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L. Q. C. Lamar: Pragmatic Patriot.

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L. Q. C. LAMAR: PRAGMATIC PATRIOT.

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L. Q. C. LAMAR: PRAGMATIC PATRIOT

A Dissertation

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Louisiana State University and
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in partial fulfillment of the
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The Department of History

by

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ABSTRACT

L. Q. C. Lamar was born in Putnam County, Georgia in 1825. After graduating from Emory College and serving one term in the Georgia legislature, he migrated to Mississippi. At age thirty-two he entered the national legislature where he vigorously defended the South and slavery until he wrote Mississippi's secession ordinance and resigned from Congress to join the Confederate States of America.

Between 1861 and 1865 Lamar served variously as soldier, diplomat, and emissary for Jefferson Davis. Then during the early years of reconstruction he returned to Mississippi to practice law and to teach on the faculty of the university. Lamar did not actively enter politics again until 1872.

When the Mississippi Republican party conceded the first congressional district to the Democrats and reapportioned the state to secure the balance of the congressional delegation, Lamar came out of political retirement to accept his party's nomination. He won national acclaim when, following his election, he spoke eloquently for sectional reconciliation and good will in an eulogy honoring the radical Charles Sumner.

Thereafter, Lamar served as spokesman for the "redemption" of the South from Republican government. The Revolution of 1875 returned Mississippi to Democratic control, and Lamar helped negotiate the withdrawal of federal troops from the remaining Southern states. Believing that the election controversy of 1876-77 jeopardized civil order, Lamar sanctioned Hayes's succession with the understanding that the administration would treat the South leniently. Also in 1877, Lamar entered the Senate.

While Lamar endeavored to promote sectional good will, he supported a nationalistic program of economic development. He especially urged governmental expenditures for internal improvements which he considered vital to his section. Although nationalistic in his economic policy and in his efforts to end sectional enmity, Lamar never turned from his ante-bellum commitment to states' rights in politics and local administration. He tirelessly opposed use of federal force in policing Southern elections and in protection of the freedmen's liberties. He advocated recognition of the Negro's political and civil status under the war amendments, but insisted upon home rule.

Grover Cleveland recognized the South's role in his election and Lamar's political and economic viewpoint when he appointed the Mississippian to his Cabinet as Secretary of the Interior Department in 1885 and then to the Supreme

Court in 1888. During these last years of his life, Lamar continued to pursue nationalistic designs. He made noteworthy contributions to the expansion of government authority in various areas including the regulation of the public domain and the supervision of interstate commerce. He continued, nevertheless, to defend the states' rights political philosophy.

For many people Lamar's career came to embody an acceptable solution to the wearisome sectional questions of the late nineteenth century. His appointment to high national office provided a battleground for the struggle and proved to many that "Reunion" had at last been achieved. In the nationalistic upsurge of these years, the government and the people accepted Lamar's proposition of sectional reconciliation while permitting the South a large degree of political autonomy and latitude for dealing with social and racial questions. This solution which Lamar helped to achieve extended unchallenged into the twentieth century.

PROLOGUE

L. Q. C. Lamar's life was determined by a particular historical milieu. Any Lamar born in the early nineteenth century contracted certain privileges, obligations, and even burdens derived from the family's almost two centuries experience in America. Birth in Putnam County, Georgia, imposed responsibility for the family's honor and its future as well as commitment to public service. Lamars had done no less since the immigrants Thomas and Peter founded the family's fortune in Maryland and Virginia about 1660. From Huguenot France, they traveled to their destiny and predetermined that of generations to follow by seeking a new life in a new world.¹

The family moved from Maryland with an advancing line of civilization into the Carolinas and Georgia. In the process they partook of the American experience even as they helped to alter areas into which they moved. By the time of the Revolution Lamars were prepared to fight in the colonial cause. Some fought and died and others returned to their

¹Harold Dihel LeMar, History of the Lamar or Lemar Family in America (Omaha, 1941), 21; William Harmong Lamar, "Thomas Lamar of the Province of Maryland and a Part of His Descendants," in Southern History Association Publications, I (July, 1897), 203 (hereinafter cited as SHAP).

homes bearing tradition and pride with which future generations would have to live.²

The commitment to independence carried sectional as well as national overtones. The entire family moved south and westward in their restlessness for fortune and identity. They merged so completely with the peculiar qualities of a region that they became a kind of microcosm of an evolving system. The economic and cultural trappings thus acquired irrevocably bound the founders' sons to the section's destiny; and to a lesser degree the relationship worked also in reverse--the family shared responsibility for the section's history. The bonds forged upon family and section would survive the ultimate test, and failure, in the Civil War. And still the habit of leadership and responsibility persisted.

In his heritage, L. Q. C. Lamar was not especially different from other men in all sections of the country. His background did, however, set certain limits upon his potential achievement. He was born at a time when Southern influence in national councils was great, and this continued to be so into his early manhood. The scion of an important planter family easily made his way into governmental circles, first on the state level and then, at the age of thirty-two, into the national legislature. Indeed, there was no reason to

²Edward Mayes, Genealogy and History of Lamar and Related Families (Hattiesburg, 1935), 15, 20-23; LeMar, History of the Lamar Family, 38-49, 101-102; Lamar, "Thomas Lamar," in SHAP, I, 206-207.

doubt that national preferment might have fallen to such a person at an even higher level.

The sectional crisis and emergence of the Northeast as a dominant force altered Southerners' prospects. The pinnacle of planter leadership also marked the beginning of its decline. A career, begun auspiciously enough, tumbled with the South's fortunes in the Civil War. Thereafter such a man might rise, as Lamar did, to national office and influence, but he was denied access to the highest levels of authority. For Lamar, the time for greatness, in terms of power, never existed. The ultimate authority would not again, during the nineteenth century, come within the realm of possibility for Southern leaders. The commitment to leadership did not disappear, but the area in which that talent might be exercised had been largely circumscribed. A framework for judging L. Q. C. Lamar is thus suggested.

CHAPTER I

THE GEORGIA BACKGROUND

Members of the Lamar family first arrived in Georgia about 1759. Substantial land owners for generations in Maryland, they sold that property to acquire grants in other areas to the south. John Lamar and his brothers, grandsons of Thomas the immigrant, recorded the sale of several land tracts in January 1755. Taking his share John moved to South Carolina, where in 1757 he held a grant of three hundred acres. Two years later he removed to Georgia where he established himself as a planter.

John Lamar had five sons. The eldest fathered a son whom he called John. The younger fathered a daughter, Rebecca. John Lamar and Rebecca Lamar, first cousins, married and were the grandparents of L. Q. C. Lamar.¹

Little is known about John and Rebecca Lamar. It is claimed that they were wealthy, cultured, and owners of many slaves. Their nine hundred acre plantation on Little River in Putnam County, Georgia, provided the traditional "homeplace" for several generations of Lamars, and here L. Q. C. Lamar

¹Mayes, Genealogy and History, 20, 23, 25; LeMar, History of the Lamar Family, 101-102; Lamar, "Thomas Lamar," in SHAP, I, 206-208.

was born in 1825.² Since his own father was not a planter, this background partially provided the aura of the plantation South which helped to make Lamar's public image.

Of John and Rebecca Lamar's children, two were important in their own right as well as in the life of L. Q. C. Lamar. Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar was their most illustrious son. Migrating westward to Texas, he participated in the Texas Revolution and emerged a military hero and a founding father. In consequence of his service, Lamar succeeded Sam Houston as President of the Republic of Texas. After annexation by the U. S., which he at first opposed, Mirabeau Lamar served as U. S. minister to the Argentine Republic and to Costa Rica and Nicaragua.³ Though there is no evidence of direct influence upon L. Q. C. Lamar, the family's pride must have welled up and taken substance at the prospect of these romantic achievements.

²Wirt Armistead Cate, Lucius Q. C. Lamar: Secession & Reunion (Chapel Hill, 1935), 15; Edward Mayes, Lucius Q. C. Lamar: His Life, Times and Speeches (Nashville, 1896), 15. John Lamar died intestate. The bond posted by his administrator indicated an estate of some \$13,000. See J. Clayton Hargrove, Ordinary of Putnam County, Georgia, to author, March 14, 1967.

³Robert G. Caldwell, "Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar," in Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, eds., Dictionary of American Biography (23 vols., New York, 1928-1958), X, 553-554 (hereinafter cited as DAB); James Grant Wilson and John Fiske, eds., Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography (6 vols., New York, 1888-89), III, 598-599 (hereinafter cited as Appleton's Cyclopedia).

John and Rebecca Lamar's second son of note was Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar, Senior, who achieved considerable local distinction as lawyer and state judge. This son departed from his father's plantation in Putnam County to work as a salesman and then to study law. He read law first in Milledgeville, Georgia, and then studied in a school in Litchfield, Connecticut. About 1818 he opened a practice in Milledgeville, the state capital.

Lamar initially met with a number of difficulties both personal and professional in his chosen career. According to a contemporary, he lacked the practical bent necessary to turn his trade to its best advantage.⁴ And more importantly, he suffered certain mental aberrations which handicapped his advancement. Through the help of his partner, he nevertheless overcame his lack of "address" and for most of his career he prospered financially. The young lawyer's competence led to a commission for the compilation of the Georgia Statutes for 1810-1820; and in 1830 the legislature elected him to the judgeship of his circuit--a top place in the legal system since the state had no supreme court.⁵

⁴A trait conspicuous in his son also.

⁵Joel Crawford, in Stephen F. Miller, The Bench and Bar of Georgia (Philadelphia, 1858), 136-138; Miller, ibid., 139-140; W. H. Sparks, The Memories of Fifty Years (Philadelphia, 1882), 173-174. Crawford was Lamar's law partner and provided a sketch of his life for Miller, Bench and Bar. Miller added material to the sketch and incorporated it in toto. This is the basis for all subsequent writing on Judge Lamar.

Although Judge Lamar's legal achievements are significant enough to warrant notice in his son's biography, his mental make-up is more relevant. His law partner recalled periods of depression and distraction severe enough to cause temporary incapacitation. Then when still only thirty-seven years of age (his son Lucius only age nine) the Judge committed suicide. Without explanation or warning, he took his own life just one year after the death of his parents, John and Rebecca Lamar. Besides young Lucius, he left a widow and four other children. Judge Crawford, Lamar's partner, sought to explain the suicide from his own knowledge of the circumstances and concluded that: " . . . insanity, resulting from accidental derangement of the cerebral organism," was "the true and only cause."⁶ Another contemporary account maintained that Judge Lamar had suffered severe dyspepsia with high fever, from which he never completely recovered, and that he killed himself in a moment of delirium.⁷ These somewhat speculative descriptions seem noteworthy since L. Q. C. Lamar, Jr., had something of his father's bent toward despondency and distractedness. Whether these could have been inherited traits is, of course, a question beyond definite answer.

Unfortunately there is no way to measure the traumatic impact which the tragedy must have had upon the nine-year-old

⁶Crawford, in Miller, Bench and Bar, 137-139; Mayes, Genealogy and History, 29, 31, 40.

⁷Appleton's Cyclopedia, III, 598.

son. He does not seem to have mentioned his father's death in his later life, but that in itself tells nothing. The violent death and the long adolescent years under female control must have marked Lucius' character. Several personality traits stand out as possible effects. For one thing, his correspondence throughout life had an almost feminine ring in the expressions of devotion and fondness which he almost invariably proclaimed, and in the self-pity which was so frequently obvious.⁸ It is also possible that Lamar compensated for his loss in his relationship to A. B. Longstreet, his teacher and father-in-law. The parallels in their lives were by no means ordinary; and the emergence of Longstreet as a father image would be quite natural.

Fortunately for Lucius and the other four children⁹ their mother was financially secure and temperamentally strong

⁸E.g., Lamar opened a letter to a lady friend: "You are the dearest, best beloved, most true & precious friend that I have in this world. . . ." and in the same letter: "For great & deep & intense as my love for you is, it does not come up to the Bible stand of perfection 'Perfect love casteth out fear'--mine is timid & tremulous & loves to have repeated assurance." See Lamar to Mrs. Clement C. Clay, March 13, 1871, in C. C. Clay Manuscripts (Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina). On occasion his proclamations to male friends were almost as strong as this. His friendship with Robert G. Harper was especially remarkable. See Lamar-Harper Letters (Lunsford Collection, Georgia State Archives, Atlanta, Georgia).

⁹There were five living children of eight births; Rebecca, born 1819; Lucius, born 1825; Thompson Bird, born 1828; Mary Ann Washburn, born 1832; and Jefferson Mirabeau, born posthumously in 1835. LeMar, History of the Lamar Family, 107-111, lists these children with sketches of their lives and lists of their offspring.

enough to bear these responsibilities. With the help of her brother-in-law, Jefferson Lamar, who managed the property, she provided a comfortable if not luxurious livelihood.¹⁰

Soon after her husband's death, Mrs. Lamar moved to Covington, Georgia, for the purpose of educating her three sons in the Manual Labor School operated there by the Methodist Church, of which she was a member.¹¹ Lucius entered the school with a combination of formal and informal background education common for the time. He had received some training in the Milledgeville schools before his father's death, but probably benefitted more from his parents' instruction and guidance. Lamar later recalled reading classic works such as Franklin's Autobiography, Plutarch's Lives, Marshall's Washington, Lord Byron, John Locke, and others.¹²

With this background, young Lamar prospered under the school's system of combined mental and physical training. Though he disliked the labor, it provided an important corrective for a child whose experience was largely limited to town environment and whose life had lacked male direction for four years. Since his health had not been robust and he

¹⁰Calvin M. Simpson, Ordinary, Baldwin County, Georgia, to author, n.d., states that the estate was valued at only \$7,873.¹²

¹¹Henry Morton Bullock, A History of Emory University (Nashville, 1936), 31, states that the school was the first of its kind in Georgia, and was newly opened when the Lamars moved to its location.

¹²Mayes, Lamar, 28.

suffered from "dyspepsia," the work "strengthened up and toned up" his "whole system."¹³

Lamar's curriculum at the Manual Labor School was classical in orientation. The training schedule was quite rigorous and enforced by a stringent disciplinary policy. He and his classmates began the day with chapel by 6:30 A. M., and filled the hours until 9:00 P. M., with classes, study, and about three hours of farm labor. Since the faculty and officers of the school numbered about six persons, it is probable that each of these men profoundly influenced the small student body, which never numbered over 120 persons.¹⁴

This first phase of Lamar's education continued from 1835 until 1838, when the Manual Labor School began its consolidation with Emory College in nearby Oxford, Georgia. Though Lucius would not enter college for three more years, Mrs. Lamar responded to this development by moving to Oxford, where her children might complete their education at the new school. Lucius' uncle, Harmong Lamar, who had lived with his sons in Covington, moved at the same time. Though the distance was but one and a half miles, still the seriousness

¹³Mayes, Lamar, 28-29, quoting Lamar partially, but no source nor date for the quotation is given.

¹⁴Bullock, A History of Emory University, 34-39; Mayes, Lamar, 28-31. Bullock maintains that the curriculum was not unlike nor inferior to that of most established schools of the day. The requirements were more than adequate to meet entrance requirements at Yale College, for instance. Schools combining manual and intellectual training were in vogue at this time.

with which the mother and uncle treated the matter must have impressed the children with the importance of their education.¹⁵

Between 1838 and 1841, while not in school, Lamar must have spent considerable time studying. Even if allowing for over-statement in the college catalogue, admission to Emory College required considerable preparation. New students, it was prescribed, were to be examined on the following:

Grammars of the Greek and Latin Languages, including Rules and Prosody. Caesar-5 Books of the Gallic War, and Civil War entire. Cicero's Orations against Cataline, and for Archias and Marcellus. Virgil's Aeneid 6 Books and Bucolics. Latin Exercises. Jacob's Greek Reader. Xenophon's Anabasis-4 Books. Fisk's Greek Exercises. They shall be versed in the first four Rules of Arithmetic, the Rule of Three Direct and Inverse, Vulgar and Decimal fractions, and the Extractions of the Roots, Interest and Annuities, Algebra through Simple Equations, Geography.¹⁶

The move from preparatory school to college and from Covington to Oxford involved only a slight change for Lamar. The Methodist Conference operated the newly organized college just as it had the Manual Labor School. Trustees and faculty consisted for the most part of the same individuals who had staffed the preparatory school. Likewise the student body generally transferred from Covington to Oxford. In short, Emory College was, and was intended to be, an extension of

¹⁵Mayes, Lamar, 32; Bullock, A History of Emory University, 43, 60. The absorption by Emory was gradual and the Manual Labor School operated until the spring of 1840, when Emory took it over entirely.

¹⁶The Statutes of Emory College, 1839, quoted by Bullock, A History of Emory University, 63.

the Manual Labor School with the addition of a college curriculum.¹⁷

The atmosphere in which Lamar earned his degree was austere even for the nineteenth century. In addition to the physical labor principle which remained in effect for a time, the community's religious orientation had a sobering effect. The village of Oxford where he lived was in actuality a part of the campus. Residential lots were cut from school property and leased to professors or to families like Lamar's. The governing body took advantage of this arrangement and passed regulations prohibiting intoxicants and games of chance. To further reinforce this church-like environment, the trustees initially chose a faculty entirely of Methodist ministers and provided for compulsory prayers and church attendance.¹⁸

His mind stimulated by a religious and academic atmosphere, and his inner nature deeply affected by his father's peculiar personality and death, it is not surprising that Lamar appeared thoughtful and serious. He did not mix well with his classmates and seemed to prefer solitude to society;

¹⁷Bullock, A History of Emory University, 50-56, 62.

¹⁸John Donald Wade, Augustus Baldwin Longstreet: A Study of the Development of Culture in the South (New York, 1924), 244-245; Bullock, A History of Emory University, 57-58, 61, 75. According to Bullock, p. 45, the physical labor system was suspended as implausible on January 8, 1842. According to Mayes, Lamar, 32, and Bullock, p. 79, Lamar's uncle, Harmong Lamar, moved to Oxford at the same time as Mrs. L. Q. C. Lamar and became one of the first commissioners of Oxford in 1839.

his distraction became at times so great that it was mistaken for moroseness--a charge levied against him all his life.¹⁹

In this environment Lamar launched into a four year course most notable for its comprehensiveness and classical orientation. Study in Latin and Greek including history and the scriptures continued for the entire four years. In English, the curriculum included grammar and composition with periodic declamations and "Forensic disputations." Religious instruction encompassed the English Bible and "Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion." Scientific courses surveyed geography, chemistry, minerology, geology, and natural philosophy. Senior year students also studied history, philosophy, ethics (moral philosophy), mental philosophy (psychology and logic), political economy and applied mathematics.²⁰

Though young Lamar survived this curriculum, his academic attainment was not outstanding despite his serious bent of mind. He did well in the classics which were his favorite subjects, but fared poorly in mathematics. In addition to formal studies, however, Lamar devoted a good part of his time and energy to campus debating activities. Stimulated by

¹⁹Mayes, Lamar, 29-30.

²⁰The Statutes of Emory College, 1839, cited by Bullock, A History of Emory University, 63-64. This is the only statement of curriculum available until the Catalogue of 1846, so it probably applied to Lamar.

innumerable sermons and orations, students joined competing literary societies where they attacked questions of the day. When combined with the forensic requirements of formal courses and faculty orations, these speaking activities constituted a major emphasis.²¹

Lamar not only gained experience in oratory--that most serious of nineteenth century pastimes--but also studied the most compelling issues of his time in the process. The debates often came much closer to real life than anything offered in the classroom. Here current and vital questions were pursued by enthusiastic students. At Emory Lamar learned the ingredients of forceful public speaking; here he first became conscious of his power to persuade men.²²

Debating and political discussion in general were stimulated at Emory by Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, president of the College. Lamar came into contact with Longstreet both as teacher and as advocate of a particular religious and political philosophy. Speaking with the high authority of minister, college president, and professor, Longstreet subordinated all aspects of education to religious and political orthodoxy. In his mind, inquiry stopped with the status quo.

²¹Mayes, Lamar, 33; Bullock, A History of Emory University, 116-119. Ironically, Lamar would teach mathematics at the University of Mississippi.

²²Dallas C. Dickey and Donald C. Streeter, "Lucius Q. C. Lamar," in Marie K. Hochmuth, ed., A History and Criticism of American Public Addresses (3 vols., New York, 1955), III, 185-186.

Longstreet argued most vociferously on the slavery question. During these years he led a movement which culminated with division of the national Methodist Church, a most ominous symptom of growing sectional conflict. While Emory literary societies debated the validity of slavery as an institution before God and mammon, their president fought the effort to make abolitionism an official Church policy. In characteristic language he declared: "Abolitionism among Churchmen is a mania, a fanatical monster, an insatiable polyphemus, which will tear to pieces and devour everything sacred and all political and religious institutions."²³

The dispute reached crisis stage in 1844, when the General Conference attempted to force Bishop James O. Andrew's resignation because he owned slaves. At the time Bishop Andrew served as President of the Emory College Trustees and was a resident of Oxford. In response to the Conference action, Longstreet led the withdrawal of the Southern Methodists.²⁴ This highly emotional and dramatic cleavage cannot have failed to impress serious minded students so close to these personages.

During this period of intimate academic relations young Lamar courted Longstreet's daughter, Virginia. The couple

²³Wade, Longstreet, 267-268, 280; Clement Eaton, The Freedom of Thought Struggle in the Old South (New York, 1964), 228.

²⁴Bullock, A History of Emory University, 86; Wade, Longstreet, 271-276.

were married in July 1847. In taking a Longstreet bride, Lamar literally joined the family. For most of the years before Longstreet's death, they all lived in the same town and frequently even under the same roof.²⁵ With passing time Longstreet seemed to achieve a patriarchal status. As Lamar's affection for the older man grew, he proclaimed it himself in what is both a tribute and a key to Lamar's capacity for love:

I am indebted to you for ennobling influences from my boyhood up to middle age. I have doubtless often pained you, but for many years I have loved you as few sons love a father. And many a time in moments of temptation your influence, the desire of your love and approbation, have served me when my virtue might have failed. No applause of the public delights me so much as your declaration that I am unspeakably dear to you.²⁶

It is also likely, as Lamar's letter suggests, that Longstreet reciprocated this affection. The death of his own son had deeply saddened him and perhaps made him closer to his sons-in-law, both of whom lived as part of the family.²⁷

²⁵Mayes, Lamar, 37.

²⁶Lamar to A. B. Longstreet, n.d., 1859, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 40.

²⁷Wade, Longstreet, 245, 302. It is an interesting coincidence that Longstreet studied law in Litchfield, Connecticut, just a few years before L. Q. C. Lamar, Sr., studied there. And Longstreet preceded the Senior Lamar as judge of the Ocmulgee Circuit also. Longstreet did preparatory work at the academy in Wilmington, South Carolina, John Calhoun's alma mater, under Moses Waddell. Both Lamar and Longstreet accepted Calhoun as their political mentor. Also, Lamar and Longstreet later taught at the University of Mississippi with John Waddell, son of Moses. Thus a web of influence was spun. See Wade, Longstreet, 39, 123-124; Mayes, Lamar, 17-18, 38; and Eaton, The Freedom of Thought Struggle, 229.

CHAPTER II

MISSISSIPPI AND BACK

Upon graduation from Emory in 1845, a few months before his twentieth birthday, Lamar moved to Macon, Georgia, to read law with his uncle, A. H. Chappell. After two years he entered into a partnership with Chappell, but the arrangement was of short duration. Lamar soon moved to his childhood home of Covington, opened a law office, and set up housekeeping with his bride, Virginia Longstreet.¹

Like many another young lawyer on the make, Lamar looked to politics as an integral part of his plans. As delegate from Newton County, he traveled to Milledgeville in 1847 and 1849 to make political contacts and to hear Democratic state conventions declare against the Wilmot Proviso and oppose any act limiting slavery in the territories.²

Lamar had hardly begun to make his own way when he and his wife decided to take their infant daughter to Oxford, Mississippi, where Longstreet had moved in September 1849, to become president of the University. Since Longstreet's other daughter³ and her husband followed the next

¹Mayes, Lamar, 37.

²Macon Georgia Telegraph, July 6, 1847, July 17, 1849.

³Mrs. Henry Branham. Branham was a physician-lawyer.

year, the entire family cast its fate with the relatively new state of Mississippi.⁴

In Mississippi Lamar planned to improve his economic status by combining a legal practice with employment in the university. In June 1850 he was licensed to practice law in Mississippi and presented his business card in the local paper.⁵ During the next month university trustees elected him assistant professor of mathematics at an annual salary of \$800, and additional payment of half the fees he received.⁶

The teacher-lawyer found political excitement enough to claim his attention too. The compelling issues left behind in Georgia, had risen to crisis proportions in Mississippi. Debate cascaded around the slavery controversy--especially the Wilmot Proviso and the question of statehood for California. In October 1849, before Lamar's arrival, a state convention had met to oppose congressional policy and openly threatened secession. Fiery resolutions protested against Northern efforts to enact the Wilmot Proviso and called for a Southern assembly in Nashville "with a view and hope of arresting the course of aggression." If necessary, they resolved,

⁴Wade, Longstreet, 300; Mayes, Lamar, 45.

⁵Oxford (Miss.) Organizer, July 6, 1850.

⁶Florence E. Campbell, trans., "Journal of the Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the University of Mississippi, 1845-1860" (master's thesis, University of Mississippi, 1939), 123-124, 128 (July 9-10, 1850). See also John N. Waddell, Memorials of Academic Life (Richmond, 1891), 458.

Southern states might establish "a compact of union that would afford protection to their liberties and rights."⁷

In the interval between the States Rights' convention of October 1849, and the Nashville convention of June 1850, Lamar entered Mississippi politics. He addressed a Lafayette County convention at the Oxford courthouse in May 1850, in support of the October resolutions and declared his opposition to California statehood "with her present constitution." The anxious young Mississippian closed with praise for his adopted state as the first to call a Southern convention to counter the anti-slavery threat.⁸

The Mississippi states' rights advocates of 1850 were not to have their way; their solutions proved too radical at the time for a majority of the state's population. Long before the Nashville convention, moderates throughout the South began rallying against the threat of secession. Though radical leaders stood fast, compromise was clearly the commanding sentiment. Delegates met and dutifully denounced the Compromise of 1850, and Northern policy. But more importantly, the convention avoided forcing the issue of disunion.⁹

⁷James Garner, "The First Struggle over Secession in Mississippi," in Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, IV (1901), 91 (hereinafter cited as PMHS). Cleo Hearon reprints the resolutions in "Mississippi and the Compromise of 1850," in PMHS, XIV (1914), 63-68.

⁸Oxford Organizer, May 4, 1850.

⁹Avery Craven, The Coming of the Civil War (Chicago, 1966), 259-264, passim; Holman Hamilton, Prologue to Conflict: The Crisis and Compromise of 1850 (New York, 1966), 102.

The June crisis passed and the Compromise became law in September, but still Unionists and radicals acted out their drama. The struggle in Mississippi hardened when Congress voted on the Compromise: Senator Jefferson Davis and the entire delegation in the House of Representatives opposed the measures. Senator Henry Foote, on the other hand, ignored the state legislature's instructions and supported admission of California. When Congress adjourned, the battle continued as a struggle for control of the state. Braving legislative censure, Foote organized the Union party, based upon acceptance to the Compromise, and threw down the gauntlet.¹⁰

Both sides appealed to the people. Lamar joined with Congressman Jacob Thompson¹¹ and other prominents and toured the county in opposition to Foote. The local campaign climaxed with a bipartisan county convention in Oxford. Lamar answered the Unionists and "came down" hard upon the "'stars and stripes, glorious Union, bones of our ancestors, trophies of victory'", . . . "¹²

¹⁰H. S. Foote, Casket of Reminiscences (Washington, 1874), 355-356; John F. H. Claiborne, Life and Correspondence of John A. Quitman (2 vols., New York, 1860), II, 37; Garner, "The First Struggle over Secession in Mississippi," in PMHS, IV, 93-96.

¹¹Thompson served in Congress from 1839-1851, until defeated by the Union movement. He was later Secretary of the Interior under Buchanan. See Charles S. Sydnor, "Jacob Thompson," in DAB, XVIII, 459-460.

¹²Oxford Organizer, November 2, 9, 16, 1850.

The struggle between resisters and compromisers continued through the winter of 1850-51. Men of Lamar's stripe organized as the Southern Rights party (later Democratic States' Rights party), which included most of the old Democratic party and a few states' rights Whigs. The opposition, Foote's followers, took the name Union party and absorbed most of the Whigs and those Democrats who preferred the Compromise to resistance.¹³

Lamar participated actively in the organization of the Southern Rights party at Oxford in March 1851, which promptly came out in favor of extremist John A. Quitman as gubernatorial candidate. Presumably Lamar did not object to his nomination, although he could have supported a more moderate candidate such as Jefferson Davis, who considered secession a last alternative. The party then chose Lamar, Jacob Thompson, and four others to carry the news to the Southern Rights convention in Jackson. As expected, Quitman won the nomination.¹⁴

A drastic setback forced the Southern Rights party to reorder its strategy. Stung by a 7,000 vote defeat in an

¹³Garner, "The First Struggle over Secession in Mississippi," in PMHS, IV, 99.

¹⁴Oxford (Miss.) Constitution, March 22, May 17, 1851; and Columbus (Miss.) Democrat, January 11, 1851, cited in Willie D. Halsell, "Prelude to a Career: L. Q. C. Lamar tries Politics," in Journal of Mississippi History, VII (April 1945), 82 (hereinafter cited as JMH). See also Memphis Daily Appeal, March 12, 1851; and Oxford Constitution, April 5, 1851.

election for a state-wide convention on state-federal relations only one month before elections, Quitman gave way to the candidacy of Jefferson Davis. The choice implied a backing away from extremism, since Davis denied ever having favored disunion under the conditions of 1850. Secession, he believed, constituted the ultimate, but not the present solution. The party then tried to save itself by opposing abolitionist encroachments while playing down the secession threat.¹⁵

When Foote carried his campaign to northern Mississippi, Lamar faced him as spokesman for the Democratic States' Rights party. No record remains to explain why a better known spokesman did not appear, though perhaps it was because Davis's poor health severely restricted his canvass. Whatever the explanation, the debate provided Lamar with his first political opportunity beyond the county level.¹⁶

¹⁵Hearon, "Mississippi and the Compromise of 1850," in PMHS, XIV, 211-212; Garner, "The First Struggle over Secession in Mississippi," in PMHS, IV, 99-102. Davis wrote letters on November 19, 1850, and on August 22, 1852, denying that he had favored disunion in 1850-51. These may be found, respectively, in Congressional Globe, 32 Cong., 1 Sess., App., 171; and Varina Howell Davis, Jefferson Davis . . . A Memoir by His Wife (2 vols., New York, 1890), I, 471-472. Hearon maintains that only Quitman and a few others favored secession. Davis, A. G. Brown, and Thompson would have supported secession only if by several states and actually believed that the threat of secession would be sufficient.

¹⁶Garner, "The First Struggle over Secession in Mississippi," in PMHS, IV, 102; Hearon, "Mississippi and the Compromise of 1850," in PMHS, XIV, 215; Mayes, Lamar, 51.

Ignoring the apparent majority in favor of the Compromise, Lamar fastened upon Foote's infidelity to legislative instructions during the recent debate on California: the Senator had deserted Southern friends and principles. Lamar denied that the election raised the question of union or disunion and charged that Foote was forcing the issue. He insisted that "the miscalled compromise questions" constituted the heart of the matter. Lamar's speech was reportedly a devastating success: his students thought so and bore him away on their shoulders.¹⁷

Despite these efforts Lafayette County voted Union in the November election, and Henry S. Foote became governor of the state. The minority with which Lamar had identified had not given up the field, however. They simply acquiesced for the time. Resistance was not converted.¹⁸

In 1851, L. Q. C. Lamar had made his first political commitment in Mississippi and had earned only disappointment and experience. He did make long-term gains though. He had acquired a nascent following. The Oxford Democratic Flag

¹⁷Mayes, Lamar, 51-55. The only extant version of Lamar's speech is quoted, ibid., 51-54. In arguing that secession was not at issue Lamar stated the party's position. He may have agreed; perhaps not.

¹⁸Hearon, "Mississippi and the Compromise of 1850," in PMHS, XIV, 226-227.

felt that he might even be sent to Congress.¹⁹ Unfortunately this prediction ignored the Union victory over Congressman Jacob Thompson in the election just passed.²⁰

It was true that Lamar had made friends with several of the state's most powerful figures. In days to come, these men would favor his ambitions. Jacob Thompson, Congressman and university trustee, never forgot Lamar's efforts, and Jefferson Davis had every reason to think kindly of him. A future alliance was not unlikely.

While the Compromise crisis rose and ebbed in Mississippi, Lamar contemplated a decisive move in his career. His beginning in Lafayette County was auspicious enough: but almost since his arrival in the state he had been dissatisfied.

In letters to Robert Harper, an Emory classmate, Lamar confessed his unhappiness. Mostly he spoke of his dislike for teaching and of his homesickness for Georgia and friends. Lamar's attitude toward teaching is not surprising since the job served principally to supplement his income as a lawyer. Further, he was required to teach mathematics, and as he wrote Harper only a few months after the school term began:

You need have no apprehension of my ever becoming enamoured of Mathematics
All that is required for its complete mastery is close,

¹⁹Oxford (Miss.) Democratic Flag, May 5, 1852; Percy L. Rainwater, Mississippi, Storm Center of Secession, 1856-1861 (Baton Rouge, 1938), 19. The Democratic Flag article contains Lamar's statement of continued devotion to states' rights and the right of secession in a public letter.

²⁰Sydnor, "Jacob Thompson," in DAB, XVIII, 459-460.

minute & sustained study; and this anyone can give. I have very serious doubts about the beneficial effects upon the mind which its advocates claim for it. It gives the mind habits of close & consecutive study it is true, but I doubt very much whether the kind of study for which it prepares the mind will avail one any thing [sic] out of Mathematical problems. It is said that this science gives habits of connected & methodical reasoning. It may be a great accomplishment, that of putting truths all in row 'each holding to the skirts of the other'-- but in my opinion if Newton's thoughts had been compelled to go through the process which is now employed in the demonstration of his 'binomial theorem' the world would never have heard of the discovery. If you wish any more upon this subject let [me] know & you shall have my views in extenso.²¹

Like his political views, Lamar's mental habits were apparently well fixed by his twenty-fifth year. And actually these comments do not seem strange from the moody, distracted Georgian whose chief pleasure in school emanated from the classics and the literary society. That bent of mind never changed; Lamar could never have cheerfully given the "close, minute & sustained study" required in an exact science. Nor could he have departed sufficiently from the real world of politics to treat mathematics seriously.

There were other good reasons for his frustration at the university. The students were a most unruly group and required constant policing. Typically, on November 12, 1850,

²¹Lamar to Robert Harper, Dec. 20, 1850, in Lamar-Harper Letters. The Lamar-Harper Letters were first used by Cate, Lamar. It may be remembered that mathematics was his poorest subject at Emory. As to his competence, it should be noted that the University of Mississippi required only arithmetic for admission. See Historical Catalogue of the University of Mississippi, 1849-1909 (Nashville, 1910), 16 (hereinafter cited as Historical Catalogue).

the faculty considered action against a student who had thrown a rock at President Longstreet. And on June 9, 1851, Lamar and the others worried over a student brawl. It was a special case. One student was clearly the aggressor; but, on the other hand, both were guilty of carrying weapons and therefore were deserving of punishment.²²

Still the atmosphere could not have been altogether disagreeable. In many respects it resembled Emory, which Lamar had left only five years before. Both were religious in orientation. Despite state ownership, the university's faculty included two Christian ministers, Longstreet and John Waddell, and a theologian, A. T. Bledsoe, who also taught mathematics.²³ Like most schools of the day, the curriculum was rigidly defined and easily taught by the five-man faculty.²⁴ If there were disciplinary problems and if teaching bored Lamar, still there was the \$800 guaranteed income to consider.

²²Record Book of the Faculty of the University of the State of Mississippi (University of Mississippi), 11 (Nov. 12, 1850) (hereinafter cited as Faculty Record Book); ibid., 32 (June 9, 1851); James A. Cabaniss, A History of the University of Mississippi (University, Miss., 1949), 25-26; Waddell, Memorials of Academic Life, 276.

²³Historical Catalogue, 7; Cabaniss, A History of the University of Mississippi, 32; Edwin Mims, "Albert Taylor Bledsoe," in DAB, II, 364-365.

²⁴Historical Catalogue, 12. President Longstreet taught Mental & Moral Philosophy, Logic, Belles-Lettres, Political Economy and International Law. A. T. Bledsoe--Mathematics; John Millington--Natural Sciences; John Waddell--Languages. See ibid., 7-9; and Cabaniss, A History of the University of Mississippi, 8-10.

Lamar profited in his association with several distinguished members of the Mississippi faculty, and in the last analysis that may have been the most important result of his teaching experience. The significance of Longstreet and Jacob Thompson has been noted already. His colleague, Professor A. T. Bledsoe, would also be a lifelong friend. Although the two did not share a love for mathematics, still they had many interests in common; and in many ways their careers were parallel.²⁵ Lamar and John Waddell would work together again, though in a different relationship, after the Civil War.²⁶ It was a remarkable group of men for a faculty of five.

The completeness of the Lamar-Longstreet family life in Oxford was also an important consideration for Lamar when he considered leaving the state. He and his wife seemed happy living close to the Longstreets and the Branhams, and there is no record of domestic friction. His brother, Jefferson Mirabeau Lamar, had joined them in Oxford to enlarge still

²⁵Bledsoe served as a Confederate military officer and then diplomatic agent to Europe. After the war the two men corresponded, but their points of view diverged sharply. Bledsoe edited the Southern Review from 1867-77, making that journal a mouthpiece for the unreconstructed element in the South. See Mims, "Albert Taylor Bledsoe," in DAB, II, 364-365; and A. T. Bledsoe Papers (Manuscript Division, Library of Congress).

²⁶Waddell was President of the university when Lamar returned there in 1867.

more the family circle.²⁷ Still Lamar longed for his boyhood home and friends.

Lamar had been in Mississippi only a little over a year when he wrote his friend Robert Harper about "our little scheme."²⁸ Even while he participated in the political struggle over the Compromise of 1850, he was laying plans for his future elsewhere. In March 1851 he remarked: "Well, my return to Georgia you may now regard as a fixed fact."²⁹ But the date remained indefinite. Almost a year later, in February 1852, he wrote: "I have not heard from the Board of Trustees yet. You cannot be more anxious than I am that my return to Georgia should be a speedy one, for I fully appreciate the importance of my being at once in the profession; and I lament that I am not master of my own actions."³⁰

In the same letter Lamar explained that he simply had no ambition for achievements in Mississippi whatever their nature. He believed that he could make his fortune or, if he chose, win a place in Congress. But, he said, " . . . all my patriotism and ambition (these are synonymous words now,

²⁷Historical Catalogue, 117. Jefferson Mirabeau attended the university and graduated in 1853 with honors.

²⁸Lamar to Robert Harper, Dec. 20, 1850, in Lamar-Harper Letters.

²⁹Lamar to Robert Harper, March 8, 1851, ibid.

³⁰Lamar to Robert Harper, Feb. 8, 1852, ibid. He referred to both trouble with the university and his wife, who was pregnant with their second child.

are they not?) is [sic] in Georgia." Actually these sentiments throw more light upon Lamar's state of mind than upon his circumstances.

Finally Lamar broke from the university and his family, and during the summer of 1852 he returned to Georgia. In Covington, he and Robert Harper entered into the partnership so long the object of their planning. The arrangement was a fortunate one, and the young lawyers prospered. For Lamar circumstances were especially kind, since he joined an already established practice in a community where he was well known from former times.³¹

Interestingly, the partnership and friendship existed despite fundamental political differences between the two men. Harper was a Constitutional Unionist and had run for the Georgia legislature in 1851, when the Compromise of 1850 was at issue. The Constitutional Union party had defeated the Southern Rights party, as it had in Mississippi, and Harper had gone into office with Unionist Governor Howell Cobb.³² Though Lamar remained loyal to the Democratic party, he was at the time disgusted with it. As he wrote Harper from Mississippi, shortly before he left: "My party has

³¹Herbert Fielder, Life, Times and Speeches of Joseph E. Brown (Springfield, 1883), 67; Mayes, Lamar, 56-57.

³²Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Georgia, 1851-1852, 5 (hereinafter cited as House Journal, Ga.); U. B. Phillips, Georgia and States Rights (Washington, 1902), 166.

quit its principles & is begging to get admission into a National party which we denounced as thoroughly corrupted on the slavery question." In his displeasure Lamar even pledged not to resist the Constitutional Union party if it " . . . will make amends for its past conduct by repudiating all partys that will not repudiate free-soilers."³³

After 1851 the political climate changed sharply in Georgia. The passing of the great crisis allowed Union and States Rights partisans to return to their old parties. The old Whig group kept the Union party label and opposed Democrats who had been States' Rights men for the most part. Their failure to stem the shift to the Democracy resulted in the 1853 election of Herschel V. Johnson as successor to Howell Cobb over the Union candidate, C. J. Jenkins.³⁴

The political wave which had gone against Lamar in Mississippi now flowed in his favor in Georgia. Sensing an opportunity, Lamar considered running for Congress in 1853, but finally decided against it. He explained to one who had counseled him not to make the race that: "Had I been worth

³³Lamar to Robert Harper, Feb. 8 [or 5?] , 1852 in Lamar-Harper Letters. Lamar put friendship before party, when he offered to support Harper for the state Senate in August 1853. See Lamar to Harper, Aug. 2, 1853, ibid.

³⁴Phillips, Georgia and States Rights, 168-169; I. W. Avery, The History of the State of Georgia from 1850 to 1881 (New York, 1881), 24-25.

\$5000 more than I am now worth, I presume I would have yielded to the importunities of friends and the impulses of ambition."³⁵ These considerations did not apply to the state legislature, however, and Lamar decided to test his political strength on that level. Since Newton County (Covington) traditionally favored the Whig party and had voted Union in 1851,³⁶ the contest promised a real challenge.

The rugged campaign which followed combined several forms of political exercise indigenous to the time and place. Lamar baited and debated his opponent, and before election time the contest degenerated to a physical level. On one speaking occasion Lamar humiliated his rival by challenging him to quote a disputed portion of the constitution; and receiving the negative response desired, Lamar recited the document from beginning to end.³⁷ In good "Georgia Scenes" style, feeling ran so high that Lamar was obligated to prove his manhood. As he later told the story:

Frank Nelms knocked me down in the courthouse in Covington, Georgia. . . . Frank was a big, six-foot country fellow, whose long arm, when it fell upon me, made me think of an elephant's snout. Three days after that I had it over again in Dick Burns' grocery: was

³⁵Lamar to Bainbridge Troutman, June 26, 1853, in Lamar Letters (Miscellaneous Collection, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia). Troutman married Lamar's widowed mother in 1851.

³⁶Richard Harrison Shryock, Georgia and the Union in 1850 (Durham, 1926), 320, 354.

³⁷Halsell, "Prelude to a Career," in JMH, VII, 86, citing the New Orleans Picayune, Oct. 13, 1894. Considering the date, the story could well be apocryphal.

knocked down again by Newt. Skelton, and was beaten until I think I should have 'hollered' if my Democratic friends had not 'took him off.' The next night (in the dark) in the courthouse square I whipped Newt. like a sack; but the boys had no idea that I had a small pair of iron tongs in my hand just as the fight started.³⁸

Physical and intellectual aggressiveness proved effective. Lamar won election in a county which sent a Whig to the state House as his colleague and returned a heavy majority for the Whig gubernatorial candidate, Charles J. Jenkins.³⁹

Democrats nevertheless elected their governor and organized the House. The party appointed Newton County's freshman legislator to four standing committees and one chairmanship.⁴⁰

In the House Lamar took up two political issues of real significance. These were the Western and Atlantic Railroad controversy and the election of a U. S. Senator.

³⁸Lamar to a friend, May 1879, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 392. Another account of the fight is given by Halsell, "Prelude to a Career," in JMH, VII, 86, in which Lamar beat Newt with a piece of "waffle-iron" while still in the store.

³⁹Milledgeville (Ga.) Federal Union, Oct. 18, Nov. 29, 1853.

⁴⁰House Journal, Ga., 53 (Nov. 14, 1853); Milledgeville Federal Union, Nov. 22, 1853. Lamar served as chairman of the committee On the State of the Republic and member of Agriculture and Internal Improvements, Judiciary and Public Printing.

He also looked to the lesser problems of new counties,⁴¹ internal improvements, and penal reformation.⁴²

Georgia's unique state-owned railroad, the Western and Atlantic, stimulated considerable controversy in the 1853-54 session. Outgoing Governor Cobb opened the session with a plea for executive authority to appoint the road's superintendent.⁴³ Enemies of his proposal, including Lamar, insisted upon legislature prerogative. Cobb's supporters tied up the election so successfully, however, that the legislature finally conceded.⁴⁴

The state was also under pressure to sell the Western and Atlantic or to charter a private company which could

⁴¹Lamar was appointed chairman of a special committee to deal with the new counties. See House Journal, Ga., 99 (Nov. 21, 1853); and Milledgeville Federal Union, Nov. 29, 1853.

⁴²In addition to the Judiciary Committee, Lamar was appointed to a special committee to examine the state's inferior courts. See House Journal, Ga., 99 (Nov. 21, 1853); and Milledgeville Federal Union, Nov. 29, 1853.

⁴³House Journal, Ga., 19 (Nov. 8, 1853). See also James Houston Johnston, comp., Western and Atlantic Railroad in the State of Georgia (Atlanta, 1931), 43.

⁴⁴House Journal, Ga., 41-42 (Nov. 10, 1853); ibid., 43 (Nov. 11, 1853); ibid., 48 (Nov. 12, 1853); ibid., 66-68 (Nov. 16, 1853); ibid., 267-268 (Dec. 14, 1853); ibid., 288-289 (Dec. 16, 1853); Milledgeville Federal Union, Dec. 27, 1853. Walter B. Hill, "L. Q. C. Lamar," in The Green Bag, V (April 1893), 154-155, describes an outstanding speech by Lamar in November 1853, in which he excoriated those who blocked an "important election, probably that of a Senator," and thereby brought the election about. Halsell, "Prelude to a Career," in JMH, VII, 87-88, believes that the speech probably related to the superintendent's election. The contradictions cannot be resolved.

lease the road.⁴⁵ Again Lamar sided with the minority and favored leasing the railroad and thereby removing the government from the transportation business.⁴⁶ In this attitude he differed from the Democratic administration. The Federal Union, administration organ, opposed release of such an economically vital system to a private corporation, but Lamar voted with his Whig colleagues in favor of the lease.⁴⁷

In electing a United States Senator, the legislature dealt with a problem of an entirely different nature. Highly complex party factionalism made the choice difficult and foretold a bitter fight. Since the crisis of 1850-51 when Union Democrats left the regular organization, there had been great confusion. Union leader, Howell Cobb, attempted to reconcile the factions in 1853, but with limited success. In the interest of unity Cobb supported states' rights Democrat, H. V. Johnson, for the governorship and asked a quid pro quo for his own wing of the party. When

⁴⁵Milledgeville Federal Union, Dec. 13, 1853, claimed that this was the big issue of the session. See also U. B. Phillips, A History of Transportation in the Eastern Cotton Belt to 1860 (New York, 1908), 322-323.

⁴⁶House Journal, Ga., 407-408 (Jan. 16, 1854); ibid., 559 (Jan. 28, 1854); ibid., 591 (Jan. 31, 1854); ibid., 602-603 (Feb. 1, 1854).

⁴⁷Milledgeville Federal Union, Dec. 13, 1853; Phillips, A History of Transportation, 322-323; House Journal, Ga., 591 (Jan. 31, 1854).

extreme states' rights men refused to make this concession, a great struggle over the vacant senatorship ensued.⁴⁸

Lamar's position in this controversy developed from considerations more personal than political. In view of his opposition to Foote and the Compromise of 1850 in Mississippi, he might logically have supported a states' rights candidate. Instead he vacillated between two Union men and finally backed Howell Cobb "to the last." Significantly, both Cobb and A. H. Chappell, the other contender, were relatives of the Lamar family. Either Lamar mellowed in his political stance after 1850 or family ties proved more compelling.⁴⁹

Since he had not been directly involved in the bitter Georgia struggle of 1850-51, his acceptance of a Union man related to his family is not incomprehensible. More peculiar however, Lamar wrote Cobb after the caucus had settled upon another candidate, reporting a total of 20,000 Union men in the state who would happily join Cobb's personal party. Strange

⁴⁸Helene Greene, "Politics in Georgia, 1853-54: The Ordeal of Howell Cobb," in Georgia Historical Quarterly, XXX (Sept. 1946), 197-198 (hereinafter cited as GHQ); Horace Montgomery, Cracker Parties (Baton Rouge, 1950), 95-101, 109, 116.

⁴⁹Lamar to Howell Cobb, Sept. 21, 1853, Dec. 17, 1856, in U. B. Phillips, ed., The Correspondence of Robert Toombs, Alexander H. Stephens, and Howell Cobb, American Historical Association, Annual Report, 1911 (2 vols., Washington, 1913), II, 335-336; Greene, "Politics in Georgia," in GHQ, XXX, 200-201; John T. Grant to Howell Cobb, Oct. 28, 1853, in Robert P. Brooks, ed., "Howell Cobb Papers," in GHQ, VI (March 1922), 49-50.

talk for the opponent of Foote! Cobb however accepted the caucus decision and pled for harmony. Lamar abided by Cobb's assessment and helped drive through the final election of Alfred Iverson, a compromise candidate.⁵⁰

Aside from these issues, Lamar considered only miscellaneous bills which came before his committees. Later in the session, however, the House unanimously favored a resolution supporting United States Senator Stephen A. Douglas's Nebraska bill.⁵¹ This issue of slavery in the territories would come up again and again to plague Lamar's career.

When the 1853-54 session ended, Lamar had little cause for dissatisfaction. If the experience was not an especially remarkable one, he had at least completed his legislative indoctrination with dignity and reasonable success. He could expect to be returned in the next election or perhaps even aspire to something more ambitious. But Lamar was discontented. On December 3, 1853, still early in the session, he complained that he had accomplished little, and even then he was projecting a move to some other location.⁵²

⁵⁰Lamar to Howell Cobb, Dec. 3, 1853, quoted in Montgomery, Cracker Parties, 119; ibid., 119-121; House Journal, Ga., 471-472, 476-478 (Jan. 23, 1854).

⁵¹Milledgeville Federal Union, Feb. 21, 1853.

⁵²Lamar to Robert Harper, Dec. 3, 1853, in Lamar-Harper Letters; Cate, Lamar, 45.

Several factors contributed to Lamar's state of mind and to his decision to make an important change. For one thing, he had gone to Georgia specifically to practice with Harper, a friend of more than ordinary intimacy, and Harper had become desperately ill. Prospects were all the more gloomy because of financial involvements and the absence of Lamar's wife and her "approaching confinement." For some reason, perhaps the pregnancy, she had never come to Georgia as planned, and loneliness must have contributed largely to his dissatisfaction. No wonder he considered several possibilities including removal to Macon or to Columbus, Georgia, or possibly even to Texas.⁵³

The legislative term ended in February 1854, and the following summer Lamar moved to Macon where he opened a law office. The problem of location settled, he traveled to Mississippi in the fall to visit his wife and children (Fannie, and the infant Lucius Q. C., Jr.). At the same time he transported a number of slaves which he owned for employment by Longstreet, whom he felt might engage them more profitably.⁵⁴

Despite these adjustments Lamar's legal career languished, and, as he later recalled, "The year that I lived

⁵³Lamar to Robert Harper, Dec. 3, 1853, in Lamar-Harper Letters.

⁵⁴Mayes, Lamar, 58-59. Lamar to Robert Harper, Feb. 8 [or 5?], 1852, in Lamar-Harper Letters, states that he owned fifteen slaves at that time.

in Macon I was more straitened in my circumstances than ever before or since, for I got a very small practice. . . ."55

Financial problems notwithstanding, Lamar launched into the political life of his district. With support from his relative and former Congressman, A. H. Chappell, he soon became a strong contender for the Democratic nomination for Congress.⁵⁶ By spring of 1855 he felt certain of sufficient support to win the nomination unless some other aspirant packed the convention. On March 7, 1855, he wrote Longstreet for his advice: "Now what do you think? Stick to my profession and try to make something, or go to Congress if I can and be in the fight against the free-soilers? The next Congress will be an exciting one, you know. . . ."57

In considering the candidacy, Lamar and his friends had relied upon reports that the incumbent, David J. Bailey, would not seek renomination. When this information proved erroneous, Lamar asked that he not be considered. At the

⁵⁵Lamar to John C. Butler, July, n.d., 1874, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 200. John C. Butler was Lamar's cousin.

⁵⁶Chappell had some claim to political influence since he was a former member of the Georgia House and Senate and of the national House of Representatives. See Biographical Directory of the American Congress (Washington, 1961), 683. Lamar had many other contacts in Macon. Relatives John T. Lamar and John B. Lamar were wealthy merchant and planter. G. B. Lamar owned a bank in Macon. See William T. Jenkins, "Ante Bellum Macon and Bibb County, Georgia" (doctoral dissertation, University of Georgia, 1966), 198, 205-206, 233.

⁵⁷Lamar to A. B. Longstreet, March 7, 1855, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 58. Longstreet's answer is unknown.

nominating convention held on May 22, 1855, in Forsyth, Georgia, the incumbent Bailey deadlocked for three ballots with a challenger, a Mr. Ramsey. At that point Ramsey withdrew and Lamar's name was put forward, and he in turn deadlocked with Bailey for ten ballots. It appeared that Lamar might win, since at one time he received two thirds of the vote cast. The convention decided, however, that the two-thirds rule referred not to the number voting but to the number of delegates. Finally, on the seventeenth ballot a compromise candidate, James M. Smith, received the nomination.⁵⁸

Though disappointed, Lamar dutifully campaigned for the Democratic ticket in the fall election. The district, nevertheless, voted for the American candidate, Robert P. Trippe, and sent him to Congress to replace Bailey. Again the political tides had turned on Lamar. The third district Democrats had every reason to be disappointed in this particular defeat, since their state organization had retained the governorship and had won six of the eight congressional seats.⁵⁹

⁵⁸Macon Georgia Journal and Messenger, May 30, 1855; Macon Georgia Telegraph, May 22, 1855. Lamar represented Bibb County at the Democratic state convention that year. See Macon Georgia Telegraph, June 12, 1855.

⁵⁹Macon Georgia Journal and Messenger, Oct. 10, 1855; Halsell, "Prelude to a Career," in JMH, VII, 89-90; Montgomery, Cracker Parties, 152-153. Montgomery, p. 153, states: "At no time since its organization was the Democratic party so completely in charge of the State's affairs." See also Jenkins, "Ante Bellum Macon," 310.

Almost immediately after the election Lamar left Georgia for Mississippi, this time to stay. His decision to leave Macon after only one year there marked a milestone in his career. The circumstances which caused this decision seem clear. Political disappointment certainly played a part; and it will be recalled that his departure from Mississippi in 1852, and his move from Covington in 1854, had political overtones. His finances were in poor condition and his law practice small. His wife, children, and slaves were all with Longstreet. In sum, there were many reasons for going to Mississippi and few for remaining in Georgia. An indifferent success in politics and law at age thirty, Lamar gave up his native state for the last time and headed back to the family which represented security and stability.

CHAPTER III

CONGRESS: SOWING THE BITTER FRUIT

The move to Mississippi began a new career. Rather than return to Oxford, Lamar established "Solitude" plantation about twelve miles north of town on the Tallahatchie River. His retirement to the country paralleled the relocation of the entire Longstreet connection in Mississippi. The Branhams (Longstreet's other daughter and her husband) joined the Lamars at "Solitude;" and in the summer of 1856 the Longstreets themselves moved to the hamlet of Abbeville, just two miles from the plantation.¹

For a time Lamar participated directly in the plantation tradition. Though his flirtation with the Southern

¹The plantation lands were deeded to Lamar by Longstreet four years later in 1860. Apparently some less formal arrangement sufficed until then. See A. B. Longstreet to Lamar and M. M. McEachin, Sept. 21, 1860, Deed Book I, 594, (Lafayette County Court House, Oxford, Mississippi); and Virginia Lamar to McEachin, Dec. 1, 1860, *ibid.*, 596. These deeds suggest that Lamar became only half owner in 1860, of a 984 acre tract. The sale price was \$5,000, which Lamar did not pay before reconveying his share in Lamar to A. B. Longstreet, Jan. 19, 1866, Deed Book K, 367, *ibid.* Mayes, Lamar, 60, states that Dr. Branham was interested in the farm with Lamar, but no evidence has been discovered to confirm this. McEachin's role apparently was silent, and probably the land was to have been divided had not the Civil War intervened. (Lamar reported the land as his own in the census of 1860). On Longstreet's retirement from the university and his move see Wade, Longstreet, 310-312.

idyll was brief and only nominal after 1857, the interlude still has some significance. For one thing, it enhanced Lamar's identification with a tradition which previously had been his only by implication. The ability to identify with the symbol which most accurately expressed the Southern ideal was no small asset, and it did not diminish as the actual experience receded into the past. Shortly after Lamar's death in 1893, his son-in-law, Edward Mayes, described life at "Solitude" for posterity. Probably there were few who would have challenged his accuracy when he wrote:

It was the life of the Southern farmer of the highest type. Surrounded by his slaves, to whom he was at once master, guardian, and friend, loved and petted by his women folk and his children, visited by cultivated and attractive friends. . . . ²

While Mayes' romantic version may lack perspective, still "Solitude" did place Lamar within Lafayette County's land-holding elite. The plantation consisted of about one thousand acres--not an especially large operation, but large enough to rank Lamar among the eleven percent who owned almost half the county's land.³ He also qualified as a substantial slave holder. In 1857 he paid taxes on twenty-six slaves. By comparison the census returns of 1860 show that

²Mayes, Lamar, 60.

³Production of Agriculture in the County of Lafayette, in the Post Office, Paris, 1860, from the "Original Census Returns," Lamar Subject File (Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi) (hereinafter cited as MDAH).

there were 605 slave owners in the county and that forty-two of these fell within Lamar's class (fifteen-twenty slaves). Fifty were listed as holding more than thirty slaves each, whereas five owned between one and two hundred.⁴

During Lamar's brief period of active direction, his plantation never realized the potential which might have come over a longer period. The slaves must have been employed mostly in land improvement and in making the plantation self-sufficient. Lamar's success is difficult to gauge, but certainly he never became one of Lafayette County's important producers. In 1860 only two hundred acres had been cleared; his slaves harvested only one thousand bushels of "indian corn" and forty-three bales of cotton in addition to lesser staples for home consumption.⁵ These details, plus the fact that Lamar never came close to retiring the debt of his property,⁶

⁴Personal Tax Rolls, Lafayette County, Mississippi, 1857, No. 339 (MDAH); John Cooper Hawthorne, "A Period Study of Lafayette County from 1836 to 1860" (master's thesis, University of Mississippi, 1939), 85-86.

⁵Production of Agriculture in the County of Lafayette, in the Post Office, Paris, 1860, from the "Original Census Returns," Lamar Subject File (MDAH). Hawthorne, "A Period Study of Lafayette County," lists Lamar's acreage and production in Appendix B, 216.

⁶Lamar to "Jimmy," n.d., 1866, L. Q. C. Lamar Letters (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, North Carolina). Though the story really belongs to the Reconstruction era, the following explanation to "Jimmy" is informative: "I owed Judge Longstreet for my land on which he had been paid 30 bales of cotton at 10 cts (he saved 13 of them getting 22½ cents for them) but the interest during the war ate that payment up & restored the debt to its original amount." Lamar reconveyed the land after the war.

indicate that his status as an ante-bellum planter was tenuous and potential at best.

"Solitude" did not fully occupy Lamar, and he found sufficient time to practice law in Holly Springs, seat of Marshall County, and only a few miles away. There he joined two prominent lawyers to establish the firm of Lamar, Mott and Autry. This arrangement must have proven satisfactory since it lasted until the outbreak of the Civil War. The partnership had potential political importance as well. Mott had served in the state legislature in 1850, and then as probate judge. Autry was a member of the state House of Representatives during the years 1854-59, and had been speaker of the House.⁷

Lamar doubtlessly had politics on his mind. Circumstances in Mississippi had radically changed, and he knew it. The states' rights philosophy which had been so decisively rejected in 1850-51, had again gained credence throughout the state. When Lamar emerged from the obscurity of "Solitude," his political history was a definite asset, not a handicap. Wrong in the Foote-Davis campaign was right by 1856. As he wrote Howell Cobb: "I made four or five speeches during the campaign [1856] and they took well. I

⁷For a sketch of James L. Autrey, see Dunbar Rowland, ed., Mississippi Comprising Sketches of Counties, Towns, Events, Institutions, and Persons, Arranged in Cyclopedic Form (3 vols., Atlanta, 1907), I, 176. On C. M. Mott, see ibid., II, 284.

think I shall be able to get pretty much what I please from the people out here."⁸

Improvement of Democratic prospects in Lamar's district⁹ was in fact only a return to the prevailing norm. As early as 1840, Mississippi had taken on fairly permanent party divisions based largely upon economic and geographic determinants. While the Black Belt area became unequivocally attached to the Whig party and its political descendants, the less wealthy eastern half of the state, where whites were in the majority, aligned with the Democratic party. This numerically unequal division insured Democratic political power.¹⁰

The victory of the Constitutional Union party in 1851 was a passing aberration, and when the crisis passed the old alignment again prevailed. Democrats had publicly accepted the principle of Union and backed away from talk of secession. This rapprochement weakened the Union coalition. Then with

⁸Lamar to Howell Cobb, Dec. 17, 1856, in Phillips, ed., Correspondence of Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb, 385. On Lamar's rather limited speaking schedule see Oxford (Miss.) Signal, Sept. 11, 1856.

⁹At this time the first district included: Tishomingo, Tippah, Marshall, Desoto, Tunica, Coahoma, Panola, Lafayette. See James E. Baxter, "Congressional Redistricting in Mississippi from 1817 to 1938" (master's thesis, Duke University, 1938), 53.

¹⁰Rainwater, Mississippi, Storm Center of Secession, 3-15. Lamar's district voted Democratic with the single exception of the Compromise election of 1851, between 1840 and the Civil War. Lafayette County (Oxford) never voted Whig or American in a presidential election after 1840.

the intensification of the sectional issue during the Kansas debates the Compromise leaders lost control.¹¹ Old Whigs in flight from ruin joined the effete Know-Nothing organization.¹²

The 1856 presidential election showed how completely the Whig-Know-Nothings had been displaced in Mississippi and throughout the South. Buchanan carried Mississippi by a majority of 11,261 votes while losing only the Mississippi-Yazoo River Black Belt counties to Fillmore.¹³ The continued emphasis on the slavery issue convinced the majority that the Democratic party alone offered a reliable defense of Southern rights. Slavery had by that time become more sacred than party. Under the circumstances it was by no means a small event for Lamar when Congressman Daniel Wright decided not to run for renomination on the Democratic ticket for the first district in 1857. The possibility of political preferment beyond the state level decided Lamar against the life of full time planter-lawyer, and against the professorial

¹¹In the Mississippi gubernatorial election of 1853, the Democrats easily returned to power. In Lamar's district, the Whigs carried only one county of eight. See Baxter, "Congressional Redistricting in Mississippi," 51; and Rainwater, Mississippi, Storm Center of Secession, 50. On broader aspects of this development see Avery O. Craven, The Growth of Southern Nationalism 1848-1861 (Baton Rouge, 1953), 116-141, *passim*. See also Lillian A. Pereyra, James Lusk Alcorn (Baton Rouge, 1966), 18-19.

¹²Arthur C. Cole, The Whig Party in the South (Washington, 1913), 308-309, 319-320; Rainwater, Mississippi, Storm Center of Secession, 32; Pereyra, James Lusk Alcorn, 33-35.

¹³Rainwater, Mississippi, Storm Center of Secession, 38; Cole, The Whig Party in the South, 324-326.

seat which the University again made available. He concluded to try for the nomination.¹⁴

The vacuum created by Wright's withdrawal left the organization in a turmoil. As early as March 15, 1857, the Memphis Daily Appeal mentioned Lamar as a possible candidate. Then in June his political stock rose as Lafayette County Democrats nominated him for the state legislature. When the congressional nominating convention met at Holly Springs on July 6 and 7, however, Lamar was not at first strong enough to contend. In fact, his name did not appear until the eighteenth ballot. Still little support materialized and he withdrew following the twenty-first ballot. After fifty-six indecisive ballots Lamar again offered to the convention, but received only six votes. Then in the face of what seemed an interminable deadlock the leading contenders withdrew, the count was completed, and Lamar chosen.¹⁵

The formula by which the first district selected its Democratic nominee is by no means clear. From pre-convention newspaper accounts, it appears that objections were made to Lamar from the beginning on grounds that Lafayette County

¹⁴Memphis Daily Appeal, April 14, 1857; Mayes, Lamar, 63.

