that Sherman understand that he was still loyal and could not be "carried off by talk." As matters stood, he hoped that Blaine's growing strength might "arouse the friends of Sherman & give him a united delegation," for without such an effort he stood to lose several delegates.⁵⁶

Blaine's threat to Sherman in Ohio and elsewhere continued to trouble Sherman's friends. Bateman cautioned Halstead lest he say something that could be construed as pro-Blaine talk -- for Sherman's outlook seemed bright only if Ohio gave him her solid backing. But Bateman acknowledged to Foster that the vigor of the attack on Sherman by Blaine partisans in Ohio and the strength of their support was a matter of surprise to him. In his reply, Foster counseled "kind and careful treatment of Blaine men in Ohio," advice which was quite in line with Sherman's philosophy, too. Meanwhile, in Chicago, Smith was striving to antagonize neither Blaine nor Grant boomers. In the face of the growing strength of Sherman's opponents, he too, deemed a solid Ohio delegation imperative for success.⁵⁷

This was how the picture stood for Sherman as his campaign entered its final three months, months during which his

⁵⁶Charles Foster to Garfield, Dec. 27, 1879 and Charles Foster to Garfield, Feb. 13, 1880. Garfield Papers.

⁵⁷Warner Bateman to Charles Foster, March 6, 1880; Charles Foster to Warner Bateman, March 9, 1880 and John Sherman to Warner Bateman, March 9, 1880. Bateman Papers. Letterbook.

prospects for success worsened rather than improved. But at least one of Sherman's campaign managers had finally put his finger on a major deficiency in the Secretary's drive, a shortcoming that stemmed from his lackluster personality. "The element in Sherman's canvass that is perhaps lacking is boom. . .," Warner Bateman declared.⁵⁸

⁵⁸Warner Bateman to Charles Foster, March 6, 1880.
Bateman Papers. Letterbook.

CHAPTER 10

"OHIO TO THE FRONT . . . AGAIN"

As the pre-convention struggle entered its final stages, Sherman's prospects dimmed while those of his major opponents grew stronger. Even Garfield, a reluctant dark horse as well as a key figure in Sherman's drive, found his presidential prospects brightening. The convention itself opened with a bruising battle over procedural questions that ended in defeat for Grant's forces and meant a deadlocked convention rather than a quick decision for the General. After failing to unite on any of Grant's avowed rivals, including Sherman, the weary delegates finally turned to one of their own most conspicuous leaders to bear the party standard in 1880.

Early in March, a straw vote taken in Norwalk, Ohio, resulted in 30 tallies for Blaine, 30 for Grant, 30 for Garfield, and but 7 votes for Sherman. And this in a community representative of a district Sherman had once represented in the House. Meanwhile, Blaine was gaining strength in Ohio, mainly at Grant's expense, since he was the second choice of most Grant supporters. As for Sherman, "cold & selfish -- is the verdict," Garfield was advised by an ardent supporter, who had his ear to the ground in Ohio. Throughout March, Garfield

continued to receive presidential propositions and further evidence of Blaine's popularity among Ohioians and their considerable apprehension over the possibility of Grant's nomination. From Connecticut, David A. Wells reported that federal officeholders, "evidently instructed," were active in a so-called Sherman 'boom'. "But some of the leading men have no heart and I think I shall be able to persuade the most influential man to work for you & the moment Sherman's nomination becomes impracticable to carry the Conn Delegation over to you," Wells assured Garfield.¹

Although many Ohio Blaine men favored a solid delegation, Foster observed, "the best possible management" was necessary to achieve this result. The strategy was to convince Blaine and Sherman partisans that both men were needed to stop Grant and avoid the calamity that seemed certain to befall Ohio Republicans were he chosen to bid for a third term, as Foster feared would be the outcome at Chicago. In the meantime, the leaders of Sherman's organization were anxious to know Blaine's attitude toward Ohio -- hopeful that he would encourage unity on Sherman's behalf. It appears however, that federal employees working for Sherman's nomination (and they included employees of the Post Office, as well as the Treasury) were also involved in efforts to suppress the activities of federal workers who labored on Blaine's behalf.²

¹Charles Henry to Garfield, March 8, 1880; S. Jones, Jr. to Garfield, March 15, 1880 and David A. Wells to Garfield, March 19, 1880. Garfield Papers.

²Charles Foster to Garfield, March 22, 1880. Garfield Papers.

In Ohio itself, Sherman's friends had tried to set an early date for the Republican State Convention, but were frustrated, as has been noted, by Blaine men, who won a postponement until April 28. As W. D. Bickham related it to the Secretary, his cause had not simply been "mismanaged" it had "not been managed at all." Robinson and Dennison had failed to do their homework and to plot an effective course of action. Ultimately, Sherman suffered from the animosity and craving for revenge on the part of one faction or another and Conger had again worked covertly for the anti-Sherman and the pro-Blaine people. Nevertheless, Bickham hoped the results of this preliminary test of strength would hurt Sherman only outside his native state. But conditions in Ohio continued to look anything but promising. What is more, Sherman's two chief lieutenants in his pre-convention campaign returned to Ohio early in March from Washington, thereby leaving his national organization virtually leaderless and apparently without so much as a general campaign plan. One of these absent leaders, Henry Moulton, was distressed with the state of affairs on the home front and so informed his brother-in-law, John Sherman.

I must call your attention (he wrote) to the fact that the seeming want of shrewd management (especially in Ohio) is damaging your prospects . . . Governor Dennison is too old in politics to permit himself to be dictated to by younger men who are managing things. If the money can be raised, I propose to have a committee formed here that will undertake to see to your affairs and then

without any more foolishness go to work and do what is to be done.³

Sherman readily admitted that the postponment of the Ohio State Republican Convention had hurt his prospects, for "even if the delegation is made solid," he wrote, "by the delay we have lost other States. Doubting delegations will range for Blaine or Grant." And he would come to feel that Blaine and his supporter had done him as much harm in Ohio as they could. A few days later, he called the postponment a gross error, but not as harmful as at first assumed, as his informants' commu-
niqués caused his spirits to rise in spite of this set-back. But Bateman's bitterness over the affair remained strong. "The stupidity and blundering of our friends at Columbus has been extreme and almost uncomprehensible," he told Sherman. Soon thereafter, Sherman seemed once more to have been depressed and petulant. He remarked to a Cleveland friend that the delay had seriously weakened him, and he vowed that if he were not given a nearly solid Ohio delegation, he would not stay in the race. "I am not a beggar for this doubtful and dangerous honor of a nomination," Sherman declared. Earlier in this letter, he emphasized the significance of Garfield's Western Reserve to his prospects. "If I thought the intelligent and considerate judgment of the Republicans of the Reserve was against my candidacy, I would withdraw at once," he

³W. B. Shattuck to William Chandler, March 13, 1880. Chandler Papers. William Bickham to John Sherman, March 14, 1880; Thomas Nichol to John Sherman, March 15, 1880 and Henry Moulton to John Sherman, March 17, 1880. Sherman Papers.

asserted. Had he been opposing men more attractive and more likely to be chosen president than Grant and Blaine, the whole-sale defection of the Reserve might have materialized. As it was he won its general, if unenthusiastic support. And this situation served to place additional pressure on Garfield, as was clearly reflected in a Sherman manager's letter in which he urged the Secretary to "see Garfield and at least have him prevent instructions for Blaine (that is, at the approaching district convention)."4

Sherman was likewise troubled by accusations broadcast by the somewhat eccentric, but moderately influential, Edwin Cowles, that he was under the thumb of the Catholics. Sherman's unusually warm reply to this charge reveals some interesting intrafamily tension. "The truth is," wrote Sherman to a Cleveland, "that for three years Ellen Sherman (W. T. Sherman's wife), the only Catholic connected with me by birth or marriage has refused to write to me or ask me to do anything because she says I am so prejudiced against her and the Catholics that I will do nothing. . . ." He added that he did not believe that the total body of Catholics among Treasury appointees amounted to 2 per cent. But suspicions of a pro-Catholic bias on his part did not cease.5

⁴John Sherman to Warner Bateman, March 18, 22 and 24, 1880. Bateman Papers. Warner Bateman to John Sherman, March 22, 1880; John Sherman to W. C. McFarland, March 29, 1880 and W. C. McFarland to John Sherman, March 29, 1880. Sherman Papers. Letterbook.

⁵John Sherman to James Hoyt, March 22, 1880 and B. D. Fearing to John Sherman, April 11, 1880. Sherman Papers.

The Negro question was also troubling Sherman, as evidenced by a letter apparently written for general distribution by the secretary of the National Sherman Committee. Its recipients were assured that the candidate was a stout and steady friend of the Negro who had brought more Negroes into the Treasury Department than had any of his predecessors and would remedy the wrongs committed in the South under Hayes. The letter noted that these were wrongs for which the Secretary was not "wholly responsible."⁶

As the meeting time for Ohio's district Republican conventions drew near, Sherman's aides grew increasingly nervous over opposition to their man. Nevertheless, the candidate himself appeared optimistic and certain of a nearly unanimous delegation that would stay with him until the end. But his supporters were especially uneasy over their prospects in Garfield's and Foster's districts, districts which contained some of Ohio's most adamant anti-Sherman men. Garfield himself was not at all eager to become further involved in Sherman's drive and appeared to hope -- however unrealistically -- that he might be able to stay on the sidelines from this point on. Surely the knowledge that he was being touted as a dark horse and that some supporters were already actively working for his nomination, disposed Garfield to avoid further entanglement in Sherman's drive for the nomination. But his was a truly painful predicament, and one from which there was

⁶B. D. Fearing to "Dear Sir", March 19, 1880. Bateman Papers.

really no escape. He could not refuse to gratify Sherman in view of the latter's role in Garfield's senatorial bid; moreover, he was constrained by political conventions and informal rules of seniority that called him to a supporting role in this affair. If he refused to go to Chicago in any capacity whatsoever, he might well stand convicted of treachery and ingratitude in the eyes of many Republicans, both in and out of Ohio. If he further committed himself to Sherman's cause, he laid himself open to similar charges should Sherman fail while either he or his friend Elaine emerged with the prize. And should the anti-Grant forces in the convention turn to him as their last best hope of preventing a disaster for the party (the nomination of Grant), he was in no position to reject the offer absolutely. Faced with this dilemma, it is not surprising that Garfield vacillated during the months preceding the convention, thereby arousing serious doubts among Sherman's lieutenants as to his loyalty and dependability. And it comes as no surprise that the events at Chicago should lead some men in Sherman's camp to conclude that Garfield had played a double game throughout the struggle for the party's top honor.

By early April, Garfield's position had become still more uncomfortable, for the question of whether he would go to the convention as a delegate-at-large or as a district delegate would soon demand an answer. If he declined a district delegateship, he surely would arouse suspicion and hard-feelings. He would also seemingly belie his contention that he was not a candidate for the nomination and stood firmly committed to

Sherman. He likewise understood, from the man who would head the Ohio delegation, that friends of Sherman believed it to be most significant to the candidate that he be a part of it. He concurred in this view, Dennison continued, and he hoped Garfield would agree to lead the delegation and so advise his district supporters. But on the heels of this message came another from Garfield's district, advising him that by and large his constituents were cool toward the Secretary's nomination. Garfield complained to a confidant that he was caught "between two fires." On the one hand, Sherman's lieutenant insisted he go to Chicago as a district delegate, but they had not made their wishes known until after he had told aspirants for the delegateship from the nineteenth district that their path would not be blocked by him. Under the circumstances, he inclined toward neither seeking nor, if it was offered, declining a district delegateship. For numerous reasons, Garfield's letter continued, "I would be embarrassed to go to Chicago, while on the other hand, I do not wish to shirk the responsibility, nor appear to be negligent of Sherman's interests." He then made his view of Sherman's candidacy crystal clear and shed some light on the reasons behind his tacit approval of efforts on his behalf. "While I do not think," he said, "he has much of a chance, if any, of the nomination, I still think, if we want to prevent Grant's nomination, we ought to give Ohio to

Sherman."⁷

By April, Sherman leaders like Warner Bateman began to voice serious doubts as to the solidarity of the state's delegation for the favorite son. Their worries centered on Foster's and Garfield's areas, where dislike of Sherman and/or loyalty to Blaine had found vigorous expression in the determined opposition of men like John C. Beatty and John T. Mack. Moreover, in a conversation with Bateman in Washington, Garfield had not spoken "with that degree of confidence that I would like to hear," Bateman reported. What is more, he gave Bateman to understand that he would not be or could not be a delegate from his district. A visibly disturbed Bateman quickly dispatched a message to former governor Dennison, describing his conversations with Garfield and urging Dennison and Foster to use "such influences as you think necessary with Garfield to get him to run." As noted above, Dennison was quick to act on this appeal. But this was precisely the course of action Garfield wished to avoid; indeed, he hoped his district's delegates might be chosen without reference to Sherman. A few days later, Bateman met with a group of congressmen at his Washington rooms. Garfield had returned to Ohio for a brief visit, but Bateman was told that he understood Sherman's wish that he attend the State Republican Convention as a delegate

⁷William Dennison to Garfield, April 9, 1880; George Clement to Garfield, April 10, 1880 and Garfield to Harmon Austin, April 16, 1880. Garfield Papers. Letterbook. Warner Bateman to William Dennison, April 11, 1880. Bateman Papers. Letterbook.

from the nineteenth district. If Garfield had deluded himself into believing he might avoid further involvement in Sherman's drive, his illusion now appeared to be shattered. For when Batemen informed Dennison that Garfield really had to be a part of the delegation, he was very likely reflecting his chief's point of view. Governor Foster too, must be pressed into service, Bateman continued, for the Secretary now relied on Ohio for his standing at Chicago.⁸

Meanwhile, in a "Strictly Confidential" letter, Foster advised Garfield that Dennison had overstated Foster's approval of Garfield's vying for a delegateship. He too, had been pressed to take such a step, was always ready to assist the Secretary and would, if he discovered it was advisable to do so, be a candidate for delegate. He hoped that by shrewdly managing affairs he could secure Sherman delegates from his district, although it favored Blaine, he pointed out, as did "every district in Ohio, if the two men are placed upon equal conditions." For that matter, Foster asserted, "if your support & mine were withdrawn from Sherman there would be nothing left of his candidacy and his friends know it, and it just a little unkind to hint even that we are not doing our whole duty to his canvass." After insisting that he had "never worked harder, or more skillfully for any cause than" Sherman's and severely criticizing the management of Sherman's campaign, Foster touched upon another source of embarrassment for Garfield and himself. He wrote to

⁸Warner Bateman to William Dennison, April 6 and 11, 1880. Bateman Papers. Letterbook.

Garfield as follows:

You are embarrassed by the mention of your name (which by the way would be a popular man in Ohio) for the first place on the ticket, and I have been sorely perplexed by the mention of my name for the second place.

I take it that you feel as I do, that any such use of your name under existing circumstances would be a grave error, and I feel the same in relation to myself. In fact if I was offered the second place and felt at liberty to do as I pleased, I would decline it. If Sherman's fool friends will permit it, he will get the delegation solid, not as hearty supporters, but partly because he is an Ohio man, and partly because many Blaine men see that B's chances are bettered by it.⁹

Garfield's hesitancy surely reflected in large part the open secret that he was a dark horse, as well as his knowledge of a continuing effort to bring off his nomination. Wharton Barker, the prime mover in the Industrial League, had not only been corresponding with Garfield on tariff issues and a commercial union with Canada, but on the presidential question, too. He had numerous communications from influential New Englanders and Westerners, Barker claimed late in February, who favored Garfield's being a candidate and wondered when the Philadelphians would make their move. "We believe that at present it is best for us to keep quiet," Barker continued, "but we shall next week send the enclosed circular to the chairman of Republican County Committee(s) all over the country and we hope good will come of it." He also reported that there were a large number of prominent Republicans in Philadelphia

⁹Charles Foster to Garfield, April 17, 1880. Garfield Papers.

who were strongly against the choice of either Grant, Blaine or Sherman. On the other hand, there was broad support for Garfield, as the one who had to emerge as a leading candidate at the convention and thus was being carefully watched. Barker claimed that opposition based upon the suspicion that Garfield was a free trader had been laid to rest, thanks to Garfield's recent letter to Barker on the subject. "In a word," Barker observed, "that letter of yours stating how you became a member of the Cobden Club in my hands and in those of such men as I saw fit to place it has worked the change." By early April, Barker was convinced that Grant's stock had declined while Garfield's was on the rise. A month later, he assured Garfield that now everyone had to admit that the Grant boom had collapsed. Moreover, he asserted that he was surprised to find the General's supporters were altogether ready to take up Garfield in the event Grant was removed from the race. Then in mid-May, he reported that although Don Cameron intended to remain loyal to Grant, even he had begun to lose faith in the possibility of bringing off his nomination.¹⁰

Blaine's popularity and activity on his behalf in Ohio continued to plague Sherman and his friends. Blaine probably anticipated that his only chance of defeating Grant lay in effecting a shift of Sherman delegates to his side after the initial balloting had taken place. And by continuing to press Sherman's people in Ohio, Blaine was able to secure an under-

¹⁰Wharton Barker to Garfield, Feb. 28; March 2; April 6; May 7 and 18, 1880. Garfield Papers.

standing that in return for abstaining from making an overt attempt to upset Sherman's bid for a solid delegation, he would become the state's second choice. Furthermore, he needed Sherman's help if Grant's boom was to be weakened and eventually broken down. Blaine himself made all this clear to Sherman's friends in Washington and to Sherman as well, through the Washington Blaine Club chairman. For the time being, Sherman's candidacy was essential to Blaine's hopes, as it was predicted that without Sherman in the field, Grant could defeat Blaine. The importance of some understanding with Blaine, if not with all of his Ohio friends, was underlined by Foster in these words:

The instincts of masses of our people are largely for Blaine (he told Sherman), this feeling coupled with personal hostility to you, to the Administration, and favoritism for Grant, is combined under the Blaine banner, and without doubt this combination can capture several of the districts, if in the end the sensible men among them think it wise to do so.¹¹

Among the Blaine people were those bent upon defeating Sherman at any cost, others who desired to pay Sherman the compliment of a favorite son vote, and those who wanted to stay with Sherman as long as he had a chance for success, but with the clear intention of going over to Blaine should Sherman withdraw. Given this state of affairs, the reluctance of both Garfield and Foster to make a fight for Sherman against the Blaine partisans in their district conventions is more easily

¹¹Warner Bateman to G. H. Foster, April 13, 1880. Bateman Papers. Letterbook. Charles Foster to John Sherman, April 16, 1880. Sherman Papers.

appreciated. Apparently both men hoped to maintain party harmony even at the expense of sending a few anti-Sherman delegates to Chicago where the Sherman delegates quickly would come to realize what some Ohioians already suspected -- that Sherman's cause was hopeless, save as a means of stopping Grant. But the Secretary continued to be optimistic, writing confidentially to W. H. Smith that he expected a "substantially solid delegation" who would support him "in good faith to the end." He had concluded, however, that Blaine supporters had done all they could to hurt him in Ohio, Blaine's hands-off policy notwithstanding. Nonetheless, he would not abandon his initial intention of maintaining amicable relations with the major contenders. Warner Bateman reflected the reasoning behind this tactic when he wrote that Sherman's strength would be insufficient to win an early victory at Chicago. Victory could be his only with the help of Grant and Blaine men. Blaine meanwhile, was complaining thus to Halstead:

Had Sherman cleared the track and let me bore down on Grant in Ohio, I would have been able to run right over him in Illinois. But you will see that the 'favorite son' cry makes the step a very hard one for any other candidate in Grant's home. I suggest these views because Schurz and others have too often urged upon me that Sherman's defeat in Ohio would nominate Grant. Precisely the reverse in the case, if Grant shall win, your acute eye will discover that Sherman's demand that his own State should support him (paved the way for) Grant's success in Illinois.¹²

¹²John Sherman to William H. Smith, April 19, 1880. Smith Papers. Warner Bateman to Emery Foster, April 20, 1880. Bateman Papers. Letterbook. James G. Blaine to Murat Halstead, April 23, 1880. Halstead Papers.

Blaine's line of reasoning may have seemed logical to him, but in retrospect it appears more likely that Sherman's withdrawal in Ohio would have "cleared the track" for none other than U. S. Grant, not the Senator from Maine. Following a conversation in mid-April with Blaine, Garfield recorded that the Senator was bitter toward Sherman, claiming (and accurately, too) that the Sherman letter supporting Hayes in 1876 had been written with the intention of hurting Blaine and that even now Sherman preferred Grant to him. "I like Blaine," Garfield mused, "-- always have -- & yet there is an element in him which I distrust."¹³ There were undoubtedly many others who 'liked' him, but harbored similar reservations; and there were many who would have preferred Grant to Blaine in the White House.

Although Foster and Garfield shied away from the role of district delegates, their value ruled out anything less than active leadership for them at Chicago, Sherman's brother-in-law advised him. It was now suggested that they go as delegates-at-large, with the hope that they could hold any rebels in line with the majority of the delegation. "Their presence in the delegation will have such a commanding influence over the doubtful Districts, that there would be very little disposition to act independently of the majority of the delegates," Moulton reasoned. But Garfield was singled out to carry a still heavier burden than he was inclined to assume,

¹³Garfield Diary, April 14, 1880. Garfield Papers.

for he was soon approached by Bateman to place Sherman's name in nomination.¹⁴

The Secretary had agreed that it would be "politic" to include both Foster and Garfield among the quartet of delegates at-large. He revealed, however, some suspicion of their loyalty by his remark that although both their districts appeared to oppose him, and seemed nearly alone in their attitude, he did not question the genuineness of their support. What is more, both men wished to go to Chicago, Sherman assured Bateman, after receiving a letter from Foster and conferring personally with Garfield. Indeed, Garfield did write to his trusted political aide, Harmon Austin, asking him to keep his name out of the district convention, as he was to go to Chicago as a delegate-at-large. The nineteenth district's convention ultimately chose two stout Blaine men to go to Chicago as delegates, but gave them no instructions. "It was simply a Blaine craze," Garfield was told by a member of that convention, "and when I found how over-whelming the feeling was, I was glad your name was not presented by authority. . ."¹⁵

Garfield was important, perhaps essential, to Sherman's hopes, but after he had given Sherman his best in a nominating speech, could he be depended upon to stand up under the terrific

¹⁴Henry Moulton to John Sherman, April 23, 1880. Sherman Papers. Thomas Nichol to Warner Bateman, April 25, 1880. Bateman Papers.

¹⁵John Sherman to Warner Bateman, April 25, 1880. Bateman Papers. Freeman Thorp to John Sherman, April 29, 1880. Sherman Papers. Julius Converse to Garfield, April 24, 1880. Garfield Papers.

pressure of a national political convention in which he was the outstanding dark horse? Sherman's reflections on this question reveal that he harbored some doubts. He commented thus:

Garfield's great abilities and influence in the convention make it important that he should go, and the only doubt expressed of him by anyone is that as he has failed to influence his District it is not politic to give him so advanced a position among my friends. It is a defect in his character that often at critical moments he wavers when firmness is indispensable.

