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WILLIAM DARRAH KELLEY: THE ANTE-BELLUM YEARS.

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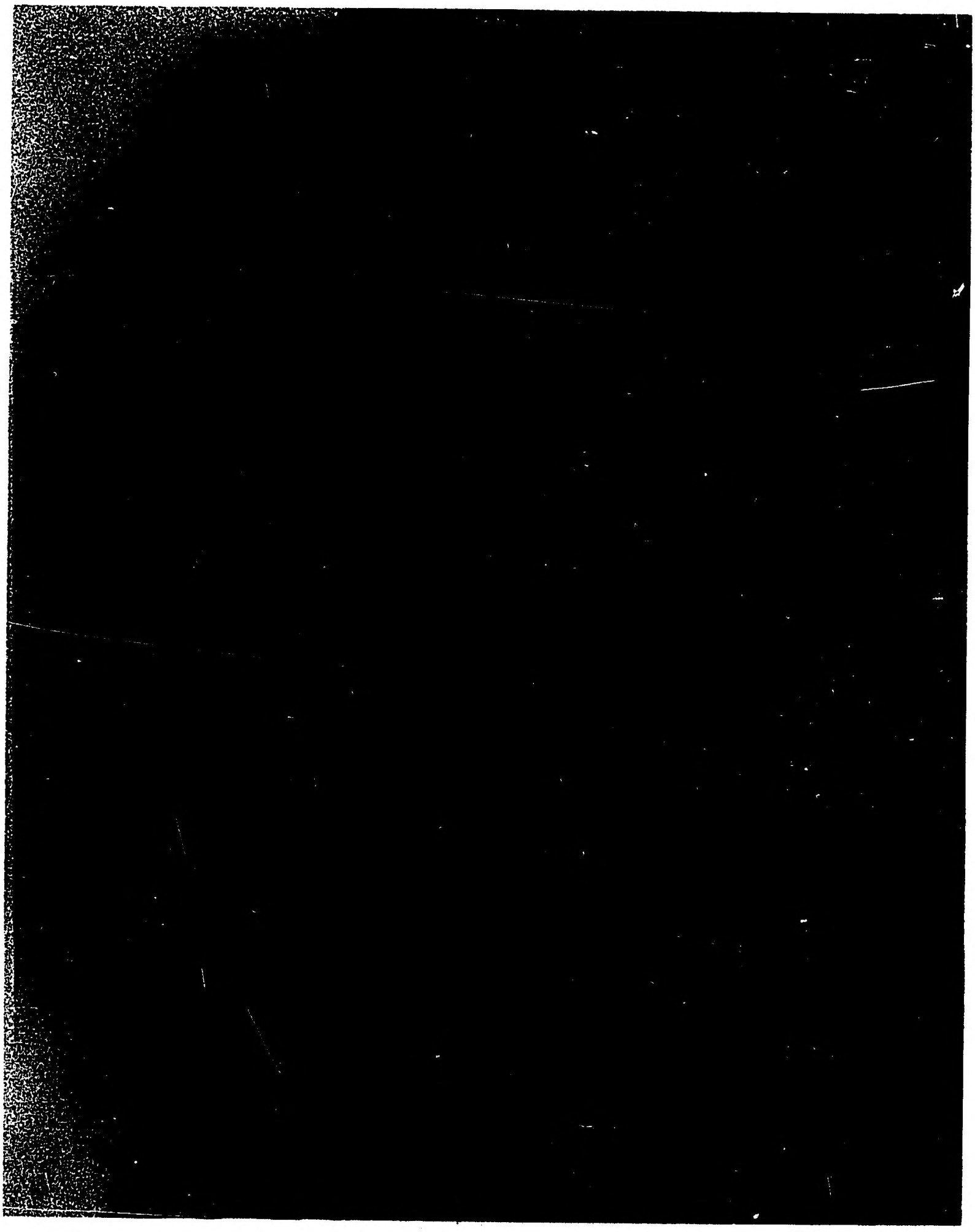
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William Darrah Kelley:
The Ante-Bellum Years

by

Michael R. Greco

A dissertation submitted to the John Hopkins University in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Baltimore, Maryland

1974

ABSTRACT

"William Darrah Kelley: Ante-Bellum Years

William Darrah Kelley (1814-1890) won a reputation during the Civil War and Reconstruction era as an outspoken Radical Republican champion of minority rights. He greatly influenced the Congressional debates concerning the status of Negroes in American society; and also advocated measures by the national government that he believed would contribute to an equality of condition for all Americans. Kelley later earned the sobriquet "Pig Iron" and a reputation as a special interest Congressman by his indefatigable espousal of protectionism.

This study focuses upon the psychological, ideological, social, and political factors which most influenced Kelley throughout his long political career. It also attempts to explain how the radical reformer and Gilded Age politico are both accurate and congruent images of this multifaceted man by an examination of these factors. This study also suggests certain common elements which Kelley shared with other nineteenth-

century radicals who opted to seek fundamental changes by operating within the established political institutions of their society rather than attempt to overthrow or subvert those institutions.

Kelley spent several years in Boston after coming of age. During his sojourn in the Bay State, Kelley fell under the influence of George Bancroft, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Orestes Brownson. Their influence resulted in Kelley's conversion to Transcendental Unitarianism and Locofocoism. He continued to be an ardent Jacksonian Democrat—advocating such reform measures as the abolition of banks, free public education, the ten-hour day, temperance, and women's rights—until the slavery issue drove him from the party.

Kelley became one of the founders of the Republican party in Pennsylvania. He was an important addition to the ranks of the Quaker State's antislavery movement. In 1856, Kelley joined his friends William Henry Furness, James Miller McKim, and Lucretia Mott in calling for the immediate abolition of slavery. He was elected to Congress in 1860 as an antislavery Republican, and remained there for almost thirty years.

Although Kelley quickly emerged as one of the leaders of the Radical Republicans, he maintained

intimate relations with Lincoln with whom he exercised more influence than most of his colleagues in the Congress. Kelley was among the first to call for McClelland's dismissal, arming the Negro, and protecting black Americans by infranchising them. He joined with Thaddeus Stevens in advocating inflationary monetary policies, and introduced Anna Dickinson into the national political circle where she immediately won fame and fortune under Kelley's tutelage.

During Reconstruction Kelley led the fight for Negro rights, expansion of the federal government's power and responsibilities, protection of American industries, labor reforms, and the impeachment of Andrew Johnson. From 1835-1865 Kelley underwent a metamorphosis from a states' rights, minimum government, hard money, free trade, radical Democrat to a national, maximum government, soft money, high tariff, radical Republican. Ironically, Kelley believed that he remained a staunch Jeffersonian republican throughout his career without any major changes in his social or political philosophy.

This self-perception can only be understood in terms of the tremendous changes that had occurred in American society during the mid-nineteenth century,

and in terms of Kelley's personality. As Herbert Croly would later argue, Kelley believed that the Civil War had so altered the circumstances of American life that he was compelled to seek "Jeffersonian ends by Hamiltonian means."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank Willie Lee Rose for making many excellent subtantive and stylistic suggestions which I believe greatly improved this dissertation. I owe her an added debt of gratitude for reading the manuscript installments under a candidate-imposed deadline thoroughly and without complaint. I also wish to express my appreciation to my friend and colleague, Thomas Wendel, who carefully read chapters two and three, and offered many useful suggestions. My greatest obligation, however, is to Kenneth Lynn who made me appreciate the historical significance of art and man's irrational nature. His incisive criticism, encouragement, and patience with my failure to meet self-imposed deadlines, are responsible for whatever merit this biography might possess.

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ABBREVIATIONS

HSP	Historical Society of Pennsylvania
KFP	Kelley Family Papers, Columbia University
LC	Library of Congress
RBHL	Rutherford B. Hayes Library
RTL	Robert Todd Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress
SCP	Simon Cameron Papers, Historical Society of Dauphin County
WDKC	William Darrah Kelley Correspondence, Historical Society of Pennsylvania

/Kelley/ is an abolitionist. He was formerly a Democrat. He is a man of obscure birth & vulgar manners, but has ability, is a fluent speaker not without a coarse popular eloquence, and, tho a good deal of a demagogue, is, I believe, generally considered an honest man.

—Sidney George Fisher,
Diary, October 12, 1862

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CHAPTER I

RADICAL POLITICIAN

> Interest them in a cause worthy of their devotion and there is no danger of the people being led away by men.
>
> —William Darrah Kelley, "An Address Delivered at the Democratic Town Meeting, in the State House Yard, July Fourth, 1841"

1. "PIG IRON"

"Who has not heard of 'Pig-Iron' Kelley?" asked the Cleveland Leader columnist Frank Carpenter. "The most noted thing about Mr. Kelley," Carpenter continued,

> is his monomania on the subject of the tariff. . . . His soul is so wrapped up and saturated with "protection" that its withdrawal would cause an immediate collapse. Mr. Kelley thinks tariff, talks tariff, and writes tariff every hour of the day; a roommate of his tells me that he mumbles it over in his dreams during the night. When he goes into society he backs women into corners and asks them their opinion of the duty on steel rails.

Carpenter's burlesque of William Darrah Kelley and the sobriquet "Pig Iron" have persisted as major elements

of Kelley's historical identity. This caricature of a Gilded Age congressman obsessed with protecting the special interests of the iron and steel industry is distorted and misleading.[1]

During his long tenure in the House of Representatives (1861-1890), Kelley was one of the most outspoken protectionists in America. The mid-nineteenth-century philosopher of protection, economist Henry C. Carey, frequently stated that "protection owed more to Judge Kelley in its defense in Congress than the efforts of any other party there." As chairman of the powerful Ways and Means Committee, Kelley had tremendous influence in determining the tariff rates and usually had his way.[2]

William Graham Sumner, an opponent of Kelley's on this issue, believed that a protective tariff was a

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[1]Frank G. Carpenter, Carp's Washington, edited by Frances Carpenter (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960), pp. 24-25.

[2]Biographical Directory of the American Congress 1774-1961 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 1150; Thomas F. Bayard to David A. Wells, November 5, 1883, Wells Manuscripts, LC; Harry James Brown and Frederick D. Williams, eds., The Diary of James A. Garfield (Michigan State University Press, 1967), 1: xlii; Charles H. Cramp, "Carey's 'Vespers,'" Manuscript, November 11, 1908, Edward Carey Gardiner Family Papers, HSP; and William D. Kelley, Speeches, Addresses and Letters on Industrial and Financial Questions (Philadelphia: Henry Carey Baird, 1872), passim.

"device" for "plundering" the average American. Echoing Sumner's charge, Matthew Josephson later argued that Kelley and other protectionists were merely serving the interests of the "Robber Barons" by their advocacy of the tariff. "These respectable gentlemen," he wrote in 1938, "found reward (almost painless and without risk) in the pleasing labor of heaping high the profit margins of manufacturers of wool, cloth, glass, marble, copper, and iron products." Josephson's belief that Kelley "found reward" from the industrialists whose interests he allegedly served was based on Kelley's implication in the Credit Mobilier scandal. Although the House of Representatives exonerated Kelley after an investigation of the charges, many historians share Josephson's suspicion that he was culpable. However, Kelley was a well-known national political figure long before his sobriquet came into general use. The Civil War and Reconstruction era generation knew Kelley not as the spokesman for big business but as the champion of Negro rights.[3]

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[3]Albert Galloway and Maurice R. Davie, eds., Essays of William Graham Sumner (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), 1: 490-491; Matthew Josephson, The Politicos, 1865-1896 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1938), pp. 112-113, 1964; Edward Winslow Martin, Behind the Scenes in Washington (Washington:

2. "THE EQUALITY OF ALL MEN BEFORE THE LAW"

Freshman congressman Rutherford B. Hayes wrote to his wife in 1865 that "thus far the noticeable men on our side of the house are Thad Stevens, Judge Kelley and Roscoe Conkling." J. Franklin Jameson, Chief of the Division of Manuscripts in the Library of Congress, seconded Hayes's assessment almost seventy years later when he claimed that "Thaddeus Stevens and William D. Kelley were the two most important congressmen of the period." Even those contemporaries and later critics of Kelley who disliked his politics readily admitted his importance. In 1866, Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles lamented the fact that radicals like Kelley controlled the Republican party. This view was later adopted by Howard K. Beale when he wrote that Kelley was a "leader of Radical aggressiveness during the War and vindictiveness in Reconstruction." What each of these men found most significant to praise or blame

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Continental Publishing Co., 1873), pp. 268-270; Claude G. Bowers, The Tragic Era: The Revolution after Lincoln (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1929), p. 398; Nation, January 30, 1873; New York World, February 19, 1873; Scribner's Monthly, March, 1874, p. 554; William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Kelley, December 3, 1872, February 7, 1873, WDKC; William D. Kelley to William Cullen Bryant, February 11, 1873, WDKC; and New York Times, January 17, February 7, March 6, 1873.

about Kelley was his position on the "Negro Question."[4]

During his first year in Congress, Kelley rhetorically asked his colleagues "What is this institution of slavery that it should claim our special regard and care?" He quickly answered his own question:

> Sir, it is saturating every acre of southern land with the best blood of the North. It is filling our villages and towns with widows and orphans. . . . The rebellion is the result of slavery, and follows naturally enough a defeated attempt to overthrow by enigmatical legislation and judicial chicanery the well and long settled laws, principles, and habits of the land.

Kelley's frequent speeches in favor of emancipation schemes won him a national reputation and following. "I enclose a letter from a highly respected gentleman of N. Jersey as a specimen of those that are coming to me from all the loyal states," he wrote to his wife. The letter congratulated Kelley for his courageous

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[4]Rutherford B. Hayes to Lucy Hayes, December 7, 1865, Hayes Papers, RBHL; J. Franklin Jameson to Nicholas Kelley, March 23, 1933, KFP; Howard K. Beale, ed., Diary of Gideon Welles (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1960), 2: 633-34; Howard K. Beale, ed. Diary of Edward Bates, 1859-1866, p. 273; Ben Perley Poore, Perley's Reminiscences of Sixty Years in the National Metropolis (Philadelphia: Hubbard Brothers, 1886), p. 102; Martin, Behind the Scenes in Washington, pp. 211-212; Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman, Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), p. 147; and Hans L. Trefousse, The Radical Republicans: Lincoln's Vanguard for Radical Justice (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p. 15.

antislavery stand in Washington. The Philadelphia congressman also received petitions and memorials from all over the country such as the one that 15,000 women from twelve states requested him to present to Congress in their behalf in the spring of 1862. It called upon Congress to "extinguish slavery."[5]

Kelley pressured Lincoln to end slavery by executive fiat at every opportunity. After Lincoln announced his intention to issue the Emancipation Proclamation on New Year's Day 1863, Kelley continued to pressure him, fearing that the President might recant under coercion from conservatives in the North and the border states. Lincoln assured Kelley that "he could not stop the Proclamation if he would, and he would not if he could; that just as soon as the first of January dawned it would be issued."[6]

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[5]Congressional Globe, 37th Cong., 1st sess.: 32, 213; Cong. Globe, 37th Cong., 2d sess.: 1657, 2049, 2527; William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Kelley, July 9, 1861, May 28, 1862, WDKC; and William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Kelley, June 6, 1862, KFP.

[6]Cong. Globe, 37th Cong., 3rd sess.: 151; C. B. Sedgwick to John Murray Forbes, December 22, 1862, Letters and Recollections of John Murray Forbes, edited by Sarah Forbes Hughes, 1: 344-345; Shuyler Colfax to William D. Kelley, January 2, 1863, Als, Houghton Library; William D. Kelley to Abraham Lincoln, July 23, 1862, RTL; Allen Thorndike, ed., Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln by Distinguished Men of His Time

Lincoln's famous Proclamation made freedom an official Union war aim. Kelley believed that the destruction of slavery which a northern victory would accomplish could be expedited by allowing black men to fight for their freedom. The arming of the Negro, however, was one of the most hotly debated issues during the first two years of the Civil War. Nowhere was hostility to this measure more pervasive than in Philadelphia. Nonetheless, Congressman Kelley was an outspoken advocate of raising Negro troops. During debate on Thaddeus Stevens's proposal to enroll "volunteers of African descent," Kelley said, "Sir, this is, in my judgment, rather a humane and wise provision for hastening the settlement of the war now pending."[7]

Lee's invasion of Pennsylvania made Kelley's constituents more receptive to the idea of Negro troops. On July 6, 1863, Kelley joined black leaders

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(New York: North American Review, 1888), pp. 271-276, and Alexander K. McClure, Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1905), 1: 557.

[7]William Dusinberre, Civil War Issues in Philadelphia 1856-1865 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1965), pp. 161, 169; Cong. Globe, 37th Cong., 3rd sess.: 606; and Chronicle of the Union League of Philadelphia, 1862 to 1902 (Philadelphia, 1902), pp. 94, 402.

in urging Negroes to enlist as a method of achieving freedom for their "brethren in bondage" and equality at home. George William Curtis responded to Kelley's speech with an extraordinary letter. He wrote:

> Did I ever do what was in my heart, thank you for your noble speech for the colored soldiers? How noble it seems to me, you may imagine now that my wife and her family mourn the most manly & gentle of men, the most modest & brave of heroes in Robert Shaw, the Colonel of the 54' Massachusetts, my brother in law. . . . They "burried him with his niggers" and so completed his glory, my dear friend, with you who have been so long faithful, I may rejoice that from this blended burial of the white & black, there springs the hope, the surity of a better day than we have known.

Kelley viewed the arming of the Negro as "the great pivotal movement of the war" because it would secure "the freedom of . . . /the black/ race."[8]

"William D. Kelley's most important contribution to the program of Radical Reconstruction," declared one recent historian of the period, "was his vigorous

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[8]Benjamin Quarles, The Negro in the Civil War (New York: Russell & Russell, 1953), p. 187; George William Curtis to William D. Kelley, August 10, 1863, KFP; William D. Kelley to Anna Dickinson, August 2, 1863, Anna Dickinson Papers, LC; "Report of the Supervisory Committee for Recruiting Colored Regiments" (Philadelphia: King, Baird, Printers, 1864); Frank Preston Stearns, The Life and Public Services of George Luther Stearns (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1907), pp. 301-305; and J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884 (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884), 1: 819.

and effective championship of Negro suffrage." Kelley believed that to secure freedom was one matter, but to maintain it required political power. On January 16, 1865, he offered an amendment to a reconstruction bill that would have enfranchised all male citizens in the occupied areas of the Confederacy who could read the Constitution. The amendment was defeated, but Kelley did not abandon the Negro suffrage question. "It is the question of the day and involves all others," he emphatically declared to Charles Eliot Norton a few months later. "If we do not triumph on that issue we shall but have abolished the chattelism of slavery. The negro will not be /ā/ directly merchantable article," Kelley argued, "but his condition will not have been materially improved in any other respect."[9]

Kelley continued to speak in behalf of Negro suffrage—asserting that he wanted "no senseless rule that allows a fool or a scoundrel to vote if he be white, and excludes a wise and an honest man if he be

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[9]Ira V. Brown,. "William D. Kelley and Radical Reconstruction," The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, 75 (July, 1961): 317; Cong. Globe, 38th Cong., 2d sess.: 287; Wendell Phillips to Moncure Conway, n.d., Conway Papers, Columbia University; and William D. Kelley to Charles Eliot Norton, March 27, 1865, Norton Papers, Houghton Library.

black." After Lincoln's assassination, Kelley invoked the martyred President's authority in order to pressure Johnson to adopt Negro suffrage as an administration measure. He disingenuously claimed in a speech before the Girls' High and Normal School of Philadelphia that Lincoln "favored the political equality of all men." When Johnson moved in the opposite direction, Kelley broke with him and carried his crusade back to the Congress. He introduced a bill on December 5, 1865, to enfranchise blacks in the District of Columbia. The measure was finally passed over Johnson's veto a year later, in January, 1867.[10]

Kelley was incensed by Johnson's apostasy. Not only did the President fail to support pro-Negro legislation, but he vetoed such legislation and punitively used the executive patronage against Radicals

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[10]William D. Kelley, "The Equality of All Men before the Law" (Boston: Geo. C. Rand & Avery, 1865), p. 28; Howard M. Jenkins to John Martin Broomall, September 28, 1867, J. M. Broomall Collection, HSP; William D. Kelley to Andrew Johnson, May 12, 1865, Johnson Papers, LC; William D. Kelley, "Speech before the Girls' High and Normal School of Philadelphia," The Union Almanac for 1866 (Cincinnati: A. Vierschilling & Bidenharn, 1865), p. 17; Cong. Globe, 39th Cong., 1st sess.: 1, 10, 173-183; James H. Whyte, The Uncivil War: Washington During the Reconstruction, 1865-1878 (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1958), pp. 49-50; and John C. Underwood to William D. Kelley, January 24, 1866, Dreer American Lawyers Collection, HSP.

like Kelley. The Philadelphia Congressman believed that Johnson was attempting to overthrow the Constitution and establish a dictatorship. He called the President the "great criminal" of the age and demanded his impeachment. In an impassioned speech, Kelley blamed Johnson for southern intransigence and the maltreatment of the freedmen:

> Sir, the bloody and untilled fields of the ten unreconstructed States, the unsheeted ghosts of the two thousand murdered negroes in Texas . . . cry, if the dead ever invoke vengeance, for the punishment of Andrew Johnson.

The Senate's failure to convict Johnson disappointed Kelley who vowed to redouble his efforts to win "equality for all men before the law."[11]

3. THE NEW SOUTH

Kelley shared a growing belief in the post-bellum North that Reconstruction offered an excellent

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[11]Orestes Brownson to William D. Kelley, December 5, 1865, WDKC and KFP; William D. Kelley to Charles Eliot Norton, August 5, 1865, Norton Papers, Houghton Library; William D. Kelley, December 2, 1866, WDKC; T. T. Davis to Andrew Johnson, February 17, 1866, Johnson Papers, LC; William Lloyd Garrison to Oliver Johnson, December 11, 1867, Garrison Manuscripts, Boston Public Library; Thaddeus Stevens to William D. Kelley, June 11, July 30, 1865, KFP; Samuel Randall to Colonel Moore, April 10, 1867, RBHL; Trefousse, Radical Republicans, p. 385; Cong. Globe, 40th Cong., 2d sess.: 1348; Brown, "William D. Kelley," pp. 327-328; National

opportunity to democratize and modernize the backward South. He therefore insisted that the seceded states should be treated as "alien enemies" until a legal framework could be adopted which would protect the freedman, punish the unregenerate Confederates, and insure that the South would be recast in the image of the North. However, Lincoln favored leniency and attempted to reconstruct Louisiana in 1864 without the provisions Kelley sought. When the members of the Louisiana delegation to the House of Representatives were denied seats, one claimant, A. P. Field, singled out Kelley as the author of his dilemma. On January 20, 1865, Field assaulted Kelley with a knife. During the attack, the southerner charged Kelley with maliciously depriving him of his seat in Congress. The incident precipitated an indignant reaction in the North similar to the one that Preston Brooks' attack upon Charles Sumner had provoked eight years earlier.[12]

Anti-Slavery Standard, May 12, 1866; and Michael Les Benedict, The Impeachment and Trial of Andrew Johnson (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1973), pp. 82, 111, 136.

[12] Cong. Globe, 38th Cong., 1st sess.: 2078-2079; Kelley, "Speech before the Girls' High and Normal School," p. 17; William D. Kelley, "Closing Speech of Hon. W. D. Kelley, in the Northrop-Kelley Debate. Delivered at West Philadelphia Hall, Friday Evening,

Field wasn't the only southerner who attacked Kelley during the Reconstruction era. On May 14, 1867, two shots were fired at Kelley while he was addressing a large audience in Mobile, Alabama. The meeting quickly degenerated into a riot which left two dead, several injured, and Kelley unscathed but more determined than ever to northernize the South. "That outrage was due . . . to Andrew Johnson, the reactionary President of the United States," Kelley told his cheering constituents upon returning to Philadelphia. This was true, according to Kelley, for two reasons. First, "a recreant Northerner who had been sent to /Mobile/ by the President . . . excited the passions of the Southern people against me on the day preceding my arrival." Second, and more importantly, Johnson had kept the "Lost Cause" alive in the South by opposing the "enlightened" Radical measures to punish the unregenerate and protect the loyal men of the section.[13]

October 7, 1864" (Philadelphia: Collins, Printer, 1864), p. 79; Brown, "William D. Kelley," pp. 319-320; James G. Randall, ed., The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning (Springfield, Illinois: Illinois State Historical Library, 1933), 2: 105; and House Report 10, 38th Cong., 2d sess.

[13]Sarah W. Wiggins, "The 'Pig-Iron' Kelley Riot in Mobile, May 14, 1867, "Alabama Review, 23 (1970):

However, Field's attack and the Mobile riot were not typical expressions of southern feelings toward Kelley. His indefatigable campaign to help the South prosper by attracting northern capital and industrializing, won Kelley the affection and respect of many former rebels. "I saw during my trip a country upon which the Almighty has with most lavish hand bestowed His richest material gifts," he reported upon his return from his first trip into the region. In March, 1868, Kelley demanded the immediate readmission of Alabama whose wealth, he claimed, was "paralyzed" by military occupation. An Alabama delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1868 acknowledged Kelley's efforts in behalf of his state by nominating him for Vice President. During the next twenty years Kelley was one of the South's most loyal boosters. He even convinced his eldest son to seek fame and fortune in this "fabulous country." By the mid-seventies, Kelley's reputation as the northern spokesman for a "New South" made him something of a celebrity in Dixie. A. H. Colquitt, President of the Georgia State Agricultural Society, invited Kelley to attend the state's

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passim; Kelley, Speeches, p. 172; and Brown, "William D. Kelley," pp. 325-326.

annual fair not only because of "our earnest desire to have you with us, /but/ also to allow our public to hear from your lips such words of counsel and encouragement as the times and our material condition will support." It was Wade Hampton, however, who best summed up his section's ambivalence toward Kelley when he said, "he was a bitter foe during the war but a sincere friend ever since."[14]

4. "RAG MONEY" AND WOMAN'S RIGHTS

Kelley's post-bellum contemporaries knew him not only as a protectionist, champion of Negro rights, and spokesman for the "New South" but also as an influential monetary reformer, and advocate of woman's rights. He supported currency expansion during the war, and bitterly denounced contraction during Reconstruction

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[14]Kelley, Speeches, p. 175; Cong. Globe, 40th Cong., 2d sess.: 2139-2141; A. H. Colquitt to William D. Kelley, July 22, 1875, WDKC; Albert J. Chapman to Blanton Duncan, January 8, 1877, Blanton Duncan Collection, RBHL; Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer, A History of the United States since the Civil War (New York: Macmillan Co., 1922), 2: 157; and Wade Hampton, "Memorial Addresses on the Life and Character of William D. Kelley," Miscellaneous Documents Number 229, House of Representatives, 51st Cong. 1st sess.; Paul M. Gaston, The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), pp. 43, 55-58, 69-79, 96, 108, 115, 126, 192-198, 256; and William D. Kelley, The Old South and the New (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1888), passim.

as the surest "road to bankruptcy." Kelley called the amendments to the original Legal Tender Act, which stipulated that the interest on the 5-20 bonds and all customs duties were to be paid only in gold, a "crime." "That crime," he charged in a blistering indictment of the contractionists, "invited from all the money centres of the world their most voracious vampires to come and fatten upon the life-blood of the American people. It converted commerce into a mere system of gambling, and made such creatures as Jay Gould and Jim Fisk possible in American history."[15]

Passage of the Specie Resumption Act in 1875 convinced Kelley that both parties were wedded to ruinous contractionist policies. Therefore, during the summer of 1875 he attempted to form a new, antimonopoly party committed to currency expansion and protection. Kelley had successfully won re-election as an independent

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[15]Kelley, Speeches, pp. 210, 216; Cong. Globe, 39th Cong., 1st sess.: 4153; Iron Age, October 24, 1867; William D. Kelley, "Money and the National Finances. An Address Delivered by Request of Citizens of Philadelphia, at the Academy of Music, January 15, 1876" (Philadelphia: Henry Carey Baird & Co., 1876), p. 21; Hugh T. Lefler, "William Darrah Kelley," Dictionary of American Biography edited by Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone (New York: Scribners, 1928-1965), 5: 300; New York Times, December 18, 1873; and Robert P. Sharkey, Money, Class, and Party: An Economic Study of Civil War and Reconstruction (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1959), passim.



July 31, 1875

Iron and Blood—This "Don't Scare Worth a Cent."

congressional candidate in 1874 after the Philadelphia Republican caucus refused to renominate him because of his monetary heresies. However, his third party movement failed to attract much attention, and the Republicans renominated this unmanageable congressman in 1876. Kelley tried to win Hayes's support for his financial policies but had little success. He gradually lost interest in the currency issue and devoted the last ten years of his life to protection.[16]

Kelley was one of the first members of Congress to become interested in the woman's rights movement. He helped to establish the National Woman's Loyal League in 1864, and the American Equal Rights Association in 1866. When the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society held its last meeting in May, 1870, Kelley recommended that the members now work to advance the cause of woman's suffrage. He introduced legislation on several occasions that would have enfranchised

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[16]New York Tribune, May 6, June 15, July 12, August 3, 9, 1875; New York Times, October 6, 12, 25, 1875, June 2, 1876, May 12, 1877, December 2, 9, 1878; Huntingdon Journal, August 4, 1875; J. J. Finley to William D. Kelley, May 29, 1875, WDKC; Albert J. Chapman to Blanton Duncan, January 8, 1877, RBHL; Unidentified, undated newspaper clipping, KFP; and Ralph R. Ricker, "The Greenback-Labor Movement in Pennsylvania," Ph.D. dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1955, pp. 38, 41, 91.

women by constitutional amendment. Kelley affectionately called Susan B. Anthony the "Little Major" because of her persistent demands for his help. She wrote to him in January, 1884:

> No one shrinks more from making herself obnoxious than I do, and but for the sake of all women, your darling Florence included, I should never again say a word to you on the subject of using your influence to secure the passage of a Sixteenth Amendment proposition. . . . /W/ill you not take hold of this work . . . with the same earnestness that you do other questions?

Kelley complied with the "Little Major's" request, but his energies were on the wane, and he did not "take hold" of the issue as he did questions relating to the tariff schedule.[17]

One might ask, "Why did Kelley advocate such radical and disparate reforms as Negro rights, currency expansion, and woman's rights?" Robert Sharkey suggests in his Money, Class and Party that Radicals such as

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[17]Ira V. Brown, Pennsylvania Reformers: From Penn to Pinchot (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania Historical Association, 1966), p. 23; Ida H. Harper, The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony (Indianapolis: The Hollenbeck Press, 1898), 1: 232-233; 2: 564, 584, 647, 3: 1361-1362; Brown, Diary of James A. Garfield, 2: 18; Scharf, Philadelphia, 2: 1551; Bedford Gazette, May 13, 1887; "Vote on Constitutional Amendments of 1889," Election returns, State Election, 1796-1889, Department of State Group No. 26, Pennsylvania State Archives; and Cong. Globe, 42d Cong., 2d sess.: 973.

Kelley, Thaddeus Stevens, Benjamin Wade, Ben Butler, Peter Cooper, Wendell Phillips, Horace Greeley, and Henry C. Carey were motivated by a strong sense of nationalism, and a belief in egalitarianism and economic freedom. This study traces the genesis of these ideas in Kelley during his formative years and early political career. It is also the purpose of this study to suggest that a closer scrutiny of the ante-bellum careers of the Radical Republicans may yield a better perspective for understanding the similarities and differences in their voting behavior than the question of their sincerity, regional economic interests, or the quest for power have done. Finally, it concludes that the political turmoil of the 1850's pushed many former "the-best-government-governs-least" men into strong government, consolidationist postures.[18]

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[18]Sharkey, Money, Class, and Party, pp. 281-282; Trefousse, Radical Republicans, p. 333; Glenn Linden, "Radicals' and Economic Policies: The House of Representatives, 1861-1873," Civil War History, 13 (1967); William Gillette, The Right to Vote: Politics and the Passage of the Fifteenth Amendment (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1965); LaWanda and John H. Cox, "Negro Suffrage and Republican Politics: The Problem of Motivation in Reconstruction Historiography," The Journal of Southern History, 33 (August, 1967); and David Donald, The Politics of Reconstruction 1863-1867 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965).

CHAPTER II

BEGINNINGS

> The poverty of the incapable, the distresses that come upon the imprudent, the starvation of the idle, and those shoulderings aside of the weak by the strong, which leave so many "in shadows and in miseries," are the decrees of a large, farseeing benevolence. . . . It seems hard that widows and orphans should be left to struggle for life or death. Nevertheless, when regarded not separately but in connection with the interests of universal humanity, these harsh fatalities are seen to be full of beneficence.
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> —Herbert Spencer, Social Statics (1850)

1. THEY CAME FROM LONDONDERRY

William Darrah Kelley descended from Protestant stock from Northern Ireland. His earliest known ancestor, Thomas Kelley, first of three generations of Thomases, settled on the east bank of the Delaware River in 1664. Thomas had left Londonderry in the wake of Ireland's first bloody round of religious turmoil. He feared that the Restoration might lead to renewed violence between Protestants and Catholics.

So rather than risk being victimized by an unholy crusade, Kelley sought a new life for his family in the New World—a life that he hoped would be free from the hatred and bitterness of Northern Ireland.