¹⁵Memphis Daily Appeal, March 15, 20, April 14, 18, 23, July 18, 1857; Mayes, Lamar, 70. Lamar's early support came from the Daily Appeal which probably had a larger circulation in north Mississippi than any other paper. Lamar was always a great favorite of that journal from 1857 onward.

had had more than its share of congressmen.¹⁶ The fact that he had recently returned from an abortive try at Georgia politics may also have seemed unfortunate to some. If we may trust the account of Lamar's son-in-law, however, the chief objection was neither of these. According to Edward Mayes, Lamar's kinship to Howell Cobb, of Georgia, posed the crucial factor.¹⁷ Lamar had been a political friend of Cobb's and had supported him for the United States Senate despite his leadership of the Union movement during the controversy over the Compromise of 1850. Many Southern rights men believed that Cobb committed further apostasy in joining Buchanan's Cabinet and supporting the President's policy in the Kansas territory. Lamar himself seemed defensive about his relationship to Cobb when he wrote him in July 1857, only a week after the Mississippi convention had chosen its candidate. "The cloud," he said "which obscures your prospects will ever cast its shadow over mine."¹⁸

Under these circumstances Lamar's nomination could have resulted only from deadlock and compromise. Though the full story is unknown, Lamar later credited his old friend and former Congressman, Jacob Thompson, with having

¹⁶Memphis Daily Appeal articles regularly mentioned this fact.

¹⁷Mayes, Lamar, 70.

¹⁸Lamar to Howell Cobb, July 17, 1857, in Phillips, ed., Correspondence of Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb, 405-406.

much to do with the nomination.¹⁹ From these peculiar and not especially flattering circumstances Lamar had his first real chance at a political career.

Nomination in hand, Lamar turned to contest the election with James L. Alcorn, the Whig-Know-Nothing candidate and long time personal friend.²⁰ The two men conducted a joint canvass with almost daily speeches distinguished by the enthusiastic oratory for which both were known. Alcorn stressed the danger of foreign suffrage in the United States and opposed the Kansas-Nebraska bill. Lamar linked Alcorn with the Know-Nothing party (with which he never actually professed affiliation) and spoke strongly in favor of the Kansas-Nebraska bill.²¹

In 1857 the Democratic hold on Mississippi was such that the election results were never in question. Alcorn

¹⁹Lamar to Mrs. Annie Crawford, April 1, 1885, Letterbook I, Lamar-Mayes Papers (MDAH). Thompson's death inspired the letter. Cate, Lamar, 51-52, gives a highly romantic story of Thompson's naming of Lamar as his choice and the spontaneous approval which followed, but this seems highly unlikely in view of the large number of ballots required.

²⁰Pereyra, James Lusk Alcorn, 35. For a shorter sketch of Alcorn, see Franklin Lafayette Riley, "James Lusk Alcorn," in DAB, I, 137-39.

²¹Memphis Daily Appeal, Aug. 12, Sept. 10, 13, 15, 1857; Pereyra, James Lusk Alcorn, 34-36. Pereyra, p. 36, observes that the most notable difference between the two men revolved around their dissimilar appeal. Alcorn's demeanor was that of the aristocrat; while Lamar appeared in homespun jeans and a wrinkled shirt driving a mule and cart. There is no other evidence that Lamar's appeal was geared to this level.

fully realized this when he undertook the campaign and claimed that he only ran as a means of keeping his career alive until a better day.²² The Democrats carried the governorship and all congressional seats. Lamar's majority was comfortable.²³ In this victory Lamar had auspiciously launched his career. So long as sectional politics made a Whig revival unlikely Lamar was secure. Such of course proved to be the case until Mississippi seceded in 1861. In 1859 Lamar won his party's renomination without challenge, while the opposition did not trouble to enter a candidate.²⁴

The move to Washington and into the vortex of political life must have been an exciting one for Lamar and his family. There he enjoyed his first taste of society beyond the small Southern town. And for the first time Lamar was really a man among men--a person of importance by the standards of the South and of the Lamar heritage. He could expect to be welcomed by a large number of acquaintances including Howell Cobb and Jacob Thompson, both of the Cabinet. And shortly

²²James Lusk Alcorn to Amelia Alcorn, Sept. 9, 1857, quoted in Pereyra, James Lusk Alcorn, 35.

²³Returns are available for all counties in the district except Tishomingo; the vote for the other seven counties gave Lamar 3,705 to Alcorn's 2,888. The Democrats carried the governorship 27,377 to 14,095, and easily won all congressional seats. Figures provided by Inter-University Consortium for Political Research, Ann Arbor, Michigan (hereinafter cited as Political Research Consortium).

²⁴Rainwater, Mississippi, Storm Center of Secession, 102; Mayes, Lamar, 80.

after their arrival he and Mrs. Lamar joined several notables and their wives in "A Historical Congressional 'Mess'" at Brown's Hotel. The group included Congressmen Orr and Chestnut of South Carolina; Fitzpatrick, Shorter, Dowdell, Clopton, Curry, and Clay of Alabama; Taylor and Sandridge of Louisiana; and Pugh of Ohio.²⁵ In these surroundings Lamar built a reputation as champion of the drawing room. Ladies impressed by his efforts included Mrs. C. C. Clay, a member of the 'Mess' from Alabama, who observed:

It is safe to say that no member of our pleasant circle was more generally valued than that most lovable of men, Lucius Q. C. Lamar, 'Moody Lamar,' as he was sometimes called; for he was then, as he always continued to be, full of dreams and ideals and big, warm impulses, with a capacity for the most enduring and strongest friendships, and a tenderness rarely displayed by men so strong as was he. Mr. Lamar was full of quaint and caressing ways even with his fellow-men, which frank utterance of his own feelings was irresistibly engaging. I have seen him walk softly up behind Mr. Clay, when the latter was deep in thought, touch him lightly on the shoulder, and as my husband turned quickly to see what was wanted 'Lushe' or 'big Lushe,' as all called him, would kiss him suddenly and lightly on the forehead.²⁶

Perhaps the strange sensitivity described by Mrs. Clay had an unfortunate effect upon Lamar. He felt lonely for his family and frustrated in his inability to achieve any real

²⁵Mrs. Howell Cobb to [John] Lamar, Dec. 27, 1857, cited in R. F. Nichols, The Disruption of American Democracy (New York, 1962), 154; Mrs. Clement C. Clay, A Belle of the Fifties (New York, 1889), 43-45.

²⁶Clay, A Belle of the Fifties, 48.

resolution of vital problems.²⁷ In his unhappiness Lamar applied to Chancellor F. A. P. Barnard of the University of Mississippi for a faculty position. He received an offer but for some unexplained reason did not accept it until 1860.²⁸ Meantime he pursued the course of freshman Congressman and spokesman for the Southern point of view.

This role of Southern spokesman dominated Lamar's antebellum congressional career. In his maiden address to the House, Lamar proclaimed this commitment, and thereafter he remained constant. Obviously considering his single-mindedness to be a virtue he declared: "Others may boast of their . . . comprehensive love of this Union. With me, I confess that the promotion of Southern interests is second in importance only to the preservation of Southern honor."²⁹ He meant it too. The line between North and South had been drawn before Lamar's birth, and objective examination of sectional issues had ceased before he reached manhood. Defense of the South required a simple extension of his education and experience.

²⁷Lamar to Mrs. A. B. Longstreet, May 4, 1858, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 76; Lamar to Mrs. Lamar, n.d., about May 1858, quoted, ibid. Lamar's wife apparently stayed with him in Washington only part of the time. The Longstreet family at this time lived in Columbia, South Carolina, where Longstreet was president of South Carolina College.

²⁸F. A. P. Barnard to Lamar, March 25, 1858, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 77-78; ibid., 84.

²⁹Congressional Globe, 35 Cong., 1 Sess., 279-281 (Jan. 13, 1858). Ibid., App., 49-53, reprints the entire speech.

During the thirty-fifth Congress Lamar made only three speeches not directly related to the sectional dispute. He gave a major address on the tariff on February 21, 1859,³⁰ made brief comments on an anti-polygamy bill on April 3, 1860,³¹ and spoke at length on the disputed election of C. L. Vallandigham of Ohio on May 22, 1858.³² Except for the Vallandigham debate, even these had sectional overtones or were given such an implication by Lamar. The tariff he believed should continue to be low. This viewpoint reflected party principle, of course, but in Lamar's application any effort at upward revision became a conspiracy of manufacturers against the farmer and planter. Straining his sectionalism somewhat, Lamar linked the slavery issue to a bill to suppress Mormon polygamy. He argued that Congress possessed full power to prevent polygamy or any other felony in the territories, but warned Republicans against using this interpretation to interfere with slavery.

Lamar's voting record in the House suggests the same preoccupation with sectional and party considerations as his

³⁰Congressional Globe, 35 Cong., 2 Sess., App., 199-203 (Feb. 21, 1859).

³¹New York Times, April 4, 1860; New York Tribune, April 4, 1860. Congressional Globe, 36 Cong., 1 Sess., 1515 (April 3, 1860), indicates that Lamar was to record his speech in the Appendix after revision. He did not resubmit it, and so no transcript is given in the Globe.

³²Congressional Globe, 35 Cong., 1 Sess., 2331-2336 (May 22, 1858). Lamar was a member of the Committee on Elections. This accounts for his special interest in Vallandigham at this time.

speeches. Although conspicuously derelict in answering roll calls, he voted often enough to establish a record of almost unfailing regularity; infrequent exceptions dealt with relatively insignificant issues.³³ His propensity for regularity, however, did not indicate any special lack of independence. Increasing identification of the Republican party with the North and Democratic party with the South meant that sectional interest and party regularity became one and the same thing. Under these circumstances Lamar's voting pattern was not remarkable. In fact, he departed from party and sectional norms more frequently than many of his colleagues, though shades of difference were light.³⁴

Rigid sectional division in congressional voting somewhat obscured Lamar's position on economic legislation and appropriations measures. This was even more true in the

³³A sampling of 180 votes shows that Lamar was absent or abstained on seventy-three questions. He departed from party discipline only eight times in 107 sample votes, seven times in the thirty-fifth and once in the thirty-sixth Congresses. These figures and conclusions are derived by checking Lamar's vote in the House Journal against the sample roll calls given in Thomas B. Alexander, Sectional Stress and Party Strength (Nashville, 1967), 243-247, 256-258.

³⁴Alexander, Sectional Stress and Party Strength, 102, 106. Alexander provides scalograms which make it possible to locate Lamar's relative position in comparison to the vote of his own and other sections. The reliability of the comparison is somewhat mitigated by failure to answer many roll calls, especially in the thirty-fifth Congress. Scalograms deal with first session. Lamar holds scale position 1, p. 102; scale position 1, p. 106. See Alexander to author, Oct. 6, 1967.

thirty-sixth than in the thirty-fifth Congress. His voting behavior became relatively more conservative in the thirty-sixth, probably as a result of growing political antagonism rather than changing economic perspective. Here as in other matters Lamar voted generally with his section and with the Democratic party.

In the thirty-fifth Congress, before the sectional issue peaked, Lamar sometimes showed more sympathy for federally financed internal improvements and for expanding government functions than did his colleagues from other Southern states. In the thirty-sixth Congress, however, none voted more consistently against government expansion and subsidation of improvements.³⁵ Though generalizations about Lamar's attitude toward the national government's economic role are necessarily tentative, it may be that his voting in the thirty-fifth Congress more nearly suggests his attitude than in the thirty-sixth, when political tension became almost irresistible.

In his address of February 21, 1859, Lamar committed himself in favor of a low tariff and against protection of manufacturing interests. Even during the thirty-fifth Congress, he opposed Republican-sponsored large expenditures

³⁵Alexander, Sectional Stress and Party Strength, 99-100, 105. Lamar holds scale position 3, p. 99; scale position 2, p. 100; scale position 0, p. 105. See Alexander to author, Oct. 6, 1967. Scalograms deal with first session. Again it should be noted that the exactitude of the scalograms here cited is qualified by Lamar's irregular voting.

such as the college land grant act,³⁶ the homestead bill,³⁷ and subsidation of the fishing industry.³⁸ But at the same time he accepted more traditional appropriations, such as post roads³⁹ and even favored government-sponsored public improvements in the District of Columbia.⁴⁰ Though economy-minded enough to oppose extension of the United States Capitol,⁴¹ Lamar voted for veterans benefits⁴² and for congressional franking privileges.⁴³ This slight flexibility in attitude changed with the organization of the thirty-sixth Congress. He consistently voted against the Republican majority even in matters like general appropriations bills.⁴⁴

³⁶Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States (hereinafter cited as House Journal), 35 Cong., 1 Sess., 73-74 (Dec. 15, 1857); ibid., 35 Cong., 2 Sess., 508-509 (Feb. 26, 1859).

³⁷Ibid., 35 Cong., 2 Sess., 308-310 (Feb. 1, 1859).

³⁸Ibid., 35 Cong., 2 Sess., 453-454 (Feb. 21, 1859).

³⁹Ibid., 35 Cong., 1 Sess., 1138-1140 (June 14, 1858).

⁴⁰Ibid., 35 Cong., 2 Sess., 530-531 (March 1, 1859).

⁴¹Ibid., 35 Cong., 1 Sess., 856-857 (May 20, 1858).

⁴²Ibid., 35 Cong., 2 Sess., 86 (Dec. 20, 1858); ibid., 97-99 (Dec. 21, 1858); ibid., 459-460 (Feb. 22, 1859).

⁴³Ibid., 35 Cong., 1 Sess., 1101 (June 11, 1858); ibid., 35 Cong., 2 Sess., 602-603 (March 3, 1859).

⁴⁴Ibid., 36 Cong., 1 Sess., passim. Lamar even reversed himself and voted to abolish the franking privilege. See ibid., 276-277 (Feb. 14, 1860).

According to Lamar's value system, the question of slavery expansion into the territories eclipsed all current economic issues because of the immediate challenge to Southern status. The issue of Kansas' statehood and the fate of slavery there epitomized the conflict. The controversy raged all during the summer preceding Lamar's election in the fall of 1857. During his campaign he had opposed the actions of Robert Walker as territorial governor because Walker made clear his opinion that slavery could not thrive in Kansas and that it made little difference whether or not it received protection in the state constitution. Lamar's reaction accorded with that of Jefferson Davis, Jacob Thompson, and members of the Mississippi state convention, all of whom condemned Walker's plan to submit the constitution to the people for ratification.⁴⁵

In long speeches before the House and before Mississippi audiences, Lamar responded to attacks by Republicans and Douglas Democrats upon the pro-slavery Lecompton constitution. The Kansas issue, he claimed, was inseparably tied to the general history of slavery in the territories. Obstruction of the Lecompton constitution, he felt: "is but an offshoot of that damnable policy which has been preying upon the vitals of the South for the last forty

⁴⁵Memphis Daily Appeal, Sept. 15, 1857; Pereyra, James Lusk Alcorn, 34-35; Nichols, The Disruption of American Democracy, 122-123.

years; . . . "⁴⁶ A piecemeal surrender of the South in the territories would not, in his opinion, bring lasting peace. The lesson of time was clear enough: the Missouri Compromise had served only as an interlude before the same issue arose in relation to the Mexican cession. The South had given way again and admitted California as a free state. That surrender marked for Mississippians a line beyond which they would not submit to free soil aggression.⁴⁷

Speaking before the House on January 13, Lamar went far beyond this historical argument. He tediously dealt with technical and legal questions surrounding admission to statehood and concluded that popular ratification of the Lecompton constitution was unnecessary. Citing the federal constitution as an example, he maintained that: "the authority of the people is fully recognized, the popular sovereignty, as a principle, is fully enforced, when an opportunity is afforded to the legal voters to deposit their vote for delegates to a convention. . . ." Lamar's legalisms also carried a barb, and he ominously warned: "You may reject her application if you will, but it will be at your own peril."⁴⁸

⁴⁶Congressional Globe, 35 Cong., 1 Sess., 279-281 (Jan. 13, 1858); ibid., App., 49-53, contains a much longer version of the speech.

⁴⁷Speech given by Lamar to the Mississippi legislature, Nov. 3, 1858, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 618-620.

⁴⁸Congressional Globe, 35 Cong., 1 Sess., 279-281 (Jan. 13, 1858); ibid., App., 49-53.

About two weeks after Lamar's speech the president decided for political reasons to force congressional acceptance of Kansas statehood with slavery. Although opposed by anti-Lecompton Democrats as well as by Republicans, Buchanan determined to drive the bill through at all costs and thus remove the issue from politics before the next presidential election.⁴⁹

A mighty House struggle for committee disposition of the bill followed. Taking advantage of a temporary majority, anti-Lecompton forces pushed for a vote. Lamar and the administration minority countered by filibustering. The resulting impasse continued throughout the night February 5, until adjournment after 6 A.M., on the morning of February 6, 1858.⁵⁰

Respite must have been welcome to the weary participants. Nerves and composure had completely broken at about two o'clock on the morning of February 6, when Grow of Pennsylvania testily objected to a proposition offered by Quitman of Mississippi. This precipitated a physical brawl in which a number of members joined. Lamar paired off with Owen Lovejoy of Illinois. Some accounts stated that the two fought with gusto; others reported that they "were pawing

⁴⁹Nichols, The Disruption of American Democracy, 163-164. For a detailed treatment of the congressional fight see ibid., 164-180, passim.

⁵⁰House Journal, 35 Cong., 1 Sess., 306-340 (Feb. 5-6, 1858).

each other at one point--each probably trying to persuade the other to be still."⁵¹ A colleague from Mississippi, William Barksdale, joined the melee with Lamar and Quitman and became the only real casualty. A Republican grabbed Barksdale's hair to set him up for a blow, when the Mississippian's hair piece came off. Since few knew that Barksdale wore a wig, this occurrence put the House into a better mood. According to one account, the wig was thrown into the crowd and trampled while the poor man struggled to get it back. Another story told that Barksdale got his top piece back, but in his frustration put it on wrong side out.⁵²

Despite the delay, administration leaders ultimately lost control of the Kansas bill in the House. Lamar, for his part, voted for admission with a guarantee of the state's right to amend its constitution and to be free of federal intervention. But in this and on the crucial question of a new popular referendum he voted with the minority. Forseeing just such an impasse as this, the administration planned to gain its objectives in a

⁵¹New York Times, Feb. 8, 1858; New York Tribune, Feb. 8, 1858.

⁵²See New York Times, Feb. 8, 1858; New York Tribune, Feb. 8, 1858; and Nichols, The Disruption of American Democracy, 165.

House-Senate conference committee packed with friendly congressmen. Lamar supported the move to send the bill to the committee.⁵³

By this time Buchanan realized that Kansas could not be admitted without resubmission of the constitution. Consequently a compromise measure--the English bill--emerged, allowing the president and Southerners to save face while giving the substance of victory to the anti-Lecompton forces. Lamar backed the compromise and assisted in the crucial fight against delaying tactics.⁵⁴ Pushed hard by Cabinet leaders, especially Lamar's friends, Cobb and Thompson, the Democrats accepted the bill. Defection was limited to the staunchest Douglas supporters and extreme Southern fireaters, including Lamar's colleague Quitman, of Mississippi. Lamar at this point stayed away from the radical position and voted for the conference measure.⁵⁵

Lamar's unwillingness to push the Kansas fight to the ultimate resolution in disunion suggests only slight flexibility on the slavery issue. When the Kansas issue was most critical, very few Southern Democrats voted more consistently than Lamar for the pro-slavery position. His acceptance of

⁵³House Journal, 35 Cong., 1 Sess., 573, 577-581 (April 1, 1858); ibid., 618-620 (April 14, 1858); Nichols, The Disruption of American Democracy, 167, 169, 173.

⁵⁴House Journal, 35 Cong., 1 Sess., 693-694 (April 26, 1858).

⁵⁵Ibid., 35 Cong., 1 Sess., 719-721 (April 30, 1858).

the administration's position probably reflected Cabinet pressure coupled with dread of the dire consequences threatened by Quitman.⁵⁶

This mildly compromising attitude on slavery also showed in Lamar's position toward foreign territorial acquisitions in areas where chattel slavery might prosper. Though sympathetic with the impulse toward expansion into Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, he nevertheless opposed filibustering activities and supported enforcement of neutrality laws. Lamar would gladly see "American liberty, with Southern institutions, upon every inch of American soil," but he believed that expansion should await final settlement of the slavery question in the United States.⁵⁷ On the related question of reopening foreign slave trade, Lamar stopped short of an extreme position

⁵⁶For a profile of the vote on slavery issues in the thirty-fifth Congress, first session, see Alexander, Sectional Stress and Party Strength, 101. Lamar holds scale position 1, on the scalogram. See Alexander to author, Oct. 6, 1867.

⁵⁷Congressional Globe, 35 Cong., 1 Sess., 279-281 (Jan. 13, 1858). The address of November 11, 1859, before the Mississippi legislature as reported in the Vicksburg Whig, is quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 80. Lamar nevertheless voted to condemn the arrest of William Walker. See House Journal, 35 Cong., 2 Sess., 69-70 (Nov. 15, 1858).

favoring the trade but condemned Northern meddling as part of the scheme to destroy slavery.⁵⁸

It is significant that Lamar's treatment of domestic and foreign expansion dwelt upon the right rather than the likelihood of taking slaves beyond the traditional confines of the plantation economy. In this respect his approach was an essentially negative one. He made no contribution to the vision of a great slave empire in South America nor to that of renewed Southern domination in national affairs. His position was basically defensive in its dependence upon constitutional protection and its ultimate threat that the South would retreat no further.⁵⁹

Lamar's defense of slavery in the territories was inextricably tied to the justification of the institution itself. Debate therefore transcended the purely economic and political issues at stake in Kansas and entered the more effervescent realm of morality. Since the preponderant majority opinion despised the "peculiar institution," the

⁵⁸Congressional Globe, 36 Cong., 1 Sess., 228-229 (Dec. 23, 1859). Because of the sectional overtones of the question he voted with the South against expanding the prohibitive acts. See House Journal, 36 Cong., 1 Sess., 1008 (June 5, 1860).

⁵⁹Henry Nash Smith suggests that of all symbols developed by the South to express the ideal ends of slavery the only one with real depth revolved around the development of a Caribbean slave empire. Lamar exploited this symbol to only a slight degree, if at all. See Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth (New York, 1950), 165-176.

ultimate right of slavery to exist posed the real issue. Lamar clearly understood this when he said on February 21, 1860, in his only defense of slavery as an institution, that: "a moral sentiment thus diffused among the majority of a great people will work itself out into practical action, and the law, . . . which obstructs its progress . . . must yield before it or be overborne by it."⁶⁰

Perhaps the most telling accusation with which Lamar dealt in that long and comprehensive speech emphasized the inconsistency between enlightenment principles and the institution of chattel slavery. Lamar's reply to that argument⁶¹ cut away the verbiage of nineteenth century rhetoric and fixed upon its most vulnerable aspect, the alleged equality of all men. He drove his point home with a long catalogue of exceptions including felons, minors, and women. He excepted women because society required their "consecration to those high and noble responsibilities which unfit her for the exercise of political rights." So, as Lamar insisted, fixed rules deduced from natural equality were specious and inapplicable to the uncivilized Negro.

Lamar based his answer more upon logic than philosophical consideration. He avoided the question of man's

⁶⁰Congressional Globe, 36 Cong., 1 Sess., App., 113-117 (Feb. 21, 1860).

⁶¹See William Sumner Jenkins, Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South (Chapel Hill, 1935), 121-130, for a summary of this argument as employed by Southerners in general.

nature altogether and aimed instead at destroying the argument of his adversary. Such tactics of course disclosed an orator and not a thinker.

Turning from defensive logic, Lamar's apology fell back upon the greatest authority known to the nineteenth century South--the Christian Church and its Bible. Lamar's use of spiritual authority added nothing new to the well-worn dialogue,⁶² but his approach was mildly ingenious in its irony. Rather than cite verse and book, Lamar gave his antagonists "the language of a learned Northern divine, . . . whose book on moral science is the textbook of your Northern colleges, academies, and schools." In quoting Dr. Francis Wayland's The Elements of Moral Science (Boston, 1848) as proof of Biblical justification, Lamar naturally did not include Wayland's conclusion that slavery was intended to be only temporary.⁶³

Going beyond logical and Biblical defense, Lamar argued for the positive virtues of slavery. Quoting from Hegel's Philosophy of History he demonstrated the exclusion of the Negro from the author's definition of civilized humanity. The African, Hegel had concluded, "exhibits the natural man in his completely wild and untamed state." And then to show

⁶²See Jenkins, Pro-Slavery Thought, 200-207, for a summary of the argument as employed by Southerners in general.

⁶³See ibid., 221, 223, 228, for a discussion of Wayland's viewpoint.

that Southern use of the Negro was actually benign rather than barbarous, Lamar cited Hegel's estimation of chattel slavery as a positive good since "slavery is itself a phase of advance... "64

Having taken his text, Lamar compared the "natural condition" of the African to that of the slave. "The negro in the Southern States," he maintained, "has reached a moral and intellectual development superior to his race in any other position in which he has been placed. . . ." Despite progress, however, slavery would remain a necessity for a naturally barbarous race. In this concept, the black race was forever unfit for freedom and slavery therefore was a positive good.⁶⁵

As for the abolitionists' complaint that the presence of slavery somehow degraded free labor, Lamar replied that: "there is no class among whom negro slavery secures such widespread blessings as the non-slaveholders of the South." With a patronizing air he declared "that God's sun does

⁶⁴For the context of Lamar's quotations see G. W. F. Hegel, The Philosophy of History, J. Sibree, trans., with prefaces by Charles Hegel and J. Sibree (New York, 1944), 93, 95, 98-99.

⁶⁵In employing Hegel, Lamar departed from the usual argument by Southern apologists. Although he did not abuse the source in a strict sense, The Philosophy of History is nonetheless a specious authority since the author was discussing the native African and addressed himself quite incidentally to European and American slavery. Jenkins, Pro-Slavery Thought, 242-246, does not mention Hegel, but does give the ethnological justification of slavery.

not shine on a nobler, prouder, happier, more prosperous and elevated class of people than the non-slaveholders of the South." The truly free laborer was the Southern farmer, who allowed "neither monster, capitalist, nor employer to have any participation in its profits."⁶⁶ This was almost pure imagery, but it answered critics who presumed the superiority of a free society.⁶⁷

In his commitment to chattel slavery Lamar sought concessions and guarantees necessary to the South's security. He well understood the danger that the North might overwhelm the South. Because the section had failed to preserve a political balance even in the Senate, Lamar sought other solutions to the South's imperiled existence.

Always important as a protective mechanism, the federal constitution presented after 1850 the only real hope of a minority whose interests conflicted with the majority section. Pursued to the last extremity, the South fell back upon the provisions specifically recognizing slavery

⁶⁶This general argument is described in Jenkins, Pro-Slavery Thought, 295-298.

⁶⁷All the foregoing on defense of slavery is based upon Lamar's speech in the House of Representatives. See Congressional Globe, 36 Cong., 1 Sess., App., 113-117 (Feb. 21, 1860).

and built from that foundation a highly ingenious defensive system.⁶⁸

Lamar's contribution to constitutionalism was largely derived from more experienced and profound political thinkers--especially John C. Calhoun. Though lacking originality, he was a good student and effective in his oratory. At a time when his section rewarded ingenuity rather than originality he served with some distinction as a spokesman for Southern orthodoxy.

In a speech of December 7, 1859, during a controversy over Hinton Helper's Impending Crisis, Lamar made his most definitive statement on the constitution. He reminded the House that the founding fathers had made the slave "an institution of property and of society and of government. . . . " and that they had required positive support of the institution. He went on to formulate the South's advocacy of constitutionalism:

Regarding that constitution as the instrument of our protection, we are determined to maintain its sacred compromises. You being a majority, and looking upon it as an instrument of restraint upon your power, have taken issue with the constitution and are attempting to throw off its restrictions. That is the fight between us, and we are ready to meet it here.⁶⁹

⁶⁸The development of constitutionalism is traced by Jesse T. Carpenter, The South as a Conscious Minority (New York, 1930), 127-170.

⁶⁹Congressional Globe, 36 Cong., 1 Sess., 44-46 (Dec. 7, 1859).

On other occasions Lamar broadened his legalistic framework in pursuit of a viable interpretation which would protect slavery. Defensive almost to the point of desperation, he turned to the traditional philosophy of sectional balance. Maintaining that the constitution presumed a union of equal sections (the concurrent majority) as well as one of confederate states, Lamar compensated for the South's numerically weak position in Congress.⁷⁰ No less an authority than James Madison, he said, had claimed that "every peculiar interest" ought to be provided with as a means of defense.⁷¹

Lamar's arguments in favor of a strict checks and balances system and representational rather than direct government sometimes suggested an anti-democratic bias. In opposing a popular referendum on the Kansas constitution in 1858, for example, he came out squarely against direct democracy and drew upon appropriate authorities to conclude

. . . that nearly all writers on governmental and social science, representing every class of opinion (except a few run-mad red Republicans of Germany and France) unite

⁷⁰Carpenter, The South as a Conscious Minority, 77-126, treats the concurrent voice.

⁷¹Congressional Globe, 36 Cong., 1 Sess., App., 113-117 (Feb. 21, 1860). On the use of Madison by Southern apologists, see Carpenter, The South as a Conscious Minority, 79-80.

in condemning this theory of direct appeal to the people.⁷²

If such authority were not sufficient--and he specifically cited Montesquieu and Rousseau--historical examples of the plebescite provided additional warning. The French constitution of 1799, for instance, was approved by the people and resulted in the conversion of France "into one moral and political volcano." All this he contrasted to the republican government envisioned by American founding fathers and embodied in the Lecompton constitution.⁷³

Carrying his argument for the concurrent majority to its logical conclusion, Lamar rejected majoritarian democracy in favor of a republican form called "representative liberty," which allowed all interests to participate in government without reference to numbers. Thus sections might "counteract the tendency of any one part to usurp the sovereignty of the whole." When any section gained control over the common government, then the "result is not liberty; it is tyranny unmixed."⁷⁴

Although Lamar did not counsel secession until after Lincoln's election, that alternative was never far from his

⁷²Congressional Globe, 35 Cong., 1 Sess., 279-281 (Jan. 13, 1858); ibid., App., 49-53.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Lamar to P. F. Liddell, Dec. 10, 1860, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 633-639. Lamar was writing after Lincoln's election, and by this time he had given up on constitutional defense.

reasoning. He feared that unless consitutional protection could be made absolute the abolitionists' view would prevail, and preponderent majority opinion would have its way despite laws to the contrary. The South would take no untoward action while the constitution guaranteed its autonomy, but after that she would cease to rely upon legalisms. On December 7, 1859, Lamar shouted his warning to Congress:

That constitution is the life and soul of this great government [and] when it is violated, persistently violated, when its spirit is no longer observed upon this floor, I war upon your government, I am against it. I raise then the banner of secession, and I will fight under it as long as the blood flows and ebbs in my veins.⁷⁵

Though Lamar's theories of representative democracy did not require control of the executive branch of government by the South, it became apparent after Lincoln's election that this condition was implicit. The 1860 election gave the "fanatical majority section" control of both legislative and executive branches of government. Lamar was unwilling to depend upon Northern Democrats or the federal judiciary for the South's defense. Loss of the presidency

⁷⁵Congressional Globe, 36 Cong., 1 Sess., 44-46 (Dec. 7, 1859). Little wonder that the New York Times reported: "As a speaker, he is extremely fiery, and inclined to raise his voice; but his portraiture and descriptions are graphic and poetical, extensively colored with Southern warpaint, and heightened to an interesting point by many romantic exaggerations." See Dickey and Streeter, "Lucius Q. C. Lamar," in American Public Addresses, III, 189-190, quoting New York Times, Dec. 26, 1859.

marked an end to the South's ability to check the majority section's progress in a "revolution which has never gone backward, and whose very law is progression."⁷⁶ With Lincoln's election Lamar's worst fears for the constitution as a protective device were realized. His reasoning came close to Calhoun's belief that only a dual executive could protect Southern interests.

Actually these events came as no surprise. As early as March 8, 1858, during the Kansas debates, Lamar had judged the sectional dispute pessimistically. He saw the struggle as one in which the South already held an isolated position. He envisioned the South's defeat in the perversion of the constitutional relationship between sections. In darkly conspiratorial terms Lamar informed a constituent that New England's ambition had always sought to subdue non-manufacturing areas and that the South should not again submit. He realized the implications of his position but would not retreat:

. . . I may deprecate, but would not prevent, the fearful consequences. Dissolution cannot take place quietly; the vast and complicated machinery of this government cannot be divided without general tumult and, it may be, ruin. When the sun of the Union sets it will go down in blood.⁷⁷

⁷⁶Lamar to P. F. Liddell, Dec. 10, 1860, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 633-639.

⁷⁷Lamar to B. S. Rozell, March 8, 1858, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 73-74.

CHAPTER IV

SECESSION: TOWARD A NEW NATION

L. Q. C. Lamar's role in the act of secession was by no means decisive or even of great importance beyond the local level.¹ Still his influence was not altogether negligible within the context of Mississippi politics, and in many respects he spoke for the typical Southern man in both his point of view and emotional involvement. After three years as portender of crisis in Congress, Lamar could at least figuratively represent his section in that most ominous gathering, the Democratic national convention in April 1860. Although not an official delegate, he went to Charleston where he observed, and to an extent, participated

¹If representative histories of the secession crisis may be used as a criterion, Lamar's activities during the winter of 1860-61, were hardly noticeable. Avery Craven, The Growth of Southern Nationalism 1848-61 (Baton Rouge, 1953); Avery Craven, The Coming of the Civil War (Chicago, 1966); Kenneth Stampp, And the War Came (Baton Rouge, 1950); U. B. Phillips, The Course of the South to Secession (New York, 1939); and George Fort Milton, The Eve of Conflict: Stephen A. Douglas and the Needless War (Boston, 1934), all fail even to mention Lamar. Roy Nichols, The Disruption of American Democracy (New York, 1962), makes one reference. Allen Nevins, The Ordeal of the Union (2 vols., New York, 1947); and Allen Nevins, The Emergence of Lincoln (2 vols., New York, 1950), make only passing references. The dearth of Lamar correspondence during this period may at least partially account for his obscurity.

in the first irrevocable step toward his nightmare's fulfillment.²

Lamar's place in the "disruption of American Democracy" at Charleston was determined by political and personal considerations as well as principle. Perhaps this may to some extent explain why he sometimes behaved with ambivalence and indecisiveness. It may be, of course, that at the time he did not know his own mind and only seemed to have mixed motives. The prospect of a Douglas-controlled Democratic party antagonistic to Southern concepts of slavery in the territories rankled deeply. Yet the knowledge that a divided Democratic party might well give the Republicans command of the national government added to the tension. Under these circumstances ambivalence and confusion of motives were not unlikely.

Lamar first appeared at Charleston as an emissary conveying the message that Jefferson Davis "did not wish the Southern delegates to secede on the platform, because he knew that we could achieve a more solid and enduring triumph by remaining in and defeating Douglas."³ Lamar relayed the

²William B. Hesseltine, ed., Three Against Lincoln: Murat Halstead Reports the Caucuses of 1860 (Baton Rouge, 1960), App. A, 284, lists the delegates. Lamar was not an official delegate to the Baltimore or "Seceders" conventions. See ibid., App. B, 290, and App. D, 301, for lists of the delegates. Cf. Cate, Lamar, 68; and Mayes, Lamar, 83, who treat him as a delegate.

³Lamar to C. H. Mott, May 29, 1860, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 83.

message and personally urged the primary importance of selecting a nominee representing Southern principles. His appeal had little effect: the Mississippi delegation left the hall in disgust before either platform or nominee could be chosen.⁴

Strangely, Davis's chosen spokesman seemed not to have been completely dedicated to the view that the South should accept a compromise platform. Indeed, despite the fact that his counsel was ignored, Lamar harrangued a mass meeting of Southern sympathizers for an hour and half on the very night of the withdrawal. He denounced Douglas's position on squatter sovereignty until he had him "in the fanged jaws of his logic and fact. . . ." ⁵ Then Davis's erstwhile spokesman announced that the Democratic party had been split and could not be mended. Following Lamar's address, the crowd was treated to a speech by that most radical of Southerners, William Yancy.⁶

⁴Lamar to C. H. Mott, May 29, 1860, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 83; Nichols, The Disruption of American Democracy, 299-300, 303-304; Willie D. Halsell, "The Friendship of L. Q. C. Lamar and Jefferson Davis," in JMH, VI (July 1944), 133-134.

⁵Hesseltine, ed., Three Against Lincoln, 86.

⁶Halsell, "The Friendship of L.Q. C. Lamar and Jefferson Davis," in JMH, VI, 134; Henry Wilson, History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power (3 vols., Boston, 1875-77), II, 682; Joseph Hodgson, The Cradle of the Confederacy; or the Times of Troup, Quitman, and Yancy (Mobile, 1876), 417.

Lamar believed that he had done his best to carry out Davis's wishes, but he could not be sure that seceders from the convention were not right in what they had done; and he felt that his own lot was cast with them. But Lamar still remained inconsistent in his feelings about Charleston. He demonstrated this by writing his more temperate relative, Supreme Court Justice John A. Campbell, a "penitential" letter for his actions at the convention. Campbell accepted the younger man's explanation, but with considerable disgust.⁷

Despite these apparently confused feelings, Lamar publicly supported Jefferson Davis's efforts to prevent formation of a Southern party. He, Davis, and other leaders, signed an address urging Southern states to participate in the national Democratic convention reconvening in Baltimore. The Southern convention scheduled to meet in Richmond, should, the address declared, be deferred until efforts at agreement with the Douglas Democrats proved futile.⁸

In urging moderation, Davis and Lamar stood alone among Mississippi Democratic leaders; the other members of the state's congressional delegation declined to sign the appeal. But again Lamar seems to have been moved by loyalty to Davis rather than by firm conviction. As he wrote Mott,

⁷Lamar to C. H. Mott, May 29, 1860, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 83; Lamar to John Campbell, June 7, 1860, cited, ibid., 84; Campbell to Lamar, June 12, 1860, quoted, ibid., 84.

⁸Oxford (Miss.) Intelligencer, June 6, 1860.

his law partner, "Davis had signed it, and I was determined that his name should not go unsupported by any of the [Mississippi] delegation."⁹

For a time the counsel of Davis and Lamar prevailed, and Mississippi's delegates did in fact attend the Baltimore convention. Moderation did not rule there, however, and the Southerners again withdrew. Nomination of Breckinridge and Lane in opposition to the Douglas ticket followed.¹⁰

Once the nominations were past, Lamar made an extraordinary move for a man whose life had been so politically oriented. Giving little explanation, he accepted the professorship of mental and moral philosophy at the University of Mississippi, and made plans for retirement from Congress at the session's end.¹¹ In a public letter to his constituents, Congressman Lamar announced his decision not to run because his private affairs required immediate attention, and suggested that his claim on the congressional position had been a limited one. His original nomination for the office, he said, had resulted from an impasse in the

⁹Lamar to C. H. Mott, May 29, 1860, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 83.

¹⁰Nichols, The Disruption of American Democracy, 311-318.

¹¹Campbell, trans., "Journal of the Minutes of the Board of Trustees," 426 (June 27, 1860); ibid., 428 (June 29, 1860); Oxford Intelligencer, July 4, 1860.

convention and a compromise. For that reason, he had desired to retire after one term, but had been convinced by friends that vindication of his course in Washington required reelection. That having been achieved, he would not run again.¹²

In addition to these financial and political considerations, Lamar's decision must have been affected by the general dissatisfaction and frustration which pervaded Washington. As the situation worsened during the winter of 1860, he grew more and more restless and desirous of returning to his family.¹³

Practically speaking, acceptance of the professorship had no effect upon Lamar's political activity. Immediately afterwards, he entered into the presidential campaign, speaking in a number of northern Mississippi towns and in Memphis. To these audiences he emphasized the well-worn story of Northern hostility since the Compromise of 1850 and urged the South to unite without regard to party. Ominously he cited John Brown's raid as justification for purchases of arms.¹⁴

¹²Oxford Intelligencer, July 11, 1860.

¹³Lamar to A. B. Longstreet, Nov. 13, Dec. 11, 1860, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 86, 89.

¹⁴Oxford Intelligencer, Aug. 22, 29, Sept. 12, 1860; Memphis Daily Appeal, Sept. 5, 1860.

Despite Lamar's efforts and the unification of Mississippi Democrats behind Breckinridge, the vital question of union or disunion remained open. Bell supporters, claiming that slavery could be preserved only within the Union, won heavy support in river counties where Whigs and Constitutional Unionists had prevailed in crises past. Still in all, opinion had swung to the Democrats since 1850, and their candidate prevailed.¹⁵

Breckinridge's success in Mississippi paled before Lincoln's national victory. Southern Democrats believed themselves driven before the alternatives of submission or secession. Mississippi's governor, John J. Pettus, called a strategy meeting with the congressional delegation for November 22, 1860, in preparation for the special session of the legislature to convene on the twenty-sixth. The governor wished counsel: the question being whether to recommend a policy of immediate and separate secession to the legislature or to advise cooperative secession with other Southern states.

Again the party's leadership divided as it had at Charleston. Lamar joined Senators Davis and Albert Gallatin Brown, in favoring cooperative secession. Governor Pettus voted with Congressmen O. R. Singleton, Reuben Davis, and

¹⁵Rainwater, Mississippi, Storm Center of Secession, 142. Lafayette County (Oxford) gave 1,034 for Breckinridge; 686 for Bell; 144 for Douglas. See ibid., 198.

E. A. Barksdale to defeat them.¹⁶ A second resolution called for South Carolina to secede immediately rather than delay for other states, and again Pettus cast the deciding ballot. Having been outvoted, Lamar, Davis, and Brown made the resolutions unanimous.¹⁷

In favoring cooperative secession, Lamar's position again became ambivalent. As late as May 1860, he believed a united South "might secure all her rights. . . ." ¹⁸ but Lincoln's election caused him to despair. Thereafter he believed theoretical secession a necessary policy, but remained undecided about its application. On November 13, 1860, he described his feelings to his father-in-law as "anxious and dejected" but still sanguine enough to hope that "if South Carolina will only have the courage to go out, all will be well. We will have a Southern Republic, or an amended Federal Constitution. . . ." ¹⁹ Either his confusion about the South's proper course persisted, or he

¹⁶Congressman John J. McRae did not attend the meeting.

¹⁷Reuben Davis, Recollections of Mississippi and Mississippians (Boston, 1891), 390-392; James B. Ranck, Albert Gallatin Brown: Radical Southern Nationalist (New York, 1937), 202, 284-285; Halsell, "The Friendship of L. Q. C. Lamar and Jefferson Davis," in JMH, VI, 135.

¹⁸Lamar to C. H. Mott, May 29, 1860, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 83.

¹⁹Lamar to A. B. Longstreet, Nov. 13, 1860, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 86.

tried to satisfy both Longstreet and Davis by vacillating on South Carolina's independent secession.²⁰

After the conference with the governor and passage of the immediate secession resolutions, Lamar did not again mention the realization of Southern rights within the Union. Instead he moved precipitately toward disunion. Circumstances had at last committed him to a final alternative; the vicissitudes and inconsistencies seemed to disappear.

At a mass meeting in Brandon, Mississippi, the day after the governor's conference, Lamar indicated his firm support of secession but at the same time spoke temperately, making no allusions to military conflict with the United States. More importantly, he presented to the audience a plan for the formation of a confederacy. That proposal, considered original by his contemporaries, would be presented to the legislature convening on November 26, and on several other occasions.²¹

²⁰It is peculiar that Jefferson Davis's account of secession in Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government (2 vols., New York, 1881), does not mention Lamar. Mrs. Jacob Thompson still considered Lamar less extreme on secession than either her husband or Howell Cobb. See Mrs. J. Thompson to Mrs. H. Cobb, Dec. 15, 1860, in Phillips, ed., Correspondence of Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb, 523.

²¹Davis, Recollections of Mississippi and Mississippians, 392; Mayes, Lamar, 87-88; Lamar to P. F. Liddell, Dec. 10, 1860, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 633-639; and Wiley P. Harris, "Autobiography," in Dunbar Rowland, Courts, Judges, and Lawyers of Mississippi, 1798-1935 (Jackson, 1935), 322; Oxford Intelligencer, Dec. 5, 1860.

According to Lamar, his plan had the peculiar virtue of allowing an orderly transition from the Union into a new political alliance. The "evils of provisional governments" might be avoided since the states would adopt the constitution, laws, court decisions, and treaties of the United states, unless and until altered by the new government. He proposed that the coming Mississippi convention should adopt ordinances leading to this end. The convention should repeal its 1817 ordinance consenting to join the federal Union. It should authorize formation of a new federal union including all slave states, the territory of New Mexico, and the Indian territory. All legal regulations of the United States insofar as applicable to Mississippi would remain in effect, and all United States offices within Mississippi would continue to function. Pending formation of the new central government, Mississippi's governor would perform all duties of the president of the United States. Following acceptance of the government by nine states, the governor would order an election of congressional representatives and electors for executive offices as under the laws of the United States.

Lamar perhaps betrayed naivete in supposing that a transferral of sovereignty could take place easily and with little disruption of institutions. Still the possibility of preserving "our old glorious constitution . . . safe in the affections of our people from the attacks of fanaticism. . . ."

was an attractive one to many Southerners. Continuation under the constitution would permit Southerners to stand upon the legality of their action, and in this sense, the plan supplied a justification as well as an instrument of government. As Lamar put it: "In a word, it gives us the Union and constitution as the fathers made them, and separates us from the enemies to both, who themselves have seceded from the constitution, and are indeed rebels and traitors."²²

Lamar presented his scheme to a caucus of Southern leaders when Congress convened in December. While hope for compromise dwindled, it offered a viable alternative of coordinated action. The political mood which prevented Southern agreement on any program, however, excluded Lamar's plan from any real chance of adoption. Its practical significance therefore awaited application in Mississippi when the secession convention organized in January.²³

His plan of confederation disregarded and compromise with the North unlikely, Lamar returned to Mississippi to

²²Lamar to P. F. Liddell, Dec. 10, 1860, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 633-639; E. Merton Coulter, The Confederate States of America 1861-1865 (Baton Rouge, 1950), 20.

²³T. William Compton to Alonzo Snyder, Dec. 23, 1860, in Alonzo Snyder Papers (Louisiana State University Archives, Baton Rouge); Nichols, The Disruption of American Democracy, 395-398.

run, unopposed, for election to the state convention.²⁴

Lamar's election did not commit Lafayette County irrevocably to any given position in the convention. Delegates were uninstructed and left free to work out Mississippi's future in counsel with leaders from all over the state. Sentiment in the county was divided so completely in 1860-61, that the election could in no way be considered a mandate on secession. Since the ticket won without opposition in Lafayette County, the presidential election furnished the best available gauge of public opinion. In November Union and national Democratic parties had polled a total of 830 votes against 1,034 for Breckinridge. Finally, it should be noted, neither Lamar nor his fellow delegate was committed at the time to unqualified and immediate secession.²⁵

Judging by a letter from Supreme Court Justice J. A. Campbell, Lamar himself felt that a division of opinion in

²⁴Oxford Intelligencer, Dec. 5, 1860; Rainwater, Mississippi, Storm Center of Secession, 198. This issue of the Intelligencer also announced the formation of a military unit called the "Lamar Rifles" in his honor.

²⁵Rainwater, Mississippi, Storm Center of Secession, 177, 196-198. Rainwater does a great deal with the geographic and economic factors in the secession movement. A map on p. 206 demonstrates the direct correlation between concentration of Negro population and Union sentiment. Lafayette County had between thirty and fifty percent of its population classified as slaves. In this correlation Rainwater shows Lafayette's delegates as one lawyer-planter owning thirty-one slaves and one physician-farmer owning twenty-nine slaves. T. D. Isom was the other delegate.

the state continued to cloud the issue. Answering Lamar's letter of December 25, Campbell wrote: "I think it to be obvious from your own statement that secession is not desired by the people of Mississippi. They want peace."²⁶ In another letter, however, Lamar declared himself pleased with the candidates elected. He wrote Jefferson Davis, who was still in Washington: "The friends of Southern independence, of firm and bonafide resistance, won an overwhelming victory. . . . " "Upon the whole, you have great cause for gratification in the action of your state."²⁷ Lamar's rather flattering letter presumed that Davis would provide Mississippi's leadership: "That God may preserve you to us, and that your mind may retain all its vigor to carry us through these perilous times, is my most fervant aspiration."²⁸

The delegates convened on January 7, 1861. On that same day the tone of the convention was set when Lamar offered a resolution establishing a committee to prepare a

²⁶J. A. Campbell to Lamar, Jan. 5, 1861, New York Historical Society Papers (New York Historical Society, New York City). The Lamar letter of Dec. 25, 1860, has not been located.

²⁷Lamar to Jefferson Davis, Dec. 24, 1860, quoted in New York Times, Aug. 15, 1863.

²⁸Ibid.

secession ordinance and to propose a new confederacy.²⁹ The following day, January 8, he was appointed chairman of such a committee.³⁰ The third day of the convention, January 9, the committee reported an ordinance for secession.³¹

It appears that Lamar had, in fact, prepared the secession ordinance prior to the convention and simply presented it to the committee at that time.³² He had maintained close touch with Southern leaders including Jefferson Davis, Jacob Thompson, and John A. Campbell during late December and early January. Thompson and Campbell, at least, had offered him advice upon the construction of the secession document.³³ His own prescription for withdrawal and formation of a new confederacy had been in circulation since early December, and presumably served as a basis for

²⁹Journal of the State Convention and Ordinances and Resolutions Adopted in January 1861 (Jackson, 1861), 9 (Jan. 7, 1861) (hereinafter cited as Journal of the State Convention).

³⁰Committee members: W. P. Harris, S. J. Gholson, J. L. Alcorn, H. T. Ellett, W. Brooke, H. R. Miller, J. A. Blair, A. M. Clayton, A. Holt, J. Z. George, E. H. Saunders, B. King, G. R. Clayton, O. Davis.

³¹Journal of the State Convention, 11-14 (Jan. 8-9, 1861).

³²Rainwater, Mississippi, Storm Center of Secession, 209.

³³Jacob Thompson to Lamar, Jan. 6, 1861, Record Group No. 109 (National Archives); J. A. Campbell to Lamar, Jan. 5, 1861, New York Historical Society Papers; Lamar to Jefferson Davis, Dec. 24, 1860, in New York Times, Aug. 15, 1863.

discussion. The ordinance as reported provided for the continuation of all rights and laws derived from the United States constitution, and for the organization of a new federal union. In these provisions it differed little from Lamar's original plan.

The ordinance of secession did not pass the convention entirely unopposed; and there is even some reason to believe that supporters feared its repudiation if tested in a state-wide popular vote. Opponents offered amendments to mitigate the provisions of the document, but without success.³⁴

Lamar joined the seventy-eight to twenty-one majority in defeating the "Yerger Amendment"³⁵ which sought constitutional guarantees within the Union, and thus set aside the last hope of avoiding secession. Another amendment, proposed by James L. Alcorn,³⁶ would have postponed action until Alabama, Georgia, Florida, and Louisiana also withdrew from the United States. Lamar joined with the majority in a vote of seventy-four to twenty-five against the delay. A final effort required submission of the ordinance to the people

³⁴Rainwater, Mississippi, Storm Center of Secession, 207-208, believes that the old line Whigs provided the backbone of this faction. A contemporary account, Horace S. Fulkerson, A Civilian's Recollections of the War Between the States, P. L. Rainwater, ed. (Baton Rouge, 1939), 5-6, held that the fifteen nay votes to the ordinance represented more than one half of the state's property.

³⁵Y. S. Yerger, Whig from Natchez.

³⁶Whig from Coahoma County in the delta.

for ratification.³⁷ An overwhelming three-fourths of the delegates would brook no such appeal to popular sentiment; nor would they tolerate further delay. By a vote of seventy to twenty-nine, the popular ratification amendment was defeated, and the ordinance, as presented, passed eighty-four to fifteen on January 9, 1861. All but a few Unionists elected to identify with the convention's action, even at the cost of principle.³⁸

Appointed on January 10, 1861, as a member of the committee "On a Southern Confederacy," Lamar promoted his plan for a United States of the South. He introduced resolutions declaring Mississippi's sympathy with South Carolina's secession and accepting an invitation to meet with seceding states to form a confederacy. The majority beat off efforts to amend the committee's recommendations so that the constitution, to be drawn up at Montgomery, would be submitted for popular ratification. An amendment then passed which allowed the Mississippi convention already in session to ratify for the state. In this form the ordinance providing for representation at Montgomery passed, and the way opened for membership in a new union.³⁹

³⁷Proposed by Walker Brooke of Vicksburg, a Whig.

³⁸Journal of the State Convention, 14-16 (Jan. 9, 1861).

³⁹Ibid., 17, 39-40 (Jan. 10, 1861); ibid., 48-50 (Jan. 22, 1861).

The business of secession and confederation done, a committee which included Lamar drew up a declaration of causes in much the same fashion as the colonies had done less than a century before.⁴⁰ The convention then turned to the practical details of the new order. The state constitution and legal codes were amended to account for independence. A postal system was set up and the state's defense provided for. Having created a republic, the convention adjourned to await results from the assembly in Montgomery.

If Lamar had been chosen as a delegate to the Montgomery convention, that might well have pre-determined a career in the legislative branch of the Confederate government. The Mississippi convention briefly considered him for the job, but failing a majority he was not elected. The convention decided to distinguish between representation to the Montgomery convention and the permanent Mississippi congressional delegation. Senators and representatives who had served in the United States Congress of 1861, were asked to continue their service until the regular election time came round. In the course of events, however, the temporary delegation assumed permanent duties in the provisional

⁴⁰Journal of the State Convention, 86-88 (Jan. 26, 1861). According to John K. Betterworth, Confederate Mississippi, the People and Policies of a Cotton State in Wartime (Baton Rouge, 1943), 9, the address was actually written by A. M. Clayton.

Confederate congress, and Lamar never became a member.⁴¹

Lamar had already, while still in Mississippi, resigned his seat in the United States Congress on January 12, 1861.⁴² This left him little to do during the interregnum separating United States and Confederate rule.⁴³ Two months later, in March, he joined the convention when it reconvened to consider the results of the Montgomery provisional congress. At once the dispute over ratification of the Confederate constitution again burst forth. A majority report from the committee favored immediate ratification by the convention. The opposition offered an amendment requiring popular ratification; but the majority, including Lamar, defeated it. Another amendment required a special ratification convention. The result was the same. Finally on March 29, 1861, the majority report passed seventy-eight to seven, and the constitution was accepted. Its work finished, the convention adjourned the next day sine die.⁴⁴

Despite their magnitude these events must have been in many ways anticlimactic for L. Q. C. Lamar. He had pondered

⁴¹Journal of the State Convention, 51-58 (Jan. 23, 1861); ibid., 73-75 (Jan. 25, 1861); ibid., 43 (March 30, 1861).

⁴²Congressional Globe, 36 Cong., 2 Sess., 345 (Jan. 12, 1861).

⁴³No correspondence exists for these months so his thoughts and plans are unknown.

⁴⁴Journal of the State Convention, 24, 26, 32-36, 47 (March 29-30, 1861).

the South's uncertain relationship to the Union since the tenuous beginnings of his political career in 1850-51. And in actuality, he had been educated around that one central issue at Emory under Longstreet. By March 29, 1861, the central issue of his life had been resolved, and he had, in a small way, helped to lead the South to its destiny. Now at age thirty-five, he must have felt confused self-importance in having helped end such a long antagonism.

A politician without a job, Lamar presided over classes in mental and moral philosophy at the university during the remaining months of peace. Whether he expected to continue this relatively unexciting livelihood is not known, but it seems unlikely. Within two weeks of the convention's adjournment, his students had begun leaving for Confederate military service. The administration, supported by Lamar, attempted to dissuade the "University Grays" from precipitant action but to no avail. On April 29, 1861, the chancellor reported to the faculty that only five students were in regular attendance and that these were expected to leave within hours. Two weeks later the university suspended operations.⁴⁵

After a summer vacation the faculty gathered again on September 18, 1861, to learn that only four students were

⁴⁵Faculty Record Book, 175-178 (April 15-29, 1861); F. A. P. Barnard, "Autobiographical Sketch of Dr. F. A. P. Barnard," in PMHS, XII, 115.

present. On October 1, 1861, the board of trustees resolved to accept the resignations of Lamar and most of his colleagues. Actually this was recognition after the fact. Lamar had already left Oxford.⁴⁶

The events of spring 1861 which closed the university also carried Lamar into active service in the Confederate army. Though he never questioned the need, it must have been a sobering prospect. He left a wife and three children⁴⁷ to the uncertainties of the time without adequate financial security. Neither his legal career nor the plantation were sufficiently developed to endure a long period of inattention. The Longstreets had moved to South Carolina and would not be able to see after his interests.

Despite these considerations, Lamar and his law partner, C. H. Mott, organized a volunteer regiment, the Nineteenth Mississippi: Mott as colonel with Lamar as his second in command.⁴⁸ The regiment reported to the Confederate War Department on May 14, 1861. After being commissioned and their command mustered, Lamar and Mott left

⁴⁶Faculty Record Book, 182 (Sept. 18, 1861); Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the University of Mississippi (University of Mississippi), 442-445 (Oct. 1, 1861) (hereinafter cited as Board Minutes).

⁴⁷Francis, Lamar, Jr., and Augusta.

⁴⁸Oxford Intelligencer, May 22, 1861.

Montgomery for Richmond, the new seat of the government.⁴⁹

In Richmond, Lamar joined President Jefferson Davis and on June 1, 1861, helped celebrate the government's transfer from Montgomery to Richmond. The Confederacy's future seemed very bright, and Davis's mere presence merited a serenade at his hotel. Lamar was known in the city and after Davis and Governor Wise spoke, he was called forth. With enthusiasm and platitudes befitting the occasion, he assured them of the South's rectitude. Cloaked in the righteousness of its cause, the South would fight if necessary, and Virginia would play her accustomed role:

Grand, glorious old commonwealth! Proud, free empress! Mother of States, themselves free, standing here in robes of steel, raising a majestic arm to press back the foe that dare attempt to force her daughters into an unnatural and unwilling union!⁵⁰

⁴⁹"Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States of America," Senate Documents, 58 Cong., 2 Sess., Doc. 234, XXV, 435, 501. L. Q. C. Lamar File, Record Group No. 109, indicates that Lamar's commission was technically issued on June 11, 1861, and took effect that date.

⁵⁰Richmond Daily Examiner, June 3, 1861, quoted in Dickey and Streeter, "Lucius Q. C. Lamar," in American Public Addresses, III, 176; Mayes, Lamar, 94-95.

CHAPTER V
THE CONFEDERACY: PATRIOT AT LARGE

Soldiering near Richmond seems not to have been too stringent during the summer of 1861. Lamar entered vigorously into the capital's social life, preferring this to the encampment. Old acquaintances from that "Historical Congressional 'Mess'" were there, and Lamar joined drawing room festivities with enthusiasm. These days were so agreeable that he wrote Mrs. Lamar with rather striking levity: "If I were well enough off, I should give up public life and devote myself to social duties. . . ." ¹

The wife of former Congressman James Chesnut remarked that Lamar called frequently and stayed late to talk of matters both light and serious. On one visit "[he said] he could only stay five minutes; he was obliged to go back at once to his camp. This was a little before eight o'clock; but at twelve he was still talking to us on that sofa." ²

Though tempered with her own prejudices, Mrs.

¹Lamar to Mrs. Lamar, Nov. 22, 1861, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 97.

²Mary B. Chesnut, A Diary from Dixie, Ben Ames Williams, ed. (Boston, 1949), 67 (June 27, 1861).

Chesnut's recollections present a view Lamar never exposed to the public. She spoke of "Mr. Lamar, who does not love slavery any more than Sumner does . . ." and who said that "Slavery is too heavy a load for us to carry" and the Lamar who looked ahead to "see all the risk, the loss of land, limb and life; of home, children and wife."³

Lamar's forebodings of "limb and life" were realized almost immediately and in a peculiar way. During encampment at Richmond just before the Nineteenth Mississippi moved to the front he was stricken with "a violent vertigo, something like an apoplexy, accompanied by unconsciousness more or less prolonged, and followed by more or less of paralysis of one side. Sometimes even his speech was affected."⁴ The illness kept him bedridden for about two weeks, and then he got about only on crutches. But on July 13, 1861, apparently well enough to travel, Lamar left Richmond with his wife and daughter and his father-in-law

³Chesnut, A Diary from Dixie, 70 (June 28, 1861); ibid., 151 (Oct. 15, 1861). Though Lamar probably had his doubts, Mrs. Chesnut must have exaggerated. Cf. Henry Adams, The Education of Henry Adams (Boston, 1918), 246, who wrote that "Lamar used to say that he never entertained a doubt of the soundness of the Southern system until he found that slavery could not stand a war."

⁴Mayes, Lamar, 96; Chesnut, A Diary from Dixie, 70 (June 29, 1861), called it "paralysis, or some sort of stroke." She went on in the same paragraph: "Will men flatter and make eyes until their eyes close in death? Except that he was in bed, with some learned professor at his bedside, and that his wife had been telegraphed for, he was the same old Lamar of the drawing-room."

for Oxford, where he convalesced until November. Here Lamar's health continued to improve, but the effects of the stroke still caused "frequent slight rushes of blood to the head" and lameness of the left leg.⁵ There is no way to gauge how close death may have been in this attack. His doctors apparently did not believe that the affliction presented a permanent threat to his life.

Probably assuming that his recovery would soon be complete, Lamar returned to duty about November 1, 1861. He remained in Richmond most of November, dividing his time between regimental business and physical recuperation, which continued rather slowly. On November 22, 1861, he wrote his wife of improved but continuing symptoms: "I hope I am nearly cured of my sickness. I can manage to get along with a stick, though my leg is quite weak and uncertain in its movements. My vertigo comes upon me very rarely, and then in a very modified form."⁶

Possibly because of Lamar's physical condition, Davis sent his friend on a special mission to General Joseph E.

⁵Chestnut, A Diary from Dixie, 81-82 (July 13, 1861); Mayes, Lamar, 96-97; Hill, "L. Q. C. Lamar," in The Green Bag, V, 158, later wrote that Lamar had traveled to Paris in 1859, to consult physicians in reference to a cerebral disease with which he suffered. Hill went on: Lamar "had frequent attacks of vertigo,--premonitory of a threatened paralysis . . . the excitement of every speech was incurred at the risk of life." There is no evidence to support Hill's contention that there were attacks before 1861.

⁶Lamar to Mrs. Lamar, Nov. 22, 1861, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 97.

Johnston's headquarters late in November to clear up "some wrong impressions. . . ." held by Johnston and James Longstreet which were causing ill will toward the president.⁷ Though Lamar's activities on the mission are not known in detail, there seemed to be an improvement in relations between Johnston and Davis at about this time. Lamar may have effectively served as a mediator because of his intimacy with Davis, his kinship with Longstreet through his wife, and his political reputation.⁸ But on the other hand his sickness confined him to his room during much of the winter and may have negated his efforts.⁹

⁷Lamar to Mrs. Lamar, Nov. 22, 1861, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 97. See also Gilbert E. Gouan and James W. Livingood, The Haskell Memoirs: John Cheves Haskell (New York, 1960), 13. Lamar File, Record Group No. 109, shows Lamar detached to Johnston during both November and December. The letter to Mrs. Lamar indicated a shorter stay.

⁸The disagreement developed after the first battle of Manassas, and became caustic and public about October 30, 1861. Davis summarized the dispute in a letter of November 11, 1861, to James Chesnut while the argument still smoldered. Davis's correspondence indicated that the dispute quieted after November 24, 1861, when it was the subject of Robert E. Lee to Davis. Lamar's name is not mentioned in this exchange of letters and it is likely that he did not figure too prominently. See Dunbar Rowland, ed., Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist: His Letters, Papers, and Speeches (10 vols., Jackson, 1923), V, 156, 164-166, 176-177.

⁹Gouan and Livingood, The Haskell Memoirs, 13. Haskell was Lamar's roommate at Johnston's camp. Later in the war, after Haskell had lost an arm, Lamar visited him, and according to Haskell, broke into tears and had to be taken from the room. It should be noted, however, that Haskell wrote forty years after the war ended. See ibid., 13-14.

After returning to Richmond, Lamar stayed in touch with Davis and apparently served him as an advisor. It was upon Lamar's recommendation that Davis employed a former University of Mississippi professor, Burton N. Harrison, as his personal secretary.¹⁰ The choice was an interesting one since Harrison taught with Lamar immediately preceding the suspension of classes at Oxford and had wished to join Lamar's regiment. According to Harrison, Lamar had discouraged him because of his dependent mother and sister. Harrison believed that Lamar had these considerations in mind when he talked to Davis.¹¹

Hoping to cross paths with Harrison in Atlanta, Lamar left for Oxford about February 7, 1862, on a thirty-day leave of absence. Failing to make the connection in Atlanta, Lamar went home where he rested with his family before finally returning to his regiment. After a separation from his men of almost one year,¹² the attraction of the field or the call of duty determined that Lamar should

¹⁰Lamar wired Burton N. Harrison: "You are Private Secretary to the President." See Fairfax Harrison, ed., Aris Soule Focisque . . . The Harrisons of Skimino (1910), 149-150; and Mrs. Burton Harrison, Recollections, Grave and Gay (New York, 1911), 69.