With the Ohio dissidents in mind, Sherman also dispatched a letter to Governor Foster, strongly urging him to carry his district in order to defeat the extremely outspoken Mack, whose selection "would be mortifying" to Sherman, after what Sherman described as Mack's abuse of him and his slandering of his dead brother, Charles Sherman. Sherman believed (or chose to believe) that his stock was rising the country over and a recent visit to New York City and Philadelphia had convinced him that Grant would be out of the picture before the convention opened -- leaving Blaine and him to fight it out.¹⁶ Sherman's incredibly fond hope may also have been based upon the anticipation of victory in the struggle with Grant for southern delegates -- a contest in which his Treasury officials were obviously active participants. Thus it was reported that every one of the Deputy Collectors of Internal Revenue in Georgia were busy at their state convention on the Secretary's behalf,

¹⁶John Sherman to Warner Bateman, April 25, 1880. Bateman Papers. John Sherman to Charles Foster, April 26, 1880 and John Sherman to W. P. Canaday, April 26, 1880. Sherman Papers. Letterbook.

although many really favored Grant.¹⁷

At this time (late April), leading independent Republicans were pushing ahead with their effort to stop Grant and nominate Garfield. On the evening of April 24, Barker made a long call on Garfield, during which he reported on the presidential question at length. Garfield recorded the substance of Barker's remarks in his diary in these words:

The independent Republicans of Pa. headed by Wanye McVeagh & Barker, have secured McManes & his associates who have pledged a majority of the Pa. delegation to oppose Grant at Chicago. This will make his nomination impossible, and at first help Blaine. Then Mass. & nearly all N.E. except Maine, will throw its weight with N.Y. against Blaine -- and break him. Pierrepont says, after Grant, Conkling will favor Garfield. Barker today visited the President who says Sherman is in the field to prevent the nomination of Grant or Blaine -- that Garfield can carry Ohio solid as B. cannot, and in case the other two are broken, Sherman will give way for G.

Barker was confident his predictions would prove accurate and called the following evening to so insist, although Garfield thought it unlikely, claiming he would be "greatly distressed" were he to feel differently.¹⁸ President Hayes was apparently undisturbed by Barker's scheme, and there is no evidence that he warned his Secretary of the Treasury of what was afoot.

Back in Ohio, Sherman received a setback when Mack was elected from Foster's district as a delegate to the national

¹⁷ _____ Tichenor to William H. Smith, April 28, 1880. Smith Papers. James Atkins to Garfield, May 1, 1880. Garfield Papers.

¹⁸ Garfield Diary, April 24 and 25, 1880. Garfield Papers.

convention. Moulton claimed that had Foster come out squarely and made a fight of it, he could have defeated Mack, but he backed away from the scrap for fear of embarrassing friends. The incident left Moulton and others in the Sherman camp suspicious of Foster. Then, after the nineteenth district convention elected its delegates, it became obvious that there would be other dissidents in the delegation. But for some reason, perhaps political obtuseness arising from being forced to operate outside familiar political environs, Sherman persisted in believing that at the very most there might be a couple of Blaine men in Ohio's delegation. Yet they too, he thought, would vote for him in the early balloting.¹⁹

Sherman clung to this hope in the face of evidence to the contrary. John Beatty, a warm friend of Garfield, but stubbornly anti-Sherman and pro-Blaine, had bested the strongest Sherman candidate handily after making his position crystal clear. Garfield's letter endorsing Sherman had left his stoutest supporters thereabouts most unhappy, Beatty told him. Moreover, Beatty claimed that Sherman's delegate strength in the district's convention would have been virtually nil without this letter. He insisted that Garfield owed Sherman nothing. "I well remember," he wrote, "when Cam Lyman travelled all over this district slandering you that he retained his place in the government service through the aid of John Sherman who doubtless set him on your track." When Garfield

¹⁹Henry Moulton to John Sherman, April 29, 1880. Sherman Papers. John Sherman to William H. Smith, April 26, 1880. Smith Papers.

passed Beatty's letter along to the Secretary, the latter denied even knowing such a man as Lyman and dismissed the accusations as "pure fiction." For his part, Beatty reminded Garfield that without exception, those candidates who were ready to pay Sherman the compliment of a favorite son vote had been beaten at the district convention and that Garfield himself, although chosen a delegate-at-large at the state convention, had not received majority support from his own district.²⁰

Other friends, aware of the dangers inherent in Garfield's position, insisted that neither he nor Foster should go to Chicago, but then readily admitted that it was impossible for them to do otherwise. Garfield himself preferred not to go to Chicago, but felt duty bound to attend if chosen. Two of his most intimate friends and advisors disagreed at this point. Austin contended it would be a great mistake for him to attend, while Hinsdale argued that unless Garfield's letter supporting Sherman was merely part of a "'job'," unless he was insincere and his public actions did not reflect his private feelings, he must attend and do his best for the candidate. Garfield had once again placed and/or allowed himself to be placed in a position from which he desperately wished to escape -- but escape was impossible. Apparently Garfield was suspect in the eyes of many pro-Sherman members of the state convention.

²⁰John Beatty to Garfield, May 3, 1880 and John Sherman to Garfield, May 15, 1880. Garfield Papers.

Bateman confided to Tom Nichol that "it would have been quite easy to have fanned a flame of suspicion against Garfield, but it was promptly suppressed by Moulton, Dennison and myself."²¹

On-the-spot reports of the state convention received by Garfield varied. Foster spoke of a "strong majority for Sherman" while Grant was "nowhere." But he also reported great enthusiasm for Blaine who was generally the second choice of all gathered at Columbus. On the other hand, the staunchly anti-Sherman Lionel Sheldon claimed that not only did nearly one-third of the convention oppose Sherman, but that they in turn mirrored the feeling of at least two-thirds of Ohio's Republicans. Sheldon very genuinely regretted that Garfield and Foster persisted "in parading before the people the pressure of . . . (their) high positions in behalf of a man the voters did not want." It is noteworthy that Hayes's favorite young congressman, William McKinley, who acted as temporary chairman of the convention, delivered a rousing keynote address ("Crimes Against the Ballot") in which he betrayed more than a little partiality for Blaine. His most recent biographer notes that after encouraging his state to stand behind Sherman, McKinley "could not forbear mentioning duties to Grant and above all to his idol, the 'peerless debater, the

²¹Worthy Streater to Garfield, May 3, 1880. Garfield Papers. Burke Hinsdale to Garfield, April 23, 1880, in Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Letters, pp. 450-51. Warner Bateman to Thomas Nichol, April 30, 1880. Bateman Papers.

fearless statesman, James G. Blaine."²²

Like Garfield, Foster acknowledged that he, too, had hoped until the very eve of the convention that he might be spared, but he informed Garfield that "Mr. Sherman himself selected the names and of course his friends could not do otherwise than yield." He had wanted no part of the task of promoting Sherman's candidacy, but now the two of them were saddled with far heavier responsibilities than those of the average delegate-at-large. Moreover, their roles would be "delicate in view of the fact that . . . (they were) expected to promote Mr. Sherman's candidacy. More of this when we meet," he concluded cryptically. Foster was now nearly certain that Sherman could not secure a solid delegation and believed he might lose as many as nine votes to Blaine. Foster's message troubled Garfield, for he thought it implied they were to shoulder the entire burden of Sherman's drive; Foster hastened to correct this misunderstanding.²³

A few days later, in a note to Garfield, Sherman offered some counsel as to how Ohio's divided delegation should be handled. It was inadvisable to acknowledge any Blaine-Sherman split within the Ohio delegation, he continued. Preferably the effort to win over the dissidents should continue, for he

²²Charles Foster to Garfield (telegram), April 28, 1880 and Lionel Sheldon to Garfield, April 29, 1880. Garfield Papers. H. Wayne Morgan, "The Congressional Career of William McKinley" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1959), p. 82.

²³Charles Foster to Garfield, May 4, 1880 and Charles Foster to Garfield, May 10, 1880. Garfield Papers.

chose to believe reports that the determination of certain of these men, including one implacable foe, was growing weaker. And even Foster was persuaded that Sherman's outlook was brightening as they approached the middle of May. But then, too, so were Garfield's presidential prospects, friends suggested when they learned he was to place Sherman's name in nomination. "Do your level best," advised Harry Rhodes, "your own golden hour may have struck," for whether Sherman won or lost, Garfield would be in a very advantageous position. Nichol wrote that while Milwaukee Republicans would vote for Sherman most would prefer Garfield were he a candidate and would solidly support him if he entered the competition.²⁴

As Sherman's campaign entered its final week, he began to estimate his vote on the first or second ballots "at about 190 with a fair chance of success." Bateman estimated 115 to 175 votes initially, but admitted Sherman's strength was uncertain -- he would receive less than one hundred votes throughout the early balloting. Although Sherman still hoped for a solid or very nearly solid vote from Ohio, it was clear that Blaine would have nine Buckeye votes from the start. Richard Smith, who had been attacking Blaine vehemently in his Cincinnati Gazette for months because he believed the nomination of either Blaine or Grant would be disastrous for the nation and the party, reflected a greater sense of reality than many

²⁴John Sherman to Garfield, May 8, 1880; Charles Foster to Garfield, May 10, 1880; Harry Rhodes to Garfield, May 14, 1880 and Thomas Nichol to Garfield, May 16, 1880. Garfield Papers.

another Sherman man when he wondered "where the votes are to come from to nominate Sherman." On the other hand, Hayes professed to see danger in Sherman becoming too strong "and assuming necessarily the responsibilities of a furious contest with Grant and Blaine."²⁵

The embarrassing division in the Ohio delegation worried Garfield, but taking his cue from Sherman, he advised acting as if they were united until the rebels, if they could not be won over, broke with the majority. He had attempted by letter, to reason with several of the implacables, but to no avail, even in the case of his admirer Beatty. Bateman offered the suggestion that the most outspoken anti-Sherman man, Mack, be isolated, thus creating such antagonism between him and the majority of the delegation as would undermine his influence with them. But this strategy, perhaps typical of Sherman's mode of operation in senatorial contests, was not followed. In the face of the hopelessly divided Ohio delegation, Sherman could take heart from William Henry Smith's report of a conversation he had recently had with John Logan. Logan had assured him that no matter what happened to Grant, neither Blaine nor Washburne would succeed. Grant's forces would turn either to Edmunds or Sherman. He directed Smith to "tell Secretary Sherman that he stands the best chance now, and that if he will manage his affairs carefully and in the right

²⁵John Sherman to Parker Chandler, May 1, 1880. Sherman Papers. Warner Bateman to William H. Smith, May 9, 1880 and Richard Smith to William H. Smith, May 7, 1880. Smith Papers.

direction he can get that nomination.'"²⁶

Help for Sherman in Ohio, with a conspicuous string attached, now arrived from the Blaine camp. Eugene Hale informed Sherman that Blaine had expressed his wish that Ohio vote unanimously for Sherman as long as he was a contender. Blaine, well aware of the unhealable rift within the Ohio delegation could afford to be generous without risk and obviously hoped that Sherman would reciprocate once his case appeared hopeless.

I told Hale frankly that I was in no position to make alliances, (Sherman informed Bateman) and that I could not promise Blaine the vote of the Ohio delegation, that I was opposed to the unit rule (did he have any other choice?) and would do all I could to leave to each delegate upon his responsibility to his constituents, the right to vote according to his conscience, and that I would not seek to control the votes of delegates from Ohio if I ceased to be a candidate.

After this bit of characteristic self-deception, Sherman concluded that Blaine's forces realized the significance of the Shermanites help in opposing the unit rule. Consequently, Blaine would presumably make an honest effort to counter a split among the Ohio delegates. Sherman enclosed, among other messages, a note from Whitelaw Reid informing him that Blaine had written Ohio friends to advise them strongly that in spite of their desires, it was imperative that they vote for Sherman on the first ballot. The implication here is apparent and it aroused suspicion in Sherman's camp. Did this mean that Blaine hoped that the futility of the Secretary's bid would become so

²⁶Garfield to John Sherman, May 10, 1880. Garfield Papers. Letterbook. Warner Bateman to Charles Foster, May 18, 1880. Bateman Papers. Letterbook. William H. Smith to John Sherman, May 10, 1880. Sherman Papers.

obvious after the first ballot as to bring about his withdrawal in Blaine's favor? A few days later, during a conversation with Garfield, Blaine professed that he had not entered the contest with the expectation of victory, indeed he had made the bid only because he was convinced he represented the best hope of stopping Grant and perhaps there was truth to this statement. Furthermore, Garfield reported, Blaine believed Grant's nomination altogether likely. It was at about this time that Garfield reportedly told Bateman that "ruinous rumors were finding their way into currency among better informed persons as to Blaine that would render success with him as a candidate almost impossible."²⁷

It is to be expected that a candidate's supporters, especially his managers, should exude optimism, but two letters from Warner Bateman late in May, give some sense of the weakness of at least one of Sherman's chief lieutenants. In a letter to fellow delegate Dennison, he pronounced Blaine "a dead duck." And, he continued, it was perfectly obvious to him that the real contestants were to be Sherman and Grant, who was the major threat to Sherman's hopes. Bateman's estimate of the size of Grant's force was accurate enough, but he erred terribly when he declared himself convinced that the General's strength was "built on too many stilts to be very

²⁷John Sherman to Warner Bateman, May 20, 1880 and Whitelaw Reid to John Sherman, May 20, 1880. Bateman Papers. Garfield Diary, May 23, 1880. Garfield Papers. Warner Bateman to William Dennison, May 5, 1880. Bateman Papers. Letterbook.

well secured."²⁸ A public campaign statement to this effect might have been justified, but when made to another delegate -- a seasoned veteran in the game of politics -- it reveals a serious deficiency in terms of political astuteness and judgment.

The optimism of the Sherman camp should have been a good deal dampened by their candidate's report late in May, that "all plans to raise any considerable sums to aid . . . (him) in this contest seem to have failed. . . ." A Secretary of the Treasury with Sherman's genuinely significant achievement behind him might justifiably have expected a more generous reception from men of means, but apparently they were either doubtful as to his chances at Chicago or simply not attracted to him as a candidate. Sherman was unaware that a rising young member of the Philadelphia's business elite, Wharton Barker, was writing to Schurz (who for months had been fully apprised of the doings of Barker and his associates) that he was now persuaded that they had to take up Garfield and do all they could on his behalf. Barker concluded by asking Schurz whether there was any possibility that the Secretary might withdraw in favor of Garfield.²⁹ Schurz obviously told his fellow cabinet member nothing of what Barker had in mind --

²⁸Warner Bateman to J. A. Gary, May 22, 1880 and Warner Bateman to William Dennison, May 22, 1880. Bateman Papers. Letterbook.

²⁹John Sherman to Henry Moulton, May 21, 1880. Sherman Papers. Letterbook. Wharton Barker to Carl Schurz, May 24, 1880. Schurz Papers.

for that matter, neither did Hayes, who also knew what was being planned.

Meanwhile Sherman continued to be hopeful; in fact it was not until the very eve of the convention that the Secretary's almost pathetic and utterly unfounded faith in the ultimate loyalty of Ohio's delegation began to crack. He was upset, he confessed to Dennison, by a press report that morning declaring that nine or ten Buckeye delegates were now determined to support Blaine. This was not true, he trusted. Evidently, Sherman's hopes for solid Ohio support were based in part on earlier promises from the Blaine camp and to Sherman's mind, defection would indicate deception. Sherman advised that if these nine or ten delegates voted for Blaine, all contact or cooperation with the Senator and his supporters should be ended. "If delegates will not respect a preference expressed by such a Convention as that of Ohio," Sherman continued, "they should not only be remembered in the future but should be cut off from all communications for the present." This hardly squares with his earlier pronouncement that he "would do all . . . (he) could to leave to each delegate upon his responsibility to his constituents, the right to vote according to his conscience. . . ."30

Federal employees continued to work on Sherman's behalf, although it appears that in some cases, they joined forces with Grant men against Blaine's supporters. Moreover, Hayes

³⁰John Sherman to William Dennison, May 31, 1880 and John Sherman to Warner Bateman, May 20, 1880. Bateman Papers.

was pursuing a hands-off policy as regards the enforcement of his civil service order. When Sherman passed on to him Bateman's pleas that Hayes order Baltimore custom house employees seeking to manage the Maryland State Convention back to their duties, Hayes answered Sherman thusly: "What do you advise? It seems to me that my interference now would be too late for good and might do great harm. Besides it is a departure from the course heretofore taken." Sherman was apparently having his troubles with fellow Cabinet members too, as regards the enforcement of "Order No. 1." He complained to Key in the following terms:

Is this not pressing the Order No. 1 partially. Mr. Belcher is a friendly delegate to the Chicago Convention unanimously elected by the Georgia Convention as a Delegate at large. I can name scores of Post Masters who have actively & violently opposed me at primaries & Conventions. . . I hope the order will not be urged against a Postal Clerk to prevent him from attending the Convention.

A little later, Sherman asked Hayes to appoint an Alabama Sherman supporter to a District Attorneyship. All except one federal officeholder in Alabama had worked against him, Sherman claimed, and this appointment was imperative.³¹ It seems certain that there were many federal employees laboring for the Secretary in both the North and the South and in the latter section, they helped deny support to Grant that might well have given his victory at Chicago.

³¹Warner Bateman to John Sherman, May 6, 1880; Hayes to John Sherman, May 6, 1880 and John Sherman to David Key, May 19, 1880. Sherman Papers. Letterbook. John Sherman to Hayes, May 27, 1880. Smith Papers.

During his final conference with Sherman on May 25, Garfield asked the candidate to "suggest frankly what he considered the strong points of his public life" in order that he might recommend him to the delegates in the best possible light. This he would leave up to his nominator, Sherman replied, although he "suggested that the chief characteristic of his life from boyhood up, had been courageous persistence in any course adopted," Garfield's diary records. Sherman's assessment provides an interesting example of the contrast between one's self-image and the image others had of him. It may also serve to help us understand how and why he could bid, with every hope of success, for his party's presidential nomination in three successive national conventions despite the great odds against his success. Certainly the man who was to place his name in nomination and who might well determine his success or failure was neither optimistic nor enthusiastic as he left for Chicago. On May 28, Garfield noted that he undertook his duties "with much reluctance," confessing that he disliked "the antagonisms and controversies which . . . (were) likely to blaze out in convention" -- a gathering which he as a dark horse and already suspect in the Sherman camp, desperately wished to avoid.³²

A bruising struggle over the unit rule began as soon as the GOP gathered at Chicago for their conclave. The Grant forces believed that a revival of the unit rule and the appointment of a dependable tool as temporary chairman were

³²Garfield Diary, May 25 and 28, 1880. Garfield Papers.

essential to their cause. The fate of the rule, the restoration of which might well have given Grant the nomination, was tied to the chairmanship. With the right man in the chair the old rule might be restored, a bitter floor fight such as had erupted over the same issue in 1876 avoided and the Grant men placed in command of the convention. The plan was essentially sound and workable, but Sherman's and Blaine's supporters learned of it in time to forestall the Grant men's scheme. At his very first meeting with his fellow-at-large delegates, Garfield reported that he exhorted his colleagues to oppose the unit rule and support the district rule **boldly and aggressively**. With this in mind, he proposed they join with those who believed such matters overshadowed in significance the outcome of anyone's candidacy. His opinion ultimately won out and gained the support of Blaine's backers, as well. As chairman of the national committee, Don Cameron played a key role in the Grant plan, yet his was a vulnerable position. Thus, when Blaine and Sherman leaders discovered what was going forward, their threat to oust Cameron from his office was enough to discourage his efforts and insure the appointment of a neutral temporary chairman, George F. Hoar.³³

The Republican meeting opened in Chicago on June 2 and did not adjourn until June 8. It was the longest convention in GOP history and one of its most exciting. Conkling's waspish and sarcastic efforts to manage things touched off

³³Leon B. Richardson, William E. Chandler: Republican (New York, 1940), pp. 250-52 and Garfield Diary, May 29, 1880. Garfield Papers.

what proved to be a series of bitter encounters with his opponents. On the second day, the convention heard the report of the committee on permanent organization and chose Hoar as its permanent chairman. During the evening session, a motion was made (and ultimately tabled) to bring in the rules committee report before that of the credentials committee, although the convention had agreed to hear the latter first. Conkling sought to block this maneuver with an amendment, but was defeated by a substantial margin. During the unit rule after the unanimous vote of a delegation had been challenged.³⁴

Early on the third day of the convention the way was opened for Garfield when Conkling proposed the following resolution: "Resolved, as the sense of this Convention that every member of it is bound in honor to support its nominee, whoever that nominee may be; and that no man shall hold a seat who is not ready to so agree." Clearly, Conkling sought to bind to his man, if nominated, the numerous delegates who took strong exception to Grant, the third term or both, and to banish any uncompromising anti-Grant delegates. A voice vote on this resolution revealed a scattering of 'noes' which Conkling determined to ferret out through a roll call. Although only three West Virginians spoke up under these trying circumstances, Conkling was quick to demand their removal. This time he won a good deal of support, but a clever and conciliatory speech by Garfield swayed the convention toward a moderate course on

³⁴Smith, Life and Letters of Garfield, II, 968 and Richard C. Bian, Convention Decisions and Voting Records (Washington, 1960), pp. 110-11.

this issue and Conkling was moved to acquiesce.³⁵

As the credentials committee, itself embroiled in a heated contest, was not yet prepared to report, the convention agreed to hear but not to act upon the rules committee report. Their most significant proposition spelled out and upheld the privilege of each delegate to vote and see his vote recorded, the unit rule notwithstanding. A minority report for the most part pled for the retention of the unit rule. At this point, and before any debate had taken place, the convention took up the long delayed credentials report. The committee, after struggling long and heatedly over some fifty cases, had come up with a long majority report and a still bulkier minority report. After spending considerable time on preliminaries, the delegates finally began the explosive task of settling state contests. Here the crucial point was reached with Illinois, where the party managers were accused of disregarding, during the state convention, the delegates selected by district conventions. Instead, they had substituted, through a special committee, Grant men for the original delegates. The pro-Grant national committee had seated the delegates, but the anti-Grant majority on the credentials committee reversed this decision while the minority upheld the national committee. The majority report for the Illinois contests was upheld only after separate roll call votes for three districts had ended in small but consistent majorities for the anti-Grant forces.

³⁵Bian, Convention Decisions, p. 111 and Smith, Life and Letters of Garfield, II, 971-72.

Kansas presented a similar problem; again the state convention and certain districts had elected different delegates. In this case, the majority report offered a compromise by which the ten contesting delegates would share Kansas's votes. The convention accepted this proposal by a large majority. In West Virginia, the committee again faced the fundamental question of whether to seat district or state convention chosen delegates. This time, perhaps because of weariness as much as anything, the majority report inconsistently sided with the state convention, whereupon the national convention accepted the minority report for the first time.³⁶

After finishing with its credential work, the convention returned to the question of the unit rule. The Grant men, who now undoubtedly saw the handwriting on the wall, tried to put off a decision on this crucial issue. They proposed that the convention begin at once with the business of nominations. Again Garfield emerged as a leader among the anti-Grant forces, vigorously supporting the majority report and the rules committee chairman. In a test of strength the Grant men's proposal was rejected by some two hundred votes. The fate of the unit rule had been determined and the majority report was accepted by acclamation.³⁷

Except for its statements on the nature of the Constitution ("The Constitution of the United States is a supreme law,

³⁶Richardson, William E. Chandler, p. 254 and Bian, Convention Decisions, pp. 111-13.