Thomas decided to try his fortune near the abandoned Swedish settlement at Fort Nya Elfsborg. His selection was an unfortunate one. The marshy site spawned swarms of mosquitoes during the summer while the mixture of sand and clay proved to be a poor soil for farming. Discouraged by his father's failure, Thomas's son and namesake moved inland to a more hospitable site at Ruff's Landing. It was on that farm in the Delaware Valley, while the first Quaker colony in America was being established around them, that the second and third generations of Thomas Kelleys attempted to realize their forebear's dream. It was also on that early family farm that William D. Kelley's grandfather, John Kelley, was born.[1]

John Kelley moved from his birthplace to the hundred-acre farm, a few miles away on the north bank

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[1] American Ancestry, (Albany, New York: Joel Munsell's Sons, Publishers, 1893), 3: 228-229; Kelley Family Genealogy, KFP, Columbia University; Florence Kelley, "My Philadelphia," The Survey, 57 (October 1, 1926): 11-12; and Richard P. McCormick, New Jersey From Colony to State, 1609-1789 (Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1964), pp. 12-50.

of Alloways Creek, that his Uncle John Kelley had bequeathed to him. It was to this new home that John brought his bride, the former Elizabeth Cushlow, on their wedding night—Christmas Eve, 1768. Elizabeth's family were French Huguenots who had fled the religious turmoil of the Old World as John's great-grandfather had done. John and Elizabeth Kelley raised wheat and eleven children on their marginally productive farm. Although the soil along the Alloways Creek was only a little better than that in which Thomas had struggled a hundred years earlier, John earned a comfortable living for his large family; and he established a reputation as an honest, hard-working, and capable neighbor. Kelley increased his holdings to over five hundred acres, and in 1782 he built the first sawmill in Upper Alloways Creek Township. By the outbreak of the American Revolution, John Kelley had realized his great-grandfather's dream. His principal concern was to keep that dream from becoming a nightmare.[2]

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[2]Deed, May 1, 1739, KFP; Archives of the State of New Jersey, 1st series, 32: 184. The genealogy deposited with the Kelley Family Papers lists Elizabeth Casteau as John Kelley's wife; but the marriage record in the Archives, 1st series, 32: 226 lists Elizabeth's surname as Cushlow. Articles of Agreement Between John Kelley and John Holme, April 1, 1782, KFP.

Like his native New Jersey, John Kelley was a reluctant rebel. Most Jerseymen deferred "choosing sides" in the impending crisis between the colonies and the mother country as long as their "neutrality" was tenable. The moment of decision came, however, for John Kelley and many other Jerseymen when the elections for the Third Provincial Congress were held on May 28, 1776. Colonial forces had been fighting against English soldiers for more than a year. Common Sense had been published, and independence was openly discussed. It was no secret that the new Provincial Congress would decide the question of independence for New Jersey, and therefore its members must be selected with the utmost care.

John Kelley had to make his choice under mounting pressure from his friends and neighbors, and events. Although Kelley's co-religionists, the Presbyterians, were generally in favor of independence, most of his neighbors were Quakers who were essentially conservative and abhorred conflict. The Quakers of Salem County opposed the rupture between King and colony, and when war broke out, they sought to remain apart from the struggle. Even more disturbing to Kelley was the large number of Tories in his and the adjacent

counties who boldly declared for George III after news reached them of General Howe's proposed invasion of New York. The specter of civil war was more threatening to Kelley than the already raging hostilities to the north. A more subtle pressure was applied by Governor William Franklin. On May 3, 1776, Franklin appointed Kelley administrator of the James Wright estate. It was not the sizable fee for administering such a large estate that tempted Kelley; he was not that easily bribed. It was the prestige! Such appointments were given only to very prominent men. A man who had been striving all his life to achieve such prominence would naturally be reluctant to jeopardize his family, prosperity, and newly gained status. After a great deal of painful soul-searching, John Kelley opted for conscience and independence.[3]

New Jersey reorganized her militia in July, 1776, to meet the exigencies of invasion. Under the new militia plan citizen-soldiers would serve alternate months. It was under this plan that John Kelley was selected by his fellow townsmen to lead their militia

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[3]McCormick, New Jersey, pp. 113-131; and William Franklin to John Kelley, May 3, 1776, KFP.

contingent. On May 5, 1777, Kelley was commissioned Captain of the Second Battalion in the New Jersey Militia's 4th Regiment. None of his children were old enough to help their mother run the farm while John Kelley spent alternate months fighting for American independence. But despite the hardships, John contributed every other month to the cause in which he believed for over five years. Promoted to Major during the conflict, Kelley retained his commission in the militia until his death in 1798.[4]

David Kelley, the youngest of John and Elizabeth's brood of eleven, was born on September 10, 1784, on the family farm in Upper Alloways Creek Township. David was spared the hardships and tragedies that his family had endured during the war. He enjoyed a childhood relatively free from fear and want in a community where his father was greatly respected and admired. The youngest member of the family would never be able to escape the long shadow cast by his father, the town

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[4]McCormick, New Jersey, p. 132; Commission, State of New Jersey, May 5, 1777, KFP; Archives, 1st series, 38: 208; Thomas Cushing and Charles E. Sheppard, History of the Counties of Gloucester, Salem, and Cumberland New Jersey (Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1883), pp. 40-41; and Robert G. Johnson, History of Salem (Philadelphia, 1839), passim.

hero. David's only notion of military matters occurred in September, 1794, when Major Kelley was called upon to help suppress the "Whiskey Rebels" with militiamen from Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and New Jersey. However, unlike his older brothers who wistfully dreamed visions of martial glory, David was most interested in tinkering with mechanical contrivances. Although he bragged to his peers about his father's military accomplishments, young David was disposed to more passive pursuits. He lacked his father's physical prowess and aggressive spirit. He also lacked his father's strength of character. David was only thirteen when John Kelley died and in desperate need of another strong shoulder to lean on. He did not fill that need until October 11, 1806, when he married Hannah Darrah.[5]

2. A STRONG-WILLED WOMAN

David Kelley moved to Philadelphia to live with his brother, William, after their father's death. David's share of John Kelley's estate was sufficient

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[5]Kelley Family Genealogy, KFP; James Giles to John Kelley, September 25, 1794, KFP; Archives, 1st series, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 208; and Leland D. Baldwin, Whiskey Rebels: The Story of A Frontier Uprising (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1939), pp. 222-23.

to meet his needs while he learned a trade. After his apprenticeship, David had enough of his inheritance left to open his own jewelry and watchmaking shop in the section of Philadelphia then known as the Northern Liberties. David met his future wife at a church social in 1805. Hannah Darrah completely dominated the insecure David Kelley from their first encounter. Five years his senior, the attractive and strong-willed Hannah seemed irresistible to David. They were married the following year in the church where they had met.[6]

Hannah was the daughter of Rebecca and William Darrah, who established a prosperous and respected Northampton County family. William Darrah had also served during the Revolution, and for his service was rewarded with land grants totaling 800 acres. Hannah possessed those qualities of confidence and an indomitable will which David so conspicuously lacked. She replaced John Kelley in David's life as both the tower of strength and the awful reminder of his own shortcomings.[7]

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[6]"Political Portraits with Pen and Pencil: William Darrah Kelley," The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, 28 (June, 1851), p. 553; Archives, 1st series, 39: 131; and Kelley Family Genealogy, KFP.

[7]American Ancestry, 8: 228; Pennsylvania Archives,

The Kelleys moved into a comfortable home at 227 North Second Street in the Northern Liberties. David became a successful watchmaker and jeweler and was able to provide a good living for his growing family. To celebrate the birth of his first child, Rebecca, David made a beautiful clock for his wife. During the next several years Hannah gave birth to two more healthy girls—Eliza Ann and Martha Shaw. Then on April 12, 1814, the Kelleys were blessed with the birth of a son, William Darrah, named after his maternal grandfather.[8]

It was shortly after the birth of William that the family's prosperity was shattered and David died. David Kelley had endorsed a note for Hannah's brother. When his brother-in-law failed to meet the note, the obligation devolved on David. This catastrophe befell David during the post-war depression, at a time when he was already in serious financial difficulty. He sold his stock of merchandise at a considerable loss and was forced out of business. David's old fears of

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3rd series, edited by William Henry Egle (Harrisburg, 1897), 26: 62-63; Kelley, "My Philadelphia," p. 10.

[8]Dorothy Rose Blumberg, Florence Kelley: The Making of a Social Pioneer (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1966), p. 6; Interview with William Darrah Kelley, III, December 26, 1972; and Kelley Family Genealogy, KFP.

inadequacy returned to haunt him. He could neither extricate himself from this disaster nor summon the courage to confront it. A broken man, David died of apoplexy at the age of 32 leaving behind a widow with three young daughters, a two-year old son, no means of support, and a still unredeemed debt.[9]

Hannah Kelley survived both the loss of her husband and the humiliation of having her precious belongings sold at public auction; or, more accurately, almost sold at auction. As there was no lien law in 1816 exempting widows from their husbands' debts, the Kelley family possessions were to be auctioned off to pay the note that had led to David Kelley's financial ruin. On the day that the family treasures were to be sold, Hannah's Quaker neighbor, the venerable Friend Scattergood, a woman of unimpeachable integrity, arrived at the auction carrying two large baskets. She began filling her baskets murmuring, "It seems strange that Friend Hannah Kelley should not have returned precious heirlooms." Several weeks later Friend Scattergood returned with her baskets loaded

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[9]L. P. Brockett, Men of Our Day (Philadelphia, 1868), p. 467; Political Portraits . . . William Darrah Kelley," p. 553; and "My Philadelphia," p. 10.

with the family's silver, china, and linen. She told Hannah: "Thee will have abundant use, Friend Kelley, for these belongings for thyself and thy children. I feel sure that thee has not misconstrued my good intention."[10]

With the help of her brother-in-law, William Kelley, Hannah moved her family to a large but less fashionable house at 103 High Street where she took in boarders to make ends meet. Working long hours preparing the meals, taking in laundry and sewing, and doing the scores of chores entailed in running a boarding house with only the help of ten-year-old Rebecca, Hannah managed to keep her family together by sheer force of will. She continued to struggle to survive for almost thirty years until her son could afford to support her. William D. Kelley would frequently be reminded by his mother in later years of Mrs. Scattergood's kindly intervention, and the circumstances which prompted that intervention. It is therefore not surprising that Kelley thought that "it seems hard that widows and orphans should be left to struggle for life or death." Herbert Spencer's Social Statics

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[10] Ibid.

would become the antithesis of William Darrah Kelley's social philosophy. During his Congressional career, Kelley adjured his colleagues to give

> Thanks for the privilege to bless
> By word and deed
> The widow in her keen distress,
> The childless and the fatherless,
> The hearts that bleed.[11]

3. THE FORMATIVE YEARS

The most vivid memory of his early childhood that William Darrah Kelley could later recall was of sitting on the lowest step of the stairs, by the open front door of his home. While his sister Rebecca swept the white marble steps, she sang as loudly as she could:

> There is a Fountain filled with blood
> Drawn from Immanual's veins.

As she finished the second line young Will ran out into the street and shouted back to his sister, "I don't want to hear about blood." That was the earliest recorded protest in what was to be a long life of protest and dissent.[12]

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[11] Brockett, Men of Our Day, p. 467; Kelley, "My Philadelphia," p. 10; Desilver's Philadelphia Directory (1830); Herbert Spencer, Social Statics (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1892), p. 150; and Congressional Globe, 38th Cong., 1st sess.: 776.

[12] Kelley, "My Philadelphia," p. 10.

Young Will's earliest years were ones of great sorrow and privation for his family. It is during this period of tribulation that his mother and older sisters found consolation in doting over the baby of the family. These formative years were dominated by the women of his family and were apparently devoid of any male influences. Only two years old at the time of David's death, William D. Kelley had no clear recollection of his father. Although his Uncle William occasionally visited the family, young Will had few private moments with his uncle. Hannah protected Will from the influence of her male boarders and neighbors who she considered to be unworthy companions for her baby. The constant and exclusive attention and companionship of his mother and sisters were important influences in Kelley's personality development. These early influences provide important clues about the cause of his theatricalism and hypochondria. It is also interesting to note that this domination by womenfolk during childhood was an experience that William Darrah Kelley shared with several other future Radical Republicans including Salmon P. Chase, John C. Fremont, John P. Hale, Edwin Stanton, Thaddeus Stevens, and

Henry Wilson.[13]

Will attended the congregational school of the Second Presbyterian Church until he was eleven. No records survive of Kelley's interests, attitudes, or performance during his brief formal educational experience. However, it is safe to assume that he was inculcated with the then prevalent "work ethic" and notions about race. The mature Kelley would recount his boyhood belief in an early version of the Horatio Alger myth as follows:

> The boy who could read and write was worth more than one of equal strength and age who could not; and that the boy who saw before him the chance for wealth or distinction would strive to attain one or the other, and by study, industry and economy, endeavor to gather capital with which to labor for himself rather than for another.

During this speech Kelley also told his southern audience that "I once shared your prejudices" against the

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[13]Sigmund Freud, "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria (1905)," Collected Papers (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1959), 3: 55-56; J. W. Schuckers, The Life and Public Services of Salmon Portland Chase (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1874), p. 7; Herbert Bashford and Harr Wagner, A Man Unafraid: The Story of John Charles Fremont (San Francisco: Harr Wagner Publishing Company, 1927), pp. 5-6; Richard H. Sewell, John P. Hale and the Politics of Abolition (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 4; Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman, Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War (New York: Alfred

Negro. This early racial prejudice was probably the product of teachers and textbooks that described blacks as being racially inferior to little Will and his playmates. A quick and curious lad, Will must have been disappointed when he was forced to leave school and take a job because of his family's continued pecuniary difficulties.[14]

William Darrah Kelley found his first employment in a bookstore as an errand boy where he earned one dollar per week. He soon left the bookstore to become a copy reader for the Pennsylvania Inquirer. Kelley worked from 6 A.M. to 8 P.M., six days per week. Twelve-year-old Will often found it difficult to keep his eyes open toward the end of his working day; therefore, he frequently would chew green tea leaves to

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A. Knopf, 1962), p. 7; Ralph Korngold, Thaddeus Stevens: A Being Darkly Wise and Rudely Great (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1955), p. 4; and Ernest McKay, Henry Wilson: Practical Radical A Portrait of a Politician (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1971), pp. 6-7.

[14]Hugh T. Lefler, "William Darrah Kelley," Dictionary of American Biography edited by Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone (New York: Scribners, 1928-1965), 5: 299; Ruth Miller Elson, Guardians of Tradition: American Schoolbooks of the Nineteenth Century (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), pp. 87-98, 251-257; and William Darrah Kelley,

keep himself awake. In later life, Kelley claimed that his "nervous excitability" was attributable to those early years of strain and fatigue.[15]

In 1828, taking his father's tools which had escaped the creditor's auction, Will apprenticed himself to the firm of Rickards & Dubosq, manufacturing jewelers, for a term of six years. He lived with the Dubosq family until the end of his term, thus helping to relieve his mother's heavy financial burden. Will became a skilled craftsman in his father's trade under the tutelage of Henry Dubosq. Unfortunately, little is known about this first male influence on Kelley. That it was not a satisfactory relationship from Will's point of view he demonstrated by rebelling against his master. Kelley would later indirectly describe his "exploitative and insensitive" taskmaster,

> I never lighted my lamp for night-work without feeling that humanity was outraged by the fact that the millions whose toil produced all the wealth were compelled at the cost of sight and health to labor thus, while those who only bought and sold their productions were free from such exactions.

Speeches, Addresses and Letters on Industrial and Financial Questions (Philadelphia: Henry Carey Baird, 1872), pp. 166-167.

[15]Brockett, Men of Our Day, p. 467; A Checklist of Pennsylvania Newspapers (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1944), 1: 214; and Kelley, "My Philadelphia," p. 10.

It is during his years as an apprentice that three attributes of the mature Kelley became noticeable—intellectual curiosity, personal charisma, and a propensity to defend the underdog.[16]

Kelley sought to further his education by reading whenever he had the opportunity to study a book. He united with a number of his companions to found the Youth's Library, later called the West Philadelphia Institute. This organization of young men, most of whom were apprentices like Will, soon accumulated a library of over 2000 volumes, and sustained for several years a regular course of lectures, some of which were given by Will and other members. William wrote to a friend who had just joined the Institute that "in it you will find much and many to interest you, but it can never be the friend to you it has been to me." In addition to providing the intellectual stimulation which Kelley craved, the success he achieved by being chosen Chief Magistrate of the Institute satisfied his other needs to belong, to be accepted, and to excel. Another clue to Will's personality can be found in his

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[16]"Political Portraits . . . William Darrah Kelley," p. 553; Desilver's Philadelphia Directory, p. 109; and Kelley, Speeches, p. 279.

multiple membership in voluntary associations. In addition to the West Philadelphia Institute, Will joined the State Fencibles in 1829, a workingman's organization in 1831, and continued his active membership in the Second Presbyterian Church where his parents had been married. Will was a joiner.[17]

During his apprenticeship, Will developed a dynamic, magnetic personality that attracted his peers like bees to honey. Six feet in height, Kelley was an impressive figure who possessed penetrating chestnut eyes that flashed from his finely-chisled features. Will's dark eyes and hair were in striking contrast to his fair complexion and greatly contributed to his handsome appearance. His charismatic appeal won Will a position of leadership among his friends and fellow workers. It also helped to attract the attention Will thrived upon and the peer approbation he coveted. Few

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[17]"Political Portraits . . . William Darrah Kelley," pp. 553-554; William F. Vilas to William D. Kelley, April 8, 1888, Pierpont Morgan Library; "West Philadelphia Branch," manuscript history, n.d., West Philadelphia Branch Library; William D. Kelley to Henry S. Patterson, August 23, 1835, KFP; William D. Kelley, Last Will and Testament, September 20, 1889, Register of Wills in and for the County of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Thomas S. Lanard, <u>One Hundred Years with the State Fencibles . . . 1813-1913</u> (Philadelphia: Nields Company, 1913), p. 175; and Charles R. Wright and Herbert H. Hyman, "Voluntary Association Memberships of American Adults: Evidence from National

of these early friendships survived Kelley's later political career so that the record of Will's interpersonal relations during this period is too meager to construct a complete adolescent profile. However, Will's sentimental attitude about friendship is well documented in a letter to his best friend, Henry S. Patterson. "I bade B/icknell/ farewell," wrote Kelley describing a visit by a mutual friend to Patterson.

> Not the farewell of the tongue which we hear at the parting of such as call themselves friends yet know not what friendship is: No, I believe that that word conveyed from each of us an earnest wish for the welfare of one to whom we were bound by ties that congeniality of disposition, sentiments, and feelings only can weave.

It was very important to Will to be assured that those persons he desired for friends felt "an earnest wish for his welfare," and could demonstrate their loyalty to him by following his lead.[18]

Sample Surveys," American Sociological Review, 23 (June, 1958): 284-294.

[18]William D. Kelley Passport, May 21, 1852, Massachusetts Historical Society; Henry S. Patterson (1815-1854) was the son of John Patterson, a successful Philadelphia merchant. Patterson received a medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1839. Kelley and Patterson were close friends until the latter's death. J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884 (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884), 2: 1611; and William D. Kelley to Henry S. Patterson, August 23, 1835, KFP.

One of the reasons that apprentice Kelley was attracted to Philadelphia's nascent labor movement was that it afforded him excellent leadership opportunities. He joined the Journeymen Carpenters in 1831 and thus became a member of the Mechanics' Union of Trade Associations, the first coordinated movement of different trades in the United States. Will joined the Journeymen Carpenters because the jewelers had no workingman's association, and the carpenters had an open-membership policy. It was not long before his charismatic qualities, penchant for oratorical exhibitions, and apparent moral indignation over the plight of the workingman combined to attract his fellow workers who made Will one of their officers even though he was neither a journeyman nor a carpenter.[19]

Kelley joined with other Mechanics' Union members in agitating for the ten hour day. They argued that "not only was the long work day physically taxing but it deprived them of an opportunity for intellectual development or from taking an active part in political

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[19]The Pennsylvanian, April 5, 1836; William D. Kelley to Henry S. Patterson, August 23, 1835, KFP; and William A. Sullivan, The Industrial Worker in Pennsylvania, 1800-1840 (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1955), p. 99.

affairs." Both considerations were extremely important to Kelley. Their demands met with success during the summer of 1835, setting an example for the rest of the country.[20]

The fact that Kelley felt a heady sense of participation and enjoyed being in the limelight which resulted from his labor agitation is not sufficient explanation for his joining the labor movement. Didn't the "success ethic" that Will had absorbed in school condemn any combination that disturbed the sensitive balance of free competition? Wasn't it only necessary for an ambitious and industrious young man like Will to apply himself to succeed? After all, the converse of the "success ethic" was that poverty was the result of idleness and vice. But this is what Will could not accept. Although he fervently believed in the "rags to riches" mythology that permeated his society, Kelley rejected its converse. He had grown up in poverty watching his mother struggle to exist. Hannah was neither lazy nor vicious but nonetheless poor. There must be some other explanation for her plight. Perhaps there were forces at work beyond her

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[20]Kelley, Speeches, pp. 278-279; Sullivan, Industrial Worker, pp. 75-76; and The Pennsylvanian, June 3, 1835.

control—forces that conspired to aggrandize themselves at the expense of the Hannah and William Kelleys. Thus, in Will's climb up the ladder of success he had no intention of limiting himself to "pluck and luck" to accomplish his objectives. He would use whatever means were available. During the 1830's the labor movement fitted the bill.[21]

During this period of his life, Will became infatuated with politics for the first time. It developed into a lifelong ectasy and agony love affair. Kelley had been indifferent to politics until the summer of 1833. On June 10, 1833, Kelley discovered Andrew Jackson with all the exhilarating emotions that Columbus must have experienced when he first gazed upon San Salvadore. The State Fencibles, a paramilitary club with a drill team, had been invited to escort General Jackson in a parade. Kelley and several other members of the Fencibles went to Independence Hall, where Jackson was holding court, to see the President before the parade. Will and his friends waited in the long line which had formed outside the

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[21]Cong. Globe, 37th Cong. 2d sess.: 1550; and Elson, Guardians of Tradition, pp. 25-257.

building. Their turn came, and Jackson shook hands with Will "looking him hard in the eye." Kelley was thunderstruck by "Old Hickory" in just those few fleeting moments.

Later that day Will listened while his new hero railed against the "Hydra-Monster." The purpose of Jackson's trip to Philadelphia was to win support for his war on the Bank of the United States. Although he had carried the city in 1828, anti-Jackson sentiment was mounting in the City of Brotherly Love. The Bank was a Philadelphia institution whose condition was perceived by many to bear a direct relationship to the prosperity of the community and its members. Jackson was cast in the role of a villain who was intent upon destroying the prosperity of Philadelphians. Jackson made it clear in his remarks that day that his only intention was to protect the interests of honest Philadelphians and other hard-working Americans against the "stockjobbers, brokers, and gamblers." Jackson would "put his foot upon the head of the monster and crush him to the dust." Kelley vowed to himself that he would help the President in that noble undertaking. A Jacksonian Democrat was born that June morning in

Philadelphia.[22]

If that first encounter with Jackson had been Will's political baptism, then the excitement over the Bank's credit contraction during the winter of 1833-34 proved to be his confirmation in the Democracy. Hundreds of Kelley's fellow workers were laid off during the financial crisis that followed the Bank's action. Many of these men blamed Jackson for their misfortune; but Will vigorously defended his idol and condemned the "Monster" for its ruthless exercise of power. Pro-Bank forces sponsored demonstrations throughout the city to protect against Jackson's removal of deposits from the Bank. Whig employers demanded that their employees attend these rallies and sign petitions condemning the administration. Kelley organized counter-demonstrations in January, incurring the wrath of his master and other Whig manufacturers. One conservative contemporary expressed their sentiments

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[22]Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 636-637; Allen Thorndike Rice, ed., Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln by Distinguished Men of His Time (6th Edition. New York: North American Review, 1888), p. 258; Bray Hammond, Banks and Politics in America, from the Revolution to the Civil War (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 430; and William D. Kelley to Henry S. Patterson, February 7, 1836, KFP.

when he wrote in his diary "I could not witness the extreme corruption of the administration, the dangerous infatuation of the people, the distress caused by the outrageous course of the government without alarm and indignation."[23]

Twenty-year-old Will Completed his apprenticeship in the spring of 1834 during the climax of the Bank crisis. Because of Kelley's political activism, advocating the "wrong" cause in the eyes of potential Whig employers, Journeyman jeweler Kelley was unemployable in Philadelphia. After nine months of fruitless search, Will was forced to move to Boston in order to find a job. Why had he risked so much? Surely he must have realized the possible consequences of his actions. One explanation that Kelley later offered for his behavior was that he had been "nurtured from

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[23]"Political Portraits . . . William D. Kelley," p. 554; Charles McCool Snyder, The Jacksonian Heritage: Pennsylvania Politics 1833-1848 (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1958), pp. 35-49; Nicholas B. Wainwright, ed., A Philadelphia Perspective: The Diary of Sidney George Fisher Covering the Years 1834-1871 (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1967), p. 2; Hammond, Banks and Politics, pp. 405-450; Marguerite G. Bartlett, The Chief Phases of Pennsylvania Politics in the Jacksonian Period (Allentown, Pennsylvania: H. Ray Haas & Co., 1919), pp. 49-51; and Sullivan, Industrial Worker, pp. 194-200.

childhood in the good old democratic faith, and loving its cause with all the intensity of an ardent and impulsive nature, he could not but be excited to vehement protest and resistence" over the discharge of workmen for failing to sign a pro-Bank petition. Will's mother had frequently told him about the courageous manner in which both of his grandfathers had "resisted" tyranny because of their "good old democratic faith." Now it was Will's turn to prove his courage. In addition to being genuinely moved by the Democratic creed of Jackson, Kelley was almost irresistibly attracted to the side of the underdog. The Whigs' political fortunes were waxing high in Philadelphia while Democrats were waging a defensive campaign. The knowledge that members of the same "moneyed aristocracy" that had ruthlessly forced the auction of Hannah Kelley's treasures were the most ardent anti-Jacksonians must have contributed to Will's passion.[24]

The most significant factor, however, was that Will had found in Andrew Jackson a father figure with whom he could identify. A male model that competed successfully with strong-willed Hannah. John William

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[24]Political Portraits . . . William D. Kelley, p. 555.

Ward has argued convincingly that Jackson was viewed by his contemporaries as "The Man of Iron." Ward wrote that "the belief that Andrew Jackson was able to put down the Second Bank of the United States solely because he willed its destruction was . . . widespread." Kelley witnessed this phenomenon and was awe-struck as a young boy is with his father's superior accomplishments. Jackson certainly compensated for the weaknesses of David and could provide Will with the security he needed. In return Will would give his loyal support to his surrogate father.[25]

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[25]John William Ward, Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955), pp. 158-167; Rice, Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln, p. 258; William D. Kelley to Henry S. Patterson, September 7, 1836, KFP.

CHAPTER III

BECOMING

I know the spirit of Massachusetts. I know her inexorable, unappeasable, demoniac energy. I know that what she decrees she will execute, as when she ordered the burning of the witches at Salem, or the scourging of the Quakers, or exile of the Baptists to the rocky shores of the Narragansett. . . . The spirit of Massachusetts has done in two or three years only what Christ, or the Church of Christ, was . . . fifteen hundred years in accomplishing in the Roman empire.

—James Brooks, Speech delivered in the House of Representatives, February 19, 1864.

1. JOURNEYMAN

William Darrah Kelley moved to Boston in February, 1835. He had searched in vain for employment in his native city where the pro-Bank forces had effectively blacklisted him. Will found a position as an enameler with the firm of Clark and Curry shortly after his arrival in the Bay State. Although he felt exhilarated by his new surroundings, Will found the climate quite disagreeable. "At four o'clock in the afternoon,"

Kelley complained to his friend Harry Patterson, the temperature was "16 degrees below /zero/." "While I stood gazing /at the thermometer/ in amazement," he continued, "Mr. John Frost esq. took the skin off my ears." Kelley jestingly concluded his indictment of Boston's weather by telling Harry that when the snow started to melt, "swimming the Delaware would be a trifle to what coming home from the shop /required/."[1]

Joseph Clark and William Curry, master jewelers, welcomed the addition of a skilled enameler to their firm. Clark and Curry catered to a wealthy clientele that demanded quality and novelty. Interest in enameled gold and silver holloware was steadily growing among Boston's burgeoning nouveau riche, but few competent craftsmen were available to satisfy the demand. Journeyman-jeweler Kelley pursued his esoteric specialty "with the enthusiasm of an artist, as well as the skill of a cunning workman." A sample of his work, a set of gold cups that he made for the Imaum of Muscat, won a gold medal from the Massachusetts

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[1]William D. Kelley, to Henry S. Patterson, February 7, 1836, KFP; and "Political Portraits with Pen and Pencil: William Darrah Kelley," The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, 28 (June, 1851), p. 555.

Mechanics' Association.[2]

Despite his prominence in the Philadelphia labor movement, Kelley did not become closely associated with the workingman's movement in Boston. Will arrived in New England while her skilled workingmen were struggling for the ten hour day. He listened to Theophilus Fisk urge Boston workers to fight for their dignity and rights—"eight hours for work, eight hours for sleep, eight hours for amusement and instruction is the equitable allotment of the twenty-four." Kelley agreed. He witnessed the Boston Trades' Union members strike for the ten hour day. Kelley cheered them on. He saw the strike fail, the Union smashed, and the Boston workers remain the only workingmen in any major American city who had not achieved the ten hour day during the Jacksonian era. Kelley sympathized but took no active part in the agitation.[3]

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[2]Ibid.; and L. P. Brockett, Men of Our Day (Philadelphia, 1868), pp. 467-468.

[3]Theophilus Fisk, "Capital against Labor. An Address delivered at Julien Hall before the mechanics of Boston on Wednesday evening, May 20, 1835," Social Theories of Jacksonian Democracy: Representative Writings of the Period 1825-1850, edited by Joseph L. Blau (The American Heritage Series; Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1954), p. 204; and Edward Pessen, Most Uncommon Jacksonians: The Radical Leaders of the Early Labor Movement (Albany, New York: State University of New York, 1967), pp. 3-43.

There are several possible explanations for his behavior vis à vis the Boston labor movement. William Kelley was paid more than any other journeyman at Clark and Curry's. The demand for enameled handiwork, the relative scarcity of competitors, and his skill as an artisan combined to assure Will that his would be "well-paid toil." He already enjoyed the benefits of the ten hour day. A few months after starting at Clark and Curry's, Kelley wrote to one of his friends that "my day's labor, as by agreement with my employer, occupies 10 hours." Will indicated that he usually worked an additional two hours "for which I am paid extra." In addition to his excellent wages and satisfactory hours, the respect afforded a highly skilled and valuable journeyman was in marked contrast to the real and imagined indignities hurled at a lowly apprentice. The gulf between dependent Will and Master Henry Dubosq had been an intolerable one for a proud and insecure young man of Kelley's temperament. The distance separating Will from Messrs. Clark and Curry was barely visible, and much more compatible with Kelley's self-image.[4]

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[4]Cong. Globe, 38th Cong., 1st sess.: 773; William D. Kelley to Henry S. Patterson, August 23, 1835, KFP;

2. LOCOFOCO

Another factor contributing to Kelley's reluctance to become a labor activist in Boston was his growing conviction that the Democratic party was the best engine for the progress of the workingman. Will agreed with Theophilus Fisk when he asserted that "there must be a radical reform and this can only be accomplished at the ballot boxes." However, Kelley strongly disagreed with the same New England labor leader when the latter enjoined workers to "form a party of your own" and eschew all other parties as they have always been "opposed to your interests." Will believed that Andrew Jackson and the Democratic party would affect the reforms Fisk called for by a restoration of the Jeffersonian creed of "free suffrage, no monopolies, no privileges, but equal rights to equal chances for all men." Why form a new party when it was certain that "Old Hickory" would destroy all forms of special privilege as he had crushed the "Hydra Monster"? Events of the next several months seemed to justify Kelley's faith in the Democracy.

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and Karen Horney, Neurosis and Human Growth: The Struggle toward Self-realization (New York: Norton, 1950), passim.

The New Bedford Gazette reported in 1836 that the labor movement's measures had now been "adopted in all the addresses and at all the conventions of the Democratic party, and are, in fact, part and parcel of their cause."[5]

The most probable cause, however, of Will not becoming actively involved with the workingmen's organizations in the Bay State was his addiction to politics. By 1835, Kelley believed that political activism would afford him greater personal opportunities than labor agitation could. Opportunities to advance the causes in which he believed, opportunities to tweak the nose of the moneyed aristocracy that had humiliated Hannah twenty years earlier, opportunities to serve his surrogate father, and opportunities to bask in the acclaim of political prominence were the crucial conscious considerations and unconscious motives which led to Kelley's choice. Once selected, politics became Will's consort durante vita—another woman to

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[5]William D. Kelley, "An Address Delivered at the Democratic Town Meeting, in the State House Yard, July Fourth, 1841" (n.p., n.d.), p. 7; Fisk, "Capital against Labor," p. 207; Marvin Meyers, The Jacksonian Persuasion: Politics and Belief (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1957), pp. 16-32, 101-120 passim; Walter Hugins, Jacksonian Democracy and the Working Class: A Study of the New York Workingmen's

dominate his life.[6]

Kelley maintained his interest in Pennsylvania politics by subscribing to the Pennsylvanian, the American Sentinel, and the Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily Courier. Newspaper subscriptions were an expensive luxury that few laboring men could afford. To have subscribed to three partisan organs attests to Kelley's relative affluence as well as his preoccupation with politics. He also conducted a vigorous correspondence with other young Jacksonian partisans who remained in the "City of Brotherly Love." During the 1835 gubinatorial contest Kelley wrote to a friend that "I am pretty warm in the cause . . . for the election of Muhlenberg." Writing to the same correspondent the following year Kelley castigated Pennsylvania Senators who "bartered the rights of the people . . . by granting charters" to special interest

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Movement 1829-1837 (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1960), pp. 24-35; and New Bedford Gazette, quoted in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Jackson (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1945), p. 176.