¹¹Harrison, ed., Aris Soule Focisque, 149-150; Harrison, Recollections, 69; Board Minutes, 442 (Oct. 1, 1861).

¹²Lamar to Burton N. Harrison, March 1, 1862, in Mrs. Burton Harrison's Scrap Book: 1858-1909, Burton N. Harrison Papers (Manuscript Division, Library of Congress; Lamar File, Record Group No. 109).

be a soldier again rather than a member of Davis's entourage.

In March when Lamar joined the Nineteenth near Yorktown, Virginia, it was apparent that a federal offensive was in the offing. Though an effort to drive past Yorktown up the peninsula to Richmond was presumed certain, Lamar's men saw no action through April except for "skirmishes of little importance and significant of nothing."¹³ Then Joseph Johnston ordered them to fall back on May 3, 1861, in anticipation of an opening barrage by superior federal artillery. General James Longstreet's Corps, including the Nineteenth Mississippi, fell back to Williamsburg, Virginia, where they joined with three other divisions.

At Williamsburg federal forces finally overtook Johnston's command. On the morning of May 5, the Nineteenth Mississippi joined in a counterattack, and Lamar experienced his first real fight of the war. The introduction must have been a sobering one since his regiment sustained, by Lamar's calculation, twenty-five percent casualties. The Nineteenth's Colonel C. H. Mott was one of those to fall in the charge, leaving Lamar to complete the engagement in command. At the end of the battle, with the Union offensive temporarily checked, Johnston withdrew his troops and hoped for a propitious turn of events further

¹³Lamar, no date or addressee, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 97; Joseph E. Johnston, Narrative of Military Operations Directed During the Late War Between the States (Bloomington, 1959), 116-118.

along the road to Richmond. Lamar had acquitted himself well enough to earn the usual commendations of his superiors.¹⁴

As McClellan's troops pushed up the peninsula, Johnston continued his march westward. By the fifteenth Lamar had reached the Chickahominy and on that day the army crossed the river nearer Richmond to draw up a line of defense. On or about that date in the midst of preparation for another encounter Lamar suffered another violent seizure--almost eleven months after the first illness. This time he quit the field for good.¹⁵

Lamar was taken to Richmond where he convalesced until June, when he felt well enough to travel to Mississippi and Georgia for an extended rest. His frustration must have been considerable during the following summer and fall of 1862. In addition to his own poor health and shattered military career, word came in September that his younger

¹⁴The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (128 vols., Washington, 1880-1901), Ser. I, Vol. II, Pt. 1, pp. 597-600 (hereinafter cited as Official Records) for Lamar's report on the engagement. For other official reports see ibid., 564-593, passim. See also Johnston, Narrative of Military Operations, 117-126; Gilbert E. Gouan and James W. Livingood, A Different Valor, The Story of General Joseph E. Johnston, C. S. A. (New York, 1956), 114-124; and G. Moxley Sorrell, Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer, Bell Irvin Wiley, ed. (Jackson, Tenn., 1958), 58-59.

¹⁵Johnston, Narrative of Military Operations, 126-128; Gouan and Livingood, A Different Valor, 124-128; Mayes, Lamar, 101.

brother, Jefferson Mirabeau, and his cousin, John B. Lamar, had died at Crampton's Gap. This loss, coupled with his personal problems, perhaps partially accounted for his formal affiliation with a church in July for the first time in his life.¹⁶

The war had also taken a turn for the worse in Confederate Mississippi. On November 13, 1862, A. B. Longstreet, again living in Oxford, wrote him: "Your plantation will soon be a battle-field. We shall be whipped on it, and the Yankees will make a desert of it." And as if to completely end hope, he continued "it matters but little whether it be made the camping-ground of our forces during the winter or fall into the hands of the enemy. . . . The prospect before us is awful." Lamar's wife and children would be sent to Georgia.¹⁷

Longstreet's apprehension was not misplaced. Armies soon overran Holly Springs, where Lamar practiced law; Oxford, where he lived and taught; and the area along the Tallahatchie, where "Solitude" was located.¹⁸

¹⁶Official Records, Ser. I, Vol. XIX, 871; Mayes, Lamar, 101-102, 559-560.

¹⁷A. B. Longstreet to Lamar, Nov. 13, 1862, quoted in Oscar Penn Fitzgerald, Judge Longstreet, A Life Sketch (Nashville, 1891), 198-199.

¹⁸Official Records, Ser. I, Vol. XVII, 470, 477-478, 487-489, 491-496, 503, 514-516; Betterworth, Confederate Mississippi, 280.

Notwithstanding these personal setbacks, Lamar's health improved sufficiently to allow his return to service early in November. Probably in consideration of his fragile condition, the army assigned him on November 6, 1862 to a place on the military court convened at Richmond.¹⁹ Lamar may not have had time, however, to assume the duties of the court. On November 19, 1862, Davis appointed him commissioner to the Russian Imperial Government, with the proviso that upon recognition of the Confederacy he would continue as envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to the emperor.²⁰

A diplomatic career must certainly have been more suitable to Lamar's disposition than the battlefield, which had brought so little personal realization.²¹ Still the auspiciousness of the appointment paled in the light of

¹⁹Lamar File, Record Group No. 109. Mayes, Lamar, 102; and Cate, Lamar, 91, mistakenly state that Lamar resigned his commission in October 1862.

²⁰J. P. Benjamin to Lamar, Nov. 19, 1862, in Confederate States of America Papers (hereinafter cited as CSA Papers): State Department, Diplomatic and Consular, XIII, 1-6, 8-11 (Manuscript Division, Library of Congress). It should be noted that Lamar had earlier predicted that he might receive such an appointment: "If we ever have peace, I expect I shall be sent as Minister to Spain or Sardinia...." See Lamar to Mrs. Lamar, Nov. 22, 1861, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 97.

²¹See Adams, The Education of Henry Adams, 185; and J. L. M. Curry, Civil History of the Government of the Confederate States (Richmond, 1900), 135, for contemporary appraisals of his suitability for the position. Both were highly flattering. Curry was a kinsman of Lamar's.

circumstances. Davis and Secretary of War, Judah P. Benjamin, had not sent a representative to Russia previously, because recognition seemed so unlikely and for fear of "assuming an attitude which could possibly be construed into a supplication for favor as inferiors. . . ." The later Confederate contention that Russian recognition might be forthcoming since "We have conquered our position by the sword" did not seem too convincing. Indeed, Lamar's instructions specifically provided that he might postpone presentation of his credentials should circumstances in Europe require it.²²

In the three and a half months which separated Lamar's appointment and his arrival in England on March 1, 1863, the government's instructions became somewhat dated. Either Lamar's health delayed him in his journey or the Confederacy was in absolutely no hurry to present its minister to Russia. Because of the hazards of running the Union naval blockade, Lamar eventually left the country via Matamoros, Mexico.

²²J. P. Benjamin to Lamar, Nov. 19, 1862, in CSA Papers: State Department, Diplomatic and Consular, XIII, 1-6, 8-11. Lamar's instructions are contained in two letters from Benjamin of this same date. These two letters and several accompanying documents may be found in Official Documents Relating to the Mission of L. Q. C. Lamar, Commissioner of the Confederate States of America to Russia (MDAH). Some of this material is reprinted in J. D. Richardson, ed., A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Confederacy Including the Diplomatic Correspondence 1861-1865 (2 vols., Nashville, 1905), II, 364-368; and in Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies (31 vols., Washington, 1894-1927), Ser. II, Vol. III, 137-138, 606-608.

But first he visited in Vicksburg, Mississippi, for five days before taking steamboat passage on the Mississippi and Red rivers to Alexandria, Louisiana. From the Red River he traveled by land to the Sabine; thence to Houston by water and land and then to Matamoros by way of San Antonio. Three weeks passed between his departure from San Antonio and his embarkment on the "Malabar." After a stop-over in Havana, where he was reported to be "feeble" but improving in health, Commissioner Lamar traveled to St. Thomas Island, and then across the Atlantic at last to England.²³

Though Lamar safely evaded the blockade, the North did not fail to capitalize on his mission. Fortunately for Union propagandists, the Confederate State Department's first dispatch to the commissioner to Russia was intercepted. The circular explaining the Confederacy's position on reopening the slave trade was widely published under the suggestive title "The African Slave Trade, the Secret Purpose of the Insurgents to Revive It." With this unearned

²³Mayes, Lamar, 106; Lamar to Mrs. Lamar, Dec. 24, 1862, quoted, ibid.; Col. P. N. Lockett (Commander of Lower Rio Grande) to Maj. A. G. Dickinson, Jan. 26, 1863, in Official Records, Ser. I, Vol. XV, 961; Ch. J. Helm (Confederate Agent in Havana) to J. P. Benjamin, Feb. 14, 1863, in Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, Ser. II, Vol. III, 690-691; James Mason to Benjamin, March 30, 1863, in Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, Ser. II, Vol. III, 732.

notoriety preceding him, Lamar entered London.²⁴

As instructed, Lamar first set out to acquaint himself with European attitudes toward the Confederate States of America. By March 20, 1863, he felt sufficiently informed in English affairs to advise the State Department of his findings--or perhaps he simply wished to record his activities. At this point Lamar believed the leaders of both political parties and the majority of their memberships to be sympathetic to the South. Only circumstances prevented their recognition of the Confederacy. For one thing, England greatly dreaded a war with the United States, and therefore was reluctant to antagonize her. Further, he believed, the composition of Parliament worked against action favorable to the South. Since neither party enjoyed a working majority: "This gives to the Radicals, under Bright and others, the balance of power" and "These men are the warm partisans of the United States. . . ." Lamar saw little reason to expect an immediate change in this dilemma. As for the continent, he considered Prussia and Austria likely areas for Confederate diplomacy. He did not despair for his own assignment and reported "there does not

²⁴J. P. Benjamin to Lamar, Dispatch No. 1, Jan. 15, 1863, in CSA Papers: State Department, Diplomatic and Consular, XIII, 11-16. See the same circular in J. P. Benjamin to James Mason, Jan. 15, 1863, in Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, Ser. II, Vol. III, 651-653. The propaganda pamphlet is on file in the Boston Public Library.

exist any feeling of hostility towards the South." Dispatch number one closed with the news that Confederate loan subscriptions were going so well that it "is claimed to be a financial recognition of the Confederacy."²⁵

Though these first observations added little to Benjamin's knowledge, Lamar remained in England until mid-April measuring opinion and apparently enjoying London society. Having satisfied himself on these accounts he traveled to Paris, where he intended to occupy himself in much the same way.²⁶

After several days in Paris, Lamar concluded that his mission to Russia could not improve that country's attitude toward the Confederacy. Specifically, he believed that until the Polish revolt could be settled his efforts would be futile. The outbreak threatened to engulf all Europe, and the czar's government felt deeply grateful for Secretary of State Seward's refusal to condemn Russian policy.

²⁵Lamar to J. P. Benjamin, Dispatch No. 1, March 20, 1863, in CSA Papers: Pickett Papers, Container 7. Also printed in Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the Confederacy, II, 453-456; and in Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, Ser. II, Vol. III, 716-718.

²⁶The exact date of Lamar's Paris trip is unknown, except that he arrived there before April 20, 1863. Cf. John Slidell to J. P. Benjamin, April 20, 1863, in Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, Ser. II, Vol. III, 743.

Relations between the two countries had therefore reached a new level of amity.²⁷

With no immediate prospects for continuing his mission Lamar entered into the multifarious activities being conducted by Confederate agents in France. Neither his relationship to these men nor his authority within their spheres of operations was ever defined. In fact, Lamar received no written instructions whatsoever beyond the original orders accompanying his appointment.

This visit in Paris, the first of several, extended from mid-April until June 25, 1863.²⁸ During the early part of his stay Lamar acquainted himself with the diplomatic and social maze surrounding the French court. In the process he learned what he could about the prospects for Russian recognition through that government's representatives in Paris.²⁹ At some time Lamar also had an audience with Louis Napoleon, to whom he broached the subject of French

²⁷ John Slidell to J. P. Benjamin, April 20, 1863, in Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, Ser. II, Vol. III, 743; Lamar to Benjamin, Dispatch No. 2, July 22, 1863, in CSA Papers: Picket Papers, Container 7. Lamar was right in his assessment. Cf. Frank L. Owsley, King Cotton Diplomacy (Chicago, 1931), 464; and Donaldson Jordan and Edwin A. Pratt, Europe and the American Civil War (Boston, 1931), 200.

²⁸ John Slidell to J. P. Benjamin, April 20, 1863, in Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, Ser. II, Vol. III, 743; Slidell to Benjamin, June 25, 1863, ibid., 821.

²⁹ Cf. Beckles Wilson, John Slidell and the Confederates in Paris, 1862-1865 (New York, 1932), 69-71.

intervention. The interview convinced him that Napoleon favored the Confederate cause and that he probably would have taken some official action if England or Russia had agreed to cooperate with him.³⁰

After a period of orientation Lamar began working with John Slidell, commissioner to France.³¹ By early June several matters required the combined attention of Slidell and Mason, who included Lamar in their conferences. Since the three Commissioners were especially concerned with fiscal affairs and with disorderly procurement procedures, General C. J. McRae, agent for the Erlanger Loan, also joined them.³²

The problem of purchase accounts had been compounded because the Confederacy had employed numerous agents whose

³⁰The only evidence of this interview is a single statement by Lamar in 1887, quoted in Curry, Civil History, 135; and Mayes, Lamar, 108-109. Lamar's views on the pro-Southern stance of Napoleon may be found in Lamar to Mrs. Clay, Aug. 8, 1863, in Clay Papers; Clay, A Belle of the Fifties, 204; and Lamar's speech of April 14, 1864, reprinted in Mayes, Lamar, 639-656 (specifically pp. 641-642). Cate, Lamar, 103, quotes a "later" statement by Lamar to the effect that emancipation of the slaves would have gained recognition.

³¹John Slidell to J. P. Benjamin, May 15, 1863, in Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, Ser. II, Vol. III, 771, enclosed a draft by Lamar for a piece of legislation (draft since lost) desired by Slidell, which would allow the administration of the Confederate oath by persons in Europe.

³²James Mason to J. P. Benjamin, Dispatch No. 38, June 4, 1863, in Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, Ser. II, Vol. III, 782; Charles S. Davis, Colin J. McRae: Confederate Financial Agent (Tuscaloosa, 1961), 38-39.

purchases far exceeded the means of the government to pay. Lacking directions from Richmond, and the situation precarious, Lamar and his fellow representatives acted independently and upon their own responsibility. At their recommendation McRae prepared to pay out £ 22,000 necessary to release crucial supplies for the Confederate government.³³

The conference also considered the progress of Confederate naval construction which was beset by financial difficulties and by the English government's close vigilance against infractions of the neutrality laws. After contracting C. S. N. Commander James H. North, who was superintending the building of a great ram,³⁴ General McRae and the commissioners at first decided to provide North the £ 30,000 from the Erlanger Loan which he requested. But the more potentially dangerous question of seizure by the British plagued them. The apparent change in English policy marked by confiscation of the "Alexandria" on April 5, 1863, convinced the commission that North should sell the ship

³³John Slidell to J. P. Benjamin, Dispatch No. 37, June 12, 1863, in Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies Ser. II, Vol. III, 806-807; Davis, Colin J. McRae, 38-39; William G. Crenshaw to James A. Seddon, June 6, 1863, in Official Records, Ser. IV, Vol. II, 587-588; Crenshaw to James Mason, June 4, 1863, in Official Records, Ser. IV, Vol. II, 590.

³⁴James H. North to C. J. McRae, May 28, 1863, in Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, Ser. II, Vol. II, 431; J. M. Mason to Captain North, June 5, 1863, ibid., 432.

unfinished "as the only sure means of saving the large amount expended upon it." They further suggested that the Russian government might be willing to assume the contract.³⁵

North was not entirely convinced; nor was Mason. But as C. F. Adams, United States Minister, continued to build his case against construction of warships ultimately destined for the Confederacy, and as public opinion in England became more antagonistic, the commission's advice prevailed. Finally in spring of 1864, the C. S. Navy Department reluctantly sold the ship to Denmark.³⁶

On June 25, 1863, shortly after the Paris conferences, Lamar crossed the Channel for England with the intention of continuing on to St. Petersburg. He was by no means convinced that prospects for recognition had improved, and both he and Slidell considered Vienna to be a more likely

³⁵L. Q. C. Lamar, John Slidell, and J. M. Mason to Commander James H. North, C. S. Navy, June 13, 1863, in Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, Ser. II, Vol. II, 439-440; Mason to Capt. North, C. S. Navy, June 16, 1863, ibid., 440.

³⁶J. M. Mason to Capt. James H. North, June 16, 1863, in Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, Ser. II, Vol. II, 440; S. R. Mallory, Sect. of Navy to Commander James D. Bulloch, C. S. Navy, June 19, 1863, ibid., 440-442; North to Mason, June 26, 1863, ibid., 443; Mason to North, June 27, 1863, ibid., 443; Mason to North, Nov. 27, 1863, ibid., 528; North to Mallory, Feb. 18, 1864, ibid., 587-588; Mallory to North, Feb. 24, 1864, ibid., 595; undated "Memorandum of meeting between Messrs: Slidell, Mason, Barron, McRae, and North," ibid., 326-329; cf. E. D. Adams, Great Britain and the American Civil War (2 vols., London, 1925), II, 136-137, 142.

field for diplomacy.³⁷ This concern turned out to be purely academic since unbeknownst to Lamar, the Confederate Senate had refused to confirm his appointment. His diplomatic service had officially terminated on June 11, 1863. According to Benjamin, the action followed a general revulsion against European nations. Throughout 1862 and early 1863, ill will had developed until finally Confederate diplomacy was admitted to be a failure. Angry with Europe's refusal to recognize the Confederate States of America and irritated by the anomalous presence of English consuls in the South, the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs squelched Lamar's appointment.³⁸

Probably due to these tensions, Davis delayed submitting Lamar's papers for confirmation until March 16, 1863, four months after the appointment was made. Three days later, On March 19, 1863, the Committee on Foreign Affairs reported back a resolution deeming it "inexpedient at this time to send a commissioner to Russia." At the same time the committee resolved against receiving

³⁷ John Slidell to J. P. Benjamin, June 25, 1863, in Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, Ser. II, Vol. III, 820-821.

³⁸ J. P. Benjamin to Lamar, Dispatch No. 2, June 11, 1863, in CSA Papers: State Department, Diplomatic and Consular, XIII, 17-18; also printed in Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the Confederacy, II, 505-506; and in Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, Ser. II, Vol. III, 796. See also Owsley, King Cotton Diplomacy, 489-516.

nominations for Lamar, James Mason and John Slidell until the Confederacy's independence had been recognized.³⁹

The Senate did not trouble to take up the committee's recommendations until April 10, 1863. The resolution on the inexpediency of sending a commissioner to Russia was brought up and amended so that it called for a statement from the president. Jefferson Davis complied, providing justification for the appointment on April 20, 1863. The Senate took no specific action on Davis's statement but proceeded to pass a resolution opposing nomination or confirmation of "envoys extraordinary and ministers plentipotentary" before the recognition of the Confederate States of America. Adjournment followed on May 1, 1863, without further action.⁴⁰ The administration ignored its failure to gain confirmation until June 11, 1863, when Secretary of State Benjamin finally notified Lamar.⁴¹

³⁹"Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States of America," Senate Documents, 58 Cong., 2 Sess., Doc. 234, XXVII, 172, 174, 180-181; Burton N. Harrison to Secretary of State, June 1, 1863, in CSA Papers: State Department, LXI, at end of volume and out of order.

⁴⁰"Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States of America," Senate Documents, 58 Cong., 2 Sess., Doc. 234, XXVII, 276, 289-290, 320, 348; Burton N. Harrison to Secretary of State, June 1, 1863, in CSA Papers: State Department, LXI, at end of volume and out of order.

⁴¹J. P. Benjamin to Lamar, Dispatch No. 2, June 11, 1863, in CSA Papers: State Department, Diplomatic and Consular, XIII, 17-18.

The uncertainties of trans-Atlantic diplomatic correspondence delayed Lamar's recall still more. Five weeks later on July 22, 1863, he finally replied to Benjamin, graciously accepting the Senate's reasoning as very similar to his own. Lamar had almost determined independently, he said, to ask that he be given new instructions or recalled. The influence of France, which he had counted upon, had dwindled with that country's support of the Polish insurrection. Lamar did hope, however, "that the principle which has governed this decision will not be extended to the withdrawal of diplomatic representatives at London and Paris. . . . The presence of these gentlemen at their respective posts is imperiously demanded by the exigencies of [the] public service. . . ." ⁴² Having given that advice, which was not followed, Lamar accepted his government's judgment.

Despite the Senate's action, Lamar remained in England for three months after his letter to Benjamin, until about November 1. Although frequently incapacitated during this time by poor health, he performed various services for the Confederacy, both in England and on the continent.

Part of this time he assisted Henry Hotze, propagandist and editor of the Confederate government's organ, the

⁴²Lamar to J. P. Benjamin, Dispatch No. 2, July 22, 1863, in CSA Papers: Pickett Papers, Container 7; also printed in Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, Ser. II, Vol. III, 848-849.

Index. Soon after word of the Senate's action reached London, Hotze wrote Secretary Benjamin expressing regret since "the suggestions of his [Lamar's] fruitful intellect were an invaluable advantage to me." Three months and some days later, on October 31, 1863, Hotze took credit for keeping Lamar in Europe and expressed "regret at losing his counsel and assistance. . . ." ⁴³ But even then Lamar did not return home.

During this period of association with Hotze, Lamar's health may have caused an extension of his stay. On August 1, 1863, Lamar wrote his wife of his intention to leave England on September 1, 1863, despite delicate health. ⁴⁴ A week later he wrote much the same to Mrs. C. C. Clay, saying he expected to be well enough to start home soon. ⁴⁵

⁴³Henry Hotze to J. P. Benjamin, Dispatch No. 26, July 23, 1863, in Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, Ser. II, Vol. III, 849-851; Hotze to Benjamin, Dispatch No. 31, Oct. 31, 1863, ibid., 944-948. By coincidence Lamar as Cleveland's Secretary of Interior offered Hotze employment for the department in Germany. See Lamar to Hotze, June 2, 1885, in Letterbook I, Lamar-Mayes Papers. According to Cate, Lamar, 101-102, he also wrote for the London Times and Telegraph, but his source is a recollection of thirty years later.

⁴⁴Lamar to Mrs. Lamar, Aug. 1, 1863, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 110. This complaint may have been exaggerated for a wife's sympathetic ear since he continued in somewhat maudlin tones: "If I should be captured by the Federals, do not be alarmed. They will only place me in confinement, if they do that. Well, I can stand anything that they can inflict. They can't break my spirit, and I will be restored to you sometime or other."

⁴⁵Lamar to Mrs. Clay, Aug. 8, 1863, in Clay Papers.

Then two months later in early October he traveled again to Paris, where he conferred with Mason, Slidell, and C. J. McRae. Again the Erlanger agent reported fiscal difficulties. The loan's balance was dreadfully reduced, and the Confederacy's uncertain credit made additional funds unattainable.—Lamar's part in this conference is not clear; but on October 7, 1863, McRae wrote Secretary of Treasury Memminger that Lamar had offered to deliver a dispatch and to confer with him in Richmond on his return.⁴⁶

On October 16, 1863, Lamar was back in England presenting the Confederate cause to an agricultural society in a speech which Hotze's Index praised. After at least one additional public appearance, and three weeks after his planned departure with McRae's dispatch, Lamar at last made ready to leave England from Liverpool. This time no change in plans intervened, and he departed about the first of November aboard the "Asia" for Halifax.⁴⁷

From Halifax Lamar sailed to Bermuda, where he boarded a British blockade runner, the "Ceres," bound for Wilmington. The ill-fated steamer ran aground at the mouth of the

⁴⁶C. J. McRae to G. G. Memminger, Oct. 2, 1863, in Official Records, Ser. IV, Vol. II, 980-981; McRae to Memminger, Oct. 7, 1863, ibid., 982-985.

⁴⁷The Index, A Weekly Journal of Politics, Literature and News, III (Oct. 22, 1863), 405, 408-409; ibid., III (Oct. 29, 1863), 423. The speech of October 16, appears to be the same speech given in Mayes, Lamar, 112-113, and described in Cate, Lamar, 102-103. Mayes, Lamar, 112, mistakenly gives the date of departure as about December 1. Cate gives no date.

Cape Fear River on December 6, 1863, but passengers and crew managed to get away in boats before the vessel was seized as a prize.⁴⁸

After an interlude of some three weeks, presumably with his family, Lamar arrived in Richmond about January 1, 1864. There he consulted with Jefferson Davis and Judah P. Benjamin.⁴⁹

Friends who welcomed him to the social rounds of the capital city thought he was somewhat the worse for his experience. His old friend, General James Chesnut, claimed that he did not at first recognize Lamar. And Mrs. Chesnut after asking the returned diplomat to dinner and preparing for a special occasion, only to have him come on the wrong night, believed him "more absent-minded and distrait than ever. . . ." But still he was the same old Lamar of the drawing room and fascinated his audience with tales of the Europeans. Try as he might to please listeners with his own adventures, Lamar related only hopelessness for the Confederate cause in Europe.⁵⁰

⁴⁸"Report of Acting Rear-Admiral Lee, U. S. Navy," Dec. 17, 1863, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, Ser. I, Vol. IX, 337-338; Mayes, Lamar, 113; Clay, A Belle of the Fifties, 181.

⁴⁹J. P. Benjamin to Henry Hotze, Dispatch No. 13, Jan. 9, 1864, in Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, Ser. II, Vol. III, 993-996; Chesnut, A Diary from Dixie, 347 (Jan. 1, 1864).

⁵⁰Chesnut, A Diary from Dixie, 347 (Jan. 1, 1864); ibid., 360-361 (Jan. 16, 1864); Clay, A Belle of the Fifties, 181.

After completing his business in Richmond, Lamar again became an emissary for Jefferson Davis. This time Davis's critics in Georgia were the object of his diplomacy. A dispute between the central and state governments had cropped up there as early as summer of 1862, when it centered upon the conscription acts; and by 1864, the question of authority had become crucial. On February 15, 1864, a law providing for suspension of the habeas corpus writ caused resentment throughout the South, but the trouble was foremost in Georgia. Alexander Stephens, vice president of the Confederacy, his brother, Linton, and Governor Joe Brown organized a campaign of protest which included denunciation of Davis by the Georgia legislature and the passing of peace resolutions by that body. Ultimately the Stephens-Brown clique intended to carry their protests beyond the state government into a popular movement against the president.⁵¹

Davis who had good reason to expect trouble, countered with an organized effort to neutralize the opposition. Lamar, with his many contacts in the state, joined Georgians Ben Hill, A. H. Kenan, and Howell Cobb to make a round of pro-government speeches.⁵²

⁵¹Albert Burton Moore, Conscription and Conflict in the Confederacy (New York, 1924), 255-258, 270, 273-274; Louise Biles Hill, Joseph E. Brown and the Confederacy (Chapel Hill, 1939), 194-200, passim; T. Conn Bryan, Confederate Georgia (Athens, Ga., 1953), 95-96.

⁵²Bryan, Confederate Georgia, 95-96.

After preliminary exchanges between Davis's critics and defenders, the Georgia legislature convened on March 10, 1864, in special session to hear the governor's message and to consider his anti-administration resolutions. Comparing Davis's government to the British Star Chamber, Brown denounced its encroachments upon state sovereignty and charged that the writ suspension was unconstitutional.⁵³

That same day Linton Stephens introduced resolutions condemning the suspension and urging that peace proposals be made after each major Confederate military victory. Vice President Alexander Stephens climaxed the effort by appealing to the legislature to pass the condemnatory measures.⁵⁴

Lamar, Howell Cobb, and A. H. Kenan responded with a series of speeches both to the public and to the legislature. During March and April Lamar spoke in the state House and to audiences in Milledgeville, Columbus, and Atlanta.⁵⁵

⁵³Hill, Joseph E. Brown, 200-206; Moore, Conscription and Conflict, 270-272; A. D. Candler, ed., The Confederate Records of the State of Georgia (Atlanta, 1909-11), 587-665; Milledgeville (Ga.) Confederate Union, March 15, 1864.

⁵⁴House Journal, Ga., 51-52, 68 (March 10, 1864); Milledgeville Confederate Union, March 15, 1864.

⁵⁵Hill, Joseph E. Brown, 210; Milledgeville Confederate Union, March 22, 1864; Mayes, Lamar, 639-656; Milledgeville (Ga.) Southern Recorder, March 22, 1864. Milledgeville Southern Recorder, May 17, 1864, reported that Lamar's father-in-law, A. B. Longstreet, was publishing a number of articles in the Columbus Times against "Stephens and Co."

Lamar's "State of the Country" speech summarized European attitude⁵⁶ toward the Confederacy and then turned upon the "efforts to excite opposition and dissatisfaction among the people. . . ." Armed with British precedents and Confederate constitutional authority, Lamar described the circumstances which made the habeas corpus act necessary. He denied any imputation of disloyalty but urged that "The best service that any one can render at this time to the cause of States' rights is to sustain and uphold the Government of these Confederate States."⁵⁷

These efforts may not have been totally unsuccessful. Even though the Georgia legislature passed resolutions condemning the habeas corpus legislation, it also expressed confidence in President Davis--to the chagrin of the anti-administration clique.⁵⁸ The victory over the central government was at best a qualified one.

Though apparently without official position Lamar remained in Georgia on the government's behalf. He continued to make public speeches, and on May 28, 1864, he wrote Mrs.

⁵⁶In generally the same tone and words as his letter of March 20, 1863, to J. P. Benjamin.

⁵⁷"Address delivered at the Atheneum, Atlanta, Georgia, April 14, 1864," quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 639-656; ibid., 113-114. For Brown's reaction to this speech see Joseph E. Brown to A. H. Stephens, April 19, 1864, in Phillips, ed., Correspondence of Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb, 641.

⁵⁸These resolutions are given in Official Records, Ser. IV, Vol. III, 234-237. See also Hill, Joseph E. Brown, 214-215.

Lamar explaining a delay in Macon, because: "I have some important matters in the military line on my hands. . . . " Unfortunately he did not elaborate.⁵⁹

Probably Lamar was unable to play a more strenuous role during these months in Georgia and Mississippi. He had returned from Europe physically weak and had suffered further illness during the summer of 1864.⁶⁰ In addition to his own infirmity, Lamar was overwhelmed with other personal cares. His sister, Susan, died in May; then his surviving brother, Thomas B. Lamar, fell in battle in June 1864; and his daughter was "quite sick." An aunt, his father's sister, died at this time too. And furthermore, Lamar feared that federal troops might overrun Oxford, Georgia, where his wife was visiting, and that she would be forced to flee in his absence.⁶¹

Small wonder that Lamar nurtured a special interest in religion at this time. Although he had joined the Methodist Church in 1862, still he was troubled by a lack of devotion and spiritual tranquility which he associated with Christian

⁵⁹Lamar to Mrs. Lamar, May 28, 1864, in Lamar Letters, University of North Carolina; Lamar to Mrs. Clay, June 12, 1864, in Clay Papers.

⁶⁰Clay, A Belle of the Fifties, 204; unaddressed Lamar Letter, filed Sept. 21, 1864, in Jefferson Davis Papers, Record Group No. 109.

⁶¹Lamar to Mrs. Lamar, May 28, 1864, in Lamar Letters, University of North Carolina; Lamar to Mrs. Clay, June 12, 1864, in Clay Papers; Mayes, Lamar, 114.

faith. In June he confessed to Mrs. Clay, that to him "religion is only a DUTY, not a joy."⁶² Six months later, again in Richmond, Lamar wrote his wife of his struggle: "I am still trying to subordinate all worldly things to the considerations associated with eternity, . . . the favor of God, and the well-being of my soul hereafter. . . . Pray to God, my darling, that we may all be his children."⁶³

Lamar's difficulties at this time also included a misunderstanding with Jefferson Davis. The nature of the argument is unknown, but there is some reason to believe that Lamar was caught in one of the perennial disputes which surrounded Davis's command of the military. At any rate, he pathetically pled with his friend and Davis's secretary, Burton Harrison, to intervene for him.⁶⁴ Possibly because of this misunderstanding Lamar accepted a colonel's commission in the Confederate army on December 3, 1864. His duty was that of judge advocate in the military court of A. P. Hill's Third Army Corps then convened in

⁶²Lamar to Mrs. Clay, June 12, 1864, in Clay Papers.

⁶³Lamar to Mrs. Lamar, Dec. 15, 1864, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 560.

⁶⁴In an unaddressed letter, filed Sept. 21, 1864, in Jefferson Davis Papers, Record Group No. 109, Lamar attempted to correct a mistaken representation of a conversation he had with Wigfall and others about the battle at Shiloh. See also "Sister" to "Brother" [Burton N. Harrison], Oct. 18, 1864, quoted in Halsell, "The Friendship of L. Q. C. Lamar and Jefferson Davis," in JMH, VI, 137.

Richmond.⁶⁵ According to Lamar's son-in-law, he disliked the work a great deal and considered it "the most unpleasant duty I ever had to perform in my life."⁶⁶

As judge advocate, Lamar found time to visit with his friends in Richmond, as they waited for what must have been obvious to all. But this time there could have been little joy in society. In an intensely personal letter to Mrs. Clay, Lamar proclaimed his own state of mind and his pre-occupation with religion rather than things worldly. As he explained in rather self-righteous tones: "The reason why I withdrew more and more from the world, is that I find it more and more in my way as a Christian." Despite this penance, however, "I have not yet felt that my nature has been regenerated. I have not realized the promises of pardon made to those who truly repent & believe." And for Mrs. Clay he recommended the same medicine as his own: "Oh my dear Mrs. Clay you have it in your power to answer this question. Become a Christian yourself."⁶⁷

While Lamar thought on spiritual matters, the Army of Northern Virginia began its evacuation of Petersburg on April 3, 1865, and moved toward the war's final act. When

⁶⁵Lamar File, Record Group No. 109; "Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States of America," Senate Documents, 58 Cong., 2 Sess., Doc. 234, XXVII, 320, 325. The commission was granted December 7th, to date December 4, 1864.

⁶⁶Quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 115.

⁶⁷Lamar to Mrs. Clay, Feb. 11, 1865, in Clay Papers.

Lee admitted defeat at Appomatox Courthouse, Lamar was acting aid to General James Longstreet, though still commissioned as judge advocate. After the surrender he was paroled and released.⁶⁸ According to his son-in-law, Lamar sadly committed himself from that moment to the future of the South, declaring: "I shall stay with my people, and share their fate. I feel it to be my duty to devote my life to the alleviation, so far as in my power lies, of the sufferings this day's disaster will entail upon them."⁶⁹

⁶⁸"Paroles of the Army of Northern Virginia," in Southern Historical Society Papers (1887), XV, 70.

⁶⁹Quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 115. Mayes gives no source for these words.

CHAPTER VI
EARLY RECONSTRUCTION: HIATUS

After Appomattox, Lamar faced the problems of obtaining a livelihood for his family and reconstructing some kind of career for himself. After several weeks delay in Richmond, he started for Mississippi. There in Oxford, Mrs. Lamar waited with the children and the Longstreets who had moved from Columbia. Whatever cheer could be taken from this prospect, however, was dampened by the realization that his two brothers and his law partners, Autry and Mott, had not returned.¹

Lamar did not immediately resume his ante-bellum career; indeed there was nothing to resume. To his way of thinking a political career was out of the question, since the old leadership would only excite the suspicion of United States authorities. Reconstruction, he reasoned, could best be directed by individuals not identified with secession.² True, the university reopened in the fall of

¹Wade, Longstreet, 351; Mayes, Lamar, 117, 120; Rowland, ed., Mississippi Sketches, I, 176, and II, 284.

²Lamar to Burton N. Harrison, Aug. 13, 1867, in Harrison Papers. J. S. McNeilly, "War and Reconstruction in Mississippi, 1863-1890," in PMHS, Centenary Series, II (1918), 313, holds this attitude to be typical.

1865, but there were only three professorships, and there is no indication that Lamar was offered a position.³

Lamar's prospects in agriculture were no better. Though he had not lived at "Solitude" since his first election to Congress in 1857, still the place represented virtually all his capital. Whatever physical damage the plantation may have sustained was dwarfed beside the loss of his slaves,⁴ and the land itself was not worth much. During the war he had been unable to make payments on the property, and the aggregating interest of these years wiped out earlier installments. Finally Lamar deeded the place back to his father-in-law, who held the lien. This turn of events was enough to exasperate the former lord of "Solitude" even with Longstreet.⁵

³Waddell, Memorials of Academic Life, 447. Board Minutes make no mention of Lamar.

⁴In the last ante-bellum personal tax return made by Lamar in 1857, he paid taxes on twenty-six slaves. See Personal Tax Rolls, Lafayette County, Mississippi, 1857, No. 339 (MDAH). The census of 1860 shows little of value beyond the land itself estimated at \$11,000, and some seventy-five head of stock. See Production of Agriculture in the County of Lafayette, in the Post Office, Paris, 1860, from the "Original Census Returns," in Lamar Subject File (MDAH).

⁵Lamar to "Jimmy," n.d., in Lamar Letters, University of North Carolina; Lamar to A. B. Longstreet, Jan. 19, 1866, in Deed Book K, 367 (Lafayette County Court House, Oxford, Mississippi). In Lamar to Mrs. Fanny Paine, April 20, 1869, in Lamar Letters, University of North Carolina, he remarked that Longstreet gave Mrs. Lamar some land and some stock, but does not describe it except to say that it pays nothing.

A legal practice provided the only remaining logical alternative. Here again Lamar's past caught up with him. He wrote a Georgia friend about the prospect of moving back there, since in Mississippi old Whigs had largely pre-empted the field during the ante-bellum period while excluded from public offices. Even for established lawyers northern Mississippi was forbidding in 1865. The area's physical ruin from both military destruction and simple deterioration was great, and the war had ended too late in the year for normal spring plowing. Furthermore, it was believed that the Negro would not work without the bonds of slavery. These conditions spoke poorly for an economy in which lawyers as well as virtually all commerce depended upon agricultural production.⁶

Considering these poor prospects, it is no wonder that "Moody Lamar," as Mrs. Clay had called him,⁷ had to fight the despair which clouded this period of his life. According to his son-in-law, Lamar's unrest was such that "loving eyes . . . watched him narrowly then . . . for more than one anxious heart interpreted those volcanic moods, and trembled lest in some weaker hour a dreadful deed, born of fury and despair, should spring like a tiger from its

⁶Lamar to Judge James Jackson, May 30, 1870, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 127-128; Ross H. Moore, "Economic and Social Conditions during Reconstruction in Mississippi" (doctoral dissertation, Duke University, 1938) 3-7.

⁷Clay, A Belle of the Fifties, 48.

lair, and ruin all."⁸ An anxious family perhaps recalled Lamar's father and his tragic end.

Lamar rested at Longstreet's residence with his family until about September 1, 1865, when he entered a law partnership with his good friend and later political ally, General Edward C. Walthall at Coffeeville, Mississippi. The town was located about thirty miles south of Oxford on the Mississippi Central Railroad. Even though the seat of Yalobusha County, Coffeeville was no more than a village. Lamar had for a time resigned himself to life as a hamlet lawyer.⁹

The two veterans apparently did fairly well in their practice; undoubtedly Lamar benefitted from Walthall's connections in Coffeeville as an established lawyer and former district attorney. Lamar felt this obligation to Walthall so deeply that in his sentimental way he later wrote: "Do you know that but for you I could not keep up? I would have given up long ago, and never made an effort."¹⁰

With Walthall's assistance Lamar made some headway in meeting his financial obligations and slowly paid off

⁸Mayes, Lamar, 167; George J. Leftwich, "Lucius Q. C. Lamar," in The Methodist Review, XLIV (1896), 71.

⁹Lamar to "Jimmy," [1866?], in Lamar Letters, University of North Carolina; Mayes, Lamar, 120.

¹⁰Lamar to Edward C. Walthall, n.d., 1861, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 120; *ibid.*, 119-120; Lamar to "Jimmy," [1866?], in Lamar Letters, University of North Carolina.

bills dating back to pre-war times. So numerous were the collectors that he had "begun to think that I never paid for anything in my life."¹¹ By March 1866, however, he felt heartened enough to make light of his situation. Mrs. Jefferson Davis wrote that: "in Lamar's woeful account of his difficulties I forgot for a time my griefs, and laughed heartily."¹²

Time might have secured financial stability but for a recurrence of bad luck. Under pressures of overwork, or maybe nervous tension, Lamar's health "gave way," and the partnership with Walthall necessarily dissolved.¹³ Fortunately a less demanding position at the university became available about this time. The rapid growth of the student body to nearly two hundred fifty students prompted the board to elect several additional faculty. Chancellor Waddell, who had been a member of the ante-bellum faculty, was anxious to add Lamar to his staff for the fall term of 1866. In agreeing to teach ethics and metaphysics, Lamar's

¹¹Lamar to "Jimmy," [1866?], in Lamar Letters, University of North Carolina.

¹²Mrs. Jefferson Davis to Jefferson Davis, March, n.d., 1866, in Hudson Strode, ed., Jefferson Davis Private Letters, 1823-1889 (New York, 1966), 238.

¹³Lamar to "Jimmy," [1866?], in Lamar Letters, University of North Carolina.

career took another major turn and entered into a new phase.¹⁴

As professor, Lamar received the regular, if meagre, income of \$2,000 per year and some additional pay from students who paid their tuition directly to their teachers. This benefit, however, was partially cancelled since he frequently permitted and often invited penurious students to register tuition free. The board also supplemented his salary by authorizing faculty housing on campus; and by boarding students in his home, Lamar enhanced this advantage.¹⁵

Lamar's relative security as a teacher found expression in the assistance he tended those less fortunate than himself. Exhibiting an apparently sincere interest in the welfare of his former comrades in arms, he worried especially over Jefferson Davis, Burton N. Harrison, and Clement C. Clay, all imprisoned by Union authorities. When Clay was released in April 1866, Lamar wrote asking him to live in the Lamar household. "Please come" he wrote, "I

¹⁴John N. Waddell to Lamar, June 2, 1866, in Lamar-Mayes Papers; Waddell, Memorials of Academic Life, 300, 456; Board Minutes, 89-90 (June 28-29, 1866).

¹⁵Board Minutes, 20 (June 29, 1866); H. G. Brown to Lamar, Jan. 2, 1867, in Lamar-Mayes Papers; Lamar to "Jimmy," August 11, 1868, in Lamar Letters, University of North Carolina; Lamar to Mrs. Fanny Paine, April 20, 1869, in Lamar Letters, ibid.; Daniel J. Meador, "Lamar and the Law at the University of Mississippi," in Mississippi Law Journal, XXXIV (May 1963), 237 (hereinafter cited as MLJ).

believe the sight of you will restore my health--at least if anything can."¹⁶ When Davis left prison, Lamar suggested to students at the university that they make up a gift of appreciation for the ex-president. He collected some \$460, and added \$40 of his own money with that. Ironically, the bank where Lamar deposited the \$500 failed three days later and he had to put up another \$500 himself; "I got the money for Jeff & sent it to him," he wrote, "Poor fellow he dont know what the 500 cost."¹⁷

In assuming the chair of ethics and metaphysics, Lamar returned to the position he had held briefly in 1860-61. After only one month, however, the board assigned him the additional duties of professor of law. Lamar occupied the two positions until January 1867, when the board elected him professor of governmental science and law and cancelled all other teaching responsibilities. Lamar in effect became the law school since he was its only professor.¹⁸

For the duration of his tenure at the university, Lamar ran the law school. Though he also practiced

¹⁶Lamar to C. C. Clay, April 24, 1866, in Clay Papers.

¹⁷Lamar to "Jimmy," [1866?], in Lamar Letters, University of North Carolina; Lamar to Burton N. Harrison, Aug. 13, 1867, in Harrison Papers.

¹⁸Board Minutes, 93 (Oct. 19, 1866); *ibid.*, 96-97 (Jan. 21, 1867); Faculty Record Book, 210-211 (Jan. 31, 1867); Jackson (Miss.) Daily Clarion, Jan. 25, 1867.

privately and dabbled in politics, he was in fact a full-time academician and presumably intended to remain in that field. Teaching was for him a career in this instance, whereas it was not in his earlier relationships to the university.

Lamar's experience as professor of law¹⁹ drew directly upon his own education and ante-bellum background. His legal training had been informal and probably had less impact than the more extensive instruction he received at Emory College and at the Manual Education School. These institutions were committed to a classical philosophy of education and had done much to shape Lamar's mentality in that direction. His system for training lawyers naturally approximated in orientation this university attitude toward education. Lamar taught his two-year course within a broad framework of public affairs. Betraying a dislike for details and trivialities characteristic of his own practice, Lamar related the law to the great public themes which concerned him most profoundly. Further reflecting his Emory background, he considered the inculcation of ethical

¹⁹Meador, "Lamar and the Law at the University of Mississippi," in MLJ, XXXIV, 227-256, surveys this period of Lamar's life so thoroughly that his influence on this chapter is greater than the footnotes here may indicate. Meador is himself a professor of law and contributes that perspective to his study.

standards to be an integral part of a teacher's duty.²⁰

To accompany his rather loose personal approach, Lamar prescribed a highly technical curriculum typical of university law schools of the day. Texts were the same standard works used in the ante-bellum law course at Mississippi, but Lamar added his own touch. In addition to interpretive lectures, he required a great deal of student involvement. Oral examinations played a regular part of his class and he commonly designated students to summarize his lectures and to submit to questioning by classmates.²¹

Lamar developed the principle of student participation further by employing the moot court system. In exercising this technique he usually served as judge while his charges filled the court's other positions and acted out the hypothetical cases which he devised. Students were by this method trained in the actual workings of court

²⁰Meador, "Lamar and the Law at the University of Mississippi," in MLJ, XXXIV, 235, 242-243; Sylvester J. Hemleben and Richard T. Bennett, "A Historical Sketch of the Early Law School of the University of Mississippi: A New Found Memoir," in MLJ, XXXVII (Dec. 1965), 48. In a congressional speech Lamar later proudly recalled these efforts and claimed that " . . . I have always endeavored to impress the belief that truth was better than falsehood, honesty better than policy, courage better than cowardice." See Congressional Record, 45 Cong., 2 Sess., 1061 (Feb. 15, 1878).

²¹Meador, "Lamar and the Law at the University of Mississippi," in MLJ, XXXIV, 235-236; Edward Mayes, History of Education in Mississippi, Herbert B. Adams, ed. (Washington, 1899), 145; Mayes, Lamar, 125.

machinery as well as in the application of legal opinions.²²

Lamar's methods flourished in the university environment of that time. For one thing, enrollment was so small that he could give constant personal attention to his students. And happily most were mature enough to profit from this relationship and willingly accepted the required discipline. A large number were veterans of the war and by no means as casual about their education as their pre-war predecessors.²³

During his first two years at the university, Lamar devoted his time almost entirely to academic obligations. In 1867 he became a director of the Mississippi Central

²²Meador, "Lamar and the Law at the University of Mississippi," in MLJ, XXXIV, 240, maintains that Lamar originated the moot court system. This is denied by Hemleben and Bennett, "A Historical Sketch of the Early Law School of the University of Mississippi," in MLJ, XXXVII, 49. Cate, Lamar, 123, holds that Lamar introduced the case study system into American legal education, but this is denied by Meador, p. 240, 240n., and by Hemleben and Bennett, p. 49n. There seems to be little reason to believe that Lamar was highly original as an educator, although he obviously gave his course a personal twist. A contemporary description of the law school is in Oxford (Miss.) Falcon, Aug. 17, 1867.

²³Historical Catalogue, 106-108; Waddell, Memorials of Academic Life, 447-448. Meador, "Lamar and the Law at the University of Mississippi," in MLJ, XXXIV, 242, 256, judges Lamar a successful teacher. Historical Catalogue, 61, refers to him as "that prince of teachers." Davidson College honored Lamar with a Doctor of Laws degree. See Oxford Falcon, Aug. 10, 1867. He served as a trustee of Vanderbilt University in 1874. See Edwin Mims, History of Vanderbilt University (Nashville, 1946), 53-56.

Railroad Company, but the position presumably was only nominal and he took little interest in the company's affairs. The Mississippi Central Railroad was in considerable financial difficulty during these years and Lamar's stock, apparently given to his wife by A. B. Longstreet, was not valuable. The board of directors, including Lamar, leased the road to another organization in 1868.²⁴

Although Lamar at first intended to combine private practice and teaching, he did not do so until 1868, when he decided that he could not satisfactorily support his family without improving upon his university salary.²⁵ He reopened his practice in the spring of 1868 in the federal court by defending four clients against debt collections

²⁴Annual Report of the President and Directors of the Mississippi Central Railroad Company (1867), 1; ibid. (1868), 5-6, 8-9. Lamar to Mrs. Fanny Paine, April 20, 1869, in Lamar Letters, University of North Carolina, refers only to "stock" and land which " . . . make no income at all."

²⁵Lamar to Mrs. A. B. Longstreet, July 26, 1866, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 124; Meador, "Lamar and the Law at the University of Mississippi," in MLJ, XXXIV, 248. Lamar offered to handle a sick friend's cases in August 1867, but apparently nothing came of it. See Lamar to Mrs. H. W. Walter, Aug. 8, 1867, in Harvey Walter Papers (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, North Carolina).

arising from commercial transactions.²⁶ At about this same time he tried at least one murder case, in which a white man was charged with killing a Negro woman.²⁷

In the fall of 1868 Lamar entered into a partnership with a young lawyer, E. D. Clark.²⁸ The two men became fast friends and apparently made some progress in building a practice. By September Lamar's good friend E. C. Walthall could remark: "I understand you are getting some good cases. I have never had any doubt about your getting a hand in all the good cases in your region, when you get fairly to work."²⁹ In the next year Lamar's fortunes were well enough repaired that he could purchase a tract of land in Oxford, and build a "humble but attractive cottage of

²⁶Lamar to "Jimmy," Aug. 11, 1868, in Lamar Letters, University of North Carolina; Meador, "Lamar and the Law at the University of Mississippi," in MLJ, XXXIV, 249. Meador bases his comments upon materials in the Federal Records Center, East Point, Georgia, for U. S. District Court, Northern District. W. A. Cate to author, Feb. 2, 1966, states that local court records for the period are no longer extant.

²⁷Lamar to C. C. Clay, July 14, 1869, in Clay Papers.

²⁸Lamar to E. D. Clark, July 16, 1868, in L. Q. C. Lamar Papers (University of Mississippi Library, Oxford, Mississippi); Oxford Falcon, Aug. 8, 1868. Clark previously practiced in Coffeeville as a partner of E. C. Walthall. He was a young man at the time without an established clientel.

²⁹E. C. Walthall to Lamar, Sept. 21, 1868, in Lamar-Mayes Papers.

six rooms."³⁰ Still his legal fees barely supplemented his university salary of \$2,000. He grossed only \$500 in 1869, and presumably made even less in 1868, when he first resumed work for the public.³¹

At about the same time Lamar opened his law office in Oxford, he also became active in public affairs once more. Prior to that time he had made only one known speech, and that for commencement exercises in June 1866.³² Then after almost two years of public silence he began during 1868 and 1869 to speak out again. In addition to several political speeches he addressed a ladies literary society, a four-county Confederate veterans' reunion, a country fair crowd, and the Female Institute in Jackson, Mississippi.³³

³⁰ John Cullen to V. L. [Mrs. L. Q. C.] Lamar, June 18, 1868, in Deed Book L, 7 (Lafayette County Court House, Oxford, Mississippi), shows \$1,500 paid cash, and a balance of \$1,500 paid June 12, 1869. See also Mayes, Lamar, 126, 166. Mayes credits the house to the growing practice.

³¹ Personal Tax Rolls, Lafayette County, Mississippi, 1869, No. 339 (MDAH). Meador, "Lamar and the Law at the University of Mississippi," in MLJ, XXXIV, 249, lists only seven cases in federal court for Lamar during the period of two years when he practiced and taught. The Tax Roll shows income of \$300 from land, which was apparently that sold by Lamar, V. L. Lamar, H. R. Branham, and Francis Branham to Robert Hill, Jan. 23, 1869, in Deed Book L, 218 (Lafayette County Court House, Oxford, Mississippi), for \$580. The land presumably was a gift from Longstreet to his daughters. See Lamar to Mrs. Fanny Paine, April 20, 1869, in Lamar Letters, University of North Carolina.

³² Oxford Falcon, July 5, 1866. Mayes, Lamar, 158, credits Lamar with complete silence between 1866 and 1871.

³³ Oxford Falcon, April 18, July 11, Oct. 17, 1868, June 9, 1869.

Since Lamar presented himself as a practicing lawyer during these months, such public appearances must have served as an advertising medium: announcing his return from the ivory towers. On the other hand, these activities bore important political implications if Lamar should care to return to public life. This was most obvious during a festive reception for Jacob Thompson, who returned from self-imposed exile in the spring of 1869. The celebrations, enthusiastically observed by the townspeople, culminated when the two men were paraded through town.³⁴

Lamar was undoubtedly more concerned with political appearances by 1868-69, than he had been when he first returned to Mississippi. Then he had felt it wise to remain in obscurity until the process of readjustment ran its course. Andrew Johnson's reconstruction policy gave little cause to doubt the wisdom of this judgment. The provisional governor, William L. Sharkey, and the elected administration of Benjamin Humphreys were by no means radical and did not endanger the old economic and social order.³⁵ Lamar was not included in Andrew Johnson's amnesty

³⁴Oxford Falcon, April 24, May 1, 1869; Cabaniss, A History of the University of Mississippi, 77.

³⁵James W. Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi (New York, 1901), 75-108, passim.

proclamation because of his military and diplomatic rank,³⁶ but he seems not to have been otherwise inconvenienced; and there is no evidence that he applied for a special pardon.

Lamar's despair must have been profound when the political situation changed in 1867-68. What had seemed a transitional subordination to the national government assumed more ominous tones. Civil control gave way to military administration, and the state government was remanded to a provisional capacity. Freedmen for the first time claimed the right of suffrage, and a proposed constitution strictly prohibited political participation for Confederate leaders. Under these circumstances passive men drastically changed their attitude toward non-participation. Since Congress specifically provided that a majority of the votes cast would ratify the constitution, conservatives were forced to act or face permanent exclusion.³⁷

Though Lamar's part in the struggle was small, he did take a public stand against the pending constitution and the Republican party. Toward this end he appeared with Benjamin Humphreys, the conservative gubernatorial candidate, at mass meetings in Oxford and in Water Valley, a few

³⁶James D. Richardson, ed., A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897 (10 vols., Washington, 1894-1899), VI, 312.

³⁷Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, 156, 202-211, passim.

miles to the south.³⁸ Lamar must have been gratified when the victorious Humphreys carried Lafayette County and the congressional district by a substantial margin against B. B. Eggleston, the radical candidate.³⁹

Since the constitution was defeated along with Eggleston, military government of the state continued until 1870. The future dimmed even more when Brevet Major General Adelbert Ames, acting civil governor, assumed command of the military district in March 1869. As both military commander and civil governor, and in the absence of a functioning legislature, Ames's authority was virtually complete.⁴⁰

Though the number of troops in Mississippi numbered not more than about a thousand and none of these was stationed regularly at Oxford, several incidents occurred involving university students.⁴¹ Lamar wrote a friend and summed up the situation: "The truth is our loves & friendships are the only things which the Yankee sons-

³⁸Oxford Falcon, May 16, 1868.

³⁹Political Research Consortium.

⁴⁰Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, 229-230.

⁴¹Waddell, Memorials of Academic Life, 456-457; Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, 230.

of-b_____ cannot confiscate. Let us hold on to it."⁴²

Though Lamar kept his peace during the continued military rule, he was not indifferent to nor entirely aloof from politics. A highly suggestive letter of February 27, 1869, which left a great deal unsaid, informed him that "There will be an important conference . . . of friends from different parts of the State. We are anxious for you to meet us."⁴³ A meeting may or may not have followed. If Lamar participated in any political activities, clandestine or otherwise, the records have since disappeared.

While Lamar smarted under federal authority, President Grant proclaimed that Mississippi should vote once more upon the constitution devised by the convention of 1868. To improve its chances of passage, Grant ordered that the most offensive clauses--those proscribing numerous Confederate leaders, should be voted upon separately from the main body of the constitution.

⁴²Lamar to "Jimmy," Aug. 11, 1868, in Lamar Letters, University of North Carolina. This is the only profanity found in the existing Lamar papers. Julia Kendel, "Reconstruction in Lafayette County," in PMHS, XIII (1913), tells a story of radical domination of local offices and troops garrisoned in Oxford. According to Kendel, pp. 237, 240-241, there was a Negro militia unit organized in 1870, but the Ku Klux Klan dispersed them. The account is so generally biased as to be of little help. Another county history in this PMHS series, Julia C. Brown, "Reconstruction in Yalobusha and Grenada Counties," in PMHS, XII (1912), 237, credits Lamar with defending Klansmen in court.

⁴³W. Yerger, E. Barksdale, W. P. Harris to Lamar, Feb. 27, 1869, in Lamar-Mayes Papers.

The proscriptive clauses were a divisive factor in the Mississippi Republican party. One faction which opposed the severity of the proscriptive clauses, accused the other branch of going beyond the law's requirements. Calling themselves the National Union Republican party, they invited people of like mind, regardless of party or race, to join them in putting forth a ticket. The Democrats, having no prospects of victory, accepted their gubernatorial candidate, Louis Dent, brother-in-law to President Grant. Lamar approved the expediency of such an arrangement and even advised Dent on his campaign. He did not, however, take part in the canvass.⁴⁴ Perhaps he feared that such a compromise might be costly in the future.

James L. Alcorn,⁴⁵ the regular Republican candidate, easily carried the election, including Lamar's own home county. The constitution, without proscriptive clauses, was ratified entitling Mississippi to enjoy her first representative government since the end of the war and to re-join the Union.⁴⁶

⁴⁴Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, 237-240; Mayes, Lamar, 164.

⁴⁵Lamar had defeated him for Congress in 1857.

⁴⁶Alcorn won a majority of 38,089 from the entire state, a majority of ninety votes in Lafayette County and a majority of 3,381 votes in the first district. Election data provided by Political Research Consortium.

Alcorn's election and the inauguration of a Republican administration probably had a greater effect upon Lamar's career than any other event between 1866 and 1870. Either by design or chance, the university had been virtually untouched by the vicissitudes of reconstruction. Sharkey and Humphreys befriended the institution, and their policies were naturally not unacceptable to Lamar. General Ames also gave no reason for complaint: the board of trustees even favored Lamar with the honorary LL.D.⁴⁷

Alcorn, on the other hand, provided immediate cause for alarm. Even before taking office he wrote his wife: "Chancellor Waddel [sic], Lamar, and others at the University at Oxford have sent overtures to me" and "Lamar thinks I will not turn him out as we have been personal friends."⁴⁸ In May 1870 Alcorn appointed a new board of trustees dominated by men of his own political persuasion and presided over by himself. A fear that the university would be "radicalized" spread instantly, and there was even talk of admitting Negro students.⁴⁹

Lamar reacted in a partisan but predictable way and immediately resigned effective at the end of the term.

⁴⁷Board Minutes, 183 (June 23, 1869).

⁴⁸James Lusk Alcorn to Amelia Alcorn, Dec. 27, 1869, quoted in Pereyra, James Lusk Alcorn, 123.

⁴⁹Cabaniss, A History of the University of Mississippi, 80-81; Mayes, History of Education in Mississippi, 163-164; Waddell, Memorials of Academic Life, 465-468, 470.

Since the university continued its operation under the same chancellor and faculty it is reasonable to assume that he could have continued if he had so desired.⁵⁰ Perhaps the compromise galled Lamar's pride beyond endurance, or maybe he feared identification with the Republicans for political reasons. Whichever the case, he cloaked himself in martyrdom and took leave of the university for the third and final time. With characteristic eloquence and sentimentality he closed his academic career in a commencement address as pertinent to the speaker as to the audience: "And now, young gentlemen," he said, "as you go home I pray that you may have prosperity and happiness through life, with just enough of sorrow to remind you that this earth is not your home."⁵¹

Lamar's decision to leave the university evidently did not come easily. In this instance, as in others, his health furnished a fair gauge to his emotional state. Although he suffered no seizure, Lamar told a correspondent in late May 1870, that "I am so nervous that I cannot write with a pen." A few days later he wrote the same person: "I am so nervous that it gives me great pain

⁵⁰Cabaniss, A History of the University of Mississippi, 81; cf. Waddell, Memorials of Academic Life, 472-476; Memphis Daily Appeal, Sept. 26, 1870; Oxford Falcon, Aug. 20, Sept. 3, 1870.

⁵¹Mayes, Lamar, 127; Oxford Falcon, July 2, 1870.

to write."⁵² Lamar further betrayed disconcertion when he considered removal to Georgia once again. Corresponding with a prospective law partner, Judge James Jackson, in Macon, he related the difficulty of practice in Mississippi and his judgment that "I must take my property and family from the State." He indicated that he had discussed the problem with his old friend Davis and that "Jeff Davis approves my purpose, and says he sees nothing but sorrow and wrongs for Mississippians in the future."⁵³

Lamar's decision against moving to Georgia must have had something to do with his father-in-law. In corresponding with Judge James Jackson he suggested a law school in Macon in conjunction with his practice and mentioned that Longstreet should be chancellor.⁵⁴ By this time, however, Longstreet had become an old man in his eightieth year. Late in June he became ill. On July 9, 1870, he died, and plans for a law school died with him. A few days later, Lamar traveled to Georgia to deliver a commencement address

⁵²Lamar to A. T. Bledsoe, May [25?], 30, 1870, in Bledsoe Papers. Lamar's second letter began: "I wrote to you yesterday, but fearing that in my haste I misdirected my letter to some other place than Baltimore, I will . . . repeat the business part of the letter." On June 9, 1870, Lamar wrote to Bledsoe a third time without mention of his health. See Lamar to Bledsoe, June 9, 1870, in Hampton L. Carson Collection (Free Library of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania).

⁵³Lamar to Judge James Jackson, May 30, 1870, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 127-128.

⁵⁴Ibid.; Wade, Longstreet, 368-369.

at Emory College. According to Edward Mayes, he was at that time offered a professorship of belles lettres and history at Emory; it came too late, however, for he had determined to remain in his adopted state.⁵⁵

A. B. Longstreet may or may not have been behind Lamar's plan to move to Georgia. But the great influence that Longstreet always had upon his son-in-law, and the loss that he felt at his death doubtlessly figured into the decisions of this time. There is also the possibility that Longstreet's death had another and more mundane influence. The old patriarch left an estate estimated at about "\$50,000 half in real estate, and half in cash." Even shared with Longstreet's other daughter, that sum should still have eased the immediate pressure upon Lamar for making a purely financial adjustment and may have allowed his continued residence and identification with Mississippi.⁵⁶

Having determined to stay in Mississippi, Lamar entered into a law partnership with his brother-in-law,

⁵⁵Oxford Falcon, July 16, 1870; Mayes, Lamar, 33-34, 128-129. Mrs. Longstreet had died in October 1868. See Wade, Longstreet, 356.

⁵⁶Wade, Longstreet, 303. No will is on file in the Lafayette County Court House. A number of deeds from Mrs. Lamar make it clear that she inherited the land, but no estimate of the acreage can be made.

H. R. Branham,⁵⁷ and continued the public appearances which he had begun in 1868. In the fall of 1870 he made several pronouncements of a semi-political nature. On one occasion he addressed the Agricultural and Mechanical Association of Carroll and Choctaw Counties, Mississippi, upon the merits of scientific farming as an adjustment to the free labor system. Lamar treated his listeners on that occasion to blunt criticism of the North, but at the same time he urged partial imitation of Northern ideas on the relationship between the government and the economy.⁵⁸ In December of 1870 he gave another ostensibly non-political but widely publicized performance, when he wrote a public

⁵⁷Oxford Falcon, July 30, 1870. Branham was better known as a physician.