³⁷Bian, Convention Decisions, p. 113.

and not a mere contract.") and popular education ("The work of popular education is one left to the care of the several states, but it is the duty of the National Government to aid that work to the extent of its constitutional power."), the platform did not move beyond the politically commonplace. It aroused no debate and was approved by a voice vote. But at this point, an amendment was introduced supporting the President's efforts on behalf of civil service reform and calling upon the executive and legislative branches to join in a concerted effort to enact the merit system. In the debate that followed several outspoken anti-reform men made their views perfectly clear, while others came to the aid of the cause and the administration with the result that the resolution passed easily.³⁸

The speeches nominating Blaine and Grant were a study in contrasts. Blaine was the first of the major candidates to be presented to the convention. His strategy called for James Joy, the powerful Michigan railroad magnate, to do the honors. The presentation could have scarcely been bungled more effectively. On the other hand, Conkling's speech on Grant's behalf, was a classic example of gilded age political oratory. Unfortunately, Conkling's sarcasm and disdainful attitude toward the other candidates, as well as his earlier ill-tempered efforts from the floor, did much to reduce the effectiveness of his performance. Moreover, anti-third term sentiment was

³⁸Bian, Convention Decisions, pp. 113-14.

strong and Grant's shortcomings while occupying the White House were still fresh in the minds of the delegates.³⁹

It now fell to the reluctant and uneasy Garfield to sing the praises of the third and final major hopeful, John Sherman. After listening to the exaggerated rhetoric of the pompous Conkling, he undertook to present his man with an extemporaneous effort that emphasized the seriousness of the work at hand by briefly outlining the history of the GOP and lecturing his listeners on the urgent need for party harmony. After describing the type of man the presidential office demanded, Garfield went on the sketch Sherman's career in the public service, concluding with a formal nomination in which he spoke Sherman's name for the first time during his entire presentation.⁴⁰ Following upon the heels of Conkling's highly affected and sharply partisan presentation, Garfield's moderate and able speech struck a responsive chord among many of his listeners. Surely, this along with his earlier contributions from the floor, boosted his stock among the delegates as a likely and attractive compromise candidate.

Throughout the first seventeen ballots the strength of the three major contenders remained very nearly as it had been on the initial vote, while none of the minor nominees -- Win-
dom, Washburne and Edmunds -- showed promise of emerging as compromise candidates. This situation was nearly unchanged

³⁹Bian, Convention Decisions, p. 114.

⁴⁰Garfield to Lucretia Garfield, June 6, 1880. Garfield Papers. Bian, Convention Decisions, p. 114.

after a 28th roll call had been taken. The convention then voted, by a comfortable margin, to adjourn over the protest of Conkling. The results of the first balloting of the following day showed a small break toward Sherman, whose total rose to 116 thanks to a shift by Edmunds backers. The Grant and Blaine blocs held firm. On the 34th ballot, Grant rose to 312, 67 votes shy of the 379 necessary for victory. Sherman, who had risen to 120, fell to 107, while Blaine held his ground at 275. However, it was on this poll that a shift began that would nominate Garfield. Ever since the second roll call, with the exception of the 14th through the 17th ballots, he had been receiving one to three votes, but now Wisconsin, whose 20 votes had been split four ways, put 16 votes in his column. On the next ballot, Indiana shifted from Blaine's camp into Garfield's column with 27 tallies to boost his total to 50. At the same time, Grant held firm, while Blaine and Sherman began to fade. On the last ballot, Grant's faithful 306 stayed with him, but a massive defection of Blaine and Sherman supporters easily put Garfield over the top with 399 votes. The anti-Grant forces, which had defeated earlier efforts on the part of the New York Senator to manage the convention, had given Garfield the Republican presidential nomination. The vice presidential contest revealed a different combination, one much like that which had nominated Hayes. The great bulk of Arthur's support came from Grant men with some little help from those in Garfield's camp, the Ohio

delegation in particular.⁴¹

The sharp and exciting struggle at Chicago had been vitally interesting to Hayes. By the fourth day of the convention, Grant's nomination seemed out of the question to him. The delegates dislike of his campaign managers (Cameron and Conkling) and their tactics, anti-third term sentiment and Grant's "failure as President" led him to this conclusion, wrote Hayes. The unit rule's defeat, an effort in which Garfield played a key role, pleased him greatly. He remarked to his diary that another "immediately valuable result . . . (was) the condemnation of the machine as organized and managed by Conkling and Cameron", and he probably believed, a commendation of him and his policy. Yet he was truly sorry, too, that Grant, whom he called America's "first soldier and a man of many sterling qualities" had been "so himiliated and degraded . . . by his unprincipled supporters." He determined that he should recommend a single six year presidential term in his last message to Congress.⁴²

Hayes greeted Garfield's selection as his party's standard bearer, as "the best that was possible" -- and "altogether good." The convention's achievements had been valuable, he observed, again citing the rejection of the unit rule, the third term and "the rule or ruin Senators, who usurped the power of the people." He was personally very gratified by

⁴¹Bian Convention Decisions, pp. 115-16.

⁴²Hayes Diary, June 5, 1880, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 600.

the nomination, he wrote, because it represented a defeat for his bitter opponents and a victory for a staunch friend. Ohio had once more been honored and civil service reform had been endorsed. "The sop thrown to Conkling in the nomination of Arthur, only serves to emphasize the completeness of his defeat," he recorded with obvious relish. Indeed, the egocentric Senator had been "crushed," he concluded almost gloatingly. But his mind turned quickly from the convention to the coming campaign, which he predicted would be "close and fierce" with defeat quite possible.

The self-made man theme, he believed, must become the watchword, the slogan of the Garfield campaign and must be exploited in every possible way. "The truth is no man ever started so low that accomplished so much in all our history," he noted in a burst of enthusiasm. It occurred to him that a campaign dwelling on "personal characteristics" came along about every twenty years and he cited the campaigns of Jackson, Harrison and Lincoln. And now Garfield joined the list. "The boy on the tow path has become in truth the scholar and the gentleman by his own unaided work. He is the ideal candidate because he is the ideal self-made man. If he were not in public life he would be equally eminent as a Professor in a College, as a lecturer, as an Author, an essayist or a Metaphysician," Hayes commented with satisfaction.⁴³

Hayes continued to react enthusiastically to the convention's

⁴³Hayes Diary, June 11, 1880, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 601.

work -- moreover, he had high hopes for November. As soon as Garfield returned to Washington, he was closeted with the President for several hours. According to Hayes, he told the nominee "that his personal history as an ideal self-made man would be the most popular force of the canvass." As the nominee "was anxious to know the feelings of Sherman (whom he had nominated) as to his loyalty to him," Hayes sought to put his mind completely at ease on this matter. The office had sought the man, Hayes believed, while self-seekers had been defeated. His administration and all he had stood for had been endorsed, while his enemies had been vanquished. He was elated: had there ever been a convention that could "show as much good and as little harm?" he inquired of Smith, who had observed the proceedings in person. As for the nominee, no public man since Franklin had been "so completely the work of his own ambitious labor." This fact should encourage America's ambitious young men and win their support as well. The party should concentrate on capturing the allegiance of the large body of "men of no party ties," Hayes advised. And if only the people could be convinced that Garfield would be elected, he speculated, perhaps they might "carry several Southern States. What a victory that would be! But --" Despite GOP defeats and 'outrages', Hayes hopes for the South had not been entirely dampened.⁴⁴

⁴⁴Hayes Diary, June 15, 1880 and Hayes to William H. Smith, June 18, 1880, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 601-02, 605-06.

CHAPTER 11

CONVENTION AFTERMATH:

A TAINTED VICTORY?

Although the work of the Republican National Convention of 1880 may be quickly and rather simply outlined, it deserves a second and somewhat more detailed review, especially as it involves Garfield and Sherman. How was it that Garfield and not Sherman emerged from this conclave as Hayes's heir? How and why had the candidate lost while his nominator won their party's highest honor? And what of the convention's aftermath and its impact on the Sherman - Garfield relationship?

If there had been any hope that Sherman would receive the solid or nearly solid support of his native state, it was dashed when a card signed by nine Ohio delegates appeared in the Chicago papers the morning of June 2, stating that the undersigned would vote for Blaine and not for Sherman. The dissidents also pointed out that, significantly, the delegates representing Hayes's and Foster's districts, as well as those from Garfield's district opposed the choice of their state convention. Among those opposing Sherman was S. V. Harkness, a partner and associate of John D. Rockefeller, who was "embittered against" Sherman, explained Foster, because of the

Secretary's decision on Standard Oil's importation of hoop iron. This ruling had cost Standard some \$400,000 according to Harkness, but apparently his feelings had not been discovered until after he was chosen a delegate.¹

The divided Ohio delegation played a crucial role in Sherman's failure before the convention. After the initial ballots had demonstrated Sherman's limited vote potential, Richard Smith observed that the Secretary's major infirmity lay in the Ohio delegation, who, were they unanimously and enthusiastically behind Sherman, could secure his nomination. He declared that "some of the Ohio delegation are not only voting against Sherman, but sneering at him, and trying to impress other delegations that Ohio's support is not sincere." These same detractors were backing Garfield, Smith said, although they did so in the face of his objections. Garfield was a sincere Sherman supporter, who would work for him until the end while stoutly opposing any attempt to make him a candidate. Nonetheless, as Smith had previously noted, Garfield might emerge as a compromise choice, for his popularity was unquestionably widespread.²

Ever since reaching Chicago, Garfield had found himself both pleased and embarrassed by the attention he received. He was trying to keep a level head, he told his wife, but he

¹Cincinnati Daily Gazette, June 2, 1880, p. 1; Charles Foster to John Sherman, June 23, 1880 and James Robinson to John Sherman, July 1, 1880. Sherman Papers.

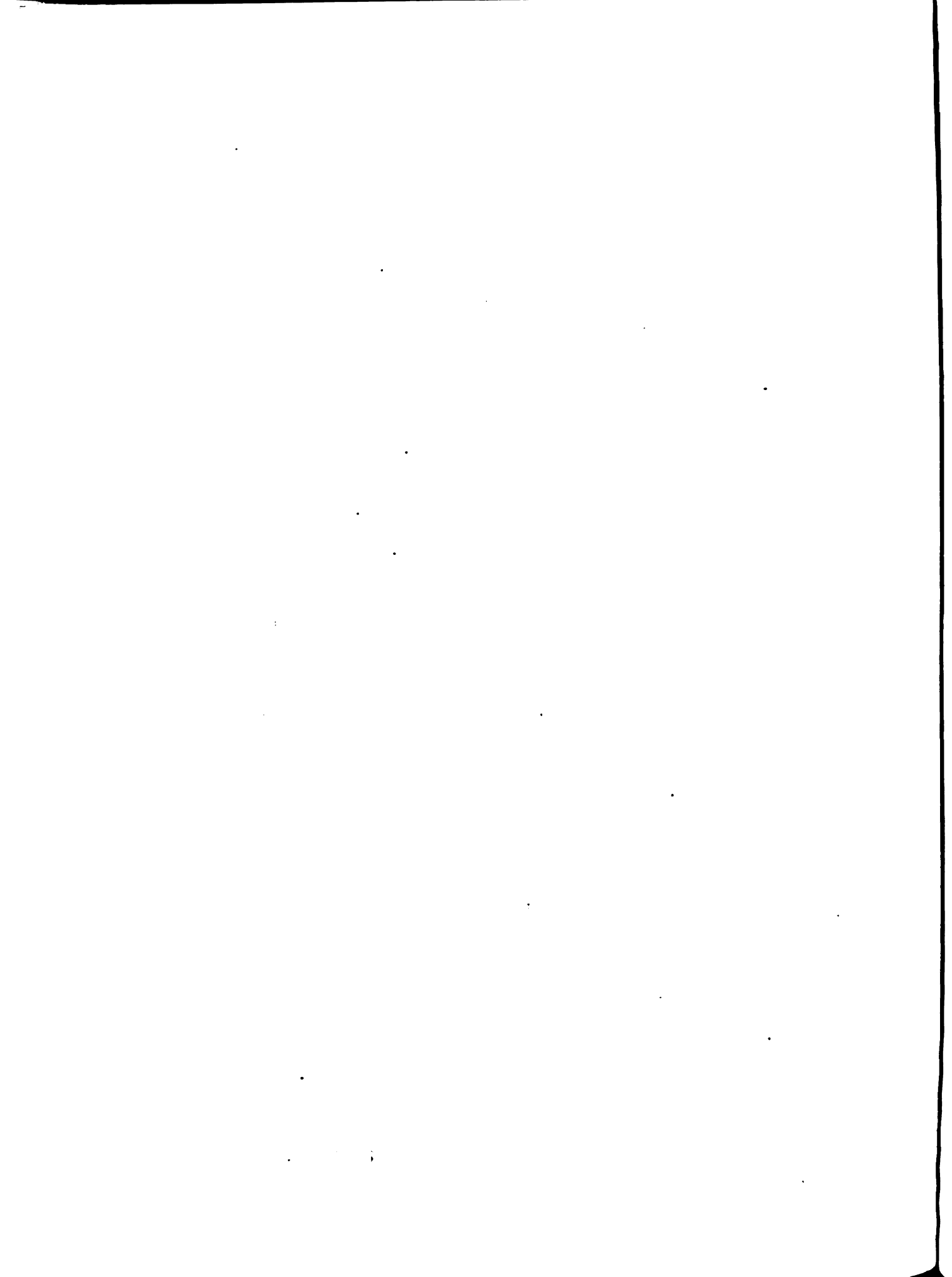
²Cincinnati Daily Gazette, June 4, 1880, p. 1.

longed most of all to be away from "the extraordinary passion, suspicion and excitement" of the tumultuous gathering. He had begun to feel fairly sure that both Grant and Blaine would fail and perhaps because of this feeling, his own position grew increasingly more uncomfortable.

You can hardly imagine (he wrote) the embarrassment I have been in, from the moment of my arrival here -- by the number of delegates from all quarters who are openly expressing the wish that I was the Ohio candidate. So much of this is said as to put me in constant danger of being suspected of ambitious designs; but I think I have been so prudent as thus far to disarm most of the suspicious ones. I shall do no act that will in the smallest degree be untrue to myself or my associates -- and I do not (think) anything will come out of the deeps to me. But I am greatly surprised at the number of prominent delegates who want to bring out my name.³

Meanwhile, Richard Smith was observing that despite the presence of several favorite sons, should Garfield's name be presented after a deadlock had clearly developed, it would attract considerable support. He believed, however, that Garfield was not encouraging such a move and was sincerely backing the Secretary. Former Governor Dennison came forward with an explanation for the several reports of disloyalty on the part of Foster and Garfield that had already reached Sherman. He related that Sherman's opponents were busy circulating rumors that Blaine and Grant supporters in several states, including New York, were prepared to join in giving Garfield the prize. This greatly annoyed Garfield, who, Dennison claimed, was doing his best to check this effort. Sherman,

³Garfield to Lucretia Garfield, May 21, 1880. Garfield Papers.



however, remained hopeful, assuring Dennison that the rumors concerning Foster and Garfield did not disturb him. "Their fidelity now will be their strength hereafter. Above all I hope that Ohio will yet give me its united support," he said.⁴

Others were less optimistic about Sherman's chances. Garfield's wife, a more perceptive observer in this case than the Secretary, was admitting to her husband that she had begun almost to fear that the party would turn to him, thus putting him in a most difficult position given the presence of the several frustrated candidates. On the preceding day, fresh from the bitter struggle to abolish the unit rule, Garfield had told to his wife that since writing to her the morning of the 2nd,

the signs have multiplied that the convention is strongly turning its attention to me. Large numbers of men are confident that will be the result. I should think there was something to it, but for the contest I am to have with Conkling. If I win that fight, it will be likely to embitter him and his followers against me. If I lose it the convention will lose its interest in me. So I am between two fires.

On the following day, he reported to her that the talk of taking him up continued to be embarrassingly commonplace. He wrote thus:

As to myself -- I have only time to say that without any act or word of mine to induce it, there has been growing hourly a current of opinion -- which, were Ohio and I honorably free -- might nominate me.

⁴Cincinnati Daily Gazette, June 1, 1880, p. 1; William Dennison to John Sherman (telegram), June 2, 1880 and John Sherman to William Dennison, June 3, 1880. Sherman Papers. Letterbook.

As I am situated -- until my full obligations are discharged, I would a thousand times rather help Sherman than to get it myself.⁵

In the terrific floor fight over the unit rule, Garfield's effective leadership and influence was widely recognized. Moulton reported to his brother-in-law that Garfield's answer to Conkling had been splendid and that it was not certain what might have been the outcome had he not silenced Conkling with a timely effort from the floor. In a letter to Mrs. Garfield reviewing the struggle over the reports of the Credentials and Rules Committees, Garfield made this comparison: "The mental and physical strain of the week ending with two days and nights of Chickamauga -- were hardly less than that which Chicago has brought upon the men of this convention." He felt he had been more successful than most delegates in maintaining his composure and this had been no mean achievement. For, he confessed, the convention had often seemed more like Paris "at the height of the French Revolution than America."⁶

As for his speech nominating Sherman, a speech which drew so much attention to the speaker himself, Garfield leaves a somewhat ambiguous record. Writing to his wife on June 2, he declared that it had been "a frightful mistake" not to have written his presentation before coming to Chicago. "It now seems inevitable that I shall fall far below what I ought to

⁵Lucretia Garfield to Garfield, June 4, 1880; Garfield to Lucretia Garfield, June 3 and 4, 1880. Garfield Papers.

⁶Henry Moulton to John Sherman, June 4, 1880. Sherman Papers. Garfield to Lucretia Garfield, June 6, 1880. Garfield Papers.

do," he continued, while adding that the belief that he would be given the nomination was gaining strength among many delegates. If he could but escape from his dilemma and return to his Ohio farm home, he would be contented. But after making his presentation, he reported to Mrs. Garfield in quite another vein:

I persevered to the end, in not writing a speech; I marshalled a few ideas in line, and left room in their ranks for any things that might come from the suggestions of the hour -- and in this, I think I was fortunate -- for Conkling's speech gave me the idea of carrying the mind of the convention in a different direction. In that, I think I had some success. At least, it was success of a better kind than his.⁷

Others were of a similar opinion. The Springfield Republican spoke of it as being "about the best" of the nominating speeches and a few days later referred to Garfield's "fine oratory" at the convention. In answer to Sherman's message of congratulations on his effort, Garfield telegraphed his thanks to the nominee and admitted he had not written out his speech, but had "waited until after Conkling's speech, and intended it a reply (to) his methods." In his autobiography, Chauncey Depew singled out Conkling's and Garfield's nominating speeches for special praise, giving them "the highest rank" among convention orations. He then contrasted Conkling's speech ("perfectly prepared" and "delivered with dramatic effect") with Garfield's spontaneous effort. Garfield, says Depew, "avoided the dramatic element, in which he could not

⁷Garfield to Lucretia Garfield, June 2 and 6, 1880. Garfield Papers.

compete with Conkling, but delivered a speech along the lines of the average thought and general comprehension."⁸

Garfield's stock was undoubtedly rising and it was commonly remarked that he had nominated himself -- not Sherman. Indeed, Sherman was warned that in this speech Garfield must have intended to aid himself rather than the Secretary. Meanwhile, Garfield continued to be told of his developing strength, it was even claimed that Mississippi would support him unanimously were the convention to reach an impasse.⁹ On June 5, Sherman had received a "Bulletin" declaring that a reliable source reported that Iowa, Connecticut and Indiana would go for Garfield were no decision reached by the fourth ballot. A dispatch appearing in the New York Herald predicted that Garfield might be taken up if Sherman withdrew, noting that as Sherman's nominator, "his speech and manner, it is thought, will make a very favorable impression on the convention." The Herald pointed out that when Garfield's selection by his delegation to serve on the Rules Committee was announced it was greeted by applause which indicated he had "not been forgotten . . . in the calculation of thoughtful men." One of Sherman's informants at Chicago advised him that Foster had joined

⁸Springfield Daily Republican, June 8, 1880, p. 5; June 14, 1880, p. 4 and Garfield to John Sherman, June 6, 1880, and Garfield to John Sherman (telegram), June 6, 1880. Sherman Papers. Chauncey M. Depew, My Memoirs of Eighty Years (New York, 1922), pp. 120-21.

⁹Depew, Memoirs of Eighty Years, p. 121; Moore, "Ohio in National Politics," p. 334 and H. C. French to Garfield, June 6, 1880. Garfield Papers.

with other delegates in a conspiracy to make Garfield a candidate and hand over Sherman's supporters to him. It was claimed that Garfield was fully cognizant of this scheme.¹⁰

On the eve of the balloting, Richard Smith made the following observation in his Gazette dispatch:

The Sherman managers are very hopeful to-night, but their greatest source of weakness is the want of compactness in the Ohio delegation. The vote of the delegation will be thirty-four for Sherman, nine for Blaine, and one for Edmunds. These ten will not vote for Sherman, even if they could nominate him, while the second choice of a large proportion of the thirty-four is Blaine, unless Garfield should be entered. In that event all the anti-Sherman men would vote for Garfield, and he would have the solid vote of the delegation. This is used as an argument by delegates outside of Ohio in favor of Garfield. Indiana is ready to support Garfield, also Connecticut, and it is intimated that Conkling is more friendly to Garfield than to either Edmunds or Washburne. This kind of talk is hurting Sherman, without opening the way to Garfield. Dennison, Foster and Garfield have positively stated that Ohio has and will have no other candidate than Sherman, and they intend to nominate him, if possible, and they believe it possible. If Sherman had the Ohio delegation solid he would be nominated, and it is my opinion that if Garfield were presented with Ohio solid at his back he would be nominated.¹¹

Smith's conclusion that Sherman now had more strength than ever before was seconded in a message from Ben Butterworth to Sherman, but Butterworth also warned the candidate that while he had "enough generals" he did not enjoy "good generalship" -- a fundamental weakness in Sherman's effort from its very inception. As the leader of the Buckeye contingent, "Grandmother D. (Dennison) lacks dash and decision,"

¹⁰("Bulletin"), June 5, 1880. Sherman Papers. Moore, "Ohio in National Politics," pp. 333 and 333-34.

¹¹Cincinnati Daily Gazette, June 7, 1880, p. 1.

Butterworth complained, "and is never in possession of information needful to necessary & prompt action." Butterworth had, therefore, taken it upon himself to assume by default some of the leadership powers and now asked for Sherman's approval of his action. Sherman quickly authorized him to negotiate with his opponents' supporters. "Be firm & bold," he admonished him, and obviously troubled by the weakness of his southern support, asked: "What is the matter with Virginia, Texas, Maryland and South Carolina?" In Virginia at least, Sherman's strategy of using federal officeholders to forward his bid proved to be a disappointment, for some seven civil servants who came to Chicago as delegates voted steadily for Grant despite efforts of the Shermanites to detach them.¹²

Shortly after the balloting began on June 7, Sherman received the following memo from Blaine -- a message that goes far toward explaining just why Sherman's forces could not effect a shift of votes from Blaine to their man:

If Mr. Blaine permits his column to be broken, his friends in Chicago say that Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Nevada, California, Oregon & twelve votes in the Territories will go to Grant. In addition to this Mr. Blaine's Southern votes will go to Grant, as also his vote in Delaware & that part of N. J. led by Gen. Sewall, & also part of Indiana.

Don Cameron with Mr. Blaine out of the way will recover a large part of the Pa delegation for Grant.