[6] Gordon W. Allport, Becoming: Basic Considerations for a Psychology of Personality (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), p. 45; and Philip Rieff, Freud: The Mind of the Moralist (New York: The Viking Press, 1959), pp. 238-243. Kelley's relationship with women is analyzed on pp. 18-19, 27-34, 97, 118, 121-123, 152-153, 189-198, 207-208, 212.

groups. Eight Democratic Senators had voted with the Whigs to charter the United States Bank by the State of Pennsylvania. Will was disgusted with their treachery.[7]

It was not long after he had arrived in New England that William Kelley was drawn into the vortex of Boston politics. A Boston Morning Post editorial entitled "The Democrat" caught Will's eye. Striking a blow at the Whig aristocracy it asserted that the Democrat "is unwilling to assist in promoting the aggrandizement of one class of the people at the expense of another." "He seeks to promote the greatest good of the greatest number," the Post continued, "not by sacrificing the interests of the few to that of the many, but by affording equal privileges, and opportunities to all." The editorial ended by challenging

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[7]Henry Augustus Philip Muhlenburg was one of two Democratic party nominees for Governor of Pennsylvania in 1835. The Muhlenburg faction which Kelley supported were ardently anti-Bank Jacksonians; and they had the endorsement of the Philadelphia Society of Mechanics and Workingmen. William Kelley to Henry S. Patterson, August 23, 1835, February 7, 1836, KFP: and Charles McCool Snyder, The Jacksonian Heritage: Pennsylvania Politics 1833-1848 (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1958), pp. 50-67.

all readers who shared these sentiments to attend an election-eve mass meeting of the Democratic party.[8]

Will attended the rally at Faneuil Hall and listened attentively to a host of minor party functionaries and ward bosses. He had arrived at the meeting early enough to capture a seat directly in front of the stage. As each speaker, in his turn, denounced monopoly and special privileges, Kelley's passion mounted. Suddenly, Will rushed onto the stage just as Benjamin F. Hallett was being introduced. Kelley responded to the indignant inquiries of "who is he?" as follows:

> Who am I? I will tell you who I am directly. I am an American citizen, a man who can earn his living by the sweat of his brow and the cunning of his good right hand—one who has come to this cradled temple of liberty to pledge himself to stem the tide of time on board the good ship Democracy, with her to swim or with her gloriously to sink.[9]

This audacious introduction of himself to his fellow Democrats attracted a great deal of attention to Will—a not unwelcomed fringe benefit. Kelley was

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[8]Boston Morning Post, August 18, 20, 1835.

[9]J. Donald Cameron, "Memorial Addresses on the Life and Character of William D. Kelley," Misc. Doc. No. 229, House of Representatives, 51st Cong. 1st sess., p. 70.

invited to speak at other Democratic meetings. His Irish name, humble origins, and identification as a workingman made Will a "showcase" speaker for the party. Although his style was as yet unpolished, young Will's dashing appearance, powerful voice, and fiery enthusiasm soon made him a favorite of the Boston working class. During the next few years, Kelley frequently shared a stage with such party luminaries as George Bancroft, Alexander H. Everett, Charles Gordon Greene, and Benjamin F. Hallett.[10]

Nathaniel Greene, postmaster of Boston and henchman of Boston's Democratic party boss David Henshaw, was one of the first party stalwarts to recognize Kelley's talents and potential usefulness. Greene offered Will a clerkship in the Post Office. Kelley refused this patronage position on the basis that he "did not wish to give up his independence and individuality and become a waiter on the tide of affairs."

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[10]Boston Daily Advocate, November 13, 1837, November 12, 1838; Cameron, "Memorial Addresses," p. 71; "Political Portraits . . . William D. Kelley," p. 555; and Arthur B. Darling, Political Changes in Massachusetts 1824-1848: A Study of Liberal Movements in Politics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), p. 163.

More important, however, was Will's reluctance to become too closely associated with Greene and Henshaw's unsavory "Custom House Party." Will was already gravitating toward the radical wing of the party.[11]

The litmus test for ideological purity, as far as Kelley was concerned, was one's position on corporations and other forms of special privileges. "I hold that a charter should not be granted," Kelley wrote in 1836, "unless the benefit the co/m̄pany/ confers on the public over-balances the evil effect it produces upon individual enterprise." Will shared the suspicion common among Boston workingmen that David Henshaw's enmity for the Bank of the United States was based more on pocketbook morality than principle. It was rumored that Henshaw was interested in a Boston bank that he wanted to see supplant the "Monster." If true, this to Kelley was the worst possible apostasy.[12]

Will agreed wholeheartedly with the emerging leader of the Radicals, George Bancroft, when the

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[11]Thomas S. Lanard, One Hundred Years with the State Fencibles . . . 1813-1913 (Philadelphia: Nields Company, 1913), p. xli; Cameron, "Memorial Addresses," p. 71; and Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, pp. 159-176.

[12]Darling, Political Changes, p. 188; and William D. Kelley to Henry S. Patterson, Feb. 7, 1836, KFP.

latter argued that "the great objection in my mind to the . . . Bank lies in its tendency to promote extreme inequalities in point of fortune." Warming to his subject, Bancroft continued:

> Show me one instance where popular institutions have violated the rights of property, and I will show you a hundred, nay a thousand instances, where the people have been pillaged by the greedy cupidity of a privileged class. . . . There is more danger that capital will swallow up the profits of labor, than that labor will confiscate capital. . . . The feud between the capitalist and the laborer, the house of Have and the house of Want, is as old as social union, and can never be entirely quieted.

Kelley added, "As Democrats . . . it is our duty to raise as it were a wall of fire around the rights of the poorest and weakest of our brethren, that they may not be oppressed or wronged with impunity by the richest or strongest in the state, not by the state itself." If such a Democratic shield had been available at the conclusion of Mr. Madison's administration, perhaps David Kelley would not have been driven to his death and Hannah and her children cruelly thrust into penury.[13]

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[13]George Bancroft, "Letter to the Workingmen of Northampton, October 1, 1834," quoted in Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, p. 163; William D. Kelley to Henry S. Patterson, Aug. 23, 1835, KFP; Kelley, "An Address . . . 1841," p. 13.

The Democracy was an embattled minority in the Boston of the 1830's. George Bancroft did not overstate his case when he wrote, "To advocate Democracy in Massachusetts is no holiday pastime." "We tread a thorny path," he concluded, "but it leads upwards to the home of freedom, of justice, of truth." The Radicals were the minority faction of the Democratic party in 1835. Once again William Kelley was attracted to the corner of the underdog. This time Will became a faithful and fervent apostle of Boston Locofocoism.[14]

Among the Radical Democrats, George Bancroft influenced Kelley the most. Bancroft and Kelley first met at a Democratic party rally in 1835. Bancroft was so impressed with young Will that the former offered Kelley the use of his magnificent library, and suggested that Will prepare for Harvard. A close relationship developed between the two that continued for

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[14] Bay State Democrat, December 5, 1843; Darling, Political Changes, pp. 173-250 passim; and William D. Kelley to Henry S. Patterson, Feb. 7, 1836, KFP.

The term Loco Foco was coined to designate the radical Democrats who held a meeting at Tammany Hall in New York City against the wishes of the regular organization. The machine had the gaslights turned off and forced the radicals to use "loco foco" matches in order to continue their meeting and declare their principles. The resolutions that passed were against distinctions in society except those based on merit, against the infringement of equal rights, against the

over twenty years. Kelley's association with Bancroft, initially a barrier to advancement within the ranks of the regular party, soon became a great asset. After Bancroft displaced Henshaw as Collector of the Port of Boston, Kelley's friend became the recognized leader of the party in Massachusetts. Bancroft tendered Kelley a position in the Customs House, but by that time Will had attracted the attention of prominent party leaders in his native city. They enticed him to return to Philadelphia.[15]

3. THE CRUCIBLE

During his sojourn in Boston, Kelley took advantage of the intellectual ferment then extant in the Puritan city. "A boy, poor, friendless, and in pursuit of wages for manual toil," Kelley fondly recalled in later years, "I found open to me in the libraries of Boston the science, history, and literature of the

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use of paper money, monopolies, the Bank of the United States, and bank charters granted by states.

[15]William D. Kelley to George Bancroft, May 23, 1846, Bancroft Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; Lanard, Fencibles, p. xli; Boston Daily Advocate, November 12, 1838; Boston Morning Post, November 12, 1838; "Political Portraits . . . William D. Kelley," p. 557; and Darling, Political Changes, pp. 214-219.

world." "At a cost that even the laboring man did not feel," he continued, "I found, night after night, week after week, in her lyceums and lecture-rooms the means of intercourse with her Bancroft, her Brownson, her Everetts, her Channings, her Prescotts, her Emerson, and scores of other learned and as able, though perhaps less distinguished sons than these." "I found four years of life spent /in Boston/," Kelley asserted, "worth to me what the same number of years in a college might have been."[16]

Kelley was not exaggerating. During the four years that Will resided in Boston, there were scores of lecture courses and hundreds of individual lectures delivered. The Boston Lyceum alone attracted almost 2000 persons per week. Kelley attended classes in elocution and debate as well as regularly attending a wide variety of other presentations. Will divided his leisure hours equally between intellectual pursuits and politics. In addition to attending lectures at the Lyceum, Kelley managed to accumulate a remarkable library for a young artisan. He was a voracious reader

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[16]Cong. Globe, 38th Cong., 1st sess.: 773; and Brockett, Men of Our Day, pp. 447-448.

eagerly devouring "Shakespeare and Milton, Johnson and Addison, Shelley and Wordsworth," along with his domestic favorites Emerson, Channing, Whittier, and Longfellow. Thomas Drew, junior editor of Elihu Burritt's Christian Citizen, reminisced in 1850 about Kelley in Boston:

> It was our good fortune, when an apprentice-boy in Boston, to enjoy the intimate companionship of this now eminent jurist and philanthropist, who was then a journeyman mechanic, devoting his days to hard manual toil, and his nights to the acquisition of knowledge. We were made a wiser and a better boy through the influence of his instruction and example; and scores of young men, who were then our companions, but who are now scattered all over the country, from Maine to Oregon, can say the same.[17]

One of the first lectures that Kelley attended in Boston was Ralph Waldo Emerson's biographical lecture about the religious reformer, George Fox. Will was

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[17]Carl Bode, The American Lyceum: Town Meeting of the Mind (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 49-50; Cong. Globe, 38th Cong., 1 sess.: 773; Cameron, "Memorial Addresses," p. 71; Rutherford B. Hayes to his wife, December 7, 1865, RBHL; "Political Portraits . . . William D. Kelley," p. 556; Florence Kelley, "My Philadelphia," The Survey, 57 (October 1, 1926), p. 52; William D. Kelley, "Characteristics of the Age: An address delivered before the Linnaean Association of Pennsylvania College, at the annual commencement, September 18, 1850" (Gettysburg: H. C. Neinstedt, 1850), p. 4; and William D. Kelley to Caroline Bonsall Kelley, January 11, 1870, WDKC.

quite impressed by his future Brahmin friend's presentation—especially by Emerson's remarks about reformers and progress.

> /Fox/ demanded radical reform of the church. This must every religious mind do that is born into an old church. The creed, the rites of one age can never fit the next. Let the Reformer define his creed never so accurately or establish what severe Rule of Discipline he will, in a short time he dies, and his friends who shared his spirits die, his own fire cannot be transmitted and soon their places are filled by a generation who read their prayers and observe their ceremonies with excessive punctuality, but the essence of religion, that is, its origin in the worshipper's soul, is wanting.

It is ironic that Emerson's insight into the dilemma of the successful reformer which so intrigued Kelley presaged Will's plight forty years later.[18]

Kelley was intellectually attracted to Emerson as a moth is drawn to a lantern. Will made the most of his contacts with the great man when they occasionally shared a stage. Kelley's quick and eager mind, deference, and ingratiating ways soon won Emerson's friendship and entree into the inner circle of Brahmin Boston. Kelley and Emerson remained on intimate terms

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[18]James Elliot Cabot, A Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson (Boston: The Riverside Press, 1888), p. 712; and Stephen E. Whicher and Robert E. Spiller, eds., The Early Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 174.

even after Will returned to Philadelphia.[19]

Kelley's association with Emerson brought him into contact with the foremost intellectuals in New England including the man who became his mentor and friend, Orestes Brownson. Will met the controversial Brownson at a meeting of the Transcendental Club held at Brownson's home in Chelsea. Emerson had invited his young friend to accompany him to listen to such Brahmin luminaries as George Ripley, James Freeman Clark, and Bronson Alcott exchange opinions about nature, man, and society. Will could barely contain his excitement.[20]

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[19]William D. Kelley to Henry S. Patterson, August 23, 1835, KFP; Brockett, Men of Our Day, p. 448; William H. Gilman and J. E. Parsons, eds., The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1970), 8: 334; and Ralph Waldo Emerson to Lidian Emerson, February 1, 1843, The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson, edited by Ralph L. Rusk (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 3: 139. Kelley continued his association with Emerson after returning to Philadelphia by arranging the latter's lectures in that city. Emerson wrote to his wife in February, 1843, that "I could not have done without /Kelley/." Ibid.

[20]William D. Kelley to Orestes Brownson, December 18, 1841, Brownson Papers, University of Notre Dame Archives; and Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., Orestes A. Brownson: A Pilgrim's Progress (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1963), p. 46.

Favorably impressed by Brownson's incisive comments and agile repartee, Kelley was drawn to this man who shared so many similar experiences and characteristics with him. Brownson had been raised in poverty by his widowed mother as had Will. Both Orestes and Will had been forced to leave school at an early age to work in a printing office. Brownson began his religious odyssey by joining the Presbyterian church—the church that Kelley had been born into and would leave under Brownson's influence. Both men were tall and dark, eloquent speakers, passionate reformers, and terribly insecure. Their similar background, and their shared beliefs forged a bond of friendship between thirty-three year old Brownson and twenty-two year old Kelley that would be strained by the former's apostasy but not severed until Brownson's death in 1876.[21]

Brownson, who was concerned about the plight of the working class, influenced Kelley's political and social thinking, who in turn encouraged Brownson to become an active Democrat in order to realize his

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[21] Ibid., pp. 5-9, 28, 45; and William D. Kelley to Orestes Brownson, June 7, 1863, Brownson Papers.

ideals. After Brownson had been pilloried by friend and foe alike for the radical views he expressed in "The Laboring Classes," Kelley congratulated his friend for "triumph/ing/ over the small-fry" who had attacked Brownson. Will reassured Orestes that "the young men are with you everywhere." Brownson's influence on Kelley was apparent in an address Will delivered the year following the appearance of "The Laboring Classes." Echoing his mentor, Kelley thrilled his Fourth of July audience when he passionately affirmed that

> we must repeal all grants of special privilege—simplify our laws—withdraw the state from the field of private enterprise, reduce the number of offices, increase the duties of many of those remaining and decrease the salaries of others: in brief we must enter our protest against all injustice, extend the hand of fellowship to the poor and lowly, and promote by our every act equality of condition among men.[22]

What most attracted Kelley to this outspoken Unitarian minister was his fervent advocacy of the working class. Brownson's social radicalism blended

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[22]William D. Kelley to Orestes Brownson, December 18, 1841, Brownson Papers; Schlesinger, Orestes A. Brownson, p. 70; Orestes Augustus Brownson, "The Laboring Classes," in Social Theories of Jacksonian Democracy edited by Blau, pp. 301-319; and Kelley, "An Address . . . 1841," p. 16. The influence of Kelley and George Bancroft upon Brownson is also

nicely with Kelley's growing political radicalism. Their relationship was mutually beneficial. Will convinced Brownson that the material condition of the working class could be improved only through political action. Therefore, Will explained, it was necessary for Orestes actively to support the Democratic party. Brownson, who had heretofore eschewed political parties, was persuaded by his young friend's arguments and became one of the party's most influential spokesmen in New England. Kelley's friend Bancroft rewarded Will's convert to the Democracy by appointing Brownson Steward of the United States Marine Hospital at Chelsea.[23]

Brownson reciprocated by introducing Will to a religion that satisfied the latter's intellectual and emotional needs—one that was compatible with his self-image and vision of the future, Transcendental Unitarianism. Kelley had become estranged from the Calvinist creed of his family. Will's faith in progress and his own abilities to do good made him

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evident in "The Laboring Classes." Brownson wrote, "We want first the legislation which shall free the Government, whether State or Federal, from the control of the banks." p. 317.

[23]Schlesinger, Orestes A. Brownson, pp. 70-72.

choke on the gloomy Edwardsian doctrine of the innate depravity of man. He came to the conclusion that the organization of society was responsible for evil, not the Fall of Adam. Thus Kelley sought a church that would enjoin its members to meliorate the lot of the poor, change those institutions which breed evil, and thank God for their humanity. Will agreed with Brownson's assessment that Jesus was "the greatest and best reformer ever vouchsafed us by heaven." Kelley believed that "the fundamental truth of Christianity /is/ the fraternity and natural equality of men." He therefore desired communion in no church that did not accept that "fundamental truth."[24]

One might suspect that the liberal theology of Unitarianism would have attracted Will even without

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[24]William D. Kelley to Orestes Brownson, December 18, 1841, Brownson Papers; Conrad Wright, The Liberal Christians: Essays on American Unitarian History (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), pp. 34-40; Elwyn Allen Smith, The Presbyterian Ministry in American Culture: A Study in Changing Concepts, 1700-1900 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957), pp. 138-161; Daniel Walker Howe, The Unitarian Conscience: Harvard Moral Philosophy, 1805-1861 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 1-23; Schlesinger, Orestes A. Brownson, pp. 16, 26-28, 41-45; and Kelley, "An Address . . . 1841," p. 4.

the intervention of Brownson. However, the conservatism and the patrician class membership of the dominant Unitarian establishment in Boston repulsed Kelley. According to one historian, the members of the "Unitarian mercantile oligarchy . . . were men of many paradoxes."

> Religious liberals and social conservatives, at once optimistic and apprehensive, nationalistic and cosmopolitan, they were elitists in a land dedicated to equality, proponents of freedom of conscience who supported a religious establishment, and reformers who feared change.

Kelley, the ardent Jacksonian Democrat and social reformer, could have no truck with the Whiggish defenders of the status quo such as Edward Tyrell Channing, Francis Bowen, Andrews Norton, and Henry Ware, Jr.[25]

Although Will had appreciatively listened to William Ellery Channing's sermons on several occasions since arriving in the Bay State, it required a religionist with the impeccable reform credentials of Orestes Brownson to win Kelley's confidence. It was not long after their friendship blossomed that Will joined Brownson's congregation thus becoming a Transcendental Unitarian—a member of the radical minority

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[25]Howe, Unitarian Conscience, pp. 11-12, 205-235.

faction of Boston's dominant denomination. This change in church membership completed William Kelley's New England identity. He was a middle class skilled artisan who was a political, social, and religious radical.[26]

Kelley's radicalism, however, did not extend to abolitionism. Although his place of employment was directly across the street from The Liberator office, Will had little contact with its fiery editor, William Lloyd Garrison. Kelley disliked slavery, but he did not agree with Garrison's immediatism nor with his methods of agitation. Will would seek the destruction of slavery as he sought to destroy other social and economic inequities—through political action.[27]

The future champion of Negro rights first became aware of the plight of black Americans during the

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[26]William D. Kelley to Henry S. Patterson, August 23, 1835, KFP; William D. Kelley to Orestes Brownson, December 18, 1841, Brownson Papers; William D. Kelley to Martha Shaw Kelley, April 18, 1841, Als file, Houghton Library; and Cong. Globe, 38th Cong., 1st sess.: 773.

[27]Stimpson's Boston Directory (Boston: Charles Stimpson, Jr., 1837); and William D. Kelley to Henry S. Patterson, August 23, 1835, KFP.

Philadelphia race riots of 1829 and 1834. Will sympathized with the black victims of these riots, but did not immediately equate northern prejudice with slavery. Reading the poetry of John Greenleaf Whittier heightened Kelley's perfectionist sensibilities and kindled his antipathy toward slavery. Whittier's faith in the goodness of man—his passionate conviction that God dwells in every soul—appealed to young Kelley who had rejected the Calvinism of his ancestors. How could men held in bondage realize their potential, Will pondered after reading Whittier? More threatening to Kelley, however, was the question how could a society that sanctioned such an anti-democratic and unjust institution as slavery progress and realize its potential? Poems such as "The Slave-Ships," "Expostulation," "Hymn," and "The Hunters of Men" persuaded Kelley that American society had to purge itself of slavery or suffer stagnation.[28]

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[28]J. Thomas Scharf and Thomas Westcott, History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884 (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884), 1: 624; William Lloyd Garrison to Helen E. Benson, August 23, 1834, The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison, edited by Walter M. Merrill (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), 1: 405-406; William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Kelley, January 11, 1870, WDKC; and John Greenleaf Whittier, The Poetical Works of John Greenleaf Whittier (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1892), vol. 3.

Influenced by Whittier, Will attended several meetings sponsored by the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society shortly after he arrived in Boston. In July, 1835, Kelley attended a series of debates between Samuel May and Ralph Gurley on the merits of the American Colonization Society. May, representing the abolitionist position, denounced colonization as slavery's handmaiden. Gurley, vice-president of the American Colonization Society, defended his organization's approach as the only rational and practical way to resolve the problem. British abolitionist George Thompson participated in the last of these debates between May and Gurley. Kelley's reaction to this debate and its participants underscores his lack of sympathy for Garrison and his followers.

> In a former letter I mentioned a discussion that was going on between May & Gurley, upon the evening of its conclusion we were honored with /the/ co. of the notorious Thompson. He attempted to interrupt G. (who was overpowering his adversary) by offering an explanation but the meeting declined hearing it and exclaimed so vehemently against the interference of a foreign Missionary & Incendiary that his impudence could not sustain him, he cowed beneath the rebuke.[29]

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[29]William D. Kelley to Henry S. Patterson, August 23, 1835, KFP; and The Liberator, July 25, August 1, 8, 22, 1835. Kelley's critical remarks about Thompson might have been prompted more by his anglophobia than

Although colonization had been effectively discredited by Garrison's relentless attack upon "those two great monsters—slavery and the American Colonization Society," Kelley nonetheless felt that Gurley's arguments for colonization had "overpower/ed/ his adversary." Why? One possible explanation could be that Gurley simply possessed superior forensic skill and more logically developed his points than his opponent. That may very well have been the case. However, more probable reasons for Will's rejection of May's position were that Kelley lacked the conversion

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his aversion to abolitionism. There was a tremendous national outcry against Thompson during the summer of 1835. See the following for details of Thompson's visit and the popular reaction to it: C. Duncan Rice, "The Anti-Slavery Mission of George Thompson to the United States, 1834-1835," Journal of American Studies, 2 (April 1968): 13-31; James D. Richardson, ed., A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897 (Washington, 1896-99), 3: 175; and Wendell Phillips Garrison and Francis Jackson Garrison, William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879 (New York: The Century Co., 1885), 2: 1-4.

Kelley described the temper of a Boston anti-Thompson mob as follows: "On a subsequent evening I attended an anti-slavery meeting in expectation of hearing him /Thompson/ speak; but he did not make his appearance. It is well he did not for had he attempted to address that meeting the city would have been disgraced & the laws violated; as he would most assuredly have been lynched and had his wounds dressed with poultices of tar & feathers. That this would have been the case is beyond a doubt; as the articles were shown in /the/ entry leading to the hall." William D. Kelley to Henry S. Patterson, August 23, 1835, KFP.

experience that motivated most abolitionists; and he had a tremendous faith in the people's ability to legislate justice through their elected officials—a faith that Garrison did not share.[30]

After his friend George Thompson had been roughly treated by a mob of workingmen in Lowell, Massachusetts, Garrison revealed his disdain for the masses. "Manufacturing towns always contain suitable materials for a mob," he wrote in The Liberator. Garrison noted that "many of the rabble /members of the anti-Thompson mob/ were foreigners of the lowest grade, who assembled to put down a foreigner of the highest!" He concluded his editorial with the smug declaration, "It shows what sort of animals are opposed to abolitionists, and furnishes good proof of the excellency of the anti-slavery cause." Garrison's contempt for workingmen and immigrants certainly did not endear him to Kelley. Unlike Garrison, who believed that the masses had to

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[30]William Lloyd Garrison to John B. Vashon, March 22, 1834, and to Gerrit Smith, February 7, 1835, Letters, 1: 298-300, and 444-453; William Lloyd Garrison, Thoughts on African Colonization (Boston: Garrison and Knapp, 1832). Examples of abolitionist's conversion experiences are James G. Birney, William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips and Theodore Weld. Garrison, William Lloyd Garrison, 1: 86-154, 454, and 2: 454.

be forced to accept social justice, it was Will's conviction that slavery, along with other social evils, would be removed at the insistence of the middle and lower classes against the wishes of the "Whig moneyed aristocracy."[31]

Kelley objected to the caustic and, what seemed to him, hysterical tone of Garrison's crusade. Will would have agreed with his friend Emerson's journal notation that "The Liberator is a scold." Although Kelley was convinced that slavery had to be eradicated before America could fulfill her mission, he agreed with his mentor, Orestes Brownson, that the federal government had "no rightful jurisdiction" over the institution of slavery in the various states under the Constitution. Thus, the problem of slavery could only be solved by persuading the South to emancipate their slaves voluntarily. Meanwhile, no further slave territory should be acquired that would nurture the peculiar institution. Slavery had to be contained to the area where it already existed. Will believed

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[31]The Liberator, December 6, 1834. For Garrison's elitism and social philosophy see John L. Thomas, The Liberator: William Lloyd Garrison (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963).

that Garrison and his followers were exacerbating the problem with their inflammatory rhetoric. Shouting and name-calling would only stiffen Southern resistance to emancipation. It was the time for sober, rational, and conciliatory discussion—not acrimonious debate. Brownson probably expressed Kelley's opinion, as well as his own, when he wrote that "Abolitionists are in no way whatever . . . the champions of free discussion." "Their concept of free discussion," he continued, "is exceedingly narrow and crude." Like "our pilgrim fathers," the abolitionists "love freedom of conscience so much that they . . . spurn the idea of sharing its custody with others."[32]

The area that most separated Kelley from Garrison, however, was politics. Garrison had begun his career in journalism as a Federalist party panygerist. He retained many of the conservative biases of his early years even after his conversion to radical abolitionism. Garrison briefly flirted with politics again in 1834 by supporting Amasa Walker for Congress; but by the time that Kelley began working across the street from

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[32]Emerson quoted in Thomas, The Liberator, p. 184; and Brownson quoted in The Liberator, October 19, 1838.

The Liberator office, its editor had eschewed politics. "The politics of this nation . . . are corrupt, proscriptive, and even ferocious," wrote Garrison during an election year. "All parties fail in their allegiance to heaven and to their country." He added "I cordially detest /Jacksonism/ in principle and in practice." Garrison could wholeheartedly agree with his faithful follower, Anne W. Weston, who wrote to her sister that "all parties seem willing to sell their very souls for 10 votes."[33]

Nothing could have been better calculated to alienate young William Kelley than Garrison's conservative, apolitical radicalism. Lloyd was Will's antithesis. It is therefore not surprising that Kelley did not gravitate toward Garrison on the anti-slavery issue. Their respective Weltanschauungs dictated that they march to the beat of different drummers. Their lines of march would not intersect until the election of 1864. In the meantime, Kelley

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[33]Thomas, The Liberator, pp. 27-53; William Lloyd Garrison to the Colored Inhabitants of Boston, December 18, 1834, Letters, 1: 426; and Anne W. Weston to Debora Weston, November 9, 1838, Weston Papers, Boston Public Library.

fought slavery in the political arena.

Kelley viewed the slavery question primarily in terms of his standard gauge—privilege versus democracy. He agreed with Bancroft's assessment that the "Whig moneyed aristocracy" was divided into three branches: commerce, corporations, and slaveholders. Bancroft railed against the slaveholding aristocracy as "the most selfish, the most united, and the most overbearing of all." Both Bancroft and Kelley cast the slavery question in terms of the Democracy's struggle against the money power. Therefore, the solution to the problem of slavery was quite simple—elect real Democrats and, eventually, the peculiar institution would disappear. That is, if Garrison and others like him did not make it impossible for real Democrats to win elections. Since Kelley predicated anti-slavery reforms, as well as higher priority anti-privilege reforms, upon Democratic party electoral success, everything was subordinated to victory at the polls.[34]

Therefore Kelley did not feel uncomfortable with the Democratic party strategy for the 1836 Presidential

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[34]Bancroft quoted in Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, p. 164: Boston Morning Post, August 6, 20, 1835; and William D. Kelley to Henry S. Patterson, August 23, 1835, KFP.

campaign of disassociating Martin Van Buren from a mild antislavery position. The Boston party organ, The Boston Morning Post, vehemently denied the allegation by the Whig Boston Atlas that Van Buren was the candidate of the abolitionists. "A declaration," according to the Post, "which could only have sprung from ignorance or depravity, as it is without any foundation in truth." A few days later the Post ran an editorial which asserted that "the intelligent, liberal and peaceable citizens of this community object to any interference with the political affairs of our Southern neighbors and their domestic institutions." Kelley thought that this strategy would eventually succeed by ameliorating the Southern excitement that had reached a fever pitch from abolitionist activity. After the emotional turbulence had subsided, Will believed that the Democratic yeoman of the South, the laboring classes, would recognize that slavery was economically, politically, and socially detrimental to them. The only southerners who benefited from the peculiar institution were the members of the "Whig moneyed aristocracy"—the slaveocracy. Thus William Kelley anticipated the argument that Hinton Rowan Helper would use over twenty years

later.[35]

Will would not finally become disabused of his faith in the Democracy's ability to overthrow slavery, along with the other two branches of the moneyed aristocracy, until the Kansas-Nebraska controversy. Once disillusioned with the Democracy, Kelley would waste no time in changing parties. However, his system of priorities would remain unchanged. Victory at the polls was still of paramount importance.

Although Kelley enjoyed his multi-faceted life in New England, he was dissatisfied with his status as a skilled artisan. His success in Boston political and intellectual circles kindled Will's ambition for greater prestige. When Col. James Page, Democratic Postmaster of Philadelphia, invited Kelley to read law in his office, he immediately accepted. A poem that became Will's favorite first appeared in print about the time that he returned to Philadelphia. Longfellow's "A Psalm of Life" provides an excellent description of William Kelley's philosophy at the end

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[35] Ibid.; Boston Morning Post, August 6, 20, 1835; and Boston Atlas, August 8, 1835.

of his four years in Boston.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
  Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
  Find us farther than to-day.

. . . .

In the world's broad field of battle
  In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
  Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
  Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act,—act in the living Present!
  Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us
  We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
  Footprints on the sands of time.[36]

Potent agencies acted upon young Will in Boston that made a lasting contribution to his character and personality. He arrived in Boston a Presbyterian and returned to Philadelphia an Unitarian. Kelley's propensity for reform was nurtured in that ante-bellum crucible of humanitarian reform called Boston. His

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[36]William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Kelley, January 11, 1870, WDKC; and The Poetical Works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1886), 1: 21.

predilection for intellectual stimulation was heightened by the intellectual ferment surrounding him in his adopted city. Kelley's success as a popular orator and political activist created an ever increasing need within young Will to publicly exhibit his talents. Boston in the 1830's was the right city at the right time to sharpen traits, whet appetites, develop talents, and clarify thoughts already a part of William Darrah Kelley. Kelley remained fondly loyal to Massachusetts for the next half century, readily acknowledging his debt to the Bay State. During heated debate over a Reconstruction bill, Kelley passionately defended Massachusetts on the floor of the House of Representatives against the charges of James Brooks:

> Sir, I am no son of Massachusetts or New England . . . but I remember that, in my wayward youth . . . I wandered from my native Pennsylvania, . . . in pursuit of employment, and found a home in Massachusetts, and I may be pardoned if I pause for a moment to feebly testify my gratitude to her in whom I found a gentle and generous foster-mother. . . . I thank God for the Puritan spirit of Massachusetts . . . which kept liberty alive, and finally brought its blessings to the entire people of the country.[37]

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[37] Cong. Globe, 38th Cong., 1st sess.: 773.

CHAPTER IV

BETRAYAL

> /S/ociety . . . is divided into two parties, the one satisfied with the existing state of affairs . . . and deprecating all change; the other looking forward to a better condition of things, and striving to . . . improve all institutions from which unhappy consequences flow. The former is the conservative party, the party of the past whose face is on the back of its head. . . ; the latter is the movement party, whose face is ever turned towards the future, and whose dearest objects are the progress of the individual man, and the melioration of his political and social condition.
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> —William D. Kelley, An Address Delivered . . . July Fourth, 1841.

1. THE SETTING

James Page, postmaster of Philadelphia and one of the city's most prominent Democrats, attended a mass party rally in Boston on November 11, 1838. He listened attentively to George Bancroft and Orestes Brownson score the "unholy" alliance between Whigs and Anti-Masons. Page was most impressed, however,

with "the eloquent address" delivered by young William Kelley who "roused /the people/ to generous, vigorous patriotism." Later that evening, Page invited Will to return to Philadelphia and study law under his tutelage. A probably apocryphal story has Will responding to Page's offer by saying, "Why don't I go to Congress?" "Maybe you will some day," said Colonel Page, "but first come and read law with me." Kelley accepted the offer and returned to his native city a few weeks later after an absence of almost four years.[1]

Yuletide 1838 was a time of intense social and political upheaval in the "City of Brotherly Love." Philadelphia had been disgraced earlier that year when anti-Negro and anti-abolitionist sentiment climaxed in the destruction of Pennsylvania Hall. Many Philadelphians believed that the mob's attack upon the

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[1]James Page served as postmaster of Philadelphia from April 16, 1833 to March 3, 1841. He also served as Philadelphia County Treasurer (1841-43) and as Collector of Customs for the port of Philadelphia (1846-49). Thomas S. Lanard, One Hundred Years with the State Fencibles . . . 1813-1913 (Philadelphia: Nields Company, 1913), pp. xxxiii-xxxvi, xli-xlii; Boston Daily Advocate, November 12, 1838; Henry S. Patterson to William D. Kelley, March 30, 1837, WDKC; and "Political Portraits with Pen and Pencil: William Darrah Kelley," The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, 28 (June, 1851), p. 556.

Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society headquarters had been provoked by the abolitionists. One disapproving contemporary observed that prior to the outbreak of violence, "Black & white men & women sat promiscuously together, & walked about arm in arm." Shortly before the riot, a more outspoken critic prophetically warned that

> the disgusting habits of indiscriminate intercourse, between the blacks and whites, so repugnant to all the prejudices of our education, which they not only have recommended, but are in the habit of practising in this very Abolition Hall, will result in some terrible outbreak of popular indignation, not only against the abolitionists, but also, against the coloured people.