⁵⁸Dunbar Rowland, History of Mississippi, The Heart of the South (2 vols., Chicago, 1925), II, 525; Mayes, Lamar, 129-130. Agriculture was a subject which interested Lamar greatly. See Willie D. Halsell, "L. Q. C. Lamar's Taylor Farm: An Experiment in Diversified Farming," JMH, V (Oct. 1943), 185-196; and Lamar to "Jeems" [Monroe], March 2, 1871, in Lamar Letters, University of North Carolina. See Mayes, Lamar, 120-121, for excerpt from another address in the "latter part of 1870" in which he dealt with his separation from politics since 1865.

letter eulogizing Robert E. Lee.⁵⁹ Except for two short speeches at the university, Lamar otherwise devoted the year and a half after Judge Longstreet's death to his legal practice in Oxford.⁶⁰

Lamar's employment during this period proved generally uneventful. On June 22, 1871, however, he became involved in an altercation reminiscent of the rough and tumble of his 1853 Georgia campaign. As Lamar attended federal court in Oxford, where several persons awaited trial under the Ku Klux Klan law--he himself defended several accused Klansmen⁶¹--he got into an argument with one of the government's witnesses. The disagreement, his defenders claimed, began outside the courtroom when Lamar upbraided the witness, Whistler, for his mistreatment of an old drunk townsman. Inside the courtroom Lamar called upon the bench to arrest the malefactor. A great deal of confusion ensued, and Lamar threatened Whistler with a

⁵⁹Lamar to Col. William H. McCardle, Dec. 5, 1870, quoted in Oxford Falcon, March 4, 1871. The "Lee Letter" answered an invitation to speak on Lee's birthday. Though Lamar could not accept, he probably appreciated the value of being identified with Lee. Lamar used the letter in his platonic wooing of Mrs. C. C. Clay: "I often thought of you when I was preparing it. And when the sublime subject seemed to rise, . . . the thought, that your eyes would see what I might write, inspired me to try to say what was in my heart about Robert E. Lee." See Lamar to Mrs. Clay, March 13, 1871, in Clay Papers.

⁶⁰Oxford Falcon, June 23, July 7, 1871.

⁶¹Ibid., March 31, 1871.

chair. In the uproar a U. S. marshal approached, and Lamar struck the officer in the face with his fist and knocked him down. Soldiers poured into the courtroom and restored order, but not before Lamar had made an inflammatory speech and threatened dire consequences if he should be arrested. Before further violence could occur, however, Lamar regained his composure and apologized to the court for his part in the fracas. Though the judge accepted the apology, he ordered Lamar's name struck from the roll of the court's attorneys. This banishment, which could have been ruinous, continued only a few days before Lamar was restored to the list of practicing lawyers.⁶²

The Oxford incident was not of great significance, at least not in any direct way. Lamar's practice was only briefly inconvenienced. His political opponents in later years revived the story to embarrass him, but with little effect. Lamar was in no way implicated with the Klan in the government reports, nor did anyone charge him with a connection. On the other hand, many people in Mississippi

⁶²See "Testimony Taken by the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Condition of Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States," Senate Reports, 42 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 41, Pt. 11 & 12, pp. 297-298, 348, 850, 857, 910-911, 1160-1162, for testimony intended to be unfriendly to Lamar. For examples of "historical" but friendly accounts see Kendal, "Reconstruction in Lafayette County," in PMHS, XIII, 244-246; J. S. McNeily, "The Enforcement Act of 1871 and the Ku Klux Klan in Mississippi," in PMHS, IX (1906), 142-143; Mayes, Lamar, 131-135; and Cate, Lamar, 129-135. See also Oxford Falcon, June 30, July 14, 1871.

may have been favorably impressed by the thrashing of a U. S. official.

Lamar's violent action revealed something of his emotional state. There seems little doubt that he suffered an entire loss of self control under strain of extraordinary tension. This was the "violent mood" which his son-in-law believed threatened a "dreadful deed."⁶³ The event embodied the entire period from 1865-1871, in its reflection of the frustration which accompanied Lamar's forced retirement from public life and the oppressive atmosphere associated with reconstruction government. The futility of this physical violence, like the futility of his quitting the university, suggests that Lamar suffered profoundly during his proscription even though the government treated him reasonably.

⁶³Mayes, Lamar, 167.

CHAPTER VII

RETURN TO POLITICS AND THE SUMNER EULOGY

It is not surprising that Lamar became restless and emotionally volatile after his retirement from the university. His legal practice was not very remunerative nor demanding upon his energies, and the political situation was distressing. The state elections of 1868 and 1869 had taught an inescapable lesson. The Democratic party in 1868, had defeated the Republican gubernatorial candidate and the constitution by a large majority, only to suffer a disastrous reversal in 1869. The Democrats had not offered a candidate to oppose Alcorn, and their support of Louis Dent was half-hearted. Non-participation by Democrats, including Lamar, had clearly yielded a Republican victory.¹

After Alcorn's Republican party had secured Mississippi's readmission to the Union on February 23, 1870,²

¹According to figures provided by the Political Research Consortium, Humphrey's majority in 1868, was 6,249 votes, while Alcorn won by 38,089 votes in 1869. Humphreys carried Lafayette County by 1,591 votes, while Alcorn won by ninety votes. V. L. Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi (Chapel Hill, 1947), 153, explains the majority as a combination of intimidation and other circumstances. See also Wharton, pp. 155-156; and Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, 238-241, 245-246.

²Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, 273.

Lamar's self-imposed political exile lost its purpose. There was little to be gained from continued aloofness and a great deal to be gained if control of the state could be wrested from the Republican Party. Lamar's guiding objective in political retirement had been his desire for ending outside control of the state. "Our nominations and our platforms" he wrote in 1873, "were all made with a view to these Federal & external relations & exigencies."³ Associated as he was with secession and war, his participation would have handicapped these efforts. These considerations changed with readmission to the Union. Lamar looked to politics with a new attitude.

The Republicans had anticipated a Democratic revival and therefore designed the apportionment section of the 1869 constitution to entrench themselves in power. That document based legislative representation upon total population distribution rather than upon white population as had been the case previously. In this new order the delta counties with their overwhelming Negro majorities gained representation and became the dominant power in the state.⁴

³Lamar to E. D. Clark, Oct. 14, 1873, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi. The letter concerned Lamar's support of the independent Republican ticket in 1873. Another version, unchanged in substance, is quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 177-178. See also Lamar to Clark, Oct. 16, 1873, ibid.

⁴Jackson Daily Clarion, June 10, 12, 1868; Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, 151.

Despite this disadvantage white Democrats fought hard to win the legislature in 1871. Lamar was generally inactive in the campaign, but joined the debate on one occasion. He spoke then because of the illness of Robert Lowery, a leading Democrat, who was scheduled to debate Governor Alcorn in Holly Springs on October 9, 1871. Without prior warning and having no notes, Lamar agreed to stand in for the Democrats. The Memphis Daily Appeal remarked that:

The invincible argument, the masterly logic and the eloquent, withering sarcasm of Lamar told with so much effect upon the Governor it was, indeed, pitiable to see the miserable subterfuges and shifts adopted by the gentleman to escape the scorn of his outraged fellow citizens.⁵

The Oxford Falcon echoed these sentiments and urged Lamar out of retirement because "He is a man of the times, alive to the progress of the age, and is destined soon to take the lead in Southern politics."⁶ Perhaps the return to the stump and a favorable reception from two of north Mississippi's most important papers stirred memories and the taste for action.

In the voting which followed, Lamar received additional encouragement. Republicans won control of the

⁵Memphis Daily Appeal, Oct. 11, 1871.

⁶Oxford Falcon, Oct. 13, 20, 1871. Alcorn disagreed with these judgments and wrote his wife, Amelia, October 11, 1871: "I think--and it was the judgment of every fair minded person, that I whaled both Lowery and Lamar badly--very badly indeed." See Pereyra, James Lusk Alcorn, 143.

legislature again, but their majority was a small one; and many white counties, including Lafayette, went over to Democratic local government.⁷

Startled by this Democratic resurgence, the Republican legislature in 1872 moved to consolidate its control over the state's congressional representation. Though Republican candidates had carried all districts in 1869, their majorities were uncomfortably small. The legislature therefore reapportioned the state so that five of the six districts were rendered absolutely secure while one was conceded to the Democrats. This was achieved by grouping the heavily white counties of northeast Mississippi together into a single congressional district, thereby assuring Negro majorities in all the other districts.⁸

While the reapportionment stratagem secured the congressional delegation for the Republicans, its significance for L. Q. C. Lamar was an entirely different matter. The

⁷McNeily, "War and Reconstruction," in PMHS, Centenary Series, II, 420; Memphis Daily Appeal, Nov. 8-9, 11, 13, 1871.

⁸Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, 246; McNeily, "War and Reconstruction," in PMHS, Centenary Series, II, 431. John R. Lynch, The Facts of Reconstruction (New York, 1915), 66-69, maintains that he drew up the reapportionment plan on this basis. The population of the first district of 1872, comprising Alcorn, Benton, Calhoun, Itawamba, Lafayette, Lee, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Tippah, Tishomingo, Union, and Yalobusha Counties was 90,523 whites and 36,242 Negroes; the first district in 1860, comprising Tishomingo, Tippah, Marshall, Desoto, Tunica, Coahoma, Panola, and Lafayette had 72,720 whites and 67,029 Negroes. Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, I, 42-43, gives figures for 1860 and 1870.

first district was presumed by its architects to be Democratic, and many considered Lamar its most likely representative.⁹ This made a great difference since under the old apportionment no Democrat from Lafayette County had even a slight chance of election.¹⁰ This remarkable shift in Mississippi's composition placed the alternative of a public career squarely before Lamar. He must have looked upon it as a fateful and perhaps final choice. A negative decision could have forever closed the door to political preferment.

A drive to put Lamar in Congress began as early as July 1872. On the fifth of that month talk had become so general that he wrote John M. Stone to protest that the movement was not of his own doing. In his disclaimer Lamar held to the principle which had guided his actions since Appomattox: "I am not a candidate, but I am so convinced of the impropriety of nominating a man under disabilities,

⁹Lynch, The Facts of Reconstruction, 67-68, maintains that the Republicans anticipated Lamar's election in advance.

¹⁰A comparison of election figures provided by Political Research Consortium shows: (1) gubernatorial election of 1869: Alcorn won a majority of 3,381 in the first district. If the district had been constituted in 1869, as it was in 1872, Dent would have carried the district by 2,322 votes. Lafayette voted for Alcorn. (2) congressional election of 1869: the Republican candidate carried the district by 3,826 votes. If the district had been constituted in 1869, as it was in 1872, the conservative would have won by 1,894. Lafayette voted for the Republican. (3) statistics for the state election of 1871 are not available.

that I cannot see how it should be tendered."¹¹

Lamar's insistence upon his unavailability continued through July. His misgivings, if that rather than timing, clearly did not preclude involvement in the rapidly changing local and national political scene. Early in May he expressed enthusiasm for the Liberal-Republican movement and especially for the leadership of Carl Schurz.¹² Then in July he served as delegate to the Lafayette County primary convention. That same month Lamar was listed as a member of the state Executive Committee for Mississippi's Democratic Conservative Party. The party's convention, which Lamar presumably attended, adopted a platform favoring consolidation of all anti-administration forces and opposing the nomination of a third candidate in opposition to the Liberal-Republicans' choice.¹³

Notwithstanding these developments and the accompanying political excitement, Lamar still held back from a commitment to seek public office. The Jackson Weekly Clarion

¹¹Lamar to John M. Stone, July 5, 1872, in John M. Stone Papers (MDAH).

¹²Lamar to Charles Reemelin, May 6, 1872, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 170. Reemelin, an Ohioian, corresponded with Lamar as early as 1870, and advised him to return to politics in 1872. He was a writer for the Cincinnati Commoner, and held various state offices in Ohio. See Biographical Encyclopedia of Ohio of the Nineteenth Century (Cincinnati, 1876), 560-561; and Mayes, Lamar, 130, 171.

¹³Oxford Falcon, July 21, 1871; Jackson (Miss.) Weekly Clarion, July 4, 1872.

listed candidates for the first congressional district as late as July 11, 1872, without including him.¹⁴ Though his political activities cloud his meaning, Lamar wrote on July 15, 1872, that he had not promoted the movement to put him in Congress: "I give it no encouragement. My aversion to public life increases." But he hedged as a running politician hedges: "If there is a genuine and general desire of our people to have me go, I shall hardly know how to decline."¹⁵

As if by signal, the most powerful papers of northern Mississippi, the Jackson Clarion and the Memphis Appeal began on August 1 to urge that Lamar come out for the nomination before the district convention on August 21. The Appeal struck an insistent and, as it turned out, a prophetic chord when it declared that Mississippi's first district needed an orator and a thinker in Congress rather than a practical man of affairs. In its prescription the Appeal observed that:

These communities should send up to Washington the most accomplished representative man that the country can produce. What care the northeastern counties of Mississippi for the little details of tariff and custom house and financial legislation at Washington? The people of this interior district ask nothing and are interested in nothing, save in the concession to

¹⁴Jackson Weekly Clarion, July 11, 1872.

¹⁵Lamar to Charles Reemelin, July 15, 1872, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 170-172.

these States of every right guaranteed to freemen by the Federal Constitution.¹⁶

Both the Appeal and the Clarion dismissed and ridiculed the argument put by some that Lamar's political disabilities disqualified him. This complication, they maintained, could easily be removed during the year before the thirty-fifth Congress would convene.¹⁷

Amidst these propitious signs, Lamar attended a meeting of the state Conservative-Democratic Executive Committee on August 7, 1872. The conference appointed a committee--Lamar was a member--to communicate with the Liberal-Republicans of Mississippi and to invite their cooperation in choosing a single presidential electoral ticket.¹⁸ Though not enthusiastic about Greeley, whom he considered "unsound and pestilent," Lamar felt the South had no choice but to combine its votes against Grant.¹⁹

By August 12, 1872, Lamar had decided to actively solicit support for the nomination to Congress. Believing that the disabilities still imposed upon him could be removed upon his election, he thought that the way was clear.

¹⁶Memphis Daily Appeal, Aug. 4, 5, 1872; Jackson Weekly Clarion, Aug. 1, 1872.

¹⁷Jackson Weekly Clarion, Aug. 1, 15, 1872; Memphis Daily Appeal, Aug. 5, 15, 1872.

¹⁸Jackson Weekly Clarion, Aug. 15, 1872. The consolidation took place as planned.

¹⁹Lamar to Charles Reemelin, July 15, 1872, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 170-172.

In seeking support from A. Y. Donaldson, a local leader, Lamar wrote that Governor Alcorn, Republican representatives in Congress, and other officials would support his case if he should be elected. He believed that the legal precedents were on his side and denied that the runner-up in the election would succeed him if his disabilities were not removed. There was, Lamar felt sure, plenty of time to apply for relief in the coming session of Congress which would meet before his term commenced.²⁰

Despite pre-convention support and his rather enviable credentials for elective office, Lamar did not win easily at Tupelo on August 21. Fifteen ballots passed before his political career emerged from the suspension in which it had languished since the Civil War.²¹ After the agony of such a nomination, Lamar must have glimpsed a bright future for himself--and at the same time realized that so long as the state government remained in radical hands he would remain vulnerable.

The Republican party chose R. W. Flourney for the thankless task of opposing the Democratic

²⁰Lamar to A. Y. Donaldson, Aug. 12, 1872 (in possession of Miss Mary Donaldson, Box 84, Oakland, Mississippi).

²¹Hernando (Miss.) Press and Times, Aug. 29, 1872; Jackson Weekly Clarion, Aug. 29, 1872; Jackson Weekly Mississippi Pilot, Aug. 24, 1872. None of these papers provide details on the nomination. No file of the Oxford Falcon for this time has been located.

nominee.²² While Flournoy's chances appeared nil at first, the possibility of an upset developed from the question of Lamar's status under the fourteenth amendment and the unexpected appearance of two independent candidates in the race. By emphasizing the issue of Lamar's eligibility and the possibility that Congress might refuse to seat him, the independents and Flournoy might split the Democratic vote and bring about Lamar's defeat.²³

Lamar's campaign also suffered when in mid-October he fell sick while delivering a speech at Corinth. He suffered "symptoms of paralysis" and his doctor "prescribed absolute rest & quiet & said that I could not speak again without peril to my life--at best for several weeks." Against these grave warnings Lamar continued his immediate engagements. But he felt that he was "nearly used up" and would have to stop his canvass before finished.²⁴

These dire prospects brightened when late in October both independents withdrew from the race and threw their support to the Democrats. Then Lamar's problems virtually ended when Flournoy pledged not to take the seat if Lamar

²²Jackson Weekly Clarion, Sept. 26, 1872. According to Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, 349, Flournoy "enjoyed the distinction of being the most extreme and obnoxious radical in the state."

²³Jackson Weekly Clarion, Sept. 12, 1872.

²⁴Lamar to E. D. Clark, Oct. 19, 1872, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi.

should be forced to resign after winning the election. By election day there was little to worry about; and Lamar even felt sufficiently strong to leave the state to campaign for Greeley in St. Louis.²⁵

It came as no surprise when the Republicans carried Mississippi on November 5, 1872. In the vote for president, Grant won a majority of 34,887 votes of 129,163 votes cast. Republicans also won handy victories in five of six congressional districts. But Lamar was elected Congressman from the first district by a majority of 4,725 votes.²⁶

The election won, Lamar traveled to Washington to petition for the removal of his political disabilities. Since the petition which he presented on December 5, 1872, was accompanied by recommendations from the governor and other prominent Mississippi Republicans, there seemed no reason to doubt its success.²⁷ One Mississippi Congressman, Pearce of the fifth district, could not abide the move, however, and tried to prevent the action. The House,

²⁵Jackson Weekly Clarion, Sept. 12, 26, Oct. 17, 1872; Hernando Press and Times, Sept. 12, 1872; Memphis Daily Appeal, Sept. 24, Oct. 29, 1872; R. W. Flourney to Lamar, n.d., quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 173-174.

²⁶Figures provided by Political Research Consortium. It is interesting to note that the first district as constituted before 1872, would have returned a vote of 11,953, to 7,443 in favor of Lamar's opponent. This comparison is based on the presidential vote of 1872.

²⁷New York Times, Dec. 7, 1872; House Journal, 42 Cong., 3 Sess., 39 (Dec. 5, 1872).

nonetheless, passed the necessary legislation on December 9, 1872, with only thirteen votes cast in the negative.²⁸ Two days later the Senate concurred, and the Confederate career of L. Q. C. Lamar officially ended.²⁹

Lamar now permanently reentered public life and never again attempted to earn his livelihood or reputation outside the government. His experiences as lawyer, planter, and teacher would not be repeated. And as if to mark this milestone in his career, Lamar's health gave way under the strain of his election and the fight to remove his political disabilities. According to his son-in-law, he immediately fell sick of a violent attack of vertigo--the same symptom as in the past--and very nearly died. Again his recovery left him temporarily crippled. After a few days of treatment at the home of his old friend, A. T. Bledsoe, in Baltimore, Lamar was able to return to Mississippi--but still on crutches.³⁰ Ill and worn-out, Lamar vented his emotions to his friend and confidant, E. C. Walthall:

²⁸New York Times, Dec. 9, 10, 1872; House Journal, 42 Cong., 3 Sess., 53-54 (Dec. 9, 1872); Congressional Globe, 42 Cong., 3 Sess., 91 (Dec. 9, 1872).

²⁹Journal of the Senate of the United States, 42 Cong., 3 Sess., 48 (Dec. 10, 1872) (hereinafter cited as Senate Journal); ibid., 50-51, 53 (Dec. 11, 1872); Congressional Globe, 42 Cong., 3 Sess., 129 (Dec. 11, 1872); ibid., 260 (Dec. 17, 1872). President Grant signed the bill into law December 17, 1872. See New York Times, Dec. 19, 1872.

³⁰Mayes, Lamar, 175-176.

I am a very sick man; suffer more than anybody thinks. I do not honestly expect to live twelve months. I believe I shall go off . . . before anybody suspects that much is the matter; and after all my studying about religion and striving to avail myself of its promises, I am not ready to go.³¹

Due to Mississippi's irregular political calendar, Lamar now had to wait a year before filling his congressional post. During this time he concerned himself with the practical matters of tending his law practice and recovering his health. By summer of 1873 both health and business permitted Lamar to make one of his periodic trips back to Georgia. The journey was purely personal, to visit his mother who was in poor health, and it was characteristic of his sincere concern for family and friends.³² Also on that trip Lamar renewed an old political acquaintance with Alexander H. Stephens, then Congressman from Georgia. The store of sentimentality which Lamar felt for his mother was sufficient to include Stephens also; and when he returned to Mississippi he poured out his feelings to the ex-vice president:

The aroma of pleasurable emotion excited by my visit to Georgia is still exhaling itself over my heart. I do not want to be demonstrative but I would like to make you know how much & how long I have honored &

³¹Lamar to E. C. Walthall, n.d., 1873, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 561.

³²Lamar to Beck[?], March 4, 1874, in Lamar Letters, University of North Carolina.

loved you--I have not attempted it for fear of using language of seeming exaggeration.³³

Such unrestrained expressions were typical of Lamar throughout his life. Perhaps a peculiarity of the nineteenth century mind made it possible for a man who based a career upon reasoned speeches and debate to also indulge in "language of seeming exaggeration."

The Mississippi political situation did not allow Lamar to concentrate fully upon personal matters nor upon his approaching removal to Washington. The course of reconstruction reached a major turning point that year in the open break between moderate Republicans, who for the most part represented the native whites of Whig-Union background, and the radical Republicans, who came under the influence of carpetbag elements and the politically-minded Negro population. The division culminated in the gubernatorial race of 1873, when moderate Republican and former Governor James L. Alcorn resigned his Senate seat to run against carpetbagger Adelbert Ames.

Since most Democrats believed they had no chance of defeating the Republicans, they were forced to choose between these two men. The Democratic party organization nominally supported Alcorn and placed no candidate in the race against him. Though many Democrats saw little reason

³³Lamar to A. H. Stephens, Aug. 19, 1873, in A. H. Stephens Papers (Manuscript Division, Library of Congress).

to choose between the two men,³⁴ Lamar considered the election profoundly important. In a long letter justifying his support of Alcorn, whom he had opposed in 1869, Lamar made his motives clear. Alcorn had, he wrote, "assumed the leadership of the conservatives in this State. Whatever may be his personal objects, the public ones are laudable & patriotic, and these with the bold & gallant style in which he has thrown himself at the head of his old opponents entitle him to . . . cordial & unstinted support."³⁵

The effort was in vain. Ames commanded the unbeatable combination of carpetbaggers, Negroes, and large numbers of Democrats who saw Alcorn's defeat as the primary issue. The result was a comfortable majority of 20,467 votes. Lamar's approval had helped Alcorn carry Lafayette county, however, and perhaps that was some gratification.³⁶

As a consequence of the 1873 election, Lamar would represent a state undergoing a much more radical process of

³⁴David Donald, "The Scalawag in Mississippi Reconstruction," in Journal of Southern History, X, (1944), 447-460, passim (hereinafter cited as JSH); Pereyra, James Lusk Alcorn, 121-163, passim.

³⁵Lamar to E. D. Clark, Oct. 14, 1873, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi. A somewhat different, but substantially unchanged version is quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 177-178. Lamar amplified his views on the election in a second letter to Clark, Oct. 16, 1873, ibid.

³⁶Donald, "The Scalawag in Mississippi Reconstruction," in JSH, X, 452-453. Figures from Political Research Consortium show that Alcorn's majority in 1869 was 38,089--considerably larger than Ames's in 1873.

reconstruction than when it had elected him one year earlier. The anomaly of a secessionist and Confederate in Congress from a Republican state thus became even more ironical. Little wonder that Lamar would become the god-head of the dormant Democracy.

When Congress convened in December, Lamar quietly and unpretentiously took his seat. He felt that unobtrusiveness became the representative of a defeated people. Thus he did inconspicuous but yeoman work in supporting a Democratic candidate in a dispute arising over a contested West Virginia seat. Though the majority of the Committee on Elections favored the Republican aspirant, Lamar successfully led the opposition. Although efforts such as this brought him some satisfaction and notice, Lamar himself confessed that his achievements were unimposing.³⁷

Lamar's status among Mississippi Democrats did not long depend solely upon the peculiarity of his election nor upon such efforts as the West Virginia case. Lamar had worn his new humility well and was therefore a likely choice, or volunteer--the method of selection is not clear--to eulogize upon the death of Charles Sumner, perhaps the foremost of the Radicals. When he finished that short

³⁷Congressional Record, 43 Cong., 1 Sess., 45-46, 842-846, 876-877, 889-890, 963; Biographical Directory of American Congress, 785; Lamar to Mrs. Lamar, n.d., quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 179; Lamar to T. J. Wharton, Dec. 25, 1873, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 179-180.

speech, which was in effect a plea for sectional amity, Lamar was no longer simply an aberration from Republican Mississippi, nor was he even limited to the state for his constituency. Though his listeners could not have known it, he then assumed a place as spokesman for a viable political philosophy. These remarks served as a prologue for Lamar's entire postwar career. For him it presented the main and irreducible issue.³⁸

The sentiments expressed by Lamar in eulogizing Sumner and pleading for an end to war-born emotions were by no means spontaneous. He had learned from his life since April 1865 a single lesson, and having learned it well, he made of it a master-credo. He had lived with the lessons of defeat and humiliation at Oxford and looked

³⁸Mayes, Lamar, 183; and Cate, Lamar, 156, maintain that the Massachusetts congressional delegation invited Lamar to present a eulogy. J. R. Allen, "Bishop Paine in Texas," in Texas Methodist Historical Quarterly, I (Oct. 1909), 172 ff., extract in Lamar Letters, University of North Carolina, states that Lamar told him personally that a meeting of Southern statesmen decided who should give the eulogy with its plea for the South.

upon reconciliation as the only corrective.³⁹

Despite the apparent humility of his retirement, Lamar was no less bitter than other Southerners in his reaction to the federal government's policies. His distinction lay only in the fact that he allowed political purpose to dominate that bitterness. Lamar expressed his conviction to a friend as early as July 15, 1872, several months before his election to Congress:

Our people are under the supreme necessity of getting into harmonious relations with the Federal Government. . . . Its [Grant administration] grim despotism glares upon us at every point. Spies and secret detectives swarm through the country. . . .

Such being the condition, the thought which presses upon every aching heart and head is not how to restore the constitutional faith of fathers, but how to get rid of these creatures, defiled by blood, gorged with spoil, cruel, cowardly, faithless, who are now ruling the South for no purposes except those of oppression and plunder.⁴⁰

He also insisted upon the South's willingness to abide the results of the war in good faith. The defeated

³⁹Lamar's notions of sectional accommodation may have been fed by contact with like minded individuals during this period. James Longstreet visited him at least once and may have made this suggestion. See Oxford Falcon, Aug. 30, 1866; and Thomas R. Hay and Donald B. Sanger, James Longstreet: Soldier and Politician (Baton Rouge, 1952), 334. Cate, Lamar, 178, claims, however, that Lamar later denounced Longstreet as having aligned with "the oppressors of the South." Edward Mayes, Lamar's son-in-law, also believed in the necessity for reconciliation and may have been influential. See Edward Mayes, "Possible Future of the South," in Century Magazine, XIX (Jan.-Feb. 1870); and Wade, Longstreet, 357.

⁴⁰Lamar to Charles Reemelin, July 15, 1872, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 170-172.

states, he said, had accepted the Northern interpretation of the constitution, and the freedmens' political and civil equality with whites. Despite the Grant administration's refusal to accept the South's good intentions, Lamar wished to believe "that there is a large majority of the Northern people . . . disposed to treat the South . . . with gentleness and justice, and even with magnanimity."⁴¹

In this revealing and at times perceptive letter Lamar described the almost impossible difficulties facing a Southerner who attempted to bridge the failure of sectional understanding. The man who could effect the reconciliation "indeed would be a patriot and benefactor. . . ." ⁴²

Lamar's conception of himself as spokesman for a contrite and anxious South expanded after his election. On November 4, 1872, he already saw himself as a vehicle of the great mission: "If I say or do anything, it will be to give to the North the assurance it wants that the South comprehends its own great necessities, and wishes to be no

⁴¹Lamar to Charles Reemelin, July 15, 1872, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 170-172; Lamar made essentially the same observations on the good will of Northerners in a letter written shortly after the address. See Lamar to C. C. Clay, Sept. 5, 1874, in Clay Papers.

⁴²Lamar to Charles Reemelin, July 15, 1872, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 182. Paul H. Buck, The Road to Reunion 1865-1900 (Boston, 1937), 128, observed: "To play this role of patriot benefactor became so strong a desire in Lamar's ambition as almost to be an obsession."

longer the agitating and agitated pendulum of American politics."⁴³ In order to develop this scheme Lamar asked advice from a number of Northern men. The results of his inquiry supported his own concepts of moderation and sectional good will.⁴⁴

The evolution of Lamar's appeal was virtually complete when he took office in December 1873: but he felt he must bide his time. Careful timing was especially important since Southern spokesmen were suspected, Lamar felt, by their Northern counterparts and therefore almost never attained a hearing either in Congress or in the Northern press.⁴⁵ At first he prepared a speech on the civil rights bill then before Congress, but decided not to give it because of the antagonism the subject would create. He had noted that placation of the North had been attempted ineffectively by Alexander Stephens and others whose efforts had been clouded by controversy. As he explained to his good friend Clement Clay of Alabama: "What was wanted, was an occasion on which they would listen & listen

⁴³Lamar to Associate Justice E. G. Peyton, Mississippi Supreme Court, ca. Nov. 4, 1872, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 175.

⁴⁴Michael C. Kerr to Lamar, March 15, 1873, in Lamar-Mayes Papers. Mayes, Lamar, 176, suggests there were others in addition to Kerr.

⁴⁵Lamar to C. C. Clay, Sept. 5, 1874, in Clay Papers; Lamar to T. J. Wharton, Dec. 25, 1873, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 179-180.

with something of a feeling of sympathy. I thought the death of Sumner was such an occasion."⁴⁶

Lamar's choice of an "occasion" showed considerable political instinct.⁴⁷ Sumner was an admirable subject, since the North, and especially those most antagonistic toward the South, would read every word said about the abolitionist champion. And Sumner had another special quality too, in that he had shown generosity toward the South in his advocacy of a general amnesty. While Lamar honestly appreciated Sumner's attitude, he assured a confidant that his eulogy "was dictated by no pseudo 'magnanimity,' but by a concern for the Southern people, a love for them with their helpless families. . . . "⁴⁸

Thus Sumner might serve as an example for the North, and

⁴⁶Lamar to C. C. Clay, Sept. 5, 1874, in Clay Papers. See also Lamar to Mrs. Lamar, April 28, 1874, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 188-189.

⁴⁷Buck, The Road to Reunion, 128-129. James G. Blaine, Twenty Years in Congress (Norwich, Conn., 1884), II, 546, wrote: "It was a mark of positive genius in a Southern representative to pronounce a fervid and discriminating eulogy upon Mr. Sumner. . . ." Adelbert Ames later held that Lamar had two speeches ready to deliver, his choice depending upon circumstance. One was a bitter attack on the North, the other a plea for reconciliation. See Adelbert Ames to James G. Blaine, Feb. 15, 1876, cited in Willie D. Halsell, "Note on a Phase of L. Q. C. Lamar's Career," in JMH, IX (Jan. 1947), 21.

⁴⁸Lamar to C. C. Clay, Sept. 5, 1874, in Clay Papers. Lamar gave essentially the same reasoning in a conversation with J. R. Allen. See extract from J. R. Allen, "Bishop Paine in Texas," in Texas Methodist Historical Quarterly, I (Oct. 1909), 172 ff., in Lamar Letters, University of North Carolina.

at the same time a Southern representative might with some justification eulogize the dead man.

The eulogy itself was but a very short speech and probably was more effective for its pointedness. Lamar's remarks about Sumner were important only as a setting for his main point. After alluding to Sumner's moral stature and intellect, Lamar spoke of the Senator's relationship to the South. On the ante-bellum slavery question he carefully praised Sumner as a man utterly dedicated to individual liberty, but at the same time avoiding any indication that the South had been wrong on the question. Then he led to his real point, by noting Sumner's sympathy toward the Southern people after the war. At this key moment Lamar lingered and expanded to make Sumner the vehicle of his own message:

Charles Sumner in life believed that all occasion for strife and distrust between the North and South had passed away, and there no longer remained any cause for continued estrangement between these two sections of our common country. Are there not many of us who believe the same thing? Is not that the common sentiment, or if it is not ought it not to be.

 Shall we not, over the honored remains of this great champion of human liberty, this feeling sympathizer with human sorrow, this earnest pleader for the exercise of human tenderness and charity, lay aside the concealments which serve only to perpetuate misunderstandings and distrust, and frankly confess that on both sides we most earnestly desire to be one . . . in feeling and in heart?

The years of Methodist sermons had not been lost on Lamar. The imagery was ingenious: if the heroic Sumner

had died believing in a noble cause, then how could the North reject that cause. In his peoration Lamar nimbly transferred Sumner's cross to the shoulders of the suffering South:

The South--prostrate, exhausted, drained of her life-blood . . . yet still honorable and true--accepts the bitter award of the bloody arbitrament without reservation, resolutely determined to abide the result . . . she suffers on in silence.

The North . . . silencing her bitter impulses, her words and acts are the words and acts of suspicion and distrust. Would that the spirit of the illustrious dead whom we lament to-day could speak from the grave to both parties . . . , 'My countrymen! know one another, and you will love one another!' ⁴⁹

When Lamar finished a "spontaneous burst of applause went up from Republicans and Democrats alike. . . . " The Northern press responded with the same enthusiasm which swept over Congress.⁵⁰ Lamar had doubtlessly achieved a

⁴⁹Congressional Record, 43 Cong., 1 Sess., 3410-3411 (April 27, 1874).

⁵⁰New York Tribune, April 28, 1874. For examples of favorable press responses see: ibid.; New York Times, April 28, 1874; Brandon (Miss.) Republican, May 14, 28, 1874; Jackson Weekly Clarion, May 7, 14, 1874. The Clarion articles provide excerpts from eight Northern papers. Mayes, Lamar, 189-197, provides excerpts from these and six other papers praising Lamar. They are: Boston Daily Advertiser, Boston Transcript, Boston Herald, Boston Globe, Springfield Republican, New York Commercial Advertiser, Philadelphia Press, Petersburg (Va.) Index and Appeal, Richmond Enquirer, Louisville Courier-Journal, Cincinnati Commercial, Memphis Daily Appeal, New Orleans Times, and the Jackson Clarion. See also Francis Pendleton Gaines, Southern Oratory: A Study in Idealism (Tuscaloosa, 1946), 53-56; and Buck, The Road to Reunion, 129, on the press reception of the eulogy. Mayes, Lamar, 188, states that James G. Blaine literally wept to hear Lamar's words. Buck, The Road to Reunion, 129; and Gaines, Southern Oratory, 55, repeat the story, but no earlier source has been found.

spectacular personal triumph.⁵¹ The popularity of his words, however, can be traced more accurately to the nation's state of mind, both North and South. The experiment with reconstruction had already worn thin by 1874, and public opinion was fast becoming more sympathetic with the white South. The change which ultimately negated Republican political power in the South had already begun, and a great upsurge of sentiment for national unity was underway.⁵²

Both circumstance and ability placed Lamar at the forefront of these momentous changes. In this national mood of accommodation, Lamar's antecedents, by their very contrast to the Sumner eulogy, did a great deal to establish his new role. His career as ante-bellum planter, secessionist, Confederate, and then silent and contrite sufferer during reconstruction--he seemed all these things--cast Lamar ideally as a conciliator.⁵³ His image as a

⁵¹Lamar's delicate treatment of this subject is suggestive of W. J. Cash's interpretation of the South's position at the end of reconstruction: "For twenty years to come the South must balance precariously between what is necessary to establish full sway for the Democratic party and to divorce the Negro from the ballot, and what would inevitably bring the bayonets back again. For twenty years those perpetually impending Yankee threats will have to be circumvented with elaborate caution." See W. J. Cash, The Mind of the South (New York, 1941), 148-149.

⁵²Kenneth M. Stampp, The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877 (New York, 1966), 187-189, 191-194, 206-209; Buck, The Road to Reunion, 96-98.

⁵³Cf. New York Tribune, June 10, 1874.

representative of the "natural" ruling class of the South⁵⁴ qualified him to speak authoritatively for a new order.

This altered climate of opinion meant that Lamar's bold declaration probably did not jeopardize his career. Actually there were numerous signs that Mississippi would tolerate his position. Old-line Whigs of course had aimed at reconciliation from the first. And a leading Democrat, Jacob Thompson, publicly favored the "New Departure" over two years prior to the Sumner eulogy.⁵⁵

On the subject of Sumner's death itself, the Democratic state legislators in Mississippi had joined Republicans in a unanimously adopted tribute one month before Lamar's speech.⁵⁶ And a major Democratic newspaper, the Jackson Clarion also anticipated Lamar's "occasion" by praising Sumner's attitude toward the South.⁵⁷

All this is not to say that Lamar earned unqualified support for his effort. There were critics certainly, and Lamar himself declared "that the time had come for me to stake my political life."⁵⁸ Even among his friends there

⁵⁴Cf. Stampp, The Era of Reconstruction, 156-158.

⁵⁵Oxford Falcon, Aug. 18, 1871; Memphis Daily Appeal, Aug. 15, 1871.

⁵⁶McNeilly, "War and Reconstruction," in PMHS, Centenary Series, II, 287.

⁵⁷Jackson Weekly Clarion, March 19, April 30, 1874.

⁵⁸Lamar to C. C. Clay, Sept. 5, 1874, in Clay Papers.

was hesitation and distress at first word of his speech.⁵⁹ And some journalists who could brook no compromise with the Republicans interpreted moderate remarks on abolition or abolitionist as treasonous.⁶⁰

The reaction to the eulogy was favorable enough overall to confirm Lamar's belief in a tempered approach to post-bellum statesmanship.⁶¹ He had maintained the South's position but had couched his contentions in tones of conciliation--and the North had generally accepted it. Little more than a month would pass before he would rise before the House again to employ the same tactics.

⁵⁹Lamar's letter to C. C. Clay, Sept. 5, 1874, in Clay Papers, was in answer to his gentle criticism. Mrs. Clay who found his explanation adequate and even "eloquent" asked permission to publish the letter. Lamar declined saying "my Sumner Speech must be 'justified by faith' rather than by any reasons formally set forth." See Lamar to Mrs. Clay, Dec. 20, 1874, *ibid.* James Z. George wrote Lamar twice in two days on this subject,--first expressing "some apprehension" and then "with wonder at the complete success attained by you." And still George could "not agree with you entirely in all you said of him. . . ." See J. Z. George to Lamar, May 3, 1874, in Lamar-Mayes Papers.

⁶⁰Brandon Republican, May 28, 1874, thought the Columbus Democrat the only paper which denounced Lamar. Mayes, Lamar, 191, lists the Canton Mail and the Meridian Mercury as critics.

⁶¹Lamar to Mrs. Lamar, ca. April 29, 1874, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 188; Lamar to Mrs. Lamar, May 5, 1874, quoted, *ibid.*, 191-192. In the letter of May 5, he said: "The whole world is my audience."

CHAPTER VIII

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: ELABORATION OF A CREED

Lamar served in the House of Representatives from December 1873, until his promotion to the Senate in March 1877. When considered in conjunction with his efforts in Mississippi during this same period, there is reason to consider these the most decisive years of his career. He was closely attentive to Mississippi and Southern affairs and to party needs throughout this period, and his health and vitality were sufficient to allow his talents full sway. After moving to the Senate he did not find so many opportunities, nor did his physical condition allow complete involvement. His reputation and his oratorical ability sustained him as an important force in politics, but historic occasions and heroic responses were not a part of the story.

The difference in the House and Senate years was only partially personal. Probably more important was the fact that during his first years in the House the great political struggle over reconstruction reached its peak. Lamar imbibed deeply of that struggle and played a significant role in reversing Republican achievements. When he

entered the House in 1873, some parts of his section were still restive under the anomalous influence of troop-supported Republican governments. Alteration of this situation challenged him to a peak of achievement. When this struggle entered into a new and less critical phase after the election of 1876, his opportunity for real influence was greatly diminished.

While appealing to men to rise above sectional prejudices in his Sumner eulogy, Lamar himself turned to the great matter of achieving Democratic power in both national and Southern affairs. He husbanded the party's fortunes not only as a sectionalist seeking home rule for the South, but also as a committed and lifelong Democrat. Under the guiding hand of A. B. Longstreet he had received political instruction quite equal to the religious indoctrination of Methodism. As an ante-bellum Congressman he had been notably regular in his support of the Democratic position. Both before and after the war he identified sectional and national interests with party politics. As a Democratic partisan Lamar took a special interest in all state elections and devoted a good deal of energy to the numerous elections contested before the House. Since he was named to the Committee on Elections in the forty-third Congress (but not in the forty-fourth Congress), he also for a time had an official responsibility to give all

possible assistance to Democratic claimants.¹

Three contested elections of 1872--West Virginia, Louisiana, and Arkansas--commanded particular attention. The debates arising from these disputed seats were all quite technical insofar as both sides attempted to employ statistics and legal obfuscation; and they were conducted in a highly partisan spirit. As a Democratic member of the Elections Committee Lamar performed in this spirit. With apparent competence and good fortune too, he saw all three of these elections ultimately decided in favor of the Democrats.²

Lamar's service to the Democracy during the House years included almost constant electioneering in Mississippi and outside the state. The national elections of 1874 were unimportant in Mississippi, since congressional seats were not vacated until 1875, but Lamar took advantage of the fall recess to exhort his constituents and advise them

¹House Journal, 43 Cong., 1 Sess., 62 (Dec. 5, 1873).

²On the West Virginia election see Congressional Record, 43 Cong., 1 Sess., 45-46, 842-846, 876-877, 899-890, 963; and Biographical Directory of American Congress, 785. On the Louisiana election see Congressional Record, 43 Cong., 1 Sess., 4071, 4733, 5316; and Biographical Directory of American Congress, 202. On the Arkansas election see Congressional Record, 43 Cong., 1 Sess., 1192, 1339, 1563, 1565, 1567, 1574-1577; and Biographical Directory of American Congress, 1828.

of his own course in Congress.³ During the following spring he campaigned outside the South. He and his good friend, John B. Gordon of Georgia, traveled into New Hampshire and Massachusetts to work for the party ticket in a canvass widely covered in the national press.⁴ Almost as soon as he returned to Mississippi, Lamar undertook the redemption of his state from the Republicans, an effort which extended throughout the entire summer and fall of 1875. The Democratic success in the elections further embellished the Democratic House majority of 1874. Owing to the odd election year in 1875, Mississippi underwent another general election in 1876; and Lamar campaigned vigorously and successfully throughout the state for the presidential electors of Samuel J. Tilden.⁵

Perhaps because of his eulogy and his partisan services or maybe in recognition of growing Democratic strength in the South, Lamar became chairman of the Democratic caucus when his party organized the forty-fourth

³Mayes, Lamar, 203-204. A draft of a speech to Marshall County voters is in the Lamar-Mayes Papers. It appears to have been given at this time. The Memphis Daily Appeal did not cover Mississippi speeches during these months, probably because of the more vital election news in Tennessee. The Jackson Clarion is not available for these months.

⁴New York Times, March 7, 1875; New York Tribune, March 9, 1875. Mayes, Lamar, 218-224, gives one of Lamar's speeches in extenso.

⁵The elections of 1875 and 1876 are detailed in subsequent chapters.

Congress in December 1875. It was a great honor for one so recently returned from political oblivion, and it marked the pinnacle of his position within the Democratic establishment. In the Senate he never attained such an elevated status in party councils. After the election of 1876 and the accompanying partisan bitterness, the veneer of party regularity wore somewhat thin. In 1875, however, the caucus chairmanship increased his prestige and contributed to his image as a nationalist rather than a narrow sectionalist.

Lamar made a lengthy speech on the occasion of his election as chairman. The sentiments expressed then were political in that they served as an indictment of the Republican party. In addition they indicated that Lamar sympathized sufficiently with the dominant views within the Democratic party, so that he could speak for himself and the national organization at once. The principles he proposed included civil service reform, public economy, reduction in the tariff, and reform of the currency system. These were stated in general terms, of course, and could not have offended any large portion of the Democratic party. Besides these national objectives, Lamar dedicated the Democrats to the cause of sectional amity, declaring that the party would strive to restore the constitution to its "pristine strength" and to make of it the protector of all

individuals without regard to race or geographical location.⁶

While party victories and personal recognition were important to Lamar, his most striking achievements represented a particular political and economic point of view. In both these major areas his attitude blended sectionalism and nationalism and to a degree transcended party loyalty. He always stood for union and reconciliation, but remained a disciple of the traditional states' rights doctrine on all political questions. At the same time he consistently favored a program of economic development financed by the central government. This combination presumed an absence of conflict between political decentralization and economic nationalism.

During the Republican forty-third Congress political issues were more important to Lamar than economic questions. Persistence of the Republican threat to home rule predetermined this basic priority. The Sumner eulogy provided no solution for the fundamental problems which divided the sections. At best its reception was only an indication of changing attitudes and motives. Congress was preoccupied with Southern state governments and with the Negro's

⁶The caucus speech was quoted and commented upon widely in newspapers. See New York Times, Dec. 5, 1875; Memphis Daily Appeal, Dec. 15, 1875; and the Jackson Weekly Clarion, Dec. 8, 1875. Mayes, Lamar, 268-269, gives excerpts from twelve papers which commented.

political fortunes after the eulogy--the same as before. Immediately after the forty-third Congress convened, civil rights legislation was introduced, and the struggle for its passage intensified as its fate became less and less certain.

Lamar supported the obstruction of early efforts at a civil rights bill⁷ and then took advantage of a debate over the contested election of a Louisiana representative to make his first major speech following the Sumner eulogy. He hoped to seat the conservative, G. A. Sheridan, rather than the Negro radical, P. B. S. Pinchback, but the issue had broader implications. The Republican administration in Louisiana retained its power only by federal support; and the contest for the congressional seat could conceivably affect the future status of the state government. A Democratic success in seating Sheridan would emphasize an election discrepancy which Southerners could claim as proof of radical treachery.⁸

Lamar's support of Sheridan provided a platform from which he attacked Republican reconstruction throughout the South and offered reconciliation in its place. This

⁷House Journal, 43 Cong., 1 Sess., 83-84 (Dec. 8, 1873); ibid., 1030 (May 25, 1874); ibid., 1080 (June 1, 1874); ibid., 1130-1131 (June 8, 1874).

⁸Sheridan was finally seated, but not until March 3, 1875. See Biographical Directory of American Congress, 202.

combination of partisanship with a plea for sectional good will made an interesting speech; but some radicals must have thought reconciliation little better than enmity when Lamar said: "No party . . . can long bear the responsibility of . . . these grotesque caricatures of government. . . ."⁹

Lamar reminded the House of his remarks on Sumner and insisted again that the South had accepted the constitutional amendments in good faith. The sentiments of the Sumner eulogy had "not met one dissent throughout the whole extent of the Southern land." In these remarks Lamar must have strained even the credulity of well-wishers when he vowed: "Every black man of twenty-one years possesses a vote. . . . There is not a trace of privilege throughout the land. . . . negro liberty is universal, thorough, and complete; and their equality before the law is without an exception."¹⁰ Of course, Lamar did not say whether the Negro's alleged equality would survive the removal of federal support.

In his argument for federal withdrawal Lamar turned the subject from the Negro and the basic problem of assimilation to the "real" issue of "constitutional government

⁹Congressional Record, 43 Cong., 1 Sess., App., 426-431 (June 8, 1874).

¹⁰Ibid.

and representative liberty." The great question was not that of racial antagonism, he said, since that conflict would resolve itself in time. Antagonism would disappear as natural increase in white population and foreign immigration reduced the Negro's importance. Under these circumstances: "it does not call for a scientist to calculate how long it will take for the weaker or smaller race to disappear before the more populous and stronger."¹¹

An influential segment of the Northern press appreciated Lamar's speech and agreed with him. By 1874 rationalization had become statesmanship. According to the New York Tribune, Lamar "spoke with honest indignation of the outrageous abuse of the federal power. . . . All of which was strictly true and most proper to be said."¹² Such praise echoed Lamar's own insight: "I believe, sir, that this spirit is passing away even from the minds of my friends on the other side. It is condemned by the

¹¹Congressional Record, 43 Cong., 1 Sess., App., 426-431 (June 8, 1874). Cf. Guion Griffis Johnson, "The Ideology of White Supremacy," in Dewey W. Grantham, Jr., ed., The South and the Sectional Image (New York, 1967), 66, who describes a theory of Negro retrogression and extinction as a result of competition with whites.

¹²New York Tribune, June 9, 10, 1874. See New York Times, June 9, 1874; and St. Louis Times, June 8, 1874, reprinted in New Orleans Daily Picayune, June 12, 1874. See also complimentary excerpts from Boston Advertiser, New York World, New York Herald, Louisville Courier-Journal, Wilmington Journal, Anderson (S. C.) Intelligencer, Jackson Clarion and Syracuse Journal, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 198-199.

spirit of the age."¹³

Lamar's exegesis on the spirit of the age did not go unchallenged. During the fall and winter of 1874 a highly volatile crisis in Vicksburg, Mississippi, threatened military intervention and irreparable damage to the still tender spirit of reconciliation. Racial and political tensions arising from alleged government malfeasance had heightened until an armed clash resulted in the death of two whites and twenty-nine Negroes.¹⁴

Congress received news of the Vicksburg outbreak with more than usual interest. The fall elections had returned the first Democratic majority in the lower House since the war, and the forty-fourth Congress scheduled to meet in December 1875 promised to be less amenable to Republican policies. And more importantly, the presidential election of 1876 already loomed into sight. Lame duck Republicans of the radical variety fell back upon their surest weapon--the "bloody shirt."¹⁵

¹³Congressional Record, 43 Cong., 1 Sess., App., 426-431 (June 8, 1874).

¹⁴Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, 328-337, passim. The figures are Garner's but he notes there are other estimates. Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, 190, sets the total at "about thirty-five."

¹⁵Buck, The Road to Reunion, 97; W. A. Dunning, Reconstruction, Political and Economic 1865-1877 (New York, 1907), 250-252. Lamar believed that Grant wished to provoke an incident in the South so that Congress would grant him additional authority before March 4. See Lamar to E. D. Clark, Dec. 23, 1874, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi.

Republican representative McKee of Mississippi called for an investigation of the Mississippi troubles. Lamar tactically countered by supporting the move and declaring that the facts would vindicate the white citizens of Vicksburg.¹⁶ He had already contacted friends in Mississippi, who advised him of the whites' position. They described the situation as grave, and one correspondent was "astonished at the moderation of our people."¹⁷

Under these circumstances, and assuming that the Republican-dominated investigation committee would look for the worst in Vicksburg, Lamar decided to remain in Washington for the Christmas holidays and to direct from there the defense of Vicksburg whites. As he wrote Mrs. Clay, he must stay because: "The wolf (at the White House) is panting for the blood of our people."¹⁸ And while the wolf panted Lamar kept in close contact with Mississippi acquaintances, especially his old friend and former law partner, E. D. Clark.

¹⁶Congressional Record, 43 Cong., 2 Sess., 77 (Dec. 14, 1874).

¹⁷W. P. Harris to Lamar, Dec. 16, 1874, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 236-237. See also Lamar to E. D. Clark, Dec. 21, 1874, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi, in which he refers to Clark's last letter and the news of Vicksburg. See also B. G. Humphreys to Lamar, Jan. 3, 1875, in Lamar-Mayes Papers.

¹⁸Lamar to Mrs. Clay, Dec. 26, 1874, in Clay Papers.

Lamar's first contribution to Vicksburg's defense came with the appointment of a Democratic minority to the investigating committee. At his recommendation, Speaker James G. Blaine appointed Speer of Pennsylvania and O'Brien of Maryland. Lamar then put the Democratic members in touch with Clark in Vicksburg.¹⁹ Through the last days of December and early January Lamar maintained almost daily contact with Clark, providing him with arguments for the investigating committee and obtaining information for a speech in the House of Representatives.

Lamar advised making a hard and fast case to prove government peculation in Vicksburg, with supporting evidence that the area was suffering grievously from taxes. Corruption and malfeasance in government should be directly related to Governor Ames since he supported the accused officials. As for the actual violence, Lamar advised arguing that a peaceful settlement was in the offing when armed Negroes approached Vicksburg intent upon trouble. Although Republicans would attempt to prove otherwise, Clark should: "Concentrate much force at this point. Show that there was no wanton or very little needless slaughter of negroes."²⁰ Lamar went on to recommend lawyers for the job, and to suggest that the Democratic press

¹⁹Lamar to E. D. Clark, Dec. 21, 1874 (two letters), in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi.

²⁰Ibid.

in Vicksburg follow a moderate line so that its spirited utterances could not be turned against them.²¹ Further, it would help "If Governor Humphreys . . . would stop the Iuka Gazette, & the Southern States & some other papers of the same kind from their loud opposition to me until after the Vicksburg affair is settled. . . . McKee has said, & he will say . . . that I am not the true Representative of the Democratic sentiment in Miss. & will quote their denunciations of me to prove it."²²

As Lamar must have anticipated, the five man investigating committee divided according to party and filed both a majority and a minority report.²³ He had, however, done his best to preserve the image of the beleaguered South which he had worked to create. Lamar probably believed in that image, but it is equally clear that violence against the Negro mattered less to him than political objectives: it was enough "that there was no wanton or very little needless slaughter of negroes."

²¹Lamar to E. D. Clark, Dec. 21, 1874 (two letters), in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi; Lamar to E. D. Clark, Dec. 26, 1874, ibid.

²²Lamar to E. D. Clark, Dec. 23, 1874, ibid. See also Lamar to Clark, Dec. 24, 1874, ibid. For the entire series of letters see: Lamar to Clark, Dec. 21 (two letters), 23, 24, 26 (two letters), 1874, Jan. 11, Feb. 1, 1875, ibid.; S. J. Randall to Lamar, Dec. 25, 1874, ibid.

²³Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, 337.

The publicity given the Vicksburg riot and investigation prompted the New York Herald to invite an open letter from reconciliation's spokesman. Lamar's studied reply of January 9, 1875, placated the Northern public while only thinly disguising the Negro's true fate.

In describing the probable results of home rule in Mississippi, Lamar vowed that the freedman's personal security and property would be completely protected by both law and public opinion. Suffrage, office holdings, and jury duty would likewise be safe, although Lamar admitted that: "In the exercise of them there might be some slight occasional disturbances."²⁴

In these sentiments Lamar perhaps substituted Northern wish for reality. He came much nearer his own concept of the proper relationship between the races when he explained that political rights would be qualified by the poverty and ignorance of the Negro population. Herald readers were told that although whites would naturally dominate Mississippi politics, home rule would allow party division without regard to race in a manner impossible under federal rule. These remarks failed to explain the process by which the Negro could be divided between parties, nor did they anticipate the possibility of a two-party system with the Negro as a potential balance of

²⁴Lamar to editor, New York Herald, Jan. 10, 1875, quoted in Jackson Weekly Clarion, Jan. 28, 1875.

power. In vagueness which an anxious public could appreciate, he said:

Withdraw the disturbing force, leave our population to the responsibility of local self-government and to the natural operation of social and industrial forces, and all that is now deranged and disorderly will certainly and permanently arrange itself. . . . ²⁵

The Herald letter was Lamar's last extended statement on civil rights or the Negro in the forty-third Congress. He had been preparing a speech on the Vicksburg troubles but for some reason did not deliver it. Possibly he decided that nothing could be added to the debate nor to his own reputation by entering into the bitter polemics which characterized the end of the session. Indeed, Lamar explained to the House that his comments would serve no purpose and that he therefore declined to speak.²⁶

²⁵Lamar to editor, New York Herald, Jan. 10, 1875, quoted in Jackson Weekly Clarion, Jan. 28, 1875. The Weekly Clarion approved the statement. See also Jackson Weekly Clarion, Jan. 23, Feb. 11, 1875.

²⁶At this time and on one other occasion Lamar asked permission to have his views recorded in the Congressional Record, but he did not turn over a speech for printing. See Congressional Record, 43 Cong., 2 Sess., 952 (Feb. 3, 1875); and ibid., 1922 (Feb. 27, 1875). In one instance during the forty-fourth Congress, Lamar again accepted discretion as the better part of valor. When the Republicans put forward a bill to amend the United States Constitution to forbid payment of Civil War claims to disloyal persons, Lamar failed to vote even though he was present in the House. See House Journal 44 Cong., 2 Sess., 101 (Dec. 18, 1876); and ibid., 181 (Jan. 8, 1877). Northern Democrats voted against the South on this last question and thus the issue had peculiarly sectional overtones. See C. V. Woodward, Reunion and Reaction (Boston, 1951), 143-144.

Lamar's resolve against speaking failed to save him from the impassioned struggle over civil rights during February 1875. Such a vital issue could not be disregarded. He became so heated when the Republicans moved to censure John Young Brown of Kentucky for intemperate language, that he imputed discourtesy and cowardliness to Brown's accusers. Such a display of temper prompted a press report that Lamar had reached for a pistol. In a personal explanation he assured the House that this was not true.²⁷

Lamar also joined in dilatory tactics against administration efforts to settle the Southern question before March, when the House majority would change hands.²⁸ In desperation the Republicans finally moved to suspend the writ of habeas corpus in the newly redeemed states of Louisiana, Arkansas, and Alabama, and thus to extend the president's power held under earlier force acts. After standing against this bill through a storm of votes, the Democrats lost; the session ended, however, without final action in the Senate.²⁹

²⁷Congressional Record, 43 Cong., 2 Sess., 989-990 (Feb. 4, 1875); New York Times, Feb. 5, 1875; New York Tribune, Feb. 5, 1875.

²⁸House Journal, 43 Cong., 2 Sess., 536-537, 548-570, 572-573 (Feb. 24, 1875); ibid., 586-601 (Feb. 27, 1875); ibid., 603-604, 606-607 (March 1, 1875); ibid., 621-623 (March 2, 1875).

²⁹House Journal, 43 Cong., 2 Sess., 586-601 (Feb. 27, 1875); Dunning, Reconstruction, 254-255; New York Times, Feb. 26, 28, 1875.

Obstructionism also delayed a civil rights bill guaranteeing public accommodations and jury service, but in this case the filibuster failed. For more than seventy votes Lamar stood fast before the bill passed the House on February 4, 1875, and went to the Senate. On March 1, 1875, just before the Republican Congress dispersed, the battered remains of Charles Sumner's civil rights bill became law.³⁰

The Democratic forty-fourth Congress proved anticlimactic in the field of Southern affairs. Lamar supported desultory efforts aimed at relieving Confederate disabilities under the fourteenth amendment³¹ and at condemning use of federal troops in the South;³² but otherwise the change in party majority quieted the agitation. He voted against an ineffectual Republican effort to investigate whether or not the states provided equal education to the races, but the measure had no chance of passing.³³

³⁰House Journal, 43 Cong., 2 Sess., 252-255 (Jan. 25, 1875); ibid., 271 (Jan. 27, 1875); ibid., 403 (Feb. 4, 1875); Dunning, Reconstruction, 254-255.

³¹House Journal, 44 Cong., 1 Sess., 185-186 (Jan. 14, 1876); ibid., 201-202 (Jan. 17, 1876).

³²Ibid., 181 (Jan. 8, 1876); ibid., 299 (Jan. 24, 1876); Dunning, Reconstruction, 255.

³³House Journal, 44 Cong., 1 Sess., 177 (Jan. 8, 1876). According to Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, 144, the Northern Democrats split on this issue and over one half of them voted with the Republicans.

Despite the becalmed atmosphere Lamar found several occasions which suited his message and his method. The first occurred on January 25, during debate on a centennial celebration appropriation bill. The centennial year provided an obvious opportunity for promotion of national unity and goodwill and the chance was not lost on Lamar. He argued in favor of celebrating independence and deprecated opposition to the appropriation. His speech for passage embodied the familiar rhetoric of reconciliation:

The motive which prompts me is one which has been the law of my career since I have been in Congress. It is my desire to the pacification of these sections--to see my people of the South restored to the proud position of dignity and equality in this Union. the People of the North, should become satisfied of the longing and desire of our people to live with them in peace and perpetuity in a restored and fraternal Union. Before that cherished purpose and inspiration all other with me sink into insignificance.³⁴

A summer riot in Hamburg, South Carolina, forced Lamar to shift from reconciliation to home rule once more. In opposing use of federal troops he employed arguments

³⁴Congressional Record, 44 Cong., 1 Sess., 630-631 (Jan. 25, 1876). On the highly flattering reaction of Mississippi's leading newspaper to the speech, see: Jackson Daily Clarion, Feb. 1, 1876; and Jackson Weekly Clarion, Feb. 2, 1876. The Daily Clarion said: "On Col. Lamar, more than any man, or all others combined, the hopes of the people who have suffered from the proscriptive rule of a vindictive party, are centered. . . . " These two issues also quoted complimentary passages from the New York Herald, New York Tribune, and Chicago Times.

developed during the Vicksburg crisis.³⁵ The local nature of the riots entirely precluded federal action. The demonstrations arose, he said, "because these so-called Republican governments have . . . encouraged it by giving it impunity through their imbecility and cowardice, and often by actually inciting it."³⁶ The disorder had nothing at all to do with voting rights. It was the activity of a lawless element of men who should be punished for their heinous crimes--but that responsibility belonged to state authorities.³⁷

As recess approached and the presidential campaign with it, Lamar made on August 2, 1876, what James A. Garfield called "a dangerous attack upon the Republican Party."³⁸ In his last important House speech dealing with the sectional question, Lamar defended the section's solid support of the Democrats as a logical response to political

³⁵Cf. Lamar to E. D. Clark, Feb. 1, 1875, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi, where Lamar outlined a speech which he did not give.

³⁶Congressional Record, 44 Cong., 1 Sess., 4709-4711 (July 18, 1876). Lamar softened this charge somewhat by stating that these "so-called Republican governments" were spurious and unrelated to true Republicanism.

³⁷Ibid. Lamar's condemnation of the men responsible for the Negroes' death was commended by the New York Tribune, July 19, 1876. For an example of Mississippi comment see Jackson Weekly Clarion, July 26, 1876.

³⁸James A. Garfield to Mrs. Garfield, ca. Aug. 3, 1876, quoted in T. C. Smith, The Life and Letters of James Abram Garfield (2 vols., New Haven, 1925), I, 607.

realities and denied that the South controlled the party. A Democratic presidential victory, he said, would in no way jeopardize enforcement of constitutional amendments or the newly won rights of freedmen.

Here Lamar clearly intended to allay the suspicions underpinning Northern thought. He had no desire to suspend Negro suffrage, he said, but believed that true freedom and equality could not exist under "party tyranny." The Democrats and home rule offered a permanent solution:

Take the question of national politics, and it can be settled on a basis which would consolidate all the rights of the black man, make him free and equal with every citizen before the law, protected in the fruits of his labor, safe in his person, happy in his household, secure in the enjoyment of whatever he can in fair competition achieve . . . and thus secure to him a higher and better life than he now leads as the misguided and deluded constituency of dishonest officeholders.³⁹

The August 2, 1876, speech combined the major goals of Lamar's return to Congress. He wished to win Northern acceptance of the South's good intentions and he desired, more than anything else, to gain home rule founded upon renewed confidence in the South's integrity. To achieve these ends he combined statesmanship of a high order and near deception of the Northern people who badly wanted to believe what he said. Probably this deception was also

³⁹Congressional Record, 44 Cong., 1 Sess., 5087-5094 (Aug. 2, 1876). The Memphis Daily Appeal, Aug. 3, 1876, calls this "the grandest effort of his life." There are notes for this speech in a notebook in the Lamar-Mayes Papers.

self-inflicted. Nothing in Lamar's correspondence indicates willful hypocrisy, and no inconsistency appears in his public and private declarations. There is callousness toward the physical suffering of the Negro, although this arose partially from an instinctive consideration of the Negro as victim and tool of the Republicans. He demonstrated no compassion nor outrage at misuse of the freedman. In treating the Negro as a political object rather than a human being, Lamar displayed little foresight into the politics of the future. He assumed that the Negro would follow white leadership and would divide into parties with the whites. That the Negro might have additional political ambitions seems never to have occurred to Lamar. Of course, Lamar was a working politician immediately concerned with the grasp of power on the state level. The future played no part in his actions on this subject.

CHAPTER IX

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: AN ECONOMIC COROLLARY

Not all issues before the forty-third and forty-fourth Congresses were so clearly sectional. Though these received far less recognition in the Mississippi press, almost none in fact, Lamar's voting record indicates that he attentively pursued the state's material as well as political needs. On other occasions, of course, Mississippi's considerations and Lamar's philosophy of decentralized political control were irrelevant, and in such instances his judgment followed a less regulated course.

The non-political problems which pressed upon the forty-third Congress more urgently than any other were economic. The country succumbed to panic when the railroad boom collapsed in the fall of 1873, and the crisis required quick remedial action. Lamar believed that the depression resulted partially from the stringency of money and thought that an increase in circulation deserved full consideration as a corrective. As the debate upon currency continued, however, Lamar's notion of currency expansion emerged as a fundamentally conservative one based upon a regular monthly

issue of United States notes redeemable in gold.¹

Acceptance of currency expansion on a secured basis did not, however, extend to Republican schemes for currency and free banking.² Of course Lamar's grounds here were partisan as well as fiscal. The desire to embarrass the Republican majority led him to support an effort by soft money Southern Democrats to convert a Republican bill for free banking into an anti-bank, greenback expansion measure.³ He clearly was not a greenbacker, however, and cast his vote against issuing all further currency in that form.⁴

Lamar best demonstrated his relative position on currency in the showdown vote over the Inflation Bill of April 14, 1874. That bill drew the line clearly between

¹House Journal, 43 Cong., 1 Sess., 264-265 (Jan. 19, 1874); ibid., 754-755, 757-758 (April 10, 1874). At the same time he opposed efforts by contractionists to retire part of the United States notes already in circulation. See ibid., 753-754 (April 10, 1874). The author recognizes the difficulty in isolating an individual's voting record on such a complex question without a detailed roll call study of the entire Congress with which comparisons may be made.