¹²Ben Butterworth to John Sherman (telegram), June 7, 1880 and John Sherman to Ben Butterworth (telegram), June 7, 1880. Sherman Papers. Otis Russell to Warner Bateman, June 17, 1880. Bateman Papers.

Mr. Sherman meanwhile is not able to present a united vote of his own state, one fourth of it steadily refusing to vote for him. Senator Blaine's friends are firmly convinced that to attempt to transfer his strength to any other candidate would nominate Grant at once. If that result is reached Mr. Blaine & his friends are determined that none of this responsibility shall lie at their door.

Sherman immediately notified Bateman that Blaine's convention managers "advised strongly against any break in his forces" and that Blaine concurred in this advice. Sherman also told his managers that they should not submit to Grant's nomination until everything possible had been done to defeat him. In a second message, he stated that he favored Blaine over Grant for the welfare of the party. "Though feeling personally friendly to Grant," Sherman continued, "I regard his nomination as the suicide of the Repn party."¹³

On the second day of balloting, Sherman's hopes were buoyed a bit by news from the Pennsylvania delegation, although few seemed to share his optimism. McManes, the leader of the anti-Cameron forces, promised to give Sherman at least twenty votes as soon as Blaine's cause appeared hopeless and wished the Secretary to know this. McManes, however, appears to have been bent on destroying Don Cameron's influence in the Pennsylvania GOP and so stuck with Blaine until the big break for Garfield. Moreover, on this same day, Garfield was also being urged to throw his weight and presumably Sherman's votes behind Blaine, lest Grant emerge victorious. Wharton

¹³"Memo by Blaine", June 8, 1880; John Sherman to Warner Bateman. (telegram), June 8, 1880. Sherman Papers. Two unsigned penciled messages signed by Sherman. Bateman Papers.

Barker, just returned to Philadelphia from Chicago was telegraphing Schurz that were Sherman only out of the way" Garfield could be named. He pleaded with Schurz to "do what you can, otherwise I fear it will be Grant."¹⁴

By early afternoon Sherman apparently recognized what was happening at Chicago. He wired Dennison qualified permission to aid the movement to Garfield, just as Dennison was wiring to ask Sherman to release the Buckeye delegation. "Whenever the vote of Ohio will be likely to assure the nomination of Garfield I appeal to every delegate to vote for him," Sherman's instructions ran. "Let Ohio be solid." Dennison was told to convey his plea in the Secretary's name to all who had supported him. Shortly before receiving this message, Bateman had wired Sherman that "Wisconsin and Indiana have voted for Garfield with much enthusiasm, our vote is restive."¹⁵

In a second message Bateman conveyed the sad tidings to his chief. "The movement for Garfield," he reported, "swept with lightning rapidity through the Convention while I was writing the last telegram." He called it "the escape of a tired convention." Sherman wired in return that Garfield's nomination was "generally satisfactory." But in his message

¹⁴S. B. Benson to John Sherman (telegram), 9:45 A.M., June 8, 1880. John Frazier to John Sherman, Sept. 6, 1880. Sherman Papers. Stephen Elkins to Garfield (telegram), June 8, 1880. Garfield Papers. Wharton Barker to Carl Schurz (telegram), June 8, 1880. Schurz Papers.

¹⁵John Sherman to William Dennison (telegram), 1:48 P.M., June 8, 1880 and Warner Bateman to John Sherman (telegram), June 8, 1880. Sherman Papers.

to the nominee, Sherman congratulated him "with all . . . (his) heart" adding with apparent sincerity that Garfield had "saved the Republican party & the country from a great peril & assured the continued success of Republican principles."¹⁶

Although the convention's work met with general approval within party ranks, it also left a legacy of distrust, suspicion and ill-feeling that would plague the Ohio GOP for some time to come. This was a product not only of the conduct of Ohio's nine anti-Sherman delegates, but also of the growing suspicion of disloyalty on the part of Garfield and Foster. Indeed, soon after the party had gathered in Chicago reports came to Sherman claiming that Governor Foster coveted a place on the ticket with Blaine or, if Garfield took the prize, Sherman's old seat in the Senate. Garfield's obvious popularity on the floor and in the galleries (which Barker claimed he had managed), his conspicuous and well recognized role in the fight against the unit rule and Conkling and his methods, and his position as Sherman's nominator placed him an extremely vulnerable position. As it turned out, Lucretia Garfield could not have been more correct when she wrote on June 4 that she was "half afraid" that the convention would turn to her husband. She had warned him that under those circumstances "the place would be most unenviable with so many disappointed

¹⁶Warner Bateman to John Sherman (telegram), June 8, 1880. Sherman Papers. John Sherman to Warner Bateman (telegram), June 8, 1880. Bateman Papers. John Sherman to Garfield (telegram), June 8, 1880. Garfield Papers.

candidates." And so it proved to be.¹⁷

Following the convention, Sherman received many letters purporting to explain why his drive for the nomination had failed so miserably. The shrewd Ben Butterworth said that "the one great need . . . was the presence on the field of one competent Major Genl. to whom all information should have been given & who should have passed upon all moves to be made in the presence of the enemy." He testified to Dennison's and Bateman's loyalty, advising that they had done all within their power for Sherman. Moreover, he wrote, Garfield had in every way been loyal. The want of a single powerful leader in the Sherman camp, one who would have been "quick to discern & prompt to act, lost the battle," he insisted. Butterworth contended that it would have been as simple to initiate a break for Sherman as for Garfield. The opportunity had presented itself, but with "so many brigadiers firing at cross purposes . . . the confidence of the Blaine men in our ability to control the field" was shaken. On the other hand, Grant's supporters were led as an able general leads his forces. So it was for the most part with Blaine's managers, too. Thus, while Hale and Conkling were constantly aware of what was happening, Dennison simply was not.¹⁸

The reports of other participants and observers generally

¹⁷Moore, "Ohio in National Politics," p. 333 and Lucretia Garfield to Garfield, June 4, 1880. Garfield Papers.

¹⁸Ben Butterworth to John Sherman, June 11, 1880. Sherman Papers.

re-enforced Butterworth's conclusions, especially his exoneration of Garfield. Thus William Henry Smith, who some years later would reverse himself, was quick to warn Sherman that "there may be an effort made to poison yr. mind towards Garfield, but believe nothing to his injury. He was loyal to you, and behaved honorably in the highest degree." In a very long letter, Moulton, too, cautioned his brother-in-law against giving credence to accusations of disloyalty among his supporters, although there had been and would be a good deal of talk. He singled out Garfield for special attention with these words:

Whoever may have been guilty of lukewarmness or bad faith, it is certain that General Garfield can not be charged with either. I consider him entitled to your full confidence and I took considerable pains to ascertain the facts before I arrived at my conclusions. I am particular about this matter because the charge of treachery was freely circulated from the day the convention met until it closed.

As far as he could tell, he said, there had been "a preconceived effort among the Grant men to create and circulate the impression that you were betrayed by your friends." Grant's backers did this with the object of spreading dissension within Sherman's ranks. Henry Cabot Lodge of the Massachusetts delegation and Charles Grosvenor of the Ohio delegation also vouched for Garfield's loyalty and told of his refusal to be used as a compromise candidate despite separate requests from each of them.¹⁹

¹⁹William H. Smith to John Sherman, June 11, 1880 and Henry Moulton to John Sherman, June 11, 1880. Sherman Papers. Smith, Life and Letters of Garfield, II, 978, 981.

In its review of the convention, the Cincinnati Daily Gazette explained Garfield's selection in this way. After the delegates had got the feel of things, first Sherman and then Washburne were brought forward without attracting significant support. Thereupon, Garfield was tried and this experiment met with success. Once the break for Garfield started it was unstoppable and despite Garfield's efforts to discourage it, it was not within his power to prevent his nomination. It was the product of a feeling that had been developing inside and outside of the convention ever since its second day.²⁰

Richard Smith, the probable author of this analysis, also made a personal report to Sherman in which he laid the Secretary's failure primarily to divisions within the Ohio delegation, claiming that with a solid delegation he might have succeeded. He admitted that Sherman's interests could have been handled more effectively, but he spoke of the inevitability of the outcome, a decision "reached in a panic, when it was anybody to beat Grant on one side and Blaine on the other." Had Sherman "been a delegate and not a candidate," Smith argued, the convention would have tapped him. But, the Cincinnati journalist hastened to add, Sherman must not infer "from this that Garfield did anything intentionally for himself, or that he did not work faithfully" for Ohio's candidate. Such a

²⁰Cincinnati Daily Gazette, June 11, 1880, p. 4.

supposition would be unjust, for the result came despite Garfield. As Smith pointed out, Garfield enjoyed "the advantage of being on the ground. The delegates saw and heard him; he took and when looking around for someone to unite upon they fell upon him."²¹

The dejected Sherman had another explanation for a defeat that had injured him deeply. "The fates seemed to be against" his success, he told one supporter. Had the contest between Blaine and Grant been less bitter, had "either . . . voluntarily broken I would have been the nominee," he wrote. As it was the move was left up to the Washburne and Edmunds people and although the Massachusetts delegation finally came over to him it was too late. Had they come to his aid Monday night he was very certain he would have won the nomination. He had as yet seen nothing to diminish his faith in Garfield, yet he occasionally could not "help feeling that the course of his friends and neighbors -- the nine who refused to vote for . . . (him) throughout the long controversey . . . (might) have been influenced by a desire to accomplish what actually occurred." Then Sherman unburdened himself of some of the suspicions that were undoubtedly running through his mind as contradictory reports of Garfield's and Foster's conduct came across his desk. He wrote as follows:

If he (Garfield) is responsible for (the anti-Sherman delegates) it will raise a suspicion as to his honorable conduct. He was instructed by the Convention

²¹Richard Smith to John Sherman, June 11, 1880. Sherman Papers.

to do all he could to support me, he was selected by me as a delegate at large after personal conversations with him, and if then he was in any way privy to a conspiracy to defeat me it must in the end impair his position, and if I believed it I could not as a matter of course, hold office under him. I have seen no evidence of the truth of such a suspicion, but it does seem to me that he did all he reasonably could have done to advance my nomination, and that his own was a natural escape from an embarrassed position by a tired convention.²²

By the end of June Sherman claimed he had truly become adjusted to his defeat and in fact had been troubled only by doubts concerning Foster and Garfield. He had now relieved Garfield "from all suspicion of perfidy" but Foster's behavior and reports thereof had "painfully impressed" him to the detriment of the Governor. Meanwhile, Garfield was being assured (as he quite desperately wished to be) that knowledgeable men had been telling Sherman of his loyalty. But Foster continued to hear that Sherman was "cross" although in his letters to the Governor he spoke kindly of Garfield and expressed a desire to renew his "old friendly relations" as Foster put it.²³

Warner Bateman, Sherman's chief confidant in his bid for the nomination, now came forward with a long and detailed report which opened by pointing out that on the whole the convention's outcome had been a pleasant one. He reported that

²²John Sherman to C. A. Trimble, June 12, 1880. Sherman Papers. Letterbook.

²³John Sherman to H. C. Hedges, June 28, 1880. Sherman Papers. Letterbook. Charles Foster to Garfield, July 20, 1880. Garfield Papers.

Grant's support had been exceptionally "solid . . . well managed and aggressive" but nonetheless many Sherman supporters had really expected Grant to triumph or withdraw early in the balloting. When it became clear that Blaine supporters offered Sherman his only hope, a protracted effort was made by Dennison, Garfield, Butterworth and Bateman to persuade Blaine's managers to aid Sherman, but to no avail. In Indiana, Harrison had spoken very well of Sherman and indeed had for his own part favored him until Monday evening. But from that time on he moved toward Washburne and "talked less and less encouragingly." Late Monday, Harrison told Bateman he would move to break the deadlock very shortly. When Massachusetts shifted to Sherman, it was hoped New Jersey, Indiana and perhaps Wisconsin might join the movement, but this did not materialize. As for suspicions of disloyalty concerning Garfield, Bateman believed that if there had been any premeditation in the break for Garfield, the plotters must have been few in number. Certainly the movement succeeded because the anti-Grant men were impatient and discouraged by the failure of those they had tried to nominate and increasingly fearful that Grant would triumph unless something was done immediately. But in addition to this he felt certain that one or two Sherman men had been scheming to 'try out' Garfield. Nevertheless, Bateman insisted: "I want to say here that after much reflection and a close watch of Garfield from the beginning I am satisfied he was (not) a party to it. He was in his conciliatory and philosophic way I am satisfied perfectly loyal to you and did nothing and said

nothing that was inconsistent with the truest friendship to you." Bateman continued:

It would perhaps be well for you so to say to him. During the progress of the last ballot, in much apparent emotion, he came to me to inquire what it meant. He protested in the utmost earnestness that he had nothing to do with the movement and asked me whether I thought he had. He said he would rather be shot to death by the inch than to have furnished any just ground for such suspicion and desired if I should vindicate him against any charge of unfaithfulness to you.²⁴

A few days after his initial report, Bateman wrote to Sherman offering this critique of the strategy used by Sherman's supporters in the convention. He believed their tactics during the balloting had been wrong. Massachusetts had been prepared to go for Sherman early on Monday, New Jersey was ready to help when called upon and Harrison believed he could deliver 25 votes for the Secretary. Had all these votes been called for and delivered, along with help from Wisconsin, South Carolina, Connecticut, Vermont, Virginia, and Minnesota, Sherman could have surged forward with from 160 to 170 votes. But Sherman leaders were advised to avoid anything that would aid Grant or hurt Blaine. Aid from Indiana would hurt Blaine and help from Massachusetts would undermine Edmunds and possibly add some Vermont votes to Grant's column. Obviously, Sherman faced a serious dilemma. His prestige at Chicago was reduced and his potential support was committed to others. This only served to strengthen Blaine and prevented his

²⁴Warner Bateman to John Sherman, June 12, 1880. Bateman Papers. Letterbook.

supporters from breaking to Sherman. Moreover, Sherman would have been better served had the interests of others had less influence in the Sherman camp, Bateman claimed. As it was, his nomination was "one of the 'might have beens!'" Sherman's modest vote was used to demonstrate his essential weakness and this in addition to faulty management prevented his drawing the anti-Grant men to his side.²⁵

Five days later, Bateman told Sherman that Hale and Chandler were dismayed soon after the balloting began; in fact by the evening of the first day of balloting, they were "thoroughly demoralized." Had it not been for the steady aid of pretended friends of Sherman, Blaine's forces would have given way to Sherman. In fact, the Ohioans had agreed to an adjournment with the understanding that Blaine's forces would come over to Sherman, only to have them reverse themselves later and call for Sherman's surrender to them. Foster, too, thought it was more logical for 95 votes to go to 285. But these 285 votes included from sixty to seventy Sherman votes, Bateman noted. After asking Sherman to destroy this letter, Bateman asserted that, frankly, they had been "paralyzed by the joint efforts of Dennison's vanity and Foster's service to others." Sherman had brought together the necessary support and cleared the way for Garfield's success, Bateman concluded. Within two days, Bateman saw fit to repeat his advice that were Garfield elected, Foster must not be allowed to go to the Senate --

²⁵Warner Bateman to John Sherman, June 16, 1880. Bateman Papers. Letterbook.

and offered further 'evidence' of Foster's double-dealing.²⁶

Other reports of the convention shed somewhat different light on Garfield's success and Sherman's failure. The Springfield Daily Republican reported that James Robinson had related that Ohio Shermanites had concluded on Tuesday morning that their cause was hopeless and were in the process of polling their southern allies to see how many would go over to Blaine. Some nineteen agreed to do so and forty-three Ohioans decided to join them, but the flight to Garfield began before they had an opportunity to make their move. In his report to Hayes, William Henry Smith contended that "the accidental presence of Garfield in the Convention" explained his nomination, for the anti-Grant forces would have combined as easily on another man.²⁷

As for Wisconsin's key role in Garfield's victory, John B. Cassoday, a member of that delegation, offered an insider's view of Wisconsin's break in a statement appearing in the Janesville (Wisconsin) Gazette shortly after the convention. "In view of many wild and untruthful statements made in regard to the alleged combination or agreement by which the nomination of Mr. Garfield was effected, it may be well to state the exact facts and thus dissipate all speculation," Cassoday observed. Monday, after twenty-eight inconclusive

²⁶Warner Bateman to John Sherman, June 21 and 23, 1880. Bateman Papers. Letterbook.

²⁷Springfield Daily Republican, June 15, 1880, p. 4 and William H. Smith to Hayes, June 15, 1880. Hayes Papers.

ballots, some twenty Wisconsinites, fearing that unhealable rifts in the GOP might result if either Blaine or Grant were chosen, visited Massachusetts headquarters. In their meeting they concluded to send a committee (Gov. John G. Smith, Vermont; Harrison, Indiana and Cassoday, Wisconsin) to consult with the Blaine and Sherman managers. Hale, Frye and Hamlin were obdurate, and in spite of being told Indiana was restive and that Blaine could not expect additional votes, they insisted victory would be theirs in Tuesday's balloting. A visit with Sherman spokesmen, who had no advice to offer, was interrupted by the arrival of Blaine's lieutenants calling to confer with the Sherman men. The following morning, after learning that the Blaine - Sherman conclave had proved fruitless, the Wisconsin delegation, meeting informally with sixteen delegates, decided that "under all the circumstances, the wisest thing for them to do was to unite, sooner or later, and make a break for Garfield, who had become exceedingly popular with the entire convention."²⁸

When the convention reconvened, Cassoday continued, Harrison's and Washburne's Connecticut, Illinois and New Jersey supporters were told that Wisconsin would switch to Garfield unless more Washburne votes were in the offering. Harrison responded by expressing his great respect and faith in Garfield, and while promising nothing, he left the impression that should Wisconsin break for Garfield, Indiana would follow

²⁸St. Paul Pioneer Press, June 9 (?), 1880, clipping in Garfield Scrapbook, Campaign #13. Garfield Papers.

Illinois, some twenty Wisconsinans, and a few others, were in the
 line in the GOP might result in a victory for the
 Wisconsin, visited Massachusetts and other states.
 that concluded to send a committee to the
 coast Harrison, Indiana and others.
 with the Illinois and Wisconsin delegates.
 were organized, and in the
 and that Illinois could not
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 supporters were told that Wisconsin would return to
 unless more Washburne votes were in the election. Harrison
 responded by expressing his great respect and faith in Gar-
 field, and while promising nothing, he left the impression
 that should Wisconsin break for Garfield, Indiana would follow

suit. Washburne's vote increased slightly on the 32nd and 33rd ballots with Indiana providing twelve of his forty-four votes. But Washburne's Indiana support fell to six votes on the 34th roll call, at which time Wisconsin decided to switch to Garfield and did so. None of Blaine's managers, nor any Ohio delegate, nor Garfield himself had any idea that any such move was about to be made. Wisconsin's break was brought about by the Blaine and Sherman managers' determination to stand by their candidates until the very end and the belief that Garfield so clearly enjoyed everyone's "confidence . . . that any reasonable prospect of his nomination" would crack the solid backing of the major contenders.²⁹

Frederick Jackson Turner's father, commenting on Wisconsin's break for Garfield, made this statement: "It is absolutely certain that no delegate outside our delegation suspected that anything of the sort was about to happen. They could not have done so, for we didn't know ourselves what we were going to do until a moment before."³⁰

In a letter to Carl Schurz, young Henry Cabot Lodge, a member of the Massachusetts delegation, explained the Bay State's course and offered this comment on the Sherman effort:

Our policy was simple. The first day we devoted ourselves to holding Edmunds & thereby all the minority candidates firm. Tuesday we turned over to Sherman not in hope of nominating him but to define our

²⁹St. Paul Pioneer Press, June 9 (?), 1880, clipping in Garfield Scrapbook, Campaign #13. Garfield Papers.

³⁰Herbert J. Clancy, The Presidential Election of 1880 (Chicago, 1958), p. 114.

position & hold him up which we did successfully at a very critical moment. Sherman had no chance. We worked hard to make a combination on him Monday night & failed utterly. Garfield was thoroughly loyal to Sherman but there was no heart in the movement, Ohio did not mean business & every one felt it.³¹

Yet Sherman seems to have grown more and more certain that he not only could have, but should have been his party's choice. As he met delegates and observers of the convention and received a fuller and more exact picture of the inner workings of the convention, he confided to Bateman, it appeared "to be perfectly clear that . . . (his) nomination was not only practicable, but, all things considered, would have been best for the party and the country." Sherman claimed this would have served to shift the emphasis of the campaign to questions of business and finance where the GOP had the advantage.³²

In 1883, Wharton Barker claimed that he had, with Garfield's prior knowledge and tacit approval, engineered the latter's victory in 1880 at Chicago. Barker's revelations revived the discussion of the convention within Sherman's circle of friends. Bateman professed great surprise that Garfield should have been privy to Barker's plans. He thereupon reviewed Garfield's conduct and while noting some of his **short-comings** as a **Sherman worker**, concluded that it "was all consistent with the most sincere good faith and fidelity" to Sherman. He described once again Garfield's reaction to his

³¹Henry Cabot Lodge to Carl Schurz, June 27 (?), 1880. Schurz Papers.

³²John Sherman to Warner Bateman, June 29, 1880. Bateman Papers.

nomination, insisting that "he seemed so dumbfounded and terrified, and presented as perfect a picture of distress . . . (that it) would be uncharitable to suspect him of any complicity with any scheme aiming at his nomination."³³

Shortly after the convention had adjourned, Barker had written to Garfield of his months of labor on his behalf. He claimed the outcome had been "in exact accordance with the plan arranged and to Genl. Streight and Gov. Pound much honor is dus." As for his motives in this episode, Barker declared that he had been bent on destroying the Cameron machine and constructing in Pennsylvania "a party of true Republicans, led by politicians to be sure, but under the direction of manufacturers, merchants and bankers, a party of the people."³⁴

Despite Bateman's message Sherman now seemed ready to believe that Garfield had been disloyal to him. "I fear," he wrote to Bateman, "that the evidence is conclusive that long before Garfield voluntarily assumed to manage my canvass at Chicago he consented to and aided in the most effective way to place himself in nomination. While I say this to you who more fully than any one shared my confidence I do not wish it repeated to others and will do nothing to deepen the fault of one who now is beyond human jurisdiction. Perhaps the temptation was too great for poor nature."³⁵

³³Warner Bateman to John Sherman, July 18, 1883. Bateman Papers.

³⁴Wharton Barker to Garfield, June 15, 1880. Garfield Papers.

³⁵John Sherman to Warner Bateman, July 23, 1883. Bateman Papers.

Some weeks after commenting to Sherman on the 1883 Barker revelations, Bateman had a long conversation with Benjamin Harrison. This exchange led Bateman to discuss again the 1880 convention with Sherman. Harrison had told Bateman that he had visited Garfield on Sunday, June 6, and mentioned the possibility of Garfield's being brought out as a compromise choice, adding that he would enthusiastically support such a move. Garfield answered that it was impossible for him to be a candidate and it appeared to Harrison that he was giving no encouragement to a Garfield boom. After giving up the attempt to work out a common strategy among those outside the Grant camp, Harrison, whose delegation wanted to break for him, but bowed to his determined opposition, had decided to wait for a break in the deadlock which came when Wisconsin went for Garfield. Before Wisconsin was reached on the 34th ballot one of its delegates visited Harrison, Bateman continued, and informed him Wisconsin would break for Garfield and called upon the Hoosiers to join them on the 35th ballot. Harrison pledged them cordial backing and on the following roll call all except 14 Indianians voted for Garfield. Later Harrison received Cassoday's congratulations for the contribution he and his state had made. Bateman concluded that no matter what he might have done or left undone, the result would have been the same unless perhaps he had protested in person to Garfield against the effort to nominate him.³⁶

³⁶Warner Bateman to John Sherman, Aug. 8, 1883. Bateman Papers. Letterbook. Springfield Daily Republican, June 10, 1880, p. 4 and Harry J. Sievers, Benjamin Harrison, vol. II: Hoosier Statesman, 1865-1888 (New York, 1959), p. 172.