Kelley was astonished to learn that so many of his fellow citizens sanctioned this flagrant violation of Constitutional rights. He agreed with the Public Ledger editorial that asserted it would be better for "all the ruffians in our city . . . /to/ bite the dust, and leave their blood knee deep in the streets, than that the great principle of freedom of speech and the press be surrendered." The burning of Pennsylvania Hall was one in a series of events that won William Kelley's sympathy and support for Philadelphia's beleaguered antislavery community.[2]

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[2]Discussions of the state of Philadelphia society during the period in which this chapter is

Another manifestation of the widespread hostility toward blacks in Pennsylvania at the time of Kelley's return to the Quaker City was the disfranchisement of Negroes by the constitution of 1838. The vote in the

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concerned can be found in the following: Charles R. Barker, "Philadelphia in the Late Forties," Philadelphia City Historical Society Publications, 2 (1931): 245-274; Stuart Blumin, "Mobility and Change in Ante-Bellum Philadelphia," Nineteenth-Century Cities: Essays in the New Urban History, edited by Stephan Thernstrom and Richard Sennett (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), pp. 165-208; Ira V. Brown, The Negro in Pennsylvania History (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania Historical Association, 1970), pp. 18-42; Dennis J. Clark, "The Adjustment of Irish Immigrants to Urban Life: The Philadelphia Experience, 1840-1870," Ph.D. dissertation, Temple University, 1970; Philip S. Klein and Ari Hoogenboom, A History of Pennsylvania (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1973), pp. 126-143; Charles McCool Snyder, The Jacksonian Heritage: Pennsylvania Politics, 1833-1848 (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1958), passim; J. Thomas Scharf and Thomas Westcott, History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884 (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884), 1: 629-735; and Nicholas B. Wainwright, ed., A Philadelphia Perspective: The Diary of Sidney George Fisher (Philadelphia: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1967), passim.

The Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society raised $40,000 to erect Pennsylvania Hall. It was destroyed by a mob on May 17, 1838, three days after its opening. For details of this episode see Brown, Negro in Pennsylvania, pp. 24-28; Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, pp. 49-50; Allan Nevins, ed., The Diary of Philip Hone, 1828-1851 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1936), pp. 327-328; Leonard L. Richards, "Gentlemen of Property and Standing": Anti-Abolition Mobs in Jacksonian America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 3, 112, 156; and Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 605-652. Kelley's gravitation toward the anti-slavery community is discussed on pp. 160-171, 200-223.

constitutional convention to restrict the franchise to adult white males was seventy-seven to forty-five. The issue stirred little debate and was approved in a statewide referendum. Kelley later rebuked Pennsylvania for taking the vote from her blacks citizens:

> And by its constitutional provisions . . . it has deprived thousands of men of the right of suffrage and thus invested them with the acknowledged right to rebel against a tyrant who will not listen to their voice or consult them in the enactment of laws for their government.[3]

Although Will condemned Negro disfranchisement and was disappointed by the failure of the constitutional convention to abolish the legislature's power to charter corporations, the aspect of the new constitution which most upset Kelley was that it ignored the Bank. The "Monster" had been given a new lease on life by what Kelley considered to be a treacherous Pennsylvania legislature. Biddle's Bank of the United States became the United States Bank of Pennsylvania on February 18, 1836, receiving a thirty-year charter from the State. Kelley, along with other

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[3]Brown, Negro in Pennsylvania, p. 22; Philadelphia Pennsylvania, January 24, 1838; Joseph Willson, Sketches of the Higher Classes of Colored Society in Philadelphia (Philadelphia: Merrihew and Thompson, Printers, 1841), pp. 68-71; and William D. Kelley,

radical Democrats, fervently wanted the Bank destroyed. They advocated repeal of the Bank's charter by constitutional amendment. Senator James Buchanan expressed the radicals' concern in a letter to Francis Shunk: The "Bank has . . . created a Monied Aristocracy, whose common pursuit is the accumulation of wealth, and the distinction in society which wealth never fails to confer." The convention's failure to repeal the Bank's charter did not close the controversy so far as Kelley was concerned. He would continue to fight the "Monster" as he had done since his first fateful encounter with "Old Hickory."[4]

Accepting the hard-money tenets of William Gouge and other Locofoco theorists, Will enthusiastically

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"An Address Delivered at the Democratic Town Meeting, in the State House Yard, July Fourth, 1841" (n.p., n.d.), p. 13.

[4]William D. Kelley to Henry S. Patterson, August 23, 1835, February 7, 1836, WDKC; Snyder, Jacksonian Heritage, pp. 84-86, 94-111; Kelley, "An Address . . . 1841," pp. 12-16; Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 646; and James Buchanan to F. R. Shunk et al, June 30, 1836, The Works of James Buchanan, edited by John Bassett Moore (New York: Antiquarian Press Ltd., 1960), 3: 118.

Although Buchanan often articulated radical sentiments, it would be a mistake to consider him a Locofoco. He was a regular Democrat who used radical rhetoric, frequently supported the conservatives, and seized his opportunities.

endorsed the venerable Jackson's Specie Circular of July 11, 1836 which required payment for public lands be made in specie. Kelley shared the fear with other radical Democrats that the prevalent inflationary banking practices would result in the ruin of America's producing classes. "When will the bubble burst?" asked William Cullen Bryant. "When will the great catastrophe which the banks have been preparing for us actually come?" Both Bryant and Kelley believed that Jackson's hard-money policy would help to avert financial disaster.[5]

However, "the bubble" did burst during the winter of 1836-37 signaling the beginning of a depression that would disrupt the nation's economic life for seven years. Conservatives, Whigs and Democrats alike, blamed the Specie Circular for the country's financial woes. Philip Hone complained in his diary that "Jackson, Van Buren, and Benton form a triumvirate more fatal to the prosperity of America than

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[5]Kelley, "An Address . . . 1841," pp. 9-11; William M. Gouge, "Principles and Effects of the Banking System," Social Theories of Jacksonian Democracy: Representative Writings on the Period 1825-1850, edited by Joseph L. Blau (The American Heritage Series; Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1954), pp. 183-198; and New York Evening Post, April 7, 1836.

Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus were to the liberties of Rome." The radicals rebutted with a counterattack on the banks. "The disease under which the country is at this moment suffering," declared William Gouge, "is overtrading, produced by over-banking." The Specie Circular, according to the Jacksonians, had not brought on the crisis. "On the contrary," they argued, "it has checked it."[6]

Philadelphia, which had one of the largest concentrations of bank strength in the nation and was at the same time the center of Pennsylvania's Locofoco activity, was a hotbed of debate about the causes of the depression and the role of Biddle's Bank in perpetuating the country's predicament. On May 10, 1837, the New York City banks suspended specie payments, refusing to redeem their paper bank notes in hard money. The next day the United States Bank in Philadelphia suspended, with the banks in other parts of the country soon following suit. Tempers flared over the banking issue in the "City of Brotherly Love."[7]

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[6]Nevins, Diary of Philip Hone, p. 260; and Gouge quoted in Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Jackson (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1945), p. 222.

[7]Snyder, Jacksonian Heritage, p. 113; Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 648; and Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, pp. 224-230.

A few days after the Philadelphia banks suspended specie payments, leaders of a huge anti-bank rally in Independence Square clamored for an end to the paper-money system and a resumption of specie payments. Nicholas Biddle and the pro-bank forces countered by blaming Van Buren for not revoking the Specie Circular. One patrician confided to his diary that the administration's policies "are the national results of clothing ignorance and folly with power." However, many Whigs saw opportunity in the country's distress. They reasoned that the depression would force the embarrassed Democrats to repudiate Jackson and Van Buren, revoke the Specie Circular, and re-institute a national bank.[8]

Those Whigs who were counting on President Van Buren to capitulate in the face of mounting political pressure were caught off guard by his September 4th message to Congress. "Our present condition is chiefly to be attributed to . . . excessive issues of bank paper," Van Buren admonished. He then

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[8]Ibid., pp. 229-230; and Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, pp. 30-32.

condemned the system of government deposits in selected banks. "The money received from the people, instead of being kept till it is needed for their use, is . . . a fund on which discounts are made for the profit of those who happen to be owners of stock in the banks selected as depositories." The President derisively shared his conviction with the legislators that "surely banks are not more able than the Government to secure the money in their possession against accident, violence, or fraud;" and concluded with a proposal to divorce state from bank by establishing a sub-Treasury system.[9]

Van Buren's Independent Treasury plan created a furor in the Keystone State. On February 3, 1838, William F. Johnston, a pro-bank Democrat, introduced a resolution in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives which requested Pennsylvania congressmen and instructed her United States Senators to use their influence for a postponement of the Independent

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[9]James D. Richardson, comp., A Compilation of Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897 (Washington, 1896), 3: 324-346; and James Buchanan to Andrew Jackson, October 26, 1837, The Works of James Buchanan, 3: 324-325.

Treasury bill until the next session of Congress. Administration supporters immediately offered a resolution in support of the sub-Treasury plan. Nicholas Biddle exerted every effort to push Johnston's resolution through the legislature. The resolution was carried by a vote of fifty-one to forty-nine, with seven pro-bank Democrats voting with the majority.[10]

The battle over the Independent Treasury was the opening engagement in the gubernatorial election of 1838. The contest was a bitter one with the issues of banking and the currency subordinated to personalities. Two sets of election returns from Philadelphia County created an explosive situation. Both Democrats and Whigs claimed victory. Although the Democratic candidate for governor had a clear majority, the statewide results were such that the victorious party in Philadelphia County would control the state legislature. The crisis was exacerbated when a spokesman for defeated incumbent Governor Joseph Ritner called for an investigation of the disrupted election, and suggested that in the meantime the Whigs and Anti-Masons "treat the election . . . as if we had not been

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[10]Snyder, Jacksonian Heritage, pp. 116-118.

defeated." Democrats were outraged by what they interpreted as an attempt to deprive them of their victory at the polls.[11]

Mass meetings were held in Philadelphia by irate Democrats "bent on seeing justice done." During the next several days hundreds of Philadelphia Democrats poured into the state capital to prevent the coup attempt they expected. One disgusted Whig gentleman described these Democratic Minute Men as "A band of ruffians, trained bullies, heroes of the cockpit and the grogshop . . . /who intended/ to intimidate & control the legislature." Governor Ritner panicked at the onslaught of belligerent Democrats descending on Harrisburg and called out the militia. The commanding officer of the militia issued orders for his troops to carry buckshot cartridges, unintentionally dignifying this opera bouffe with the name the "Buckshot War."[12]

The militia scrupulously avoided contact with the "riotous Democratic Revolutionists" and limited their

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[11] Ibid., pp. 126-131; and Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 652-653. See Table 1 for election returns.

[12] McClure, Old Time Notes, 1: 51-53; Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 652-653; and Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 69.

activities to marching up the hill and then march/ing/ down again." They made no attempt to interfere when the mob "rushed into the Senate with yells for blood" and so frightened the occupants of the Senate chamber that Thaddeus Stevens, Charles B. Penrose, and Thomas H. Burrowes, all leading figures in the election controversy, jumped out of a window in order to escape the wrath of the Locofoco mob. After several more days of ludicrous behavior, five Whig Senators defected and voted with the Democrats to recognize the Democratic claimants. Thus, the "Buckshot War" ended with no injuries except Thaddeus Stevens' wounded pride.[13]

It was in the wake of this turmoil that William Darrah Kelley returned to his native city. It would not be long before his association with Jim Page would thrust him into the center of the Quaker City's partisan controversies. But on Christmas day, 1838, Will enjoyed the "Bright, exhilarating winter weather," in the company of his mother, Hannah. He returned

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[13] McClure, Old Time Notes, 1: 52-56; Nevins, Diary of Philip Hone, pp. 366-369; Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, pp. 63-64; Snyder, Jacksonian Heritage, pp. 131-135; William Henry Egle, "The Buckshot War," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, 23 (July, 1899): 137-156; and Klein, History of Pennsylvania, pp. 134-135.

from Boston more worldly, with an increased confidence in himself and the future; but, although he loved his mother and was fascinated by her, he remained unconsciously apprehensive around this strong-willed woman from whom he had escaped four years earlier.[14]

2. TWO INSTITUTIONS: THE LAW AND MARRIAGE

Kelley spent several weeks reorienting himself to Philadelphia before entering Colonel Page's law office in February, 1839. Will got on well with the robust Page who shared his radical principles and gusto for the knock-down, drag-out variety of urban working-class politics practiced in the "City of Brotherly Love." The Colonel was an old Democratic party wheelhorse who had an uncanny ability to judge political talent. In William Kelley he recognized a potential protégé worthy of the master's time and counsel. Page lost no time in establishing a regime for Will that consisted of one part law and three parts politics. One distinguished member of the Philadelphia bar observed that "Kelley, while yet a student of law, became a popular and eloquent political speaker."

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[14]Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 65.

According to David Brown, young Will vigorously supported "all public and philanthropic measures for the suppression of vice, and the amelioration of the condition of the poor or neglected." In between these crusades on the hustings, Will reluctantly read the dreary legal tomes which lined the shelves in his mentor's office.[15]

During the spring, 1839, many knowledgeable politicos believed that the fortunes of the Pennsylvania Democracy were improving after two years of the depression blues. In a letter to Andrew Jackson, James Buchanan expressed his optimism and summarized the political situation in the Keystone State as follows:

> The signs of the times are portentous of another suspension of specie payments, although such an event is to be deprecated; yet should it come, human ingenuity will not be able to furnish a pretext for charging it on the Government. The Banks have had their free sway. In that event, the final separation of Bank and State can no longer be retarded.

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[15]Lanard, Fencibles, pp. xxxiv, xli-xlii; Scharf, Philadelphia, 2: 1551; L. P. Brockett, Men of Our Day (Philadelphia, 1868), p. 468; and David Paul Brown, The Forum; or Forty Years Full Practice at the Philadelphia Bar (Philadelphia: Robert H. Small, 1856), 2: 184-185.

> In Pennsylvania, the folly and wickedness of the Whigs and Antimasons, in attempting to nullify the late election and force into the Legislature the defeated Whig Candidates of the County of Philadelphia, and thus usurp the Government, have greatly strengthened the Democratic party. With honest and discreet measures on the part of our State Government, and I have great confidence in Governor Porter, we shall maintain our ascendancy without difficulty.

Both Buchanan's optimism and his faith in Porter were misplaced. Although the party was victorious in the state elections that October, Porter and the conservative Democrats in the legislature laid the foundation for the party's defeat in 1840 by their response to the predicted bank suspension.[16]

On October 9, 1839, the United States Bank once again suspended specie payments; banks throughout the country immediately followed its lead. A few days after the suspension Governor Porter urged that the banks be treated with "forbearance and moderation." However, the Democratically controlled legislature that convened in January, 1840 was not in a forebearing mood. A bill passed the House which would have

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[16]James Buchanan to Andrew Jackson, April 9, 1839, The Works of James Buchanan, 4: 117-118; Sister M. Theophane Geary, A History of Third Parties in Pennsylvania, 1840-1860 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1938), p. 14; and Snyder, Jacksonian Heritage, pp. 137-141.

required the immediate resumption of specie payments by all banks in Pennsylvania. Conservative Democrats voted for the bill rather than risk the wrath of their constituents.[17]

Governor Porter was convinced that the passage of this anti-bank measure would jeopardize the state's chances for receiving a bank loan for improvement projects. He therefore decided to intervene on behalf of the banks. Porter sent a special message to the legislature in which he declared, "if a too vigorous system of measures be adopted to coerce the payment of the liabilities of the banks immediately, the credit of the state must and will be seriously and disastrously affected." His message was a thinly veiled threat to veto any immediate resumption act. Kelley joined with other Philadelphia radicals in denouncing Porter's action at a mass rally. The aging Jackson lamented to his friend, Frank Blair, "the corrupting influence of the Banks" in Pennsylvania.

> I am afraid there are some apostates in the Pennsylvania legislature . . . who bend before the money power. . . I fear also that Governor

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[17] Ibid., pp. 138-139; Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 653; and Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 85.

> Porter made a bad move on the political chess board under other influences than that of the real Democratic and republican principles. . . . The Banks must not be coerced to be honest is the cry or you destroy the people. When the people, the real working /people/ are oppressed and cursed by a depreciated paper and the Banks, bankers, speculators, and swindlers /are/ fattening at the expense of the laboreur, I hate such hypocrisy /as Porter's/.

Porter's por-bank stance sharpened the cleavage between the conservative wing of the party which supported him and the Van Buren-hard-money men like Kelley who vehemently denounced his course as one that was "making the rich richer at the expense of the laboring poor."[18]

James Buchanan attempted to mediate the differences between the pro-bank conservatives and hard-money radicals. However, Porter's role in blocking passage of immediate resumption legislation made the Senator's self-appointed task impossible. Radicals competed with conservatives for patronage and control of the state party. As the presidential campaign drew nearer, the schism within the Democratic party widened.

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[18]Snyder, Jacksonian Heritage, p. 139; Geary, History of Third Parties, pp. 14-15; Andrew Jackson to Francis P. Blair, April 9, 1840, Correspondence of Andrew Jackson, edited by John S. Bassett (Washington, D.C., 1933), 4: 56-57; and Kelley, "An Address . . . 1841," p. 12.

Thus, a divided Pennsylvania Democracy unenthusiastically faced the election of 1840.[19]

Although the Whigs were united only by their common enmity for Van Buren and the Democrats, they managed to submerge divisive principle to political exigency and work together. The Whigs adroitly turned the depression to their advantage. After approximately 1500 women besieged a benevolent society in Philadelphia that had offered work relief at fifty cents a week, the Whig campaign broadsides which read: "Matty's policy, 12-1/2 cts. a day and French soup, Our policy, 2 dollars a day and Roast Beef" became an effective indictment of the administration in the eyes of its former supporters.[20]

Even more damaging to the Democratic cause was the Whig discovery of the "common man." Sidney George Fisher, who had staunchly supported the Whig party as the heir to the aristocratic Federalists, disgustedly described the party's metamorphosis during the "Log-Cabin" campaign.

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[19]James Buchanan to David Porter, May 30, 1840, The Works of James Buchanan, 4: 246-248; and Snyder, Jacksonian Heritage, pp. 141-145.

[20]Robert Gray Gunderson, The Log-Cabin Campaign (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1957), pp. 15, 20a, and 37.

> Everything is done to keep up the excitement—meetings, speeches, processions are daily & hourly held & made & marched throughout the country. . . . Their results are party spirit, bad passions, demagogism, idleness, drunkeness, mobs & riots. . . . The demon of democracy is abroad & triumphant and will drive us to the devil before very long. . . . To retain power /after the election of Harrison even the Whigs/ must flatter the prejudices, adopt the opinions, gratify the passions & comply with the wishes of the majority, & to do this they must pursue nearly the same course as the /Democrats/.

It was symbols such as the whiskey bottles in the shape of log cabins made by the E. C. Booz Distillery of Philadelphia that disturbed Fisher's sense of propriety. However, the editors of the Democratic Review understood far better than Fisher the consequences of the "hard cider" tactics used by the Whigs when they lamented "We have taught them how to conquer us!"[21]

Young Kelley desperately fought against "the tide of time on board the good ship Democracy." On the evening of September 27, 1840, Sidney George Fisher encountered "a mob" in front of "the Loco Foco

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[21]Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 104; Gunderson, Log-Cabin Campaign, p. 129; and Democratic Review quoted in William Nisbet Chambers, "Election of 1840," History of American Presidential Elections, edited by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. and Fred L. Israel (New York: Chelsea House, 1971), 1: 682.

headquarters opposite the State House." James Page and William Kelley "were haranguing" the crowd. Their speeches were "the lowest and most vulgar imaginable, consisting principally of coarse abuse of the Whigs, of Harrison, Webster, Biddle, etc." Obviously amused, Fisher explained that "it soon became evident that the majority of those assembled were Whigs" who jeered the Democratic orators. "Page and his friends were evidently disconcerted & frightened, for . . . /they/ stopped & the window shutters of the house were closed." Unable to pass by an opportunity to moralize on the evils of democracy, Fisher confided to his diary that

> Here was an officeholder of the government /Page/ addressing an exciting & abusive harangue to his party in a crowded street. What more likely to produce a disturbance. . . . These elections are a curse. Every four years this system of agitation & excitement is gone thro with.

The scene that Fisher described was unusual. Locofoco orators were better received and more influential during the contest than Fisher would have us believe.[22]

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[22]J. Donald Cameron, "Memorial Addresses on the Life and Character of William D. Kelley," Misc. Doc. No. 229, House of Representatives, 51st Cong. 1st sess.: 70; Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, pp. 102-103; and Snyder, Jacksonian Heritage, p. 90.

Although the Whigs carried the state, Kelley, Page, Henry Horn, Henry Gilpin and other Philadelphia radicals managed to increase their party's share of the vote in both the city and county by a vigorous campaign waged on a Locofoco platform. While middle and lower-class Democrats were defecting to the Whigs in other parts of the state, the Philadelphia organization retained the loyalty of the workingmen, immigrants, and urban poor which had been the core of their coalition. Table 1 shows that the Democratic percentage of the vote in Philadelphia increased from 46.5 in 1836 to 50.3 in 1840. Will and his friends had performed well, but they would not reap the benefits of their labor.[23]

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[23]William D. Kelley to Henry Horn, October 2 [n. d.], Hampton L. Carson Collection, Free Library Philadelphia; George Mifflin Dallas to Henry D. Gilpin, April 17, 1840, Gilpin Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; American Republican and Chester County Democrat, July 12, 1842; and Snyder, Jacksonian Heritage, pp. 149-150.

A common misconception of the "Log-Cabin" campaign is that workingmen, especially Irish immigrants, deserted the Democratic party in wholesale numbers. In Philadelphia County, the four sub-divisions with the heaviest Irish concentration of population gave 66% of their combined vote to the Democrats in 1836 and 62.4% of their vote in 1840. The difference of 3-1/2 percentage points can hardly be considered a "wholesale" defection. Election Returns, Philadelphia Archives; and Clark, "The Adjustment of Irish Immigrants to Urban Life," pp. 42-43.

TABLE 1*

	PENNSYL-VANIA	CITY AND COUNTY OF PHILADELPHIA	CITY	COUNTY
1836				
Van Buren	91,475	10,918	3,027	7,891
Demo. % of vote	51.2	46.5	34.1	55.0
Harrison	87,111	12,199	5,746	6,453
Whig % of vote	48.8	53.5	65.9	45.0
1838				
Porter	133,194	13,413	3,156	10,257
Demo. % of vote	51.5	44.9	30.5	52.5
Ritner	125,344	16,504	7,205	9,299
Whig % of vote	48.5	55.1	69.5	47.5
1840				
Van Buren	143,675	18,076	4,783	13,293
Demo. % of vote	49.9	50.3	38.5	56.5
Harrison	144,018	17,843	7,645	10,200
Whig % of vote	50.1	49.7	61.5	43.5

*The election returns were compiled from the following sources: Philadelphia County Commissioner's Election Returns, 1820-1858, Manuscript Ledger, City of Philadelphia Archives; Niles' Register, 51 (November 26, 1836): 195; 59 (November 14, 1840): 165; and Senate Journal, 1838-39, 1: 42-43.

"Why . . . was not Mr. Van Buren sustained," Kelley rhetorically asked a sympathetic audience after the election. Answering his own question Will explained "the cause of his defeat is not with him but with his friends. Their treachery to the people ruined him." While Jackson and Van Buren were engaged in "warfare against privilege," Kelley continued, conservative Democrats "winked at the creation of scores of corporate monopolies, especially of banks." Will, in a scathing indictment of apostate Democrats, declared that even more damaging "in its consequences on Mr. Van Buren and our cause, in the late campaign, was the want of popular confidence in our local party leaders, who had habitually held forth large promises and beautiful theories to the people, yet shown their love for the fat things of the land." James Buchanan echoed Kelley's sentiments in a letter to Francis Shunk. "It would seem that whether the Democratic party are successful or defeated in the popular elections," the Senator wrote, "the result in regard to the Banks is always the same." "I fear that honest men feeling this truth will hereafter be discouraged from continuing the struggle," Buchanan bemoaned, "upon the principle that it is better to be defeated

by an open enemy than betrayed by a treacherous friend." The worst, from Kelley's point of view, was yet to come.[24]

A few weeks after the Pennsylvania banks were required by law to resume specie payments, the United States Bank suspended for the third time in less than four years. Kelley demanded that any bank that failed to make specie payments as provided by the Banking Act of 1840 forfeit its charter. Other radicals quickly joined in the attack. The mounting crescendo of criticism came from some unexpected quarters including archconservative Sidney George Fisher. "This banking system is a curse to the country. It has all interests, all business, all classes in its meshes," he disapprovingly observed. "It cannot be destroyed, it cannot now even be regulated without serious injury to many." But instead of purging the state of Biddle's Bank, twelve conservative Democrats joined with Whig legislators to save it.[25]

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[24]Kelley, "An Address . . . 1841," pp. 10-11; and James Buchanan to Francis Shunk, May 6, 1841, The Works of James Buchanan, 4: 405.

[25]Ibid., pp. 153-159; Pennsylvanian, February 12, 1841; Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 116; and Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 657-658.

The "Revenue Bill" linked aid for banks to the procurement of funds for the state. It suspended indefinitely the penalties upon defaulting banks, and invited them to loan the state $3,000,000. The bill enabled the participating banks to issue notes in small denominations equal to the sum of their subscriptions, a privilege Biddle had been fighting to secure for six years. Senator Buchanan claimed that "the news of the passage of the Revenue bill . . . caused my heart to sink within me." "No political event," he confided to a political friend in Harrisburg, "has ever made me despond before." Buchanan ended his epistle with a post script which illustrates his incredulity at the turn of events. "What could have been the reason why twelve Democrats deserted us?" A radical Philadelphia newspaper was more aggressive in its attack on the pro-bank Democrats. "These are the traitors! These are the men who could forget everything in their thirst for Gold," the editorial declared. It concluded by admonishing loyal Democrats to "teach /their/ children to mention /the revenue bill Democrats/ as you would mention with execration the traitor Arnold, the traitor Burr, or

the traitor Hull."[26]

Will was so disgusted with the revenue bill and the Democrats that aided in its passage that he found it difficult to enter the gubernatorial campaign. Even though Governor Porter had vetoed the hated bill, Kelley suspected him of collusion with the pro-bank forces. As the campaign progressed, however, Will could not resist the urge to become involved. He vigorously campaigned for local Democrats during the summer and fall ignoring the top of the ticket. One of his campaign appearances in 1841 was at a Philadelphia town meeting held on the Fourth of July. A member of the audience described Kelley on that occasion.

> To a tall and vigorous frame, he united an expressive and mobile play of features, and a voice of unusual depth and power. The writer remembers standing /at one corner of the square/, and distinctly hearing him . . . at the other end of the State-House yard, notwithstanding the noises of the street. The warmth and energy of his speech roused and attracted his auditors, so that /he was/ loudly . . . and enthusiastically cheered.[27]

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[26]Snyder, Jacksonian Heritage, pp. 155-157; James Buchanan to Francis Shunk, May 6, 1841, The Works of James Buchanan, 4: 405-407; and Spirit of the Times, May 6, 1841.

[27]"Political Portraits . . . William D. Kelley," p. 556; and Kelley, "An Address . . . 1841."

Kelley used this occasion to upbraid Porter and conservative Democrats who had "departed from the Democratic creed." "Democracy is the unabridged liberty of all," Will declared for the benefit of those apostates who seemed to have forgotten. Echoing the strong states' rights position of his friend Orestes Brownson, he asserted that democracy "requires that government do no more than protect each man in the enjoyment of his rights." Kelley added,

> Democracy demands not much government but little, not splendor but simplicity, and when a government attempts to do more than preserve order in the state and administer justice between man and man, it must infringe the rights of some and become a tyrant, be its name Monarchy, Aristocracy, or Democracy.

Porter and his legislative supporters had obviously failed to adhere to these tenets.[28]

A banking crisis early in 1842 once again pitted conservative Democrats against radicals, but with very different results than the earlier contests. The revenue bill the preceding year had not relieved the state's financial problems. Many radicals advocated repudiation of the state debt and sale of the public improvement projects as the only alternative to

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[28] Ibid., p. 12.

bankruptcy. The specter of repudiation prodded the legislature to action.

On January 28, 1842 the Girard Bank failed to open its doors. Three days later Governor Porter obtained an injunction closing the doors of the Bank of Pennsylvania to protect $800,000 in state funds on deposit in that institution. These events precipitated a general bank run and financial panic that exceeded anything that had yet occurred during five years of depression. S. W. Gordon, a Philadelphia bond broker, wrote to a friend in New York that "you have no idea of the state of things in this city." He continued,

> Our currency now is in a most peculiar situation. The small notes that are in circulation are mostly the issues of the State Banks and these the city Banks refuse to receive on deposit, they are thus at a discount in reality, while you take them at their value to pass them off on the first occasion each one hoping that he will not be the unlucky one to find them on his hands.

Gordon concluded "I would wish for my part that every Bank would go by the board instanter—I know nothing that would do more good to the community at large."[29]

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[29] Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 659-660; Snyder, Jacksonian Heritage, pp. 161-162; Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, pp. 130-131; and S. E. Gordon to Garnet J. Pendergast, February 8, 1842, Naval History Society Collection, New York Historical Society.

On the same day that Gordon expressed his enmity for the Pennsylvania banks, the state House of Representatives passed a bill requiring immediate resumption. The Senate, however, countered with a bill providing for a gradual resumption spread over a period of five years. Kelley immediately responded to the Senate challenge by organizing protest rallies in Philadelphia. He helped collect signatures on a petition denouncing the Senate action which stretched for fifteen feet. Some conservative Democrats argued that adoption of the House bill would ruin the banks. The Spirit of the Times retorted, "Let them break! And we shall be so much the sooner put in possession of a sound currency." The Senate demurred to the popular outburst and passed the House resumption bill. Kelley and the radicals had won.[30]

There was a great deal of uncertainty concerning the ability of the banks to obey the law and resume specie payments. Will, at a mass public meeting in Independence Square, eloquently reassured his

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[30]Ibid.; Pennsylvania, February 8, 1842; Spirit of the Times, February 18, and March 18, 1842.

townsmen that the crisis was over. He argued that the Resumption Act, a Democratic party measure, had crushed the money power and that their savings were secure. To allay their fears, he asserted that there was sufficient "sound money" to meet their demands. His strategy worked. When the banks proceeded to resume specie payments a few days later, amidst predictions of disaster by their officers, no run occurred. Public confidence had been restored—the panic was over. The Spirit of the Times called Kelley the "Tribune of the People" for his role in restoring public confidence and proving the bankers wrong. Will reveled in his triumph.[31]

During brief interludes in his political activities, Kelley managed to study enough law to pass the bar examinations. A few days after his twenty-seventh birthday Kelley excitedly wrote to his sister Martha that he had been examined on his birthday and was "told I passed with much credit." On the motion of James Page, Kelley was admitted to the Philadelphia bar on April 17, 1841. He jestingly told his favorite

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[31]"Political Portraits . . . William D. Kelley," p. 556; and Cameron, "Memorial Addresses," p. 72.

sister that "yesterday I . . . stuck out my tin. Now that my probation is over there will have to come many flies to my net before I shall suffer from plethory." Many "flies" did seek out Kelley who quickly established a "large and lucrative practice." However, his real vocation remained politics with the practice of law relegated to the back seat.[32]

Kelley developed a legal philosophy congenial to his political philosophy. He despised the members of his profession who were so preoccupied with technicalities and legalisms that they earned the pejorative epithet "a Philadelphia lawyer." Will believed in the native genius of the "common man," and thought that the law should be accessible to everyone. He therefore vehemently disagreed with leaders of the Philadelphia bar such as Thomas Sergeant and Horace Binney who sang the praises of the common law while claiming that only the most erudite could comprehend its majesty. Kelley denounced "the common law of England . . . replete as

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[32]William D. Kelley to Martha Shaw Kelley, April 18, 1841, Als file, Houghton Library; "Political Portraits . . . William D. Kelley," p. 556; Cameron, "Memorial Addresses," p. 72; and William D. Kelley to John Chase, May 18, 1846, Kelley Miscellaneous Manuscripts, New York Public Library.

it is with feudal technicalities and monarchical principles," as the means of "shackeling the masses to the arbitrary rule by a privileged few."[33]

Kelley agreed with Boston labor reformer Frederick Robinson who charged that "every plan to humble and subdue the people originates . . . /in/ the judiciary . . . in every State where judges hold their office during life." According to Robinson, judges held this aristocratic power because of their "possession of common law jurisdiction." "Common law" is, protested Robinson, "only in the head of the judge, so that whatever he says is common law, must be common law, and it is impossible to know, before the judge decides, what the law is." In a speech where Kelley condemned Pennsylvania for violating the rights of the people, the first article of indictment concerned the state's collusion in shrouding the law in mystery. "It has enacted a multitude of laws not required by the public good," he accused, "and by thus erecting factitious

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[33] I am indebted to Perry Miller's brilliant analysis of the evolution of the legal mind in America in his The Life of the Mind in America: From the Revolution to the Civil War (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1965), pp. 99-265 passim; Kelley, "An Address . . . 1841," pp. 6, 8, 12, and 15.

standards of right and wrong, /the state/ has rendered it impossible for any citizen to know his legal responsibilities without devoting years to the study of law, exclusive of all other pursuits." This appalling situation created what Alexis de Tocqueville saw as the only semblance of an aristocracy in America—the legal fraternity.[34]

Will became a legal maverick as he had earlier become a political and religious maverick. Like many of his radical friends, Kelley believed that in order to make the courts as concerned with human rights as they were with property rights that the judges had to be elected for specified terms by the people; and rationally made legal codes had to replace the "feudal technicalities" of the common law. He supported the movement for codification because he thought that the people would benefit from the simplification of the law. As David Dudley Field later succinctly stated the argument for codification:

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[34]Frederick Robinson, "An Oration delivered before the Trades' Union of Boston and Vicinity, July 4, 1834," Social Theories of Jacksonian Democracy, edited by Blau, p. 328; Kelley, "An Address . . . 1841," pp. 12, 15; and Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (New York: Vintage Books, 1945), 1: 283-286.