²House Journal, 43 Cong., 1 Sess., 450-451 (Feb. 16, 1874); ibid., 743-744 (April 9, 1874); ibid., 749-750 (April 10, 1874); ibid., 1029 (May 25, 1874).

³Ibid., 771 (April 11, 1874). Irwin Unger, The Greenback Era: A Social and Political History of American Finance, 1865-1879 (Princeton, 1964), App. B, 409, shows that thirty Southern Democrats voted for this effort while only three voted against it. On the other hand Eastern Democrats voted eleven against and four for.

⁴House Journal, 43 Cong., 1 Sess., 410 (Feb. 9, 1874).

hard money men and expansionists. Actually the Republican sponsored measure was not extreme and in no sense represented a capitulation to inflationists. Conservatives strongly opposed it, nonetheless, because they looked upon even a moderate concession as a breach in their defense of sound money. The measure provided for a \$46 million increase in national bank notes and allowed expansion of legal tender in circulation to \$400 million, or about \$18 million over the legal ceiling at the time. Taken together, the increase in circulation would not have amounted to more than \$64 million--a modest change. The bill earned the almost unanimous opposition of Eastern Democratic votes as well as that of most Eastern Republicans. On the other hand, the majority of Western Democrats voted for the measure, as did two-thirds of the Southern Democratic delegation. The bill passed the House, but Lamar sided with Easterners and opposed it.⁵

The Inflation Bill ultimately passed both Houses. Urged on by conservatives and reformers including Charles Francis Adams, Sr., Edward Atkinson, Whitelaw Reid, and Cyrus Field, Grant vetoed the measure as dangerously inflationary.⁶ Lamar's vote clearly placed him with these

⁵House Journal, 43 Cong., 1 Sess., 802 (April 14, 1874); Unger, The Greenback Era, 235-236, App. C, 410; Milton Friedman and Anna J. Schwartz, A Monetary History of the United States, 1867-1960 (Princeton, 1963), 47.

⁶Unger, The Greenback Era, 240-242.

men in the currency spectrum. The bill Congress finally passed with Grant's approval made only very mild concessions to the soft-money men and passed by a large bipartisan majority. The greenback limit was set at \$382 million, which was the amount then outstanding. Lamar voted his approval.⁷

The Resumption Act of 1875 succeeded the Inflation Bill as the focus for House debate on currency. The measure provided for a return, beginning in 1879, to a currency entirely secured by gold reserves and therefore pleased moderate hard money advocates. The bill represented, however, a purely partisan effort before a presidential election campaign to consolidate different views within the Republican party, and therefore Lamar's negative vote did not necessarily represent his true attitude. Obviously the fact that the forty-third Congress was Republican in its organization often forced Democrats to react defensively against administration measures. Lamar, like other Democrats who voted against resumption, may have reflected party maneuvering in their opposition rather than personal conviction.⁸

⁷House Journal, 43 Cong., 1 Sess., 1260 (June 20, 1874); Unger, The Greenback Era, 246; Friedman and Schwartz, A Monetary History, 47.

⁸House Journal, 43 Cong., 2 Sess., 138 (Jan. 7, 1875). Unger, The Greenback Era, 252-255, 259, shows that only two Democrats voted for the measure.

Although the currency issue did not again become an issue of great urgency while Lamar served in the House, it continually cropped up as efforts were made to repeal the Resumption Act or to coin silver dollars. After the Democrats assumed control of the House when the forty-fourth Congress convened, he consistently voted against repealing the Resumption Act of 1875, indicating that his initial opposition to the Republican bill was political rather than fiscal. In opposing repeal, Lamar departed company with the majority of his party which on August 5, 1876, drove through the House a bill repealing the date (1879) when resumption would become effective and a resolution calling for an investigation of the entire issue.⁹ Lamar's own criticism of the Resumption Act attacked the delay in implementation, and he voted for a commission to study "what measures are necessary and practicable in order to bring about the resumption of specie payments at the earliest possible time. . . ."¹⁰

Before the forty-fourth Congress adjourned, silver had begun to displace the greenback as a panacea for the continuing economic slump. Silver as an issue would not

⁹House Journal, 44 Cong., 1 Sess., 202-203 (Jan. 17, 1876); ibid., 899-900 (May 1, 1876); ibid., 1280 (July 17, 1876); ibid., 1392 (Aug. 5, 1876); Unger, The Greenback Era, 311-312.

¹⁰Congressional Record, 44 Cong., 1 Sess., 5230-5231 (Aug. 5, 1876); House Journal, 44 Cong., 1 Sess., 1391 (Aug. 5, 1876).

reach crisis proportions until a later day, however, and Lamar's opinion evolved with the changing circumstances. At this time his dedication to a stable currency was bi-metallic, and he favored restoration of the legal tender nature of the silver dollar which had been dropped from the mint list in 1873.¹¹ Though his attitude would change, at the time he desired only to see the people relieved of the "evils of an irredeemable currency."¹²

One of the clearest and most fixed tendencies of Lamar's economic record during his postwar tenure in the House of Representatives arose from his consistent support of federal projects requiring expenditure of national funds. This attitude, of course, directly contradicted Lamar's position favoring retrenchment in state government, and it represented a reversal of his more conservative

¹¹House Journal, 44 Cong., 2 Sess., 72 (Dec. 13, 1876).

¹²Lamar's address to the Democratic caucus. See New York Times, Dec. 5, 1875; and Memphis Daily Appeal, Dec. 15, 1875.

fiscal voting record of the ante-bellum period.¹³

Lamar's economic philosophy was nonetheless logical and not unlike that of his fellow congressmen from the South and from the Mississippi Valley. The area's great need for material rehabilitation after the Civil War could be satisfied only from federal coffers. A policy of retrenchment appealed reasonably enough to the Northeastern wing of the party, which had long fought expenditures for public and private developments; but such an attitude from Lamar would have been doctrinaire and unrealistic. Consequently he often voted with the Republican majority on these questions during the forty-third Congress and with the minority when the Democrats won control of the House of Representatives in the elections of 1874. The appearance of party irregularity is the more conspicuous because Lamar, as chairman of the Democratic caucus during the forty-fourth Congress, paid lip service to the party's

¹³In the matter of tariff legislation, however, Lamar appeared to hold to his ante-bellum predilection for free trade or at least downward revision. In the Republican forty-third Congress he voted generally with the minority. See House Journal, 43 Cong., 1 Sess., 1073-1076 (June 1, 1874); ibid., 43 Cong., 2 Sess., 228-230 (Jan. 21, 1875); ibid., 525-529 (Feb. 23, 1875). According to J. G. Randall and David Donald, The Civil War and Reconstruction (Boston, 1961), 666, no significant tariff legislation passed during the entire reconstruction period, because supporters and opponents of protection neutralized one another; hence no change. For this reason the tariff played a small part in the voting record described in this section.

position favoring government economy.¹⁴

A resolution offered by Democrat William S. Holman of Indiana perhaps best illustrated the party alignment on subsidy appropriations. The measure stipulated that henceforth: "no subsidies in money, bonds, public lands, indorsements, or by pledge of the public credit, should be granted by Congress to associations or corporations engaged or proposing to engage in public or private enterprise." The measure passed by a vote of 223 to thirty-three. Only two Northern Democrats voted against it along with a few Republicans. Southerners, including Lamar, accounted for all but seven votes of the opposition.¹⁵

Such an economic division was ironic. Former Confederates, such as Lamar, sought reunion and reconciliation through the auspices of the Democratic party; and yet these same leaders shared little in common with their brethren in the Northeast in terms of economic policy. Conversely the party of reconstruction and military intervention sympathized more with the material needs of the South. For these reasons some spokesmen for reconciliation consciously supported "New South" economic development along lines favored by Northern Republicans and said as much in public. While Lamar did little to popularize this facet of the "New

¹⁴New York Times, Dec. 5, 1875.

¹⁵House Journal, 44 Cong., 1 Sess., 65-66 (Dec. 15, 1875); Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, 62.

South" creed, his political contribution clearly complemented these efforts.¹⁶

Lamar most clearly represented the South's need for government sponsored measures in the field of internal improvements. In recognition of the geographical location of Lamar's constituency, he received a place on the Select Committee on Mississippi River Levees when the forty-third Congress met in December 1873.¹⁷ In that capacity Lamar pushed for a special commission on reclamation of the river delta¹⁸ and consistently favored improvements along the Mississippi. During the forty-third Congress these far reaching projects included construction of a toll free canal from the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico, improvement of the Mississippi River for navigation, construction of a canal connecting Lake Michigan to the

¹⁶Paul M. Gaston, "The New-South Creed, 1865-1900" (doctoral dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1961), 77-78. Gaston, p. 89, probably makes too much of the connection between the plea for reunion and the economic program: e.g., "nearly every New South declaration of loyalty to the union has as a basic ingredient an appeal for Northern capital." According to Raymond B. Nixon, Henry W. Grady: Spokesman of the New South (New York, 1943), 107, Lamar had a marked influence upon the thinking of Grady.

¹⁷House Journal, 43 Cong., 1 Sess., 94 (Dec. 10, 1873).

¹⁸Congressional Record, 43 Cong., 1 Sess., 202 (April 8, 1874). The favorable response of his constituency may be judged in Jackson Weekly Clarion, April 16, 23, 30, 1874.

Mississippi River, and legislation for a bridge at St. Louis.¹⁹

The Democratic forty-fourth Congress expended less effort for river improvements because of opposition from the economy-minded Northeastern wing of the party. The gulf between Northern and Southern Democrats perhaps showed most clearly when the House voted by roll call on a comprehensive bill to rebuild Mississippi levees, reclaim alluvial lands, and improve navigation. After having deliberately put off the legislation until near the end of the second session, Northern Democrats helped defeat the measure seventy-two to 113. Only fourteen of 118 Northern Democrats voted with the Southerners, and eight of these came from border states. In contrast, twenty-six Republicans voted for the measure.²⁰ The Southerners and Republicans were clearly wedded in an unequal struggle against the more niggardly Northern Democrats.

Lamar's support of internal improvements proved comprehensive enough to include projects far removed from Mississippi. Among others he voted for construction of the Louisville and Portland Canal and for improvement of the economically unimportant Oostoonoula River in Georgia. In

¹⁹House Journal, 43 Cong., 1 Sess., 1113-1117 (June 5, 1874); ibid., 43 Cong., 2 Sess., 246-247, 250 (Jan. 25, 1875).

²⁰Ibid., 44 Cong., 2 Sess., 668 (March 3, 1877); Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, 145-146.

the Democratic forty-fourth Congress he also supported a general bill for construction, repair, and completion of public works on canals and rivers and presumably would have accepted more of the same type legislation if the House majority had been more amenable.²¹

The penchant Lamar showed for disbursing government funds did not stop with public improvements legislation. He also voted with fair consistency for government subsidization of private concerns--most notably the railroads. Though railroad subsidization at first seemed quite consistent with Lamar's attitude toward other federal expenditures, there was a difference because in this connection the beneficiaries--at least the direct recipients--were private individuals rather than the public. And of course the forty-third and forty-fourth Congresses gravely suspected railroad companies because of such revelations as the Credit Mobilier scandal, which were still fresh in the public mind. Reformers in both parties generally opposed railroad legislation and unfailingly attacked what they considered "jobbery." Thus Lamar in favoring generous government grants walked against "reform" as well as the Northeastern wing of his own party, which was more interested in economy than in government backed expansion.

²¹House Journal, 43 Cong., 1 Sess., 882-883 (April 30, 1874); ibid., 949 (May 11, 1874); ibid., 44 Cong., 1 Sess., 778-779 (April 10, 1876).

Here again he appeared to oppose a principle which he had publicly espoused as chairman of the Democratic caucus.²²

In favoring government financing for railroads, and most especially for a continental railroad along a southern route, Lamar represented prevailing opinion in his home state and region. During the spring of 1874 the Mississippi legislature passed a resolution asking the state's congressional delegation to support a subsidy for the Texas Pacific Company, which proposed construction of a road from the Mississippi River to the Pacific. By the end of 1875 every former Confederate state's legislature excepting Virginia and Louisiana had passed such recommendations. Similar action followed by chambers of commerce presumably representing the commercial community of the South. The Texas Pacific also claimed support from representative newspapers throughout the section, so that in 1875 the company could publish a pamphlet quoting more than forty such editors in their behalf.²³ In light of this general commitment, Lamar's position was obviously a popular one.

²²New York Times, Dec. 5, 1875.

²³Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, 78-81. For a similar analysis see the Memphis Daily Appeal, Nov. 18, 1875. Support of the project may be followed in the river-oriented Memphis Daily Appeal, Oct. 28, 30, Nov. 6, 14, 19, 20, 21, 1875.

Despite the considerable economic and political justification for Lamar's support of the Texas Pacific Railroad, he became during 1876 and 1877 a focal point for the controversy which surrounded congressional consideration of legislation favorable to railroads. There are two apparent reasons for this association. For one thing, Lamar became chairman of the House Committee on the Pacific Railroad when the Democrats returned to power in that branch of Congress in December 1875. As chairman he introduced and supported legislation reported by his committee. Secondly, complications arose from the Tilden-Hayes election controversy of 1876, and the involvement of railroad interests in the matter implicated Lamar in the bargaining which resulted.²⁴ These factors and the time table which raised the transcontinental bill as an important issue in the forty-fourth Congress combined to give Lamar special prominence.

As chairman of the Pacific Railroad Committee, Lamar's first setback came when Northern Democrats led by William S. Holman squelched his effort to bring up a bill extending construction time for the Northern Pacific Railroad. Though that bill did not claim Lamar's interest to nearly the extent that the southern transcontinental road

²⁴The election will be treated in a subsequent chapter.

would, the defeat was portentous.²⁵

The southern road, like the Northern Pacific, faced certain defeat unless the competing companies could work out some agreement among themselves and then combine their lobbies in Congress. Under duress, the Texas Pacific Road controlled by Thomas Scott compromised with Collis P. Huntington's combined Central Pacific and Southern Pacific lobby. Despite the Southern states' solid stand for his company, Scott could not hope for a congressional subsidy while Huntington offered to build the road without government support; nor could Huntington expect to overcome Scott's laboriously organized Southern support. To resolve the impasse, they agreed to divide the road and the proceeds of the federal subsidy which they hoped Congress would pass. In this compromise form, the Texas Pacific bill went to a subcommittee, which included Lamar as a member, and emerged in its final form.²⁶

On January 24, 1877, in the midst of the Hayes-Tilden election dispute, Lamar reported two bills from his

²⁵Congressional Record, 44 Cong., 2 Sess., 92 (Dec. 7, 1876).

²⁶Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, 114. The discussion of the Texas Pacific question which follows draws heavily upon Woodward's work. Lamar's part in the jockeying between Huntington and Scott is not fully explained by extant evidence. His sympathy with Scott is, however, made clear by a letter from Scott to Lamar, April 13, 1876, in Lamar-Mayer Papers, suggesting certain actions Lamar might take to frustrate Huntington's efforts to defeat the Texas Pacific Railroad.

committee. First, he reintroduced a measure extending the allotted construction time for completion of the Northern Pacific before the road forfeited its government grant. Congressman Holman objected to the move on grounds that an extension would amount to an appropriation, since without new legislation the original grant would be reclaimed by the federal government. Lamar denied Holman's contention, but the chair decided against him. Despite Lamar's argument that default by the Northern Pacific would result in great and undeserved injury to honest and even penurious stockholders, Holman effectively prevented consideration of the legislation. Though Lamar made two last efforts to bring the bill to a vote by suspending the House rules, he failed and the session ended without action.²⁷

Also on January 24, 1877, Lamar reported the more controversial Texas Pacific bill as compromised and ironed out by the Pacific Railroad Committee, and requested that it be made a special order on the calendar. It would have exempted the company from the forfeiture requirements of existing laws and would have divided construction of the Texas Pacific system between the Scott and Huntington companies--both to share in the government grant. In addition to the subsidy the government would guarantee the

²⁷Congressional Record, 44 Cong., 2 Sess., 922-923 (Jan. 24, 1877); ibid., 2004 (Feb. 28, 1877); House Journal 44 Cong., 2 Sess., 633 (March 2, 1877).

debts of the companies.²⁸

Apparently feeling his bill would not pass upon its own merits, Lamar presented the Texas Pacific as a means of reconciling the sections by making possible the physical reconstruction of a war-torn area and by placing sectional good will upon a base of equality and mutual respect.²⁹ Since the North had built transcontinental roads largely at public expense during and after the Civil War, this argument was not unreasonable. But the magic of an appeal for reconciliation could not be stretched too far. Holman again objected, and the House refused to grant the unanimous consent necessary to make the bill a special order. Consequently there could be no hope of its passing before the end of the session.³⁰

Lamar suffered personally with his program's defeat. Though he had little hope of passing the Texas Pacific bill even when he introduced it,³¹ the vituperation which followed must have been disconcerting for a man so accustomed to high regard. Northern Democratic papers jumped upon him with both feet, and the usually sympathetic Liberal

²⁸Congressional Record, 44 Cong., 2 Sess., 924 (Jan. 24, 1877); Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, 127-131.

²⁹Congressional Record, 44 Cong., 2 Sess., 924 (Jan. 24, 1877).

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Lamar to Mrs. C. C. Clay, Jan. 24, 1877, in Clay Papers.

Republican press did likewise. His antagonists included such influential papers as the New York Times, the Chicago Tribune, the New York Sun, the New York Tribune, the Washington Union, and the weekly Nation. Perhaps none of these were less kind than the New York Times, when it warned that Lamar's good name would not carry the bill and offered the opinion that his "effort is rendered especially odious by the character of the scheme with which it is associated."³² Lamar could take some comfort in the defense by the Memphis Daily Appeal, which attacked the hypocrisy of Northern editors who criticized "Lamar's reasonable and honest Texas Pacific bill as if they had never countenanced the robbing scheme known as the Central Pacific. . . ."³³ But overall his national image and his personal dignity suffered a stunning reversal.

The futile struggle for the Texas Pacific and the accompanying election crisis of 1876 marked the close of Lamar's service in the House of Representatives. Even though the Memphis Daily Appeal and his constituents approved his action, the bitterness of the final debate lingered in stark contrast to the more auspicious day of the Sumner eulogy. The failure meant a great deal more to Lamar than the immediate need for a transcontinental

³²New York Times, Feb. 18, 28, 1877; Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, 134-139.

³³Memphis Daily Appeal, Feb. 2, 1877.

railroad. An economic and political principle--federal subsidization for Southern development--had faltered. But on the other hand, neither the principle nor the bill died with the session's end. Linked as the Texas Pacific was to the political events of 1876-77, it resurfaced as a crucial issue after Hayes became president of the United States. At another time and in another place Lamar would again speak for the legislation he considered essential to the well-being of Mississippi and the South.

Other issues which had concerned Lamar in the House during the forty-third and forty-fourth Congresses would reappear before the Senate either in the same form or in different guises. Though specifics altered, Lamar would follow the pattern of economic voting established during these years. Like his commitment to political decentralization, the creed of federally-supported economic development, coupled with a predilection for sound money had in the course of four years hardened into a fixed basis for his entire career. New questions would arise, but his general response would logically follow these well established conceptions of economic rectitude and self-interest.

CHAPTER X
REVOLUTION OF 1875

In a very real sense political and economic principles at the national level were incidental to Lamar during these early years of his return to public life. So long as Mississippi remained under the rule of the Republican party with freedmen providing the voting base, Lamar's pronouncements offered little of relevance to his Democratic friends at home. To them and to Lamar the ultimate and irreducible question was that of home rule. This compelling need never left his mind for long throughout the forty-third and forty-fourth Congresses until redemption was completed in 1876. While he spoke over the dead Sumner and secretly directed the defense of Vicksburg; and while he supported the national Democracy against the Republicans and at the same time worked for federal aid to internal improvements, the Mississippi situation remained crucial.

Because of the peculiarities of the Mississippi election calendar, the Democrats had remained powerless to act against their antagonists during Lamar's first term in the House. No state-wide election had been held since his victory in 1872, and so the general election of 1875 assumed

great importance not only to Lamar personally but to the Democratic party as the first promising opportunity to "redeem" the state.

In January 1875 when Lamar returned home from Washington to answer to his constituents, public meetings and testimonials greeted his arrival.¹ Such activity suggested that he could expect reelection in the fall with gratifying ease. The sometime publicized threat to gerrymander him out of office did not seem to present a real danger as the canvass approached, although it did point up the incongruity of his position in a Republican state.² His congressional seat remained in a sense gratuitous and subject to the administration's tolerance, and so long as Lamar alone represented the Democratic party in Washington, he spoke for a limited constituency and possessed no real moral authority to speak for the state. Unless the Democrats could effect a revolution in the political climate of Mississippi, reelection would be an empty victory.

Despite personal vulnerability Lamar took hope from the situation in 1875. The Democrats could, he thought, reasonably hope for victory for the first time since they had defeated the reconstruction constitution of 1868. For

¹Jackson Weekly Clarion, Jan. 7, 1875; and Jackson Daily Clarion, Jan. 18, 29, 1875, describe public meetings to honor Lamar in Tupelo and Oxford. See also Jackson Daily Clarion, Jan. 30, Feb. 12, 20, 1875.

²Jackson Daily Clarion, Jan. 30, 1875.

one thing, the federal government's amnesty policy since the ratification of the fourteenth amendment had increased the white vote. And at the same time many native white Republicans had found the racial policies of the Ames government repugnant and had joined the Democrats in increasing numbers since 1873. Perhaps more importantly, many Negroes, including men of standing, had become disillusioned with the sincerity of Ames and with Mississippi Republicanism in general. They comprehended that Republicans were unwilling or unable to provide rewards for Negroes, and realized that continued alienation from the native whites would result in hardship for the landless and dependent.³

Combined with these events in Mississippi, national political developments favored a Democratic revival. The lower House had gone Democratic in 1874 for the first time since 1861, presumably indicating a change in popular attitude toward Republican reconstruction. Also Grant had become unwilling to provide military support for the Republicans, and in states like Mississippi a policy reversal such as this virtually sealed the party's

³Hiram Revels to Grant, Nov. 6, 1875, quoted in Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, 399-400. See also Donald, "The Scalawag in Mississippi Reconstruction," in JSH, X, 454-455.

doom.⁴ Before Grant announced his historic decision not to send troops to police the Mississippi election, Lamar had written his wife:

I think the future of Mississippi is very dark. Ames has it dead. There can be no escape from his rule. His negro regiments are nothing. He will get them killed up, and then Grant will take possession for him. May God help us!⁵

Without troops, however, the future brightened infinitely.

Under these changing circumstances the Democratic party began its organization as early as January 1875. On the seventh of that month a supposedly bipartisan tax payers convention met in Jackson to propose fiscal reforms. The convention urged organization of tax payers leagues in each county to search out ways of reducing taxes and to expose speculation by government officials. Although the Democratic party did not officially sanction the meeting, the implications were certainly partisan. One need look no further than the resolutions or the leadership to find the

⁴Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, 193-194, holds that "Negro suffrage or even Negro freedom, had never been really popular with the masses in the north." Wharton, p. 198, also believes that the federal withdrawal was in the Negro's interest in the long run.

⁵Lamar to Mrs. Lamar, Feb. 15, 1875, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 211.

connection. Both would recur in the 1875 campaign.⁶

On March 3, 1875, the Democratic minority in the state legislature met in caucus to make plans for the party's reorganization. The group named John M. Stone as chairman of a forty-two man committee to spearhead the effort. Stone's committee issued a state-wide call for a Democratic meeting on May 17, 1875. Soon afterwards Lamar himself traveled to Jackson, where he closeted himself with Democratic leaders. Although he issued no statement, the press declared that he would return for the May conference.⁷

When the delegates to the organizational meeting gathered on May 17, 1875, they decided to hold a state convention on August 3 and to invite all conservatives and anti-radicals without regard to party. Despite petty quibbling, the new organization declared itself the Democratic-Conservative party rather than simply the Democratic party as some preferred. Lamar remained inconspicuous in

⁶Jackson Weekly Clarion, Jan. 7, 1875. Well known Democrats including A. G. Brown and Wiley P. Harris addressed the convention. James G. George was also active in its proceedings. According to Rowland, History of Mississippi, II, 192, Lamar was present and helped to prepare the address of the convention. Hudson Strode, Jefferson Davis: Tragic Hero--The Last Twenty Five Years, 1864-1889 (New York, 1964), 399, also places Lamar at the convention. The Jackson Clarion lists the delegates, however, and does not include Lamar.

⁷Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, 372-373; Jackson Weekly Clarion, April 21, May 5, 1875; Memphis Daily Appeal, May 8, 1875.

these matters and declined to address the delegates. In his failure to speak or to place himself on the Provisional Executive Committee, Lamar displayed a predisposition which characterized his relationship to the Mississippi Democratic party: he generally left organizational matters to others. In the campaign which followed he would serve primarily as spokesman and totem for the party.⁸

Between May and August Lamar took to the stump. Since his own nomination was virtually assured, he campaigned principally against the radical state legislature. With this larger target in view, he spoke at numerous mass meetings throughout northern Mississippi.⁹

The Democratic-Conservatives concentrated their promotional efforts on a meeting scheduled for July 15 at Falkner's Station in Tippah County. For this occasion special trains transported between two and three thousand people to the rally. These hardy partisans who braved ninety degree temperatures did not go away disappointed. Lamar harrangued against Ames and the Republicans for three terrifically hot hours, blaming them for creating a color line which he deplored and for the perversion of white-Negro relations through discriminatory reconstruction laws. In addition to

⁸ Jackson Weekly Clarion, May 19, 1875; Memphis Daily Appeal, May 20, 22, 1875.

⁹ Jackson Weekly Clarion, July 21, 28, 1875; New York Tribune, July 26, 1876.

Lamar's speech, Democrats at Falkner's Station heard from state legislator Thomas Spight and W. C. Falkner--the author, speculator, and politician, and enjoyed a giant barbecue and dance. In the midst of this fun the gathering chose its delegates to the state convention to meet August 3 and passed resolutions approving Lamar's actions in Congress.¹⁰

Other meetings throughout the district endorsed Lamar, so that the Democratic-Conservative congressional nominating convention which met on July 22 resembled a testimonial more than a nominating procedure. No opposition developed, and the convention obligingly passed the resolutions Lamar desired opposing the color line and inviting Negro support. The business of the day settled, Lamar treated the 5,000 people in attendance to a grand attack upon the policies and maladministration of the Republican party.¹¹

Lamar then traveled from his own first district to Jackson, where he opened the state convention of August 3 with a speech which has been characterized as the "bugle

¹⁰ Memphis Daily Appeal, June 30, July 20, 1875; Jackson Weekly Clarion, July 21, 28, 1875; Mayes, Lamar, 250-251.

¹¹ Memphis Daily Appeal, July 23, 1875; Jackson Weekly Clarion, July 28, 1875; New York Times, July 23, 1875; Brandon Republican, July 29, 1875.

call" of the Revolution of 1875.¹² Though it perhaps merited such a description, the content of Lamar's message had been well tested on earlier occasions, and he simply said the same popular things over again in Jackson. The appeal was obvious, but irrefutable. One editor enthusiastically declared: "His arraignment of the Radical Southern government was terrible, and his dissection of Ames and his crew in Mississippi was pitiless. . . ."¹³

Lamar's "bugle call" stressed two main points. He denounced Republicans for their Southern policy and at the same time pledged the good will and patriotism of Mississippi whites. This combination he had found irresistible in his congressional speeches and on the stump prior to the convention. Immediate enfranchisement of the Negro, he believed, had been a mistake. Federal interference in Southern affairs was all wrong. By employing the Negro for political purposes, the federal government had drawn the color line and had caused a war between the races. By using this approach he ignored all differences in opinion within the white community and described a simple struggle between Negro and carpetbagger Republicans and native whites. As an alternative to reconstruction Lamar preached reconciliation and good will based on Negro enfranchisement

¹²Rowland, History of Mississippi, II, 195; Jackson Weekly Clarion, Aug. 4, 11, 1875.

¹³Memphis Daily Appeal, Aug. 4, 1875.

and home rule. Mississippi, he declared, fully accepted the constitution and its amendments and opposed the color line which was unrepugnant and immoral.

In all this, Lamar said little new or informative. On one point, however, he clearly revealed the underlying supposition of his political philosophy. The American people of both sections, he told the Jackson audience, wanted peace and reconciliation. Once convinced that the South would protect the Negro in his rights, the public would support local government.¹⁴

Lamar's reasoning permeated the platform adopted that same day by the Democratic-Conservative party. It recognized civil and political equality and espoused public education for all children. Other planks included government economy, tax reductions, and judicial reform. A provision asking federal aid for flood control indicated the distinction made between state economy and national spending. And finally the convention invited men of both races to support these principles.¹⁵

¹⁴Jackson Weekly Mississippi Pilot, Aug. 7, 1875; Jackson Weekly Clarion, Aug. 4, 1875; Memphis Daily Appeal, Aug. 4, 1875. Lamar wrote A. J. Phillips, Aug. 20, 1875, in A. J. Phillips Papers (Houghton Library, Harvard University), "There is no accurate report of my speech delivered at Jackson." Mayes, Lamar, 252, describes the Pilot account as the best available.

¹⁵Jackson Weekly Clarion, Aug. 4, 1875; Memphis Daily Appeal, Aug. 4, 1875.

Lamar's platform was not altogether unopposed. Resistance centered on the anti-color line proposition and on the inclusion of "Conservative" along with "Democratic" as a party designation. Led by W. H. McCardle, editor of the Vicksburg Commercial, and A. J. Frantz, editor of the Brandon Republican, the opposition group generally represented the heavily Negro populated counties. These men feared that the anti-color line principle would prevent their regaining control of their county governments. The vote of 162 to thirty-three on the platform however showed the one-sided nature of this conflict. The difference of opinion was not forgotten, but it was submerged for a time.¹⁶

After the convention three long months of campaigning lay ahead. Tactical direction of the campaign fell to James Z. George of Jackson, and the State Executive Committee which he headed. This leadership proved so effective, and the cause so popular, that the entire state soon seethed with political activity.¹⁷

Lamar was not a member of the Executive Committee and apparently played only a peripheral role in organizing the campaign. He contributed instead as a campaign orator and

¹⁶Memphis Daily Appeal, Aug. 4, 1875; New York Tribune, Aug. 10, 1875; Willie D. Halsell, "The Bourbon Period in Mississippi Politics," in JSH, XI (Nov. 1945), 520-521.

¹⁷Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, 373.

as a rallying point for the rank and file members of the party. Lamar's unique status as Democratic Congressman may have induced many to agree with the suggestion of antebellum Senator A. G. Brown who on May 26, 1875, wrote:

. . . I did not at first fully approve of Lamar's speech over the dead Sumner. But, having witnessed its good effects, I recant. It is now, I think, on every account our policy to make him our recognized leader. We thereby, amongst many other advantages, get the benefit of his conservative statements so often and so boldly expressed. By making him our leader we make these expressions our own, and thus disarm our Northern slanderers.¹⁸

Along with these sentiments Brown provided Ethelbert Barksdale, editor of the Jackson Clarion, with an article booming Lamar. The Clarion printed the piece¹⁹ with a poem which must have been effusive even for that time and place. The verse aimed straight at the patriot's heart:

Press where you see his white plume
shine, amid the ranks of war.

.
Amidst the thickest of the fight will blaze,
the helmet of Lamar.²⁰

Other newspaper coverage echoed Lamar's role as a

¹⁸A. G. Brown to Ethelbert Barksdale, May 26, 1875, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 248. Barksdale was editor of the Clarion and an important leader of the Democratic party.

¹⁹Without Brown's name.

²⁰Jackson Weekly Clarion, June 2, 1875; Mayes, Lamar, 248.

figurehead--a symbol of national status.²¹

Beyond titular leadership and highly effective election oratory, Lamar played a nebulous part in the campaign. The Democratic-Conservative party clearly acted contrary to his spoken principles and practiced outrageous forms of intimidation. Unless he approved the discrepancy then it would appear that he did not control local party organization. On the other hand, Lamar did not disavow local leaders or groups for their violation of the party's platform.²²

This apparent divergence between Lamar and the activities of the Democratic party showed most clearly in varying attitudes toward the color line. The state convention adopted a biracial plank on August 3 by consensus, but this in no way ensured acceptance on the county level. Many whites had predetermined to carry the election even at the cost of intimidating Negroes and white Republicans and

²¹Memphis Daily Appeal, July 20, 27, 1875; Brandon Republican, Aug. 19, 1875; Jackson Weekly Clarion, Aug. 11, 1875. For instance, the press picked and ballyhooed the notion of Lamar as a vice presidential candidate on the abortive National Union party ticket with N. P. Banks. Judging by the J. Z. George correspondence, Lamar was the most sought after speaker of the campaign. See Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, 375n.

²²Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, 182, believes that Lamar and A. G. Brown actually tried to stop the color line movement. On the intimidation of votes, see Wharton, p. 185 ff.

would not be dissuaded.²³ Under these circumstances Governor Adelbert Ames may have struck close to the truth when he described the August 3 convention to his wife:

The true sentiment of the assembly was 'color line' though the platform says nothing about it. The understanding evidently is that each locality can act as it chooses, but the state convention shall put forth a platform for Northern consumption.²⁴

Whatever Lamar's actual feelings may have been toward election tactics in heavily Negro counties, he consistently preached in favor of Negro suffrage. All preconvention speeches emphasized this aspect, and the message remained the same until the November ballot.

Governor Ames, however, charged that the words of Lamar's speeches masked their true intent. He wrote his wife on September 7, 1875, describing as "incendiary" the efforts by Lamar and his friend John Gordon who had come from Georgia to help out. "The Language they use," he continued, "is not of itself violent, but the conclusions they reach are that this election must be carried, even if

²³Jackson Weekly Mississippi Pilot (Republican), Sept. 4, 1875, pounced on this inconsistency and printed the following from the Columbus Democrat: "WHITE MEN SHALL RULE MISSISSIPPI. Col. Lamar may fancy that he and his coadjutors have crushed out the race issue. Vain, silly thought." See also Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, 184-185.

²⁴Adelbert Ames to Blanche Ames, Aug. 4, 1875, in Blanche Butler Ames, comp., Chronicles from the Nineteenth Century (2 vols., n.p., 1957), II, 124. The same point was conceded by a Mississippi historian in McNeily, "War and Reconstruction," in PMHS, Centenary Series, II, 374.

violence be resorted to."²⁵ Ames probably spoke with some justification, but ironically Negroes attended those same speeches by Lamar and Gordon, and the speakers made a definite pitch for their votes.²⁶

Lamar's true attitude toward Negro voting in 1875 fell somewhere between the public image and the contradictory tactics many Democrats employed. Perhaps he spoke as a Democrat and as an equalitarian as he claimed, but his immediate political goal was an end to federal power in Mississippi. Personally Lamar preferred to enlist Negroes in the Democratic party as a means of defeating the Republicans. But at the same time he failed to oppose white line methods, and lent his energy and reputation to obscuring the existence of political intimidation.²⁷

Desire for Democratic government and Negro suffrage

²⁵Adelbert Ames to Blanche Ames, Sept. 7, 1875, in Ames, comp., Chronicles from the Nineteenth Century, II, 166.

²⁶New York Times, Sept. 8, 1875; Memphis Daily Appeal Sept. 7, 1875. Lamar, however, defended himself in Congress on July 25, 1876, against what he considered false charges in a Washington paper that he had favored the white line in speeches at Aberdeen and Scooba, Mississippi, during the campaign. See Congressional Record, 44 Cong., 1 Sess., 4878-4879 (July 25, 1876); and New York Tribune, July 26, 1876. But according to Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, 186, a Democratic badge in Lafayette County gave the Negro bearer protection from physical violence and the right to "boss" other Negroes.

²⁷The Republican party charged Lamar with white line speeches, as for example: "Even Col. Lamar, that sweetest singer in Bourbonic Israel, grows wild and desperate in his latest harangues." See Jackson Daily Mississippi Pilot, Oct. 27, 1875. See also ibid., July 27, Oct. 26, 1875; and Jackson Weekly Mississippi Pilot, July 31, 1875.

became further confused in Lamar's mind because a thwarted sense of moral responsibility impinged upon practical political matters. He acted with the conviction that the politically ignorant Negro must somehow be accommodated to the political system.²⁸ Furthermore, the color line concept favored by men like McCardle offended Lamar's fundamental commitment to representative democracy. As he told the August 3 convention:

It is not right. It is not Republican. One of the principles of Democratic government is that all parts of the body politic shall contribute to its support and control. Any race organization which seeks to assert the exclusive management of a country may have good government, but cannot have liberty. It is tyranny unmixed, and is fraught with disaster.²⁹

Four days after making that speech Lamar wrote Charles Nordhoff, editor of the New York Herald, explaining the party's platform and asking his support. Regarding the color line movement, Lamar wrote: "Whatever you may have heard or believe, this principle (the sense of moral rectitude) is as strong in the soul of our people as in any on earth."³⁰

Whatever may be said of the "moral rectitude" of

²⁸Lamar to Charles Reemelin, Aug. 25, 1875, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 258-259.

²⁹Jackson Weekly Mississippi Pilot, Aug. 7, 1875.

³⁰Lamar to Charles Nordhoff, Aug. 8, 1875, in Charles Nordhoff Papers (Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts). Charles Nordhoff, The Cotton States in the Spring and Summer of 1875 (New York, 1876), criticized Republican reconstruction.

white Mississippians, they succeeded in combining white line methods with high sounding principles. Lamar himself campaigned actively with other party orators who carried the message throughout the state.³¹ By election time the contest was over; the vote simply confirmed Democratic achievements over a period of months. Very little fraud occurred at the polls on November 3; and little was necessary. The Revolution of 1875 ended quietly.³²

The Democratic majority of almost 31,000³³ sufficed to elect a state treasurer (the only state office involved in the election), a majority of the state legislature, a majority of county officials, and four of six congressmen. Lamar ran without opposition from a Republican candidate, and his district returned all of its twelve counties for the Democratic party.³⁴ A Republican governor, lieutenant governor, and several lesser Republican officials remained in office, but their power was spent.

When the Democratic legislature met in December, Lamar had already left for Washington. In his absence state leaders demanded the immediate impeachment of Ames, Negro

³¹Jackson Weekly Clarion, Sept. 8, 29, Oct. 6, 20, 27, 1875; Brandon Republican, Sept. 2, 9, 1875.

³²Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, 392; Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, 195-197.

³³Compared to a Republican majority of 20,467 in 1873.

³⁴Election figures furnished by Political Research Consortium.

Lieutenant Governor A. K. Davis, and Negro Superintendent of Education, T. W. Cardoza. Former Governor Alcorn's term in the Senate would expire in 1877, and the new legislature would provide for his successor as well.

Lamar played no known part in the proceedings against Davis and Cordoza, though presumably he had no objections. Ames's impeachment, however, carried dangerous political overtones. Lamar realized that if Ames were removed without absolutely irrefutable evidence, the Democratic victory would be vulnerable to federal action.³⁵ In a letter chiefly remarkable for its uncharacteristic cynicism, he conveyed his strong determination to build a strong case to E. D. Clark:

I do not know but that it may subserve a useful purpose to employ Joshua Morris. It is not necessary for me to state what my feelings towards that person are; but if he can be made useful by getting, through his peculiar capacity for finding carrion, information that is inaccessible to our people, such a man, should not be thrown away.³⁶

Ames's fate might also affect the choice of Alcorn's successor in the Senate. As leader of the Mississippi Democratic party, Lamar of course possessed a large stake in the matter. Other prominent candidates included James George and Robert Lowry, both leaders in the Revolution of

³⁵Lamar to E. C. Walthall, Feb. 23, 1876, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 263.

³⁶Lamar to E. D. Clark, n.d., Lamar Papers. Joshua Morris, a Republican, served as Mississippi's attorney general.

1875, were mentioned, but these men withdrew their names from consideration, and the legislature elected Lamar to the seat without opposition.³⁷

Ominously for Lamar and the Revolution, Ames declared the Mississippi legislative body illegal, and Republican members declined to participate in the election of a senator on grounds that an irregular body could not so act.³⁸

O. P. Morton had meanwhile introduced a resolution in the United States Senate calling for an investigation of the Mississippi election on grounds of alleged fraud and because of the legislature's responsibility to elect a United States Senator.³⁹ More trouble developed when Ames refused

³⁷Both the Jackson Clarion and the Memphis Daily Appeal supported Lamar for the Senate. The latter showed a great deal more enthusiasm for the project, printing resolutions from smaller papers and press excerpts from all over the country praising Lamar. See Jackson Weekly Clarion, Dec. 1, 1875, Jan. 12, 19, 1876; Jackson Daily Clarion, Jan. 7, 1876; and Memphis Daily Appeal, Dec. 11, 25, 1875, Jan. 7, 19, 1876.

³⁸Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, 403; J. S. McNeily, "Climax and Collapse of Reconstruction in Mississippi, 1874-1896," in PMHS, XII (1912), 436.

³⁹Congressional Record, 44 Cong., 1 Sess., 220 (Dec. 15, 1875). The Morton resolution resulted in the Boutwell Committee investigation. The Boutwell report did not touch Lamar with the exception of the Oxford courthouse affair of 1871, when he struck a federal marshal. The resolution may have been put forth in Ames's behalf. Mrs. Ben F. Butler wrote to her daughter, Blanche Ames: "There is a chance that Morton's resolution in the Senate may stop further action against Gen. Ames, if Lamar has any fear about getting into the Senate." See Ames, comp., Chronicles from the Nineteenth Century, II, 264.

to certify Lamar's election while his impeachment charges were pending.⁴⁰ To add to these complications, Ames's father-in-law, Ben Butler, assumed responsibility for managing his case in Washington.

Ironically, the radical Butler and the conservative Lamar played instrumental roles in a compromise which led to Ames's departure from Mississippi. Soon after Lamar learned that his election had not been certified, a spokesman for Ben Butler approached him on the impeachment issue. In conversations with J. B. Beck and Jeremiah Black, Northern Democrats in touch with Butler, Lamar learned that Ames would be willing to resign if the legislature dropped its impeachment proceedings, but that otherwise he would make a strong defense. As a part of the proposed compromise they also suggested that Butler might kill the congressional investigation of election fraud in Mississippi. Beck and Black left Lamar believing that he opposed Ames's impeachment and would undertake to stop the proceedings. Butler himself believed Lamar was sincere.⁴¹

⁴⁰Undated transcript of an interview between state Senators Allen and Reynolds and Governor Ames, Lamar-Mayes Papers; Reuben O. Reynolds to Lamar, Feb. 16, 1876, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 313-314.

⁴¹Lamar to E. C. Walthall, Feb. 23, 1876, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 263-264; Ben Butler to Adelbert Ames, Feb. 25, 1876, in Ames, comp., Chronicles from the Nineteenth Century, II, 304-305.

Lamar seems to have decided in favor of the compromise primarily to avoid further controversy and damaging investigation by a Republican congressional committee. Ames's resignation along with the impeachment of Lieutenant Governor Davis, against whom charges of malfeasance were easily provable, would permit installation of the Democratic speaker of the Mississippi House as acting governor. Lamar's election to the Senate, if he was really worried about it, could be certified then by the acting governor. Therefore nothing whatsoever could be gained by forcing the issue with Ames.⁴²

After Ames's resignation on March 28, 1876, John M. Stone became Mississippi's acting governor and Lamar's election was certified. Lamar immediately wrote Stone outlining the most vital issues facing a Democratic

⁴²Lamar to E. C. Walthall, Feb. 23, 1876, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 263-264; Garner, Reconstruction in Mississippi, 404. Ames's distrust of Lamar in this matter and his bitterness is indicated by his letter to Ben Butler just two weeks before he resigned: "I am free to confess I have no faith in Lamar's political integrity. . . . My opinion of the man is--I know him well--that he deceives. . . ." and "He is one thing here and quite another in Washington." See Adelbert Ames to Ben Butler, March 14, 1876, quoted in Halsell, "Note on a Phase of L. Q. C. Lamar's Career," in JMH, IX, 21. Ames's wife wrote to her mother on March 14, 1876: "The warmest friends of Lamar here are the most violent for impeachment--and Mr. Lamar is a double dealer on whom no dependence can be placed, as it is well known that in all matters political he does not hesitate to be false. . . .

 If he really wishes to be of service, let him call off the dogs--which he can easily do. . . ." See Ames, comp., Chronicles from the Nineteenth Century, II, 344.

administration. First, he urged the appointment of a judiciary consisting of the state's most distinguished lawyers.⁴³ Second, Lamar counseled sale of the executive mansion as "The people will hail it as a return to Republican economy & simplicity of living." And third, the governor "ought not to countenance any funding measures that even squint toward Repudiation." Stone at once replied to Lamar agreeing with all his suggestions and requesting a written statement supporting sale of the mansion.⁴⁴

The nature and the early date of this exchange suggested that Lamar might play an active role in the state's government. Surprisingly, however, Lamar did not pursue the supervision of Mississippi's return to austere simplicity. National problems in the House of Representatives and then in the Senate, claimed his attention to the neglect of state affairs. Lamar resumed his place as spokesman and diplomat for the South.

⁴³On March 29, 1876, Lamar had written Stone urging the appointment of Edward Walthall to a Circuit Judgeship. See Lamar to John M. Stone, March 29, 1876, in Stone Papers.

⁴⁴Lamar to Governor Stone, March 31, 1876, in Governor's Papers: John M. Stone, Series E (MDAH); John M. Stone to Lamar, April 1, 1876, in Lamar-Mayes Papers.

CHAPTER XI

REVOLUTION OF 1876 AND THE NEW DEPARTURE

Democrats looked toward the national election of 1876 with understandable optimism. Weakened by the schism of 1872, Republicans had lost control of the House of Representatives. The scandals of Grant's second administration had added to the dishonor of the first. The Democrats on the other hand were no longer encumbered by the unfortunate Greeley. And Samuel J. Tilden's reputation as reform governor of New York took on special importance. His professed good will toward the South also assumed practical significance since the "redeemed" states would wield power in the electoral college. Lamar had long looked and worked toward such a change in the circumstances of national politics.

Encouraged by these propitious circumstances, Mississippi's recently enthroned Democrats hoped to carry their state for the first time in a presidential election since the Civil War.¹ And if the state should go for Tilden, Mississippians would at the same time complete their

¹J. Z. George, Chairman State Executive Committee, to Lamar, Sept. 11, 1876, in Lamar-Mayes Papers.

own revolution. Congressional elections were to be held in the state again in 1876, and the chances of defeating the remaining two Republican congressmen appeared good.

Though Lamar's fragile health failed him during the spring and summer, he recovered sufficiently to campaign extensively. Judging from the returns, he might have rested more easily. The election sent a solid Democratic delegation to the national House of Representatives and handed Tilden a majority of almost 50,000. No gubernatorial election would be held until 1877, but Democrats won the other executive positions; and the Democratic state legislature reflected the overwhelming rout of the Republicans.²

National election results on the other hand confounded both Democrats and Republicans. When after the initial confusion and claims of victory by both sides it became clear that disputed returns in Louisiana, South Carolina and Florida would decide the presidency, both parties sent representatives South from Washington to protect

²Abram S. Hewitt to Lamar, Oct. 20, 1876, in Lamar-Mayes Papers; Memphis Daily Appeal, March 12, April 2, 1876; Jackson Weekly Clarion, Aug. 23, 1876. For Lamar's speaking engagements see: James George to Lamar, Oct. 19, 1876, in Lamar-Mayes Papers; Memphis Daily Appeal, Sept. 9, 23, Oct. 13, 27, 1876; and Jackson Weekly Clarion, Nov. 1, 5, 1876. Election figures furnished by Political Research Consortium.

their interests.³ As Congress would not convene to count the electoral votes until December 4, the journey of the "visiting statesmen" took on great importance. During the intervening weeks both Democratic and Republican parties had their work to do.

Lamar traveled with other Democratic watchdogs to New Orleans and they found much there to arouse their suspicion. Lamar felt that the Louisiana situation was dangerous and joined Democrats Randall, Watterson, and Ottendorfer in advising Tilden that he should consult directly with Hayes.⁴ These men believed that a conspiracy to deprive Tilden of Louisiana's votes existed already, and that the best hope of thwarting that plan lay in appealing to Hayes's honor for a just solution rather than depending upon Louisiana Republicans for a true count. Tilden,

³An electoral vote from Oregon, disputed on technical grounds, is not germane to this aspect of the story.

⁴Samuel Randall, L. Q. C. Lamar, Henry Watterson, Oswald Ottendorfer to S. G. Tilden, Nov. 14, 1876, in "Testimony before the Select Committee on Alleged Frauds in the Presidential Election of 1876, in relation to Cipher Telegraphic Dispatches," House Miscellaneous Documents, 45 Cong., 3 Sess., Doc. 31, p. 336.

however, disregarded the suggestion.⁵

While Tilden at his Grammercy Park estate appeared unwilling to take action, the political situation became more and more precarious. While en route to Washington for the congressional session which would decide the presidency, Lamar revealed his misgivings to W. H. Roberts of the New Orleans Times, who was traveling on the same train. Roberts' immediate destination was Cincinnati; and from there he planned to go on to Columbus, Ohio, for an interview with Governor Hayes. He undoubtedly listened willingly to Lamar's impressions. Both Roberts and Lamar stopped off in Cincinnati to visit with another interested party, Murat Halstead of the Cincinnati Commercial. As they both knew, Halstead was on very friendly terms with Hayes and actively promoting his succession to the presidency.⁶

⁵Lamar to E. C. Walthall, n.d., quoted in McNeilly, "War and Reconstruction," in PMHS, Centenary Series, II, 487; Joseph Frazier Wall, Henry Watterson: Reconstructed Rebel (New York, 1956), 141-142. Hayes's intimate, Guy Bryan, also suggested to Hayes that he meet with Tilden. See Harry Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes and His America (Indianapolis, 1954), 337. In an interview given the New Orleans Times, Lamar mentioned the possibility of having the vote counted by honorable men of both parties. He stressed, however, his belief that the Democrats carried Louisiana by 7,000 votes. See Memphis Daily Appeal, Nov. 15, 16, 17, 1876, citing the Times on Lamar's interview; and his telegram to Walthall, quoted in McNeilly.

⁶Testimony of W. H. Roberts, in "Report of the Investigation of the Presidential Election of 1876," House Miscellaneous Documents, 45 Cong., 3 Sess., Doc. 31, p. 881.

Lamar declined the suggestion by the two newspaper men that he go on to Columbus,⁷ but still he talked freely enough so that they could relate his general position to Hayes. The gist of Lamar's view, as they reported it, maintained that the South wanted no civil disruption and would "not oppose an administration which will favor an honest administration and honest officers in the South."⁸

Lamar's indirect message does not seem to have constituted an offer to support Hayes's election. Despite immediate newspaper allegations and charges by a congressional investigating committee to the contrary, neither Hayes nor Lamar understood that a bargain had been proposed and struck.⁹ Hayes gave no hint in his correspondence or his diary to support such a conclusion. And Lamar even refused to take seriously the assurances that W. H. Roberts conveyed from Hayes promising a lenient policy toward the South. A sympathetic Southern policy, Lamar thought, would be altogether impolitic and therefore impossible for Hayes.

⁷Testimony of W. H. Roberts, in "Report of the Investigation of the Presidential Election of 1876," House Miscellaneous Documents, 45 Cong., 3 Sess., Doc. 31, p. 881; Murat Halstead to Lamar, Dec. 20, 1876, in Lamar-Mayes Papers.

⁸T. Harry Williams, ed., Hayes: The Diary of a President, 1875-1881 (New York, 1964), 52.

⁹The rumor of collusion cropped up almost immediately and was persistent. Memphis Daily Appeal, Dec. 9, 1876, cited the New York Herald on this point, and raised the subject again on Jan. 9, 1877. Jackson Weekly Clarion, Jan. 10, 1877, carried the story.

Though their assessment of Hayes's remarks varied somewhat, both Roberts and Lamar seemed interested only in knowing Hayes's intentions if he became president, and to assure him that if he did become president, he would not be opposed by the South so long as he treated the section justly. Nothing more happened at the time.¹⁰

From Cincinnati Lamar traveled into the crisis atmosphere which hung over Washington in December 1876. Party spirit bred tension and divided the capital into two political war camps. Republicans positively maintained that the electoral vote in the South rightfully belonged to Hayes. Democrats were just as convinced that Tilden had been elected and that the Republicans would refuse to honor the popular mandate. The bitter division even tore down party solidarity. Democrats disputed among themselves as to the party's proper course if Republicans should persist in their effort to secure the presidency. Generally the Northern wing of the Democratic party opposed compromise, and some members of it threatened civil war as a last alternative to submission. Southern members, chastened by

¹⁰Testimony of W. H. Roberts, in "Report of the Investigation of the Presidential Election of 1876," House Miscellaneous Documents, 45 Cong., 3 Sess., Doc. 31, pp. 881-882; Williams, ed., Hayes: The Diary of a President, 52-53; Murat Halstead to Rutherford B. Hayes, Dec. 10, 1876, in Rutherford B. Hayes Papers (Hayes Memorial Library, Fremont, Ohio); E. A. Angier to Hayes, Dec. 16, 1876, ibid.

defeat in war, counseled a more moderate course.¹¹

The real ability of Democratic advocates of resistance to seriously threaten civil war against Republican efforts to install Hayes cannot be measured. But more to the point: many men, including Lamar, believed that danger of war did exist, and this conviction weighed heavily with them during those days of decision.¹²

Believing Tilden elected, but chary of violence, Lamar sought some safe solution to the controversy. On December 10, 1876, he claimed that the Constitution provided an answer. It required agreement of the two Houses of Congress upon the election of a president under the electoral college system. The vice president, who presided over the joint session, lacked authority to accept or reject disputed votes upon his own volition. He must leave the choice to the two Houses, and if they should fail to agree to the election of a candidate then:

It devolves upon each house to immediately proceed in their respective duties--one to elect the President and the other the Vice President. Let the constitution be maintained inviolate, and there need

¹¹Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, 32-33.

¹²Lamar to Burton N. Harrison, March 8, 1877, in Mrs. Burton Harrison's Scrap Book, 1859-1909, Harrison Papers; Lamar speech of n.d., 1879, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 297-299. D. D. [?] to Capt. Alfred E. Lee, Dec. 25, 1876, in Hayes Papers, credited Lamar with strong belief in Tilden's election and with fear of trouble if Tilden was not inaugurated.

be no disorganizing collisions and no necessity for resorting to force.¹³

Although Lamar's interpretation appealed to the Democratic majority in the House, it offered but small comfort to the Republican Senate to which would fall the thankless duty of choosing a vice president.

Lamar realized, of course, that his constitutional solution was not acceptable. As member of a special advisory committee appointed by the House Democratic caucus and then as chairman of a joint House-Senate committee formed on December 11, he remained in close touch with the developing views of the controversy. From that vantage point he saw that the impasse would not be resolved through any such simplistic application of established law as he had suggested.¹⁴

The committee's already numerous difficulties were further exacerbated by Tilden's continued failure to give direction to his supporters. During the Christmas holidays, which began on December 19, Lamar went with Senator Thomas Bayard to visit Tilden. The meeting did nothing to resolve the dilemma. Tilden presented no plan of action and gave no indication of his intentions. Lamar must have

¹³Interview of Dec. 10, 1876, quoted in McNeilly, "War and Reconstruction," in PMHS, Centenary Series, II, 492. The same quote is in Memphis Daily Appeal, Jan. 6, 1877.

¹⁴Allan Nevins, Abram S. Hewitt, with Some Account of Peter Cooper (New York, 1935), 351.

returned deeply shaken in his hope for a peaceful Democratic inauguration. Without leadership from the party's candidate the likelihood of a catastrophic debacle loomed. In light of Tilden's earlier rejection of the "visiting statesmen's" advice to meet with Hayes, this interview offered anything but reassurance.¹⁵

Since the holidays yielded no master-plan from Tilden, and no intimation of compromise came from Hayes's people, the Democrats returned to Congress somewhat unsettled in disposition. The inclination toward violent resistance among Northern Democrats grew apace during the first two weeks in January. And this belligerence was abetted by rumblings from Roscoe Conkling's anti-Hayes clique, which threatened to desert the Republican candidate.¹⁶ Men of good will sought a middle way--a means of arbitration which would satisfy partisans and at the same time give a cloak of legality to a president whose claim to office could at best be tenuous.

¹⁵Edward Spencer, Public Life and Services of Thomas F. Bayard (New York, 1880), 261, describes the visit. This account is accepted by Nevins, Abram S. Hewitt, 335; and Charles C. Tansill, The Congressional Career of Thomas Francis Bayard, 1869-1885 (Washington, 1946), 156-157. L. C. Weir to Rutherford B. Hayes, Feb. 7, 1877, in Hayes Papers, asserted that Tilden provided Lamar and Bayard with an actual plan of war to insure his inauguration. Weir gave Halstead as his source. Tansill, p. 150, discounts this version of the conference.

¹⁶Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, 110.

As a member of the Democratic advisory committee and as a moderate seeking a peaceful solution to the great question, Lamar was privy to many of the talks which finally led to a solution of the election impasse.¹⁷ Since the Republican Senate and Democratic House of Representatives could never be expected to agree of themselves, the proponents of compromise decided that an Electoral Commission should be named with membership from both legislative bodies and the Supreme Court as well. Presumably such a group would have some claim to objectivity. The understanding that Justice David Davis, a professed Independent, would round out the Supreme Court delegation provided some basis for this pretension.

The Electoral Commission bill came to a vote in the House on January 26, 1877. Lamar rose and justified the legislation in a speech chiefly notable for its appeal to moderation. He defended the measure's constitutionality with reasoned argument and then proceeded to show its applicability to the crisis at hand. By establishing a commission, he said, a "thoroughly considered and impartial opinion" would be guaranteed and the country secured against the existing defective system of presidential election. Lamar then noted that resistance had been widely discussed as an alternative. By contrast the bipartisan

¹⁷Nevins, Abram S. Hewitt, 351.

commission would allow a decision without "either fraud or force." And the defeated party would be spared the onus of humiliation.

In presenting the machinery for an orderly presidential succession Lamar assumed his familiar peacemaking posture. The proposed Electoral Commission bill would, he explained, be a "declaration" that future sectional issues would be resolved without military force. This application of Lamar's tried theme also suggested that the new president should to an extent consider himself free and above party obligation. Though left unsaid, the implication that a non-sectional policy would be the price of election may have been intended.¹⁸

The bill became law, and a few days later Lamar nominated five members to represent the House of Representatives.¹⁹ Once the Commission's membership was chosen little remained except to wait.

Though Lamar in his speech perhaps promised more than the Commission bill explicitly provided, he explained his position completely--or almost completely. In a letter of explanation to his friend and former protege, Burton N. Harrison, Lamar repeated the argument given in the debate

¹⁸Congressional Record, 44 Cong., 2 Sess., 997-999 (Jan. 26, 1877).

¹⁹House Journal, 44 Cong., 2 Sess., 309, 331 (Jan. 26, 1877).

of January 26. But he added a clinching support to his reasoning: "When I got to Washington I found that Tilden was defeated--his inauguration an impossibility."²⁰

Lamar's realistic appreciation of Tilden's situation combined with an apparently sincere desire to promote political stability and sectional quiet. And he felt he had nothing to lose. Probably the same logic moved his Democratic colleagues who voted 186 for the bill and only eighteen against it. In the South the Electoral Commission proved even more popular than these figures showed; the section's representatives indubitably wanted a peaceful inauguration. More confident of their man, the Republicans voted eighty-five against and fifty-two for passage. They believed with Hayes that the plan was unnecessary to their victory.²¹

Lamar's course did not go well with those who considered Tilden's inauguration the price for continued loyalty to the Union. In Mississippi a goodly number of prominent Democrats fresh from the fires of the 1875 Revolution opposed him. Influential editors, including

²⁰Lamar to Burton N. Harrison, March 8, 1877, in Mrs. Burton Harrison's Scrap Book, 1859-1909, Harrison Papers. Apparently Harrison was convinced and wrote his sister that Lamar acted patriotically and wise. See Harrison, ed., Aris Souis Focisque, 214.

²¹Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, 151-152; Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes, 362-363; House Journal, 44 Cong., 2 Sess., 309 (Jan. 26, 1877).

Ethelbert Barksdale of Jackson and W. H. McCardle of Vicksburg, belonged to the dissidents. Barksdale, editor of the Clarion, and usually a Lamar supporter, voiced the opinion of this faction most strongly. The resulting bitter estrangement made political enemies of the two men for years to come.²² One Washington D. C. Democratic newspaper, Montgomery Blair's Union, went further than its Mississippi counterparts and directly charged Lamar with collusion: his support of Hayes to be rewarded by political preferment and by sympathetic consideration of his favorite legislation. These charges did not abate as the election crisis developed.²³

Lamar personally believed that the Northern press attacked him because of his continued support of Tom Scott's Texas Pacific Railroad.²⁴ This assumption was not without basis. On January 24, during the debate on the Commission bill, Lamar led and Northern Democrats opposed an effort to report legislation favorable to the railroad.

²²Mayes, Lamar, 301-302; William H. McCardle to Jefferson Davis, Feb. 27, 1877, in Rowland, ed., Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist, VII, 525.

²³Jackson Weekly Clarion, Jan. 10, 1877, quoted the St. Louis Republican to the effect that Lamar first answered Montgomery Blair's charge of collusion in the Washington Union, Jan. 5, 1877, with a belligerent note amounting to a personal challenge, but that he was dissuaded from sending it by friends. Blair's paper retracted on January 6. See also Mayes, Lamar, 303.

²⁴Jackson Weekly Clarion, Jan. 10, 1877.

As in the case of the Election Commission bill, he pled for passage in the name of sectional reconciliation, but the Northern wing of his party helped in defeating the effort. Since the Hayes Republicans on the other hand befriended Lamar's Texas Pacific bill, enemies of both the railroad subsidy and the election compromise, quite frequently the same people, quickly drew adverse conclusions. This suspicion was aggravated later when Lamar was linked by news reports and gossip to the so-called "Scott Plan" for making Hayes's inauguration conditional upon Republican support for the Texas Pacific.²⁵

Stories of such a plan began as early as mid-January, when Hayes's supporters had sought common cause with the Texas Pacific Railroad lobby which was at the time becalmed in the House. Together they formulated a promising arrangement--the "Scott Plan"--to lure Southerners away from their party's Northern wing. The basic understanding was that Scott's economic influence in the South would be used to insure Hayes's inauguration, and that in return Hayes would look with a sympathetic attitude toward the Texas Pacific.

In addition to the "Scott Plan" there evolved a political understanding involving a number of Southerners and Hayes Republicans which had potentially far greater

²⁵Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, 66-67, 119, 127-136.

importance. In brief, it provided that the Southerners would see the electoral count through, would aid Republicans in organizing the House of Representatives, and would assist Hayes in reestablishing a Republican party based on white conservative support in the South. In return Hayes's supporters promised to end reconstruction, restore home rule, appoint a Southerner to the Cabinet, and cooperate with Southern conservatives in the distribution of federal patronage. This arrangement overlapped and complemented the "Scott Plan," and together they greatly improved Hayes's prospects in the House. Doubtlessly many Southern leaders either agreed to such an arrangement in full or in part. Or if they were not party to an actual understanding, they at least had wind of Hayes's lenient attitude toward the South.²⁶

The bargain was undoubtedly an attractive one. Lamar had built his postwar career around "redemption" of the South, and such an arrangement placed these objectives within his grasp. He had also consistently favored internal improvements and federal subsidies for the South; and he had specifically supported the Texas Pacific Railroad. The Hayes people felt, and with good reason, that Lamar

²⁶Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, 174-175.

should be willing to cooperate.²⁷ And no wonder that speculators getting wind of the arrangements should assume Lamar a participant.

Early in February these two vital issues--the election and the Texas Pacific--came up for House consideration. As the Electoral Commission began to count the controversial votes, efforts at passing the Texas Pacific Railroad bill were redoubled. Then on February 10 the Commission announced its decision on the disputed Florida returns. On a strict party division--eight to seven--the Hayes electoral votes were approved.²⁸ Tilden's defeat in the remaining states could hardly be doubted. The shock to those who believed Tilden elected must have been great, and later that same day Lamar joined a Democratic party move to recess the House.²⁹ When the House reconvened on February 12, 1877, Lamar voted against the acceptance of Florida's vote for Hayes despite the Commission's decision. The Democrats carried their defiant gesture 168 to 103. On February 14 he again supported a resolution claiming that the Tilden-Hendricks electors represented the legally chosen ticket in

²⁷E.g., Murat Halstead to Rutherford B. Hayes, Dec. 21, 1876, in Hayes Papers; James M. Comly to Hayes, Jan. 8, 1877, ibid.