In 1895, prompted by the appearance of Sherman's memoirs, Richard Smith, in a long letter to William Henry Smith, discussed Sherman's 1880 bid for the nomination. Smith had warned Garfield that he should ready himself for a break to him, but Garfield had replied that "such an occurrence would not be acceptable to him, that he would be accused of disloyalty to Sherman and that above all other things he wished to avoid," Smith recalled. He still believed that Garfield had acted loyally for Sherman, noting that Garfield had come to him and requested him to "defend him against charges of disloyalty that were then being made by Grant men and Blaine men and others." It is not likely that Richard Smith persuaded William Henry Smith to his generous point of view, for several years earlier, in a memo of one of his retrospective conversations with Hayes, Smith had written thus:

We agreed, too, as to Garfield's treachery to Sherman. I related how Thomas M. Nichol informed me of the plan of Thad. C. Pound, Jere M. Rusk and other Wisconsin Congressmen (to throw the vote of that state to Garfield as was done), some weeks before the convention, and Gen. Hayes told me of several conversations with Garfield before the convention. One was to this effect: That Gen. Garfield came to him and said he was going to be embarrassed in presenting Sherman's name on account of the mention of his own name in connection with the nomination.³⁷

The nineteenth century closed with Garfield's contemporaries unable to agree on the question of his loyalty to Sherman's cause in 1880. It can be safely assumed, however, that

³⁷Richard Smith to William H. Smith, Oct. 21, 1895. Smith Papers. William H. Smith, Memorandum of a conversation with Hayes, Aug. 9, 1880. Hayes Papers.

he was neither guilty of "treachery" as some would have it, nor wholly without fault, intentional or otherwise. For while he labored loyally for Sherman at Chicago, he did so reluctantly and with the knowledge that there were those who had been, or under the proper conditions would be, working to nominate him. But then Hayes, Schurz and other 'friends' of Sherman also were aware of this situation. Garfield was not a genuine admirer or a close personal friend of the Secretary's and held out little hope for his success. Like other Sherman endorsers, including Hayes, he viewed the Secretary's candidacy as a part of the effort to stop Grant and thus save the party from an anticipated disaster. Obviously Garfield was not at all eager to become entangled in Sherman's drive, but it is equally obvious that the realities of state and national politics left him with no real choice in the matter. He might, however, have made his position as a dark horse clearer to Sherman -- been more candid and frank -- and appeared less willing in their conversations to undertake his assignment as delegate-at-large and nominator. Nonetheless, it is doubtful that such candor would have changed Sherman's course, for surely he tapped Garfield in part because he was so prominent a dark horse.

At Chicago, Garfield's conspicuous success in the fight against Conkling and the unit rule undoubtedly enhanced his popularity and boosted his presidential stock, but again he did only what his conscience, his position and political realism demanded of him. That his conduct was consciously dictated

by a desire to win the nomination in 1880 or that he was surreptitiously following a preconceived strategy is not plausible. Garfield might have done more to discourage his supporters both before and during the convention, although he undeniably did on more than one occasion discourage the use of his name. Yet perhaps in politics such rebuffs can never be made to ring quite true. He might also have expressly and dramatically forbidden anyone to support him as the Wisconsin delegation did, but then he was unconvinced that anything would happen along these lines until it was too late for such a disclaimer to have much effect. Although Sherman's cause appeared hopeless by Tuesday morning, Garfield's selection was far from inevitable. Moreover, he was not blessed with the 20-20 hindsight of his critics and detractors which might have allowed him to nip in the bud those movements that would bring him an unexpected and unwelcome prize. Perhaps those who found him guilty of treachery were motivated in part at least, by a desire for a neat and simple explanation for Sherman's defeat and/or further support of their belief that Garfield was deceptive and lacking in moral courage.

CHAPTER 12

CONCLUDING AND OPENING SCENES

During its final months, the Hayes administration was upstaged first by the presidential campaign and then by Garfield's cabinet-making efforts. Nevertheless, Hayes pushed on to the end, justifying his southern policy and repeating his conviction that universal education alone could rid the South of slavery's bitter heritage -- the nation's major concern. He also defended his civil service efforts against liberal criticism and reiterated his plea for congressional cooperation in this area. Although carefully avoiding any involvement in the campaign itself, he did not hesitate to offer Garfield his opinions concerning campaign tactics -- nor was he silent while the president-elect made ready to succeed him in the White House.

"A pen picture" of Hayes appearing in the Philadelphia Times, that spring had given its author, H. V. Boynton, an opportunity to express publicly some of the long smoldering resentment he felt toward the administration and in particular its southern strategy. In an extended diary entry, Hayes responded privately (as was his life-long habit) to several of Boynton's charges. He put the matter in this way:

First, the southern policy is represented as very different in practice from what 'its friends' understood it would be when they supported it. I know, of course, very little of what was expected. The truth is, I had no confidants in regard to it. My judgment was that the time had come to put an end to bayonet rule. I saw things in the South which could only be accounted for on the theory that the War was not yet ended. Many Southern people evidently felt that they were justified in acts which could only be justified in time of war towards the common enemy. My task was to wipe out the color line, to abolish sectionalism, to end the war and bring peace. To do this I was ready to resort to unusual measures, and to risk my own standing and reputation with my party and the country.¹

Although the southern policy was undertaken hopefully and sincerely, Hayes viewed it first of all as a necessary and expedient program that might well yield but few of the hoped for results. Whether it succeeded or failed, it was certain to strengthen the party for 1880 and this, too, was a fundamental consideration. With few exceptions, Hayes's political wisdom was underestimated by his contemporaries, a fact now recognized by most students of his era. However, W. T. Sherman, for one, thought him "a better politician than John Sherman or Blaine or any of the rest of them." As he remarked to Tom Donaldson, the "Hayes policy of generosity and conciliation towards the South had forced them to show their true character. They had repelled his peace advances, and had compelled the North to see that they could not be trusted."²

As evidence of the risks he was willing to take as regards

¹Hayes Diary, April 11, 1880, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 594-95.

²Memoirs of Thomas Donaldson, Dec. 20, 1879.

the South, Hayes cited the appointment of Key to a cabinet position and of many another southern Democrat to lesser federal posts, including a woman as postmaster of Louisville, all in the face of sharp criticism. "My object was to end the war --," he said, "restore confidence in the South in the justice and good will of a Republican Administration. The army was withdrawn because I believed it a constitutional duty and a wise thing to do." And with the exception of Boynton, he claimed, there was no original supporter of pacification who did not now support it. He denied, and it was clearly a sore point with him, that the "tried Republicans at the South were totally abandoned. As for charges that his policy had all but ruined the Republican party in the South, he protested that the "practical destruction of the Republican organization in the South was accomplished before" his southern strategy was announced or his civil service order was issued.³

Although he and Garfield had just finished fighting Democratic attempts to amend federal election laws through the use of riders, he was by no means ready to abandon his pacification policy. When it came time to appoint a successor to Postmaster Key, who had been appointed to federal judgeship, Hayes was determined to choose a well known southerner. He seriously considered three men: Joshua Hill of Georgia, James Alcorn of Mississippi and Horace Maynard of Tennessee. He finally settled on the latter. According to John Sherman,

³Hayes Diary, April 11, 1880, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 595.

Hayes also wished to "recognize the conduct of Gen. Longstreet as one who, having served in the rebel army, had fairly acquiesced in the results of the war and had acted as a true Republican."⁴ He ultimately appointed Longstreet to fill Maynard's old post as minister to Turkey.

During July, Hayes gave a good deal of thought to civil service reform. Perhaps, he thought, he should point out in his final message that real reform could not be achieved without the aid of legislation. When The Nation attacked his approach to reform in its July 8th issue, he was a bit perturbed. "Agreeing with The Nation on this subject," one diary entry ran, "I would like to make it clear to all such friends of the reform, that public opinion and Congress must be right on the question before we can have a thorough and complete Reform. The President has neither time, nor authority, neither means nor men, to gather the information required to make appointments and removals." Earlier, while listing twenty areas in which his administration had "been successful in a marked degree" Hayes had made this assessment of his reform endeavors:

In fine, I have not done as much to improve the system and methods of the civil service as I hoped and tried to do, but I have improved the service in all of its branches until it is equal to any in the world -- equal to that of any previous Administration. Look at its purity, efficiency, freedom from scandals, and decide as to its merits.⁵

⁴John Sherman to J. Hill, May 22, 1880. Sherman Papers. Letterbook.

⁵Hayes Diary, July 9; 11 and April 11, 1880, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 608, 609, 597.

While acknowledging that Hayes had improved the service somewhat, The Nation had scolded him for using his appointive power "lavishly to reward party and personal services." He had been especially generous in rewarding those men -- "good, bad, or indifferent" -- who had a hand in his gaining office. The reformers were left feeling betrayed, The Nation continued, believing along with the spoilsmen that Hayes's reforms lacked support, were impermanent and would not outlive his administration. Moreover, it charged, the supposedly effective rules laid down in both the Post Office and Treasury departments, rules in which Hayes took such pride, had been violated with regularity.⁶

Ardent reformers like John Jay, George W. Curtis and Jacob Cox had long since become impatient with Hayes's approach to reform. Writing to Cox in May 1878, Curtis had wondered when the President would, in a special message outlining "a reasonable system," call upon Congress for legislative action. "I think you hit the nail squarely," he continued, "in saying that he has broken up one system without establishing another. This leaves him open to the charge of a peculiarly personal administration." Indeed, the last two years of Hayes's administration generally bear out this assessment. In a letter to Schurz in 1878, John Jay reported that "great disappointment has been expressed at the non-appearance of the Special Report on Civil Service Reform which the President last year

⁶The Nation, XXIX (Sept. 11, 1879), 168.

announced to Congress as presently forthcoming." Even though the Democratic majority prevented congressional action, it was imperative that a proposed system be brought before the public.⁷

Hayes returned to the subject of reform in three successive and lengthy mid-July diary entries. As was his custom when critics touched a sensitive nerve, he reviewed the subject historically, rationalized his deficiencies and called attention to his achievements -- all in the privacy of his journal.⁸ These confidential expositions relieved tensions, buttressed his self-confidence and reassured him of the wisdom of his conduct -- and all without ever going before the public on the subject. Such an act would have been repugnant to and out of character for Hayes, while his diary offered a far more acceptable -- and comfortable -- outlet for his private thoughts.

It was obvious that Hayes was certain he could carry reform little further. The principle features of a thoroughgoing reform could not be enacted in the face of House and Senate opposition, he told his diary. The burden of guilt, so to speak, lay with Congress and not with the chief executive. Only with congressional cooperation could the reformation be made truly "radical, thorough, and complete. . . ." He noted approvingly what Garfield had said on this subject:

⁷George W. Curtis to Jacob Cox, May 3, 1878. Cox Papers. John Jay to Carl Schurz, Nov. 7, 1879.

⁸Hayes Diary, July 12; 13 and 14, 1880, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 610-11, 611-12, 612-13.

"Experience has proved that with frequent changes of Administration, no system of reform can be made effective and permanent without the aid of legislation." But he admitted, Congress would not be moved to take effective action until forced into it by public opinion.⁹

The initial and principle step toward an effective and thorough reconstruction of the system, Hayes insisted, would be the abolition of "congressional patronage," plus the restoration of those presidential appointive powers that Congress, notably the Senate, had seized. A major aim of his efforts had been to "break down . . . congressional patronage, and especially Senatorial patronage." And despite intense opposition and all manner of hostility, he recorded proudly that he had enjoyed "great success." Even so much as an attempt at congressional dictation had ended, he continued, and his exclusive claim to fill executive appointments was implicitly recognized. He had concluded, it appears, that he could forward the cause of reform "in no way so effectively as by rescuing the power of appointing to office from congressional leaders."¹⁰

Beginning with the selection of his cabinet in the face of widespread congressional criticism, he had repeatedly challenged Congress. Thus he had asserted his authority and independence until he could now appoint a "collector of the

⁹Hayes Diary, July 13, 1880, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 612.

¹⁰Hayes Diary, July 14, 1880, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 612-13.

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¹⁰James M. Hays, July 14, 1880, in Williams, ed., Hays and
Letters of Hays, III, 642.

¹¹James M. Hays, July 15, 1880, in Williams, ed., Hays and
Letters of Hays, III, 642-43.

port and a postmaster at Philadelphia almost without a suggestion even from Senators or Representatives! Is not this a good measure of success for the Executive to accomplish almost absolutely unaided in Congress?" he asked.¹¹ This then, was Hayes's answer to the criticisms voiced by the reform brethren. He had set out to reach a goal that he believed to be an essential prerequisite for a comprehensive and drastic reform effort. It was a politically realistic goal and under the circumstances, an attainable if transitory achievement. When it came to reform, he had determined to take half a loaf rather than none, unlike his stand on resumption and riders. He counted on his strategy to hasten the growth of reform sentiment in Congress and among voters. Moreover, it was also the approach which he personally favored and which not only reflected his political philosophy, but brought into play the strongest features of his character and personality. The issues involved seemed clear-cut and indisputable to Hayes and, unlike Garfield, he appeared to be wholly free of any doubts that his was the 'right' side in the struggle.

It comes as no surprise that when Garfield's letter of acceptance appeared, Hayes was not entirely satisfied. Garfield had "made a mistake in not speaking more explicitly on the civil service," Hayes observed. He then made a characteristic reference to politicians' tendency to "trim, to talk so equivocally as to have the benefit of opposing nobody," which

¹¹Hayes Diary, July 14, 1880, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 613.

was, he concluded censoriously, "contemptible." As for himself, he habitually spoke on public issues "squarely and with distinctness" if he spoke at all. And while he did not question the correctness of the candidate's true reform views, he believed his letter did raise some disturbing questions. A month later, perhaps mirroring his evaluation of Garfield's character and moral courage, he agreed with William Henry Smith that the letter was not forceful. But, he added, "his speeches . . . are good and we must bring to the front his record."¹²

Unlike Garfield, Hayes failed to appreciate the degree of polarization within Republican ranks or that his administration was a burden as well as a boon to the candidate. Certainly there were those who feared that Garfield might continue Hayes's civil service policies unchanged. Thus Garfield felt compelled to frame a letter of acceptance that would allay such fears, unite rather than distract his party and heal wounds incurred during the struggle for the nomination. He was determined that neither Stalwarts nor Half-Breeds should have grounds for complaint. So he had in effect modified the platform's civil service plank by declaring that he would confer with men "whose knowledge of the communities in which the duties are to be performed best qualifies them to aid in making the wisest choice" when making appointments. As he told

¹²Hayes Diary, July 19, 1880 and Hayes to William H. Smith, Aug. 19, 1880, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 614, 622.

Whitelaw Reid, he had "paid all to the regulars that they . . . (could) reasonably ask" and in the process had "considerably tried the temper of the independents."¹³

Garfield answered critics of his civil service reform statement by calling attention to his record on the subject, for he was obviously angered by their tendency to treat his letter as if he had "never spoken before." Thus he told Schurz that no congressman had "said or done more in behalf of real reform" than he had. What is more, he was seeking to "shift the battleground from the person of the appointee to the principles on which the office shall be held. He assured the mildly critical John Sherman that he had no intention of retreating on the issue, but was "fully persuaded that Congress" should attack the subject and establish tenure standards so as to end capricious removals.¹⁴

Garfield was clearly eager to correct Independent Republicans' notions concerning his reform declaration. He asked Burke Hinsdale to write a letter to The Nation or better yet persuade E. L. Godkin to adopt his view of civil service reform. Moreover, he would like to see an article covering these views, which were as follows:

Earnest as Pres. Hayes' efforts have been -- he has made the mistake of merely antagonizing Congress -- and trying to effect a reform without legislative aid. I would shift the line of battle and, by presenting in a message a well considered plan of civil service, urge its adoption by Congress as law.

¹³Whitelaw Reid to Garfield, June 26, 1880 and Garfield to Whitelaw Reid, July 21, 1880. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

¹⁴Garfield to Carl Schurz, July 22, 1880 and Garfield to John Sherman, July 2, 1880. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

This would perhaps include a four year term for clerks, specific rules governing removals and provisions shielding them against removal for any other reasons. He believed this approach would "bring all the reform sentiment of the county to bear upon Congress, and would sooner or later result in a law which would greatly narrow the field of uncertainty, that now makes the life of an appointer so miserable." Moreover, this would have a permanence that mere executive action did not offer.¹⁵

Obviously, Garfield still did not see eye to eye with Hayes on civil service reform. As for Hayes's order banning participation of civil servants in caucuses and conventions, this not only interfered "with the lawful rights of citizens," but placed "the badge of political disability" upon them, he contended. And while his letter of acceptance was no attack on Hayes, he insisted that officeholders should not be denied the rights of all citizens. Briefly, he had attempted "to lift the movement for reform to a higher line which should harness Congress into the work of making a permanent betterment of the service." He also considered that Hayes had erred in standing against consultation with congressmen. He agreed that congressional dictation was wrong, but better presidential appointments could be made after consultation. If Independent Republicans adopted these views, they could make his

¹⁵Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, July 25, 1880, in Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Letters, pp. 454-55.

"lead effective for good." If they took it to be "a surrender to the machine" they would "hurt the cause and cripple" him.¹⁶

Although he was discreet, Hayes did not hesitate to offer Garfield campaign advice and analyses from time to time. In a mid-June memo, he had defined the issues of the campaign. First, there was attempt, "in Congress, in the Supreme Court and in the Country at large to re-establish the State Rights doctrine of Calhoun and the Rebellion" against the determined resistance of the GOP. Second, there was the fact that a Republican administration and its measures had brought prosperity to both the government and the people. Thirdly, he believed the campaign should focus on the "character, life, and Services" of its candidate.¹⁷

Later, as the campaign began to gain momentum, Hayes expressed his conviction that Garfield could speak out with maximum effectiveness on what he called the congressional Democrats' sanctioning of "the practical nullification of the Fifteenth Amendment." But, he cautioned, probably with the Stalwarts in mind, it must "be calmly done." He should, for example, call attention to the Democratic platform and the wholesale denial of the Negro's political rights in South Carolina, Louisiana and Mississippi. One could easily demonstrate, he continued, that because of the Fifteenth Amendment's virtual

¹⁶Garfield to Burke Hinsdale, July 25, 1880, in Hinsdale, ed., Garfield-Hinsdale Letters, pp. 455-56.

¹⁷Hayes to Garfield, July 16, 1880. Garfield Papers.

nullification, the GOP had in recent years been denied control of both houses of Congress. Moreover, the South's failure to keep its promise to uphold this amendment was "the cause of the failure of all efforts towards complete pacification. It is on this hook that the bloody shirt now hangs," Hayes sternly insisted.¹⁸

It was true enough that during the greater part of the post re-construction era, Hayes's party lacked the political power necessary to guarantee the civil rights amendments. However, Hayes did initiate a southern policy that placed greater emphasis on building white Republican strength in the South while conserving, perhaps augmenting, the black vote. And at least during his own administration, he did not join the growing number of northerners who agreed generally with those southerners who claimed that the freedman was as yet unprepared for full citizenship. Nor did he accept the related notion that genuine sectional reunification and inter-sectional economic development required the elimination of the divisive element in American political life -- the Negro.¹⁹ He was not, as one recent study has claimed, reverting to bloody shirt tactics,²⁰ but he did feel that he had been betrayed by some southerners and he was prepared to make the

¹⁸Hayes Diary, July 21, 1880, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 615.

¹⁹Vincent P. De Santis, Republicans Face the Southern Question: The New Departure Years, 1877-1897 (Baltimore, 1959), pp. 74-75.

²⁰Hirshon, Farewell to the Bloody Shirt, pp. 45-61.

question of equal political rights for all citizens a major campaign theme.

How would Hayes solve the persistent racial and economic problems plaguing his country? Education was the answer -- "universal education," in which the federal government would play a significant role, and here, too, he and Garfield were in essential agreement. Education, not the bloody shirt it turned out, was the motif of a speech by Hayes at a great reunion of Ohio soldiers later in August. He summarized his remarks in this manner:

. . . I tried to show that to complete the victory gained by the Union arms it was necessary that the means of education should be amply provided for all parts of the country. Wherever universal education prevails in the United States, the results of the war are cheerfully accepted and the constitutional amendments embodying those results are inviolable. Ignorance is the enemy most to be dreaded by the friends of free government. Ignorant voters are powder and ball for the demagogues. The right to vote will lose its value in our country if ignorance is permitted to prevail in any considerable portion of it. The schoolmaster alone can abolish the evils which slavery has left in the South. Universal education is the only safe foundation for universal suffrage. Men cannot be fitted for the duties of citizenship in a republic without free schools. Jefferson said: 'Without education universal suffrage will be a farce and a tragedy, and perhaps both.' In too many instances elections are already the farce he predicted.

Therefore, he concluded, "let us hasten to provide for all our countrymen the means of instruction, that we may escape the tragedy which Jefferson predicted."²¹

Education and time, these were Hayes's (and Garfield's) studied answers to the southern problem. These ameliorative

²¹Hayes to "Dear Sir", Aug. 16, 1880, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 620-21.

forces offered the best hope for both black and white in that section. Education held the key to the South's economic, political and social problems and it alone would insure the permanence of our form of government. But many a Negro, believing that his race was being totally abandoned, reacted to Hayes's southern policy with growing suspicion and criticism. Nevertheless, they would continue to align themselves, when circumstances permitted, with the GOP and not with the Democrats or the Independents. Despite the real or apparent indifference of the Republicans toward the Negro in the post Reconstruction era, his best hope still lay with Lincoln's party rather than with the Democrats, wrote Frederick Douglass some years later.²²

Not only was Hayes full of optimism and ready with advice for Garfield as the campaign gained momentum, but he was also ready to contribute prudently to bringing off a Republican victory. He tried to promote party harmony through his appointments during this period, especially in key states like Pennsylvania. Although he advised Garfield that reports that he would take to the stump in California during his trip to the West Coast that summer were erroneous, he was sure he could help out and would gladly do so. However, it would not involve "improper, or questionable methods." Hayes also cautioned Garfield, confidentially, to avoid the inkstand like the plague -- "write no letters to strangers, or to anybody else on politics."²³ Garfield did not heed this bit of advice,

²²DeSantis, Republicans Face the Southern Question, p. 87.

²³Hayes to Garfield, July 23 and 26, 1880. Garfield Papers.

but carried on a most extensive political correspondence throughout the campaign. For unlike Hayes during the 1876 presidential contest, Garfield played a very active role in managing affairs all through the summer and fall.