> The numerous collections of law-books upon the shelves of our libraries superseded by a single work; the whole law brought together, so that it can be seen at one view; the text spread before the eyes of all our citizens; old abuses removed, excrescences cut away, new life infused—these will be the beneficent effects of this vast work.

Contrary to the preferences of the majority of his professional brethren, Kelley's legal idol was not a Kent or Story but Chief Justice Roger Taney.[35]

Will enjoyed the prestige of being an attorney and prominent political figure. Shortly after beginning practice, he persuaded Hannah to sell her boarding house and move into more fashionable quarters with him. Although he never hesitated to recount his humble origins on the hustings, Kelley was greatly relieved to have his mother keeping house for him rather than running a public house. Will might have genuinely

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[35]Merle Curti, The Growth of American Thought (3rd edition; New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1964), pp. 229-230; David Dudley Field, "Reform in the Legal Profession and the Laws. Address to the Graduating Class of the Albany Law School, March 23, 1855," The Legal Mind in America: From Independence to the Civil War (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1962), p. 294; William D. Kelley to Henry S. Patterson, August 23, 1835; Kelley, "An Address . . . 1841," pp. 12, 15; and Morton J. Horwitz, "The Emergency of an Instrumental Conception of American Law, 1780-1820," Law in American History, edited by Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), pp. 287-326 passim.

identified with the laboring man, but most of his associates were now young gentlemen. William Kelley never went down to the neighborhood tavern for a drink with the boys.

The influence of his sojourn in Boston continued to affect Kelley's behavior after he entered his new career as part-time lawyer and full-time politico. Among the strongest of these earlier influences had been Orestes Brownson and his brand of Unitarianism. Will believed that "Worship /should/ be the free and unrestrained act of the individual, subject to no forms but such as conscience might prescribe." Upon returning to the "City of Brotherly Love," Kelley sought kindred spirits to worship with. He joined a "transcendental Unitarian /church/ under the pastoral care of F. A. Eustice." According to Will, each member "read the Dial & Boston Quarterly" and was then left "to the guidance of his conscience thus enlightened." After tendering Brownson an invitation "to preach to /the/ congregation," Kelley enthusiastically added "it is not very numerous but is growing rapidly, and already embodies considerable talent and real respectability." The latter was quite important to

Will.[36]

. Enhancing Kelley's growing prestige was his close association with Brownson and Emerson. The former usually stayed with Will on his frequent lecture trips to Philadelphia. "My townsmen take it for granted that I am to some extent advised of your intentions," Kelley wrote to Brownson in 1841, "some of them call on me almost daily to know whether you will visit our city during the winter." William Ellery Channing visited with Kelley after one of his last major addresses in May, 1841. But the Boston luminary that most impressed Will's Philadelphia friends was Ralph Waldo Emerson. During a lecture trip to the Quaker City, Emerson wrote to his wife that Kelley was "Brownson's friend & patron here as far as lectures are concerned." Unusually demonstrative, the staid Emerson exclaimed that "Kelley . . . has undertaken for dear love the whole matter of my lectures & . . . has made my cause his own." Emerson modestly concluded

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[36]Kelley, "An Address . . . 1841," p. 5; William D. Kelley to Orestes Brownson, December 18, 1841, Brownson Papers, University of Notre Dame Archives; and Elizabeth Geffin, Philadelphia Unitarianism (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961), pp. 219-220.

"I could not have done without /him/."[37]

Kelley's best friend during this period was Henry S. Patterson, a young physician and ardent Locofoco. Two weeks after President Harrison's death, Kelley gleefully described Henry's pique about the behavior of his visiting Whig relatives:

> Harry exclaimed the other day with a degree of asperity unusual to him, "Why the D-l don't they /Patterson's relatives/ go to their Whig friends and not convert our house into a Tippicanoe headquarters for the Federalists;" and then, as though he found comfort in the thought he added "but I'm determined that instead of leaving my windows bowed as usual I'll spread them wide open and tie them back with white ribband."

It was this type of statement that endeared Pat to Will.[38]

In between political campaigns, which usually absorbed most of their free time and energy, Will and Pat attended lectures, went to the theatre, or visited

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[37]William D. Kelley to Orestes Brownson, December 18, 1841, Brownson Papers; Daniel Walker Howe, The Unitarian Conscience: Harvard Moral Philosophy, 1805-1861 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 221; and Ralph Waldo Emerson to Lidian Emerson, February 1, 1843, The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson, edited by Ralph L. Rusk (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 3: 139.

[38]Henry S. Patterson to William D. Kelley, March 30, 1837, WDKC; and William D. Kelley to Martha Kelley, April 18, 1841, KFP.

families with pretty daughters at home. Sidney George Fisher thought that "Nothing but a village in the West /could/ be more stupid, triste, and villagelike than Philad." The young patrician complained that there was "No society, no life or movement, no topics or interest of any kind." Had he known about it, Kelley would have laughed at Fisher's ennui. Will found life in Philadelphia exciting.[39]

Kelley was frequently called upon to be the host to the visiting friends of his Boston intimates. Will and Pat entertained Lewis Steenrod, a friend of Brownson's who was a Congressman from Virginia, by taking him to see "La belle Fanny" (Fanny Elssler) perform her celebrated ballet "La Tarentule." They also frequently visited another famous Fanny who had retired from the theater. Will was fascinated by Fanny Kemble and visited her at every opportunity. But the entertainment Kelley enjoyed best was visiting the "girls on union st." However, this form of entertainment stopped when he met a Scottish lass from

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[39]Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 134; and William D. Kelley to Henry S. Patterson, n.d., KFP.

Baltimore.[40]

Will met Harriette Tennant at the home of her uncle, James Page. Harriette's parents had died a few years before. Another uncle, Joseph Stewart of Baltimore, sent to Scotland for his orphaned niece in 1840 and adopted her. After a whirlwind courtship, Will and Harriette were married by her family minister in Baltimore's Second Presbyterian Church on August 1, 1843. The newlyweds returned to the house on Sansom Street that Will had moved Hannah into a few years earlier. Hannah had already established her sway over the household and was not inclined to relinquish it. There the three of them resided alone until the arrival of a welcomed addition to the family—Will's favorite sister Martha moved in a few months after the wedding. Once again Will had three women to pamper him.[41]

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[40]Ibid., Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 101; and William D. Kelley to Henry S. Patterson, February 7, 1836, KFP. The "girls on union st." were Henry Patterson's cousins.

[41]Democratic Union, August 9, 1843; American Ancestry: Giving the Name and Descent, in the Male Line, of Americans Whose Ancestors Settled in the United States Previous to the Declaration of Independence (Albany, New York: Joel Munsell's Sons, Publishers, 1893), 7: 284, 8: 228; Public Ledger,

3. "TO THE VICTOR BELONG THE SPOILS"

Harriette had little opportunity to domesticate Will who, almost immediately after their marriage, once again responded to the clarion call to political battle. With the lackluster Tyler discredited and repudiated by the Whigs, hopefuls in both parties began early maneuvering for the nomination. James

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October 11, 1851; and William D. Kelley to Orestes Brownson, October 17, 1843, Brownson Papers.

Hugh Lefler erroneously wrote in the Dictionary of American Biography that Kelley's "first wife was Isabella Tennant of Baltimore." Dorothy Blumberg accepted Lefler's error and wrote in Florence Kelley, "He had married Isabella Tennant of Baltimore, who bore him a daughter, Harriette. Very little else is known of this union, which proved to be of a short duration."

Kelley's wife Harriette's mother was Isabella King before marrying Bryce Tennant of Scotland. This is probably the source of Lefler's Isabella Tennant. Another possible source of Lefler's confusion may have been the 1850 census which lists an Isabella as a member of William D. Kelley's household in Philadelphia County. This was his first daughter who later died.

Will and Harriette were married for three and a half years until her death in 1847. They had two children—Isabella who was born in 1845, and Harriette who was born in 1847. Dorothy Rose Blumberg, Florence Kelley: The Making of a Social Pioneer (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers, 1966), p. 7; Hugh T. Lefler, "William Darrah Kelley," Dictionary of American Biography edited by Allen Johnson and Duman Malone (New York: Scribners, 1928-1965), 5: 300; and "Seventh Census of the United States. Original Returns of the Assistant Marshalls. First Series. White and Free Colored Population. Volume 55 Containing the Count of Philadelphia Pennsylvania," p. 549.

Buchanan made an early bid by having the Pennsylvania Democratic Central Committee slate the state convention for January, 1843. This assured his nomination by that body which would be packed with his supporters. His planned scenario worked perfectly with the legislature re-electing him to the Senate on the morning of January 10, 1843 and the convention nominating him as the favorite son choice of Pennsylvania in the afternoon.[42]

Radical supporters of Van Buren led the opposition to Buchanan's nomination in Philadelphia. Kelley, George M. Dallas, Henry D. Gilpin, Henry Horn, and John K. Kane sponsored a Jefferson Day meeting in Van Buren's honor on April 13, 1843, and reactivated the Hickory Club on that occasion. Their effort to keep the Buchanan boom out of Philadelphia was so successful that Buchanan announced his withdrawal from the Presidential contest on December 14, 1843. It appeared to most political observers that Van Buren had sufficient strength to win Pennsylvania's endorsement in the convention and thus secure the Democratic

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[42]Snyder, Jacksonian Heritage, p. 172.

party nomination.[43]

The jocular George Templeton Strong wrote during the national Democratic convention in May, 1844:

> /I/ wonder how the grand Democratic Palaver is getting on at Baltimore about this time. They're a pretty tangled skein to wind and I suppose the consumption of cobblers and brandy smashes, loud lying and hard swearing throughout today has kept the dealers in those commodities pretty actively employed. On the whole, two to one on "the little red fox of the Empire State."

Strong was lucky that there was no one within the confines of his study to take his bet. Van Buren looked like a "shoe-in" for the nomination; but the "grand Democratic Palaver" surprised many, including its nominee.[44]

Van Buren's foes labored night and day to keep him from winning the nomination. It soon became evident to the Anti-Van Buren forces that "the little red fox's" nomination could be prevented only by the adoption of the two-thirds rule. The Pennsylvania delegation became a prime target of the anti-Van Buren

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[43] Ibid., p. 175; Klein and Hoogenboom, Pennsylvania, p. 138; and Pennsylvanian, December 27, 1843.

[44] Allan Nevins and Milton Halsey Thomas, eds., The Diary of George Templeton Strong: Young Man in New York, 1835-1849 (New York: Macmillan Company, 1952), pp. 235-236.

coalition to support this measure. Although the Keystone state had instructed its delegates to vote for Van Buren, many members of the delegation were Buchanan or Cass men. Henry Gilpin wrote to Van Buren that "All the Governor's /Porter's/, Buchanan's and Cass's forces are on the ground." "They have persuaded some of our delegates," he reluctantly admitted, "that they do not violate their instructions by merely voting for this two thirds rule." The measure was adopted by a vote of 148 to 118, and Van Buren's nomination no longer seemed to be such a safe bet.[45]

The crisis had come. The frightened Van Buren leaders realized that Pennsylvania was breaking wide open. John K. Miller submitted a motion to the convention calling for Van Buren's nomination for receiving "the vote of a majority . . . on the first ballot." But it was too late. The opposition scented blood and would only be satisfied with the kill. After eight ballots, Van Buren men combined with Pennsylvania, Virginia and Tennessee to stop Cass' nomination.

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[45]Charles G. Sellers, "Election of 1844," History of American Presidential Elections, 1789-1968, edited by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. and Fred L. Israel (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1971), 1: 764; McClure, Old Time Notes, 1: 85-86; and Henry D. Gilpin to Martin Van Buren, May 26, 1844, Van Buren Papers, LC.

James K. Polk was nominated on the ninth ballot becoming the nation's first "dark horse" candidate. Sidney George Fisher considered the Democratic nominee "a fourth-rate partizan politician of ordinary abilities." William Kelley, although disappointed at Van Buren's defeat, was quite pleased with his party's nominee.[46]

In addition to the presidential campaign, Pennsylvania had to elect a Governor in October. The contest for the Democratic party nomination narrowed to a duel between Francis R. Shunk, a Buchanan supporter with radical inclinations, and Henry A. Muhlenberg, a Van Buren supporter who had become increasingly conservative. After a bitter convention battle, Muhlenberg won the nomination. Shunk prevented a potential schism within the ranks of the Democracy by graciously endorsing the convention's decision. This proved to be a wise course for Shunk to have followed because Muhlenberg died in August leaving the Democrats without a standard bearer. The state Central Committee quickly

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[46]Sellers, "Election of 1844," 1: 767, 837, 839; McClure, Old Time Notes, 1: 86; and Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 169.

selected Shunk as the party's new gubernatorial candidate.[47]

Kelley enthusiastically stumped the Keystone State for Polk and Shunk. However, Will was deeply disturbed by the rapid ascent of new issues during the campaign. The "old" issues of banking and the currency which had separated the "true Jacksonians" from the heretics and heathen were being supplanted by the "new" issues of expansionism, nativism, and the tariff. The compass that had given Kelley's political career direction was going askew.[48]

Among the new issues, expansionism gave Will the least trouble and was the least significant campaign issue in Pennsylvania. Although Kelley fervently supported the tenets of Manifest Destiny as did such other leading Locofocos as Frank Blair, Thomas Hart Benton, George Bancroft, and Orestes Brownson, he felt uneasy about the increasingly southern pro-slavery slant to the expansionism issue. Will temporarily

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[47]McClure, Old Time Notes, 1: 88; and Snyder, Jacksonian Heritage, pp. 181-182.

[48]"Political Portraits . . . William D. Kelley," p. 557; Cameron, "Memorial Addresses," p. 73; and Sellers, "Election of 1844," 1: 749.

sidestepped this aspect of the issue which eventually drove him from the Democratic party by emphasizing the Oregon rather than the Texas question. Northern expansionism pandered to the anglophobia of many Philadelphians without producing an antislavery backlash. Kelley adroitly exploited the Quaker City's anti-British feelings without arousing its growing animosity toward the South.[49]

The tariff issue posed a much more difficult problem for Will. By 1842, the cumulative effect of the depression, the financial crisis during the spring of that year, and the increasing importance of the iron and coal industries in Pennsylvania combined to resuscitate protectionism as a political issue. Sensing a shift in the popular mood, many Democrats abandoned their traditional hostility to the tariff. The Pennsylvanian, the Democratic party organ in Philadelphia, rationalized its change of policy as follows:

> We have never been advocates of the high tariff system, but situated as the country and the

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[49]William D. Kelley to Anna Dickinson, August 2, 1863, Anna Dickinson Papers, LC; Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, pp. 427-428; and Kelley, "An Address . . . 1841," p. 14.

> government was, and would have been had not some bill been passed, it was the part of wisdom and patriotism for those who had the moral courage to do it, to give up some of their predilections, and adopt the best measures that could be obtained.

Two years later, during the heat of the campaign, all vestige of Democratic apology for supporting protectionism had given way to such campaign slogans as "Polk, Dallas, Shunk and the tariff of 1842," and "the Democratic Tariff of 1842—We dare Clay to try to repeal it!"[50]

Kelley viewed the tariff as a new test of power between the "Whig moneyed-aristocracy" and the producing classes. He agreed with another Van Buren radical who, when called upon to compromise on the politically explosive tariff issue, said "What has democracy to do with compromise? I say damn the idea of compromise." Will could not accept even the mild "tariff for revenue" position taken by Polk in his letter to John K. Kane. Kelley angrily maintained that "Labor is too hardy and too honest to need

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[50]Malcolm Rogers Eiselen, The Rise of Pennsylvania Protectionism (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1932), pp. 134-153; Pennsylvanian, September 3, 1842; McClure, Old Time Notes, 1: 96; Sellers, "Election of 1844," 1: 749; Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, pp. 422-423; and Snyder, Jacksonian Heritage, pp. 182-183.

protection." "Discriminating duties protect the capitalist at the expense of the laborer," Kelley passionately exclaimed to an appreciative Philadelphia audience, "We must therefore oppose the whole so called protective or American system which gives to the proletaire . . . just such protection as the vulture gives the dove."

Will desperately attempted to revive the "old" issues during the canvass and thus avoid the embarrassment of being at odds with his party's platform. However, another new issue became the "voting issue" in Philadelphia overshadowing both expansionism and the tariff.[51]

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[51]Schlesinger, Age of Jackson, pp. 422-423; Sellers, "Election of 1844," p. 779; Nathan Sargent, Public Men and Events (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1875), pp. 234-235; and Kelley, "An Address . . . 1841," pp. 9, 11, 15.

Two contemporary political analysts coined the term Voting Issue which is applicable to the nativism issue in Philadelphia in 1844. "In a normal election there may be several separate issues at work at the same time and the same issues may be acting in different ways on different groups. But frequently . . . one big issue is motivating . . . voters. The Voting Issue becomes of surpassing political interest . . . when it continues to hold sway over the electorate for many consecutive years or even consecutive decades." Richard M. Scammon and Ben J. Wattenberg, The Real Majority (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1970), pp. 30-33.

Agitation over reading the Bible in public school classes and the rapidly growing Irish-Catholic population in Philadelphia resulted in the formation of a number of Native American associations in late 1843 and early 1844 throughout Philadelphia County. The avowed purpose of the nativists was the exclusion of aliens from the political process—an attempt to counter the imagined subversion of American institutions and ideals by foreign conspirators. The following declaration of Native American principles is a perfect example of what Richard Hofstadter called the "paranoid style" in American politics.

> From first to last, the Native Americans have occupied grounds of self-defense. Finding that a formidable organization existed in the very heart of the country—whose elements and objects were foreign, the Native Americans determined to organize a Party, to procure such an amendment of the naturalization laws as would arrest the fraud which placed the ballot-box under the control of foreign cabals. The Constitution pointed out the remedy, and reason suggested the probationary term of twenty-one years as a necessary defense against the swarm of aliens, who, like a deluge, annually poured moral and political pollution upon us from the tainted shores of monarchy-ridden Europe.[52]

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[52]Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 663-664; Geary, History of Third Parties, p. 65; Richard Hofstadter, "The Paranoid Style in American Politics," The Fear of Conspiracy edited by David Brion Davis (Ithaca: Cornell

On May 3, 1844 an attempt was made to organize a Native American association in the Third Ward of Philadelphia county's Kensington District—popularly known as the "Irish Quarter." During the meeting the Natives were fired on by members of the Hibernia Hose Company, an Irish volunteer fire company. This initial melee resulted in one dead and eleven wounded. The news of the attack quickly spread throughout the city, and a meeting was called for May 6 in the State-House yard. Native American handbills ominously warned "LET EVERY MAN COME PREPARED TO DEFEND HIMSELF." After the organizers of this meeting called for its adjournment, a rump caucus proposed to reconvene the meeting at the sight of the earlier disturbance. The crowd was primarily composed of young boys and laboring-class WASPs. Most of the assembly ignored the plea of the meeting's organizers and followed the rabble-rousers into the "Irish Quarter."[53]

The Native procession into Kensington triggered one of the bloodiest riots in Philadelphia's history.

Press, 1970); and "Proceedings of the Native American State Convention, Held at Harrisburg, February 22, 1845" (Philadelphia: William F. Geddes, Printer, 1845), p. 11.

[53]Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 665-666. For an excellent analysis of ante-bellum mobs see David Grimsted,

Before it was brought under control two Catholic churches and numerous houses belonging to Irish-Catholics were burned, scores of men and women were killed or wounded, and more than five thousand militia-men were called into service to quell the disorders. George Templeton Strong called Philadelphia "the most anarchical metropolis on this side /of/ the Atlantic." One observer noted that "the boys were the most active." "They fired the churches," he disapprovingly continued, "the crowd around being ready to protect them. They were seen among the crowds shooting at the people, several of whom were killed by little fellows scarce/ly/ able to carry a musket, who laughed and hurra/h/ed when shots were directed at themselves without effect." Thaddeus Stevens expressed the sentiments of many when he called Philadelphia "a great and grievous ulcer on the body politic."[54]

"Rioting in Its Jacksonian Setting," American Historical Review, 77 (April 1972): 361-397.

[54]Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 665-668; Geary, History of Third Parties, pp. 69-74; Sargent, Public Men and Events, pp. 228-230; Nevins, Diary of George Templeton Strong, 1: 232-234; Diary of Philip Hone, pp. 700-701; Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, pp. 165-168; and Snyder, Jacksonian Heritage, p. 103.

Philadelphia Democrats were quite concerned about the impact of the riot on the outcome of the election. The two principal components of their constituency—the Irish working class and the wasp working class—were killing each other. However, radical leaders deplored the violence more than they feared the political consequences of offending the Natives. James Page commanded one of the military companies that quelled the riot. John K. Kane organized a citizen's defense committee and pressed Governor Porter to send assistance. William Kelley denounced the Natives as "Churchburners" and warned that "he is as much a slave who trembles at the frown of a mob, as he who pales and cowers in the presence of an angry monarch." Will's opposition to the Natives won their enmity and the gratitude of Philadelphia Catholics. The Unitarian Kelley thereafter enjoyed the political support of the Quaker City's sizable Irish-Catholic community.[55]

A few months before the state election, rioting once again broke out between Natives and Catholics in the "City of Brotherly Love." "Jolly fight in

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[55]Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 666; William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Kelley, February 7, 1873, WDKC; and Kelley, "An Address . . . 1841," p. 12.

Philadelphia," chortled George Templeton Strong, "civil war raging, mob petting the military, not with paving stones, but with grape-shot and scrap-iron out of ten-pounders." The renewed excitement created a tense atmosphere for the duration of the campaign. Democratic politicians worried that "there may . . . be some falling off in the City & County of Philadelphia, both on account of the Native American feeling & for other causes;" but they did not realize the extent of the "falling off" until after the election. The Native Americans struck a bargain with the Whigs in Philadelphia. In return for Whig support for the Native American candidates for the state legislature, the Natives agreed to vote for Clay and the Whig gubernatorial candidate.[56]

Passions ran so high the last few weeks of the campaign that many feared more civil disorders. One frightened Philadelphian noted that:

> On Tuesday, the Whigs had a grand procession. Some 10 or 12,000 mounted & on foot, with all

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[56]Nevins, Diary of George Templeton Strong, 1: 240; Diary of Philip Hone, p. 709; Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, pp. 172-173; Sellers, "Election of 1844," 1: 792-793; John K. Kane to James Polk, October 1, 9, 1844; and George M. Dallas to James Polk, October 8, 9, 1844, Polk Papers, LC.

> sorts of banners & devises to attract the vulgar, marched thro the streets. Not to be outdone by their rivals, the Locofocos on Friday night had a torchlight procession with lamps, painted lanterns, flags & symbols innumerable. They were both striking exhibitions certainly, but the practice will lead to some serious calamity.

William Kelley addressed a huge throng in the Spring Garden District, a nativist stronghold, on the evening that the Maine returns reached Philadelphia announcing an unexpected Democratic victory. "Have you heard the news from Maine, boys?" the elated Kelley asked. Will asserted that the Maine returns were a "sure pressage of victory to the party." He was right insofar as the election of Shunk and later Polk was concerned; however, Kelley's enthusiasm would have been dampened had he suspected the election results in his own back yard.[57]

The Native-Whig alliance in Philadelphia resulted in an overwhelming defeat for the Democracy. The normally Democratic Philadelphia county gave almost

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[57]Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 177; and William D. Kelley, "An Address Delivered by Hon. William D. Kelley, At Spring Garden Hall, Philadelphia, On September 9th, 1856" (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Morning Times, 1856), p. 3.

54 per cent of its vote to the Whig gubernatorial candidate compared to only a 40 per cent Whig share of the vote in the preceding election. The returns in the working-class wards of the county are more illuminating as to the extent to which laboring WASPs had defected to the Native Americans. Table 2 indicates that the four county wards with the highest proportion of lower and lower-middle class blue-collar residents switched their votes en masse from the Democrats to the Whigs. There was a forty point difference in these wards between the 1843 and the 1844 state elections. During a normal election year, a ten point variance from earlier elections is considered unusual. Obviously the "voting issue" of nativism in Philadelphia made 1844 an extraordinary election year.[58]

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[58]William D. Kelley to Orestes Brownson, October 17, 1843, Brownson Papers; Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 177; Snyder, Jacksonian Heritage, 186; Geary, History of Third Parties, pp. 102-105; and Election Returns, Philadelphia Archives.

Ethnic, class, and occupational composition of Philadelphia county and city wards have been compiled from the following sources: "Seventh Census of the United States. Original Returns of the Assistant Marshalls. First Series. White and Free Colored Population. Volume 55 Containing the Count of Philadelphia Pennsylvania;" John Daly and Allan Weinberg, Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions (City

TABLE 2*

	CITY OF PHILA-DELPHIA	COUNTY OF PHILA-DELPHIA	WORKING CLASS WARDS	UPPER AND MIDDLE-CLASS WARDS
1840				
Van Buren	4783	13,293	5286	3192
Demo. % of vote	38.5	56.5	62.4	49.5
Harrison	7645	10,200	3185	3253
Whig % of vote	61.5	43.5	37.6	50.5
Point spread	-23	13	25	-1
1843				
Canal Comm.	3965	10,179	4305	2684
Demo. % of vote	37.5	59.6	63.2	52.9
Canal Comm.	6620	6881	2503	2389
Whig % of vote	62.5	40.4	36.8	47.1
Point spread	-25	19	26 1/2	6
1844				
Shunk	5265	12,200	4313	3472
Demo. % of vote	36.2	46.3	43.3	43.7
Markle	9282	14,138	5643	4482
Whig % of vote	63.8	53.7	56.7	56.3
Point spread	-27 1/2	-7 1/2	-13 1/2	-12 1/2
1844				
Polk	5368	13,468	4686	3572
Demo. % of vote	36.6	49.1	47.4	44.9
Clay	9314	13,969	5223	4382
Whig % of vote	63.4	50.9	52.6	55.1
Point spread	-27	-2	-5	-10

*Table 2 was compiled from returns listed in the Philadelphia County Commissioner's Election Returns, 1820-1858, Manuscript Ledger, City of Philadelphia Archives.

Point spread is the Democratic percentage of the total vote cast minus the Whig percentage of the total vote cast.

Democrats across the country were shaken by the Pennsylvania returns. Francis Shunk won the gubernatorial contest against a political nonentity by only 4000 votes. It was noted that Polk was in trouble on the tariff issue in Pennsylvania, and that if he lost the state he would lose the election. Shunk, who appreciated Kelley's efforts on his behalf, asked Will to stump the northern part of the state where the party was in trouble. Kelley left Harriette and embarked on a twenty day speaking tour in Pennsylvania, Delaware and New Jersey for Polk and Dallas. He was enthusiastically received everywhere he spoke although he avoided mentioning the three crucial issues of the campaign—expansionism, nativism, or the tariff. Polk barely carried the Keystone State beating Clay by only 6500 votes. The president-elect was very grateful to Francis Shunk and loyal campaigners like Kelley who saved him and the Democracy from disaster. An equally grateful Andrew Jackson exclaimed "I thank my god that the Republic is safe, & that he had

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of Philadelphia: Department of Records, 1966); Blumin, "Mobility and Change in Ante-Bellum Philadelphia;" and Clark, "The Adjustment of Irish Immigrants to Urban Life."

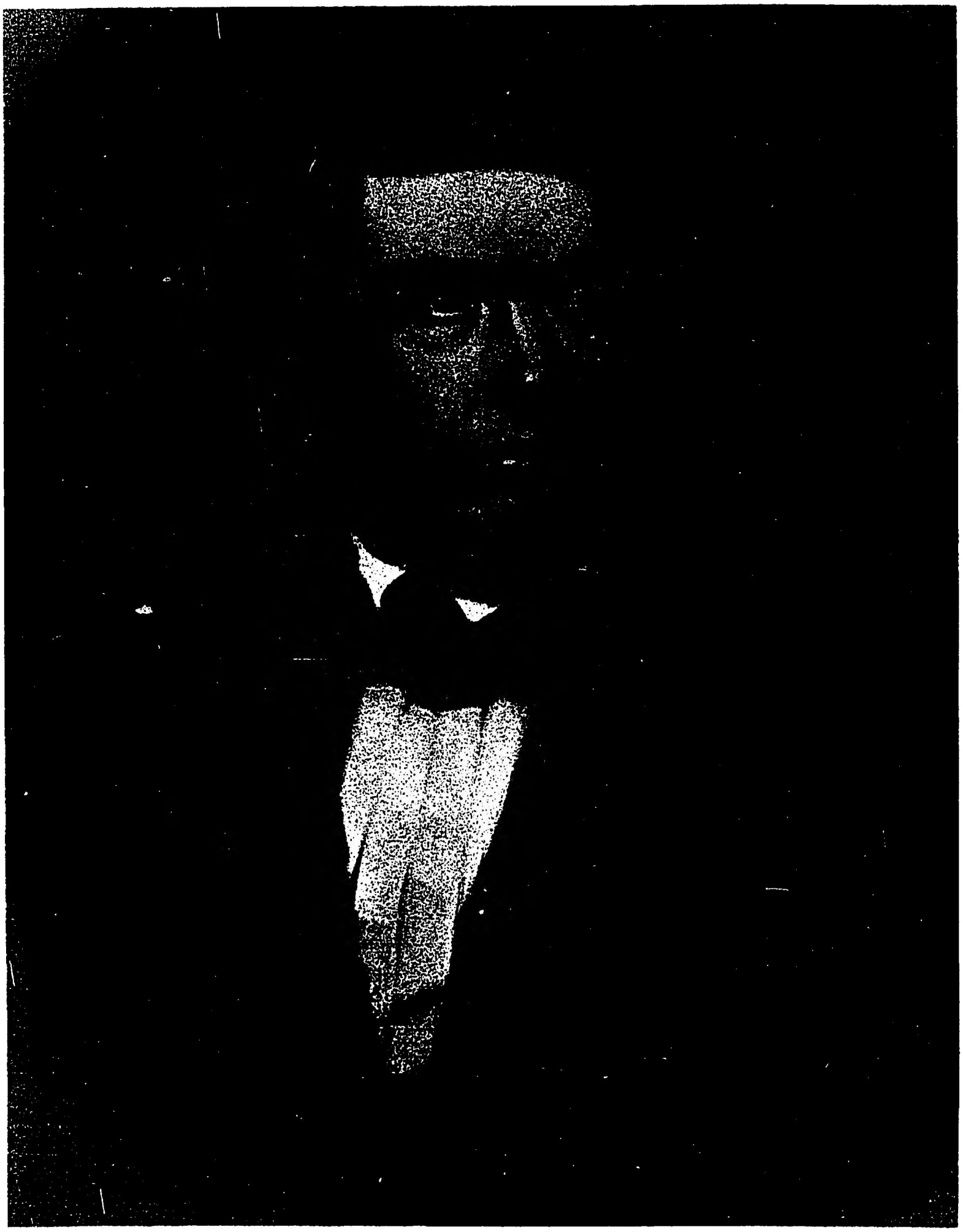
permitted me to live to see it, & rejoice."[59]

With Francis Shunk's inauguration in January, 1845, came Will's first intimate contact with the Spoils system. Acting upon instructions from the new governor, Attorney General John K. Kane appointed Kelley Deputy Attorney General for Philadelphia county. The award of this patronage plum to thirty year old Will, at a time when the governor's number of appointive positions had been drastically reduced, bears eloquent testimony to Kelley's rapid rise in the Pennsylvania Democracy. Shortly after naming Kelley prosecuting attorney for Philadelphia, Shunk wrote to president-elect Polk that "By our new Constitution the patronage of the Executive is so limited and the competition is so great, that its exercise tends rather to destroy than to increase his influence." The new governor was therefore very careful to dispense his favors only where they would do Francis Shunk and the Democratic party the most good.[60]

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[59]Pennsylvania, Senate Journal, 1845, 1: 68-69; Cameron, "Memorial Address," p. 73; "Political Portraits . . . William D. Kelley," p. 557; Sellers, "Election of 1844," 1: 796; and Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, pp. 177-178.

[60]Brockett, Men of Our Day, p. 468; Brown, Forum, 2: 184; Martin, Bench and Bar, pp. 85-87; Cameron,



Deputy Attorney General Kelley's first major responsibility was conducting the prosecution of all persons arraigned for participation in the riots of 1844. One over-zealous contemporary declared that "It is not too much to say, that the firm and capable administration of justice to which Mr. Kelley's exertions so much contributed, averted a threatened civil war." More accurately, as most of the rioters being tried were Native Americans, Kelley's central role during the trials made him the brunt of Whig and Native denunciations in the press. His vigorous prosecution of the "Churchburners," and his villification by the press, further strengthened Kelley's popularity with Irish-Catholics and other Democrats.[61]

Will was quite pleased with his patron's administration. Francis Shunk "sincerely believed . . . the government that governed least," reminisced Alexander McClure, "was always the best." This

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"Memorial Addresses," p. 73; "Political Portraits . . . William D. Kelley," p. 557; and Francis Shunk to James Polk, February 24, 1845, James K. Polk Papers, LC.

[61]Cameron, "Memorial Addresses," p. 73; "Political Portraits . . . William D. Kelley, p. 557; and William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Kelley, February 7, 1873, WDKC.

philosophy of government endeared the governor to his young supporter in Philadelphia. A close relationship developed between the two men as Shunk became increasingly dependent on Kelley's political advice. The governor rewarded Will's consul by reappointing him Deputy Attorney General in 1846, and then elevating him to the bench the following year.[62]

The controversial Kelley's nomination to the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas was initially rejected by the Senate. A coalition of Whigs, Natives, and conservative Democrats succeeded in blocking Will's appointment. An infuriated Governor Shunk cajoled, intimidated, and harassed recalcitrant legislators until Kelley was confirmed as an associate judge in the First Judicial District of Pennsylvania. One result of Kelley's confirmation battle was that judicial offices were made elective by an amendment to the state constitution.[63]

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[62]McClure, Old Time Notes, 1: 169; Francis R. Shunk to William D. Kelley, November 20, 26, 1847, WDKC; Pennsylvanian, August 5, 1846; and Martin, Bench and Bar, p. 55.