²⁸Justice Davis who presumably was politically independent, had meantime been elected to the Senate and so declared himself ineligible for the Commission.

²⁹House Journal, 44 Cong., 2 Sess., 419 (Feb. 10, 1877); Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, 164-165.

Florida and must be counted in opposition to the Commission's ruling.³⁰ Having helped create the Commission, Lamar seemed unwilling to accept a decision opposing his own party.

Lamar's actions during the crucial days which followed were not altogether consistent nor always decisive. On February 17, when the Electoral Commission announced its readiness to report on the Louisiana vote, Lamar moved to recess until the nineteenth. The Democrats carried the motion and the count was delayed.³¹ On the evening of the seventeenth the Democrats caucused. One group whose members were almost exclusively from the North and West proposed a filibuster to prevent further congressional action and Hayes's victory. Southerners, including Lamar, voted to complete the count, and they carried the caucus. On the nineteenth after the House reconvened and debated all day, the Democratic caucus met again that evening to consider strategy. The same obstructionism was proposed, and again Lamar and the Southerners voted against a filibuster. Once more they got their way.³²

Though the Southern position during the caucuses played an important role in frustrating the filibuster

³⁰House Journal, 44 Cong., 2 Sess., 423 (Feb. 12, 1877); ibid., 444 (Feb. 14, 1877).

³¹Ibid., 465-467 (Feb. 17, 1877).

³²Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, 177-180.

plan, Lamar's attitude did not become immediately clear. He wrote Thomas Bayard of a revolt reported to be brewing among Senate Republicans who opposed Hayes's policies.³³ Perhaps Lamar saw in the developing Republican opposition to the Electoral Commission an opportunity to guarantee withdrawal of troops from the Southern states.

Whatever his plans, they still did not include effective obstruction of the vote count. On February 20 he supported a House resolution against counting the Hayes ballots from Louisiana. But more importantly, he refused to accommodate a filibustering move to recess the House and to postpone completion of the Louisiana count.³⁴ The second vote was more decisive and clearly indicated that Lamar stood by the caucus decision not to filibuster.

Lamar's somewhat ambiguous course on February 20 also included a highly suggestive letter to his friend John E. Ellis, Congressman from Louisiana. Lamar advised Ellis to meet with Stanley Matthews, Hayes's brother-in-law, and to ask for Hayes's assurance that if inaugurated he would not sustain the Republican government in Louisiana.

The Ellis letter later appeared in newsprint and was cited in a congressional investigation as evidence of

³³Lamar to Thomas F. Bayard, Feb. 19, 1877, in Thomas F. Bayard Papers (Manuscript Division, Library of Congress).

³⁴House Journal, 44 Cong., 2 Sess., 488, 492 (Feb. 20, 1877).

collusion involving Lamar, Ellis, and Hayes. The note was of especial interest in a broader context, however, because it seemed to suggest that Louisiana and other Republican Southern states had not at that time received binding assurances regarding the federal government's future policy. In light of this letter it would appear that either Lamar was not a party to a bargain with the Republicans as was sometimes charged by the press, or he lacked confidence in their assurances. Lamar retained some of the early skepticism for Hayes's intentions, which he had confided to W. H. Roberts of the New Orleans Times. His position had changed little since his arrival in Washington in December. He still admitted the probability of Hayes's inauguration but wished for definite assurances regarding the South. Unless Lamar misrepresented the situation to Ellis, he was not a party to any previous deal.

In his letter to Ellis, Lamar stated that a spokesman had been authorized by Matthews to say that Hayes would not support the Republican government in Louisiana. Lamar's information indicated that Hayes was seeking a way to drop the Republican state regime. Lamar went on:

Now, Ellis, this is the first thing I have ever heard as coming from Hayes worth acting upon by any Southern man. We do not want the offices, but we do want to get our states and our people free from carpet bag government. Ought you not, if an available opportunity offers, to spring forward at once and see if you can't free your state? I think you should at once see Mr. Stanley Matthews and ask him if Hayes will give you

some assurance that he will not maintain Packard in his domination of our people.³⁵

Ellis did not immediately act upon Lamar's advice. Meanwhile, an article in the Columbus (Ohio) State Journal attacked Louisiana whites for their intimidation of Negroes, causing a frightened reaction among Southern Democrats, who assumed that Hayes had approved the piece.³⁶ Fearful that Hayes had decided to support the Louisiana Republican movement, Lamar and the Southerners voted with the Northern wing of their party to force a recess on February 23. In the caucus which followed Lamar reversed his previous position and stood by the filibusterers in favor of an additional recess on February 24. On that day the filibuster failed temporarily despite the fact that Lamar and forty-one other Southerners voted to recess, but a dangerous shift of Southern votes had started, and Lamar was for the moment a part of it. With the Southern rebellion still ringing, the House recessed for the weekend to reconvene on February 26.³⁷

³⁵Lamar to John E. Ellis, Feb. 20, 1877, in "Report of the Investigation of the Presidential Election of 1876," House Miscellaneous Documents, 45 Cong., 3 Sess., Doc. 31, pp. 896-897, 973-974.

³⁶Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, 186. Actually James Comly, the editor, was ill and knew nothing about the article.

³⁷House Journal, 44 Cong., 2 Sess., 521 (Feb. 23, 1877); ibid., 530, 539 (Feb. 24, 1877); Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, 190.

By the twenty-sixth Lamar had changed his attitude somewhat. This reflected the results of several conferences earlier that day which involved prominent Louisianians and Republican leaders. While the conferees were reaffirming assurances that Hayes would treat Southern states generously, Lamar broke with the filibusterers and voted against a recess which would have again delayed the count. His shift actually preceded a final meeting on the night of the twenty-sixth at the Wormley House, but followed an assurance by President Grant to the Louisiana group that the Louisiana Republican state government would not be protected.³⁸ The filibusterers, led by Louisianians, continued the delay until they could clarify certain points with the Republican congressional leaders and Grant, including an agreement that troops would be withdrawn as soon as the count was completed. In the two days following while these conversations continued, Lamar consistently voted to end the filibuster until on March 2, 1877, the Louisianians admitted their satisfaction, and the count continued to

³⁸There is no way to determine absolutely whether the developments of the twenty-sixth were decisive, or whether Lamar would have reverted anyway to his earlier position against the filibuster. Cate, Lamar, 265-303, passim, especially p. 280, maintains that Lamar supported the Electoral Commission in good faith and opposed the forceful installation of Tilden although believing him chosen by the people. Cate believes that Lamar sought to salvage something for the South from Tilden's loss and therefore instigated and participated directly in the meetings culminating in the Wormley House Conference on February 26, 1877.

its fateful conclusion.³⁹

Presumably the resolution of the great crisis relieved Lamar and most Americans. In the end, Southerners willing to see Hayes elected joined with a majority of Northern and border state Democrats who also believed a peaceful inauguration to be essential to the nation's well-being. Chaos had been avoided; the traditional system of election by the electoral college had been preserved intact--even if somewhat battered. As a spokesman for the Southern section, Lamar had additional cause for pleasure. The region's most cherished objectives had been promised and a government not unfriendly to the South installed. These triumphs eased the loss of the presidency.⁴⁰

Despite the compelling logic of peace which led Southern moderates to accept Hayes, Lamar had at times behaved ambivalently. He curiously shifted from

³⁹Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, 194-196; House Journal, 44 Cong., 2 Sess., 547 (Feb. 26, 1877); ibid., 574 (Feb. 28, 1877); ibid., 589, 592-595 (March 1, 1877); ibid., 613 (March 2, 1877).

⁴⁰Cf. Wall, Henry Watterson, 161-163, who suggests that Southerners had no special motives in supporting a peaceful nomination. Wall, while defending the patriotism of Southerners, believes that the Texas Pacific issue influenced Lamar. Justice Miller of the Supreme Court in an unaddressed letter, March 4, 1877, offered the opinion that Lamar and the Southern leaders deserved most of the credit for the peaceful resolution of the election crisis. Miller later believed that the government would have been destroyed if the decision of the election had been left to Congress. See Charles Fairman, Mr. Justice Miller and the Supreme Court 1862-1890 (Cambridge, 1939), 291. George F. Hoar, Autobiography of Seventy Years (2 vols., New York, 1903), II, 173, also credits Lamar with keeping peace.

sponsorship of the Electoral Commission bill to the dilatory tactics of the obstructionists and back again. He could have purposely obscured his thoughts and motive. Perhaps such a course constituted good politics, and it would not have been totally uncharacteristic of Lamar's career. Still several apparent inconsistencies remain. As a member of the House advisory committee and of the joint advisory committee he had played an influential role. He had made a substantial effort on the House floor for the Electoral Commission bill and had nominated the House membership. Although actively promoting the bill, he for a time obstructed and privately considered a negative vote on the ultimate conclusion.⁴¹ After advising Ellis to see Stanley Matthews, he had also played at least a peripheral role in the Wormley Conference, and yet he withdrew from Ellis's filibuster effort after the twenty-sixth of February. And finally, his support of Thomas Scott's Texas Pacific Railroad during the crucial period added another dimension to Lamar's behavior.

If, on the other hand, consideration of Lamar's course is extended to include the entire election history rather than just late January and February, a more consistent picture appears. In this perspective Lamar had

⁴¹Mayes, Lamar, 699-701, reprints an address written in February, but never delivered, which supported a vote against final acceptance of the Electoral Commission's decisions.

made his commitment almost two years in advance. In March 1875 he told Henry Grady in Atlanta that the Republicans could be defeated only by a coalition of Democrats, Liberal Republicans and other anti-administration men. He believed that either Liberal Republican Charles Francis Adams or Justice David Davis, an Independent, could win under the Democratic banner. Of the regular Democrats, Thurman, Hendricks, or Bayard might be able to draw sufficient support from outside the party if the platform made sufficient concessions to the Liberal Republicans.⁴²

Being a practical politician, Lamar favored the coalitions and compromises necessary to secure a victory over Grantism. That was, to him, the main issue.⁴³ As in the past, he would willingly sacrifice rigid party regularity for higher political values. His logic had been the same when he favored Grant's brother-in-law, Dent, for governor of Mississippi in 1868; and the same when he subscribed to Republican Alcorn's campaign against Ames in 1873. In each case a desire for conservative home rule

⁴²Atlanta Herald, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 224-228; and New York Times, April 8, 1875. In his article Grady said of the interview: "I was not long in discovering that I had struck a conversational 'bonanza.' Such a wealth of happy sayings, of pregnant epigrams, of wise utterances, of eloquent burst, of humorous touches, of political axioms, of brilliant sarcasm, of earnest statesmanship, and of decorous anecdote, it has never been my fortune to look upon. . . ."

⁴³Lamar stated in the interview that Grant would surely run for a third term.

guided him. Likewise Lamar had supported the Liberal Republicans in 1872 before Greeley's nomination by the Democrats, as the most promising means of defeating Grant.

In November of 1876 the prospect of civil violence eroded Lamar's party regularity further. He believed that incumbent Republicans held the upper hand in an election impasse. In addition to the Republican state returning boards, they controlled the army and other governmental machinery. It seemed unlikely that Hayes could be convinced to relinquish the presidency.⁴⁴

Under these circumstances Lamar's efforts developed along two lines. He advised Tilden to meet with Hayes to discuss an honorable resolution, and that failing, he promoted compromise legislation which would allow an acceptable and legal vote count. At the same time Lamar sought assurances that Hayes, if inaugurated, would follow a friendly policy toward the South. Lamar indirectly and by piecemeal received the assurances, and then he helped carry out the Electoral Commission's findings. There is no evidence that these assurances or Lamar's cooperation depended upon any specific guarantees in relation to the Texas Pacific Railroad. It is true, however, that Lamar staunchly promoted the road throughout the crisis, as did

⁴⁴A speech by Lamar in Mississippi, n.d., 1879, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 297-298.

most of his Southern colleagues, and obviously Republican offers of help could not have displeased him.

Lamar favored a compromise course toward the election controversy well before the formulation of the so-called "Scott Plan." And as a matter of fact, the press attacked Lamar for collusion well before that time. Early in December the New York Herald published accusations, and the loyal Memphis Daily Appeal and the Jackson Weekly Clarion replied in his behalf.⁴⁵ The Clarion carried Lamar's countercharge that the press attacks originated in his support of the Texas Pacific Railroad. Though the "Scott Plan" may have been talked about in some circles during the first week of January, it was not finally agreed upon before these charges were placed against Lamar.⁴⁶ And furthermore, Lamar's advice to Tilden to confer with Hayes and then to W. H. Roberts of New Orleans in the same connection dated his willingness to compromise back to the beginning of the crisis in November.

⁴⁵Memphis Daily Appeal, Dec. 9, 1876, Jan. 9, 1877; Jackson Weekly Clarion, Jan. 10, 1877.

⁴⁶Extant Lamar correspondence provides no help in this matter. The only Thomas Scott letter to Lamar bears the date April 13, 1876; the only Collis Huntington letter to Lamar is dated November 16, 1876. The Murat Halstead-Lamar correspondence does not mention the Texas Pacific or its managers. A cursory check of the William Henry Smith Papers was fruitless. The Hayes Papers are indexed by writer and recipient and also by content. While there is circumstantial evidence in the collection to connect Lamar with the group interested in Hayes's election and the Texas Pacific, the information is inconclusive.

Even after the Scott-Hayes lobby made its determined effort in February, Lamar filibustered temporarily and wrote a speech against the Electoral Commission's findings. Unless these be considered diversionary tactics, he at that late date suffered personal misgivings about accepting the Commission's findings, or he consciously backed the filibuster movement to gain assurances from Hayes before settling the matter.

Hayes's correspondence during the crisis also suggests that there was no definite understanding with Lamar beyond an expression of good will. These letters contain a large amount of criticism of Lamar. W. D. Kelly advised Hayes against taking such men as Lamar into his confidence.⁴⁷ Wilson J. Vance, the Cincinnati Commercial's Washington correspondent, warned that Southerners friendly toward Hayes "don't go much on Lamar's sincerity . . . and the Lamar crowd will, I think myself, bear a little watching."⁴⁸ Even the central figures in the engineering of the Scott-Hayes plan distrusted Lamar. Within a week of Hayes's inauguration, Andrew Kellar of the Memphis Avalanche, head of the Southern portion of the "Scott Plan," wrote Joseph Medill of the Chicago Tribune that

⁴⁷W. D. Kelly to Rutherford B. Hayes, Dec. 17, 1876, in Hayes Papers.

⁴⁸Wilson J. Vance to Murat Halstead, Jan. 5, 1877, ibid. According to Vance, these friendly Southerners thought Lamar "only anxious to get his seat in the senate--after that he will show different colors."

"Lamar will not do in an emergency."⁴⁹ And Thomas Donaldson, confidant of Hayes, felt that Lamar "is one grand Humbug."⁵⁰

Lamar found no relief from criticism even after the controversy's settlement. Two days after Hayes's inauguration on March 4, 1877, he heard from a constituent that "Our people are very much depressed here, cursing everybody, you with the balance."⁵¹ And Lamar was not insensitive to the news from home either. Almost pathetically he wrote "that men who have loved me are beginning to grow cold in their affections; I know that men who have trusted me have begun to falter in their confidence."⁵²

The attack upon Lamar's carefully cultivated political image spread far beyond Mississippi. In Washington more trouble awaited when he chaired the Democratic caucus which assembled to plan strategy under another Republican president. The volatile B. B. Douglas of Virginia charged Lamar with sacrificing the presidency to secure a seat in the

⁴⁹Andrew Keller to Joseph Medill, March 20, 1877, in William Henry Smith Papers (on microfilm, Hayes Memorial Library, Fremont, Ohio).

⁵⁰Thomas Donaldson to Rutherford B. Hayes, Feb. 18, 1877, in Hayes Papers.

⁵¹Mr. Goar to Lamar, March 6, 1877, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 304.

⁵²Lamar to Rutherford B. Hayes, March 22, 1877, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 307-309. A copy in the Hayes Papers does not include the quoted passage. Lamar apparently thought better of it before posting the letter.

Senate. The New York Tribune reported the abuse so severe that "but for the intervention of friends Mr. Lamar would undoubtedly have shot him."⁵³

Lamar must have appreciated the irony of Douglas's accusation when the Senate met to swear in its new members. Stalwart Republicans led by Morton and Conkling plotted to block Lamar's admission or to exact a very high price. Lamar's claim to a seat was challenged on grounds that the Mississippi election of 1875 and the legislature then chosen were illegal. Lamar apparently felt that he was in real danger of defeat, and he wrote his family of these misgivings.⁵⁴ Stalwart tactics failed, however, because of the support that Lamar received from other Republicans--notably James G. Blaine and Blanche K. Bruce. As Mississippi's senior Senator and the only Negro in the upper House, Bruce's unexpected help greatly eased Lamar's admission. The gesture of good will laid the basis for lasting cordiality between the two men.⁵⁵ Blaine took the floor in opposition to Morton and Conkling for Lamar's

⁵³New York Tribune, March 5, 1877; New York Times, March 4, 1877. Both papers declared Douglas to be drunk at the time.

⁵⁴Mayes, Lamar, 312-318.

⁵⁵See Samuel D. Smith, "The Negro in the United States Senate," in Fletcher M. Green, ed., Essays in Southern History Presented to Joseph Gregoire de Roulhac Hamilton (Chapel Hill, 1949), 61; and Melvin I. Urofsky, "Blanche K. Bruce: United States Senator, 1875-1881," in JMH, XXIX (May 1967), 134.

admission, and the majority voted for confirmation. The security of six years in the Senate must have been welcome --especially at a time when reelection to the House might have been uncertain.⁵⁶

The Senate, having sworn in its new members, turned to the business of President Hayes's Cabinet appointments. Some Republicans who favored Hayes's policy of conciliating Southern whites felt that Lamar or some other moderate Southerner should be recognized.⁵⁷ Hayes agreed but there is no evidence that he seriously considered Lamar. Instead, David M. Key of Tennessee became Postmaster General.⁵⁸

Hayes gave the Stalwart faction which opposed the appointment of a Southerner other grievances when he named reformers William Evarts and Carl Schurz to the State and Interior Departments. In Hayes's judgment these

⁵⁶Congressional Record, 45 Cong., 1 Sess., 2, 5-15 (March 5-6, 1877); Lynch, The Facts of Reconstruction, 186-190; New York Tribune, March 7, 1877. On top of other charges against Lamar, his letter to Ellis suggesting a meeting with Stanley Matthews was published in the New York Tribune, March 30, 1877. The Memphis Daily Appeal carried the Ellis letter March 30, 1877.

⁵⁷Whitelaw Reid to Rutherford B. Hayes, Feb. 21, 1877, in Hayes Papers; E. D. Morgan to Hayes, Feb. 22, 1877, ibid.; Irving W. Lyon to Hayes, Feb. 24, 1877, ibid.

⁵⁸Vincent P. DeSantis, Republicans Face the Southern Question: The New Departure Years, 1877-1897 (Baltimore, 1959), 75-76. Kellar of the Memphis Avalanche, perhaps Hayes's number one contact in the South, supported Key of Tennessee.

appointments would not have succeeded but for Lamar and other sympathetic Southern senators. The cooperative spirit which proved so important in February thus sustained Hayes in his first presidential difficulty.⁵⁹

After a long struggle for compromise Lamar had no call to join obstructionists. To the contrary he had good reasons to think kindly of Evarts, Schurz, and Key. He must have remembered Evarts as a reformer and as defender of Andrew Johnson against Senate radicals. Schurz had won approval from Lamar for his stand on sectional issues in 1872, when Greeley won the Liberal Republican nomination, and Lamar had always considered him to be a man above prejudice. Although Lamar had little liking for Key personally, he would hardly have opposed a fellow Southerner under such circumstances.⁶⁰

Irritated by the tensions that troubled official Washington in the wake of Hayes's inauguration, Lamar turned impatiently from the Cabinet nominations to urge the removal of federal troops from Louisiana and South Carolina. Provoked by the delay Lamar wrote Hayes on March 22:

⁵⁹Williams, ed., Hayes, The Diary of a President, 80-81.

⁶⁰Lamar to E. D. Clark, March 30, 1877, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi. The friendly relationship with Schurz continued through Lamar's tenure in the Interior Department. Lamar called Key "mere locum tenens."

The position towards your administration which has been taken by Southern Senators, in solido, rests upon the foundation of your inaugural Address: viz--that you would not consent to sustain by unconstitutional interposition of the Federal forces State Governments which had no support. . . . They felt that this resolution, promptly and firmly carried into effect, gave to the South that for which she had most earnestly contended.⁶¹

Although Hayes left no record of his reaction to this letter, on the following day he invited South Carolina's Wade Hampton and Daniel Chamberlain to Washington. That conference presaged the carpetbagger's downfall. A few days later a commission traveled to Louisiana to review that situation. After further delay the troops were finally withdrawn on April 24, 1877.⁶²

⁶¹Lamar to Rutherford B. Hayes, March 22, 1877, in Hayes Papers. This fascinating letter marked "Strictly private & confidential" has several suggestive but inconclusive phrases. On the question of the withdrawal Lamar said, "Upon that subject we thought you had made up your mind and indeed you so declared to me." One cannot help wishing Lamar had said when Hayes so declared. From the tone of this letter and one written to E. D. Clark, March 30, 1877, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi, it appears that Lamar saw Hayes after the inauguration and not before. As noted above W. H. Roberts testified under oath that Lamar never saw Hayes. Cate, Lamar, 288, holds that Lamar saw Hayes in February.

Lamar appealed to Hayes's sense of statesmanship when he wrote: "I regarded you Mr. President as the one who was to open to us a new era--an era illustrious as one of peace, prosperity, nationality." A few days later he wrote E. D. Clark "he [Hayes] is full of the idea of being a great Pacificator. . . ." See Lamar to Hayes, March 22, 1877, in Hayes Papers; and Lamar to Clark, March 30, 1877, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi.

⁶²Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, 219, 221.

Hayes's unwillingness to immediately satisfy the Southern redeemers on the troop question pointed up a basic difficulty in his "new departure" program. He wished to rebuild the Republican party in the reconstructed states by appealing to the best element of whites. But still he could not bring himself to entirely desert the Negro or to allow the control of elections to pass entirely to those same whites.⁶³

Many Southern leaders were aware of this dilemma and understood what Hayes was about. Although willing to cooperate with a friendly Republican administration, Lamar had no sympathy with Hayes's efforts to absorb part of the Democratic party and certainly had no plans to help him. Late in March he wrote to E. D. Clark that public opinion and the admitted failure of reconstruction had placed the Republicans in a new frame of mind. "Knowing this," he said, "it has been my aim to get these ideas in the Republican Party developed into active political forces."⁶⁴ But he had no confidence in the permanence of those "forces." And consequently "as a mere party question" the South must continue to be Democratic. "A Southern Statesman can never

⁶³Stanley P. Hirshon, Farewell to the Bloody Shirt: Northern Republicans and the Southern Negro, 1877-1893 (Bloomington, 1962), 21-44, passim.

⁶⁴Lamar to E. D. Clark, March 30, 1877, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi.

be a power in the Republican Party."⁶⁵

Lamar's judgment would certainly have been disquieting to the usually optimistic Hayes. And it would have been puzzling too, for Lamar admitted the existence of the common ground which Hayes claimed for Republicans and Southern conservatives. Lamar himself seemed a bit confused when he declared that "The Democratic Party of the nation is the natural ally of our people. . . . But the intellect, courage, literature, moral ideas . . . and aggregations of wealth . . . at the North are all arrayed against the Democrats."⁶⁶

To a man of Lamar's mentality the proposition that the Democratic party remain the "natural ally" required no debate. The South's overriding political needs could not be gained by alliance with Republicans. Hayes and members of his Cabinet did not understand the South, Lamar reported to a friend:

They are not en-rapport with us in a single sentiment. They feel more natural & easier with Morton than they do with me. They love Chamberlain, they can understand his dialect & appreciate his aims & enter into his plans--whilst they regard Hampton as an embarrassment. They want to conciliate the whites of the South, but the real object of interest to them is the Negro & they look with misgiving to the result of any policy which terminates federal surveillance [sic] over the former & federal protection over the latter. Even those who

⁶⁵Lamar to E. D. Clark, March 30, 1877, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi.

⁶⁶Ibid.

have no sentimental interest in the negro, have not lost their estimate of his value to them as a voter.⁶⁷

Although this analysis hardly did justice to Hayes, Lamar's rejection of the Republicans was final. In this judgment he established a rule of conduct for the remainder of his public career, and in fact, he spoke for the future far beyond his own life. The South would cooperate with the Republicans in things conservative, but she would defend her home rule and white supremacy from within the Democratic party.

In his aloofness from Hayes's efforts to construct a Southern Republican party, Lamar apparently broke no crisis-born agreement to desert the Democrats. He was not of the old Whig-Union group that Hayes hoped to attract to the Republican party. Although Lamar's economic policies frequently associated him with Whiggery, his commitment had always been to the conservative wing of the Democratic party, and in that he never wavered. Despite charges by Stalwart Roscoe Conkling that Lamar was a chief advisor to Hayes, there is no evidence that their relationship ever became intimate on either a political or a personal basis.⁶⁸

⁶⁷Lamar to E. D. Clark, March 30, 1877, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi.

⁶⁸Hirshon, Farewell to the Bloody Shirt, 43. Hayes mentions Lamar only twice in his diary and apparently never corresponded with him. Lamar letters to Hayes are few and sustain this generalization.

Hayes's hopes and expectations for winning over the South apparently never included Mississippi to the same extent that it did other Confederate states.⁶⁹ The patronage policy of conciliating white Democrats was therefore probably never fully employed in Mississippi, and Lamar's connection to the administration was not as close as that of men such as Stephens and Gordon in Georgia.⁷⁰

Hayes had ample justification for slighting the Republican party in Mississippi. The organization had already fatally divided between white leadership and the Negro rank and file. Refusal to satisfy Negro demands for office and influence had thoroughly discredited white

⁶⁹There is only negative evidence on this point. E.g., a letter from Hayes to W. D. Bickham, May 3, 1877, cited in DeSantis, Republicans Face the Southern Question, 66, shows that Hayes was hopeful for results in North Carolina, Maryland, Virginia, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Florida, while expressing no opinion at all on Mississippi. Also, Hayes in his good will tours in the South failed to visit Mississippi and included no prominent man of that state in the president's party. See Hirshon, Farewell to the Bloody Shirt, 38-39.

⁷⁰The evidence is again negative. Extant Lamar letters relating to patronage are very few (only three plus three petitions which he signed) and suggest this conclusion by their small number. DeSantis, Republicans Face the Southern Question, 91-93; Woodward, Reunion and Reaction, 225-226; and Hirshon, Farewell to the Bloody Shirt, 36, all discuss Hayes's appointment policy in the South without including Mississippi in their generalization that Hayes gave about one third of the offices in the South to Democrats. There is also some contrary evidence: James Alcorn to Kenneth Rayner, Feb. 6, 1878, cited in Pereyra, James Lusk Alcorn, 186, complained that Republicans got no support from Hayes. DeSantis, Republicans Face the Southern Question, 92, cites a similar complaint from an unnamed Mississippi Republican.

leaders and drove many of the disillusioned into the Democratic party. This split, combined with the general demoralization suffered after the defeats of 1875 and 1876, proved decisive. The party formally disbanded in 1877 and failed to offer a ticket in the election of that year.⁷¹

When Negroes revived the Republican organization without the whites, a new political reality emerged in Mississippi. White Democratic conservatives and Negro Republicans "fused" in a relationship which promised the utter subordination of the latter. In this arrangement the conservatives, including Lamar, helped Negroes retain control of the Republican organization and the patronage of the national Republican party. In return Negroes supported conservative Democrats at election time. In a political milieu such as this, Hayes could expect little from his "new departure" patronage policy.⁷²

The role of Mississippi's senior Senator, Blanche K. Bruce, a Negro and a Republican, added an additional dimension to the evolving Mississippi party structure. As colleagues in the Senate, Lamar and Bruce got along well together, and each accepted the other's sincerity and good will. It is perhaps part of the irony of Lamar's

⁷¹Albert D. Kirwin, Revolt of the Rednecks: Mississippi Politics, 1876-1925 (New York, 1965), 7-8; Hirshon, Farewell to the Bloody Shirt, 40.

⁷²C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South (Baton Rouge, 1951), 103-104; Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, 202-203.

relationship to the Negro that he respected and even admired Bruce while participating in the political annihilation of his race. Shortly after entering the Senate, Lamar invited Bruce to his residence in Washington for a discussion of their mutual interests and especially that of federal patronage. In a "Private and Confidential" letter concerning their conference Lamar wrote that Bruce "is a sensible, self-poised man who has purposes of his own & is not timid about following them & adhering to them. He strikes me too as a man of truth, & the fact is I believed him to be a noble negro."⁷³

In that cordial conversation the two Mississippi Senators reached a tentative understanding. They agreed, Lamar said, upon the desirability of removing "Carpetbaggers & corrupt mischievous white men." While concluding that Bruce could not be exploited for Democratic party purposes, Lamar did "believe he will go with me into any reasonable plan of so distributing the Federal offices as will give recognition to both races." As a start Lamar suggested to Bruce that the Carpetbag postmaster in Vicksburg might be replaced by a Negro Republican "whose bond should be secured by our people, & who should put a man chosen by his securities in charge of the money orders &

⁷³Lamar to E. D. Clark, March 15, 1877, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi.

other important business of the office--a Southern democrat acceptable to our people."⁷⁴

There is reason to believe that this same relationship remained effective throughout Hayes's administration. In the only two known pieces of Lamar-Bruce correspondence Lamar asked favors in patronage matters but indicated respect for Bruce's political needs. In a letter addressed to "My respected Colleague," Lamar asked for help on the appointment of a white "mild" Democrat rather than a non-resident to the Meridian post office. But the request was tentative and subject to Bruce's approval since, as Lamar said, "I do not wish you to do anything that would bring you into a damaging conflict with your party friends. . . ." ⁷⁵

This arrangement, if known to Hayes, must have destroyed any dream of a successful white Republican party in Mississippi. The fusion principle, inadvertently supported by Hayes's appointment policy, strengthened Democrats while the machinery of the Republican party went to relatively acquiescent Negroes. The Negro majority was neutralized, while little incentive remained for white

⁷⁴Lamar to E. D. Clark, March 15, 1877, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi.

⁷⁵Lamar to B. K. Bruce, Oct. 18, 1879, in Blanche K. Bruce Papers (Howard University Library, Washington, D. C.). Lamar signed the letter "With great respect & the kindest wishes for your prosperity & happiness. . . ." See also Lamar to Bruce, Oct. 27, 1879, *ibid.*, asking consideration for an appointee.

conservatives to succumb to Hayes's appeal to join the opposition party. Mississippi had her home rule and white domination.

Though bitter-enders found Lamar's tactics compromising and mild, there can be little doubt that he represented his white constituents in achieving these goals. As spokesman for his people and executioner of their wishes, Lamar's career came to a climax during the years between the Sumner eulogy and the final Democratization of Mississippi. Although his political future would never be effectively challenged after 1877, Lamar began a course of divergence from popular opinion which he never entirely reversed. For this reason Lamar's most effective efforts were perhaps realized during the crises of 1875 and 1876 and in their aftermath.

CHAPTER XII
THE SENATE YEARS: I

After Congress adjourned in March 1877, Lamar returned home to Mississippi. During spring and early summer he made no public speeches, but his silence was not entirely peaceful. Some critics continued to question his course in the election controversy, and division threatened the Democratic party on the issue. Incipient party rebellion also loomed over nomination of a gubernatorial candidate and in relation to the controversial monetary question then before the country. Lamar had an immediate interest in all these matters, and consequently he accepted when Lafayette County elected him delegate to the state convention--a position usually filled by politicians on the state level.¹

Although participation in the convention provoked criticism from unfriendly newspapers, Lamar accepted a place on the platform committee from which he could influence public pronouncements. In this capacity he successfully blocked mention of the controversial currency question, so that the issue remained open, and members of

¹Memphis Daily Appeal, Aug. 1, 1877.

the congressional delegation suffered no restraint nor embarrassment in their positions. The issue would crop up when Congress considered currency legislation again, but the showdown was at least postponed.²

Lamar's presence counted for less when the convention nominated a gubernatorial candidate. Although he took no public position, Lamar favored his friend, E. C. Walthall, for the position, and Walthall tentatively authorized use of his name if circumstances proved propitious. Even after the convention deadlocked for nine ballots the chief contenders did not withdraw, and Walthall apparently decided against announcing. On the tenth vote Acting Governor John M. Stone won the nomination, and at least one critical paper declared the outcome a personal defeat for Lamar. Walthall's failure to win the nomination belied the charge by some journalists that Lamar controlled the convention with a dictatorial hand.³ But in an effort to allay such bitterness and to restore party harmony, Lamar warned the convention against division so long as radical Republicans

²Natchez Democrat, quoted in New York Times, Aug. 13, 1877, criticized Lamar's position on the currency plank. The Democrat also charged that Lamar blocked a plank on Hayes's Southern policy, but there is no other evidence on this point. See also Mayes, Lamar, 321.

³Natchez Telephone, quoted in Memphis Daily Appeal, Sept. 11, 1877; Memphis Daily Appeal, Aug. 1, 2, 1877. See also Forester Register, and Canton Mail, cited in Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks, 33.

menaced home rule.⁴

Lamar's efforts did not impress the dissident factions, and a segment of the state Democratic press continued to criticize his actions. Although the area's most influential newspapers--the Jackson Clarion and the Memphis Daily Appeal--defended him,⁵ many smaller papers reflected continuing dissatisfaction.⁶

Such discontent must have come as something of a shock to Lamar after his easy election to the Senate only a few short months earlier. It also suggested that party machinery was not so malleable as he might have expected. His victory in excluding a silver plank from the platform seemed weak beside the failure to nominate Walthall and the personal criticism to which he was subjected. Lamar never worked closely with the state organization, and when he stepped from his place as titular head and spokesman his lack of control became painfully apparent. The venerable statesman's image had its beginning cracks even before he commenced work in the upper House.

⁴Memphis Daily Appeal, Aug. 3, 1877. Lamar also announced confidence in Hayes's policy toward the South.

⁵E.g., Memphis Daily Appeal, Sept. 8, 1877; Jackson Weekly Clarion, Aug. 15, 1877. The Oxford Falcon, Lamar's hometown paper also supported him. See citation in Memphis Daily Appeal, Sept. 8, 1877.

⁶E.g., Forester Register, and Canton Mail, quoted in Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks, 33; Natchez Democrat, quoted in New York Times, Aug. 13, 1877; and Natchez Telephone, quoted in Memphis Daily Appeal, Sept. 11, 1877.

After Stone's uncontested victory in the November election, Lamar headed back to Washington for the brief opening of the forty-fifth Congress. The session dealt primarily with disputed elections; and again the outstanding issues concerned South Carolina and Louisiana. Lamar always voted with his party on such questions, but he assumed prominence in the debate only once, when he took the floor to defend the seating of M. C. Butler of South Carolina on November 30, 1877.⁷

When Congress reconvened in December 1877, Lamar received the appointments which helped determine his role in the coming days. His two standing committee appointments included the Committee on Railroads, for which he was fitted by his experience in the lower House, and Education and Labor, which suited him because of his earlier legislative experience and his involvement in education as a teacher.⁸

The Senate did not at first turn to matters of railroads or education and labor. The currency problem Lamar had faced in the lower House in 1873 immediately obtruded. The money question now focused upon free coinage and the restoration of the legal tender value of silver. On

⁷Congressional Record, 45 Cong., Special Sess., App., 62-65 (Nov. 30, 1877). Voting may be followed in Senate Journal, 45 Cong., Special Sess., 80-109 (Nov. 22-30, 1877).

⁸Senate Journal, 45 Cong., 2 Sess., 26 (Dec. 6, 1877).

December 6 an effort giving such a bill special order succeeded despite Lamar's opposition. And then Stanley Matthews of Ohio offered a resolution allowing payment of all United State bonds in silver dollars, and restoring the legal tender nature of the silver dollar which had been suspended in 1873. Lamar voted against Matthews, but he also opposed counter measures requiring payment of all bonds in gold.⁹ Amid great public excitement Lamar gave his first major speech in the Senate on January 24, 1878, and explained his opposition to both silver and gold requirements for paying bonds, since either would commit the country prematurely. From that premise, however, he addressed his argument entirely to the Matthews resolution and the silver bill.

In Lamar's opinion silver should be remonetized only by cooperative action of interested nations and based upon fair and honest ratios with gold. Unilateral action by the United States, he said, would establish silver as "the exclusive ruling element of American currency. . . ." and would bring European silver to the United States. In effect, this would establish silver and eliminate gold from the currency; the cheap would drive out the dear. While admitting the humanitarian instincts of many

⁹Senate Journal, 45 Cong., 1 Sess., 31 (Dec. 6, 1877); ibid., 125-129 (Jan. 25, 1878). Unger, The Greenback Era, 357-364, describes the debate in the Senate on this resolution and the Bland bill which followed.

many supporters of the silver bill who contended that remonetization would relieve the depression, Lamar denied their reasoning and dismissed it as spurious. He insisted that gold hoarding would automatically cease as the greenback reached the gold value of the dollar and with implementation of the Resumption Act of 1879, whereas passage of the silver bill would reverse this desirable achievement. Remonetization of silver would, Lamar contended, hurt the laborers, debtors and farmers whom its proponents claimed to favor. Wages would lag behind the inevitable inflation. Farmers would be hurt because their income would be determined abroad on a gold market, while their expenses increased as a result of remonetization and free coinage. And as a clincher, Lamar pled the ultimate argument of the sound money conservative: payment in silver of bonds purchased with gold would constitute an act of bad faith; paying back good money with bad would be injurious to credit both at home and abroad.¹⁰

In answer to silverite arguments that the money question pitted the capitalists against the laboring class, Lamar emphatically disputed the validity of a class interpretation in a country where economic mobility allowed laborers to become capitalists and vice versa. In phrasing his denial of class conflict, it is noteworthy that Lamar

¹⁰Congressional Record, 45 Cong., 2 Sess., 519-526 (Jan. 24, 1878).

referred to the laboring classes in a context which meant specifically the working men of the North. He passed over entirely the internal situation in his own Southland, where radical agrarianism demanded inflation as a solution to chronic farm depression. Although he avoided direct conflict with the agrarians, Lamar implicitly condemned their demand. In opposing cheap money, he associated himself with the conservative Northeastern wing of the Democratic party and Hayes's wing of the Republican party, which also opposed the silver bill and favored implementation of the Resumption Act in January 1879.¹¹

Lamar's support of sound money antagonized public opinion in his state and threatened a split in the Mississippi Democracy. As early as the August 1877 convention of the party, Lamar had found himself at variance with a substantial number of his group; and the convention failed to declare in favor of remonetization only because of his presence. He realized at that early date that his position would not be a popular one. The opposition became more evident when northern Mississippi's leading newspapers, the Memphis Daily Appeal and the Jackson Clarion, also expressed approval of the silver bill, though they hedged and

¹¹Congressional Record, 45 Cong., 2 Sess., 519-526 (Jan. 24, 1878); Woodward, Origins of the New South, 47-49; Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes, 461-463.

avoided attacking Lamar personally.¹² Then in January, before Lamar's speech, the Mississippi House of Representatives passed a resolution instructing the state's congressional delegates to support the Bland-Allison silver bill. When Lamar ignored the instructions and voted against the Matthews resolution, the Mississippi House struck back by passing a resolution thanking Negro Senator Blanche Bruce for his vote favoring remonetization. The Senate of Mississippi, however, declined at the time to join in the rebuke. The upper House delayed action until after Lamar spoke on January 24, but then on February 4 a resolution instructing for the silver bill cleared both Houses.¹³

Since the Bland-Allison silver bill did not come up for final vote in the Senate until February 15, 1878, Lamar had sufficient time to reconsider and recant. Apparently he gave no thought to reversing his position. He wrote a member of the Mississippi legislature on February 8 expressing his regret that he must vote against the expressed wishes of his friends at home. Conscience and studied

¹²Memphis Daily Appeal, Jan. 25, Feb. 2, 1878; Jackson Weekly Clarion, Feb. 6, 1878. The Weekly Clarion on that same day, February 6, thanked Lamar for his defense of the state against the charge of repudiation, thus pointedly avoiding a break with him.

¹³Mayes, Lamar, 331; Jackson Weekly Clarion, Feb. 6, 1878. The House was controlled throughout the "Bourbon Period" by farmer interests who favored inflation. This disapproval of Lamar also provoked criticism from the Patron of Husbandry, organ of the state Grange. See Halsell, "The Bourbon Period in Mississippi Politics," in JSH, XI, 530-533.

opinion, he said, dictated his course. In declaring his intention, Lamar referred to his constituency and said: "I would rather deserve than have their approval."¹⁴ And to his wife he wrote: "I cannot do it; I had rather quit politics forever."¹⁵

On February 15 Lamar voted for several dilutions of the Bland-Allison Act¹⁶ and then rose to state his opposition to the bill's passage and to place on record the instructions of the Mississippi legislature. His short, self-righteous explanation was classic: "Mr. President," he said, "between these resolutions and my convictions there is a great gulf. I cannot pass it. Of my love to the State of Mississippi I will not speak; my life alone can tell it." In antiphonal rhetoric, not unlike rhyming, he talked of the generations of young men whose educations he had guided and he said: "Upon them I have always endeavored to impress the belief that truth was better than falsehood, honesty better than policy, courage better than cowardice. To-day my lessons confront me. To-day I must

¹⁴Lamar to James Gordon, member of the Mississippi legislature from Pontotoc County, Feb. 8, 1878, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 332.

¹⁵Lamar to Mrs. Lamar, Feb. 14, 1878, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 333.

¹⁶Senate Journal, 45 Cong., 2 Sess., 201-204 (Feb. 15, 1878).

be true or false, honest or cunning, faithful or unfaithful to my people."¹⁷

By rejecting silver despite prevailing Southern sentiment and by disregarding the instructions of the Mississippi legislature, Lamar earned the wrath of many citizens. The Jackson Clarion openly denounced his actions, and since Barksdale headed the State Executive Committee of the Democratic party from 1877 to 1879, and his paper served as party organ, this amounted to an admitted schism. The seriousness of the split became clear when thirteen members of the Mississippi Senate jointly wrote Lamar their confidence in the earnestness of his course, the resolution of the legislature notwithstanding. By summertime Lamar's own congressional district passed a platform favoring silver re-monetization and reissuing greenbacks, and asking an investigation of the frauds related to Hayes's election in 1876. Though not mentioning Lamar by name, the platform could hardly have pleased him.¹⁸

Lamar's attitude earned a friendlier reception from some. The lieutenant governor of Mississippi wrote a

¹⁷Congressional Record, 45 Cong., 2 Sess., 1061 (Feb. 15, 1878). For the vote see Senate Journal, 45 Cong., 2 Sess., 209 (Feb. 18, 1878). Lamar later voted against passage over Hayes's veto, but the bill passed anyway. See Senate Journal, 45 Cong., 2 Sess., 252 (Feb. 28, 1878).

¹⁸Unger, The Greenback Era, 355n; Jackson Weekly Clarion, Feb. 20, July 31, 1878.

personal letter congratulating Lamar on his stand; E. C. Walthall, though disagreeing on the silver vote, also praised him for his courage and promised ultimate vindication; the Vicksburg Herald, also disagreeing on silver, came to his defense.¹⁹ Other moral support came from hard-money Southerner, Ben Hill of Georgia, and from F. A. P. Barnard, Lamar's old colleague at the University of Mississippi, now president of Columbia University in New York. Support from leading Republicans included William Phelps, H. C. Warmoth of Louisiana, and his old friend Charles Reemelin of Ohio.²⁰ Lamar received other support from outside the state from both parties, including the Memphis Daily Appeal, the New York Tribune, Nation, and Harper's Weekly.²¹

Lamar's situation had undoubtedly become uncomfortable. Many in Mississippi defended his integrity and the right to vote his conscience, but support at variance with

¹⁹William H. Simms to Lamar, Feb. 18, 1878, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 336; E. C. Walthall to Lamar, Feb. 16, 1878, ibid.; Vicksburg Herald, ibid., 337. Mrs. Lamar wrote E. D. Clark, May 1, 1878, Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi, thanking him for his article in the Vicksburg Herald.

²⁰Ben Hill to Lamar, March 7, 1878, in Lamar-Mayes Papers; F. A. P. Barnard to Lamar, Jan. 29, 1878, ibid.; Barnard to Lamar, Feb. 12, 1878, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 332-333; William W. Phelps to Lamar, Feb. 18, 1878, ibid., 335; H. C. Warmoth to Lamar, Feb. 16, 1878, ibid., 335; Charles Reemelin to Lamar, Feb. 16, 1878, ibid., 336.

²¹Memphis Daily Appeal, Feb. 22, 1878; New York Tribune, Feb. 16, 1878; Nation and Harper's Weekly, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 339.

political conviction was tenuous at best, and Lamar suffered misgivings about his future. Although he probably did not mean it, Lamar even talked for a time of quitting politics. Letters to his wife expressed dissatisfaction and regret that he could not financially afford to leave public life. These sentiments tell more about Lamar's state of mind and of his dependence upon public office for a livelihood than they do about his intentions; but at any rate, he was unhappy.²²

Actually Lamar's political future could hardly have been as fragile as his despondency implied. His Senate term would run until 1882--four years away--a long time in politics. And his disregard of the legislature's instructions was not so drastic as it seemed. The ante-bellum doctrine of instruction had fallen into disuse after the Civil War, and there could be little argument that Lamar should have accepted the legislature's instructions or resigned his seat.²³

Whatever his thoughts about the future, Lamar temporized but little in his voting during the remainder of

²²Lamar to Mrs. Lamar, several letters, dated and undated, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 341-342. An interesting assessment on the danger of defeat that Lamar faced is in John F. Kennedy, Profiles in Courage (New York, 1964), 144-155.

²³W. E. Dodd, "The Principle of Instructing U. S. Senators," in South Atlantic Quarterly, I (Oct. 1902), 326-332; George H. Haynes, The Senate of the United States: Its History and Practice (2 vols., Boston, 1938), II, 1029-1030.

the forty-fifth Congress. He voted to consider forbidding further retirement of legal tender notes, but then he voted to make the notes receivable as payment to the government but not otherwise acceptable as legal tender. He voted against repeal of the Resumption Act of 1875, and against a resolution making United States notes receivable on certain bonds. During the final session Lamar voted only once on a currency issue, and then he opposed the payment of pension arrears with legal tender notes withdrawn from circulation under a law of 1875.²⁴ His record for conservative money policy remained intact; and it also went virtually unnoticed by a Mississippi press, which usually paid little attention to such questions except when writ large.

After the currency debate, Lamar's next speech of note in the forty-fifth Congress supported the Texas Pacific Railroad bill--substantially the same legislation which he had promoted as chairman of the Railroad Committee in the House of Representatives. As a practiced expert on the question and now as a member of the Senate Committee on Railroads, Lamar held forth at considerable length in favor of the measure. He rehearsed the old arguments employed in the House, pleading that the Texas Pacific needed additional time under its original grant because of the depression

²⁴Senate Journal, 45 Cong., 2 Sess., 479 (May 7, 1878); ibid., 581 (May 28, 1878); ibid., 688-689 (June 13, 1878); ibid., 45 Cong., 3 Sess., 411 (Feb. 28, 1879).

of 1873, and that the federal government should guarantee the interest on bonds to be issued by the railroad to finance its construction. The South, he said, deserved the road since the previous transcontinental systems had been subsidized by the national government while contributing to the aggrandizement of another section. And he reminded the Senate that nearly every Southern legislature supported the Texas Pacific proposal, and that the connection with the west coast would encourage needed industrial development.

In this rare direct reference by Lamar to Southern industrialization he suggested that a cheap transportation system would provide the deficiency which has arrested the section's development. Echoing the gospel of Henry Grady, Lamar declared: "The South has every condition of soil, climate, and raw material for the development of a great industrial community." The region already possessed infant industries, "But, to develop these industries she must have free access to the markets of the world, and be able to attract to herself the skill and capital and the . . . machinery of the North."²⁵

One of the most memorable things about Lamar's speech was the emphasis he placed upon the nationalistic aspect of such a road. He undoubtedly intended to serve sectional as

²⁵Congressional Record, 45 Cong., 2 Sess., 3653-3659 (May 22, 1878).

well as national interests by nationalistic arguments, as he had on many economic and political occasions, but the rhetoric was nonetheless noteworthy. The road, he said, would serve the government in its civil and military needs, and bring merchants and manufacturers into contact with the west coast, South America, China, and the Pacific islands. As he put it, in most Whiggish terms:

My purpose is to show that the road is a great national enterprise; that its results will be to increase the national power, to develop the national interests, and to augment the wealth and prosperity of the people of the whole country. . . .²⁶

Without help from either the Hayes Republicans who had promised Scott their support or from the Northeastern wing of the Democratic party, Lamar could not hope for progress with his bill. In June, just before Congress recessed, he braved attacks from the press for jobbery and pled his cause once more, but without results.²⁷

Lamar's Texas Pacific speech set the tone for the entire forty-fifth Congress in its economic and fiscal aspects. As in the House of Representatives, he supported a program of government spending and subsidized economic development. There were few opportunities to support

²⁶Congressional Record, 45 Cong., 2 Sess., 3653-3659 (May 22, 1878).

²⁷Ibid., 4129 (June 5, 1878); New York Times, May 29, 1878; DeSantis, Republicans Face the Southern Question, 89; Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes, 436-438. The Mississippi legislature and the Jackson Weekly Clarion, Jan. 9, 1878, supported the Texas Pacific.

private industry in the South, however, and Lamar did not often publicize Southern industrialization. The spokesman-ship of that aspect of the "New South" he generally left to others, but he gave practical assistance to the business community whenever possible.²⁸

Thus Lamar presented a bill to aid Southern timber and turpentine interests in answering federal charges of depredation of the public domain. He disputed Secretary of Interior Schurz's contention that the industry depended upon illicit trade and that his bill would obstruct government efforts.²⁹ On another occasion Lamar introduced an unsuccessful bill to relieve the Vicksburg and Meridian Railroad Company from taxes improperly paid to the government.³⁰ He also supported businessmen by helping to postpone legislation enforcing the eight hour law³¹ and by submitting a resolution for government maintenance of the

²⁸This is not an indication that Lamar was indifferent to Southern industrialization. For example, he favored the sending of an emissary to Europe in search of capital for Southern industrialization. See New York Times, Dec. 21, 1877, which comments upon and quotes from Lamar's letter to John Gordon on the subject. See also above on Lamar's speech of May 22, 1878.

²⁹Congressional Record, 45 Cong., 2 Sess., 1398-1401 (Feb. 28, 1878). The Memphis Daily Appeal, March 7, 1878, praised Lamar's action on the timber and turpentine question.

³⁰Congressional Record, 45 Cong., 3 Sess., 518 (Jan. 17, 1879).

³¹Senate Journal, 45 Cong., 2 Sess., 677 (June 12, 1878).

Vicksburg waterfront.³² Though the tariff was not an important issue during the forty-fifth Congress, Lamar opposed efforts made to add additional items to the protected list.³³ Although these were not major issues before Congress, Lamar assumed a role favorable to business interests of his own home locale.

More important than these few private bills, Lamar advocated government expenditures for internal improvements. In this he joined other Southern congressmen who deluged Congress with their legislation--forty such bills being introduced in the Senate alone between October and December 1877.³⁴ Since Lamar did not belong to a committee dealing with these improvements, his part was an inconspicuous one. He did, however, consistently vote for bills introduced by his fellow Southerners. He supported passage and enlargement of the rivers and harbors appropriation bill throughout the second and third sessions. In these instances Lamar voted with the majority, and the appropriation bill passed.³⁵ Closer to home, Lamar offered an

³²Senate Journal, 45 Cong., 2 Sess., 345 (March 28, 1878).

³³Ibid., 45 Cong., 3 Sess., 306 (Feb. 18, 1879)

³⁴DeSantis, Republicans Face the Southern Question, 88.

³⁵Senate Journal, 45 Cong., 2 Sess., 632-633 (June 6, 1878); ibid., 647 (June 8, 1878); ibid., 647-648 (June 12, 1878); ibid., 45 Cong., 3 Sess., 433, 447 (March 1, 1879).

amendment to increase the allocation for improvement of the Pascagoula River; he had less luck with this, however, and the chair ruled him out of order. He also fought to establish a Mississippi River Improvement Commission,³⁶ but this agency would not be established until the next Congress.

The forty-fifth Congress considered two new issues in Lamar's experience. As a member of the Committee on Education and Labor, he introduced and supported legislation to promote education of the blind;³⁷ and as Senator from a region ravaged by yellow fever, he sponsored progressive measures in that field.

During Lamar's visit home between the second and third sessions of Congress, yellow fever struck New Orleans at the end of July and spread rapidly along the Mississippi River northward. Through August, September, and October the sickness raged. Oxford was not subjected to the epidemic, but Lamar and his family left town for the country, where the air might be purer. He remained there even though he had to forego the election canvass of 1878.³⁸

³⁶Congressional Record, 45 Cong., 2 Sess., 4437 (June 11, 1878); Senate Journal, 45 Cong., 3 Sess., 468 (March 3, 1879).

³⁷Congressional Record, 45 Cong., 3 Sess., 66 (Dec. 10, 1878).

³⁸Memphis Daily Appeal, July 14, Aug. 2, Oct. 29, 1878; Mayes, Lamar, 352-353. Gordon wrote for help in the Georgia campaign, but apparently did not get it. See John B. Gordon to Lamar, Oct. 7, 1878, Lamar-Mayes Papers.

Immediately after Congress convened in December, Lamar moved to establish a yellow fever commission. He was appointed a member and later traveled to Memphis and New Orleans in fulfillment of its objectives. Several days later, on December 10, 1878, Lamar introduced a bill for the establishment of a Department of Public Health. He supported again on February 24, 1879, a move to consider prevention of infectious diseases and the establishment of a federal Bureau of Public Health.³⁹ Both measures failed. In this attention to health and education Lamar again reflected a willingness to fall back upon the national government for local solutions.

Lamar did not, however, devote his energy entirely to such nationalistic enterprises in 1878. The spring was also marked by relatively mild sectional debates. During the session Lamar helped limit use of the army for Republican and civil rights projects in the South, and he also voted to continue restrictions on Negro enlistments in the army. But he studiously avoided arguments which might damage sectional good will and even enhanced this ideal by

³⁹Congressional Record, 45 Cong., 3 Sess., 2 (Dec. 2, 1878); ibid., 35 (Dec. 5, 1878); ibid., 66 (Dec. 10, 1878); Memphis Daily Appeal, Dec. 27, 31, 1878; Jackson Weekly Clarion, Dec. 25, 1878, Jan. 8, 1879; Senate Journal, 45 Cong., 3 Sess., 362 (Feb. 24, 1879).

supporting the pensioning of U. S. Grant as General of the Army.⁴⁰

The anti-Hayes faction of the Republican party had determined before the fall election of 1878, however, to again base their campaign on the "bloody shirt." That, plus the adverse results of the canvass and obvious voting irregularities in the South, caused virtual collapse of hope that reconciliation had been achieved. A change in Senate tempo related directly to the campaign and to the emergence of the "solid South" as part of a remarkable Democratic victory.⁴¹

Although Lamar did not campaign vigorously in 1878, he became involved in the subsequent partisan antics even before he reached Washington for the December opening of Congress. En route to the capital Lamar told the Cincinnati Enquirer of his confidence in Hayes's continued good will toward the South. He maintained nonetheless that home rule remained the issue in Southern elections and that the region would necessarily be "solid" on that account. He categorically denied that the Democratic victory had depended upon Negro disfranchisement: "In my state they elections were as peaceable as any election in the world

⁴⁰Senate Journal, 45 Cong., 2 Sess., 406 (April 17, 1878); ibid., 535 (May 20, 1878); ibid., 542 (May 22, 1878); ibid., 645 (June 8, 1878).

⁴¹Buck, The Road to Reunion, 110-111; DeSantis, Republicans Face the Southern Question, 99-101.

could possibly be. Not a human being was molested or made afraid."⁴² The interview made national news immediately and unleashed attacks upon Lamar for hypocrisy and circum-spection. The New York Tribune put it most plainly when it protested: "The South is solid, as the history of Mr. Lamar's own State proves only too conclusively, because Democratic assassins have driven Republican leaders out of politics or into their graves."⁴³ In the Senate James G. Blaine immediately picked up the cry against Southern Democrats. On the very first day of the session he introduced highly inflammatory resolutions calling for an investigation to determine whether any citizens had been deprived of their constitutional right to vote. Blaine's comments suggested restriction of Southern congressional representation might be required as provided by the fourteenth amendment.⁴⁴

Senator Allen Thurman replied to Blaine, and then Lamar rose to conclude the Democratic rebuttal. In a highly unusual performance Lamar clearly acted on the defensive and resorted to disingenuous argument. He counter-charged that lightly populated states such as in New

⁴²Cincinnati Enquirer, quoted in Memphis Daily Appeal, Nov. 22, 1878; Jackson Weekly Clarion, Nov. 28, 1878.

⁴³New York Tribune, Nov. 29, 1878. See also ibid., Nov. 30, 1878; and New York Times, Nov. 21, 1878.

⁴⁴Congressional Record, 45 Cong., 3 Sess., 84-86 (Dec. 11, 1878).

England neutralized larger population centers elsewhere and therefore had no cause for complaint, and he categorically denied that Negroes were proscribed in the South. In his words, there was not "a single right of freedom or of citizenship belonging to the black race of the South that was not as secure and as well enjoyed as that of the proudest and freest white in the land."⁴⁵ The leadership of whites, he said, derived from their "intelligence and virtue and sagacity" as contrasted to the Negro's ignorance.

More striking even than this ill-considered argument, Lamar turned his frustration to sharp repartee, a mode of debate unbecoming the conciliator. Smarting from Blaine's ridicule of his reasoning, Lamar spleenfully replied:

"That will do pretty well for wit and pretty well for the Senator's peculiar species of perversion, but it will not do for the truth. . . ."⁴⁶ The next day Lamar wrote his old friend Henry Watterson, and referring to the debate said, "My point told." And, he added: "I will give them

⁴⁵Congressional Record, 45 Cong., 3 Sess., 87-89 (Dec. 11, 1878).

⁴⁶Ibid. In an interview with the Washington Post a few days later, Lamar said of the "southern outrages" that: "The recent election in Mississippi was a peaceable and orderly as any ever held in the Union. Every man, black or white, voted as he pleased, and every vote was honestly counted." The interview is quoted in Memphis Daily Appeal, Dec. 26, 1878.

more of it."⁴⁷

Lamar and Blaine continued their colloquy in the March 1879 issue of the North American Review as participants in a symposium on Negro suffrage. The format was, of course, more formal and polite than their encounter in the Senate. In replying to Blaine's essay, Lamar quietly granted that enfranchisement of the Negro had been necessary and desirable, but after that he disputed his antagonist point by point. Lamar contended that the Negro had learned through his political experience to look upon the white Southerner as his natural ally and preceptor. But still "years must pass before the ballot will have educated him fully into self-restraint, temperate citizenship. . . ." and "at this state of its progress the negro vote cannot intelligently direct itself." In the not too distant future, however, Lamar believed that political issues would divide white men in the South and that the Negro vote would also divide--with the blessing of the whites. Until then the Negro's freedom and equality before the law would be complete, and his franchise a protection against exploitation. Lamar closed his essay with the self-satisfying

⁴⁷Lamar to Henry Watterson, Dec. 12, 1878, in Henry Watterson Papers (Manuscript Division, Library of Congress). Interestingly, Lamar later wrote President-elect Garfield a long and complimentary letter recommending Blaine for the Secretaryship of State. See Lamar to James G. Garfield, Jan. 3, 1880 [sic], in James A. Garfield Papers (Manuscript Division, Library of Congress).

judgment that whatever problems should arise, "the proper remedies for whatever of evil or error may attend the working out of this grave and critical experiment. . . . " should be left to home rule.⁴⁸

Back in Congress Lamar voted in support of this practical conclusion. There he opposed any interference from the federal government to enforce Negro rights. He voted to kill a resolution to enforce the war amendments⁴⁹ and for state rather than federal punishment under the fifteenth amendment.⁵⁰ Late in February 1879, when an army appropriations bill came up from the House, Lamar and the

⁴⁸A Symposium: "Ought the Negro to be Disfranchised," in North American Review, CXXVIII (March 1879), 225-283. Other participants included: Wade Hampton, James Garfield, Alexander Stephens, Wendell Phillips, Montgomery Blair, and Thomas A. Hendricks. See Rayford W. Logan, The Betrayal of the Negro from Rutherford B. Hayes to Woodrow Wilson (New York, 1965), especially his chapter "The Negro in Literary Magazines," which discusses this symposium in perspective. Gaston, "The New South Creed, 1865-1900," 108-125, discusses the race position of men like Lamar and Wade Hampton as characteristic of the "New South" leadership. These men were moderate in their position between racial equality espoused by writers such as G. W. Cable and reactionaries who held that the Negro was suited by nature only to the condition of slavery. In Gaston's opinion the "New South" leaders were able to accommodate their attitude with the American creed of freedom and equality. A formula evolved as follows: "In return for acquiescence in white domination, the Negroes were entitled to expect exercise of the ballot as a means of developing their sense of responsibility." See Gaston, p. 125.

⁴⁹Senate Journal, 45 Cong., 3 Sess., 163 (Jan. 24, 1879); ibid., 182 (Jan. 29, 1879); ibid., 218-222 (Feb. 5, 1879).

⁵⁰Ibid., 221-222 (Feb. 5, 1879).

Democratic Senators voted to keep House attached riders negating federal authority to use troops for policing congressional elections. The effort failed, but the Democratic House refused the Senate version; and Congress adjourned without passing an army appropriation.⁵¹ Clearly Hayes would be forced to call a special session.

Bad blood between Southern Democrats and Republican partisans boiled again just before Congress adjourned in the spring of 1879, when an effort was made to exclude former Confederates from a Mexican War pension bill.⁵² After that attempt failed, Senator George Hoar offered an amendment exempting Jefferson Davis alone from the pension benefits. As always Davis's champion, Lamar immediately charged Hoar with wanton insult. After being called to order by the chair for his language--only to be vindicated by Senate vote, Lamar excoriated Hoar for the injustice to Davis, contending that all Confederates stood exactly the same in the matter of disloyalty. The heat of debate carried Lamar to extraordinary lengths. Referring to the attack on Davis, Lamar turned on Hoar in an impromptu denunciation which must have cheered the former Confederate President's heart:

⁵¹Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes, 482; Senate Journal, 45 Cong., 3 Sess., 359 (Feb. 24, 1879); ibid., 434, 435 (March 1, 1879).

⁵²Senate Journal, 45 Cong., 3 Sess., 448 (March 1, 1879).

Sir, it required no courage to do that; it required no magnanimity to do it: it required no courtesy. It only required hate, bitter, malignant, sectional feeling, and a sense of personal impunity. The gentleman, I believe, takes rank among Christian statesmen. He might have learned a better lesson even from the pages of mythology. When Prometheus was bound to the rock it was not an eagle, it was a vulture, that buried his beak in the tortured vitals of the victim.⁵³

When Hayes immediately recalled Congress into special session in April 1879 to pass the army appropriation bill, the sectional question quickly cropped up. The new Democratic majority proceeded to pass the House army appropriation and with it the riders disallowing use of the army at

⁵³Congressional Record, 45 Cong., 3 Sess., 2227-2229 (March 1, 1879). In a letter of March 15, 1879, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 371, Davis thanked Lamar for his defense. Their personal relationship during this period was, however, somewhat unsteady. Davis had written a letter clearly aimed at Lamar's refusal to abide by the Mississippi legislature's instructions on the Bland-Allison Act, and this was published in the Jackson Clarion, Jan. 15, 1879. And even before that, Davis was apparently irritated by what he considered to be a slight from Lamar. In a letter to John Gordon, Nov. 11, 1877, Lamar had urged Gordon to go to Europe as a representative of Southern industry. Lamar had disqualified himself from the mission because the state of Mississippi during the ante-bellum period had repudiated certain debts and had thereby incurred an unenviable reputation on this score. Davis apparently believed for a time that Lamar's reference to the repudiation was in some way a reflection upon him. The difficulty was ironed out to the satisfaction of all after an involved round of letters. See Lamar to John B. Gordon, Nov. 11, 1877, quoted in Memphis Daily Appeal, Dec. 11, 1877; Lamar to W. T. Walthall, June 29, 1878, quoted in Rowland, ed., Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist, VIII, 222-223; Gordon to Walthall, Aug. 21, 1878, ibid., VIII, 258-259; and Jefferson Davis to Gordon, Aug. 28, 1878, ibid., VIII, 267-268.

the polls or use of federal marshals to enforce election laws.⁵⁴ Hayes vetoed the bill. New measures passed without the objectionable provisions about civilian authorities, but still prohibiting military interference at polling places. Hayes again vetoed. Finally a compromise measure which amounted to a victory for Hayes passed through both Houses after the special session dragged on until late June; but Lamar did not vote on the final question.⁵⁵

Lamar did not participate in the acrimonious struggle over federal power to police elections until near the end of the debate. While Congress raged over the army appropriations bill, Lamar was pushing through a measure to establish a Mississippi River Commission. Since he required only a short time to bring the bill to a vote on June 18, he received unanimous consent to delay the army appropriations debate. Following favorable action on the Commission bill, the Democrats attempted to force a vote on the army appropriations bill, but the Republicans filibustered to frustrate the effort. The impasse lasted on and on. Sometime around midnight Senator Conkling charged that the

⁵⁴Senate Journal, 46 Cong., 1 Sess., 99 (April 24, 1879); ibid., 106-107 (April 25, 1879); Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes, 482.