Most Republican leaders (including Garfield) considered New York's vote crucial to the party's success and early in the campaign Garfield came under heavy pressure to make a trip to New York City to assuage Conkling and his faction. But the candidate was most reluctant to undertake such a fence-mending trip at any time. He resisted advice to go East early in July, a move which Hayes believed "would have been almost suicide."²⁴ Later that month, Garfield declared to Hayes that while the New York meeting was "greatly against . . . his judgment," he was persuaded that it would be "perilous" to reject the counsel of the National Committee. However, he would go only "on the condition that Mr. Sherman & leading men of all shades of republicanism" should be in attendance. Would Hayes, on his behalf, ask Sherman to be in New York City on August 5? He assured the President that he would make no concessions to "sulking" New Yorkers, that he would not offer any Republican.²⁵

He was undoubtedly worried about the reaction of Independent Republicans to the proposed conclave. He remarked that although Independents were already "disappointed and worried" by what they called his capitulation to party Regulars

²⁴Memoirs of Thomas Donaldson, July 10, 1880.

²⁵Garfield to Hayes, July 31, 1880. Smith Papers. Notes on the Garfield-Conkling controversy. Almon F. Rockwell Papers. Library of Congress.

in his letter of acceptance, they had stood by him nonetheless. Might not a New York parley "positively alienate" the very faction whose votes might decide the election's outcome?

"This is the one question that gives me panic," he confessed.²⁶

Nevertheless, a variety of circumstances made the New York trip imperative. Conkling's forces feared a replay of the Hayes administration, Garfield was told, and of losing their position as "the Republican party of New York." They also feared that Schurz would be carried over into Garfield's cabinet and were especially fearful that Sherman would again head the Treasury. Moreover, reconciliation was significant insofar as raising a substantial amount of campaign funds among New York capitalists was concerned.²⁷ Not only was Stephen Dorsey (Secretary of the Republican National Committee) pressing for the meeting, but for some time he had been laying the groundwork for it. Thus any backing off by Garfield became nearly impossible. Dorsey's presumption in arranging for and then announcing the meeting angered some party leaders, including Blaine, Marshall Jewell (Chairman of the Republican National Committee) and W. E. Chandler. In fact, "as an original question," Garfield was told, they would have advised him not to come East.²⁸

²⁶Garfield to James G. Blaine, July 30, 1880 and Garfield to William Chandler, July 26, 1880. Garfield Papers. Letterbook.

²⁷Whitelaw Reid to Garfield, July 30, 1880; Charles Henry to Garfield, July 26, 1880 and William Chandler to Garfield, July 24, 1880. Garfield Papers.

²⁸Stephen Dorsey to Garfield, July 25, 1880 and William Chandler to Garfield, July 28, 1880. Garfield Papers.

Garfield made over two dozen brief and 'safe' speeches enroute to and from the August 5th gathering and while in New York City did his best to reassure New York's Regulars that they and their chief would be fairly treated. As it turned out, Conkling chose not to be among the bevy of party leaders of every hue who gathered at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. Although Garfield conferred with Conkling's lieutenants, he was piqued by his behavior. But he came away better aware of Conkling's waning strength, secure in the knowledge that he had made a generous and conciliatory gesture and feeling that if he had made the trip "without mistakes" he would be pleased. Unfortunately, the participants came away with conflicting views of just what the meeting had settled. Conkling's men believed that New York party leader and banker, Levi Morton, stood a good chance of becoming Garfield's Treasury chief and that New York's patronage would be in the hands of its Regulars. Garfield came away with no such understanding. While he believed that "probably much good had been done," he felt sure in his own mind that he had participated in "no trades" and that "no shackles" bound him.²⁹

With but few exceptions, the collection of assessments went merrily forward during the campaign in spite of Hayes ban on such activity. Jay Hubbell, Chairman of the Republican Congressional Committee, wrote to Garfield complaining that

²⁹Garfield to Hayes, Aug. 18, 1880. Smith Papers. H. Wayne Morgan, From Hayes to McKinley: National Party Politics, 1877-1896 (Syracuse, 1969), p. 109 and Garfield Diary, Aug. 7, 1880. Garfield Papers.

Schurz's stand against assessments in his department would cost them \$100,000 because the example would injury fund raising elsewhere. By late August, Hubbell was complaining to Garfield that he could not "even think of the Interior Department without using cuss words." They ought, he said, to have raised \$20,000 there, but would not realize \$5,000. In mid-October, Hubbell wrote to Sherman complaining that he was without money to pay campaign bills, after going all out to aid the campaign in Ohio and Indiana. He needed \$20,000 within a week to ensure a Republican majority in the next House. Would Sherman do what he "consistently" could do to have the Treasury Department "pay up this week," he asked.³⁰ Obviously assessments upon federal office holders were still commonplace. It was reported for example, that levies upon postal employees ranged from three per cent to seven per cent of their salaries. In Garfield's own state, congressional and national committees had assessed all federal personnel while turning a deaf ear to pleas to leave some room for state assessments.³¹

As the campaign moved into the late summer, the President and the man who would succeed him continued to agree on most campaign issues. In a letter to an Iowa correspondent, Hayes quoted approvingly from these remarks of Garfield's during

³⁰Jay Hubbell to Garfield, July 8; Aug. 23 and Oct. 18, 1880. Garfield Papers.

³¹H. S. Neal to William Chandler, Oct. 2, 1880. Chandler Papers. Springfield Daily Republican, Oct. 26, 1880, p. 4 and George Nash to Garfield, Aug. 19, 1880. Garfield Papers.

...a stand against...
 ...the example...
 ...late August, Robert...
 ...that he could not "even...
 ...without using such words."...
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1880. Garfield Papers.
 311. 3. Letter to William Chandler, Oct. 2, 1880. Chandler
 Papers. Garfield Daily Republican, Oct. 28, 1880, p. 4 and
 George Mark to Garfield, Aug. 19, 1880. Garfield Papers.

his visit to New York City: "These veterans of the war meet tonight to stand guard around the sacred truths for which we fought." What were these truths, asked Hayes rhetorically? They were "national unity, the supremacy of the National Government, and the equal rights for all men before the law." The inviolability of the union had been permanently established and although federal supremacy was still questioned and challenged by some, it seemed certain to be accepted and sustained. Hayes thought, however, that one could not deny "a dangerous practical denial" of the Fifteenth Amendment. "One of the most cogent arguments in favor of extending the right of suffrage to the freedman was that it would furnish them with the means of self-protection, he told his Iowa friend. But experience had shown that the grant of suffrage "to be effective, must be wielded by the skill and intelligence which training and education alone can give." Thus to insure and protect equality, America must take another step and provide that education for all its citizens "without which wise and honest self-government" was not possible. Hayes earnestly wished to see New England's concept of universal education become a national commitment, institutionalized and legislatively guaranteed.³²

By August, the campaign was becoming more heated and, contrary to the standard interpretation, the tariff question had already emerged as a significant issue. For example,

³²Hayes to Frank Hatton, Aug. 24, 1880 and Hayes Diary, Dec. 8, 1880, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 623-24 and 629.

his visit to New York City: "I found many of the
 English to stand around the streets and
 'thoughtful'. What was there to think of?
 They were 'national unity', and
 ... and the equal right
 the inviolability of the ...
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 ... have thought, ...
 ... practical demand ...
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 of violence to the ...
 with the means of self-protection ...
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Interviews with Frank Hutton, Aug. 24, 1980 and Roger Daley,
 Dec. 2, 1980, in Williams, ed., *Party and People of New England*,
 III, 223-24 and 229.

Pennsylvania's State Committee was trying to reach industrial workers with a campaign song entitled "The Workingman's Guide" which assured them that Garfield and Arthur favored the protective tariff. They were further advised to protect themselves by rejecting free trade -- for it was protectionism that had brought an increase in their wages and full employment. And from Ohio's Mahoning Valley, Garfield was informed that the tariff issue would seriously hurt the Democrats among the laborers there. The National Committee was also beginning to emphasize the tariff issue. They began to send out more tariff material and prepared an appeal to labor and business interests on the grounds that rising wages and prices had come thanks to Republican protectionism. Edward McPherson, Secretary of the Republican Congressional Committee, informed Garfield that he was preparing some "special" tariff documents to be used in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and other industrial states.³³

The Republicans continued their emphasis on the tariff issue -- apparently to good advantage. Jewell thought that even Democratic businessmen were becoming increasingly uneasy about Democratic control. The tariff for revenue only plank had begun to hurt the Democrats and the GOP was quick to take advantage of the situation. Their national committee made ready to distribute a tariff tract containing a government

³³H. E. Gordon to Garfield, Aug. 28, 1880; B. S. Higley to Garfield, Aug. 28, 1880; Marshall Jewell to Garfield, Aug. 26, 1880 and Edward McPherson to Garfield, Aug. 21, 1880. Garfield Papers.

Pennsylvania's State Committee was again active in the
 efforts with a campaign book entitled "The Tariff
 which assured them that tariff reform was
 feasible tariff. They were then in
 action by rejecting free trade
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Mr. E. Gordon to Garfield, Aug. 28, 1880; R. B. Wiley
 to Garfield, Aug. 28, 1880; Marshall Jewell to Garfield, Aug.
 28, 1880 and Edward Norton to Garfield, Aug. 21, 1880.
 Garfield papers.

comparison of wage rates in the United States with those in Europe. One hundred thousand copies in English and fifty thousand in German had been ordered, for Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Connecticut were calling "very loudly" for such literature. From Cleveland, Edwin Cowles reported that he had prepared a tariff circular playing upon the theme of high tariff -- high wages and vice versa and had distributed twenty thousand copies in English and German. He and his people also hoped to publish a weekly paper emphasizing the tariff issue, in English, German and Bohemian editions during the duration of the contest.³⁴

Their unexpected defeat in Maine shook the Republicans, although Blaine for one had warned Jewell not to "believe the bragging of the papers or the stump orators" who visited him. Jewell blamed poorer business and labor conditions there than elsewhere for the defeat, but assured Garfield that he would now arouse businessmen and get them to open their purses. Indeed, businessmen disturbed by the Maine defeat did begin to contribute generously to the Republican effort. It was at this point that Blaine apparently recommended that the party drop the bloody shirt and take up protection as the main issue.³⁵

The tariff issue did come to the front increasingly in

³⁴Marshall Jewell to Garfield, Sept. 7, 1880 and Edwin Cowles to Garfield, Sept. 11, 1880. Garfield Papers.

³⁵Marshall Jewell to Garfield, Sept. 14, 1880 and William C. Hudson, Random Recollections of an Old Political Reporter (New York, 1911), p. 112.

...of wage rates in the ...
 ...One hundred thousand ...
 ...in Germany had been ...
 ...New York and ...
 ...From ...
 ...had prepared a ...
 ...at high tariff -- high ...
 ...and twenty thousand ...
 ...the people also hoped to ...
 ...the tariff issue, in ...
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 ...Their unexpected ...
 ...through Maine for one ...
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 ...elsewhere for the latest, ...
 ...now since businessmen ...
 ...last, businessmen ...
 ...contribute generously ...
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 ...stop the bloody shirt ...
 ...The tariff issue did ...

Manuscript to Garfield, Sept. 14, 1880 and
 to Garfield, Sept. 11, 1880. Garfield papers.
 Manuscript to Garfield, Sept. 14, 1880 and
 to Garfield, Sept. 11, 1880. Garfield papers.
 Boston (New York, 1911, p. 112.

Ohio, Indiana and New York, while the sectional issue received less attention. It appeared to Jewell that the GOP campaign was "settling down largely into a tariff fight" while the Democrats concentrated on personal attacks, i.e., the accusations that had been brought against Garfield involving the DeGoyler pavement contract and Credit Mobilier during the 1870's.³⁶ The candidate himself urged the pushing of the business question, especially the tariff issue, while not overlooking or overdoing the "solid South" argument. Indeed, it was reported that in a state like Vermont, the bloody shirt still seemed most effective.³⁷

It was the tariff question that was given special attention by the Republicans, who continued to make much of the Democrat's tariff for revenue only plank. Moreover, Hancock's October 7th statement, declaring the tariff to be essentially a local issue, played into the Republican's hands. Jewell assured Garfield that in both New Jersey and Connecticut the campaign was centering on the 'business issue' and audiences seemingly never tired of hearing the tariff question discussed. Jewell claimed that if New Jersey, Connecticut and New York were carried it would be on the tariff question. The Maine setback had aroused the business community and "set them

³⁶Springfield Daily Republican, September 28, 1880, p. 4; September 29, 1880, p. 4; October 4, 1880, p. 4 and Marshall Jewell to Whitelaw Reid, Sept. 27, 1880. Whitelaw Reid Papers. Library of Congress.

³⁷Garfield to John Sherman, Sept. 25, 1880. Sherman Papers. Springfield Daily Republican, September 7, 1880, p. 4.

to thinking," another correspondent told Garfield.³⁸ Indeed, Wharton Barker reported that his Philadelphia businessmen's committee had raised \$60,000 by early October, nearly two-thirds of which had gone west, while one-third of the \$30,000 gathered by the Union League had been similarly dispatched. A week later, he reported that they had raised and used some \$105,000. "The business, tariff fight . . . had done the work" and the businessmen were with them, Barker reported, pleased with the change in campaign strategy.³⁹

Following GOP victories in Indiana and Ohio (where they gained six House seats), it was commonly stated that the tariff question had been the "chief issue" that had changed votes in those states. However, the southern question, fear of a change and an appreciation of the Hayes administration had also played significant roles in these states, it was claimed. On the other hand, a friend of Hayes admitted that it was "surprising how many Republicans are out with the present Administration." He had discovered that in many a district, it was "the heaviest load the party . . . had to carry."⁴⁰

Although Hancock's October 7th tariff statement undoubtedly hurt the Democrats, it was probably offset in some states by the Morey Letter which appeared two weeks later. This

³⁸Marshall Jewell to Garfield, Oct. 8 and 15, 1880 and Thomas McLain to Garfield, Sept. 27, 1880. Garfield Papers.

³⁹Wharton Barker to Garfield, Oct. 7 and 16, 1880. Garfield Papers.

⁴⁰Springfield Daily Republican, October 18, 1880, p. 4 and Richard McCormick to Garfield, Sept. 18, 1880. Garfield Papers.

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 annual fees had raised \$80,000. A
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- 1. Kearney's Journal to Garfield, Oct. 8 and 15, 1880 and
 Thomas Nelson to Garfield, Sept. 27, 1880. Garfield Papers.
 - 2. Barker's Report to Garfield, Oct. 7 and 18, 1880. Gar-
 field Papers.
 - 3. Garfield's Daily Republican, October 18, 1880, p. 4
 and Richard McCord to Garfield, Sept. 18, 1880. Garfield
 Papers.

letter, purportedly in Garfield's hand, announced his opposition to the restriction of Chinese laborers emigrating to the United States. Democratic leaders initially believed it to be genuine and made generous campaign use of it. It soon became apparent, however, that the document was a forgery and the use of such a tactic even drew fire from Democratic papers.⁴¹ Garfield's loss of California and Nevada may have been due to this letter, but his opposition to unilateral restriction had been well known since 1879. Moreover, since it was generally accepted as a forgery in most papers some days before the election, it probably worked to his advantage in the key November states.

As it was, Garfield's popular margin was less than 10,000 votes, although he won an impressive 214 to 155 electoral victory. To no one's surprise, New York, where the Democratic nominee for mayor or New York City probably lost that state for Hancock, decided the election's outcome. But the presence of a Greenback candidate in the field and the renewal of the charges brought against Garfield during the 1870's served to reduce his margin and kept him from winning a popular majority. Despite Hayes's hopes to the contrary, the South went solidly for Hancock. The GOP did, however, improve its showing over that of 1876 and although it lost Delaware, New Jersey, Nevada and California, it was by a margin of only some 4,100 votes. The Republicans also took control of the House for the first time since 1874, but could control the Senate only with the

⁴¹Morgan, From Hayes to McKinley, pp. 118-19.

aid of two Independents. The victory not only confirmed Hayes's belief in the political wisdom of his course as president, but reassured him that his policies enjoyed majority approval. Garfield attributed his victory chiefly to "distrust of the solid south, and of adverse financial legislation" should the Democrats take over.⁴² He was also aided by his record and reputation as a veteran public servant, his rise from humble circumstances and by the manner in which he had handled himself during the campaign. And surely the Republican's use of the tariff issue aided their cause in a most significant way.

Soon after the election, Hayes visited Mentor where he expressed his great pleasure at the election's outcome. If Hayes was quick to take some credit for the victory, Garfield was equally quick to recognize the President's contribution. Whatever his critics might say Hayes had "given the country a very clean Administration and his party . . . (had) not been handicapped in the late contest by any scandals caused by him," Garfield wrote in his diary. Later that month during a visit to Washington, Garfield conferred at length with Hayes on such matters as retirements, appointments and White House personnel.⁴³

While Garfield began the difficult and delicate task of putting together a cabinet, Hayes presented his final annual

⁴²Morgan, From Hayes to McKinley, p. 120 and Garfield to John Sherman, Nov. 4, 1880. Sherman Papers.

⁴³Garfield Diary, Nov. 4 and 24, 1880. Garfield Papers.

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⁴³ Morgan, From Hayes to McKinley, p. 180 and Garfield to
 Mrs. Garfield, Nov. 4, 1880. Garfield Papers.
⁴⁴ Garfield to Mary, Nov. 4 and 24, 1880. Garfield Papers.

message to Congress. In it he once again focused upon the violation of the Negro's constitutional rights in the recent elections. He asserted that such violations had "perhaps, not been manifested in the recent elections to any great extent in acts of violence or intimidation." Nevertheless, the opponents of full political rights for the Negro had, by practicing fraud relative to every phase of the election process, successfully defeated his use of the right that preserved all others -- the right to vote -- a privilege constitutionally guaranteed to the freedman, he warned Congress.⁴⁴

The right of every qualified citizen to cast his ballot without restraint and to have it properly recorded was still the fundamental issue, his message continued. Once this matter was correctly decided, the United States would be freed of a heritage of discord and such issues as economy and efficiency in government, internal improvements, the tariff, taxes, education, finance and questions of similar significance would then receive the attention they deserved. It was apparent that by 1880 Hayes believed the Negro question was serving to distract the government and the people from giving proper attention to significant contemporary issues of more recent origin.⁴⁵

Hayes insisted that the determination to maintain citizen's

⁴⁴Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the Presidents, VII, 601.

⁴⁵Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the Presidents, VII, 601-02.

constitutional rights remained strong and would remain the federal government's major concern. "Happily, the history of the late elections shows that in many parts of the country where opposition to the fifteenth amendment has hitherto prevailed it is diminishing, and is likely to cease altogether if firm and well-considered action is taken by Congress," he said. He again called upon the House and Senate to see that their members were fairly elected before seating them. Meanwhile, he would, if given adequate financial support, "prosecute unsparingly" those who had violated the constitutionally guaranteed rights of other citizens. Effective action depended upon congressional cooperation, which Hayes knew would not be forthcoming.⁴⁶

After treating civil rights, Hayes turned his attention to education, calling it "the best and surest guaranty of the primary rights of citizenship. . . ." He insisted that universal suffrage must be "supported by universal education." So convinced was he that public education deserved the country's serious consideration, that he called upon Congress to make supplemental grants of land, and, if need be, cash, to school funds in those states with large numbers of enfranchised, but uneducated citizens.⁴⁷

Civil service reform was given more attention than any

⁴⁶Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the Presidents, VII, 602.

⁴⁷Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the Presidents, VII, 602-03.

other subject dealt with in this final message. For the third time during his administration, he asked for congressional cooperation in the effort. Definite rules regulating the appointment, promotion and removal of civil servants were imperative, Hayes warned Congress, in order to insure equal treatment of all applicants "and the most economical and efficient administration of the public business." His justification of reform on the basis of economy and efficiency put Hayes in step with many a progressive reformer of the early 20th century. He bolstered his argument for reform by citing the experiments at New York's Custom House and Post Office and pronounced their results to be most valuable. He reasoned that the procedures developed there might "be fairly considered conclusive (and) should be extended to all subordinate positions."⁴⁸

Although Hayes took much pride in 'breaking up' the assessments system, at least one expert had his doubts about the effectiveness of Hayes's efforts. On February 19, 1881, in compliance with the Hayes's request of December 4, 1880, Dorman Eaton submitted his long-awaited report to the President -- a 123 page document entitled The "Spoils" System and Civil Service Reform in the Custom House-and Post-Office at New York. In this thorough appraisal, Eaton reported that removals at the Custom House were no longer being made for "partisan or merely political reasons" and agreed with the President's favorable evaluation of the results of the competitive

⁴⁸Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the Presidents, VII, 603.

When subject dealt with in this manner, the
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 party political reasons" and agreed with the President's
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 system.

82
 Messers and Hayes of the President.

examination system which had appeared in his messages of 1879 and 1880. But he criticized the rules used in New York for failing to go even as far as Grant had in an 1872 executive order in which he had banned assessments. In the 1880 contest, Eaton claimed, both the GOP and the Democrats tried in the most determined and arrogant manner to compel federal office holders to accept a system of assessments. Such demands were made by national as well as state committees, the former insisting on an assessment amounting to three per cent of federal postal and custom's employees' earnings. As Hayes's own Vice-President recalled in his memoirs, a "New York justice took a room at the Astor House, took off his coat, sent for all the clerks in the post office across the street, and levied a tax on each." In this campaign the GOP Congressional Campaign Committee, using traditional methods, was reported to have collected over \$100,000 from federal civil servants alone.⁴⁹

Garfield began preparing for his presidency immediately after his victory. From that point on, he was preoccupied with the task of constructing a cabinet designed to insure a harmonious and successful administration. During a visit to Washington in early November, he had conferred with Sherman about his future and had a very frank discussion with a prime cabinet prospect, James G. Blaine. A bit later, Hayes reported that Blaine was "favorably spoken of" for the State

⁴⁹Dorman B. Eaton, The "Spoils" System and Civil Service Reform in the Custom-House and Post-Office at New York (New York, 1881), pp. 64, 79. Quoted in Fowler, The Cabinet Politician, p. 172.

Department "in all quarters" and although predicting a declination, he suggested that Garfield make the offer. After satisfying himself that Blaine would not use the post "as a camping-ground for fighting the next presidential battle," Garfield chose him to head the State Department. Thus Blaine, his faction and New England had been recognized and rewarded.⁵⁰

When the choice of Blaine became known, the more difficult task of filling the Treasury post became still more onerous. Here, the claims of Conkling and his people who wished to control the great economic and patronage power of the Treasury combined to ensure a protracted and sharp contest for this post. Much to his annoyance, Garfield had discovered that Morton and other Conklingites believed that he had committed himself to appointing a New Yorker (probably Morton if he wished it) to the Treasury. Garfield rejected this contention. He believed that such an appointment would create "a congestion of financial power" at the nation's money center that would greatly upset the West. He observed to his diary that the "collection & management of revenue should be kept as far apart as possible." Hayes entered the picture by remarking that if he knew Garfield's choice for Secretary of the Navy, he would appoint him then to replace the resigning Charles Thompson. Perhaps, he thought, this position would "suit Morton & the N. Y. muddle." Although pressure on Garfield to fulfill the 'understanding' concerning Morton and the

⁵⁰Garfield Diary, Nov. 27, 1880 and copy by Joseph Stanley Brown from Garfield Memo Diary, Nov. 27, 1880. Garfield Papers.