[63]McClure, Old Time Notes, 1: 111; Frank M. Eastman, Courts and Lawyers of Pennsylvania: A History, 1623-1923 (Philadelphia, 1922), pp. 559-560; and "Political Portraits . . . William D. Kelley," p. 557.

Will donned his judicial robes on March 13, 1847. The Court of Common Pleas met in Independence Hall in a room directly over the dog kennel in the cellar. Thus, in addition to the barking of opposition lawyers, Judge Kelley was treated to "the incessant howling of the imprisoned curs." Edward King was president judge and James Campbell was the other associate judge when Kelley first took his seat on the bench. The former became Will's mentor and friend until his death in 1851. Judge King was despised by the aristocratic lions of the Philadelphia bar for his easy manner and unpretentious demeanor. David Brown decried "his want of gravity on the bench." "His intercourse with his criers, and tipstaves, and reporters for the papers," Brown complained, "was just as unreserved and familiar as with his nearest friends." Brown pompously concluded, "his example in these respects . . . has . . . much impaired judicial propriety and dignity." Will totally disagreed with Brown and adopted Edward King as a model to emulate.[64]

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[64]Eastman, Courts and Lawyers, p. 560; John Downes, The Philadelphia Almanac . . . 1848 (Philadelphia: Charles J. Gilles, 1847), p. 137; Barker, "Philadelphia in the Late Forties," pp. 267-268; Martin, Bench and Bar, pp. 52, 55; Public Ledger,

The Court of Common Pleas had both equity powers and exclusive criminal jurisdiction in Philadelphia County. Kelley who had denounced the equity power as unconstitutional "judicial legislation" was soon called upon to exercise this power. However, most of Will's time on the bench was devoted to criminal cases. Many of the defendants passing before Kelley's bench were members of gangs and volunteer fire companies who spent most of their time fighting each other. Judge Kelley took a dim view of "lawless rioters" and usually handed down stiff sentences. One might speculate that the idleness of these "half-grown boys" was almost as offensive to the "self-made" Kelley as their frequent destruction of property.[65]

October 11, 1851; Brown quoted in Eastman, Courts and Lawyers, p. 558; and Gary B. Nash, "The Philadelphia Bench and Bar, 1800-1860," Comparative Studies in Society and History, 7 (1965): 203-220.

[65]"Political Portraits . . . William D. Kelley," p. 557; Minute Book, Court of Quarter Sessions, August 1850-November 1854, Philadelphia City Archives; Public Ledger, April 3, 26, 1849; Barker, "Philadelphia in the Late Forties," pp. 262-263; Downes, Philadelphia Almanac . . . 1848, pp. 133-134; William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Bonsall, Thursday Morning /1854/, WDKC; and Kelley, "An Address . . . 1841," p. 15.

4. UNIVERSAL REFORMER

Will soon became bored with his judicial routine and sought other outlets for his energy. The editor of the Democratic Review asserted that Judge Kelley was "universally recognized as an ardent friend of humanity, a zealous collaborator in every effort for the elevation of the laboring community, and a helper in every good work." Another admiring contemporary said of Kelley that "the protection of the weak and downtrodden, the reformation of the ignorant and vicious, and the promotion of education, have . . . found in him an eloquent and powerful advocate." Will, the humanitarian reformer, was true to his interpretation of the "democratic creed." "Liberty is not the sole idea that possesses the American mind," he once passionately declared.

> We habitually join equality with that word, and answer to all who assume superiority, "I am as good as you, you may be wiser or richer, as you may be taller or stronger, but we are children of a common Father, and our rights before Him, the state, and society, are equal."[66]

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[66]Kelley frequently jotted down disparaging remarks about his legal colleagues while "listening" to their tedious arguments. "The fathers and 'solid men' of the bar are sitting grave & grim before us," he wrote to his second wife while hearing a case,

Kelley believed that education was the keystone of a democratic society. The best method of assuring equality of opportunity, according to Will, was to provide equal educational opportunities to every citizen. Judge Kelley despised what he considered to be the class character of American education. During a commencement address he delivered at Pennsylvania College, he said:

> If the lot of the child is cast in extreme poverty . . . it is assumed that . . . his life is to be so simple and subordinate that he will have /no/ . . . ideas or sentiments to express. . . . But for /the precious child of the rich who are/ candidates for the professions, the future lawyer, physician and divine, what liberal degree of culture does society demand /for them?/ For their development . . . a college course,—the classics, mathematics, logic, history, mental philosophy, with access to well stored libraries inviting to the profitable employment of learned leisure—is thought sufficient.

Will asserted that the inequities in American society would persist as long as the children of poverty were

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"How the scene contrasts with the throng of vivacious friends that filled our hall last night!" William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Bonsall, Thursday Morning, April 7, July 1, 1854, WDKC.

"Political Portraits . . . William D. Kelley," p. 553; Brockett, Men of Our Day, p. 469; Brown, The Forum, 2: 184-185; and Kelley, "An Address . . . 1841," p. 15.

excluded from the "trough of knowledge."[67]

One of the principal reasons Kelley became involved in the ten-hour-day movement while an apprentice was that he believed workingmen should have leisure time to study and "cultivate their minds." He reacted strongly to a statement published in a Philadelphia paper in 1830 by a committee of Philadelphia workingmen. The committee declared "that until the means of equal instruction shall be equally secured to all, liberty is but an unmeaning word, and equality an empty shadow." The workingmen also claimed that "each human being has an equal right to a full development of all his powers, moral, physical, and intellectual." Their statement concluded with the charge that "the common good of society can never be promoted" until such equality of opportunity existed. Will agreed with his friend Brownson's assessment that "the power of education to elevate a people compelled to labor from twelve to sixteen hours a day" was nil. He therefore championed the ten-hour

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[67]William D. Kelley, "Characteristics of the Age: An Address Delivered before the Linnaean Association of Pennsylvania College, at the Annual Commencement, Sept. 18th, 1850" (Gettysburg: H. C. Neinstedt, 1850), pp. 12-14.

day in order to remove one barrier to the equality of opportunity for working-class people.[68]

As a young lawyer, Kelley was a popular lecturer on education. He usually repeated the same two themes at these addresses. The first theme was that the native genius of the poor and laboring masses equalled their more fortunate neighbors, but "moral and religious influences are well nigh powerless on those whose poverty makes them familiar with rags and hunger." The second theme in Kelley's lectures on education disparaged the public school's emphasis on the "laws of language and numbers." Will explained that "language is but an instrument in the use of which the scholar should be adept—it is neither wisdom nor understanding." He believed that public schools should place less emphasis on rote memorization and concentrate instead on ideas and reasoning.[69]

Judge Kelley increased his efforts on behalf of educational reforms in the late 1840's and during the

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[68] Ibid., p. 15; Working Man's Advocate, March 6, 1830; and Orestes Augustus Brownson, "The Laboring Classes," Social Theories of Jacksonian Democracy edited by Blau, p. 304.

[69] Addison May to William D. Kelley, July 15, 1842, WDKC; and Kelley, "Characteristics of the Age," pp. 10-12.

next decade. He persuaded his friend Governor Shunk to tour Philadelphia's public schools and make legislative proposals for their improvement. Kelley worked with Bishop Alonzo Potter to establish public night schools in Philadelphia. This was another reform primarily for the benefit of the working man and woman, who had little opportunity to pursue an education during the day. The Judge was also a moving force behind the establishment of the Woman's Medical College of Philadelphia in 1850—a major breakthrough for women interested in professional training.[70]

The inferior status of women under the law had disturbed Kelley from the time that he was old enough to understand the humiliation and hardship that Hannah was forced to endure after his father's death. He bitterly denounced Pennsylvania for reducing, "so far as law can do it, the women of the commonwealth to the condition of toys or slaves." Will joined his colleague, Judge John Bouvier, in actively

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[70]Barker, "Philadelphia in the Late Forties," pp. 255-266; "William D. Kelley . . . Political Portraits," p. 558; and Ira V. Brown, Pennsylvania Reformers: From Penn to Pinchot (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University, 1966), pp. 21-22.

supporting the movement for the passage of a married women's property law led by Lucretia Mott and Mary Grew. Judge Kelley used his influence with Governor Shunk who was persuaded to endorse the reform in 1848. Shortly thereafter, the Pennsylvania Assembly passed a measure which provided that all property held by a single woman would continue to be her own after marriage, and that her property was not to be sold to pay her husband's debts. The enactment of this legislation constituted the first significant victory for the woman's rights movement in Pennsylvania. By contributing to this victory Will helped to remove an injustice that he had deplored since he was a child.[71]

Another humanitarian reform that attracted William Kelley was the temperance movement. A teetotaller, he believed that the consumption of alcoholic beverages prevented a man from achieving

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[71]Kelley, "An Address . . . 1841," p. 9; Brown, Pennsylvania Reformers, pp. 18-19; Lucretia Mott to Richard and Hannah Webb, February 25, 1842, James and Lucretia Mott. Life and Letters, by Anna Davis Hallowell (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1884); and Florence Kelley, "My Philadelphia," The Survey, 57 (October 1, 1926), p. 10.

his potential. During his tenure on the bench, Judge Kelley was frequently reminded of the damage addiction to alcohol could do physically, materially, and emotionally to both the alcoholic and his family. Temperance advocates who viewed "demon rum" as Kelley did organized the Order of the Sons of Temperance to lobby for prohibition. The Sons of Temperance numbered about 7500 in Philadelphia when Kelley joined the order in 1846.[72]

One of Kelley's responsibilities as a member of the Court of Common Pleas was licensing taverns and other establishments that sold liquor. He worked vigorously to curtail the number of establishments engaged in this "vicious trade." By the end of 1847 his court had reduced the number of licensed houses in Philadelphia to less than 500; but he disappointedly remarked from the bench that "there did not appear to be one temperance man possessing courage enough to put the law in force against the numerous class of persons who are openly and steadily violating it." During the 1850s prohibition sentiment swept Pennsylvania. Kelley continued the temperance crusade as

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[72]Barker, "Philadelphia in the Late Forties," pp. 259-260; and Brown, Pennsylvania Reformers, pp. 43-44.

part of his reform repertoire until preoccupation with the Civil War issues made Will lose interest in sobriety.[73]

Kelley was greatly influenced by the romanticism of Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, Emerson, and Whittier. As a result of this romantic influence, Kelley deplored any institution that stifled rather than fostered what he perceived to be the innate goodness of man. So far as Will was concerned no institution in the North was more culpable than prisons. He joined Philadelphia prison reformer Richard Vaux in working for the improvement of Pennsylvania's penal institutions. "Leaving vengeance to Him to whom it belongs," Kelley asserted, "society /should/ protect itself not by punishing, but by reforming, the criminal."[74]

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[73]Public Ledger, December, 1847; "Minute Book, Court of Quarter Sessions, August 1850-November 1854," August 5, 1850, Philadelphia City Archives; William D. Kelley to Craig Biddle, March 7, 1849, Craig Biddle Correspondence, HSP; and Brown, Pennsylvania Reformers, pp. 43-44.

[74]William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Kelley, January 11, 1870, WDKC; and William D. Kelley, "Address delivered at the Colored Department of the House of Refuge" (Philadelphia: T.K. and P.G. Collins, Printers, 1850).

This was especially true with young offenders who too often, in Kelley's opinion, were the victims of their environment. The "increase of crime," he warned an anxious audience in 1850,

> /is/ a consequence of the culture of the age. It is attributable to poverty, and desires increased, expanded and strengthened by the sensual philosophy, aims and habits of society. If gratification of the senses be the true purpose of life, what logic will suffice to persuade men to chasten their desires and forego enjoyment? And if to unrestrained desires be super-added gnawing hunger, what but blind force can vindicate the rights of property or assert the majesty of law."

Kelley assisted in creating the first reformatory for black juvenile delinquents in the United States. Will believed that "it is /better/ to reclaim the young from the error of their ways, and place them in a position in which . . . they may imbibe sound moral principles and acquire habits of self-discipline and industry," than merely to punish them. The purpose of incarceration for Kelley had to be correction not retribution.[75]

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[75]Kelley, "Characteristics of the Age," p. 9; Francis R. Shunk to William D. Kelley, November 20, 1847, WDKC; and "An Appeal on behalf of a House of Refuge for Coloured Juvenile Delinquents" (Philadelphia: T.K. & P.G. Collins, Printers, 1846), p. 3.

Will became actively involved in the movement to consolidate the government of the city of Philadelphia with the adjacent Philadelphia County districts. He was convinced that the lack of a centralized police force and fire department had prevented the city and county authorities from quelling the riots that had plagued Philadelphia during the 1840s. However, Sidney George Fisher imputed another motive to men of Kelley's political persuasion for agitating the consolidation question. "Another movement, showing a disregard for vested rights, is an attempt lately made to unite the city & districts under one government," Fisher complained, "thus destroying its charter & altering all its relations." "The pretext is a general police," he continued, but "the real motives are to give the vote of the whole to the Democratic Party & to improve the value of the vacant lots in the districts." Much to Will's satisfaction and Fisher's chagrin, the city and county were consolidated in 1854.[76]

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[76]Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 693-694; New York Times, September 22, 1851; and Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 179.

Charles Godfrey Leland wrote that "Whoever shall write a history of Philadelphia from the Thirties to

In addition to educational, social, penal, and municipal reforms, Kelley welcomed the opportunity to reaffirm his allegiance to the democratic creed of his grandfathers by publicly supporting democratic revolutions aboard. Judge Kelley celebrated the outbreak of the Revolutions of 1848 by addressing a large gathering of sympathetic Philadelphians in the State-House yard. None of the European movements elicited a more enthusiastic response from Will than Hungary's abortive revolution and its symbol in America, Louis Kossuth.[77]

After his revolutionary regime collapsed, the exiled Governor Kossuth toured the United States at the official invitation of the government. He arrived in Philadelphia on Christmas Eve, 1851. That evening at a banquet given in Kossuth's honor, Kelley saluted "the heroic hungarian people," and wished them ultimate success in "their struggle for liberty." In April of the following year, at the conclusion of his American

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the end of the Fifties will record a popular period of turbulence and outrages so extensive as to now appear almost incredible." Quoted in Geffin, Philadelphia Unitarianism, p. 188.

[77]Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 686; and Louis Kossuth to William D. Kelley, April 12, 1852, KFP.

tour, Kossuth wrote Kelley that he was "deeply indebted" to the Judge for his "noble exertions on behalf of civil & religious liberty on the Continent of Europe." "I cannot leave the U.S.," the Hungarian patriot concluded, "without having once more the pleasure of returning my thanks to the advocate of liberty of Philadelphia." Once again Kelley could claim to be the "Tribune of the People."[78]

His belief that society could be improved by human effort and that the individual was capable of ultimate perfection combined with his restless energy, desire for fame, and almost mystical faith in the democratic creed of Jefferson as interpreted by radical Jacksonians to make William Darrah Kelley a universal reformer in the decade after his elevation to the bench. When Philip Freneau wrote in 1972,

> Hostile to garter, ribbon, crown, and star;
> Still on the people's, still on Freedom's side,
> With full-determined aim, to baffle every claim,
> Of well-born wights, that aim to mount and ride

he was not only describing himself, but a Philadelphia judge of another generation as well. It is therefore

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[78] Ibid., and Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 702-703.

not surprising that Kelley would react violently to George Fitzhugh's statement "Some were born with saddles on their backs, and others booted and spurred to ride them—and the riding does them good." The pro-slavery argument forced Will to re-examine his hostility to Garrison and the antislavery movement as well as his faith in the Democracy's ability to solve the dilemma of slavery. The result of Kelley's renewed reflection on this subject was his conversion to antislavery reform and the creation of an untenable tension between his perception of the democratic creed and the behavior of the Democratic party in relation to the slavery question.[79]

Although Kelley associated with many Philadelphia abolitionists such as James and Lucretia Mott, Mary Grew, and James Miller McKim in other reform efforts, he remained hostile to abolitionism until the late 1840's. The victory of the Garrisonian wing of the

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[79]Philip Freneau, "To My Book," Poems of Freneau edited by Harry Clark (Hofner, 1929); and Harvey Wish, George Fitzhugh, Propagandist of the Old South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943), p. 97.

Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society at the Kennett Square meeting in 1845 confirmed Will's suspicion that the abolitionists were at best quixotic do-gooders who did not understand the exigencies of reform in a democratic society and at worst fanatics bent on destroying the fundamental institutions of the nation. Kelley believed that the slogan adopted at the Kennett Square meeting, "no union with slaveholders" illustrated their naivete or malevolence or both. Will condemned slavery as a "pernicious" institution but agreed with his fellow Locofoco, William Leggett, who wrote in the New York Evening Post

> We have no right to interfere legislatively with the subject of slavery in our sister states. . . . We have no moral right to stir the question in such a way as to endanger the lives of our fellow human beings. . . . Nay, we repeat . . . that we deeply deplore all intemperate movements on this momentous subject, in view of the dreadful wrecks which the meeting tides of contrary fanticism must spread around their borders. But while we truly entertain these sentiments, we know no reason that renders it incumbent on us to conceal how far our views are really opposed to slavery.[80]

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[80]Sarah Pugh, an active member of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society who would later become Kelley's "Aunt Sarah" by marriage, wrote in her diary on August 4, 1844: "'No union with slaveholders' is

One reason for Kelley's ambivalence toward abolitionism was his initial rejection of racial egalitarianism. Although Will believed very early in his career that Negroes must be accorded the equal protection of the law including the right to full political participation in the society, he rejected the notion of social equality. Kelley viewed the Negro as intellectually and morally inferior to the white man. He agreed with his hero, Thomas Jefferson, that the physical differences between blacks and whites required their separation. "I am listening to the dirty details of Sessions business," Judge

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to me a simple, plain doctrine, as is free produce. . . . In respect to the government, cease from all direct support of it, and it ceases to be the instrument of bondage. There are two classes who shrink from this simple application of the principle: one, of persons who have determined not to yield their glorious right of sharing in this government, wicked as it is, and therefore look aboard for arguments to justify them in their course; another, who are perhaps morbidly conscientious, who fear to adopt a principle lest, if they fail to carry it out, they convict themselves of sin; both these classes run into extremes for arguments, and with motives so different use the same plea." Memorial of Sarah Pugh, pp. 33-34.

Brown, Negro in Pennsylvania, p. 31; see chapter 3 for details of Kelley's aversion to Garrison. Theodore Sedgwick, Jr., ed., A Collection of the Political Writings of William Leggett (New York: Taylor & Dodd, 1840), 2: 54-55.

Kelley wrote to his political associate, E. P. Mitchell. "The artist that would make a correct copy of the old nigger who sits in front of the 'dock' would establish his reputation as a caricaturist." Kelley reflectively concluded his note, "Nature does funny things!" On a particularly muggy August day a few years later, Will wrote to his fiancee while impatiently hearing a case that:

> The mercury is going steadily up toward the top of the thermometer as it hangs there in the only current of air passing through the courtroom & it strikes me that the colored friends sitting in the upper seats in the corner there are enjoying the temperature very much. They appear to be perfectly comfortable! The case is somewhat different with me. I am clearly not a tropical production.

The future champion of Negro rights had many "prejudices" to overcome.[81]

Students of the antislavery movement are familiar with the dramatic conversion of Wendell Phillips and hundreds of others who became abolitionists after antislavery editor Elijah Lovejoy was killed by an

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[81]William D. Kelley to E. P. Mitchell, December 22, [1851], Autograph Collection, HSP; William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Bonsall, August 25, 1854, WDKC; William D. Kelley, "The South—Its Resources and Wants: Address Delivered at New Orleans, May 11th, 1867," Speeches, Addresses and Letters on Industrial and

Alton, Illinois mob. William Kelley's conversion was neither as sudden nor as complete as Phillips' but nonetheless resulted from the same psychological phenomenon. Silvan S. Tomkins has argued "that violence and suffering are critical in a democratic society, in heightening antipathy for violations of democratic values and in heightening sympathy for victims of such violations." It was a series of violent episodes, with abolitionists and blacks as victims, which challenged Kelley's democratic values and led to his identification with the antislavery cause.[82]

Three of these episodes occurred while Will was in Boston—the Boston anti-Thompson mob in August, 1835, the Alton incident, and the burning of Pennsylvania Hall. Although Will had little sympathy for the "foreign Missionary & Incendiary" Thompson, he was shocked and outraged by the anti-Thompson mob that "disgraced" Boston by threatening to lynch the

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Financial Questions (Philadelphia: Henry Carey Baird, 1872), p. 167; and Memorial of Sarah Pugh, pp. 21-22.

[82]Silvan S. Tomkins, "The Psychology of Commitment: The Constructive Role of Violence and Suffering for the Individual and for His Society," The Anti-slavery Vanguard: New Essays on the Abolitionists

British abolitionist. The murder of Lovejoy at Alton, Illinois was even more disturbing to Kelley than the Thompson mob scene he had witnessed two years earlier. However, it had been a Whig mob not a Democratic one. Will expected anti-democratic behavior from the Whig moneyed aristocracy, but he also expected that their crimes would be punished. However, the mob destruction of Pennsylvania Hall in his native Philadelphia for the first time posed serious doubts in Kelley's mind concerning the willingness of Democrats to protect the rights of the abolitionists.[83]

After returning to the Quaker City, four more violent episodes contributed to Kelley's antislavery commitment—the murder of Melzar Gardner, anti-Negro riots in Philadelphia in 1842 and 1849, and the Native American riots of 1844. Melzar Gardner, a Boston abolitionist printer, and Kelley had become close

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edited by Martin Duberman (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 270-298.

[83]William D. Kelley to Henry S. Patterson, August 23, 1835, KFP; Richards, "Gentlemen of Property and Standing," passim; Arthur B. Darling, Political Changes in Massachusetts 1824-1848: A Study of Liberal Movements in Politics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), pp. 246-247; Nevins, Diary of Philip Hone, pp. 284-285.

See footnote 2 on p. 86 for details of the burning of Pennsylvania Hall and Kelley's reaction to it.

friends during Will's sojourn in the Puritan City. In the spring of 1840 Gardner moved to Norfolk, Virginia, staying with Kelley in Philadelphia for a few days while en route south. Kelley later reminisced that Gardner "was a mild, gentle enthusiast, a lover of his kind and of freedom." A few weeks after he arrived in Norfolk he was shot for opposing the employment of slave labor in the Norfolk Navy yard. No inquest was ever held, and the man allegedly responsible for this "barbarous murder" was never punished. The circumstances surrounding the death of his friend left an indelible mark on Kelley vis a vis the anti-slavery movement.[84]

The anti-Negro riots of 1842 and the Native American riots a few years later engendered a hatred for mobs and a sympathy for the victims of mob violence in Kelley. However, it was the anti-Negro mob in 1849 in the "City of Brotherly Love" that finally converted Kelley into an antislavery crusader. On October 9, 1849, a tavern owned by a mulatto and his white wife was attacked by a white mob. The

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[84] Cong. Globe, 37th Cong., 2d sess., 2050.

tavern was burned, Negroes in the tavern and the surrounding neighborhood were beaten, and the city police who arrived on the scene to quell the riot were repulsed by the mob. Firemen attempting to contain the fire were beaten and driven from the scene. The specter of this mob violating the right to life, liberty, and property of all in its path continued to haunt Judge Kelley. He could not help hating the anti-abolitionists who had precipitated the riot nor help sympathizing with the black victims of the mob. Kelley resonated to antislavery reform because its opponents had violated the democratic creed that he revered.[85]

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[85]Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 660-661, 692-693; Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 135; Nevins, Diary of Philip Hone, pp. 614-615; and Tomkins, "The Psychology of Commitment," pp. 296-297.

The 1849 riot was shocking not because it was the first anti-Negro riot in the country but because both opponents of abolition and antislavery men believed that mob violence was a thing of the past when it occurred. "In the disappearance and general condemnation of mob violence; /and/ in the diminution of prejudice against the people of color" James Miller McKim saw evidence of a rejection of the past and the dawn of a new day one year before the 1849 riot. The Pennsylvania Freeman, August 17, 1848.

In 1848, Kelley decided to join the antislavery crusade by supporting the Free Soil ticket. Two other factors contributed to this decision in addition to the aforementioned resonance created in Kelley by the recurring mob violence directed against blacks and abolitionists—the influence of his minister and friend, William Henry Furness, and the increasingly pro-slavery posture of the Democratic party.

The Transcendental Unitarian society that Will had joined after returning to Philadelphia dissolved. Therefore, in 1846 Kelley affiliated with the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia under the pastoral care of William Henry Furness. The flock that Kelley joined included such luminaries as Thomas Sully the artist, Henry C. Carey the economist, Pierce Butler the Georgia plantation owner and his celebrity wife, Fanny Kemble. There were also a number of Hicksite Quakers who regularly attended Unitarian services including James and Lucretia Mott. It was in the company of these and other members of the congregation that Kelley listened and was influenced by Furness's antislavery sermons.[86]

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[86]Geffin, Philadelphia Unitarianism, pp. 162, 225.

William Henry Furness, a native of Boston and Harvard graduate, was called to the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia pulpit in 1825. He initially responded negatively to Garrison and immediatism as Kelley had done. But after the mob destruction of Pennsylvania Hall, Furness resonated to the anti-slavery cause. He warned the anti-abolitionists that "when, instead of replying to a man's arguments, you put a torch to his house, or threaten his person with violence, you awaken in him a keen sense of injustice." However, Furness did not preach against slavery for thirteen months after his conversion because of his fear of dividing his congregation on this issue. He finally spoke out in July 1839, claiming that "I was impelled by a sense of duty that I could in no wise resist."[87]

Once Furness began speaking out he couldn't stop even under the mounting pressure from some members of the congregation. Thomas Sully signed a petition

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[87]Scharf, Philadelphia, 2: 1405; Geffin, Philadelphia Unitarianism, pp. 114-234 passim; and William H. Furness, "A Sermon occasioned by the Destruction of Pennsylvania Hall, and delivered . . . May 20, 1838" (Philadelphia, 1838), p. 5.

with thirty-eight other members demanding an end to Furness's antislavery sermons. They argued that his antislavery stand did "no good, present or remote, but on the contrary it sows the seeds of disunion and if continued, we earnestly believe it will greatly injure the Society as a body of Christians." Opposition from his flock only strengthened Furness's antislavery commitment. He desperately wanted to save and reform.[88]

Kelley joined Furness's congregation after the Unitarian Pastor had become a well-known abolitionist. Will listened to sermons in which Furness made impassioned pleas for the slaves such as the following:

> We suffer this great flock of the Lord Jesus to be treated as chattels, bought and sold, like beasts of burthen, hunted and lacerated by dogs and wolves. I say we, we of these Free Northern communities, because it is by our allowance, signified as effectively by our silence as by our active co-operation,

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[88]Petition from Parishioners to William Henry Furness, /1842/, First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia Archives; Geffin, Philadelphia Unitarianism, p. 143.

An insight into Furness' reform mentality can be gleaned from a letter he wrote in 1852. He declared "Milton's Paradise Lost almost pays for the Fall—doesn't it?" William H. Furness to John G. Palfrey, February 24, 1842, Als, Houghton Library.

> that such things are. They could continue so scarcely an hour, were not the whole moral, religious and physical power of the North pledged to their support.

Furness's influence on Kelley is obvious in a speech Will made at the annual Unitarian convention which met in Philadelphia in 1846. He proudly boasted that "young men of other congregations . . . gather into our Church in the evening to be warmed into hope and life by the glowing truths that fall from our Pastor's lips." Although both the violence of the 1840s and Furness' eloquent pleas for those held in bondage contributed to Kelley's antislavery coversion, it was the Democratic party's failure, in Will's opinion, to resist the southern "slave power" that made him an antislavery crusader and eventually drove Kelley from the ranks of the Democracy.[89]

5. SERPENT IN THE GARDEN

Although the war with Mexico was popular with most Democrats including Kelley, many party loyalists

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[89] William H. Furness, "Christian Duty. Three Discourses Delivered in the First Congregational Unitarian Church of Philadelphia May 28th, June 4th and June 11th, 1854" (Philadelphia: Merrihew & Thompson's Steam Power Press, 1854), p. 8; and "Proceedings of the Regular Autumnal Convention of Unitarian Christians: Held in the City of Philadelphia, October 20, 1846" (Philadelphia, 1846), p. 6.

in the North feared that the territory taken from Mexico would become slave territory. In order to thwart southern designs and prevent the Polk administration from acceding to southern demands, David Wilmot, a Pennsylvania Democrat, offered the following amendment to an appropriation bill on August 8, 1846:

> Provided, That, as an express and fundamental condition to the acquisition of any territory from the Republic of Mexico by the United States . . . neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of said territory except for crime, whereof the party shall first be duly convicted.

The Wilmot Proviso soon became the rallying cry for free-soil Democrats such as Kelley and John P. Hale, conscience Whigs such as Charles Sumner and William H. Seward, and political abolitionists such as James G. Birney and Salmon P. Chase; but only after John C. Calhoun and other southerners had given the "slave power" conspiracy theory currency by their denunciations of the measure.[90]

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[90]President Polk requested $2,000,000 on August 8, 1846, ostensibly to settle the Texas boundary dispute if the opportunity for a peace settlement developed. This appropriation request only increased the suspicion among northern Democrats that Polk was plotting to annex Mexican territory in order to extend slavery. Chaplain W. Morrison, Democratic Politics

Four days after the House passage of the Wilmot Proviso, Senator Calhoun offered a series of resolutions which described what he believed to be the basic southern rights on the question of slavery in the territories. He asserted that "Congress . . . has no right to make any law . . . that shall . . . make any discrimination between the States of this Union by which any of them shall be deprived of its full and equal right in any territory of the United States." Calhoun also argued that "the enactment of any law which should . . . deprive the citizens of any of the States of the Union from emigrating, with their property [i.e. slaves], into any of the territories of the United States, will make such discrimination." "Therefore," the South Carolinian concluded, it "would be a violation of the constitution and the rights of the States from which such citizens emigrated." Calhoun's doctrines were hammered into a southern manifesto by Alabama firebrand, William Lowndes Yancey, who attempted to make them a test of

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and Sectionalism: The Wilmot Proviso Controversy (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1967), pp. 13-20.

party loyalty. "No men proclaiming such a principle /the Wilmot Proviso/ can be democrats," Yancey declared, "they must be factious conspirators or whigs in disguise." The gauntlet had been thrown down—it was now up to the northern Democrats to either accept the challenge and fight for the Wilmot Proviso or acquiesce to southern demands. William Kelley decided to fight.[91]

Kelley characterized Calhoun's thesis that Congress had no right to legislate about slavery in the territories as "absurd." Will claimed that before Calhoun had articulated his novel notions both Democrats and Whigs had agreed with the founding fathers who believed that slavery was "a great social and political evil." However, they had sanctioned the peculiar institution because it was a "local domestic State institution /and/ that . . . the General Government had no concern with it within the limits of any one of the States." Kelley concluded his

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[91] Ibid., pp. 34-36, 113-117; Cong. Globe, 29th Cong., 2d sess.: 425; Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, pp. 192-193; and Eric Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), chs. 1, 2, 4 passim.

rebuttal of Calhoun's thesis by arguing that all had agreed that the Congress had the constitutional responsibility to legislate on this issue for the territories; and that most Americans had believed that it was desirable for Congress to prohibit slavery in any newly acquired territories.[92]

The issue in the North was quickly defined as a struggle between free white labor and slave plantation labor in which the freedom, dignity, and opportunities of the white laboring man were at stake. Kelley emphasized this point when he said that "it is the existence of slavery in the Southern States that excludes the white laboring man." Walt Whitman used a classic Jacksonian class analysis to drive home the same point. "The grand body of white workingmen, the millions of mechanics, farmers, and operatives of our country" are engaged in a life and death struggle, the editor of the Brooklyn Eagle declared, with the "aristocratic owners of slaves at the South." There could be no compromise on this issue for Kelley.

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[92]Kelley, "An Address . . . September 9th, 1856," pp. 3-10.

It was inextricably intertwined with his fundamental belief system—the democratic creed he totally identified with.[93]

New York conservative Philip Hone prophetically wrote in his diary that the Wilmot Proviso "is an important measure which may alter the whole organization of political parties in the country. Morris Longstreth, Democratic Canal Commissioner of Pennsylvania, attributed the decisive Whig victory in the 1846 state elections to the "suspicion that the War with Mexico may be made to result in the acquisition of Slave holding territory." Because of the growing public support for the Wilmot Proviso in Pennsylvania, members of both parties endorsed it and the state legislature passed a resolution requesting Pennsylvania Congressmen to support the measure in Washington. However, this bipartisan support was short-lived.[94]

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[93] Ibid., p. 10; Foner, Free Soil, pp. 11-18; and Whitman is quoted in Rayback, Free Soil, p. 60.

[94] Nevins, Diary of Philip Hone, p. 790; Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 192; Morris Longstreth to James Buchanan, February 21, 1847, Buchanan Papers, HSP; North American and United States Gazette, January 23, 28, 1847; and Cong. Globe, 30th Cong., 1st sess., Appendix, 680.

Under mounting pressure from the Polk administration, Pennsylvania Democrats reversed their initial support for the Wilmot Proviso and joined the southern opposition to it. Senator James Buchanan repudiated the free-soil proposal and warned his fellow Democrats that by fomenting sectionalism it was a "threat to the Union." The Pennsylvanian, Philadelphia's foremost Democratic journal, quickly joined Buchanan's attack on the Wilmot Proviso as did scores of other party organs. Kelley viewed this Democratic apostasy as a much more serious breach of faith than the conservative Democratic defection to the Bank a decade earlier. Will expressed his displeasure to President Polk at a Philadelphia banquet given in honor of the President on June 24, 1847. Polk ignored the entreaties of his young supporter. Although disappointed in the Pennsylvania Democracy, Kelley actively campaigned for his friend Francis Shunk in the 1847 gubernatorial contest. Governor Shunk had not taken a stand on the Wilmot Proviso issue admitting that he had had no "occasion to examine it." Although Kelley would have preferred to have had Shunk committed to the Proviso, he nonetheless worked hard for the governor's

re-election. This was the last political contest in which Kelley actively participated as a Democrat.[95]

The nomination of anti-Wilmot Proviso Democrat Lewis Cass by the national convention in 1848 convinced Kelley that the southern branch of the Whig moneyed aristocracy had captured the Democratic party. Although politically antithetical to radical Democrat Kelley, Sidney George Fisher shared Will's perception of the principal issue of the 1848 presidential campaign. "The South has made another move on the chessboard," Fisher wrote in his diary.