⁵⁵Senate Journal, 46 Cong., 1 Sess., 131 (May 8, 1879); ibid., 136 (May 9, 1879); ibid., 245 (June 21, 1879); Barnard, Rutherford B. Hayes, 482-483.

Democrats had acted in bad faith and contrary to the understanding on Lamar's bill by forcing a vote on the army appropriation that same day. The accusation proved too much for Lamar.⁵⁶ His reply to Conkling more resembled the fiery debate with Blaine in the previous session than any other utterances since the Civil War. Fairly exuding anger and according to the New York Times "in a voice almost choked with passion," Lamar tersely explained his own understanding of the matter and then called Conkling's hand:

With reference to the charge of bad faith that the Senator from New York has intimated toward those of us who have been engaged in opposing these motions to adjourn, I have only to say that if I am not superior to such attacks from such a source I have lived in vain. It is not my habit to indulge in personalities; but I desire to say here to the Senator that in intimating anything inconsistent, as he has done, with perfect good faith, I pronounce his statement a falsehood, which I repel with all the unmitigated contempt that I feel for the author of it.⁵⁷

Conkling replied to the point:

. . . I have only to say that if the Senator--the member from Mississippi--did impute or intended to impute to me a falsehood, nothing except the fact that this is the Senate would prevent my denouncing him as a blackguard, and a coward.⁵⁸

According to the New York Times: "When Mr. Lamar rose to

⁵⁶Senate Journal, 46 Cong., 1 Sess., 226-235 (June 18, 1879); Mayes, Lamar, 379-382. Mayes, p. 379, suggests that Lamar had prepared himself in advance for an attack from Conkling.

⁵⁷Congressional Record, 46 Cong., 1 Sess., 2143-2144 (June 18, 1879).

⁵⁸Ibid.

reply he was livid with passion and trembling with suppressed rage. He replied, however, with a calmness which was forced and a dignity which was assumed."⁵⁹

Mr. President, I have only to say that the Senator from New York understood me correctly. I did mean to say just precisely the words, and all that they imported. I beg pardon of the Senate for the unparliamentary language. It was very harsh; it was very severe; it was such as no good man would deserve, and no brave man would wear.⁶⁰

Both the New York Times and the New York Tribune speculated about the possibilities of a duel between the two men; but apparently the principals made no plans for it. Lamar himself did not believe that Conkling would present a challenge but felt that "the matter is not yet over. A great deal will depend on what the Times, Tribune, Herald, and Sun of to-day will say. If they say fight, he will do so; but if the sentiment at the North says he has done enough, he will resort to some other method to get me down."⁶¹

An interesting question arises as to Lamar's motivation in allowing himself to be involved in such an unseemly fray. His practice over the years until the forty-fifth Congress had been to uphold the highest standard of decorum

⁵⁹New York Times, June 20, 1879.

⁶⁰Congressional Record, 46 Cong., 1 Sess., 2143-2144 (June 18, 1879).

⁶¹Lamar to E. C. Walthall, June 20, 1879, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 386-387.

and to remain aloof from participation in vituperative partisan struggles--especially those involving sectional questions. Now either he felt secure enough to fall back upon the ways of the fire-eater, or he had become weak enough to be dragged into an outburst totally inconsistent with his hitherto primary mission of reconciliation. Even granting, as Lamar maintained, that Conkling "had determined to make me take part in the silly and unwise discussions that our party has been carrying on, . . . "62 the about face was a mysterious one.

A friend of Lamar's, S. A. Jonas, editor of the Aberdeen Examiner, may have unwittingly touched upon the underlying explanation in a letter written almost two weeks later:

You will remember that I assured you [afterwards] . . . that its effect would be to crystalize public sentiment in our beloved State and rally your people in solid phalanx to you; but I had no conception of the strength of the sentiment until I reached home, and no idea that the enthusiasm which I believed would pervade the hearts of all political allies would be shared alike by friends and foes in politics; but so I found it. . . . the timely rebuke . . . was regarded as a vindication of Mississippi upon the floor of the Senate, and, as such, entitling you to the thanks of Mississippians 'without regard to race, color,' or political affiliation.⁶³

⁶²Lamar to E. C. Walthall, June 20, 1879, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 386-387.

⁶³S. A. Jonas to Lamar, July 1, 1879, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 390-391.

Lamar may have had such political motivation, but there is no evidence to support the supposition.⁶⁴ There can be little doubt, however, that he at this time very much needed a boost with his constituency. He was under constant fire by 1879 for his positions on the electoral college in 1876-77, his disobedience to instructions on the silver question, and his espousal of a moderate position in face of provocation from "bloody shirt" politicians. It is also true that while campaigning on the hustings later in 1879, Lamar indulged in the same kind of reverse "bloody shirt" tactics--perhaps to convince the people of his soundness on the vital issues.

Fortunately for Lamar, the record he carried home was not entirely dependent upon name swapping with radical Republicans. The special session yielded several distinguished achievements both immediate and long range in importance. Since the Democrats controlled the forty-sixth Congress which convened in March 1879, Lamar improved upon his committee assignments. He succeeded the senior Mississippi Senator, Blanche K. Bruce, as chairman of the Mississippi River Committee and became a member of the Judiciary and the Railroad committees, and later in the session he filled a vacancy on the Education and Labor

⁶⁴To Walthall he wrote: "But for once in my life I feel that I am right, even in the most extreme alternative." See Lamar to E. C. Walthall, June 20, 1879, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 386-387.

Committee. In addition to these standing committees he again served on the Select Committee on Epidemic Diseases. These appointments carried over through the second and third sessions and gave Lamar considerable influence.⁶⁵

During the brief special session Lamar's proudest accomplishment in terms of economic benefit for Mississippi and the South, had been the establishment of the Mississippi River Improvement Commission.⁶⁶ As chairman of the Mississippi River Committee he first introduced legislation in the Senate, and then took up the House version and saw it through passage on June 18 amidst the disrupting effects of the debate on army appropriations.⁶⁷ As a lesser achievement perhaps, but still important in the aftermath of the terrible yellow fever epidemic of 1878, Lamar had the satisfaction of joining the Democratic majority in passing a bill to prevent spread of infectious diseases.⁶⁸

⁶⁵Congressional Record, 46 Cong., 1 Sess., 15 (March 19, 1879); ibid., 435 (April 15, 1879); ibid., 46 Cong., 2 Sess., 19 (Dec. 3, 1879); ibid., 46 Cong., 3 Sess., 14-15 (Dec. 7, 1880).

⁶⁶Lamar to E. D. Clark, June 18, 1879, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi.

⁶⁷Senate Journal, 46 Cong., 1 Sess., 187 (June 6, 1879); ibid., 226 (June 18, 1879); Congressional Record, 46 Cong., 1 Sess., 34 (March 21, 1879); ibid., 2099, 2103 (June 18, 1879). Blanche K. Bruce supported the bill also. See Smith, "The Negro in the United States Senate," in Green, ed., Essays in Southern History, 63.

⁶⁸Senate Journal, 46 Cong., 1 Sess., 162 (May 23, 1879).

With this positive record behind him and the taste of the Conkling affair fresh in his mouth, Lamar headed home to see to his political fences.

When Lamar reached Mississippi late in June 1879, he intended to vindicate his position in Congress and to shore up developing crevices in the state's Democratic organization. He realized that personal friction between himself and other individuals or groups within the party was symptomatic of dangerous division on fundamental questions and that a third party movement might seize upon these differences. In such a situation the Negro vote might possibly be called into play as the balance of power again. The results of such division might return the radicals to power.⁶⁹

Lamar made only one Mississippi speech, at Brookhaven on June 24. Then a recurrence of the yellow fever outbreak and personal illness interrupted his campaign. He took his family to Virginia where they were safe from the epidemic, while he went on to Washington to stay until the press of Mississippi affairs compelled him to return again in mid-September.⁷⁰

⁶⁹Interview in Cincinnati Enquirer, quoted in Jackson Weekly Clarion, Nov. 27, 1878. For speech at Oxford, see Jackson Weekly Clarion, Oct. 8, 1879.

⁷⁰Jackson Weekly Clarion, July 2, 1879; Mayes, Lamar, 397.

Though he concealed it from the press, Lamar was not well during this period out of the state; and in fact, his illness may have prompted his journey as much as the yellow fever did. During the two months absence he underwent operations and treatment for a painful growth in his nose. Although the growth kept returning and caused aching in the head and eyes, the doctor assured Lamar that it was not malignant. Apparently medical attention arrested it before September, and no further mention was made of it.⁷¹

After his return Lamar campaigned extensively in northern Mississippi.⁷² He defended himself again against criticism for his support of the Electoral Commission bill and claimed he had been vindicated by the withdrawal of troops from the South. He attacked the Greenbackers and urged against unseemly Democratic divisions which might permit an enemy victory. And more than anything else, he justified his recent course in ignoring legislative instructions and opposing the Bland-Allison Act in the Senate.

The crux of Lamar's justification was his denial that he had opposed the principle of silver remonetization. To the contrary, he insisted that in the House of Representatives he had supported remonetization and failed to do so

⁷¹Lamar to E. D. Clark, Aug. 31, 1879, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi.

⁷²Jackson Weekly Clarion, Oct. 8, 15, 22, 1879; Mayes, Lamar, 408; Lamar to Blanche K. Bruce, Oct. 18, 1879, in Bruce Papers.

in the Senate only because of the devaluation of silver. Because of world conditions which precipitated devaluation, he favored remonetization only if the weight could be increased, or if by international agreement the value could be reset. To remonetize a devalued silver dollar would betray the national credit and honor. He reminded his constituents of the commitment he had made to sound money in the party's name when chairman of the caucus in 1875; and he emphasized that he had been elected to the Senate after that commitment. And finally he pointed out the sectional implications of the Bland-Allison Act. The South's failure to support the national debt would confirm the charges of those who claimed that former Confederates would never agree to pay United States debts incurred during the Civil War. He also feared economic damage to the South if the silver issue discouraged movement of capital into the area. As for the legislature's instructions, Lamar firmly held that instructions were not mandatory and could not take priority over conscience.⁷³

Lamar also mended his political fences by means other than public speeches. In the spring and summer of 1879, he worked at placing supporters in postmasterships at Vicksburg and Meridian. For the Meridian job he asked for help

⁷³Two accounts of speeches are available in detail. See Jackson Weekly Clarion, Oct. 8, 1879, for the Oxford speech; and Mayes, Lamar, 342-348, for a speech without date or place of delivery.

from Negro Republican Senator Blanche K. Bruce. The language of his request suggested a working relationship between the two men. Lamar said: "it will be a great help to me in this community if through your agency Mr. Smith can procure the appointment."⁷⁴ A few days later Lamar wrote Bruce again asking a smaller favor by keeping a lady employee in office.⁷⁵ The extent of federal patronage available for use in Mississippi is not known, but the Republican administration may have given Lamar extra consideration even as late as 1879 in an effort to win support from the Mississippi Democrats.

Lamar's efforts were again interrupted on October 31, 1879, when his mother died in Georgia--necessitating a trip there.⁷⁶ He returned to Mississippi after the Democratic election victory to face an entirely different, but related political situation: the election by the legislature of a United States Senator to succeed Blanche K. Bruce. A bitter factional and personal battle arose over the

⁷⁴Lamar to Blanche K. Bruce, Oct. 18, 1877, in Bruce Papers. On the Vicksburg appointment, see Lamar to E. D. Clark, April 4, 1879, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi.

⁷⁵Lamar to Blanche K. Bruce, Oct. 27, 1879, in Bruce Papers.

⁷⁶Mayes, Lamar, 411.

prize.⁷⁷

Long before the Mississippi election Lamar had decided upon his candidate for Bruce's place in the Senate. As early as February, almost a year before the election, he wrote E. D. Clark of the Vicksburg Commercial, that he considered E. C. Walthall of Coffeerville the man for the job.⁷⁸

In supporting Walthall for the Senate Lamar showed a surprising lack of perspicacity, especially when it is considered that he had already rocked his base of support by taking unpopular positions in 1876-78. Walthall was a poor choice since he resided in the same area of the state as Lamar--only a few miles from Oxford, and therefore could not offer geographical balance to the congressional delegation. Furthermore, he was not nearly so prominent as several others who had made important contributions to the Revolution of 1875 and to subsequent Democratic administrations. By contrast, both James Z. George and Ethelbert Barksdale resided in Jackson, and could claim to represent the Southern half of the state. Both men had been deeply involved in Mississippi politics and had strong claims upon

⁷⁷The election chose only state legislators. The Democrats won combined control of the two Houses with 135 seats to seven Republican seats and sixteen National (Greenback) seats. Figures furnished by Political Research Consortium.

⁷⁸Unaddressed memorandum, Feb. 18, 1879, signed by Lamar in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi; Lamar to E. D. Clark, Feb. 20, 1879, ibid.

the Democratic party for its victory in 1875. James Z. George had directed the campaign as chairman of the State Executive Committee during 1875-76 and afterwards had served as chief justice of the state Supreme Court. Barksdale had edited the party's organ, the Jackson Clarion, and had served as state printer and then as chairman of the State Executive Committee after George's retirement. Congressman Otho Singleton appeared as a third obvious and willing candidate, whose political service dated back to the ante-bellum congressional delegation. In the face of these considerations Lamar had determined to support Walthall.⁷⁹

Lamar apparently based his commitment to Walthall entirely upon their intimate friendship dating back to reconstruction, when the two men practiced law together in Coffeerville. It may be too that Lamar looked upon the election as an opportunity for political vindication, or perhaps he considered Walthall's personal loyalty a desirable characteristic for a colleague. In a four and one-half page private memorandum on Walthall's candidacy Lamar did not really go beyond this explanation except to describe the man's great ability and integrity. If Lamar's

⁷⁹Willie D. Halsell, "Democratic Dissensions in Mississippi, 1878-1882," in JMH, II (July 1940), 126-127. Lamar also mentioned James R. Chalmers as a candidate, but he seems not to have been a strong contender. See Lamar to E. D. Clark, Feb. 20, 1879, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi.

professions on the matter can be taken at face value, he realized in advance that there would be strong opposition and that the opposition might be directed at him as Walthall's sponsor; he even claimed to understand that Walthall's election might endanger his own seat in the election of 1882.⁸⁰

But Lamar was so intent on pushing Walthall that he decided to stay home from Congress in December 1879 to embark upon a more active role in the senatorial campaign. Enlisting E. D. Clark of the Vicksburg Commercial, he promoted publication of a questionnaire to be put to all aspirants for the office. The questions were intended to pin down the candidates' positions upon leading issues of the day and to show Walthall in a favorable light. Lamar asked for specific answers on monetary policy in terms of greenbacks, silver coinage, payment of national debt, and specie resumption; and he wished to force the candidates into a position on the legislature's authority to instruct a Senator. Finally, he wanted the candidates queried on their attitude toward his own course in the Senate, and whether they would consider election a vindication or condemnation of his position.⁸¹

⁸⁰Unaddressed memorandum, Feb. 18, 1879, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi; Lamar to a "friend" in Vicksburg, Feb. 17, 1879, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 411-412.

⁸¹Lamar to E. D. Clark, Dec. 26, 1879, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi.

The questionnaire duly appeared in the Commercial on December 29, 1879, but the trap did not entirely work. Walthall's answers in agreement with Lamar's position in Congress were printed in the Commercial and in the Clarion, but the other candidates declined to reply.⁸² Probably Lamar had succeeded only in cementing the identification between himself and Walthall. He at the same time burdened Walthall with the unpopular silver position which the inflationists found so offensive. The depressed farmer element had deferred to Lamar's leadership, but to ask that they support another of the same political breed--but without his redeeming features, proved too much.⁸³

Despite misgivings and fears that his presence might hurt the cause, Lamar decided to go to Jackson when the Democratic legislators caucused to nominate a senator.⁸⁴ Since his participation in the state-wide convention of 1877 had caused criticism, he could surmise that attendance at a legislators' caucus would provoke an even more bitter

⁸²Vicksburg Daily Commercial, Dec. 29, 1879, Jan. 5, 14, 1880, cited in Halsell, "Democratic Dissensions in Mississippi," in JMH, II, 126.

⁸³Halsell, "The Bourbon Period in Mississippi Politics," in JSH, XI, 530-532, suggests that the farmers controlled the state legislature throughout the period, but accepted conservative leadership such as Lamar's. She discusses this particular election in "Democratic Dissensions in Mississippi," 125-128, but does not explain the farmer's influence.

⁸⁴Lamar to E. D. Clark, Dec. 31, 1879, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi.

outbreak: especially because his attention to Walthall's election required his absence from Congress, which was then in session. Even ordinarily sympathetic persons must have looked askance at Lamar's continued truancy from the Senate in mid-January.

The trip to Jackson turned out to be an altogether unfortunate one. On the first day Ethelbert Barksdale led the balloting for six rounds, failing victory by only two votes. The Walthall forces withheld his name from consideration for a more propitious moment. Then that same night Lamar suffered an attack of paralysis and seemed seriously ill. His doctor "applied leeches to his head and pronounced his case hopeful, . . . " but he nevertheless retired from the scene of contest. Under duress of high tension and excitement he paid the high cost of a stroke without assuring his friend's victory.⁸⁵

When word came of this turn of events, Walthall joined Mrs. Lamar, and both made the trip to Jackson. He offered for the nomination immediately, but lagged behind Barksdale as the voting dragged on for a week without a decision. Finally Walthall withdrew in defeat, and his followers shifted their allegiance to James Z. George whose name was brought forward. After Barksdale and George

⁸⁵Memphis Daily Appeal, Jan. 13, 1880; Jackson Weekly Clarion, Jan. 21, 1880. The Clarion did not discuss Lamar's involvement but simply reprinted an article from the New Orleans Picayune.

deadlocked on through the ninth day of the caucus, Barksdale also retired in favor of George, and the struggle ended in a saving compromise.⁸⁶

In a sense the struggle for the senatorship resulted in a stand-off between Lamar and Barksdale. Neither had won, and George had been a compromise upon whom both sides could agree. Probably George's political complexion was even more acceptable to Lamar than it was to Barksdale, at least on the major issue of attitude toward the federal government and acceptance of reconciliation. But still Lamar suffered a profound sense of loss.⁸⁷ Back in Oxford and still on crutches, he told Clark on January 28 just how keenly he felt Walthall's defeat:

The election of George does not gratify me as it ought. Barksdale speaks with unwitting truth when he says I have met a 'signal punishment.' It is one which grows sharper & more bitter every day. It is my one great disappointment in my life, & the only one of a political nature that I could not have borne with composure.⁸⁸

And although the two men got along well enough as colleagues

⁸⁶Memphis Daily Appeal, Jan. 13, 16, 17, 20, 22, 1880. Cf. Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks, 52.

⁸⁷Halsell, "Democratic Dissensions in Mississippi," in JMH, II, 128; Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks, 52.

⁸⁸Lamar to E. D. Clark, Jan. 28, 1880, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi. Lamar characteristically felt self-pity: "I want to tell the press & legislature that they need not trouble themselves about me, for I do not expect to want their support or votes. I have done about all in my power for the South & am ready to close my stewardship."

in the Senate, Lamar never entirely cherished George's presence there and sometimes spoke unkindly of him to intimates.⁸⁹ Lamar did not get off with just private regrets either. A critical press spearheaded by Barksdale's Clarion relentlessly attacked Lamar while a number of smaller papers chimed in.⁹⁰ Broken in health, he recuperated for a time in Oxford, and then started for Washington in time for the last part of the congressional session.

⁸⁹Lamar to E. D. Clark, May or August 12, 1882, ibid.; Mary F. Summers, "Edgar Wilson: The Mississippi Eagle, Journalist of the New South" (doctoral dissertation, Mississippi State University, 1962), 92.

⁹⁰Jackson Daily Clarion, Jan. 28, 1880. Jackson Weekly Clarion, Feb. 4, 11, 1880, quotes press coverage on both sides including: Yazoo City Yazoo Sentinel, Yazoo City Herald, and Grenada New South. Halsell, "Democratic Dissensions in Mississippi," in JMH, II, 128, cites: Raymond Hines County Gazette, Meridian Lauderdale Review, Vicksburg Daily Commercial, and Water Valley Courier.

CHAPTER XIII
THE SENATE YEARS: II

The congressional session which commenced while the intra-party struggle raged in Mississippi was not a very active one for Lamar. The possibility of achievement diminished somewhat in his failure to appear during the first two and a half months of the session. And apparently he did not intend even then to take a conspicuous part in the proceedings.¹ Presumably his physical condition discouraged active participation, and obviously he had lost touch with the business at hand. The voting record indicates that even after his initial appearance in Washington in February 1880 Lamar still did not attend for protracted periods. He did not vote at all for almost a month, from late in April until late in May, and returned for only the last meetings and the more important votes. Lamar did not explain this irregularity; illness presumably was the cause, mingled with numbing disappointment.

Despite these irregularities, a pattern emerged not

¹Lamar first appeared February 16, 1880. See Congressional Record, 46 Cong., 2 Sess., 909 (Feb. 16, 1880). Lamar prefaced his one speech near adjournment time with a declaration that he had meant not to speak at all. See ibid., 4527 (June 14, 1880).

unlike that of the forty-fifth Congress. Concentrating on the area of civil rights, Lamar again joined the Democratic majority in the Senate to prevent the Republicans from striking out a prohibition against use of troops to police elections.² Then on June 14, 1880, he devoted his single speech on the session to the Southern question and the Negro.³

The occasion followed a committee report on the Negro migration, or "exodus" so-called, from the Southern states to the mid-west. Negro population movements such as that of 1879-80 were an unknown phenomenon and caused great concern. The migration had been favored by many Republican politicians, and the National Emigration Society had been organized to provide assistance. On the other hand, most Southerners saw migration as a threat to their economic system, and they resisted the movement. In Lamar's home state, for instance, the discomfiture provoked James R. Chalmers, a prominent Democrat, and a group led by him to intimidate Mississippi River ship owners into leaving about 1,500 Negroes stranded along the banks.⁴

In late 1879, when the migration spread from Mississippi

²Senate Journal, 46 Cong., 2 Sess., 464-67 (April 22, 1880). That provision secured, he voted for passage of the appropriation. See ibid., 467.

³Lamar apparently planned to make a speech in defense of Southern election "outrages" but did not do so. See Wade Hampton to Lamar, Sept. 12, 1879, in Lamar-Mayes Papers.

⁴Hirshon, Farewell to the Bloody Shirt, 63-68.

and Louisiana to North Carolina, Democrats in both Houses of Congress moved to bring about an investigation. Senator D. W. Voorhees led the movement in the upper House and was appointed to chair the investigating committee. The investigation would deal specifically with Indiana, Voorhees's home state.⁵

Predictably the committee returned both majority and minority reports. Also not surprisingly, bitter debate followed in the Senate. The Democratic report and argument held that the Republicans had actively colonized Indiana, and that the "exodus" had not resulted from maltreatment in the South. The Republican rebuttal denied both contentions.⁶

Lamar followed Voorhees's defense of the majority report in a speech not remarkable for its strength of argument or for its eloquence, but moderate enough to draw praise from President Hayes.⁷ In measured terms he denied the existence of a large scale "exodus" and attributed the small scale movement to political organization by Republicans desirous of Negro votes rather than to onerous conditions in the South.

Lamar maintained that it was altogether proper if the Negro's aspirations led him to seek fulfillment

⁵Hirshon, Farewell to the Bloody Shirt, 73-74.

⁶Ibid., 76.

⁷Lamar to Rutherford B. Hayes, July 24, 1880, in Hayes Papers.

elsewhere. He also admitted that some problems in the South contributed to the tendency to migrate: especially the easy credit extended to the improvident by unscrupulous merchants (most often non-Southerners, he said). Then, as if by habit, Lamar testified to the happiness and effectiveness of Southern labor and even referred to the lien system as a benevolent one. With considered aplomb he said:

You may talk, sir, of the dignity of labor, but labor can be put nowhere upon such a dignified and equitable basis as it is in Mississippi, where every laborer has an indefeasible lien upon the products of the farm, paramount to that of the landlord or the supply-man, for payment of his wages or of his reward.⁸

These remarks were all the more interesting when considered alongside a personal and apparently unguarded letter written more than two months earlier. In that candid communication Lamar admitted what he could never afford to say in public: that the Negro had small hope in the South, and that there existed no prospect for substantial advancement or integration as an equal member of society:

It is a great mistake to suppose that the warm, genial climate and bounteous soil of the South are the proper conditions to mold that race into active, intelligent, self-sustaining, and self-restraining citizens of a free and enlightened Commonwealth.

.
The only mode by which they can ever get rid of their characteristics as a parasite race. . . is to remove it from the structure to which it is attached.⁹

⁸Congressional Record, 46 Cong., 2 Sess., 4527-33 (June 14, 1880).

⁹Lamar to W. B. Montgomery, March 24, 1880, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 415-16.

That sentiment was a far piece from his public statement dignifying Southern labor. Still more remarkable, in the personal letter Lamar divorced himself from the economic interests of Mississippi's ruling class. If naive, he was nonetheless more honest when he wrote:

Certainly the negro race ought to be placed, if it will voluntarily go, where it will be modified by the surrounding civilization, instead of remaining where it is, with such numbers and under such influences as cause it to pervert and poison the civilization on which it has been superimposed--that is, if it is ever to be redeemed. The disappearance of negro labor has no terrors for me. I would hail it as the beginning of a glorious Southern renaissance.¹⁰

On economic questions as on civil rights, Lamar's record during the last session of the forty-sixth Congress proved uneventful, but altogether consistent with his previous position. His new and more influential committee assignments made little difference, and he introduced no legislation comparable to the Mississippi River Improvement Commission of 1879. He did, however, vote to increase the rivers and harbors appropriation, although without the majority's support, and then voted to pass the bill in its final form.¹¹

Though achieving little of note of an official or public nature, Lamar at least regained his health suffi-

¹⁰Lamar to W. B. Montgomery, March 24, 1880, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 415-16. Cf. Gaston, "The New-South Creed, 1865-1900," 115, who wrote that "none of the New South spokesmen could conceive of a regenerated economy and a new prosperity without the willing contribution of the Negro."

¹¹Senate Journal, 46 Cong., 2 Sess., 648-49 (June 2, 1880); ibid., 650 (June 3, 1880).

ciently by the end of the session to attend the Democratic nominating convention in Cincinnati--presumably en route back to Mississippi from Washington since his train took him through that city. Lamar favored Senator Thomas Bayard of Delaware for the nomination, and it may have been through his insistence or in his interest that Lamar attended the convention.¹² After Bayard's failure and Hancock's nomination, Lamar made a short speech of ratification; he then returned to Mississippi to campaign for the ticket.¹³

The presidential campaign summer proved difficult for Lamar in a personal sense. His own health was yet unsteady, and he suffered from vertigo, as he called it, and some pain and dizziness. And even more punishing, the doctors concluded that his wife's illness was undoubtedly "consumption." He found it necessary, so he wrote a friend, to stay at her bedside almost constantly.¹⁴

Still Lamar took the election train and campaigned hard. In September he traveled into Indiana at the invitation of that state's party, and then in October he toured northern and central Mississippi. The message was everywhere

¹²Lamar to General [Walthall], May 25, 1880, in Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi; Wade Hampton to Lamar, May 1, 1880, in Lamar-Mayes Papers; Mayes, Lamar, 418-19; Tansill, The Congressional Career of Thomas Francis Bayard, 268.

¹³Mayes, Lamar, 419.

¹⁴Ibid., 420; Lamar to J. W. C. Watson, Oct. 1, 1880, quoted, ibid., 419-20.

the same. He eulogized Hancock and attacked the opposition--both Republicans and Greenbackers. His approach to the two parties differed, however. According to the Memphis Daily Appeal, "He arraigned the Republican Party for its crimes, venality and corruption, his castigation of Garfield being cruel though true."¹⁵ On the other hand, he attacked James Weaver, but implored the Greenbackers to vote Democratic as an act of patriotism and loyalty to their section. He regretted the division within Democratic ranks and urged reconciliation in a common cause of defeating Republicans. He justified the "solid South" as a logical reaction to the Republican threat and insisted that the Democratic party served both as a sectional and national cause. He declared the national party's goals to be the same as those of Mississippi Democrats and included: civil service reform, economy in government, a lower tariff, and a reduction in taxation.¹⁶

During the campaign Lamar's health declined enough to warrant notice in the newspapers. Two and three hour speeches in the gruelling Mississippi sun proved too much for his delicate health. Late in October he delivered his addresses while sitting in a chair, and on November 14 the Daily Appeal said: "He is regarded as an invalid,

¹⁵Memphis Daily Appeal, Oct. 5, 1880.

¹⁶Ibid., Sept. 12, Oct. 2, 5, 6, 21, Nov. 14, 1880.

and fears are expressed for his health."¹⁷ But still he saw the election through.

The Republican presidential victory could hardly have surprised or disconcerted Lamar. By this time he had adapted to Republican control of the national government, while Democrats maintained their position in Mississippi state government. He even presumed to advise Garfield in the composition of his Cabinet. Blaine, he thought, would make an eminently qualified Secretary of State.¹⁸ He also suggested that retiring Senator Blanche K. Bruce of Mississippi "would give as much satisfaction to the Southern people as the selection of any white Republican in the Southern States."¹⁹ Also Lamar turned to more practical matters than giving unsolicited advice to the president-elect. When his health allowed, he traveled to Washington for the third session of the forty-sixth Congress. He first attended on December 20, 1880, two weeks after the session convened.²⁰ Two days later, on the same day that Congress recessed for Christmas, he pushed through a bill granting a right of way

¹⁷Memphis Daily Appeal, Nov. 14, 1880. See also ibid., Oct. 21, 1880.

¹⁸Lamar to James A. Garfield, Jan. 3, 1880 [sic], in Garfield Papers.

¹⁹Interview from Washington Post quoted in Jackson Weekly Clarion, Jan. 27, 1881. The article stated similar sentiments from other Mississippi Congressmen.

²⁰Senate Journal, 46 Cong., 3 Sess., 68 (Dec. 20, 1880).

to the Memphis and Vicksburg Railroad Company through government property near Vicksburg. That piece of business out of the way, Lamar joined his colleagues in celebrating the season's holidays until January 5, 1881.²¹

Lamar reported on schedule in January but again failed to attend with any regularity. Throughout the session his voting was sporadic and infrequent, as for instance when he cast no vote on a matter of substance for an eighteen day period in the middle of February; and indeed his votes in that month concentrated on a single day, February 26, 1881. Even if able to keep reasonably informed, he obviously could not maintain the daily contact with his peers which might have made his influence greater.

Despite this spotty voting record, Lamar made a large and, presuming his illness, an exacting effort to see through the rivers and harbors appropriation and other economic legislation important to the Mississippi Valley. On February 26, 1881, he voted numerous times to increase the rivers and harbors appropriation against efforts by the minority to weaken the legislation. These efforts proved to be his most successful of the session, and the bill passed with the changes he favored.²² On that same day he introduced a bill granting right of way through

²¹Senate Journal, 46 Cong., 3 Sess., 82 (Dec. 22, 1880).

²²Ibid., 327-29, 334-35 (Feb. 26, 1881).

public lands to the New Orleans and Northeastern Railroad Company from New Orleans to Meridian, but it died in committee.²³ A few days later, on March 3, 1881, just before the session ended, he brought up a bill to allow the Cherokee and Arkansas Railroad access through the Indian Territory. In arguing for the measure Lamar disputed with Henry Dawes, champion of Indian rights, and other senators who believed the legislation contrary to the existing treaty arrangement. Lamar's broad interpretation of the treaty provided that explicit consent from the Indians was not necessary; but he could not push the bill through before the end of the session.²⁴

Since debate was sharply curtailed for lack of time, Lamar's attitude toward the complex and confused Indian question cannot be definitely separated from the economic aspect of the Cherokee and Arkansas Railroad bill. One may only surmise that his support of the railroad may have outweighed any consideration he might have had for Indian rights. Only one other vote of the session and one of the previous session had bearing on this attitude. Late in January 1881 Lamar had voted with Dawes and against the majority in favor of amending an unsuccessful general

²³Congressional Record, 46 Cong., 3 Sess., 2108 (Feb. 26, 1881).

²⁴Ibid., 2377-78, 2407, 2416-17 (March 3, 1881); Senate Journal, 46 Cong., 3 Sess., 373, 386, 389 (March 3, 1881).

Indian severalty bill to give citizenship to the Indians.²⁵
 In the previous session he had voted with the majority to open the Ute Reservation in Colorado to white settlement and for severalty distribution of the remaining tribal lands among individual Indians.²⁶ Since he did not participate in the debates upon the merits of severalty and citizenship, it is not clear whether he at this date looked upon them as reforms, as some did, or only as measures to open up reservation lands to white settlers, as others did.²⁷ These questions had not been defined by 1881, and Lamar indicated little moral concern for the interest of the Indians.

Lamar made only one other speech during the session, and that was his single foray on the Southern question. Actually he raised the Southern banner himself without provocation--either to advance his moderate position or to call attention to his presence. When Republican senators

²⁵Senate Journal, 46 Cong., 3 Sess., 165 (Jan. 26, 1881). This was a vote against westerners who objected to any change in the Indian's status. Lamar, as Secretary of Interior in 1885, opposed immediate citizenship as being dangerous for the Indian's welfare. The contradiction is not clear. See Annual Report, Secretary of Interior, 1885, p. 25.

²⁶Senate Journal, 46 Cong., 2 Sess., 420, 425-26 (April 12, 1880).

²⁷On the general confusion of motives on these issues see Loring B. Priest, Uncle Sam's Stepchildren, the Reformation of United States Indian Policy, 1865-1887 (New Brunswick, N. J., 1942), 189-92, 208-11. Priest maintains that the enemies and friends of the Indian often voted together during this period for opposing reasons.

tried to pass a bill retiring U. S. Grant from the army with pension, all Democratic members except Lamar opposed the motion.²⁸ He made a short speech in which he held that the general's military service entitled him to the pension, that it was not properly a political question, and that it had no sectional overtones whatever.²⁹ These sentiments presumably did not hurt Lamar's now dimming image as an impartial reconciliator. On the other hand, his critics at home jumped at a new opportunity.³⁰

The inauguration of President Garfield and the calling of Congress in special session began a highly partisan struggle for control of the Senate's organization. The dispute arose from the Senate's peculiar composition which included thirty-seven Republicans, thirty-seven Democrats, one Independent, David Davis of Illinois, and one Readjuster, William Mahone of Virginia. Davis sided with the Democrats, thus leaving Mahone as the pivotal vote since in case of a tie the vice president would vote Republican. A protracted and bitter quarrel grew out of this situation; and even

²⁸Senate Journal, 46 Cong., 3 Sess., 156 (Jan. 24, 1881); ibid., 161 (Jan. 25, 1881); Mayes, Lamar, 422; Lamar to John W. Daniel, March 7, 1881, in John W. Daniel Manuscripts (Duke University Library, Durham, North Carolina).

²⁹Congressional Record, 46 Cong., 3 Sess., 901-02 (Jan. 25, 1881).

³⁰E.g., Jackson Weekly Clarion, Feb. 9, 1881, opposed Lamar's position.

when Mahone went with the Republicans, allowing them to control the committees, the Democrats demurred and successfully blocked replacement of their own Senate administrative officers with Republicans.³¹ The Democratic effort was clearly obstructionist in intent; Lamar felt it unwise and opposed it in caucus. He nevertheless voted regularly with his party to frustrate the Republicans and to the exclusion of all other business.³²

The Democratic filibuster provoked the Republicans to attack Southern senators and their state governments, contending that Southern elections permitted intimidation and perversion of constitutional processes. On April 1 Lamar put aside his earlier misgivings and ignored his failing physical strength to enter the rejoinder against his Republican tormentors. He castigated Republican tactics as purely partisan and as an effort to court the Readjusters of Virginia by electing one of them to an administrative position. Lamar devoted the balance of this lengthy speech to a defense of the "solid South" which the Republicans, working through the Readjusters, were intent upon breaking. His chief point was that the "solid South" could never dominate the country against the will of the more populous

³¹DeSantis, Republicans Face the Southern Question, 144-46.

³²Mayes, Lamar, 426; Senate Journal, 46 Cong., 3 Sess., passim. The Republicans gave way on May 5, 1881. See ibid., 486 (May 5, 1881).

and more wealthy North.

Lamar's speech added little to the debate; and even a sympathetic newspaper questioned the wisdom of his having made it, especially since "He was very unwell, and when he finished fell in his chair from exhaustion, his head throbbing with pain and his face bearing marks of intense physical suffering."³³

Lamar faced another uncomfortable situation when the Senate turned to the appointment of Stanley Matthews of Ohio to the Supreme Court Bench. Matthews had been named to the position first by his close political ally, Rutherford B. Hayes, but when the Senate failed to ratify the appointment it was resubmitted by President Garfield. Matthews was again caught between the Stalwart wing of his own party and the Democrats; he finally won ratification in May 1881 by only one vote. Lamar was the only member of the Judiciary Committee to vote for confirmation, and then he argued in the full session in Matthews behalf. This attitude doubtlessly caused Lamar to appear more tolerant than his fellow Southerners, but of course it also suggested the relationship between the two men during the troubled days of 1876-77. Lamar's critics in Mississippi cared

³³Aberdeen Tri-Weekly Examiner, April 15, 1881.

little for his attitude in this.³⁴

Even before Congress adjourned on May 20, politics in Mississippi showed signs of turmoil and indications that the coming season might bode ill for Lamar. In state politics the year 1881 caused greater concern than the national elections had in 1880. The Democratic party convention would meet in August to choose candidates for state offices, and in November both executive and legislative offices would be filled in a general election. The newly elected legislature would as one of its most important tasks select Lamar's successor. In some respects, especially for Lamar personally, these events were the most important since the state elections of 1875, which had given the Democrats control of the state and had sent Lamar to the Senate for his first term.³⁵

The election year of 1881 presented one major contrast to 1875. In the latter Democrats had stood together despite their differences against the Republican administration. Factionalism stemming from the color line question had not disrupted party effort; the hunger for victory had

³⁴New York Times, May 10, 13, 1881; Jackson Weekly Clarion, Feb. 17, 1881. Lamar defended himself in the campaign of 1881. See Mayes, Lamar, 440-41. Stanley Matthews to Lamar, April 1, 1881, in Lamar-Mayes Papers, discusses the subject.

³⁵Halsell, "Democratic Dissensions in Mississippi," in JMH, II, 129-30, discusses the elections and the importance of these events.

prevailed. By 1881 the need for unity was less compelling, and the old factionalism, made more abrasive by new developments, threatened to split the party to pieces and to retire Lamar from office in the process. Strife over the distribution of offices, difference of opinion over silver and greenbacks, and attitudes toward the federal government all combined as complications.³⁶

Ethelbert Barksdale, editor of the Clarion, led the opposition to Lamar, strongly backed by James Chalmers, Congressman and editor of the Vicksburg Daily Commercial. As early as May 1881 Barksdale raised the old question of Lamar's failure to obey legislative instructions on the silver bill and made clear the Clarion's freedom from commitment on the senate election. Also in May, Chalmers's Daily Commercial suggested that the Lamar faction divide the spoils of office--either the senatorship or governor's office, with the other wing of the party. During the summer editors throughout the state aligned behind one of the two factions or maintained an uneasy neutrality.³⁷ Lamar

³⁶Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks, 18-26, treats this factionalism. See also Halsell, "Democratic Dissensions in Mississippi," in JMH, II, passim.

³⁷Jackson Weekly Clarion, May 12, 26, June 16, 1881; Vicksburg Daily Commercial, cited in Halsell, "Democratic Dissensions in Mississippi," in JMH, II, 131; Aberdeen Tri-Weekly Examiner, April 27, May 13, 1881; Memphis Daily Appeal, Sept. 3, 1881; Halsell, "Democratic Dissensions in Mississippi," in JMH, II, 130-32; Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks, 52.

remained publicly aloof but participated in the newspaper war through others.³⁸

The press dramatized the issues of 1881; but the county and state conventions would actually make the decisions. County conventions meeting in June and July would pass resolutions binding delegates to the state convention in advance. Barring a deadlock, the voice of the county conventions would be final.³⁹ In north and northeastern Mississippi Lamar won endorsement without exception, and he carried the string of counties stretching along the Mississippi River in the west. Only scattered opposition appeared in the central and southern parts of the state. By August he had a comfortable majority of the convention delegates pledged in his behalf. The matter of a gubernatorial nominee was not so clear cut. A number of counties left their delegations uninstructed or threw away their votes on weak candidates thus leaving the issue undecided. The Barksdale-Lamar factions then began concentrating on this office, and each moved to compel the convention, the supreme

³⁸Lamar to E. D. Clark, July 15, 1881, Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi, supplied Clark with information to be used against Chalmers and suggested a line of attack. The Jackson Weekly Clarion, May 26, 1881, declared that Lamar furnished data to the correspondent "A.B.C." who defended Lamar's course in disobeying the Mississippi legislature on the silver issue.

³⁹Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks, 52-53. See ibid., 27-39, for a description of state party machinery.

party authority, to choose its own man.⁴⁰ Thus while Lamar's own career was not in jeopardy, his control of the party and his prestige on the home scene were at stake.

Lamar did not travel to Jackson to participate personally in the convention's proceedings. Presumably he had learned that lesson from his setback the previous year. He was nevertheless deeply committed to the candidacy of John M. Stone, who had held the office during two terms since 1875 and presented the principal challenger to Ethelbert Barksdale, leader of the anti-Lamar faction.

Stone and Barksdale deadlocked for twenty-seven ballots before Barksdale decided to compromise with a group who opposed Stone because of the third-term issue, but who refused to accept Barksdale himself. The two factions agreed on Robert Lowry and offered his name to the convention. Stone's supporters were caught unawares, and Lowry carried the nomination. Barksdale had not won the office he coveted, but he had stopped the Lamar wing of the party. Lamar, on the other hand, had not been totally vanquished. Lowry agreed in principle with Lamar's attitude and could not be considered either an economic liberal or an "unreconstructed Bourbon" of the Barksdale type.⁴¹

⁴⁰Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks, 52-53; Halsell, "Democratic Dissensions in Mississippi," in JMH, II, 132-33.

⁴¹Halsell, "Democratic Dissensions in Mississippi," in JMH, II, 134-35; Halsell, "The Bourbon Period in Mississippi Politics," in JSH, XI, 528; Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks, 53.

Lamar seemed somewhat bewildered by it all. He wrote Clark: "My opinion is that the result of the action at Jackson is not a favorable one for me; but it is less unfavorable than the preexisting conditions were capable of working out. . . ."42 In a second letter to Clark he wrote: "As yet I have not formed a decided opinion about the result of the action of the convention.

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I am left as yet wholly to conjecture." And "If you know anything of the influences which are operative upon Lowery [sic] I would like to have them."43

These results again attested that Lamar's following in Mississippi was primarily a personal one which could not be effectively transferred to another individual. Lamar also lacked the sagacity in political in-fighting to prevent such a struggle. Stone predictably proved vulnerable because of the third-term stigma and could possibly have been dumped in advance for a Lamar man who would have carried the convention. Or since the Barksdale people could not control the convention, a compromise with the anti-third termers after the convention opened might have avoided an accommodation with Barksdale and still yielded an acceptable

42Lamar to E. D. Clark, n.d., quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 434-35.

43Lamar to E. D. Clark, Aug. 10, 1881, Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi.

nomination. And finally, since the Barksdale branch of the party legitimately claimed a share of the spoils as their due for past service, Lamar might well have compromised with good grace and avoided the disruption which followed.

After the convention Mississippi Democrats faced their most formidable opposition since 1875. While Democrats fought among themselves, opposition groups banded together to contest the party's hold on the state government. A "fusion" ticket joined remnants of the Greenback party, dissident Democrats, and the Republican party as a combination of expedience. The real threat of the "fusion" ticket, however, came when it resurrected the Negro's claim to a decisive role in state government. Just as in reconstruction the freeman constituted a potential majority, and power awaited any party which could mobilize that potentiality.⁴⁴ All Democrats well appreciated this threat; and many still felt unmitigated hostility to Negro voting anyway. The challenge resulted in a revival of the rhetoric, and to some degree the tactics, of 1875.

Lamar's response to the "fusion" threat contrasted markedly to his campaigning of past years. For one thing, he departed from his accustomed stumping grounds along the Mississippi Central Railroad in the northern part of the state and moved into the areas of central and southern Mississippi,

⁴⁴Wharton, The Negro in Mississippi, 204-205.

where opposition to his wing of the party had developed under Barksdale's leadership. For the first time in his career he made a truly statewide race. This alteration in tactics probably resulted from appreciation of the limitation of his personal following, as shown in the machinations of preceding months, and perhaps genuine concern for the party's ticket. The small farmers outside the black belt areas, whose economic and racial views contrasted to Lamar's, clearly threatened rebellion against the establishment. Lamar had neglected both the geographic areas and the persons most disaffected.⁴⁵

The content of Lamar's campaign changed with the location. A new emphasis upon race crept into his speeches and communications of these months. While still disclaiming sympathy with illegal deprivation of Negroes' voting rights, his remarks clearly were demagogic in their appeal to white unity and in his suggestion of the calamity of defeat at the hands of a Negro-backed party. Although comparison is difficult, he appeared less moderate in 1881 than he had been in 1875-76 when trying to hold the rabid "white liners" in check. The disgruntled farmers were highly susceptible to the race question, and they provided a

⁴⁵Jackson Weekly Clarion, Sept. 8, 15, 1881; Memphis Daily Appeal, Oct. 4, 1881; Mayes, Lamar, 435. Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks, 40-49, describes the geographic factors involved in agrarian discontent in the 1880's, and the reaction of the small farmer areas against the established Democratic leadership.

large part of the support the "fusionists" depended upon.

In a letter to R. H. Henry, editor of the Brookhaven Ledger, Lamar analyzed the election contest of 1881 and excoriated the "shameless partnership" with the Negroes which intended to establish "simply negro government, to be reestablished by carpetbaggers and a few ambitious natives. . . . It will be the domination of the negro vote, just as it was before 1875, with not one feature of mitigation. . . ."46 His own relationship to the threat as he described it in another letter was "to arouse the white people and to impress them with the necessity of union against negro government." To do so "I have to demonstrate the insulation of the negro as a political element in our system, his refusal to assimilate with our political habitude and methods, and our failure hitherto to get him to unite with us in reaching any equilibrium of power between the two races."47 But still Lamar attempted to draw the line between illegal disfranchisement and use of the racial question simply to unite whites: "I make no attack upon the negro race. I insist upon . . . all his rights. . . ." But as for the whites "I say that they should combine and unite to prevent, by such means, the negro from grasping the

⁴⁶Lamar to R. H. Henry, n.d., quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 435-436.

⁴⁷Unaddressed letter by Lamar, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 438.

power of the State. . . ."⁴⁸

Lamar's white unity message also included a specific plea for Lowry. The rift of August could not be allowed to stand in the way of victory, and Lamar made clear his acceptance of the convention's settlement. At Scooba he told the crowd that "I do not know whether Lowry is for Lamar for the Senate or not, but I do know, and wish it understood once for all, that Lamar is for General Lowry for Governor."⁴⁹ The unity theme combined with defense of his congressional record--namely the Electoral Commission, the Stanley Matthews case, the Grant retirement bill, and the silver bill--constituted Lamar's main campaign message. He made many more speeches than was his custom, and although his tour was interrupted during October by a special session of Congress, he carried his alarming message of impending danger to all corners of the state.⁵⁰

⁴⁸Unaddressed letter by Lamar, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 438. See examples of his application of these tactics in his speech of September 6, reported in Memphis Daily Appeal, Sept. 7, 1881; and his address of November 7, reported in Memphis Daily Appeal, Nov. 8, 1881.

⁴⁹Memphis Daily Appeal, Sept. 7, 1881. Ibid., Sept. 13, 1881, gloried that the "serpent of faction" had been slain.

⁵⁰Memphis Daily Appeal, Sept. 2, 7, Oct. 4, Nov. 8, 17, 1881. Mayes, Lamar, 435-436, copies a number of newspaper accounts which are no longer available. The Jackson Clarion generally ignored Lamar's efforts on the party's behalf, presumably because of the ill will between Barksdale and Lamar. The special session of Congress resulted from James Garfield's death and met from October 10, 1881, to October 29, 1881.

The results of the campaign must have been gratifying. Lowry carried the state by a majority of roughly sixty percent, and the Democrats won control of the legislature again. The party caucus unanimously nominated Lamar, and the legislature duly re-elected him to a second six year term.⁵¹

When Lamar joined the forty-seventh Congress when it convened on December 5, 1881, he suffered the fate of other Democratic senators in a Republican Senate. His committee appointments were cut back, and he lost the chairmanship he had held. Now he served on the standing committees on Railroads and on the Judiciary and the Select Committee on Epidemic Diseases.⁵² And again Lamar sharply reduced his effectiveness by repeated absences. He rarely voted between the first meeting of Congress on December 5, 1881, and the middle of February. He made one speech, perhaps to call attention to his presence, and then lapsed again until early April. On April 10 he requested an official leave due to family illness.⁵³ From that time until July 10 he did not vote more than a few, perhaps two or three, times. No vote is recorded at all during the last part of the session from

⁵¹Memphis Daily Appeal, Jan. 5, 6, 18, 1881. Exact figures were provided by Political Research Consortium: Robert Lowry-76, 857, to Benjamin King-51,856.

⁵²Senate Journal, 47 Cong., 1 Sess., 33-35 (Dec. 7, 1881).

⁵³Congressional Record, 47 Cong., 1 Sess., 2723 (April 10, 1882).

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the middle of July until adjournment on August 8, 1882.⁵⁴

Lamar doubtlessly bridled at his restraints, but his wife's condition continued to deteriorate and to require his presence. As he wrote his "dear friend," E. D. Clark:

My future as a public man if not cut [sheer?] off is indefinitely suspended. I am very sensible of the fact that my continued absence from the Senate, and my silence when there, will excite comments which must pain my friends. But I cannot remedy it at least for the present.⁵⁵

The strain upon him must have been great, especially since his own health was never good during this period. As he wrote Clark: "She wants me all the time, (I am writing this in the intervals of her fitful and troubled sleep) and cannot bear for me to leave her. The demand upon my care is all through the day and night; for her insomnia yields to no medicine."⁵⁶ Lamar closed his letter with directions for Clark's references to Mrs. Lamar in his reply: she would want to read Clark's letter and "she is morbidly sensitive."⁵⁷

Lamar's single speech in the forty-sixth Congress, first session, dealt with a unique combination of civil and

⁵⁴Senate Journal, 47 Cong., 1 Sess., 1118 (Aug. 8, 1882), shows Lamar voting once on the final day of the session. Possibly that was in error.

⁵⁵Lamar to E. D. Clark, May [or Aug.] 12, 1882, Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

religious freedom. The legislation in question proposed to disfranchise and bar from office persons practicing bigamy, meaning, of course, the Mormons. Three Republican presidents, Hayes, Garfield, and Arthur, had raised the issue of Mormon bigamy, and public opinion had come to demand government intervention. The resulting legislation not only proscribed political rights of Mormons, but also provided fines and imprisonment for persons guilty of bigamy and declared the children of such unions illegitimate. Lamar declared his opposition to the political provisions of the law on grounds that it unfairly punished persons victimized by a system not of their own making.⁵⁸ During this same session an immigration bill excluding Chinese immigrants from America passed Congress. Though Lamar did not fully participate in debating the bill's merits, he voted to override a veto of it by President Arthur, who argued that the legislation constituted "a breach of our national faith."⁵⁹ Lamar's stand on these religious and racial questions fails to provide any conclusive insight, but they invite speculation. In one case Lamar reacted with tolerance, while in the other his vote may have indicated a racial bias in addition to

⁵⁸Congressional Record, 47 Cong., 1 Sess., 1212 (Feb. 16, 1882); Nels Anderson, Desert Saints: The Mormon Frontier in Utah (Chicago, 1966), 310-312.

⁵⁹Senate Journal, 47 Cong., 1 Sess., 541 (April 5, 1882).

party dependence. Obviously neither question was vital in Mississippi.⁶⁰

During this session internal improvements appropriations were vital as always. As in the past, Lamar managed to attend the decisive voting on the rivers and harbors bill. Now, however, he did not directly participate in writing the legislation, since Republican control of the Senate excluded him from membership on the committee. Once the bill reached the floor, he joined the Republican majority in successfully defeating an effort to exclude levee work except for navigational needs. Likewise they successfully added provisions for improvements on the Potomac River and for other increases in the appropriation.⁶¹ Congress's enthusiasm in passing this \$18,743,875 bill was so great that Chester A. Arthur, not known for squeamishness in such matters, vetoed it on constitutional grounds.⁶²

⁶⁰On the question of tolerance, there is only one reference to the Jews in Lamar's known correspondence, and that a very curious one. Writing to his close friend, S. A. Jonas, Lamar speculated about Blaine and whether he might actually be Jewish: "Look at his children; they are Jew, all over. I think so because, beyond any American politician except Benjamin he has not only the will, the ambition & popular aptitudes of the American Statesman, but also the artistic delicacy of the Jewish mind. You know I think the mixture of that blood is to the human family like a cross of the Jersey on the bovine race." See Lamar to S. A. Jonas, June 15, 1884, S. A. Jonas Papers (MDAH).

⁶¹Senate Journal, 47 Cong., 1 Sess., 939, 946-947 (July 10, 1882); ibid., 957-958 (July 12, 1882).

⁶²George Frederick Howe, Chester A. Arthur: A Quarter Century of Machine Politics (New York, 1957), 170-171.

Before the long summer session ended, the Senate passed the bill over Arthur's veto, but Lamar did not vote. He most likely left Washington early to see to his wife's health and to rest himself from what had been a difficult political season. There was good reason to expect the summer to end quietly in Mississippi. The only elections being held in the fall of 1882 were congressional and should not have required any special attention on his part.

Lamar in fact did not campaign during the summer and fall, but the political atmosphere was anything but calm. James R. Chalmers, one of Lamar's antagonists in the state elections of 1881, bolted the Democratic party and challenged Vannoy Manning, the incumbent Democratic Congressman from Lamar's district. Embittered by his failure to gain a larger role in the Democratic party, and convinced that Lamar had failed to give him support against Negro John Lynch in a disputed election of 1880, Chalmers determined to seek a new political base outside the Democratic party. When he lost the contested seat to Lynch, and the Democratic state legislature redistricted the state to his disadvantage, Chalmers announced his decision to leave the party to run on an Independent ticket. Hoping to fuse anti-Lamar forces of all party complexions, Chalmers moved his residence into Lamar's own county and announced his decision to run for

Congress.⁶³

Chalmers intended to take advantage of Chester A. Arthur's efforts to build up Independent parties in the South as a counterbalance to the Democrats. Asking for and receiving support from the national Republican administration, Chalmers laid plans to deliver Mississippi to the Republicans.⁶⁴ Probably because of his wife's illness, Lamar determined not to campaign for Manning against Chalmers. It may be too that Lamar lacked the inclination to engage in the campaign, since he had written before the 1880 race that "I have no use for Manning but I dont see the wisdom of making a vain effort to beat him."⁶⁵

Personal relations aside, the election results must have given a pause to Lamar and his friends. The anti-Democrats carried two of the state's seven districts including Chalmers's victory in Lamar's own. The opposition vote throughout the state was the largest since reconstruction.

⁶³Willie D. Halsell, "James R. Chalmers and Mahoneism in Mississippi," in JSH, X (1944), 37-58, treats the Chalmers movement. See also Jackson Weekly Clarion, May 10, 17, 1882. Lamar to E. D. Clark, Dec. 27, 1880, Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi, suggests that Chalmers may have had good reason to consider Lamar lukewarm in the dispute with Lynch.

⁶⁴DeSantis, Republicans Face the Southern Question, 160-161; Halsell, "James R. Chalmers," in JSH, X, 44-45.

⁶⁵Lamar to E. D. Clark, May 25, 1880, Lamar Papers, University of Mississippi, Lamar explained his failure to campaign in another district for Ethelbert Barksdale because of a domestic affliction--meaning presumably his wife. See Jackson Weekly Clarion, Sept. 13, Nov. 1, 1882.

Even more galling, Chalmers carried Lamar's home county of Lafayette. Drawing upon white Republicans, Greenbackers, dissident Democrats, and most importantly upon Negro voters, the Independents wrested the congressional seat away from Manning. Despite a long drawn out legal dispute which continued until June 25, 1884, the Democrats were unable to deny Chalmers his victory.⁶⁶

Perhaps partially because of the success of the Independents in Mississippi, Lamar returned to the second session of the forty-seventh Congress prepared for the first time in months to carry out the normal obligations of his position. He voted regularly throughout the session; and while he made only one speech, it was a carefully and well prepared discourse on the tariff. The tariff question dominated Congress for the first time since Lamar's return to national politics, and thus afforded him a unique response to this particular issue. The only other prominent aspect of the session, so far as Lamar was concerned, was the debate over the civil service reform bill of 1882. This measure introduced a subject about which he had had no previous opportunity to register an opinion. Otherwise Congress proved uneventful without important voting on measures of economic importance to Mississippi nor protracted debate on civil

⁶⁶Halsell, "James R. Chalmers," in JSH, X, 49-53. Chalmers won by only 851 votes according to figures provided by Political Research Consortium.

rights. In this sense Lamar concentrated less than usual on local matters and more on national affairs.

Early in December, soon after Congress convened, the question of civil service reform came to a head. The pressure of public opinion and the beating which the Republicans suffered in the by-elections of 1882, caused Arthur to recommend remedial action.⁶⁷ Although Lamar favored bringing reform legislation up for consideration, the Republican majority directed its progress, and he made no speeches.⁶⁸ Once the amending process began, however, he seemed reluctant to endorse a watchdog civil service commission and worried about the political use that the dominant Republican party might make of the reform measure. He accordingly voted to require incumbent civil servants to compete with new applicants and opposed a provision requiring new employees to enter at the lowest grade thus leaving the higher positions to Republicans. Carrying the political aspect further, he voted to give Democrats and Republicans an equal number of civil service positions. Failing to gain such absolute protection, he accepted prohibition of campaign contributions from civil servants and voted for

⁶⁷Ari Hoogenboom, Outlawing the Spoils: A History of the Civil Service Reform Movement 1865-1883 (Urbana, 1961), 236-237; Howe, Chester A. Arthur, 207.

⁶⁸Senate Journal, 47 Cong., 2 Sess., 82 (Dec. 11, 1882); ibid., 110 (Dec. 20, 1882).

passage.⁶⁹ The much amended bill which finally passed proved that for the rest of Congress, as well as Lamar, party considerations rather than wholehearted reform were dominant. In the end Lamar's vote for passage did not mark him as a reformer, since the bill became law with bipartisan support.⁷⁰

Political exigencies of 1882 also determined consideration of the tariff. A Tariff Commission, appointed by Arthur in 1882, returned its recommendations, and serious effort at revision began for the first time since the Civil War.⁷¹ Despite mounting criticism, the protectionists tried desperately to preserve their system, and long debate and manipulation for special interests followed. Lamar rose to speak for downward revision on February 7, 1883, after consideration had already dragged on since early December.

The tariff speech doubtlessly constituted Lamar's most carefully studied effort after a long undistinguished period in the Senate. The effort to defend an essential principle produced a speech remarkably representative of Lamar's mind in his combination of arguments and his ability

⁶⁹Senate Journal, 47 Cong., 2 Sess., 123 (Dec. 22, 1882); ibid., 128 (Dec. 23, 1882); ibid., 136, 138, 140 (Dec. 27, 1882).

⁷⁰Hoogenboom, Outlawing the Spoils, 238-247.

⁷¹Howe, Chester A. Arthur, 218, 220-221.

to absorb and rationalize conflicting economic policies. Nowhere is it more possible to observe the peculiar contrast of Whiggery as seen in his position on internal improvements against the agrarian Democratic philosophy which Longstreet had instilled. The tariff prescribed the limits of Lamar's economic nationalism and showed that men of his stripe could not fit into the mold cast for them by "New Departure" Republicans like Hayes. Lamar had favored a positive government in internal improvements and railroad subsidies; but he could not countenance government support of manufacturing through a protective tariff, nor the taxation which it in effect levied against the consumer. The contradiction in his philosophy was obvious enough, just as it was in his opposition to positive government action in civil rights; but strict doctrine did not disturb Lamar's system of values.

To confound economic nationalists even more, Lamar served up a generous portion of the agrarian myth as a foil against which to condemn the protective system and a manufacturing economy in general. American agriculture, he said, presented a more powerful limiting factor upon manufacturing than foreign competition. And with good reason:

. . . there is an instinctive tendency in the Anglo-Saxon blood to landowning. This instinct gives to agriculture a social dignity and personal independence which compensate for its meager profits, and . . . the cares and disappointments The magic of the freehold is more potent than that of wages of hire. The thrilling associations of the homestead, where wife and children live in security and peace

and love, cannot be measured by a scale of dollars and cents.⁷²

Use of such folklore betrayed idle romanticism on Lamar's part less than it reflected Mississippi's continuing agrarian emphasis. The state's largest manufacturing interests included lumber mills, cotton goods, woolen goods, oil, cottonseed, and cake mills; and these profited little from a protective tariff. Her aggregate assets in manufacturing industries in 1890 had reached only \$14,896,884. The industrial lag was remarkable even among Southern states. Economically speaking, Mississippi remained but a poor relative of the "New South." Conservative as he was, Lamar could not be expected to ignore such a blatant economic truth.⁷³

Lamar tweaked Republicans about the failure of their protective system to make manufacturing truly independent and self-sufficient. Citing copious evidence provided by the Tariff Commission, he remarked: "If these industries cannot exist without the aid of taxes levied by the government; . . . they are not really industries, but government manufactures, . . . branches of the public service, as much

⁷²Congressional Record, 47 Cong., 2 Sess., 2184-2194 (Feb. 7, 1883).

⁷³Eleventh Census, Manufacturing Industry (1890), 482-484. The census reported other Southern states:
 Ga.-industrial aggregate, 1890-\$56,921,580, p. 378.
 Ala. " " " \$46,122,571, p. 334.
 N. C. " " " \$32,745,995, p. 538.
 S. C. " " " \$29,276,261, p. 582.
 Tenn. " " " \$51,475,092, p. 590.

as the army and navy. . . ."74 He then launched into an historical argument demonstrating the command of literature which, with his academic background, could cause Henry Watterson to call him "the biggest brained of all the men I have met in Washington."75 He piled up past and contemporary authorities and concluded that history, economic theory, public opinion, and common sense all decreed a reduction in tariff duties: "Sir, I warn the manufacturers of this country. The hand-writing is upon the wall of this protective system, and I trust that they will have the intelligence to comprehend its import."76

If Lamar intended the tariff address to herald a comeback on the political scene, he had no call for disappointment. The national and local press responded favorably; the New York Times called it "The Most Striking Effort of the Session on the Tariff Question." The Times verified the image which Lamar himself cultivated, saying that he spoke only infrequently to avoid trite comments and included a

⁷⁴Congressional Record, 47 Cong., 2 Sess., 2184-2194 (Feb. 7, 1883).

⁷⁵Henry Watterson, Marse Henry: An Autobiography (2 vols., New York, 1919), II, 20-21. George Hoar recalled: "He had a delightful and original literary quality which . . . might have made him a dreamer like Montaigne. . . ." See Hoar, Autobiography of Seventy Years, I, 178.

⁷⁶Congressional Record, 47 Cong., 2 Sess., 2184-2194 (Feb. 7, 1883). The debate continued until February 20, 1883. See Senate Journal, 47 Cong., 2 Sess., 383-384 (Feb. 20, 1883). Though Lamar did not vote on passage, he consistently voted for reductions whenever he was present.

flattering vignette of his physical presence:

Mr. Lamar is striking in appearance--not tall, rather heavy of frame, with a massive head set upon broad and slightly stooping shoulders, and with a full brown beard and mustache worn in Southern fashion.⁷⁷ He is a typical Southerner in outward aspect. . . .⁷⁷

Even more complimentary, the Southern press began soon after the tariff address to boom him as a vice-presidential candidate. The Memphis Daily Appeal called for recognition of the Southern wing of the party and specially demanded Lamar for the ticket: "If civil war has not been expiated by a generation of silence and subserviency, when will it be?"⁷⁸ Throughout September and October 1883 the Appeal reprinted a series of articles favoring Lamar for the vice-presidency.⁷⁹ Some months later the Aberdeen Tri-Weekly Examiner even went so far as to favor Lamar for the presidency itself.⁸⁰

Amidst praise reminiscent of the old days Lamar spent a quiet summer and fall in Mississippi. Since it was one of those rare non-political summers, he rested with unaccustomed ease. The governor had been elected for a four year

⁷⁷New York Times, Feb. 8, 1883. Jackson Clarion, Feb. 14, 21, 1883, reprinted a series of complimentary articles gleaned from the contemporary press.