Treasury mounted, he remained firm. So far Conkling seemed well disposed toward the incoming administration and Garfield was ready to meet him halfway, but without giving up the control of presidential prerogatives. He seemed as determined as Hayes to maintain executive privileges.⁵¹

As Garfield wrestled with the problem of factionalism within his party, he found himself agreeing with Blaine's grouping of the GOP into the following three units: the Blaine faction, the Grant faction and the Independents. Garfield thought that while the first group was the party's "chief force," the Grant men could "not be ignored or neglected" and that he must recognize and deal with them fairly without shackling himself in the process. As for the Independents, their methods were most impracticable, but they included a class of voters who should be kept within the GOP and some effort should be made to hold them fast. He recognized their able service in the election and hoped to rally all supporters of civil service reform behind a drive to get Congress to enact legislation defining and establishing the tenure of most minor offices and the criteria for removal. This was necessary so as to save congressmen and the president from the hordes of petty office-seekers.⁵²

Shortly after his election, Garfield was unavoidably

⁵¹Garfield Diary, Nov. 27, 1880; Hayes to Garfield, Dec. 16, 1880; Garfield Diary, Dec. 20 and 19, 1880. Garfield Papers.

⁵²James G. Blaine to Garfield, Dec. 10, 1880 and Garfield to James G. Blaine, quoted in Gail Hamilton, Biography of James G. Blaine (Norwich, 1895), pp. 490-91, 493.

Hearty mounted, he remained there, and will disengage toward the incoming party, all ready to meet him halfway, and the last of substantial preparations. It was to maintain executive order. As Garfield wrestled with the issue within his party, he found a group of the GOP into which he went, the Grant faction. He found that while the Grant faction, "the Grant man could be trusted," he must recognize and acknowledge himself in the matter. Their methods were most largely those of voters who should be first should be made to hold their own. He served in the election and helped to secure the use of civil service reform before the election. He was not to exact legislation defining what was necessary to do so to have Congressmen and the President. The burden of party office-seekers. Shortly after his election, Garfield was unavoidably

²¹Garfield's diary, Nov. 27, 1880; Hayes to Garfield, Dec. 18, 1880; Garfield's diary, Dec. 20 and 19, 1880. Garfield's diary.

²²James G. Elaine to Garfield, Dec. 10, 1880 and Garfield to James G. Elaine, quoted in *John Hamilton, Biography of James G. Elaine* (Norwich, 1892), pp. 430-31, 432.

drawn into another situation involving John Sherman. Both Governor Foster and Sherman were maneuvering for Garfield's Senate seat and their sparring match threatened to end in a politically bloody head-on clash. Many people looked to Garfield to settle the problem amicably. However, he had been putting off certain cabinet decisions precisely because he was determined not to interfere in several other senatorial contests then in progress in spite of heavy pressure to the contrary. He let it be known that he would remain neutral in this contest, too, although he admitted to his diary that Sherman's defeat would leave him where he could scarcely "accept anything else." With him out of office, there would arise a "dissatisfaction in Ohio, dangerous to the party," whereas Foster's withdrawal would insure harmony. And while Garfield observed that it would be difficult to find an equally able successor to Sherman, yet his retention in the Treasury would create many "serious resulting embarrassments."⁵³

Foster's withdrawal in mid-December before the contest reached the legislature left Garfield greatly relieved. Years later, Foster explained that, according to Sherman, Garfield had asked the latter whether he preferred to stay in the cabinet or return to the Senate. Sherman took this to mean that Garfield did not really want him for the cabinet and so he declared in favor of the Senate for that reason. Foster also understood Garfield to be asking him not to bid for the Senate

⁵³Richard Smith to John Sherman, Dec. 1, 1880. Sherman Papers. Garfield Diary, Dec. 8, 1880. Garfield Papers.

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 Governor Foster and Sherman were both in the same
 place and their argument was about the same. Sherman
 continually played head-on against Foster's
 plan to settle the problem and to make it
 possible for certain soldiers to be
 determined not to leave the
 service in progress. Sherman
 said it was his duty to do so. He
 said, too, that Sherman's
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 understood Garfield to be asking him not to bid for the Senate

when he advised Foster that it would be unwise to "superannuate Mr. Sherman."⁵⁴

During January and February, Garfield's preoccupation continued to be cabinet making. He was not lacking for advisors and advice as he struggled to heal party rifts, forestall further divisions and weigh the many claims made upon him. For example, although Hayes was careful to point out that Nathan Goff, who had replaced Thompson as Secretary of the Navy, did not expect to be retained under Garfield, he, Goff would make a good appointee. However, Goff did expect to be reappointed to the District Attorneyship he had resigned at Hayes's request and which Hayes had held open for him. "I hope you will see no objection to this," Hayes told Garfield.⁵⁵

The problem of satisfactorily recognizing New York continued to be a major one for Garfield. Like it or not, Garfield was drawn into the struggle between Conkling and his opponents in New York's Republican party. Eager as he was to give some satisfaction to the Conklingites, Garfield refused to succumb to the growing pressure to give Morton the Treasury, even when Conkling himself visited him at Mentor. He would not name Morton to "more than the war or the Navy." Over Conkling's objection, he offered the Attorney-Generalship to Judge Charles J. Folger, a Conkling man, only to have

⁵⁴Garfield to Charles Foster, Dec. 15, 1880. Garfield Papers. Letterbook. Charles Foster to Charles Henry, Nov. 25, 1895, quoted in Henry, Captain Henry, p. 515.

⁵⁵Hayes to Garfield, Jan. 8, 1881. Garfield Papers.

him decline late in February. He thereupon turned to Morton with the Navy post, in the hope of yet satisfying New York Stalwarts, and received his acceptance just before starting for Washington on February 28.⁵⁶

But Garfield's cabinet-making problems were destined to plague him beyond inauguration day. As a result of pressure from the Conkling faction, Morton declined the Navy post on March 2. Garfield then turned to Louisiana's William Hunt to fill the position. Hayes had offered a favorable evaluation of Hunt some weeks earlier, apparently at Garfield's request. Garfield's selection of New York City's reform postmaster, Thomas James, only served to further antagonize Conkling, although James was a Conkling man. On the other hand, Robert Lincoln's selection as Secretary of War was generally satisfying, especially to the Illinois Grant faction. Wayne MacVeagh's appointment as Attorney-General pleased Pennsylvania's Independents without provoking his in-laws, the Camerons. Finally, although William Allison of Iowa had agreed to take the Treasury on March 3, he "broke down" on Garfield the following day and was replaced with William Windom of Minnesota. It was "not an ideal cabinet," Garfield admitted, but it was "a good combination of esse et videri."⁵⁷

While Garfield was struggling with cabinet problems, Hayes was advising his old friend Guy Bryan that never had anyone

⁵⁶Garfield Diary, Feb. 16, 1881. Garfield Papers. Smith, Life and Letters of Garfield, II, 1082-87.

⁵⁷Hayes to Garfield, Jan. 28, 1881. Garfield Papers. Smith, Life and Letters of Garfield, II, 1091-98.

left the White House with fewer regrets, fewer disappointments and less resentment, nor with a greater feeling of personal contentedness with the outcome of his administration than he did. He admitted that his term had been filled with difficulties and troubles at first, but now he was sailing along on calm seas and beneath sunny skies.⁵⁸

His successor was scarcely optimistic concerning his life in the White House. "I must confront the problem of trying to survive the Presidency -- or as it is said of criminals -- live it down," Garfield had written despondently in December.⁵⁹

And even Hayes, as he looked back upon his term, admitted that he and Lucy would leave Washington "gladly" although they had "upon the whole enjoyed" their stay. Yet they disliked the burdens, the discomforts and the distressing personal sufferings they could not relieve. There was, moreover, the ever-present threat of scandalous or criminal behavior on the part of men they were forced to trust and the presence of so much else that stood in the way of pleasant and contented living. Therefore to retire from their prominent position to a free, independent and safe life on their estate in "obscure" Fremont would cause no regrets. Nor had Hayes forgotten two of his most implacable critics while recording these thoughts, adding that were there "any two men in the country whose opposition and hatred . . . (were) a certificate of good character

⁵⁸Hayes to Guy Bryan, Jan. 1, 1881, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 632-33.

⁵⁹Garfield Diary, Dec. 11, 1880. Garfield Papers.

and sound statesmanship, they . . . (were) Conkling and Butler." He was undoubtedly sincere when he declared he enjoyed "the satisfaction of being fully endorsed by the hatred and opposition of both of these men."⁶⁰

On the other hand, he was quite disturbed by rumors that Garfield would abandon the temperance stand taken by the Hayeses. As he put it in his journal, he was "no fanatic" on the issue and did not "sympathize with the methods of the ultra temperance people." He opposed temperance legislation, believing the cause would be "most surely promoted by moral, religious, and educational influences and by the influence of example." His diary explanation for the banning of wine and liquor from the White House neatly illustrates the mixture of idealism and political expediency that underlay much of his presidential policy. The step was taken for the reason that it was "right, wise, and necessary" and in response to "the large support given . . . (him) by sincere friends of the temperance reform." And last, but not least, it was done because he thought it would aid the party by winning converts "from the political Temperance party" and would prevent the defection of many (Republicans) who would otherwise leave . . . to join" that party. If Garfield was to abandon Hayes's stand, he would suffer politically and personally. He would appear to "lack the grit to face fashionable ridicule," Hayes

⁶⁰Hayes Diary, Jan. 16, 1881, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 637-38.

contended, returning once more to a favorite theme.⁶¹

The President even went so far as to prepare a memorandum for Garfield, outlining reasons for keeping the White House dry. The drinking American was "in danger of becoming the victim of drunkenness, licentiousness, and gambling," he warned his successor. Moreover, a rejection of the reform would rejuvenate the Prohibition party which had nearly disappeared from view and "give it votes enough to put in jeopardy the Republican ascendancy in Maine, New Hampshire, Connecticut, New York, Ohio, Indiana, and perhaps thirty northern congressional districts." The political implications of the issue were obviously very significant to Hayes. He cautioned Garfield that to abandon the reform would "seriously damage . . . (his) personal reputation and . . . political prospects." At this point, he cited the widespread support of his position by the Protestant establishment and "the friends of education and temperance. . ." Finally, he sought to drive home the issue's political significance with the following candid advice:

You as a professing Christian and lay preacher will be regarded as lacking the courage of your convictions if you abandon it. It will be said quite as much by men of the world as by others that you lack the grit to face fashionable ridicule. That you can't afford. The general wish is that you have two terms. You will surely be renominated if you wish to be, or I am much mistaken. You can't be elected, however, if you so deal with this question that from five to ten per cent of the Republican voters are diverted to Temperance candidates in the great States of the North.

⁶¹Hayes Diary, Jan. 16, 1881, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 638.

Your duty to the Republican party is to let well enough alone on the subject. The moment you reject the reform it becomes a political question which in the hands of the Temperance leaders will surely take from us States and congressional districts which we can't spare.

But if the matter were left unchanged, Hayes asserted, dissension would be negligible; none would be "seriously offended" and many would be pleased.⁶²

As his term drew rapidly to a close, Hayes again reflected on the troubles that began with his inauguration. He wrote in his diary that Democratic extremists had excoriated him as an imposter, while ultra-Republicans had attacked him for being ungrateful and traitorous. He now appeared certain, however, that he was leaving office with the favor, thanks and the endorsement of the "best people" the country over, regardless of party ties. To his own surprise, he reflected with satisfaction, he had retained a solid and sustaining belief that he could form and lead a government which would meet the nation's needs and gain its support.⁶³

Meanwhile, Garfield was contemplating his term of office with anything but pleasure. "Few people would believe that I go away (from Ohio) with great sadness," he told a close friend, "but such is the fact. I know I am bidding good-bye to my old freedom, and to many good friends -- whose countenances and counsels I shall miss -- and worst of all, I know very many

⁶²"Memorandum for Garfield", Jan. 17, 1881, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 639-40.

⁶³Hayes Diary, Jan. 23, 1881, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 640.

of them will be disappointed in me, and some will be alienated." He would be "compelled to live in great social isolation," he observed, predicting that almost all who now come to him would want some favor they believed he could or ought to give them. This would embitter "the pleasure of friendship," he lamented. A longtime friend noticed that he "never seemed the same man after he was nominated for President." Garfield enjoyed "happy moments" this friend recalled, "but they soon gave place to that depression of spirits which would cling to him in spite of all." Sensing his melancholy, Hayes tried to cheer him with the assurance that his cabinet selections had removed "all sinister doubts" and that "an able and happy Administration" was a certainty. Your troubles "are all over now," he told the President.⁶⁴ Unfortunately, they had only begun.

Of the many commendations Hayes received from the hundreds of visitors to the White House during his last days in office, he was especially pleased with the clergy's compliments. "The burden of the talk on all sides," his March 2nd journal entry ran, "is a clean, honest, independent, and successful Administration."⁶⁵ This had been Hayes's aim when he became president and he left Washington certain in his own mind that he had achieved his purpose.

⁶⁴Garfield to Harmon Austin, Feb. 7, 1881. Garfield Papers. Charles Henry quoted in Henry, Captain Henry, pp.296-97 and Hayes to Garfield, Mar. 6, 1881. Garfield Papers.

⁶⁵Hayes Diary, Mar. 2, 1881, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, III, 648.

and then will be disappointed in me, and will think
 it would be "conspired to live in the" [illegible]
 reserved, thinking that almost [illegible]
 and some have they believe [illegible]
 This would smother "the [illegible]"
 A Justice friend advised that [illegible]
 after he was nominated for [illegible]
 "because" this friend would [illegible]
 expression of spirit which [illegible]
 feeling his melancholy, [illegible]
 words that his cabinet [illegible]
 "and that" an [illegible]
 "Your troubles" [illegible]
 last. Unfortunately, [illegible]
 Of the many connections [illegible]
 death of violence to the [illegible]
 office, he was especially [illegible]
 "The burden of the [illegible]" [illegible]
 "a clear, [illegible]" [illegible]
 "This was [illegible]" [illegible]
 became president and he left Washington [illegible]
 that he had achieved his purpose.

Garfield to Henry Austin, Feb. 7, 1881. Garfield
 papers. Garfield Henry quoted in Henry, Captain Henry, pp. 295-97
 and Henry to Garfield, Mar. 6, 1881. Garfield papers.

Henry Garfield, Mar. 2, 1881, in Williams, ed., Henry and
Letters of Henry, III, 648.

EPILOGUE

Garfield entered upon his duties with anything but a light heart and the events of his brief tenure only served to accentuate his feeling of foreboding. It was a burdensome and crisis ridden four months. He was plagued by a veritable horde of office seekers and compelled to meet Conkling's challenge in the matter of New York appointees as had Hayes. Garfield was determined to recognize the Empire State's Stalwarts led by Conkling, without forgetting the Independents led by William Robertson, who had declined to back Grant at Chicago and instead had supported Blaine and then Garfield. He, like his predecessor, also wished to assert his independence of the imperious Conkling. After first naming several Conklingites to New York posts, he assigned the prize, the collectorship of the port of New York, to Robertson, without consulting Conkling.

This action touched off a harsh and protracted contest reminiscent of the Hayes-Conkling struggle. Once again Conkling turned to his brother senators for aid. But the conciliatory efforts of a specially formed GOP caucus committee were to no avail, for Garfield would not withdraw Robertson's name. As he put it, he wished a quick answer to the question of whether he "was a registering clerk of the Senate

or the Executive of the government."¹ This was the essence of Hayes's position during his contest with Conkling.

Although Hayes had no intention of returning to politics in any capacity, his interest in public affairs would remain as keen as ever. He obviously found great pleasure in discovering any event or statement that could be construed (sometimes with difficulty) as endorsing his administration. Naturally he followed the work of the Garfield administration with considerable interest. Given his pride in and evaluation of his achievements at the New York Custom House, it does not come as a surprise that he should view Merritt's removal as collector and reassignment as Consul at London with disfavor.

As the struggle entered its second month, it became evident that Conkling would press for the confirmation of his men and then bring about the Senate's adjournment before Robertson's appointment could be acted upon. Garfield shrewdly countered by withdrawing his Conklingite appointees, virtually forcing the Senate to face up to the Robertson question. Thereupon, New York's Senators, Conkling and Platt, resigned their seats, anticipating justification through quick re-election. This was an act of desperation, and only served to emphasize the erosion of Conkling's power and the imminence of his defeat. Indeed, the Senate lost no time in confirming Robertson and after a long struggle at Albany, both Conkling and Platt were defeated for re-election. Garfield had won a signal victory and his personal and political stock soared.

¹Garfield Diary, April 30, 1881.

Many of the doubts concerning his moral courage evaporated.

Hayes viewed the affair with mixed emotions. Following Conkling's and Platt's resignations, he observed that it was "a wretched business. They make a strong point in claiming that to remove Merritt is a violation of the President's principles as laid down in his inaugural message, and of all sound principles on the subject." Yet, he admitted, it was important to settle the question of senatorial courtesy, for it was the "first step toward clearing the way for a reform of the service." This almost reconciled him to Merritt's removal.²

Although Garfield's abbreviated administration seemed dominated by his struggle with Conkling, its achievements were not limited to this area. Thus, Secretary of the Treasury Windom, with Garfield's support, achieved a notable victory in refunding over \$600,000,000 worth of bonds at a one and one-half to two per cent interest rate savings. At the State Department, Blaine, given a relatively free hand, continued the Hayes policy on the Panama Canal question, while his nascent Pan-Americanism gave promise of a brilliant secretaryship. In the Post Office, the reform-minded James pursued an investigation of frauds perpetrated in the administration of the Star Routes in sparsely populated Western areas.

The New York Times had been pressing for an investigation of the frauds when James took office and after receiving Garfield's permission to pursue the task to a conclusion, James

²Hayes Diary, May 18, 1881 and Hayes to Manning Force, May 21, 1881, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 19.

and Attorney General MacVeagh set to work. Garfield observed that he was "surprised that it could so long have escaped the attention of the Hayes Administration."³ His initial response was to simply remove Second Assistant Postmaster-General Thomas Brady, the man implicated in the frauds, but following his cabinet's advice Garfield asked for and received Brady's resignation. Brady struck back by publishing Garfield campaign-time letter to Jay Hubbell asking how the fund raising was going among federal employees and calling upon Brady for help in the Post Office Department. MacVeagh warned the President that the investigation might strike highly placed men, might cause the loss of the GOP's majority in the Senate and injure men who insisted that Garfield was "under personal obligations to them for services rendered during the campaign -- one person (Brady) in particular who . . . asserted that without his management you could not have been elected." But Garfield reportedly ordered them to "go ahead regardless of where or whom you hit" and not simply "probe the ulcer to the bottom, but . . . cut it out."⁴ He gave the investigation his steady support.

When the Star Route affair broke, Hayes commented in almost apologetic tones in his diary that while Congress had ample means and great powers, he had neither the "means to

³Garfield Diary, April 14, 1881.

⁴Quoted in Smith, Life and Letters of Garfield, II, 1158.

take testimony or compel witnesses to testify."⁵ Hayes was obviously troubled that the scandal might threaten the purity of his administration and referred to the subject in several diary entries and letters. Since he had relied so heavily on First Assistant Postmaster General James Tyner, he was pleased that he was as yet unaccused, but admitted that "all agree that Key was honest but unexperienced and too confiding." Hayes complained that his enemies were now attacking him for failing to discover and put an end to the frauds. However, upon taking office, it was believed that the Post Office was honestly and efficiently run. Postmaster-General Tyner had had "large experience," Hayes wrote, "and was capable and efficient (and also had supported Hayes at Cincinnati and was a friend of Morton's)."⁶ Brady enjoyed the same reputation, he noted, therefore he did not wish to change what seemed to be in sound condition. As the investigation dragged on, Hayes wrote that he would not make denials or explanations until the situation required it. "Haste to deny or explain is always a sign of weakness," he concluded smugly.⁷

Hayes continued to show a lively interest in civil service reform and its progress under his successor. He also referred time and again to what he considered were his achieve-

⁵Hayes Diary, April 28, 1881, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 10.

⁶Hayes Diary, May 3, 1881, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 12.

⁷Hayes to "Dear Sir", May 3, 1881, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 14.

ments in that area and remained sensitive to criticism of them. The Nation always talked as if he had "but one thing to do, but one reform to establish, and as if men to aid were as plenty as blackberries," he complained.⁸ Hayes readily admitted that during his term he had wrought no miracles and that machine politics remained "deeply rooted" in the American political system.⁹ What is more, his references to the subject seem to re-enforce the notion that the major objective of his reform efforts was business-like efficiency.

Hayes was equally jealous of the good reputation of his administration in general and never seemed to tire of repeating, in diary entries and letters, his personal evaluation of what he had faced and what he had achieved. Some months after leaving office, he nicely summarized what he would repeat for years to come concerning his administration's accomplishments in these words:

The Administration came in with the Republican party discordant, disheartened, and weak. When the Administration closed, its party was united, strong, confident, and victorious. At its beginning the South was solid and the North divided. At its close the North was united and the South divided. At the beginning both houses of Congress had been lost. When it closed both houses were regained. I can say with truth: -- "I left this great country prosperous and happy and the party of my choice strong, victorious, and united. In serving the country I served the party."¹⁰

⁸Hayes Diary, March 11, 1881, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 3.

⁹Hayes to R. U. Johnson, Sept. 5, 1881, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 34.

¹⁰Hayes Diary, Dec. 29, 1881, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 58.

Following the shooting of Garfield, Hayes observed to Sherman that should the President recover, as he then (July) anticipated, the terrible event would "vastly increase the President's power and popularity." Stalwartism would lose power and "thus this great calamity may turn out well for the President and for the country." The public was now ready to back reform as it had not been during his administration. Therefore, Garfield could undertake any needed reforms with the assurance of full public support, Hayes asserted. But he seemed less certain that such would be the President's course.¹¹

As a member of The Garfield Monument Board, Hayes played an active role in raising funds for a suitable memorial structure and selecting its site. It was on his motion that the Board selected what was then an oat field on a ridge near the southern end of Lake View Cemetery as the location for the massive but unimposing Garfield Memorial. "From this point," Hayes wrote, "there is a noble view of the city and suburbs, and of Lake Erie for many miles. The monument will be like a city set upon a hill -- in sight from land and lake."¹² One can only regret that Garfield was not memorialized as Hayes would be -- with a handsome museum and library -- a research center set in a beautiful grove.

When in 1889 the monument's dedication was about to take

¹¹Hayes to John Hay, July 8, 1881, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 25.

¹²Hayes Diary, June 27, 1883, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 120.

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 When in 1889 the monument's dedication was about to take

¹ Hayes to John Hay, July 8, 1884, in Williams, ed.,
Hayes and John Hay, IV, 52.
² Hayes Diary, June 27, 1885, in Williams, ed., Hayes
and John Hay, IV, 130.

place, Hayes, who would preside at the affair, called upon Garfield's old friend, Jacob Cox, to deliver the dedication address. Cox was reluctant to do so because his recent speech on Garfield before the Army of the Tennessee had been given wide press coverage and been published in pamphlet form. Hayes would not take no for an answer. He pleaded with Cox to put aside his reservations in words that might well be applied to our other martyred Presidents:

I urged that justice to Garfield demanded of him the sacrifice of his feelings, that Garfield had suffered in two ways by the injudicious praise of those who knew him only in a general way. They had attributed to him powers and qualities which did not belong to him, and which all who knew him well thoroughly understood were not the truth about him. Others, his enemies, took advantage of these mistakes and the result is a belittling of his character and powers.¹³

Perhaps these comments, Hayes's last diary appraisal of a man whose political career was intertwined with his, may suffice to bring this study to a close.