> From being defensive they have become aggressive. They declare openly that it is essential to their protection that they should govern the country. . . . To acquire this political preponderance, Texas was annexed and the Mexican War undertaken. To defeat their schemes the Wilmot proviso was introduced. The Southern men will sustain no one for the Presidency who does not pledge himself against the Wilmot proviso. Cass did so at the Balti. Convention, /and/ . . . at the same convention a portion of the party from New York were refused admission because they are in favor of the proviso.

William Kelley later explained to his friend, Abraham Lincoln, that this was the reason he "broke . . .

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[95]James Buchanan to Berks County Committee, August 25, 1847, Buchanan Papers, HSP; Pennsylvanian, February 17, 1847; Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 682-683; and Francis R. Shunk to James Buchanan, November 3, 1847, Buchanan Papers, HSP.

from the democratic party in '48 and went into the free soil party."[96]

Judge Kelley supported Martin Van Buren and the Free-Soil ticket in Philadelphia during the presidential contest. A few Buchanan men claimed that Kelley "used the power of the Quarter Sessions in granting licenses to taverns /to political allies/ and prosecuting for tippling /political opponents/ so as to deprive large numbers of persons of freedom of action. Promises of licenses to applicants and threats of taking licenses away were used /by Kelley/ with an undisguised freedom." There is no evidence, however, to substantiate this charge that Kelley used his judicial office to either coerce Cass supporters or purchase support for Van Buren. It is especially improbable that a man as committed to temperance reform as Kelley was would have played fast and loose with liquor licenses in order to buy a few votes for

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[96]Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 211; and William D. Kelley to Abraham Lincoln, November 10, 1860, Robert Todd Lincoln Collection, Library of Congress.

a candidate that had no chance of winning.[97]

One historian of the 1848 election asserts that "it was the Quaker City that gave Taylor the margin which made him the twelfth President." Certainly Taylor's 10,000 vote margin over Cass's Philadelphia total was more than enough for the Whigs to carry Pennsylvania. Martin Van Buren's poor showing in Philadelphia (less than two per cent of the total vote cast) might be interpreted to mean that the defection of Kelley and other free-soil Democrats was insignificant. The coalition of Whigs and Native Americans had decided the election in Pennsylvania and not the revolt of disaffected antislavery Democrats. However, the defection of radical Democrats such as William Kelley and David Wilmot in 1848 pressaged the decline of the northern Democracy, signaled the end of the Locofoco financial issues as important elements in national party politics, heralded the arrival of the question of slavery in the territories as the dominant national political issue, and lent credibility to Sidney George Fisher's foreboding that it was all

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[97]William A. Stokes to James Buchanan, January 3, 1848, Buchanan Papers, HSP.

leading to "civil war."[98]

William Darrah Kelley had been attracted to the anti-privilege party of Jackson fifteen years earlier. His association with Orestes Brownson, George Bancroft, James Page, and Francis Shunk had reinforced his hatred for the Whig moneyed aristocracy whether in the form of northern financial manipulators or southern slave owners. It was because of Kelley's sincere belief in the Democratic tenets he had been espousing for over a decade that he felt betrayed by his best friend when the party rejected the Wilmot Proviso. The serpent slavery had entered Will's Democratic Garden of Eden and had enticed weaker souls than the "Tribune of the People" into abandoning the democratic creed that Kelley revered. Paradise had suddenly become hell, and that was no place for a virtuous man like Kelley.

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[98]Holman Hamilton, "Election of 1848," Presidential Elections edited by Schlesinger, pp. 879-894; Rayback, Free Soil, pp. 74-76; and Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 211.

CHAPTER V

METAMORPHOSIS

> The best government is that which governs least. No human depositories can, with safety, be trusted with the power of legislation upon the general interests of society so as to operate directly or indirectly on the industry and property of the community. . . . Government should have as little as possible to do with the general business and interests of the people. If it once undertake these functions as its rightful province of action, it is impossible to say to it "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther."
>
> —John L. O'Sullivan, Introduction to The United States Magazine and Democratic Review (October, 1837)

1. THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE

Judge Kelley angrily declared during a contested election proceeding that "our election system is a very bad one." Testimony indicating that there had been widespread fraud during the 1850 Philadelphia election prompted Kelley's remark. "Certainly no other business is more important than this," he argued to his Quarter Sessions colleagues who thought

that the contested election was consuming too much of the court's time. "It matters not how laws are administered," the indignant Kelley concluded, "if laws can be corruptly made, and they can be, if our elections are corrupted."[1]

The potential for election fraud in mid-nineteenth-century Philadelphia is apparent in the election procedure described by Sidney George Fisher. That Quaker City patrician was both fascinated and disgusted by his experience as an election judge. Fisher excitedly wrote in his diary:

> On Tuesday, the election day, went to the State House at 7 o'clock in the morning to perform my duties as one of the judges. The polls were opened at 8 & the voting commenced. It continued at some of the wards 'till 12 o'clock at night, when the polls closed. . . . The scene . . . was novel & interesting /to me/. The two large rooms of the State House, with the officers of the wards at the windows, receiving votes & discussing the claims of applicants, the shouts & hurrahs of the crowd outside, and the variety of character & demeanor of those in the house, gave the affair enough of excitement to me . . . to compensate for the labor, confinement and vulgarity of my associates. . . . Having counted the votes, sealed the ballot boxes and delivered them to a magistrate, I went

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[1]Horn Riley Kneass, Contested Election between Horn R. Kneass and William B. Reed (n.p., n.d.), pp. 160 and 251.

> home tired enough at 4 o'clock. Mine is one of the smallest wards in the city so that I got thro very soon. At some of the wards they were occupied in counting 'till 12 o'clock the next day.

Judge Kelley argued that "few men, jaded by forty . . . hours of unusual labor and confinement, can have their senses so continually about them, that they can watch for hours a shrewd and base man, who may be with them." Several Democratic partisans of Philadelphia District Attorney Horn Riley Kneass were "shrewd and base" men who falsified the 1850 election returns in order to keep their patron in office.[2]

William B. Reed, the Whig candidate for district attorney who had been cheated by Kneass and his followers, contested the election results. The matter was argued before Judges King, Campbell, and Kelley—all three Democrats. The judges, who had to stand for election later that year, were under intense pressure from their party to decide in favor of Kneass. Kelley was warned by "gentlemen whose controlling influence" in the Democratic party was

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[2]Ibid., and Nicholas B. Wainwright, ed., A Philadelphia Perspective: The Diary of Sidney George Fisher (Philadelphia: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1967), pp. 104-105.

indisputable that he "would be held accountable politically for /his/ judgment." Reed and his attorneys, William Meredith and St. George T. Campbell, were Judge Kelley's bitter political foes. Henry J. Horn, one of Kneass' attorneys, was an old personal friend and Kelley's staunch political ally. However, the evidence of fraud was too conclusive for Kelley to ignore; and the offense of depriving the people of their choice at the polls was too serious a breach of the democratic creed to go unchallenged. Democrats Kelley and King decided in favor of the Whig claimant. The court decreed that William Reed was elected on October 8, 1850 and "that the official return setting forth that Horn R. Kneass was elected was false and illegal."[3]

Although William Kelley had been appointed to the bench by Governor Francis Shunk, his "defiance of the . . . Democratic party organization" left him vulnerable because an 1850 constitutional amendment

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[3]Kneass, Contested Election, passim; 2 Parsons Equity Cases 553; Public Ledger, October 11, 1851; and "Minute Book, Court of Quarter Sessions, Aug. 1850-Nov. 1854," entry for Monday, May 5, 1851, Manuscript Journal, Philadelphia City Archives.

required all Pennsylvania judges to stand for election on October 14, 1851. Kelley was branded a "traitor to the Democracy" for his decision in the contested election case by the leaders of the local party organization. The Philadelphia Democracy had come under the control of the conservative, pro-Buchanan faction of the party that had "sold out" to the banking interests a decade earlier, and that had recently attempted to woo the southern wing of the party for the Sage of Wheatland by proscribing free-soil Democrats. These conservative Democrats refused to nominate Kelley, even though he was an incumbent, forcing him to seek election as an independent candidate.[4]

The campaign was a vicious one in which the Democratic leadership attempted to discredit Kelley among his natural supporters—the workingmen, reformers,

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[4]L. P. Brockett, Men of Our Day (Philadelphia, 1868), p. 468; Frank M. Eastman, Courts and Lawyers of Pennsylvania: A History, 1623-1923 (New York: American Historical Society, Inc., 1922), 1: 553, 560; Alexander K. McClure, Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: John C. Winston Company, 1905), 1: 72; and J. Donald Cameron, "Memorial Addresses on the Life and Character of William D. Kelley," Misc. Doc. No. 229, House of Representatives, 51st Cong., 1st sess.: 73.

and other Democrats. They also rekindled old partisan animosities against Kelley among Whigs and Natives in order to prevent possible support from that quarter. Kelley's judicial contest dominated the Philadelphia press for weeks before the election with each newspaper edition bringing new charges and counter-charges concerning Judge Kelley's competence, integrity, and courage. The volume and outlandish nature of the accusations prompted one wag to facetiously charge that

> William D. Kelley is far from being a man whose early history will bear investigation. It has already been proved that he was born without a shirt. . . . He was naturally of such a dirty disposition that he had to be washed every day; and, instead of being grateful for such kind offices, he would squall or kick. . . . /It also/ can be proved that whenever he wanted to eat, he did not care a fig for his mother or anybody else, but would get up an uproar that banished sleep from the bed-room; and then, after he was satisfied, would "crow" and laugh as if he had done something praiseworthy. All these charges can be proved. Judge Kelley is challenged to deny them if he dare.[5]

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[5]William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Kelley, February 7, 1873, WDKC; and Public Ledger, October 11, 1851.

A much more potentially damaging allegation made during the campaign was that Kelley "took some 'Whisky' in public, which . . . he /also/ often took in private." Kelley's opponents claimed that he had taken whisky after a game of ten pins at Pennsgrove, New Jersey in 1849. They argued that Kelley's only interest in the temperance movement was political expediency labeling him "Judge break-pledge." Kelley's friends explained that the Judge had taken whisky on the occasion mentioned upon the medical advice of a physician who mistakenly had diagnosed Will's flu attack as cholera. Furthermore, Kelley's defenders added, the Sons of Temperance had investigated the charges immediately after the incident, and they had exonerated the Judge of any wrongdoing.[6]

The election results surprised most of the political pundits who had predicted Kelley's defeat. Receiving votes from Whig reformers, workingmen, and free-soil Democrats, Kelley led the field of five candidates who were competing for two associate

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[6]Ibid. Prominent Democrats who publicly supported Kelley during the 1851 judicial campaign included James Page, Francis Wharton, and Henry M. Phillips.

judgeships with 27,918 votes. The Democratic nominee who had been selected by the party leadership to challenge Kelley, Vincent L. Bradford, trailed by 8,761 votes. The election results in the judicial contest were as follows:

William D. Kelley (Independent)	27,918	59%
Joseph Allison (Native)	23,403	49%
James F. Johnston (Democrat)	22,176	47%
Vincent L Bradford (Democrat)	19,157	40%
Martin R. Thayer (Whig)	1,948	4%

Kelley believed that his first successful bid for election to public office had been "a triumphant vindication by the people of the justice and integrity of his action[s]."[7]

2. A GENTLE FRIEND

After Harriette's childbirth death in 1847, Will's sister Martha took charge of his two daughters, Isabella and Harriette, while Hannah continued to run the Kelley household. In 1850, Judge Kelley moved his mother,

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[7] County Commissioner's Election Returns, 1820-1858, City of Philadelphia Archives; Public Ledger, October 11, 1851; and Brockett, Men of Our Day, p. 468.

Alexander McClure mistakenly wrote in his Old Time Notes that: "In Philadelphia at the first election the demand for an independent court became so strong that after the Democrats Whigs and Native Americans had all presented candidates for judges the leaders were compelled to make up an independent

sister, two daughters, and Irish servants into the Elms—a large country estate he had built four miles northwest of Independence Hall. George Sidney Fisher remarked about this time that "the taste for country life is increasing here very rapidly." Will wanted a respite from the clamor of Philadelphia. The year that he built the Elms, Kelley told a college commencement audience that "Mine has been a city life." "Crowded thoroughfares and marts of labor and trade were my academic groves," he wistfully confessed, where "use and art intervening have concealed nature from my view." Will wanted more than "glimpses of her beauty and wonders." He hoped that he would be able to commune with nature at the Elms. After a few years in the country, the city boy was able to romantically write that "the spring rain . . . sounded as a sweet prelude to a vernal ballet and a joyous harvest scene."[8]

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judicial ticket, consisting of one Whig (Thompson), and one Democrat (Kelly), then serving on the bench, and Allison, who represented the Native Americans. 1: 118-119.

[8]Florence Kelley, "My Philadelphia," The Survey, 57, (October 1, 1926), p. 51; "Seventh Census of the United States. Original Returns of the Assistant Marshal, First Series, White and Free Colored

Will enjoyed the peaceful, rustic atmosphere of his new West Philadelphia home. During the long interludes between court sessions, Will looked forward to his regular morning walks to the West Philadelphia Drug Store which was also the local post

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Population," Volume 55 containing the County of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, p. 549; Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, March 5, 1891; Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 202; William D. Kelley, "Characteristics of the Age: An Address Delivered before the Linnaean Association of Pennsylvania College, at the Annual Commencement, Sept. 18th, 1850" (Gettysburg: H. C. Neinstedt, 1850), p. 3; and William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Kelley, April 7, 1855, WDKC.

Sidney George Fisher described "life in the country" in 1859 as follows: "He took me thro one or two streets between his place & Germantown, which I had not seen for many years and which are now lined with cottages & villas, surrounded by neat grounds, trees, shrubbery & flowers, many of them costly & handsome, all comfortable and pretty. . . . The same spectacle is to be seen . . . at Frankford, West Philada; /and/ Chester . . . everywhere, in short, within ten miles of the city where a railroad runs. . . . They are owned by shopkeepers, manufacturers, merchants, etc., and their beauty and general good taste and the care and attention lavished on them show what sources of enjoyment they are and how superior is the life they promote to that of the streets. Fresh air, space, trees, flowers, privacy, a convenient & tasteful house, can now be had for the same expense as a narrow & confined dwelling on a pavement, surrounded by brick walls & all the unpleasant sights & sounds of a crowded town. The advantages are so obvious that this villa & cottage life has become quite a passion and is producing a complete revolution in our habits. It is dispersing the people of the city over the surrounding country, introducing thus among them, ventilation, cleanliness, space, healthful pursuits, and the influences of natural beauty, the want of which are the sources of so much evil, moral & physical, in large towns."

office and meeting place for the community's unemployed gentry. However, it was not the arcadian simplicity of life in the country that most attracted Kelley to his new home but the prestige that went with it. The decade following the Mexican war witnessed the movement of wealth from the center city to the suburbs. It was only appropriate for a young man of Kelley's rising status to display his success for the world to see by moving into a prestigious suburban neighborhood like West Philadelphia.[9]

Will lived an almost idyllic life at the Elms. He was successful, respected, and surrounded by six adoring women—his sister, mother, daughters, cook, and housekeeper. Then on June 16, 1852 the harmony in Judge Kelley's suburban domain was rudely disrupted by the death of his mother. Hannah had been all things to Will—coddling mother, domineering father, font of affection, and tower of strength. She had inspired admiration, fear and awe in her son.

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[9]Charles R. Barker, "Philadelphia in the Late Forties," Philadelphia City Historical Society Publications, 2 (1931), p. 254; William D. Kelley to Henry Horn, October 2 [n.d.], Hampton L. Carson Collection, Free Library Philadelphia; and Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 202.

Her death was a much more traumatic experience for Kelley than the death of his wife had been. It both liberated Will from Hannah's overwhelming personality and imposed new psychological burdens on him. Incessantly prodded by his mother, Will had proven himself to be more of a man than David had been; but the contest was a strangely emasculating one in which both father and son lost to the matriarch. However, after Hannah's death Kelley could no longer blame her for his failures. He was forced to accept full responsibility for his conduct. Will could therefore sympathize with Oliver Wendell Holmes' observation that "liberty is often a heavy burden on man. It involves the necessity for perpetual choice which is the kind of labor men have always dreaded."[10]

The grief-stricken and frightened Kelley attempted to escape from the harsh reality of personal responsibility by journeying to Europe immediately after Hannah's funeral. His oldest and dearest friend,

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[10]Kelley Family Genealogy, Kelley Family Papers, Columbia University; and Oliver Wendell Holmes, Elsie Venner: A Romance of Destiny (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1891), p. 252.

Henry Patterson, had recently lost his wife and consented to accompany Will aboard. After touring Paris, Coblenz, Sardinia, Berne, Geneva, and Stazione, Will returned to Philadelphia in time for the fall session of court although still unprepared to confront his insecurity and the loss of his personal excuse for anxiety.[11]

Caroline Bartram Bonsall, a gentle and beautiful Quakeress, filled the vacuum in William Kelley's life that had been created by the deaths of his wife and mother. Carrie's father, Henry L. Bonsall, was the great-grandson of botanist John Bartram. He was also a failure at everything he attempted as David Kelley had been. Hannah Wentz Bonsall, Carrie's mother, instilled in her daughter the same love of God and man that she described in the simple verse:

> There is a school on earth begun
> Supported by the holy one
> He sends his pupils from above
> The principles of perfect love.

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[11]William D. Kelley Passport, May 21, 1852, Massachusetts Historical Society; and "Letter from American Consul to Paris to Unknown," July 1, 1852, WDKC.

Hannah could have compensated for Henry's weaknesses had she lived, but she died when Carrie was only four. In 1838, the widower Henry Bonsall also died leaving nine-year-old Carrie and her two brothers orphans.[12]

The Bonsall's friends and neighbors, Isaac and Elizabeth Pugh, adopted Carrie and provided her with the warmth, affection, and security she had lacked since the death of her mother. The Pughs "lived in an ivy-clad, pebble-dashed, gable-roofed old house," reminisced Florence Kelley many years later, situated "on a slightly terraced hillside, overlooking the lovely little Wingshocking Creek." Willow Glen, the name given to the Pugh's Germantown estate, was the ideal place for a romantic, gentle, and God-fearing young girl to grow up.[13]

Carrie's new mother, Elizabeth Kay Pugh, was born into a family of Unitarians who had accompanied Joseph Priestly when he fled from England. She

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[12]Kelley, "My Philadelphia," p. 52; Kelley Family Genealogy, KFP; Hannah Wentz Bonsall to Thomas H. Wentz, "The School of Christ" (a poem), August 13, 1833, KFP; Caroline Bartram Kelley, "Family Reminiscences," [1892], Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

[13]Kelley, "My Philadelphia," pp. 7, 52-53.

continued the religious training that Carrie's mother had initiated. Isaac Pugh was a man who unswervingly followed the dictates of his own conscience. A prosperous wallpaper manufacturer, Friend Pugh made the golden rule the hallmark of his business dealings. His firm was ruined by the default of its numerous southern accounts during the Civil War. Isaac refused to avail himself of the bankruptcy law. He went to work for the Philadelphia post office and struggled for fifteen years to pay the principal and interest of his firm's debts. He continued working until blindness forced him to retire at the age of eighty-three. Isaac Pugh imparted to his foster daughter his strong moral sense.[14]

William Kelley met Caroline Bonsall at the First Unitarian Church in 1854. He was immediately taken with the demure, dark-haired, blue-eyed beauty from Germantown. Will became an ardent and persistent suitor making frequent calls at Willow Glen and arranging daily meetings with Carrie at her father's store. Judge Kelley acted like an infatuated school

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[14] Ibid., p. 53.

boy racing down Broad Street after visiting the object of his affection, writing love letters while sitting on the bench, and generally not behaving like a forty-year-old pillar of society. Will believed that he had found the one "who was the sun of his world & the warmth of his heart."[15]

Will and Carrie were married on October 2, 1854 by their friend and pastor, William Henry Furness. The ceremony was held at Willow Glen with well over one hundred friends and relatives in attendance. That evening after William Kelley had brought his bride home to the Elms, he congratulated himself on his good fortune. He was a respected member of the community in which he had struggled as an impoverished youth to win fame and fortune. He was a trustee of the American Insurance Company, a manager of the Mount Moriah Cemetery Company, and a visitor of the Philadelphia County Prison. In addition to the prestige of wearing the judicial ermine, Kelley could boast that his election to the bench by an overwhelming majority was a clear indication of both his

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[15]William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Bonsall, May 21, June 5, July 1, August 25, 31, September 19, 21, 23, 27, 1854, WDKC.

popularity and merit. The acquisition of Carrie completed his happiness. Will more than ever agreed with what the editor of the Democratic Review had written about the former's Horatio Alger success story:

> We commend his /William D. Kelley/ history to the younger portion of our readers as an example of the manner in which, under the operation of our free institutions, talent, honor, and industry, will secure for their possessor his appropriate position, by their own force, against all disadvantages, and without resort either to the patronage of the influential, or the arts of the demagogue. Let the young man of intellect and industry learn from its recital that there is a path open for him also to reputation and fortune, in which he may walk freely and still keep his fair fame unspotted to the end.[16]

Kelley had written to his fiancee several months before their wedding that "Energy . . . has transformed me from the almost friendless errand boy into the man I am." "It has served me well," he added with a touch of false modesty, "and I flatter myself that my native city & even the broad state of my

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[16]"Pastor's Register," First Unitarian Church, Philadelphia, 1: 113; Sarah Pugh to Sydney Howard Gay, October 8, 1854, Gay Collection, Columbia University; Kelley, "My Philadelphia," p. 11; Elizabeth Geffin, Philadelphia Unitarianism (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961), p. 279; J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884 (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts &

birth is somewhat the better of it." Kelley believed that America was a land of opportunity where free institutions assured determined and talented young men like himself that they could succeed through their own efforts. He had faith in the idea of national progress. "Is it not true that the rising generation in the North is more intelligent, more cultivated, more hopeful, /and/ more prosperous than the generation that preceded it," Kelley rhetorically asked during one of his free-soil speeches. "Does not the poor free laborer come and put his children into the public schools," he continued, "so that they come to rank among the educated . . . working-men . . . of the country?" National progress was associated in Kelley's mind with individual success stories such as his own. Therefore his conviction that the "slave power" was conspiring to halt national progress by the expansion of slavery was personally threatening to him. If successful, it would prevent other William Kelleys from realizing the American dream. This was the most serious attack upon the

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Co., 1884), 1: 712; and "Political Portraits with Pen and Pencil: William Darrah Kelley," The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, 28 (June, 1851), p. 553.

democratic creed that Kelley had ever had to confront.[17]

3. ANTISLAVERY CRUSADER

New York bon vivant George Templeton Strong asked himself "Is slavery morally right or wrong?" He confessed to his diary that "that's a question which I can't answer." Although many of Strong's contemporaries were as perplexed about the "slavery question" as he was, William Darrah Kelley entertained no doubts whatsoever about the nature of the peculiar institution. "Slavery is not the natural condition of man," Kelley declared before an enthusiastic audience of workingmen. "Freedom is the natural condition of man." Since "Freedom is the gift of God to man," Kelley reasoned that "Before

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[17]William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Bonsall, May 21, July 21, 1854, WDKC; William D. Kelley, "An Address Delivered by Hon. William D. Kelley, At Girard Avenue, Above Eleventh St. On October 3rd, 1856 (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Morning Times, 1856), p. 10; David Brian Davis, The Slave Power Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), pp. 51-61; and Eric Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 11-39, 103-185 passim.

there can be slavery there must be violence." Judge Kelley abhorred violence.[18]

Violence perpetrated against abolitionists and blacks had contributed to Kelley's decision to bolt the Democratic party in 1848 and support Martin Van Buren. After the election he temporarily returned to the fold as did most other free-soil Democrats. Judge Kelley remained nominally a Democrat, voting for Franklin Pierce in 1852, until passage of the Kansas-Nebrasks bill convinced him that "the doctrine of Calhoun . . . had got control of the party," and forced him to go "forth to resist its great power for evil." William Darrah Kelley met the "slave power's" challenge to the democratic creed first by supporting their most hated foes, the abolitionists; then by scorning the party that had fallen under its control, with "its great power for evil;" and finally by combat in the political arena as an antislavery

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[18]Allan Nevins and Milton Halsey Thomas, eds., The Diary of George Templeton Strong: Young Man in New York, 1835-1849 (New York: Macmillan Company, 1952), p. 195; and Kelley, "An Address . . . October 3rd, 1856," p. 6.

crusader.[19]

Judge Kelley's brief reconciliation with the Democracy was immediately strained by the party leadership's attempt to make the fugitive slave law a test of party loyalty. Kelley became an outspoken critic of the measure who wholeheartedly agreed with his friend William Furness' assessment of the hated law:

> How can we be Union men if the sole value of the Union to the South is that it secure/s/ the Northern people as her slave catchers. I had rather be a slaveholder a thousand times over than a slave keeper. We are required to do the very thing everybody says he can't do: maintain slavery in the abstract /and thus/ deprave the inmost reason & sense of us by the admission of a wicked principle.[20]

Kelley and Furness' predisposition against the fugitive slave law was reinforced by the first case handled by Philadelphia's newly appointed chief slave

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[19]Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, pp. 154-155; Nathan Sargent, Public Men and Events (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1875), pp. 374-375; and William D. Kelley, "Reply of Hon. William D. Kelley to George Northrop, Esq. in the Hall of the Spring Garden Institute Friday Evening, September 23, 1864" (Philadelphia: Collins, Printers, 1864), p. 7.

[20]William H. Furness to John Gorham Palfrey, April 9, 1851, Houghton Library; Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 701-702; Sargent, Public Men and Events, pp. 374-375; and Sarah Pugh to "A Friend," May 26, 1850, Swarthmore Library.

catcher, Commissioner Edward D. Ingraham. Although the alleged fugitive in this case presented substantial evidence that he was born a free man, Ingraham ignored this testimony and sent Adam Gibson to Delaware in the custody of the claimant's agents. Upon arriving in Delaware, Gibson's "master" declared that the wrong man had been rendered to him. Kelley believed that the honest Delaware slaveowner would prove to be the exception and not the mistakenly apprehended free Negro. Kelley viewed the fugitive slave law as a license enabling the "slave power" to kidnap northern blacks.[21]

The Christiana Riot of 1851 further inflamed Kelley's hostility toward the fugitive slave law and the Democratic party leaders who supported it. In September, 1851, while Judge Kelley was seeking election to the Court of Common Pleas as an independent candidate, Edward Gorsuch, a Maryland planter, attempted to capture several of his former slaves

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[21]Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 701-702; and John F. Coleman, "The Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy, 1848-1860," Ph.D. dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1970, p. 57.

who had escaped to Christiana, Pennsylvania two years earlier. Commissioner Ingraham issued four warrants for the arrest of the fugitives and dispatched Deputy United States Marshal Henry H. Kline to assist the Gorsuch party apprehend their property.[22]

Warned that slave catchers were on the way, Christiana blacks under the leadership of William Parker armed themselves in order to prevent the re-enslavement of their run-away friends. As soon as the Gorsuch party arrived at the Parker house, they were warned that the occupants would resist any attempt to capture the fugitives. Deputy Kline had second thoughts and jumped "over the fence and out through the cornfield" behind Parker's house. But Edward Gorsuch and his son Dickinson remained, demanded the surrender of the fugitives, and then exchanged shots with the Negroes resulting in Gorsuch's death and the serious wounding of his son. The Christiana Riot created a national furor, directly

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[22]W. U. Hensel, The Christiana Riot and the Treason Trials of 1851 (New York: Negro University Press, 1969 /1911/), pp. 22-51; Ira V. Brown, The Negro in Pennsylvania History (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania Historical Association, 1970), p. 36; and McClure, Old Time Notes, 1: 188-189.

affected the outcome of the Pennsylvania election, and precipitated a schism between Kelley and the few important Philadelphia Democrats who had continued to be his political supporters.[23]

Prominent Democrats, including Kelley's mentor and friend James Page, called for "the arrest of the murderers" of Gorsuch and enforcement of the fugitive slave law. John K. Kane, the man who had trained Kelley to be Philadelphia District Attorney six years earlier, charged that the "Fanatics of civil discord have . . . convulsed the country . . . as if . . . by the outbursting of a volcano." Excited Pennsylvania voters had an opportunity to register their opinion of the fugitive slave law four weeks after the Christiana affair. Free-soil Democrats and conscience Whigs voted for Governor William F. Johnston, and conservative Whigs and Democrats voted for the Democratic gubernatorial candidate, William Bigler. The Whig defections outnumbered the Democratic ones, and Bigler won the election by 8,000

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[23] Ibid.; Hensel, Christiana Riot, p. 32; and Roderick Nash, "The Christiana Riot: An Evaluation of Its National Significance," Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society, 65 (1961): 64-91.

votes.[24]

Kelley publicly rejected the position taken by his former friends and Democratic associates. He declared that the Christiana Riot was a lamentable but logical consequence of the fugitive slave law. And when several Quakers and free Negroes were tried for treason in connection with the Christiana affair, Kelley discredited the principal prosecution witness, Deputy Marshal Henry Kline, by offering testimony that posed serious questions concerning Kline's veracity. Kelley's testimony led to the acquittal of Castner Hanway and the other defendants in the Christiana treason trial making the Judge a hero among abolitionists and freesoilers but anathema to his former Democratic allies. The few remaining threads connecting Kelley with the party of his youth were breaking.[25]

"These Christiana trials," remarked Kelley's friend Furness to John Gorham Palfrey, "will do great

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[24]Hensel, Christiana Riot, pp. 50, 57; McClure, Old Time Notes, 1: 188-189; Coleman, "Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy," pp. 68-71; and William Henry Furness to John Gorham Palfrey, [December, 1851], Als file, Houghton Library.

[25]Hensel, Christiana Riot, pp. 64-79.

service." "It seems to me," the antislavery preacher concluded, "in the state of things that no one can choose but do what he /can/ for the worldwide & world old cause of Freedom." James Miller McKim, a leading Philadelphia abolitionist, wrote to Ralph Waldo Emerson that "Every day is making it more and more apparent that American Slavery is the obstacle to the advancement of the whole world." Judge Kelley agreed. Shunned by his old friends, Will began to keep company with those "quixotic do-gooders" he had ridiculed only a few years earlier—Philadelphia's small but vigorous abolitionist community.[26]

The growing bonds of friendship between Kelley and his new antislavery associates were tremendously strengthened by Will's union with Carrie Bonsall. Carrie's Aunt Sarah expressed her niece's sentiments exactly when she wrote: "Would it not be delectable if all abolitionists were saints? The only conso-
lation is that they are more nearly so than the

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[26]William H. Furness to John Gorham Palfrey, /December, 1851/, Houghton; James Miller McKim et al to Ralph Waldo Emerson, December 31, 1851, Als file, Houghton Library; William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Bonsall, June 5, 1854, WDKC.

world around them." Among the most saintly were Aunt Sarah and her best friend, Lucretia Mott. Carrie had been tutored by these two childhood companions to despise slavery. The Executive Committee of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society met every week at Sarah Pugh's where Carrie frequently listened to her Aunt and the other officers of the society conspire to morally redeem their country. During their courtship, Judge Kelley often accompanied Carrie to Aunt Sarah's or to the Motts' where "Robert and Hattie Purvis, Sarah Douglass, Charles C. and Cyrus M. Burleigh, Abby Kimber, and Mary Grew" were constant visitors. Both Aunt Sarah and Lucretia Mott reminded Will of the woman who had salvaged his family's heirlooms and his mother's pride—Friend Scattergood. Their influence upon him was enormous.[27]

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[27]Sarah Pugh to Sydney Howard Gay, October 8, 1854, and Lucretia Mott to Elizabeth Neall Gay, December 24, 1847, Sydney Howard Gay Collection, Columbia University; Memorial of Sarah Pugh, pp. 85-89; William Cohen, "James Miller McKim: Pennsylvania Abolitionist," Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1968, p. 112; Lucretia Mott to Caroline B. Kelley, July 16, 1859, KFP; Otelia Cromwell, Lucretia Mott (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 97; and "Memorial of Sarah Pugh," p. 92.

This influence was apparent in Kelley's increased participation in antislavery activities. He became an organizer and manager of the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society's annual fairs. Kelley also began speaking against slavery and the Pierce administration's capitulation to the "slave power" in behalf of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society. But the most significant evidence of Aunt Sarah's and Mrs. Mott's influence upon Judge Kelley was his conduct in the Passmore Williamson case.[28]

Colonel John H. Wheeler, the United States Minister to Nicaragua, made the mistake of tarrying with his slaves under the watchful eye of the Philadelphia Vigilance Committee. While en route from Washington to his post in Nicaragua, Wheeler and his slaves passed through Philadelphia. Passmore Williamson and William Still, two prominent abolitionists, informed the slaves that "you are entitled to your freedom according to the laws of Pennsylvania, having been brought into the State by your owner." Jane

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[28]William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Bonsall, June 5, 1854, and Thursday Morning, WDKC; Memorial of Sarah Pugh, pp. 85-86; and Brown, Negro in Pennsylvania, p. 32.

Johnson and her two small sons seized this opportunity to escape their bondage. They followed William Still while Williamson prevented Wheeler from interfering with their escape.[29]

United States District Court Judge John K. Kane immediately issued a writ of habeas corpus demanding that Williamson surrender the fugitives. Williamson claimed to have no knowledge of their whereabouts and was cited for contempt of court by Judge Kane. Williamson's imprisonment from July 27 to November 3, 1855 became a cause celebre. His co-conspirator, William Still, glowingly wrote that Williamson "gained in the estimation of the friends of Freedom every where, a triumph and a fame which but few men in the great moral battle for Freedom could claim." Thomas Williamson, Passmore's father, was "only afraid that Passmore will come out of prison too soon."