⁷⁸Memphis Daily Appeal, Sept. 25, 1883.

⁷⁹Ibid., Sept. 3, 11, 21, 23, 25, 30, Oct. 2, 5, 9, 1883.

⁸⁰Aberdeen Tri-Weekly Examiner, March 3, 1884.

term in 1881; Lamar himself had been re-elected for a six year term in 1882, and the threat of the "fusionists" to take the state was quiet in his district until Chalmers attempted to win re-election in 1884. Except for the continuing decline of his wife's health there was little cause for the frustration which had been annual in Mississippi since 1878.

Lamar returned to Washington in December 1883 to join his last Congress before retirement from that branch of public service. From the beginning he slipped into the pattern of absences and irregularity in voting that had marred most of his previous service in the Senate. The major reason was the illness of Mrs. Lamar, which continued for a year before she finally died of consumption on December 29, 1884.⁸¹

Despite Lamar's membership on the Civil Service and Retrenchment Committee during the forty-eighth Congress,⁸² he continued to support prodigious government spending. He favored appropriations for a miscellany of petty items and major grants for a Mexican War pension bill and federal aid to common schools.⁸³

⁸¹Jackson Clarion, Jan. 7, 1885.

⁸²He also served on the Judiciary and Railroad committees. See Senate Journal, 48 Cong., 1 Sess., 65-66 (Dec. 10, 1883).

⁸³Senate Journal, 48 Cong., 1 Sess., 209 (Jan. 23, 1884); ibid., 212 (Jan. 24, 1884); ibid., 273 (Feb. 7, 1884); ibid., 298 (Feb. 12, 1884); ibid., 443 (March 19, 1884); ibid., 479-480 (March 31, 1884); ibid., 493 (April 2, 1884); ibid., 830 (June 24, 1884).

Lamar's concept of finance included continued support of government allowances for private enterprise. He supported a right of way through the Indian Territory for the Southern Kansas Railroad;⁸⁴ aid for the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad against threatened forfeiture of land grants;⁸⁵ an appropriation to encourage a domestic silk industry; and the establishment of a federal Bureau of Animal Industry.⁸⁶ He likewise continued to favor maximum internal improvements appropriations,⁸⁷ and further suggested his bent toward economic centralization when he voted for an Inter-state Commerce Commission Act which would give the federal government increased authority over trade.⁸⁸

Lamar's belief in extending the federal government's responsibilities combined with sectional interest in a curious way in his support of the Blair Bill to provide federal financial aid for public schools. In his only important speech in the forty-eighth Congress, Lamar rallied strongly behind the bill as a measure important to his own

⁸⁴Ibid., 813 (June 23, 1884).

⁸⁵Ibid., 908-909 (July 3, 1884). The amendment in question gave the courts authority to make the final decision on the forfeiture.

⁸⁶Ibid., 596-597 (April 30, 1884); ibid., 665-666 (May 20, 1884).

⁸⁷Ibid., 863 (June 28, 1884); ibid., 878 (June 30, 1884); ibid., 48 Cong., 2 Sess., 479 (March 3, 1885).

⁸⁸Ibid., 48 Cong., 2 Sess., 228 (Feb. 4, 1885).

section. But while seeking federal aid, Lamar claimed, in opposition to a proposed amendment, that the funds should be controlled by local authorities rather than by the national government. As in instances involving home rule and civil rights, he insisted upon local controls. Federal administration, he contended, would amount to a declaration of distrust in the South and would lead to discrimination against the white race in favor of the Negroes--precluding equal treatment for all. But if federal financing was combined with local autonomy, Lamar argued, then such spending would promote national unity; the government's program would stand as an expression of good will toward the formerly estranged peoples.⁸⁹

Lamar had good reason for treating the Blair Bill in terms of the South's peculiar problems. The appropriation would be distributed among the states according to their number of illiterates, and the South might thereby receive as much as two-thirds of the total grant. For this aid Lamar and Southerners who agreed with him were willing to overlook the bill's Republican sponsorship and by implication other related partisan questions such as the treasury surplus, which the Republicans wished to be rid of, and the protective tariff, which was inseparably linked to the

⁸⁹Congressional Record, 48 Cong., 1 Sess., 2368-2371 (March 28, 1884).

treasury surplus.⁹⁰

In this instance Lamar did not make reconciliation the main point of his speech. He concentrated upon the fiscal inability of Southern states to provide the common school education needed for equality with other sections of the nation. And while including both races in his plea for education funds, Lamar emphasized the particular requirements of the freedmen. If his support of education for Negroes was sincere and not only a rhetorical appeal to Northern sympathies, Lamar reached a higher plane of statesmanship that day than was ordinary when dealing with the racial issue. The question permits more than one interpretation, however, since federal support for white and black education was sorely needed; and at the same time education, unlike the franchise, did not seem an immediate or direct threat to white supremacy in Mississippi. And of course Lamar must have known that federal aid without federal administration would accrue to the whites more than

⁹⁰Allen J. Going, "The South and the Blair Education Bill," in Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLIV (Sept. 1957), 267 (hereinafter cited as MVHR); Woodward, Origins of the New South, 63-64. Woodward implies that the industrialist wing of the redeemer state parties favored the bill precisely because of its connection to the tariff and the treasury surplus. This analysis does not apply to Lamar, since he consistently opposed the protective tariff.

to the Negro.⁹¹

Lamar Contended that the bill for education would be the most effective measure ever taken by the federal government in support of the freedmen--more so than the wartime amendments. "The problem of race," he said, "in a large part is the problem of illiteracy. Most of the evils, most of the difficulties which have grown up out of that problem have arisen from a condition of ignorance, prejudice, and superstition." Because education would remove these difficulties: "I will go with those who will go farthest in this matter."

Liberty cannot be manufactured by statutes or constitutions or laws. It is a moral and intellectual growth. It is the outgrowth of men's natures, and feelings, and passions, and instincts, and habits of thought. A people who remain ignorant and superstitious and debased can not be made free by all the constitutional guarantees and statutes that you surround them with.⁹²

While advocating federal subsidization of the states,

⁹¹The bill allowed separate education facilities for white and Negro so long as no discrimination resulted. See Woodward, Origins of the New South, 63. Southern senators, Democratic and Republican, provided the bill's main support in the Senate. Black-belt leadership was most enthusiastic for the bill. See Going, "The South and the Blair Education Bill," in MVHR, XLIV, 288-289.

⁹²Congressional Record, 48 Cong., 1 Sess., 2368-2371 (March 28, 1884). See also ibid., 2470 (April 1, 1884), for further comment by Lamar. Johnson, "The Ideology of White Supremacy," in Grantham, ed., The South and the Sectional Image, 68, describes the Southern argument for educating the Negro. The rationale often reflected a belief that only uplifting would prevent retrogression to savagery.

Lamar did not retreat from his opposition to intervention in Southern elections, nor from his defense of the former Confederates against government reprisal. He voted against investigation of alleged election irregularities in Mississippi and Virginia during 1883, although the majority overrode his objection.⁹³ And he opposed amending the Mexican War pension to exclude persons disabled in Confederate service; again he voted with the minority.⁹⁴ His last speech in the Senate carried to the conclusion of his congressional career his dedication to this aspect of sectionalism. On January 12, 1885, he spoke in defense of Jefferson Davis against the perennially repeated charge of treason and conspiracy and against the contention that Davis had intended suppressing any state which might have attempted to secede from the Confederate States of America.⁹⁵

The most vital matter before Congress during these days was not legislative, but rather the approaching presidential election. Despite the difficulties accompanying his personal and public life, Lamar took a keen interest in this matter. He reacted with pleasure to the nomination of

⁹³Senate Journal, 47 Cong., 2 Sess., 230 (Jan. 29, 1883).

⁹⁴Ibid., 48 Cong., 1 Sess., 816 (June 23, 1884).

⁹⁵Congressional Record, 48 Cong., 2 Sess., 627 (Jan. 12, 1885); Lamar to Jefferson Davis, Feb. 28, 1885, in Louisiana Historical Association Collection: Jefferson Davis Collection (Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana).

James G. Blaine and affirmed to a friend that "as far as I am personally concerned I 'couldn't have been better suited if called upon to arbitrate at Chicago.'"⁹⁶ His relationship to the Republican standardbearer at this time was warm enough to convince Blaine that "Mr. Lamar will see that I get a fair count in Mississippi." Politically wizened John Lynch replied that Lamar "'would not if he could and could not if he would, secure a fair count in Mississippi. The State will be returned against you.'"⁹⁷

The action of the Democratic party at Chicago, however, held Lamar's attention more completely than Blaine's fortunes. An enthusiastic home town paper, the Oxford Falcon, reported that Lamar himself would make the ideal presidential candidate for the Democrats and regretted that the sectional issue excluded him.⁹⁸ Presumably admitting to his disqualification, Lamar actively supported Thomas Bayard of Delaware just as he had in 1880.⁹⁹ Lamar had doubts that Bayard could carry the convention, however, and believed that some Democratic senators would oppose him.

⁹⁶Lamar to S. A. Jonas, June 15, 1884, in Jonas Papers.

⁹⁷Conversation quoted in Lynch, The Facts of Reconstruction, 224-225. Lynch did not intend this as an indictment, since he reflected that "To expect any ambitious man to make such a sacrifice as this was contrary to human nature."

⁹⁸Oxford Falcon, Feb. 7, May 17, 1884.

⁹⁹Lamar to Thomas Bayard, n.d., 1884, quoted in Tansill, The Congressional Career of Thomas Francis Bayard, 321-322.

Cleveland, he thought, would make the "strongest man could he get the nomination. . . ." ¹⁰⁰ Cleveland also had enemies, especially among the New York Irish, and faced an obvious handicap. Lamar wrote that he regretted the "Southern section . . . is practically ineligible to [sic] the presidency, and to the great Federal Employments." The Democratic party's "Northern men are incapable of leadership. . . ." ¹⁰¹ he declared. Nevertheless when Cleveland carried the convention, Lamar announced to a home town reception that the nomination was the best possible under the circumstances. He seemed eager for the contest, went right to work on Blaine, and then "had a friendly hand-shaking all around." ¹⁰²

Early in October Lamar launched a vigorous campaign for the Democratic ticket. He and other Democrats meant to redeem Lamar's congressional district from Independent James Chalmers. Congressional candidate James B. Morgan joined with Lamar, Governor Lowry, E. C. Walthall, and ex-Congressman Manning at Holly Springs on October 6 to open the season. In a long speech which he repeated in essence throughout the canvass, Lamar attacked the opposition on all fronts. He singled out corruption, election interferences, and

¹⁰⁰Lamar to S. A. Jonas, June 15, 1884, in Jonas Papers.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Oxford Falcon, July 26, 1884.

financial assessments upon federal employees by Republicans, and praised Cleveland as a reformer who would correct the mess in government. In this and in speeches which followed, Lamar addressed himself to the farmers with more care than usual. The high tariff and taxes, he said, were hurtful of Mississippi's economy. Although manufacturing held a place of importance within the state, agriculture must continue to come first. A protective tariff only served to favor manufacturing interests and the monopolies while oppressing the masses. Intending to offset the appeal of Chalmers's Independents and Republicans who solicited the Negro vote, Lamar warned white men to stand together for safety and civilization. Since as usual the Negro question had been raised again by the "fusionists," Lamar temporized by denying any intention of disfranchising the Negro or any ill-will toward the black race. Whites must stand together, he said, because the Negro's ignorance made him vulnerable to exploitation.¹⁰³

The results of the campaign reflected the effort of the Democrats. Cleveland carried the state by almost sixty-four percent of the vote, and the party carried every congressional district. The Independent movement had been snuffed out in its infancy. Every county but one in Lamar's

¹⁰³Memphis Daily Appeal, Oct. 7, 14, 22, 25, 26, 30; Jackson Clarion, Oct. 22, 1884.

district returned Democratic majorities. The appeal to the farmer's interest and to racial solidarity effectively reversed the trend of two years earlier. Lamar must have considered the congressional district and the state as his own again.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴Election figures provided by Political Research Consortium. Halsell, "James R. Chalmers," in JSH, X, 49-50, 56, stresses the difference in total turn out of voters in 1880, 1882, and 1884. Democratic inactivity and over-confidence permitted Chalmer's extraordinary victory.

CHAPTER XIV
CABINET, COURT AND REUNION

The good news came first from John B. Gordon by telegraph: "Thank God! Cleveland is elected. Turn the rascals out."¹ When confirming reports arrived from other sources, Lamar and other Democrats looked forward to a new era. After a quarter of a century waiting, the taste for power was well whetted.

Lamar knew that election of a Northern Democrat to the presidency marked the ultimate realization for the Southern wing of the party. "Southern men, by reason of their virtual ineligibility, have ceased to project National policies" he had written to a close friend in Mississippi prior to the election.² Cleveland's election nevertheless implied that Southerners might participate in the executive branch and might now prove their loyalty by service. Perhaps even then Lamar supposed that Cleveland might look to Mississippi for help in the formation of his

¹John Gordon to Lamar, n.d., quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 460.

²Lamar to S. A. Jonas, June 15, 1884, in Jonas Papers.

administration.³

Immediately after the election Lamar entered into the discussions out of which would grow Cleveland's Cabinet. He gave qualified recommendations for several Southerners including Augustus Garland of Arkansas, and John Gordon of Georgia.⁴ But as he explained to Garland: "An active support of one friend on such an occasion as this is apt to involve an ungracious disservice to another friend."⁵ His unstinted support went to his friend and ally in Mississippi, Edward Cary Walthall. He declared that "if Mr. Cleveland will put Walthall in his cabinet, he would link me to his administration by a bond as strong as steel and as soft as silk."⁶

Since Walthall was at this time unknown outside the state, Lamar's support of him and lukewarm advocacy of his senatorial friends, Garland and Gordon, probably masked personal aspirations. He protested to friends that he had

³Allan Nevins, Grover Cleveland: A Study in Courage (New York, 1932), 322. New York Tribune, Dec. 12, 1884, quoted Lamar as saying that the Cleveland administration would be the first friendly to the South since the Civil War.

⁴Lamar to A. H. Garland, Nov. 15, 1884, in Grover Cleveland Papers (Manuscript Division, Library of Congress); Lamar to Grover Cleveland, Jan. 1, 1885, ibid.; Lamar to Cleveland, Feb. [6?] 1885, ibid.

⁵Lamar to A. H. Garland, Nov. 15, 1884, ibid.

⁶Lamar to Mr. [?] Bates, Dec. 18, 1884, ibid.; Burton N. Harrison to Lamar, Feb. 16, 1885, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 471.

no such ambitions, but when an offer of the Interior Department was tendered, he immediately accepted.⁷

The appointment was not a surprising one. Cleveland needed representation in his official family from the South for geographical balance, and he, in fact, appointed his attorney general from the same area. On a number of major issues including currency, the tariff, and civil service reform Lamar and Cleveland were in absolute agreement. These common views in addition to Lamar's reputation for moderation on sectional issues made him palatable to the Northern wing of the party. There were, of course, drawbacks to Lamar's appointment, and Cleveland might have avoided criticism had he chosen someone not identified with secession and the Confederacy. Questions were also raised about Lamar's capacity for an administrative post, and especially for the Interior portfolio. The Republican press noted that Lamar suffered from absentmindedness and indicated concern for his reputed disdain of detail work.⁸

⁷Lamar to E. C. Walthall, Feb. 3, 1885, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 469-470; Lamar to "My Dear Sister" [Mrs. M. A. Ross], Feb. 14, 1885, quoted, ibid., 470; Lamar to Grover Cleveland, Feb. 21, 1885, in Cleveland Papers. The treatment of Lamar's tenure as Secretary of Interior which follows is cursory and written without benefit of the Interior Department Archives.

⁸James Ford Rhodes, History of the United States (8 vols., New York, 1893-1919), VIII, 242-243; Mobile Daily Register, March 7, 1885; New York Times, March 6,

Criticism of Lamar's distracted nature and his bent toward the theoretical probably arose to some extent from the actual existence of these traits. Possibly such comments also stemmed from his inactivity in the Senate.⁹ Cleveland doubtlessly knew, as perhaps the newspapers did, that Lamar's absences in the Senate and to an extent his distractedness as well resulted from disturbing difficulties at home. And in fact it is doubtful that Lamar could have been considered for a Cabinet position except for the death of his wife just after the presidential election.

Whatever Cleveland's reasoning or the wisdom of his choice, the events of 1885 clearly marked a turning point in Lamar's life. In a spirit tempered by resolution he admitted to Jefferson Davis "that it puts a terminus to my

⁹A friendly newspaper, the Augusta (Ga.) Constitutionalist, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 529-530, noted three years later when Lamar left the Cabinet: "As a Senator, Mr. Lamar was apparently conspicuous for inertness, when not, at long and rare intervals, roused to tremendous activity by some occasional thrust from Conkling or Hoar, and the delivery of a carefully prepared oration about once in two years. All attempts at industrious effort were eschewed or carefully concealed. He appeared only on great occasions . . . but as a rule he was silent, abstracted, absent, and contemptuous of detail and drudgery." A good many other papers noted his philosophical nature, though his spotty Senate record was not dwelt upon. On this point see quotations from Kansas City Star, Jan. 24, 1893, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 474; Cleveland (Ohio) Leader, n.d., quoted, ibid., 481; Nashville Daily Union, n.d., quoted, ibid., 530; and Emporia Saturday Evening News, July 24, 1866, quoted, ibid., 531.

political career."¹⁰ And the chances were of course very good, as he told E. C. Walthall, that "I close my career in Congress, and will go into private life at the close of four years, perhaps sooner."¹¹ Since Lamar was sixty years old in 1885 and had no real financial security to cushion his retirement this posed an important consideration. Still ambition and the habit of service to party and section were decisive, and Lamar did not hesitate to accept the new and uncertain in place of security and familiarity.¹²

In a sense the Cabinet offered Lamar an opportunity to realize some of the objectives he sought during his congressional career. To that degree the secretaryship presented a continuation rather than an absolute break with the past. That continuity was, however, less striking than the division. Whereas Lamar had made a reputation for oratory, he now became an administrator; whereas he had concerned himself with the South and with the white and Negro

¹⁰Lamar to Jefferson Davis, Feb. 28, 1885, in Louisiana Historical Association Collection: Jefferson Davis Collection.

¹¹Lamar to E. C. Walthall, Feb. 3, 1885, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 469-470.

¹²Savannah (Ga.) Morning News, Jan. 17, 1888, cited an interview with E. C. Walthall who estimated Lamar's worth at \$15-20,000. Aberdeen Tri-Weekly Examiner, Feb. 6, 1884, called Lamar a poor man incumbered by old debts. See Halsell, "L. Q. C. Lamar's Taylor Farm," in JMH, V, 185-196, for an account of Lamar's retirement plans and his Mississippi farm.

racess, he now cared for the West and the Indian. In acquiring a Cabinet post, Lamar embodied the ambitions of the South and symbolized the success of his own policy of reconciliation with the Union. Elevated to an executive position, however, he could not easily serve the section which had put him there. He turned instead to national policies.

As a congressman and member of the minority party Lamar had espoused reform in government. Cleveland had campaigned in a similar vein, and the two men happily agreed that civil service reform should be of primary importance in the Interior Department. From the first, however, Lamar found the pressure for jobs from long deprived Democrats irresistible. On March 10, 1885, a few days after taking over his department, he wrote: "I am nearly drowned in an inundation of ink . . . from all parts of the country. . . ."¹³ And the files certainly sustain his charge--to the extent that the first several months were given over largely to appointments. The new Secretary was not entirely unsympathetic. "The thirst for a general 'turn out' all over the country is almost fearful," he wrote, but "The proscription and intolerance of the Republican party . . . are constant provocations . . . and I

¹³Lamar to Mr. Pope Barrow, March 10, 1885, in Letterbook I, Lamar-Mayes Papers.

cannot blame the feverishness of our people for a change under such circumstances."¹⁴

Civil service reform was more difficult in actual practice than in theory. Lamar tried to resist the endless demand for offices and refused applicants over and over again. And he sought to maintain publicly the standards professed by Cleveland and the party.¹⁵ In numerous letters to Carl Schurz, Interior Secretary under Hayes and self-appointed gadfly, Lamar explained his appointments and justified his actions. He claimed to be cooperating fully in the administration of the civil service law and told Schurz a year and a half after he took office that "I am to-day surrounded with men of the opposite party . . . and have retained them against the protest of my personal and political friends. . . ." and "the fact that the great body of the clerical force is still Republican is due not so much to the compulsory power of the law as to a sincere cooperation with its intent and purpose."¹⁶

Lamar was especially hard pressed to give positions to Southerners. Requests came from Democratic political

¹⁴Lamar to Brevet Maj. General G. Pennypacker, July 11, 1885, in Letterbook I, Lamar-Mayes Papers.

¹⁵E.g., Lamar to Dorman B. Eaton, Chairman Civil Service Commission, quoted in New York Times, July 30, 1885.

¹⁶Lamar to Carl Schurz, Oct. 2, 1886, in Carl Schurz Papers (Manuscript Division, Library of Congress). But he went on to admit to Schurz that he had in instances yielded to the importunities of political friends.

leaders,¹⁷ ordinary citizens, and from innumerable family connections throughout the South. To a "Cousin" Lamar painfully wrote: "I confess to you a reluctance towards appointing my own relatives to office. It is proper to state here that the applications from this source are numerous and distressing to me."¹⁸ Other requests came from Southern "ladies" who were down on their luck and asked for clerical jobs in Washington. Once more Lamar demurred, saying that the work was really not suitable for persons of gentle Southern background and that "I am troubled to death by their constant revolt from the authority of their superiors."¹⁹

Though doubtlessly sincere in his professions, Lamar compromised before these supplications. He dismissed Republican officials to make way for Democrats and even appointed members of his family to office. Among others, he

¹⁷E.g., Lamar to Wade Hampton, March 10, 1885, in Letterbook I, Lamar-Mayes Papers, to whom Lamar replied: "But you must give me time. I do not want to hurry southern appointments, especially when they involve removals of northern men." See also Lamar to H. S. Van Eaton, Sept. 11, 1885, Lamar-Mayes Papers.

¹⁸Lamar to "Cousin," May 13, 1885, in Letterbook I, Lamar-Mayes Papers. Presumably the burden of kinship increased when Lamar remarried into an old Georgia family with the innumerable connections which that implied. The second Mrs. Lamar was the widow of William Holt, late president of the Southwestern Railroad Company. See Mayes, Lamar, 507.

¹⁹Lamar to Mrs. R. R. Grasty [?], Oct. 2, 1885, in Letterbook I, Lamar-Mayes Papers.

named his son, L. Q. C. Jr., who was apparently not overly successful in his own right, as his personal stenographer.²⁰ He also indulged Southern womanhood on occasion, as for example when he wrote Miss Kitty Carr of Georgia, saying "Oh, no, Miss Kitty: I have not forgotten you by any means.
I have not been able to forget you. I have got from Mr. Vilas a place for you, and a pretty good one."²¹

In oiling the Mississippi political machine, Lamar followed his general practice of many years and left most details to others closer to the local situation. His chief instrument in this was Edward C. Walthall, whom he had designated as his successor in the Senate. In a letter of May 28, 1885, Lamar wrote that he would make no appointments in Mississippi save those desired by Walthall, and that he would intercede with Vilas in Post Office appointments. But he asked for competent men for the jobs as "you may know we profess, and, I think, sincerely, to make appointments with reference to the competency of the agents and

²⁰Lamar to Kate [his daughter-in-law], May 16, 1885, in Letterbook I, Lamar-Mayes Papers. Young Lamar also served on occasion as special Indian agent. See Lamar, Jr. to Lamar, July 19, 1886, in Letterbook III, *ibid.*; and Lamar to George G. Vest [U.S. Senator], June 26, 1885, in Letterbook I, *ibid.* There is almost no information on Lamar's relationship to his children except during these years in the Interior Department. He seemed then to be considerably burdened financially by their needs.

²¹Lamar to Miss Kitty Carr, June 1, 1885, in Letterbook I, Lamar-Mayes Papers.

employees of the government."²² In dealing with Negro appointments in the Interior Department, he worked with Republican state officials John R. Lynch and Blanche K. Bruce.²³ In this way Lamar fused reform principles with political expediency; or if he did not quite fuse them, at least he employed both.

After fighting through "an inundation of ink," Lamar turned from appointments to deal with the proper business of the Interior Department. Responsibility for policy, of course, rested ultimately with the president. Cleveland laid down broad lines for each of the department's divisions, and presumably Lamar agreed with the executive's thinking, at least in a general way. Lamar's subordinates, the heads of the Bureaus of Land, Patents, Pensions, and Indian Affairs, all received their appointments from the president. But since John DeWitt Clinton Atkins, chief of the Indian Bureau, and the first assistant secretary, Henry L. Muldrow, were both former Confederate colonels--Muldrow being a Mississippian--Lamar doubtlessly had some influence in these selections. The mode of appointment for all these men and the nature of the Interior Department's

²²Lamar to "My Dear General" [Walthall], May 28, 1885, in Letterbook I, Lamar-Mayes Papers.

²³Lynch, The Facts of Reconstruction, 235-250; Blanche K. Bruce in Boston Herald, Jan. 28, 1893, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 593.

expansive structure and duties gave a notable independence to each bureau.²⁴

Politically the Pension Bureau presented one of the touchiest aspects of the Interior Department. Opponents of Lamar's appointment had professed horror that Union veterans should be dependent upon a Confederate secretary.²⁵ Despite these misgivings Lamar had an undamaged record. He had stood aloof from Southern criticism of pension bills while in Congress; and he had forcefully endorsed a retirement pension for U. S. Grant. To further neutralize charges of indifference to veterans, Cleveland chose John C. Black as Commissioner of Pensions, the man directly responsible for the bureau. Black was an Illinois Union veteran but dedicated to reform principles.

The Pension Bureau eliminated hundreds of unworthy applicants for pensions, while Cleveland vetoed private bills from Congress. While the raid on the treasury did not cease, it at least slowed somewhat. Lamar remained inconspicuous and was probably inactive in pension affairs. In his Annual Reports he projected a politically desirable attitude of reform-minded liberality toward veterans, declaring that complaints against excessive pensions were

²⁴Leonard D. White, The Republican Era: A Study in Administrative History, 1869-1901 (New York, 1965), 175-176, 179-180; Nevins, Grover Cleveland, 216-217.

²⁵New York Times, March 6, 1885.

not well-founded.²⁶

The work of the Patents Bureau was almost entirely independent of the department's political bureaucracy. Although the commissioner of the bureau and his immediate subordinates were all politically chosen and confirmed by the Senate, the actual workings of the staff were little affected. They simply continued to perform their single task of receiving applications and issuing patents. Whereas Lamar supervised the other bureaus to some extent, he did not in the Patents Bureau consider appeals of applicants or make rulings except on broad matters of policy.²⁷ Lamar annually posed as director of Patents affairs in the Annual Reports, where he summarized the workings of the bureau and recommended improvements; but this was obviously perfunctory.

The Indian Bureau offered a much larger opportunity for Lamar than either Patents or Pensions. Unfortunately, however, the secretary had no special qualifications in this area and had shown no particular interest in Indians during his congressional tenure. Realizing his deficiency, he turned for advice to men of more training, notably the Senate champion of a liberal Indian policy, Henry L. Dawes,

²⁶Nevins, Grover Cleveland, 327-328; Annual Report, Secretary of Interior, 1885, I, 56. Mayes, Lamar, 497, credits Lamar with the choice of Black, but no other evidence of this has come to light.

²⁷White, The Republican Era, 221-224, 228.

and Herbert Welsh, secretary of the Indian Rights Association. To Dawes he wrote: "I shall depend upon you largely in trying to do something for the Indians. . . ." and to Welsh: "The only difficulty that I see in the way [of reform] is my own want of familiarity with the details of the best methods to accomplish this purpose."²⁸

Although years of concentration upon Southern affairs did not prepare Lamar in any real sense for administering the Indian service, it did at least demonstrate to his way of thinking the danger in precipitate dissolution of reservations and opening of tribal lands to homesteaders. In drawing a parallel, Lamar compared prospects for absorption of the Indians into the citizenry with the Negro's situation during reconstruction. Relying upon that experience he couched his recommendations for caution and gradual change upon humanitarian grounds. The reservation system, he believed, must be continued until the Indian could reach an advanced state of development.²⁹

Despite his caution, which exceeded that of Congress and the general public, Lamar kept the well-being of the

²⁸Lamar to Henry L. Dawes, Nov. 13, 1885, in Letter-book I, Lamar-Mayes Papers; Lamar to Herbert Welsh, April 16, 1885, ibid.

²⁹Lamar to Henry L. Dawes, Nov. 13, 1885, in Letter-book I, Lamar-Mayes Papers; Lamar to John T. Morgan, Nov. 2, 1885, ibid.; Annual Report, Secretary of Interior, 1885, I, 24, 27. Lamar's questionable attitude toward the Indian while in Congress has been noted in a preceeding chapter.

Indian at heart. He held the federal government ultimately responsible for the welfare of the reservation population and opposed any relinquishment of power by the national authorities. At first glance this attitude appears inconsistent with his view of the Southern Negro, whose control he had helped remand to the local whites. But on the other hand, he had argued eloquently for federal aid in educating the Negro for participation in American society. Of course the similarity of the two problems was less real than apparent. As Lamar himself noted, the Indian in no way presented a danger or an obstacle to be removed. The responsibility was moral rather than practical.³⁰

In this patronizing context Lamar concluded that the Indian's salvation required a drastic change in traditional policy. Assimilation should, he felt, be gradual and preceded by several conditions. The Indian ought first to accept the idea and habit of individual property holding as opposed to tribal ownership; he should become acquainted with English, arithmetic, and the practical arts; and he should accept law as a substitution for superstition and force. Lamar recommended that a commission visit the Indians and report on their needs looking to these objectives. And in the meantime, he strongly urged that Congress

³⁰Priest, Uncle Sam's Stepchildren, 104, 124, 210; Annual Report, Secretary of Interior, 1885, I, 24. In his report Lamar noted that some had characterized past policy as a "century of dishonor."

go ahead with a general law for allotting reservation lands in severalty while the tribal organization remained intact. In his third and last Annual Report the Secretary commended Congress for its passage of the Dawes Severalty Act. He suggested also as a further step toward assimilation that the question of compulsory education of Indian youths would bear consideration.³¹

Lamar's experience with territories and public lands resembled that with Indian policy in a number of ways. Here again, he lacked depth in practical training for the job. His interest had been confined to the question of slavery expansion prior to the Civil War and to railroad expansion during the post-bellum period. The latter provided certain insights but hardly amounted to a well-rounded education in territorial government.

Actually, the territories were almost free of direct control from Washington. Poor communications, political considerations, and lack of vital concern all combined to give territorial officials a virtually free hand, except for rare occasions when the secretary or the president wished to depart from this pattern. Lamar acted on more of these occasions than previous Secretaries of Interior, and Cleveland left him considerable freedom to make decisions

³¹Annual Report, Secretary of Interior, 1886, I, 4-6; ibid., 1887, I, 25-30.

and encouraged his advice on legislation.³²

Probably the most notable thing about Lamar's administration was his emergence as a conservationist. With certain exceptions arising from political and legal considerations, he departed from a long-time affinity with economic largess and federally stimulated laissez-faire and placed himself in the role of public guardian against these same principles. And in making this adjustment he became much more nationalistic in terms of federal authority over local matters. Faced with conflict between local autonomy and public interest, he moved toward the latter. With land, as with the Indian, Lamar believed that the federal government must retain authority in order to arrest exploitation.³³

The crux of Lamar's program revolved around conservation of public lands and natural resources for the legitimate freeholder. In pursuit of this objective he and the even more vigorous land commissioner, William Andrew

³²Earl S. Pomeroy, The Territories and the United States, 1861-1890 (Philadelphia, 1947), 23-27. For an example of this strong role, see Lamar to Thomas C. McRae, Committee of Public Lands, House of Representatives, April 5, 1886, in Letterbook II, Lamar-Mayes Papers.

³³Annual Report, Secretary of Interior, 1887, I, 20; Pomeroy, The Territories and the U. S., 27, classifies Lamar with Schurz as a conservationist as opposed to the political type secretary such as Columbus Delano and Zachariah Chandler. Lamar also proposed legislation in support of national parks. See Annual Report, Secretary of Interior, 1886, I, 73-77; and ibid., 1887, I, 71 ff.

Jackson Sparks, handed down decrees to drive speculators and poachers off Indian lands and to remove unlawful enclosures of public land by cattlemen. As a preventive action he urged revision of land laws so that illegal acquisition might be restrained in favor of homesteaders. All these objectives he declared early in his administration and pursued throughout three years of tenure.³⁴

Lamar couched his case for these reforms in terms of the democratic virtues of small freeholding units in contrast to massive exploitation of natural resources. The phraseology is striking by comparison to Lamar's antebellum association with the cotton aristocracy and post-bellum sympathy with railroad corporations. Equality, he now maintained, depended upon the government's success in controlling the land monopolies. For: "Nothing can be a surer safeguard in a free community against the dominating influences of powerful corporations and combinations of capital than a body of independent small land owners living upon their own freeholds."³⁵ To ensure the desired results he opposed congressional pressures to revise and weaken the Homestead Act, which he considered the backbone of the land system. In conjunction with this defense, Lamar advised

³⁴Annual Report, Secretary of Interior, 1885, I, 33; ibid., 1886, I, 30; ibid., 1885, I, 38-41.

³⁵Ibid., 1887, I, 3. For a similar statement see ibid., 1885, I, 38.

repeal of all other laws allowing for acquisition of the public domain and the resources located thereon. Pre-emption laws, timber culture acts, cash-entry laws, and the desert-land law should all be discarded as repugnant to the public interest because of the ease with which fraud could be perpetrated.³⁶

Beset by opposition from vested interests and Western congressmen, Congress refused to enact the legislation called for by Lamar, and reform continued to be a purely administrative policy. Despite this disadvantage, the interior Department made vigorous advances toward enforcing existing restraints and in reclaiming millions of acres of public domain. By October 1887 Lamar could boast reclamation of over forty-five million acres, and the total might have gone even higher if he had given the less cautious Commissioner Sparks free reign.³⁷

The Interior Department's policy regarding Western railroad corporations contrasted even more with Lamar's past career. A great deal of the land reclaimed for the

³⁶Lamar to Thomas C. McRae, Committee on Public Lands, House of Representatives, April 5, 1886, in Letter-book II, Lamar-Mayes Papers; Annual Report, Secretary of Interior, 1887, I, 5-7; ibid., 1885, I, 38-41. These reforms, it should be noted, were foreshadowed by the work of Secretary Carl Schurz of the Hayes administration. See Roy M. Robbins, Our Landed Heritage: The Public Domain, 1775-1936 (Princeton, 1942), 281-291, passim.

³⁷Robbins, Our Landed Heritage, 294-296; Annual Report, Secretary of Interior, 1887, I, 4; Nevins, Grover Cleveland, 360-361.

public domain came from this source. The land commissioner's strategy against railroads called for a suspension of patents--which would have granted final title--while the department investigated and Congress prepared legislation for forfeiture. In this way he and Lamar sought to prevent companies from claiming land for which they had not fulfilled requirements laid down in the original grants.³⁸

The most important subjects of this policy were the transcontinental giants, especially the Atlantic and Pacific, the Northern Pacific, and Southern Pacific Railroads.³⁹ Nor did the Interior Department limit its actions to the trans-Mississippi area. In the South where Lamar had also worked for railroad expansion as a congressman, patents to the New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Vicksburg Railroad were suspended.⁴⁰

Lamar and Sparks worked together in general agreement in reform of land policy until November 1887, when a

³⁸Leslie E. Decker, "The Railroads and the Land Office: Administrative Policy and the Land Patent Controversy, 1864-1896," in MVHR, XLVI (March 1960), 695-696; John B. Rae, "Commissioner Sparks and the Railroad Land Grants," in MVHR, XXV (Sept. 1938), 211-212.

³⁹Lamar modified Spark's ruling on the Northern Pacific in favor of the railroad, but sustained the major portion of the suspension. See Rae, "Commissioner Sparks and the Railroad Land Grants," in MVHR, XXV, 219; and Decker, "The Railroads and the Land Office," in MVHR, XLVI, 295.

⁴⁰Nevins, Grover Cleveland, 226; Annual Report, Secretary of Interior, 1885, I, 43.

difference of opinion led to the commissioner's retirement--only two months before Lamar also left office. Lamar proved less zealous than Sparks by nature, and more concerned for legal precedents and political considerations. The difference became crucial when Lamar reversed Sparks in favor of the railroad in the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha Railroad case. Restrained on what he thought a critical issue, Sparks refused to compromise; and when Cleveland declined to intercede, he quit the department. Aside from Sparks's zeal, there is reason to believe that the land commissioner had become a political liability. Since Lamar realized that he might also soon resign, he probably cleared the matter with Cleveland or at least with Vilas, who succeeded to the Interior post. Sparks's successor as land commissioner, S. M. Stocklager, continued the same general policies but with less energy. And when Vilas succeeded Lamar the recession from the earlier administration went further.⁴¹

When Lamar followed Sparks from the Interior Department in January 1888, he had established his record as a reasonably competent secretary. If there were

⁴¹Annual Report, Secretary of Interior, 1887, I, 4; Lamar to W. A. J. Sparks, Nov. 11, 1887, in New York Times, Nov. 12, 1887; W. A. J. Sparks to Grover Cleveland, Nov. 15, 1887, in New York Times, Nov. 16, 1887; New York Times, Nov. 13, 14, 15, 1887; Rae, "Commissioner Sparks and the Railroad Land Grants," in MVHR, XXV, 226-227; Harold Dunham, "Crucial Years of the General Land Office, 1875-1890," in Agricultural History, II (April 1937), 136-137.

shortcomings, still the civil service merit system had at least gotten a start; the Pensions Bureau was not so beleaguered as before; and public lands were more secure. In all these matters Lamar had shown a concern for reform, and seems to have honored in general the pledges of the president. At the same time he demonstrated a growing proclivity for extending the national government's authority. As congressman his nationalism usually had been limited to economic matters. In dealing in Western rather than Southern problems he favored a patronizing federal government committed to protection of the public's rights. Freed of the need to invoke states' rights in defense of the South, his Whiggish inclinations carried him further away from his ante-bellum political philosophy and toward the nationalism which was becoming more and more characteristic of the time.

Lamar did not leave the national service when he resigned from the Cabinet. Cleveland had decided in 1887 to promote him to the Supreme Court. Lamar's acceptance of the appointment indicated that he considered his career as a Southern spokesman at an end. Even in 1887 the choice to leave an appointed federal office to re-enter Mississippi politics would have been an agonizing one; and at age sixty-three election to Congress might have been difficult.

The question of Lamar's appointment must have raised many questions before Cleveland made his final commitment.

Lamar was somewhat advanced in age for the appointment; his health was always fragile; and his legal background was not all that it might have been. Lamar had never served on the bench and had not engaged in regular private practice since his early manhood. His experience as a professor of law during the reconstruction era should have counted for something in theoretical law, but there was no public mention of it during the discussion which followed Cleveland's announcement.⁴²

On the other hand there was ample justification for Cleveland's choice. The deceased Justice William B. Woods, whom Lamar would succeed, had been a Southerner, and the section by usage was entitled to the place. Since Woods had been the South's only representative since before the Civil War, and he was a Republican, the argument for a Southern appointment was reinforced. The Democratic policy of sectional reconciliation made a figure of Lamar's type desirable. No former Confederate had been appointed to the bench, and the gesture would demonstrate the nationalistic designs of the party. And of course Lamar's constitutional views were not unlike Cleveland's own. Likewise his

⁴²On these points see especially Willie D. Halsell, "The Appointment of L. Q. C. Lamar to the Supreme Court," in MVHR, XXVIII (Dec. 1941), passim. According to Meador, "Lamar and the Law at the University of Mississippi," in MLJ, XXXIV, 227, he was the first Supreme Court Justice to have had an academic background.

services in the Senate and the legal duties of the Interior Department provided some of the needed preparation.⁴³

News of Lamar's appointment was at first well received by the press, including Republican papers, and in the Republican-dominated Senate, where Lamar had many friends across the aisle. The political situation, however, became much too volatile as an election approached for partisans to forego an opportunity to attack the administration. Republican newspapers, congressional leaders, and local party organizations began turning against confirmation even before Cleveland placed Lamar's name before the Senate. The question quickly deteriorated into a purely political one. Republican leaders lapsed into their "bloody shirt" arguments and concentrated almost entirely upon Lamar's Confederate background.⁴⁴

Under pressure of the debate on his confirmation, Lamar decided to resign his post as Secretary of Interior in advance of the Senate's action. Explaining that his

⁴³Charles Warren, The Supreme Court in United States History (2 vols., Boston, 1937), II, 566; Mayes, Lamar, 518-519; Halsell, "The Appointment of L. Q. C. Lamar to the Supreme Court," in MVHR, XXVIII, 399-400.

⁴⁴Halsell, "The Appointment of L. Q. C. Lamar to the Supreme Court," in MVHR, XXVIII, 400, 402-405; Lamar to Mrs. Kate Freeman, Dec. 23, 1887, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 525. Surveys of the Republican press by the following friendly newspapers also draw these conclusions about the changing nature of Republican reaction: New Orleans Daily Picayune, Jan. 7, 1888; Mobile Daily Register, Jan. 14, 1888. See also New York Times, Dec. 23, 30, 1887.

continued service might be an embarrassment to the administration, Lamar gave Cleveland his letter on January 7, 1888. Three days later the Judiciary Committee returned an adverse recommendation; a minority report disputed the decision.⁴⁵

The full Senate vote did not at first look much more certain. Membership at that time included thirty-seven Democratic senators, thirty-eight Republicans, and one Independent. Republicans possessed the numerical capacity to win, but even before the Senate went into executive session, it became apparent that the party might not hold the line. Final action came on January 16. The vote divided on political lines except for the desertion of Republicans Stewart of Nevada and Stanford of California; Riddleberger, the Independent, also voted with the Democrats. The breach in Republican discipline was decisive; Lamar was confirmed thirty-two to twenty-eight.⁴⁶

The critics had stung Lamar in reviling his broken and limited legal background. He had written letters prior

⁴⁵Lamar to Grover Cleveland, Jan. 7, 1888, in Cleveland Papers; Cleveland to Lamar, Jan. 7, 1888, ibid.; Mobile Daily Register, Jan. 11, 1888.

⁴⁶Halsell, "The Appointment of L. Q. C. Lamar to the Supreme Court," in MVHR, XXVIII, 402-403; New York Times, Jan. 3, 9, 17, 1888; Mobile Daily Register, Jan. 17, 1888. The Daily Register, Jan. 21, 1888, suggests that the contest was not so close as it seemed and that other Republicans would have crossed party lines if it had been necessary to confirm Lamar.

to the Senate's action telling friends of his feelings of inadequacy,⁴⁷ and even later indications of insecurity appeared in his correspondence. After more than a year he wrote his lifelong friend Burton N. Harrison, saying: "I would be an imposter . . . if I were to allow you to believe that I am doing any thing useful or with even moderate ability."⁴⁸ And to Justice Bradley he explained his failure to read an opinion in much the same tone: "I suspect my break-down was somewhat due to a misgiving as to how it would be received. It is however the best I can do. . . ." and "I write you this because I have learned to regard you as an indulgent critic."⁴⁹ After discounting for characteristic modesty, Lamar's feeling of inadequacy seems real enough. The lack of confidence and instability of his early career in Mississippi and Georgia returned to plague him.

Certain aspects of Lamar's Court record reflected his real or imagined weakness. He dissented from the opinion of the Court only thirteen times in four years of active

⁴⁷Lamar to E. C. Walthall, July 30, 1887, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 521; Lamar to Mrs. Kate Freeman, Dec. 23, 1887, quoted, ibid., 525; Lamar to Edward Mayes, Dec. 13, 1887, quoted, ibid., 541.

⁴⁸Lamar to Burton N. Harrison, April 11, 1889, cited in Willie D. Halsell, "L. Q. C. Lamar, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court," in JMH, V (April 1943), 77.

⁴⁹Lamar to Justice Bradley, Nov. 30, 1889, in Joseph P. Bradley Papers (New Jersey Historical Society, Newark, New Jersey).

service, and in only two instances did he dissent alone. Only Justice Blatchford, who never dissented at all, returned fewer contrary opinions.⁵⁰ Equally striking is the fact that Lamar's opinions almost never provoked dissent from his colleagues. There were dissents on only four of his ninety-six decisions, and in at least two of those the difference of opinion was on a minor point. This high level of agreement indicates that Lamar either sympathized entirely with the trend of the Court, or his colleagues' arguments completely overshadowed him. The lack of opposition from Lamar's opinions also suggests that he may have been assigned cases which evoked little discussion and thus probably were not of great consequence in the Court's history.⁵¹ There is no way to know whether such an assignment practice was intentional.

Though Lamar's diffidence may have resulted from personal inadequacies, it is nonetheless true that he agreed

⁵⁰Thirteen dissents for Lamar is the present author's count. For a comparative table see Willard L. King, Melville Weston Fuller: Chief Justice of the United States 1888-1910 (New York, 1950), App. I, 340-341. See also Halsell, "L. Q. C. Lamar, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court," in JMH, V, 76; and Fairman, Mr. Justice Miller, 386. Lamar returned no decisions after May 1892, although he continued as justice until his death in January 1893.

⁵¹This of course is only surmise. A much more detailed study of the Court than this would be required to fully establish this point. A survey of standard authorities on the Court suggests that Lamar's contribution was slight. See Fairman, Mr. Justice Miller, 388-389, as an example.

in principle, both as a justice and before, with the dominant economic trend of the Court. Lamar's congressional career and his long-standing economic policies based upon positive government participation had been vindicated by a judiciary, which after 1880 steadily expanded federal authority in that area. And Lamar himself sat in judgment when the Court confirmed the national government's right to build interstate highways and bridges in an interpretation broad enough to settle forever the constitutionality of internal improvements.⁵²

By broadening traditional interpretations of the "commerce clause" and exploiting the fourteenth amendment, the Court enhanced the property rights which Lamar had always defended. Although the Wabash case of 1886 had already assured federal control over interstate commerce, the Court, including Lamar, would go much further in exempting commerce from state regulation.⁵³

Lamar's opinion for the Court in Kidd v. Pearson⁵⁴ advanced the definition of this state-federal relationship

⁵²Warren, The Supreme Court, II, 625, 637; California v. Central Pacific Railroad, 127 U. S. 1 (1888).

⁵³Warren, The Supreme Court, II, 633, 693 ff.; John R. Schmidhauser, The Supreme Court as Final Arbiter in Federal-State Relations, 1789-1957 (Chapel Hill, 1958), 115-139, passim.

⁵⁴Kidd v. Pearson, 128 U. S. 1 (1888); Samuel Sibley, Georgia's Contribution to Law: The Lamars (New York, 1948), 16-17.

and clearly indicated Lamar's limits in centralized economic regulation. He made two basic points which anticipated the Court's position for years to come. The power of Congress over interstate commerce, he said, was absolute and complete--leaving no place for interference from state legislatures. But he defined commerce in such a way that it excluded the manufacturing process; that remained a matter for state regulation. Even in this limitation Lamar agreed completely with the direction being taken by the Court; and his interpretation stood until the twentieth century when the national government acquired proportions inconceivable during his tenure. Later in Leisy v. Hardin⁵⁵ the Court reaffirmed the authority over interstate commerce once more; and Lamar concurred rather than join in the dissenting opinion which disputed the broad interpretation.

Lamar departed only once from this pattern of extending federal authority over commerce. In dissenting from the majority's opinion in the Minnesota rate case,⁵⁶ Lamar agreed with Justices Bradley and Gray that the Munn v. Illinois decision⁵⁷ should stand to the extent that state

⁵⁵Leisy v. Hardin, 135 U.S. 100 (1890); Halsell, "L. Q. C. Lamar, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court," in JMH, V, 65-66.

⁵⁶Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway Company v. Minnesota, 134 U.S. 418 (1890).

⁵⁷Munn v. Illinois, 94 U.S. 113 (1877).

legislatures might decide upon the reasonableness of rates fixed by a regulatory commission. Since Lamar did not write the dissenting opinion his reasoning cannot be exactly known; and it appears that he acted inconsistently with his earlier Kidd v. Pearson decision. Perhaps he found the political implications of this limitation upon a state legislature offensive; but the evidence is not conclusive.

Lamar's several opinions defining the state's authority to tax companies and individuals engaged in interstate commerce provide a further key to his bias on this aspect of federal power. He agreed with the Court's tendency to exempt from state taxation except in the most extreme instances. In McCall v. California⁵⁸ Lamar affirmed that the state could not tax even an agent of a company engaged in interstate traffic. And in Norfolk and Western Railroad v. Pennsylvania⁵⁹ he held that a state legislature could not tax an out-of-state railroad corporation when its branch office existed for its interstate trade. With Lamar dissenting, the Court's majority compromised somewhat in Maine v. Grand Trunk Railway Company⁶⁰ and allowed the

⁵⁸McCall v. California, 136 U.S. 104 (1890).

⁵⁹Norfolk and Western Railroad v. Pennsylvania, 136 U.S. 114 (1890).

⁶⁰Maine v. Grand Trunk Railway Company, 142 U.S. 217 (1891).

legislature to separate intra and interstate revenues for tax purposes. In this instance he proved even more protective of the railroad's rights than did the Court.

Although Lamar's opinions and votes favored expansion of national control over the nation's economic processes and the restriction of state legislatures in this respect, he did not accept the Court's rulings on strictly political questions. His views on the political independence of state governments remained constant. State control over personal rights, criminal proceedings, and local elections was basic to his creed. In this sense Lamar's final career--that of judge--ran curiously true to his antecedents. The peculiar dichotomy which had characterized his political career also obtruded upon his judgeship. As in Congress and to a lesser degree in the Interior Department, he successfully fused the principles of an ever growing nationalism with an unalterable commitment to political states' rights.⁶¹

In several of the most important cases of this era Lamar opposed expansive interpretations of the national government's authority; sometimes he stood alone against a Court united against state sovereignty as he conceived of

⁶¹Cf. Halsell, "L. Q. C. Lamar, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court," in JMH, V, 75-76. Miss Halsell believes that the support of federal authority resulted from a growing distrust in popularly elected state legislatures. In a period of rural radicalism this point may warrant some weight.

it. In Cunningham v. Neagle⁶² Lamar denied that a United States marshal assigned to the protection of Justice Field, who in pursuance of this duty had killed a man, was subject to federal jurisdiction. Since no federal law provided for appointment of such a body guard, Lamar held that state authorities had jurisdiction over the homicide. The majority, however, held that the marshal's appointment fell within the implied power of the executive branch and that jurisdiction belonged to the federal government.⁶³

The majority made a similarly sweeping decision for federal power in Corporation of Latter Day Saints v. United States,⁶⁴ which sustained congressional action in annulling the Mormon's church charter. Claiming that Congress possessed full and unqualified power over the territories, the Court declared that the government acted legally in seizing church property as a punishment for the criminal practices of that church. Chief Justice Fuller, joined by Lamar and Justice Field,⁶⁵ protested that Congress's authority to

⁶²Cunningham v. Neagle, 135 U.S. 1 (1890). Warren, The Supreme Court, II, 697, called it "the broadest interpretation yet given to implied powers of the National Government. . . ." See also Schmidhauser, The Supreme Court as Final Arbiter, 136-137.

⁶³Chief Justice Fuller concurred with Lamar.

⁶⁴The Late Corporation of Latter Day Saints v. United States, 136 U.S. 1 (1890).

⁶⁵Fuller, Lamar, and Field were the only Democrats on the Court and frequently voted together on issues of federal political authority.

acquire property and suppress crime was not sufficient to include confiscation.⁶⁶

Fuller, with Lamar concurring, also protested against a broad interpretation in U.S. v. Texas.⁶⁷ The majority maintained that the federal government possessed authority to sue a state in order to fix its boundaries. Lamar and Fuller denied the Supreme Court's jurisdiction over the question.

Only one of Lamar's dissents dealt directly with federal protection of freedmen's rights. Standing alone on this question without even the support of Democratic Justices Fuller and Field, Lamar simply recorded his objection without offering an opinion of his own. The case, Logan v. U.S.⁶⁸ arose from a federal statute⁶⁹ prohibiting conspiracy against civil rights. Lamar denied the jurisdiction of the federal court over the attack by "conspirators" upon a prisoner in the custody of a federal marshal.

Lamar's failure to write an opinion in Logan v. U.S. may have indicated his hopelessness on the question, or it could have demonstrated a desire to avoid the acrimonious

⁶⁶See King, Melville Weston Fuller, 147-148; and Warren, The Supreme Court, II, 697. While in the Senate Lamar had held a moderate position on the Mormon question.

⁶⁷United States v. Texas, 143 U.S. 621 (1892); Warren, The Supreme Court, II, 697-698.

⁶⁸Logan v. United States, 144 U.S. 263 (1892).

⁶⁹Revised Statutes of the United States, Sec. 5508.

political discussion sure to follow such an opinion by the ex-rebel Justice. In the different circumstances of Cunningham v. Neagle Lamar definitively stated his attitude on the state's control over its political functions. In denying federal jurisdiction over Marshal Neagle, he deprecated the effect of:

. . . this decision upon the autonomy of the States, in divesting them of what was once regarded as their exclusive jurisdiction over crimes committed within their own territory, against their own laws, and in enabling a federal judge or court, by an order in a habeas corpus proceeding, to deprive a State of its power to maintain its own public order or to protect the security of society and the lives of its own citizens, whenever the amenability to its courts of a federal officer or employee or agent is sought to be enforced.⁷⁰

In this ringing declaration the last phase of a highly varied career and the realization of its principles can be traced to the earlier ante-bellum and reconstruction stages. Unification and nationalism had been established as Lamar had hoped, but his compromise on states' rights continued to the last to be only veiled acquiescence. The irate Lamar of the Oxford courtroom who struck down a federal marshal in protest of legal processes beyond his comprehension was not so far removed from the old and wizened Justice who refused to admit federal authority over masked conspirators who audaciously attacked the prisoner of a federal marshal. Lamar had not deviated far from the road he had chosen while teaching and practicing law in

⁷⁰Cunningham v. Neagle, 135 U.S. 1 (1890).

Oxford. He had forsworn violent personal resistance but little more. He knew at first and at last the price paid by the South, in terms of cherished autonomy, for its return to a Northern-dominated Union. He accepted the cost, but his principles did not change.

Justice Lamar wrote no additional opinions after the spring of 1892. While the Court was still convened, he suffered a recurrence of the ill health which plagued him most of his adult life. Although it seems unlikely that Lamar's physique could have fully recovered from the paralytic attacks which he suffered intermittently after 1861, there is no way to connect the last illnesses with the first. Apparently Lamar experienced lung hemorrhaging which greatly sapped his strength and left him almost physically helpless. This symptom suggested consumption, but he failed to respond to the healthful mountain climate where he went for a cure.⁷¹ One physician thought that he had suffered gradual deterioration of the arteries and kidneys over a period of years. Other doctors believed him afflicted with Bright's disease. Since Lamar's correspondence confirmed symptoms of both a kidney ailment and

⁷¹Lamar to Grover Cleveland, April 3, 1892, in Cleveland Papers; Lamar to N. T. A. Robinson, April 14, 1892, in Carson Collection; Lamar to William H. McCardle, May 18, 1892, in William H. McCardle Papers (MDAH); Lamar to Mrs. M. A. Ross his sister, Sept. 9, 1892, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 568.

lung hemorrhaging, he probably suffered a combination of the two.⁷²

Looking forward to the Court's recess to bring renewed energy, Lamar traveled South with his wife, the second Mrs. Lamar, with the intention of returning for the next session of Court. En route to Mississippi by way of Georgia, he suffered another attack, and on January 23, 1893, he died at age sixty-eight in the state where he was born.⁷³

⁷²Opinion of William Pepper, March 8, 1892, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 568; Lamar to William H. Hardy, Jan. 10, 1893, quoted, ibid., 569. The New Orleans Daily Picayune, Jan. 24, 1893, obituary credited the death to "Bright's disease, with apectoris."

⁷³Oxford (Miss.) Eagle, Jan. 26, Feb. 2, 1893.

EPILOGUE

L. Q. C. Lamar's death was less important to his section and in the nation's history than his elevation to the Cabinet in 1885 or the Supreme Court in 1888. His tenure in both the executive and judicial branches was, of course, historically significant, but his distinction derives less from his service in these positions than from his attainment of the offices.

By 1885 Lamar had come to represent certain qualities and policies, and his significance as a symbol of these was well known both to the party which gave him political preferment and to the party which opposed his advancement. In this single career the course of the nation could be traced from the divisive sectionalism of the 1850's through the Civil War and then into a period of reconciliation and nationalism which culminated in the 1890's.

Of course Lamar had not alone, or even with help, divided or reunited the nation, but as a participant he became identified with both movements. Because he did not reach political maturity until after the war, the latter aspect of his career became much the more important. It was then that he made a measurable contribution to historic

developments which might conceivably have suffered without his presence. But beyond Lamar's leadership of sectional reconciliation in terms of oratorical, intellectual, and political power, the last eight years of his life acquired significance because his personal advancement provided a battleground over which the sectional war could be fought--for some of the last times.

While successful appointment of a Confederate to the executive and judicial branches of the government marked milestones in the "Road to Reunion," Lamar's conduct in these offices embodied the terms upon which the sectional conflict could be settled. He stood in 1892--much as he always had after 1873--for reunion and nationalism qualified by a permanent commitment to political states' rights. As Secretary and Justice he had the opportunity to employ these principles, and to prove that Confederate antecedents were not an insurmountable disqualification. Republican warnings about the South and the Rebels could never again be as effective after Cleveland chose to honor one of them for these high offices. And as sentiment in the North turned away from the idealistic principles of reconstruction and Negro equality, Lamar's national service and Cleveland's recognition of the South complemented the general trend of the period's political and social opinion. By 1884 the "bloody shirt" was rapidly losing its appeal anyway, but

Lamar added to its passing.¹

It is probable that Lamar knew his place in history when he decided to leave Congress in 1885. He wrote Jefferson Davis on February 28, 1885, that:

I know it puts a terminus to my political career. I know that I am not well fitted to be a Cabinet officer. But I think it best for me to undertake the task which has been pressed upon me. . . . If I can administer the department with honesty & efficiency & fairness to all parts of the country I think I may go far towards convincing the people that the South desires to serve the best & highest interests of a common country.²

He showed the same preoccupation with historical implications when appointed to the Supreme Court in 1887. After Republican opposition rose to block his confirmation, he expressed anxiety to a fellow Cabinet member, saying: "I have determined . . . not to allow those Senators to raise the sectional issue on my name. I won't let my name remain before them if they start a sectional angry debate. . . ." ³ Though there is no evidence that Lamar actually contemplated withdrawing his name, it is noteworthy that he

¹See Buck, The Road to Reunion, 267-269; and Nevins, Grover Cleveland, 322-323, on the significance of Cleveland's election to the sectional question.

²Lamar to Jefferson Davis, Feb. 28, 1885, in Louisiana Historical Association Collection: Jefferson Davis Collection. See also Lamar to E. C. Walthall, Feb. 3, 1885, quoted in Mayes, Lamar, 469-470.

³Unaddressed note, n.d. [but about Dec. 1, 1887], in Bayard Papers. Interestingly the recipient of this note scribbled at the bottom that Lamar's fears were groundless and that his nomination was intended to quiet the sectional issue rather than to raise it.

thought and spoke in terms of his effect upon the South's future.

Lamar had cause to fear that the "bloody shirt" would be wrung over his appointment to the Supreme Court. The judiciary still had not been breached by a Confederate, and the issue provided ammunition for the Republicans in the election year of 1888. Partisans of both sides immediately saw the possibilities in treating Lamar as the embodiment of the Confederate cause. If he had not already been fixed in the public mind since his Sumner eulogy (which was frequently mentioned in the newspaper war) as the personification of the sectional question, then the newspapers in the winter of 1887-88 would have done just that.⁴ Even Republican Senator Stewart of Nevada, who voted for confirmation, phrased his support in sectional terms, explaining that "the rejection of Mr. Lamar will be construed, both in the north and in the south, as a declaration that his participation in the war disqualified him. . . ."⁵

⁴E.g., see New York Times, Dec. 20, 23, 1887; New York Tribune, Dec. 25, 1887, Jan. 4, 12, 1888; New Orleans Daily Picayune, Jan. 10, 1888; and Mobile Daily Register, Jan. 10, 13, 17, 1888.

⁵New York Times, Jan. 9, 1888. Mayes, Lamar, 536, opposite, reprints a cartoon from San Francisco Argus, Jan. 28, 1888, with the caption "The Funeral of the Bloody Shirt." The drawing shows "Justice" with her scale tipped for Lamar's confirmation as opposed to partisan prejudice and Senators Stewart and Stanford (who voted for confirmation) standing over the grave of "The Bloody Shirt."

In treating the Justice-designate as the embodiment of the Southern question, the press simply recognized an image that Lamar had spent a career in creating. From the date of the carefully planned Sumner eulogy he had kept up appearances as the harbinger of peace and slipped from this pose only in a few instances. There is every reason to believe that he consciously saved himself for presenting the best face of the South. His reticence in Congress can be at least partially explained by an unwillingness to frequently tax the interest of those who might listen to his message of reconciliation. When he did choose to speak, Lamar prepared carefully and generally chose lofty topics evoking patriotic sentiments such as the Centennial Celebration in 1876, the Electoral Commission bill, and Grant's retirement pension.⁶ Lamar even made virtue of his disregard of the Mississippi legislature's instructions on the silver issue; and in all instances he attempted to project himself as a paragon of virtue and honesty.⁷

⁶Lamar to Hampton L. Carson, April 24, 1891, in Carson Collection.

⁷Cf. Gaines, Southern Oratory, 56. After leaving the Senate, Lamar made only one major address, and he did not fail to project once more the theme of his career. In speaking at the unveiling of a statue of John C. Calhoun, Lamar said that if Calhoun were alive he would say to South Carolina that she should "seek the happiness of her people . . . in the greatness and glory of the American Republic." See Ladies Calhoun Monument Association, A History of the Calhoun Monument (Charleston, 1888), 72.

Lamar's more or less self-consciously prepared imagery succeeded in achieving his immediate purposes, and it proved sufficiently well done to persist beyond his own life. He joined the galaxy of Southern folk heroes of the Civil War era, and thus earned the right to carry his message to generations in the South. Publications such as the Confederate Veteran, organ of the United Confederate Veterans, regularly mentioned him in articles as late as August 1932.⁸ More important to the romantic memory of Lamar, the Sumner eulogy and other speeches have been preserved and passed on to school children in anthologies and in "Southern Readers."⁹ And the South, especially his home state, has contributed to the image of eminent statesmanship by giving his name to worthy subjects including schools, counties, streets, and business firms.

Perpetuation of Lamar's name as leader of sectional reconciliation has not been reserved for the romantic and childlike. Scholars who have at one time or another commanded respect from their peers have assigned Lamar the

⁸See manuscript index of Confederate Veteran, Knox College Library, Galesburg, Illinois. From Lamar's death in 1893 until 1932, there are thirty-three references to Lamar, most of which are prior to 1922.

⁹Examples: Edwin Shurter, Oratory of the South (1908), 230-234; Stark Young, A Southern Treasury of Life and Literature (1937), 370-373; John G. James, Southern Students Handbook of Selections in Reading and Oratory (1879), 142-143; Leonidas Payne, Southern Literary Readings (1922), 198-208.

role he chose for himself. When historical scholarship led by William Dunning turned toward the rehabilitation of the South at the turn of the century, Lamar enjoyed a special place in the story. After Dunning, writers such as Claude Bowers, Paul Buck, and George Fort Milton all honored him. Lamar's biographer, Wirt Armistead Cate, wrote in much the same vein in 1935. After long years of such interpretation Lamar's reputation became permanent. Twenty years later in 1955 he still seemed an admirable subject for such a popular work on political heroism as John F. Kennedy's Profiles in Courage.

This is not to say that either the South or the nation came to accept all Lamar's reasoning; but both followed his lead and came finally to many of the same conclusions. Well into the twentieth century the South embraced and the nation accepted this pragmatic-patriotic form of nationalism. While the federal government looked on, the South preserved to a large degree its political autonomy and latitude for dealing with social and racial questions. The South in time appreciated Lamar's philosophy that compromise on the theoretical relationship of the states to the Union yielded most of the section's substantive objectives.

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Major Field: HISTORY

Title of Thesis: L.Q.C. LAMAR: PRAGMATIC PATRIOT

Approved:

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Date of Examination:

May 27, 1968