¹³Hayes Diary, March 6, 1889, in Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Hayes, IV, 451.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

REPRODUCTION

OFFICIAL RECORD

REPRODUCTION

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

MANUSCRIPT MATERIAL

The papers of Garfield and Hayes are the most important sources for tracing their careers. All but a very small portion of the rich and extensive Garfield collection is in the Library of Congress, although a few items of value can be found in the Ohio State Historical Society and the Hayes Memorial Library. The Western Reserve Historical Society has a small collection of Garfield papers as well as scrapbooks for the presidential period. The even more extensive and equally valuable Hayes Papers are housed in the Hayes Memorial Library along with a very useful collection of microfilm selections from the papers of most of the public figures whose lives touched his. The more than six hundred volumes of John Sherman Papers in the Library of Congress are indispensable for an adequate understanding of GOP politics of his era.

Other manuscript collections that have been of considerable importance in this study include the William Henry Smith Papers in the Indiana Historical Society (microfilm copy, Hayes Memorial Library, hereafter cited as microfilm, HML) and the Ohio State Historical Society; the Murat Halstead Papers in the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio

MANUSCRIPTS

MANUSCRIPTS

The papers of Garrison are known for tracing their portion of the rich and extensive collection of the Library of Congress, and are located in the Ohio State Historical Society Library. The Western Historical Society has a small collection of Garrison papers for the presidential period. The Western Historical Society has a very useful library along with a very useful collection from the papers of most of the lives covered here. The more than 100 volumes in the library of Congress are located in the Ohio State Historical Society Library. The Western Historical Society has an adequate understanding of the collection of his papers. Other manuscript collections that have been of considerable importance in this study include the William Henry Smith papers in the Indiana Historical Society (microfilm copy), Hayes Memorial Library, hereafter cited as microfilm, HML, and the Ohio State Historical Society; the Murtel Halseid papers in the Historical and Ethnographical Society of Ohio.

(microfilm, HML); the James Comly Papers at the Ohio State Historical Society and the Jacob Cox Papers in the Oberlin College Library. Because of their long and intimate relationship, the Smith Papers are especially valuable for Hayes's entire career. The Comly collection is useful for Hayes's political activity through 1877, while the Halstead materials contain items of value for both Garfield and Hayes as well as Ohio and national politics. The Cox manuscripts include a few items of interest, especially as regards Hayes's civil service reform policy and his southern strategy. What we have in the way of Charles Foster Papers at the Ohio State Historical Society and the Western Reserve Historical Society shed considerable light on Sherman's drive for the presidency and Ohio politics. The same can be said of the Warner Bateman Papers in the Western Reserve Historical Society, a little used, but most helpful collection for anyone interested in John Sherman. The Memoirs of Thomas Donaldson in the William Henry Smith Papers in the Indiana Historical Society are a mine of information and opinion on the Hayes-Garfield years and deserve to be edited and published.

Other papers of lesser importance, but nonetheless of value for certain aspects of this study or for general background information include the Chester Arthur Papers, Library of Congress (microfilm HML); the Benjamin Bristow Papers, Library of Congress (microfilm HML); the William Chandler Papers, Library of Congress (microfilm HML); the Joseph Hawley Papers, Library of Congress; the Carl Schurz Papers, Library

of Congress (microfilm HML) and the Elihu Washburne Papers, Library of Congress. Some valuable insights into Garfield's personality and political history can be gained from the papers of his longtime friend Charles Henry in the Hiram College Library. The Toledo Public Library's collection of Clark Waggoner Papers have been largely unexploited, but they deserve greater attention for the light they shed on Ohio and national politics from the viewpoint of a newspaperman and federal officeholder.

PRINTED PRIMARY MATERIALS

Although the greater part of the extensive papers left by Hayes and Garfield must be consulted in manuscript form, a significant portion have been or are being edited and published. Thus in Charles R. Williams, ed., Diary and Letters of Rutherford B. Hayes (5 vols.; Columbus, 1924) one can find most of Hayes's diary along with most of his important letters. Valuable as this edition is, some of its diary entries are incompletely reproduced, Williams has made corrections in Hayes's spelling and grammar and there are almost no explanatory notes. More recently, T. Harry Williams has edited the diaries for the presidential period as Hayes: The Diary of a President, 1875-1881 (New York, 1964). This edition reproduces the diary entries exactly as they are in manuscript, including crossed out words and sentences, misspellings and errors in grammar. Garfield's diary during the period 1848-1874 has been edited

with extraordinary care and thoroughness by Harry J. Brown and Frederick D. Williams as The Diary of James A. Garfield (2 vols.; East Lansing, 1967). The remainder of the Garfield Diary will be forthcoming. Two editions of Garfield letters have appeared thus far. Mary L. Hinsdale, the daughter of Garfield's close friend Burke Hinsdale, has ably edited Garfield-Hinsdale Letters: Correspondence between James Abram Garfield and Burke Aaron Hinsdale (Ann Arbor, 1949). Frederick D. Williams, ed., The Wild Life of the Army; Civil War Letters of James A. Garfield (East Lansing, 1964) skillfully introduces and edits an especially important body of Garfield correspondence. Burke A. Hinsdale's The Works of James A. Garfield (2 vols.; Boston, 1882) contains Garfield's most important written and spoken efforts. Finally, correspondence between John and William T. Sherman edited by Rachel S. Thorndike in The Sherman Letters (New York, 1894) helps to bring the views and relationship of these famous brothers into clearer focus.

No study of politics during the Hayes-Garfield years can afford to overlook the Congressional Globe and the Congressional Record and of course these sources are indispensable for a adequate appreciation of Garfield's long congressional career. A careful and disinterested reading of this record not only gives one a 'feel' for the political currents of the era, but undermines the notion that national politics during the Gilded Age were characterized solely by expediency, irresponsibility, indifference and hypocrisy. James D. Richardson, ed., A

with extraordinarily broad and extensive knowledge of the
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 Age were characterized solely by expediency, irresponsibility,
 selfishness and hypocrisy. James D. Richardson, ed., A

Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897 (10 vols.; Washington, 1907) is a necessity for anyone seeking to understand Hayes's conception of presidential powers and responsibilities.

SECONDARY WORKS

Several books dealing with postwar politics have influenced the development of this dissertation. For the immediate postwar years, Kenneth Stampp's The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877 (New York, 1965) is a superbly developed and lucidly written interpretation, while in David Donald's The Politics of Reconstruction, 1863-1867 (Baton Rouge, 1965) the author undertakes an interesting experiment in the use of statistical techniques to unravel the complexities of reconstruction politics. In the New American Nation Series, John Garraty imaginatively explores the economic, political and social-intellectual history of The New Commonwealth, 1877-1890 (New York, 1968). Even more recently H. Wayne Morgan has reassessed post reconstruction politics with style and penetration in From Hayes to McKinley: National Party Politics, 1877-1896 (Syracuse, 1969).

Biographical studies that have contributed to a better understanding of the subjects of this study include Charles R. Williams, The Life of Rutherford Birchard Hayes (2 vols.; Boston, 1914) and the much superior Harry Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes and His America (Indianapolis, 1954). This well

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 was working to understand the American people and their responsibilities.
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 written interpretation, which is the basis of the American people.
 of Reconstruction, 1863-1865 (New York, 1935) 10 vols.
 makes an interesting study of the American people to unravel the American people.
 In the New American National History, the American people, the American people, the American people.
 history of the American people, the American people, the American people.
 Even more recently R. Wayne Brown has written a book on the American people.
 Reconstruction politics with style and grace in the American people.
History of the American People, 1863-1865 (New York, 1935) 10 vols.
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written study, the product of very thorough research, concentrates on Hayes the man rather than Hayes the politician. Theodore C. Smith's The Life and Letters of James Abram Garfield (2 vols.; New Haven, 1925) is a generally uncritical, but indispensable work that should be supplemented by Robert G. Caldwell's more critically interpretive James A. Garfield; Party Chieftian (New York, 1931). Captain Henry of Geauga; A Family Chronicle (Cleveland, 1942), Fredrick Henry's delightful biography of his father, Garfield's good friend, Charles Henry, sheds light on Garfield, his friends and Ohio politics. Volumes IV and V of The History of the State of Ohio, Eugene H. Roseboom's The Civil War Era, 1850-1873 (Columbus, 1944) and Philip D. Jordan's Ohio Comes of Age, 1873-1900 (Columbus, 1943) provide one with an adequate survey of the entire Ohio scene.

Several monographs and biographies for the period from the nomination of Hayes for the presidency through the settlement of the disputed election proved to be helpful. The penetrating examination of Convention Decisions and Voting Records (Washington, 1960) by Richard C. Bian were most revealing for the GOP gathering of 1876 and that of 1880, too. Frank B. Evans sheds some very important new light on the role of Samuel Randall and Pennsylvania in the settlement of the disputed election in his Pennsylvania Politics, 1782-1877: A Study in Political Leadership (Harrisburg, 1966). In Henry Watterson; Reconstructed Rebel (New York, 1956), Joseph F. Wall offers a convincing re-evaluation of Watterson's part in this episode.

Both studies supplement and qualify C. Vann Woodward's Reunion and Reaction; The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction (2d. ed., rev.; Garden City, 1956), a brilliantly executed, but too sharply drawn analysis of the settlement of the disputed election of 1876. Finally, the closing scenes of the Grant administration and something of the opening scenes of the Hayes administration can be followed through Allan Nevins, Hamilton Fish; The Inner History of the Grant Administration (New York, 1936).

The southern problem, civil service and the money question have each attracted considerable scholarly attention. C. Vann Woodward's Origins of the New South, 1877-1913 (Baton Rouge, 1951) is the premier work on its subject. In Republicans Face the Southern Question: The New Departure Years, 1877-1897 (Baltimore, 1959), Vincent P. DeSantis presents a well-balanced treatment of the motives and policies of the GOP toward the South and the Negro. Stanley P. Hirshon's Farewell to the Bloody Shirt; Northern Republican and the Southern Negro, 1877-1893 (Bloomington, 1962) focuses on an important topic, but erroneously claims that Hayes abandons pacification for stalwartism by the middle of his term. The Hayes-Hampton relationship and this Redeemer's policies are well covered in Hampton Jarrell, Wade Hampton and the Negro; The Road Not Taken (Columbia, 1949). Ari Hoggenboom's Outlawing the Spoils; A History of the Civil Service Reform Movement, 1865-1883 (Urbana, 1961) is a critical study which thoroughly examines the motives (often political) and methods of the reformers,

including Hayes. Leonard D. White's The Republican Era, 1865-1900; An Administrative History (New York, 1958) covers the work and duties of the evolving federal bureaucracy and comments on the effects of civil service reform measures. A seldom-used, but valuable commentary on the Hayes-Conkling struggle can be found in Edwin A. Merritt's Recollection, 1828-1911 (New York, 1911). A full review of the reformer-spoilsman contest in New York City by a contemporary reformer is presented in Dorman Eaton's The "Spoils" System and Civil Service Reform in the Custom-House and Post-Office at New York (New York, 1881), while The Cabinet Politician; The Postmasters General, 1829-1909 (New York, 1943) by Dorothy G. Fowler contains a wealth of information on the operation of the spoils system and the campaign techniques of that era. Finally, for the money question, Irwin Unger's The Greenback Era; A social and Political History of American Finance, 1865-1879 (Princeton, 1964) answers almost any question one might raise on that subject.

The 1880 Republican convention and campaign are covered in Herbert J. Clancy, The Presidential Election of 1880 (Chicago, 1958), but they deserve fuller and more imaginative treatment.

Among those biographies of contemporaries of Hayes and Garfield that have been useful, often for general information and background, are: Leland L. Sage, William Boyd Allison; A Study in Practical Politics (Iowa City, 1956); George F. Howe, Chester A. Arthur (New York, 1934); Gail Hamilton (Mary A. Dodge), Biography of James G. Blaine (Norwich, 1895); David S. Muzzey, James Gillespie Blaine; A Political Idol of Other

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Days (New York, 1934); Leon B. Richardson, William E. Chandler, Republican (New York, 1940); Donald B. Chidsey, The Gentleman From New York; A Life of Roscoe Conkling (New Haven, 1935); James W. Nielson, Shelby M. Cullom; Prairie State Republican (Urbana, 1962); Oscar D. Lambert, Stephen Benton Elkins (Pittsburgh, 1955); Bernard Dyer, The Public Career of William M. Evarts (Berkeley, 1933); William B. Hesseltine, Ulysses S. Grant, Politician (New York, 1935); Harry J. Sievers, Benjamin Harrison, Vol. II: Hoosier Statesman (New York, 1959); H. Wayne Morgan, William McKinley and His America (Syracuse, 1963); Robert M. McElroy, Levi Parsons Morton; Banker, Diplomat, and Statesman (New York, 1930); Royal Cortissoz, The Life of White-law Reid (2 vols.; New York, 1921); Claude Fuess, Carl Schurz, Reformer (New York, 1932) and Alexander C. Flick, Samuel Jones Tilden; A Study in Political Sagacity (New York, 1939).

REMINISCENCES AND MEMOIRS

Certain recollections and autiobiographical works have been helpful in answering specific questions and providing general background information. Among them are: James B. Angell, The Reminiscences of James Burrill Angell (New York, 1912) which sheds light on Hayes and the Chinese question; James G. Blaine, Twenty Years of Congress; From Lincoln to Garfield (2 vols.; Norwich, 1884-1886); Jacob D. Cox, Military Reminiscences of the Civil War (2 vols.; Cincinnati, 1900); Chauncey M. Depew, My Memoirs of Eighty Years (New York, 1922);

John Foster, Diplomatic Memoirs (2 vols.; Boston, 1909) is enlightening on the Mexican problem and the State Department under Evarts; William C. Hudson, Random Recollections of an Old Political Reporter (New York, 1911) and John Sherman, Recollections of Forty Years in the House, Senate and Cabinet; An Autobiography (2 vols.; Chicago, 1895).

ARTICLES

One can scarcely undertake a study of Ohioans in state and national politics without becoming indebted to Clifford H. Moore's excellent "Ohio in National Politics, 1865-1896," Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, XXXVII (1928), 220-427. Several articles shed light on the years of Hayes governorship, among them Forrest W. Clouts, "The Political Campaign of 1875 in Ohio," Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, XXXI (1922), 38-97. Irwin Unger has considered the same campaign in his thoroughly developed "Business and Currency in the Ohio Gubernatorial Campaign of 1875," Mid-America, XLI (January, 1959), 27-39. The fullest and most recent evaluation of Hayes three terms at Columbus can be found in Daniel R. Porter's "Governor Rutherford B. Hayes," Ohio History, LXXVII (Winter, Spring, Summer, 1968), 59-75.

Among those articles that focus on the national scene during the Reconstruction years, John and LaWanda Cox have made a good case for the risks taken by the GOP in its support

of the Fifteenth Amendment in their "Negro Suffrage and Republican Politics: The Problem of Motivation in Reconstruction Historiography," Journal of Southern History, XXXIII (August, 1967), 303-30. One facet of the relationship between the two wings of the Democratic party in this era is explored in Albert V. House, "Northern Congressional Democrats as Defenders of the South During Reconstruction," Journal of Southern History, VI (February, 1940), 46-71. On a related subject, Hannah G. Roach makes an important contribution to understanding congressional voting patterns in "Sectionalism in Congress (1870-1890)," American Political Science Review, XIX (August, 1925), 500-26. In "The Contribution of Samuel J. Randall to the Rules of the National House of Representatives," American Political Science Review, XXIX (October, 1935), 837-41 considers a project in which Garfield played a significant role.

The period from Hayes's nomination through the settlement of the disputed election has attracted a good deal of scholarly attention. Kenneth E. Davison's "The Nomination of Rutherford Hayes for the Presidency," Ohio History, LXXVII (Winter, Spring, Summer, 1968), 96-110, is the most able and recent study of that event, while Edwin B. Thompson, "The Bristow Presidential Boom of 1876," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXII (June, 1945), 3-30, examines Bristow's failure at Cincinnati. An interesting explanation of Indiana's role in Blaine's defeat can be found in E. J. Edwards, "Reminiscences of James G. Blaine," Chautauquan, XVII (1893), 44-48. Hayes's choice of Key for his cabinet is considered in Albert V. House, "President

Hayes' Selection of David M. Key for Postmaster-General," Journal of Southern History, IV (February, 1938), 87-93. A wealth of detailed information on Louisiana's part in the settlement of the Hayes-Tilden contest may be found in Fanny Z. L. Bone, "Louisiana in the Disputed Election of 1876," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XIV (1931), 408-40, 549-66; XV (1932), 93-116, 234-67. This study should be supplemented by Benjamin F. Lathrop, "An Autobiography of Francis T. Nichols," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XVII (1934), 246-67 and Robert C. Tucker, "The Life and Public Service of E. John Ellis," Louisiana Historical Quarterly, XXIX (July, 1946), 679-770, which provide important information on the role and attitude of two key figures in the election settlement.

Hayes's new departure in southern policy has been most perceptively examined by Vincent P. DeSantis in "President Hayes's Southern Policy," Journal of Southern History, XXI (November, 1955), 476-94. For some insight into Hayes's view of the southern problem and his feelings toward that section, see Edward W. Winkler, ed., "The Bryan-Hayes Correspondence," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXVII (April, 1924), 305-328.

Among those articles that focus, at least in part, on the President's civil service reform efforts are: Lee Necomer, "Chester A. Arthur: The Factors Involved in His Removal From the New York Customhouse," New York History, XVIII (October, 1937), 401-10 and two articles by William Hartman, "The New York Custom House," New York History, XXXIV (April, 1953),

149-63 and "Pioneer in Civil Service Reform: Silas W. Burt and the New York Custom House," New York Historical Society Quarterly, XXXIX (October, 1955), 369-79. Edward Cary, "The Administration and Civil Service Reform," International Review, VI (March, 1879), 227-33 is a fair example of a reformer's critique of Hayes's experiments in civil service reform.

There are several enlightening articles on members of Hayes's cabinet. John Sherman was easily the major figure in the official family and a close friend and political confidant throughout the presidential years. Their special relationship is nicely surveyed in Jeannette P. Nichols, "Rutherford B. Hayes and John Sherman," Ohio History, LXXVII (Winter, Spring, Summer, 1968), 125-38. Her examination of "John Sherman and the Silver Drive of 1877-78: The Origins of the Gigantic Subsidy," Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, XLVI (April, 1937), 148-65 is most helpful on the silver issue during the Hayes administration and along with "John Sherman: A Study in Inflation," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXI (September, 1934) is enlightening as to Sherman the man, his views and his politics. The relationship between Hayes and the staunchest reform member of his cabinet is reviewed in Carl Wittke, "Carl Schurz and R. B. Hayes," Ohio Historical Quarterly, LXV (October, 1956), 337-55. Secretary of State Evarts did not impress at least one member of the diplomatic corps as can be seen in Paul Knaplund and Carolyn M. Clewes, eds., "Private Letters from the British Embassy in Washington to the Foreign Secretary Lord Granville, 1880-1885,"

Annual Report of the American Historical Association for 1941, I, 75-183.

After the death of Hayes in 1893, Jacob D. Cox and Murat Halstead, two men who knew him well, recalled the man and his administration in "The Hayes Administration," Atlantic Monthly, LXXI (June, 1893), 819-832 and "Recollections and Letters of President Hayes," Independent, LI (February 16, 1899), 486-89.

A perceptive review of the men who bid for the Republican presidential nomination in 1880 can be found in "Republican Candidates for the Presidency," Atlantic Monthly, XLV (April, 1880), 549-58. The claim that Garfield's nomination was due to Wharton Barker's management is detailed in the latter's "The Secret History of Garfield's Nomination," Pearson's Magazine, XXXV (May, 1916), 435-43. Barker's work on Garfield's behalf have been considered in Frank B. Evans, "Wharton Barker and the Republican National Convention of 1880," Pennsylvania History, XXVII (January, 1960), 28-43.

DISSERTATIONS

The growing number of dissertations with a late nineteenth century focus have contributed significantly to a re-evaluation of this era. Among those that this study has benefited from is David Abshire, "David McKendree Key; A Study in Reconstruction Politics" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Georgetown University, 1958), a sympathetic and often enlightening biography of Hayes's major southern appointee.

James H. Hays of the American Historical Association

1872-1952

after the death of Hays in 1952

and two men who knew him well

association in "The Hays Papers"

XXI (1951), 819-820

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Hays's family have been recorded

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 Washington University, 1958), a sympathetic and often en-
 lightening biography of Hays's major southern opponent.

One gains some insight into the rupture between Hayes and his party over his southern and civil service policies in Selig Adler, "The Senatorial Career of George Franklin Edmunds, 1866-1891" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1936). William Henry Smith deserves further treatment, if only because of his significance in Hayes's political life, although a competent survey of his activities can be found in Edgar L. Gray, "The Career of William Henry Smith, Politician-Journalist" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1950). William Hartman's thorough and well written study, "Politics and the Patronage: The New York Custom House, 1852-1902" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1952) makes a substantial contribution to an understanding of Hayes's reform efforts there, while Edward A. Huth presents a moderately helpful survey of the entire Hayes reform effort in "President R. B. Hayes; Civil Service Reformer" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Western Reserve University, 1943). James K. Kindahl offers a carefully developed analysis of the economic factors involved in resumption in "The Economics of Resumption; The United States, 1865-1879" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1958). James Comly is another important Hayes associate who deserves further attention, although Eugene Kleinpell, "The Life of James M. Comly" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1937) is a gracefully written and thorough study. In "The Congressional Career of William McKinley" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University

of California at Los Angeles, 1959), H. Wayne Morgan nicely captures the essence of the political maturation of this protégé of Hayes. The views and political activities of a major Negro spokesman and Hayes appointee are adequately dealt with in Benjamin Quarles, "The Public Life of Frederick Douglass" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1941). The man who was defeated by Hayes for the presidential nomination and was later embittered by Hayes's failure to recognize him as expected is the subject of Edwin B. Thompson's "Benjamin Helm Bristow" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1940). And finally, Upton S. Palmer evaluates and analyzes Hayes as a public speaker in his long and detailed "An Historical and Critical Study of the Speeches of Rutherford B. Hayes" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1950).

THE PRESS

Among the journals that have been of value, either in a general way or for their commentaries and analyses of events of the period covered in this study are the National Republican, a sharply partisan Republican paper that often found fault with both Hayes and Garfield; the New York Times; the New York Tribune; The Nation; the Springfield Daily Republican; the Cincinnati Daily Gazette and the Ohio State Journal. The Nation and the Tribune were generally sympathetic toward Hayes and his presidential policies, although they sometimes found him insufficiently liberal on such questions as southern

policy and civil service reform. The Gazette and the Journal reflected the views of editors who not only were well acquainted with Hayes and Garfield, but had played a role in their political rise.

1940-1941 and 1942-1943. The results of the
 1940-1941 season are shown in the table on page 329.
 The results of the 1942-1943 season are shown in the table on page 330.
 The results of the 1943-1944 season are shown in the table on page 331.





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