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[29]William Still, The Underground Railroad (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1872), pp. 86-97. An 1847 Pennsylvania statute withdrew the right of southerners to bring slaves "in transit" into the state. It was under this statutory protection that Williamson and Still urged Jane Johnson to act. William Dusinberre, Civil War Issues in Philadelphia, 1856-1865 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1965), pp. 51-52.

And even conservatives such as Sidney George Fisher responded sympathetically to Williamson's martyrdom: "A respectable man has been imprisoned because he is an abolitionist on the pretext that he was guilty of contempt of court." Fisher disgustedly concluded, "I think it contrary to law, oppressive & the result of a desire on the part of the Judge to please the South."[30]

While Williamson was enjoying his newly gained status in the Philadelphia County Jail, William Still was tried for forcible abduction, riot, and assault and battery. Judge William Kelley presided over the trial. He did not attempt to hide his sympathy for the defendant nor his hostility toward Colonel Wheeler and the other prosecution witnesses. The dramatic climax of the trial came when Jane Johnson unexpectedly appeared and testified that "I went away of my own free will" destroying the prosecution's forcible abduction case. The ex-slave's appearance created a stir in the courtroom because United States

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[30] Ibid., pp. 96-97; Wainwright, Diary of George Sidney Fisher, pp. 250-251; and Anna Davis Hallowell, James and Lucretia Mott. Life and Letters (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1884), pp. 355-356.

District Attorney Vandyke who had vowed that Jane Johnson would be apprehended and returned to Colonel Wheeler was present. Tension mounted as rumors of a confrontation between state and federal officers circulated in the courtroom. Finally Jane Johnson, flanked by Aunt Sarah and Lucretia Mott, left the courtroom "protected by the energy and skill of the presiding judge, William D. Kelley."[31]

The influence of the two matrons who had escorted Jane Johnson from his courtroom the day before was evident in Judge Kelley's charge to the jury. The defendant later reported that "the ring of freedom could be distinctly heard /in the charge/--much more so than was agreeable to Wheeler and his Pro-Slavery sympathizers." William Still was acquitted of all charges and received a hearty handshake from a smiling Judge Kelley. His Honor was once again the darling of the Philadelphia abolitionists.[32]

Nothing established William Kelley's reputation as a devotee of the antislavery cause among

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[31] Ibid., p. 356; and Still, Underground Railroad, pp. 93-96.

[32] Ibid.

abolitionists more than his actions after the outrageous assault upon Senator Charles Sumner. The Massachusetts idol delivered a two-day philippic entitled "The Crime Against Kansas" in which he denounced the Pierce administration's truckling to the "slave power" and personally abused several of his colleagues. On May 22, 1856, two days after Sumner concluded his speech, Congressman Preston S. Brooks of South Carolina viciously assaulted Sumner in his Senate seat. Brooks repeatedly struck the Massachusetts Senator with a gutta-percha walking stick knocking the hapless Sumner insensible. Brooks defiantly justified his attack upon Sumner by claiming that "I felt it to be my duty to relieve /Senator Andrew P./ Butler and avenge the insult to my State."[33]

"The atrocious outrage on Sumner" triggered an outpouring of indignation throughout the North. Judge Kelley was so upset by Brooks' assault upon Sumner that he suspended the business of his court and held a protest meeting in his courtroom. Kelley

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[33]David Donald, Charles Sumner and the Coming of the Civil War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1960), pp. 282-297. Senator Andrew P. Butler of South Carolina was a kinsman of Brooks' and was one of those personally attacked in Sumner's speech.

invited the public to attend the meeting and listen to him and his friend William Henry Furness denounce the "slave power's" most recent transgression. "Now let us come to the States of Brooks and Sumner," Kelley derisively suggested to his courtroom audience.

> In Massachusetts, of those over 20 years of age there are but 1,861 who cannot read and write, or one in every 446, (Great applause,) while in South Carolina there is one in every seventeen! And do you wonder that in a State where one in every seventeen cannot read or write, they lavish silver pitchers and gold-headed canes upon a man who tells them himself what he has been doing; they don't hear of it in any other way than by what he chooses to let them know.[34]

One month after Kelley had publicly manifested his indignation over the attack, Sumner arrived in Philadelphia to convalesce at Furness' home. Sumner placed himself under the care of Furness' son-in-law, Dr. Caspar Wister, a distinguished Philadelphia physician. Wister found that Sumner was in "a condition of extreme nervous exhaustion, his circulation feeble,

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[34]Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 257; Donald, Sumner, pp. 299-304, 310; Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 722; Elizabeth Geffin, Philadelphia Unitarianism (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961), p. 229; and William D. Kelley, "An Address Delivered by Hon. William D. Kelley at Spring Garden Hall, Philadelphia, on September 9th, 1856" (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Morning Times, 1856), p. 10.

and in fact every vital power alarmingly sunken." Kelley's visits with the stricken idol convinced the Judge that those responsible for such a dastardly deed (i.e. the "slave power") "must be resisted at all hazards."[35]

Kelley continued his resistance to the "slave power" by assisting in local antislavery activities and by speaking out on the subject of slavery whenever given an opportunity to do so. However, it was the response to John Brown's raid during the autumn and winter of 1859-60 that impelled Kelley to declare war against the "slave power" and their peculiar institution. Mobs led by "gentlemen of property and standing," reminiscent of the anti-Thompson and anti-Garrison Boston mobs of 1835, threatened abolitionists while pledging their devotion to the South. Kelley's former mentor and uncle by marriage, Col. James Page, advised "that the meetings of the abolitionists should be broken up by violence & the speakers hung on the spot."

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[35]Geffin, Philadelphia Unitarianism, p. 229; Donald, Sumner, p. 315; and William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Kelley, July 26, October 30, 1856, WDKC.

Presumedly this blanket condemnation included his old friend Kelley. The Pennsylvanian, Buchanan's Philadelphia organ, predicted that "loyal" northerners would join forces with their southern brethren to suppress the antislavery "traitors."[36]

Passions were at a fever pitch in the "City of Brotherly Love" where pro-southern sympathies had always been great and were now increased by a feeling of collective guilt over Brown's raid, and a fear that Philadelphia's vital southern commerce might be jeopardized by any untoward behavior. Many Philadelphians shared Sidney George Fisher's concern that "Between northern abolitionists and southern extremists the Union is in some danger." John Brown's wife stayed with James and Lucretia Mott from the time of her husband's arrest until the commencement of his trial. Her presence nettled most of the city's

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[36]Lucretia Mott to Caroline B. Kelley, July 16, 1859, KFP; Daniel Aaron, The Unwritten War: American Writers and the Civil War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), pp. 11-38; George M. Fredrickson, The Inner Civil War: Northern Intellectuals and the Crisis of the Union (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 36-48; Dusinberre, Civil War Issues, pp. 83-94; Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, pp. 334, 339-342; Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 732; Hallowell, James and Lucretia Mott, p. 391; Philip S. Foner, "The Battle

populace, but Furness and Kelley frequently paid their respects to her risking the opprobrium of the community.[37]

Excitement mounted as the time for Brown's execution approached. On the appointed day, December 2, 1859, Kelley joined his friends Furness, the Motts, and Aunt Sarah in paying tribute to the soon to be martyred Brown. William Furness read several of Brown's letters from prison moving many in the audience to tears. Then pandemonium broke out. Robert Purvis, a mulatto abolitionist, declared that "John Brown would be looked upon as the Jesus Christ of the nineteenth century." The southern medical students who had come to the meeting to heckle the abolitionists surged toward the stage and had to be driven back by a cordon of police. Philadelphia had become a microcosm of divided America ready to erupt

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to End Discrimination Against Negroes on Philadelphia Streetcars," Pennsylvania History, 40 (July, 1973): 262-263; and Pennsylvanian, November 23, 1859.

[37]Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 732; Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 334; Hallowell, James and Lucretia Mott, p. 391; and The Anti-Slavery History of the John Brown-Year, . . . the Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society (New York, 1861), p. 130.

into violence at the slightest provocation.[38]

The day after John Brown's execution his remains arrived in Philadelphia en route north. James Miller McKim attempted to secure the services of an undertaker so that Mrs. Brown would have a day's rest before finishing her journey to North Elba. However, Mayor Alexander Henry insisted that because of the excited state of public opinion Brown's remains posed a serious threat to the peace and order of the city and would have to continue on to New York without stopping in Philadelphia. The mayor's action incensed William Furness who "believed that the whole city should have been at the station, headed by civil, ecclesiastical, and military authorities, to do honor to Brown." Furness' public denunciation of Mayor Henry and his glowing praise for Brown at a time when most Philadelphians were responding conservatively to the crisis rejuvenated the movement for censure among the pro-southern portion of his congregation. William Kelley eloquently defended

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[38]Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 732; Dusinberre, Civil War Issues, p. 85; and Anti-Slavery History of the John Brown-Year, p. 130.

Furness and Brown at the special church meeting that had been called to consider censure. Many who had condemned Brown were persuaded by Kelley's argument. The resolution to censure the pastor was overwhelmingly defeated.[39]

Kelley, Furness and the other public figures who had eulogized Brown were branded "fanatics" and "incendiaries" by the Philadelphia press. It is ironic that the hostile press should use the same epithetes to describe Kelley in 1859 that he had used twenty-five years earlier to describe the English abolitionist George Thompson. Kelley accepted the challenge as Thompson had done and redoubled his efforts in behalf of "the good cause."[40]

Judge Kelley arranged for the well-known New York abolitionist George William Curtis to address the People's Literary Institute two weeks after

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[39]Foner, "Battle to End Discrimination," p. 262; Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 339; Anti-Slavery History of the John Brown-Year, p. 130; Geffin, Philadelphia Unitarianism, p. 231-232; and Kelley, "My Philadelphia," p. 11. For description of the earlier attempt to censure Furness see pp. 169-171.

[40]Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 732-733; Dusinberre, Civil War Issues, p. 90; and William D. Kelley to Henry S. Patterson, August 23, 1835, KFP.

Brown's execution and during the peak of public excitement over antislavery agitation in Philadelphia. Shortly after it was announced that Curtis would speak on the "Present Aspect of the Slavery Question," advertisements calling for a protest demonstration appeared in the Pennsylvanian and the Ledger. The rally was to be held outside of National Hall, where Curtis was scheduled to speak, "to adopt such measures as the exigency may require." The ad challenged "All who are determined that no more hireling incendiaries shall be permitted to make their inflammatory addresses in our loyal city" to attend the rally.

On the evening of December 15, 1859, a large audience crowded into National Hall to listen to Curtis' address. An even larger "mob was assembled outside the building" who sought "to break up the meeting by violence." Judge Kelley introduced Curtis amidst the hisses and groans from the southern medical students and pro-southern Democrats who had stationed themselves around the hall to heckle the abolitionists. The crowd outside, incited by several "respectable" merchants and professional men, "threw stones at the windows" and a bottle of sulphuric acid onto the platform which fortunately did not injure anyone.

Kelley commanded the police in the hall to arrest those persons, both within the building and without, who were disturbing the peace. The speaker was then able to conclude his address without further disruption. Curtis wrote to Kelley several days later that "I am glad of this opportunity of putting upon record my heartiest thanks to you and my admiration of your skill in controlling a tempest the other evening."[41]

"I claim to belong to the Abolition section of the Republican party," Kelley proudly boasted during the Civil War. He could have made that statement any time after 1855. Kelley passionately summarized his sentiments about slavery when he said:

> I do not believe that any man has so good a right to a babe as the woman who carried it for nine months, and suffered the pangs of maternity in giving it birth. I believe that every man, whether his father under the barbarous laws of the Southern States might sell him on

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[41]Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 732-733; Dusinberre, Civil War Issues, p. 90; Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, pp. 340-341; Charles Eliot Norton, ed., Orations and Addresses of George William Curtis (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1894), 1: 62-93; Horace Greeley, The American Conflict (1866), 1: 367; George William Curtis to William D. Kelley, December 26, 1859; George William Curtis to Alexander Henry, December 16, 1859; and Alexander Henry to George William Curtis, December 20, 1859, Houghton Library.

> the auction block or not, is entitled to wages for all the work he does. I do not believe that one man has a right to be lord and master, and hold others as his slaves. And I despise the system under which a heartless and sensual aristocracy have been in the habit of selling their daughters into whoredom and their sons to lives of unrequited toil.

Kelley had vowed to fight that "sensual aristocracy" and had done so during the Christiana trials, the trial of William Still, after the Brooks-Sumner affair and John Brown's raid. Kelley had fought well and by 1860 he was ready for Armageddon.[42]

One might ask, "why did William Darrah Kelley risk his newly acquired status by gravitating to Philadelphia's despised antislavery community?" A part of the answer to this question lies in Kelley's intellectual and emotional commitment to the democratic creed. He believed that the fundamental rights that he had fought to preserve since his youth were being threatened by the "slave power"—a branch of the same moneyed aristocracy that had humiliated Hannah and forced Will into penury as a child. The remainder of the answer is that Kelley

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[42]Kelley, "Reply . . . to George Northrop," p. 9.

was a very impulsive person. "So you smile at the energy with which I embark in a new work," he revealingly wrote to this fiancee in 1854.

> Sometimes it excites the fears of my friends lest I endanger myself by rashness; but I am prepared to maintain that I am a cautious man requiring to understand things fully before I commit myself to them. After exercising, as lawyers say, abundant caution, & looking thoroughly beforehand, I do leap with some energy /emphasis added/.

Kelley described himself as "a solid, moving, mass of boiling fluids." It was this "energy" which led Will to impulsively jump onto the stage in Fanueil Hall in 1835, denounce the Natives as "churchburners" in 1844, bolt the Democracy in 1848, race down Broad Street while courting Carrie, hold an antislavery meeting in his courtroom after Sumner's caning, and invite Curtis to deliver an antislavery speech while passions were running high in the "City of Brotherly Love."[43]

4. BACK HOME ON THE HUSTINGS

William Darrah Kelley reluctantly retired from

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[43]William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Bonsall, July 21, August 24, 1854, WDKC.

active political participation after his appointment to the bench in 1847. He believed that judges should be divorced from partisan political considerations, and therefore was determined to content himself with his judicial duties and reform activities. Kelley only wavered twice in his resolve to remain above politics during the first seven years he served on the bench. The Judge felt obliged to bolt the Democratic party in 1848 in order to campaign for Martin Van Buren and the free-soil principle. Kelley indulged his political proclivities once again in 1851 when he actively sought election as an independent judicial candidate. In both instances he rationalized his recrudescence to the political arena on the grounds of moral necessity. Kelley convinced himself that the extraordinary circumstances surrounding his political forays exonerated him from the charge of "sullying the judicial ermine."[44]

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[44]William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Bonsall, April 7, July 1, Thursday Morning [n.d.], 1854, WDKC; William D. Kelley to Abraham Lincoln, November 10, 1860, RTL; "Political Portraits . . . William D. Kelley," p. 553; and for the judicial campaign of 1851 see pp. 143-146.

Judge Kelley was forced to reconsider his decision to remain aloof from politics, however, when "the leaders of the Democratic party /attempted/ . . . to degrade the laboring masses of the country by nationalizing slavery." Passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act by a Democratic Congress in May, 1854, was sufficient evidence for the Judge that the "slave power had got control of the party." Kelley believed that the repeal of the Missouri Compromise made the expansion of slavery and the exclusion of free labor from these territories inevitable. Enactment of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill convinced him "that Democracy, which once had meant civil and religious liberty, equality, justice, advancement, the greatest good of the greatest number, had come to mean proscription of opinion, aristocracy, tyranny, disorder, /and/ slavery." The idea of a politically involved judge was far less offensive to the impulsive Kelley's sense of right and wrong than one who failed to respond to the immoral policies of the Democratic party. He therefore vowed to go "forth to resist its great power for evil."[45]

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[45]William D. Kelley, "Speech of Hon. Wm. D. Kelley in the Northrop-Kelley Debates, at Spring

Kelley joined with other free-soil Democrats in supporting David Wilmot during the 1854 Pennsylvania gubernatorial contest against conservative Democratic incumbent William Bigler. The badly split Whigs also named an avowed Free-Soiler, James Pollock, as their gubernatorial candidate. Wilmot withdrew from the contest leaving an anti-Nebraska coalition of free-soil democrats, Whigs, nativists, and temperance men united against Bigler and the "slave power." Pollock's 37,000 vote margin of victory indicated that the winds of political change were sweeping across the Keystone State. Few could predict which way they would eventually blow.[46]

Garden Institute, Wednesday, September 28" (Philadelphia: Collins, Printer, 1864), p. 24; Kelley, "Reply to Northrop, September 23, 1864," p. 7; Michael F. Holt, "The Democratic Party 1828-1860," History of U. S. Political Parties, edited by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1973), 1: 526-527; and Brockett, Men of Our Day, p. 473.

Kelley first spoke publicly against the Kansas-Nebraska Bill on March 18, 1854 in an address before the Northwest Literary Society while the Congress was debating the measure. "First Anniversary of the Northwest Literary Society," Program, March 18, 1854, WDKC.

[46]McClure, Old Time Notes, 1: 196; Philip S. Klein and Ari Hoogenboom, A History of Pennsylvania (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1973), p. 150; Holt, "Democratic Party," pp. 526-527; and Kelley,

When challenged by his opponent during an especially heated campaign debate to deny that he had abandoned the Democratic party in its time of need, William Darrah Kelley responded "that does not admit of a question; it left me."

> The men who forced Calhoun's fatal dogmas on the party forced all thinking and honest Democrats to choose between their good principles and evil and dangerous associations. Thus forced to elect, I chose to adhere to my principles, and let those would-be leaders and their pliant followers go where they might.

Kelley concluded his indictment of the Democracy by charging the party leadership with "spiting envenomed spite on the tomb of Andrew Jackson."[47]

One such party leader, in Kelley's opinion, was James Buchanan who wrote to his southern ally, John Slidell, that "The Missouri Compromise is gone, and

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"Reply to Northrop, September 23, 1864," p. 7.

There is a debate among historians of this period concerning the relative significance of the slavery in the territories issue and nativism in accounting for the 1854 Democratic election reverses. See Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, pp. 93-95, 155-161; Robert W. Johannsen, Stephen A. Douglas (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), chs. 17-18; Coleman, "Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy," pp. 117-119; and Roger D. Petersen, "The Reaction to A Heterogeneous Society: A behavioral and Quantitative Annalysis of Northern Voting Behavior 1845-1870, Pennsylvania A Test Case," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1970, pp. 18-19.

[47]Kelley, "Speech . . . September 28," p. 24; and Kelley, "Reply to Northrop, September 23, 1864," p. 13.

gone forever." "I verily believe that the best, nay, the only mode now left of putting down the fanatical and reckless spirit of abolition at the North," Buchanan declared, "is to adhere to the /Kansas-Nebraska Act/ . . . without the slightest thought or appearance of wavering, and without regarding any storm which may be raised against it." This Democratic intransigence contributed to the continuation of anti-Nebraska coalitions such as the one that had elected Pollock in Pennsylvania, and ultimately it fostered a new political organization pledged to free soil, free labor, and free men."[48]

The Republican party in Pennsylvania held its first state convention in Pittsburgh in September, 1855. The delegates were pledged "to organize a republican party whose object shall be to place all branches of government actively on the side of Liberty." Kelley did not attend the state convention

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[48]James Buchanan to John Slidell, December 28, 1855, The Works of James Buchanan, edited by John Bassett Moore (New York: Antiquarian Press Ltd., 1960), 9: 486-487; Hans L. Trefousse, "The Republican Party 1854-1864," History of U. S. Political Parties, edited by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1973), 2: 1146, and Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, pp. 155-162.

because his court was in session. He did, however, help to organize the Republican Association of Philadelphia's Thirteenth Ward while the state convention held its deliberations. The association adopted a platform that called upon the federal government "to secure 'Life, Liberty and Happiness to all men'" by prohibiting slavery "in any of the Territories of the United States." The delegates to the state convention demonstrated their antislavery zeal by nominating Passamore Williamson for canal commissioner, the only statewide office up for election that year, while he was serving a jail sentence for contempt of court in the Jane Johnson case. The party was off to a glorious start.[49]

"Public affairs seem /to be/ getting worse," lamented Sidney George Fisher during the summer of 1856. "The atrocious invasions of Kansas, sustained & supported by the President are unparallelled in the history of the country," he confided to his diary,

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[49]Coleman, "Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy," pp. 128-130; McClure, Old Time Notes, 1: 236-237; and "Constitution of the Republican Association, 13th Ward," American Abolition Society Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
See pp. 209-212 for details of the Passamore Williamson-Jane Johnson case.

"and show what slight security our institutions afford for justice order or liberty. Austria or Russia could not do worse." Had he known about Fisher's observations, Kelley would have endorsed them. The "slave power" seemed to have a strangle hold on the federal government through their control of the Democratic party. The nomination of Pennsylvania's pro-southern Buchanan by the Cincinnati convention on the same day that Kelley held a protest meeting in his courtroom over the Sumner caning confirmed the Judge's belief that the republic was in grave jeopardy.[50]

Kelley had been organizing the Republican party in Philadelphia, and working for John C. Fremont's nomination for six months when the first national Republican party convention convened in Philadelphia on June 17, 1856. The state convention met in the Quaker City at the same time as the national convention. Although Kelley was not a delegate at either convention, he adroitly worked both meetings

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[50]Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 258; and Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 722.

in behalf of Fremont and an aggressively antislavery platform. He was most successful in his pro-Fremont efforts; but, although the Republican platform was not as radical as Kelley desired it to be, it did call for congressional prohibition in the territories of "those twin relics of barbarism—Polygamy, and Slavery," and the immediate admission of Kansas as a free state.[51]

Kelley wholeheartedly threw himself into the campaign stumping the Keystone State for the Pathfinder. He was especially effective among the iron workers and coal miners who identified with the eloquent Kelley. The Judge never failed to mention his humble origins or his association with the workingman's movement during the 1830's. Kelley wrote to his wife from Danville, an important iron producing community in central Pennsylvania, that:

> I was yesterday conducted through the Montour iron works. The largest in America. Messrs. Grove the managing proprietors were with me. Now & again as we passed in the various

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[51]Horace Greeley to William D. Kelley, April 27, 1856, WDKC; Trefousse, "History of the Republican Party," pp. 1150-1151; and Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 722.

> apartments they would introduce me to some leading workman, and in all most every case was I thanked for my speech in Spring Garden, on the question put "is it the gentleman that made the great speech." They seemed all to have read it.

The enthusiastic crowds which cheered and applauded his speeches during an eight-county-campaign swing prompted Kelley to prophetically write "We may not succeed in electing Fremont this time but henceforth Penna is a Republican state."[52]

While Kelley was campaigning for Fremont in the hinterland, the Philadelphia Republican organization nominated the Judge for the congressional seat that

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[52]William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Kelley, July 26, October 30, 1856, WDKC; Horace Greeley to William D. Kelley, April 27, 1856, WDKC; Horace Greeley to William D. Kelley, September 7, 1856, Als, Houghton Library; and William D. Kelley to Horace Greeley, November 5, 1856, Horace Greeley Papers, New York Public Library.

Kelley compared Fremont to Columbus during the campaign. Fremont "realized the dream of Columbus. He is the man who explored, in summer and in winter, mid burning suns and burying snows--the passes of the Rocky Mountains, so that a grand railway may be constructed from the Atlantic to the Pacific; and thus a voyage of twenty-five days,--ten days by stream over the Atlantic; five days by railroad across the American Continent; ten days again by stream over the Pacific,--the two hundred and fifty millions of people dwelling in Western Europe, are united with the seven hundred and fifty millions dwelling in Asia. . . . /Fremont/ has made America the highway to the commerce of the world?" Kelley, "An Address . . . October 3, 1856," p. 5.

represented the northwestern part of the city. Following the practice of the period, Kelley did not actively seek votes for himself but only for the top of the ticket and his party. However, after his nomination Kelley campaigned much more in Philadelphia than he had originally planned to do.[53]

The contest, which had begun quietly eliciting slight interest, intensified at the end of the summer and seemed "to absorb everybody's energies . . . for the next ten weeks." There were more meetings, parades, and partisan flare-ups in the "City of Brotherly Love" than even the great log-cabin campaign had produced. Pennsylvania Democratic Committee chairman John W. Forney marshaled his party's talent and resources quite skillfully in support of the state's native-son candidate. He confidently wrote Buchanan in September that "Our best speakers are out all the time. They penetrate remote regions, and every acre is canvassed, as if we were electioneering

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[53]Brockett, Men of Our Day, p. 471; Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 723; William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Kelley, February 7, 1873, WDKC; Kelley, "An Address . . . September 9, 1856;" and Kelley, "An Address . . . October 3, 1856."

for county offices." Forney imported a number of southern party luminaries like Georgia Governor Herschel Johnson who frightened Philadelphians into voting for Buchanan. "I tell you that my deliberate and calm opinion is that if Fremont is elected President of the United States," Johnson threatened, "the day on which his election is announced will close the history of this Union."[54]

William Kelley immediately responded to Johnson's threat. "We love the Union," he told a loudly cheering audience during a Republican street rally, "and we would slaughter our brethern . . . if they dared to invade it." Kelley left no doubt as to his meaning when he added we are "prepared to hang disunionists, . . . if they attempt to put their threats into execution." The Judge also characterized Democratic charges of Republican fanaticism as "a vile slander" and "shallow twaddle." Kelley claimed that the reason that southerners were sulking like spoiled children was that the "free laboring masses in the

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[54]Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 723; John Forney to James Buchanan, September 10, 1856, Buchanan Papers, HSP; and Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, pp. 260-261. Johnson quoted in Daily Pennsylvanian, September 18, 1856.

North" would not allow them to "trample upon the Constitution." "The law . . . which declares that a man shall be held as property," Kelley explained to a crowd of enthusiastic supporters, "degrades human nature to the level of the beast, and makes the fair maiden and the growing boy mere cattle, to be sold upon the auction block!" "That law the Southern men cannot carry into free territories," the Judge concluded, "and there is the cause of their complaints."[55]

The congressional and state elections were held in Pennsylvania three weeks before the presidential election. Anti-Democratic coalitions of Republicans and Know Nothings had emerged in all of the state's congressional districts with the exception of the one in which Kelley sought election. Kelley refused fusion with the nativists, and was therefore defeated by a large margin. His principal opponent was Democratic candidate Henry M. Phillips, a former political ally and the clerk of Kelley's court. The third man in the race was the Know Nothing candidate, Robert M.

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[55]Kelley, "An Address . . . October 3, 1856," pp. 3-6.

Foust. Phillips received 50.4% of the vote, Foust 36.2%, and the Judge trailed far behind with an embarrassing 13.4% of the vote. Kelley had carried 59.9% of the vote in these precincts as an independent candidate in the 1851 judicial contest. He later accounted for his defeat by claiming that "the Republican idea had made at that day but feeble impression in Philadelphia, and the party was without means or organization." However, the restless natives were at least as important as the lack of funds or the "feeble impression."[56]

Kelley's defeat presaged Fremont's defeat but not disaster for the party. Republicans did remarkably well for a new party's first national

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[56]Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 723; McClure, Old Time Notes, 1: 245; William D. Kelley to Horace Greeley, November 5, 1856, NYPL; County Commissioner's Election Returns, 1820-1858, City of Philadelphia Archives; John Daly and Allen Weinberg, Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions (Philadelphia: Department of Records, 1966), pp. 51, 64-65; and Brockett, Men of Our Day, p. 471.

For the influence of Know-Nothings on this election see Coleman, "Disruption of the Pennsylvania Democracy," pp. 129-153; Petersen, "Reaction to a Heterogeneous Society," passim; and Michael F. Holt, "The Antimasonic and Know Nothing Parties," History of U. S. Political Parties, edited by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1973), 1: 595-618.

TABLE 3*

		13TH	14TH	15TH	20TH	24TH
MAYOR	(5/ 5/56)					
Vaux	(48.9%)	1066	1146	1515	1464	1049
Moore	(50.3%)	1445	1558	1216	1244	951
Thomas	(.7%)	27	25	12	10	22
CONGRESSMAN (10/14/56)						
Phillips	(50.4%)	1292	1444	1562	1890	1387
Foust	(36.2%)	1296	1522	960	1240	770
Kelley	(13.4%)	671	526	343	334	377
PRESIDENT	(11/ 5/56)					
Buchanan	(52.4%)	1336	1521	1962	2029	1330
Fillmore	(19.4%)	625	905	879	480	462
Fremont	(28.2%)	1331	1128	736	1062	681

*Party affiliation of candidates is in order Democrat, Know Nothing, and Republican. Results listed are from the wards comprising the congressional district in which Kelley ran. Table 3 was compiled from election returns listed in the Philadelphia County Commissioner's Election Returns, 1820-1858, Manuscript Ledger, City of Philadelphia Archives.

election. Kelley was so enthusiastic about Republican strength at the polls that he wrote to Horace Greeley the day after the election that:

> I cannot let this first day of the campaigns of '58 & '60 pass without dropping you a line. The late campaign in this state commenced in weakness & error has resulted disastrously for our Standard bearer, but not so for our cause. . . . I am satisfied that the fault will be all our own if we do not in two years make the state thoroughly republican. . . . The magnificent run Fremont has made in your state & New England though expected by his friends here seems to astonish the Fillmore men & old line Whigs. . . . We must therefore organize at once and hostility to fusion must be a cardinal doctrine for Penna.

The campaign rekindled Kelley's passion for politics. He was glad to be back home on the hustings, and he decided that the hustings was where he belonged.[57]

After his defeat in the October election, Judge Kelley resigned from the Court of Common Pleas. He later claimed that "motives of delicacy prompted him to resign his judicial office immediately after the election." Mortification over the decisive defeat he suffered at the hands of his clerk probably would be a more accurate explanation. But whether

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[57]William D. Kelley to Horace Greeley, November 5, 1856, NYPL.

one accepts "motives of delicacy" or mortification as an explanation, it is insufficient reason for Kelley's resignation. He was also motivated by a sense of mission to fight the Democratic party with "its great power for evil." He believed that that fight could better be waged without the fetters of the bench constraining him. Kelley fervently believed in the democratic creed and meant to see it implemented. During the campaign he told an approving group of workingmen that "Democracy reverences man as man." "Democracy believes not only in the right of man to own himself," Kelley continued, "but believes it to be the duty of government to protect the poor and the weak, and to secure every child born into this beautiful world equal changes before the State and in society." Kelley believed that the men who had gained control of the Democratic party in the 1850's held "adverse doctrines" to those he cherished. Therefore, it was imperative that they be stripped of their power. Finally, to understand why Kelley resigned his seat on the bench one must understand that he had been bored as a judge and yearned for the excitement that politics provided. Even though he hung out a shingle announcing the renewal of his

law practice, it was politics he longed to practice not law.[58]

5. CONVERSION

Joseph Dorfman, an historian of American economic thought, argues that "enlightened opinion" at the time that William D. Kelley reached intellectual maturity, "maintained that a government with too great powers created sinecures and parasites."

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[58]Brockett, Men of Our Day, p. 471; William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Kelley, February 7, 1873, WDKC; Kelley, "An Address . . . October 3, 1856," p. 3; William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Bonsall, April 7, July 1, 1854, WDKC; and William D. Kelley to Horace Greeley, November 5, 1856.

William Disinberre questioned Kelley's sincerity as a radical organizer of the Republican party. "Kelley was talented in persuading white men to recognize Negroes' interests," asserts Dusinberre, "yet his demagogy and deviousness stir one's distrust of his motives and judgements" (Civil Issues in Philadelphia, p. 189). Unfortunately, Dusinberre's uncritical analysis, and one of his examples quoting Kelley out of context were adopted by Hans Trefousse. The latter writes: "Frequently, radicals looked upon the Negro question from the point of view of bigoted white labor. William D. Kelley said in 1856, 'There is another party in the contest—the Anglo-Saxon, and the whole Caucasian race—working with its own hands. Do you believe the colored race a superior race to that which we belong? No you don't.! This frank appeal to racial prejudice against proslavery Democrats was a potent electioneering device." (The Radical Republicans: Lincoln's Vanguard for Racial Justice (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p. 32. I hope that the discussion of Kelley's attitudes and behavior in this and the preceding sections rectifies this misconception.

Therefore, "liberal-minded men were concerned with restraining the growth of government in order to enlarge economic opportunity." Dorfman concludes, "Laissez faire and the aspirations of the common man merged in the conflict against aristocratic tradition /law-created privileges/." Kelley's vision of the democratic creed would certainly qualify the young Philadelphian, according to Dorfman's definition, as one who held an "enlightened opinion" in the two decades preceding Buchanan's inauguration. In his most eloquent expression of this opinion, Kelley declared that:

> Democracy is the unabridged liberty of all. It wars against all power but that of justice as proclaimed by the common voice after the freest and fullest discussion; it respects the rights of the minority; and as we represent justice with nicely balanced scales in her hand, it requires that government do no more than protect each man in the enjoyment of his rights, and raise by a tax, assessed equally on all, the trifling expense incurred in the performance of this limited duty. Democracy demands not much government but little, not splendor but simplicity, and when a government attempts to do more than preserve order in the state and administer justice between man and man, it must infringe the rights of some and become a tyrant, be its name Monarchy, Aristocracy, or Democracy.[59]

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[59]Joseph Dorfman, The Economic Mind in American Civilization (New York: Viking Press, 1946), 3: ix;

Kelley believed that government creation of corporations "shackle/d/ the popular will . . . /with/ an aristocracy, . . . and ultimately reduce/d/ the many to dependence on the few." He also deprecated government public projects which "created a multitude of offices with trivial duties and large salaries and thereby enrolled an army of tax consumers." Kelley warned that such measures as chartering a national bank, imposing protective tariffs, and financing internal improvements were violations of the Constitution and created a political environment where "the states would sink into mere departments, and the general government /would/ be converted into a grand central despotism." He applauded the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions which "called the government back to its original purity," but feared that their spirit had been forgotten.[60]

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and William D. Kelley, "An Address Delivered at the Democratic Town Meeting, in the State House Yard, July Fourth, 1841," (n.p., n.d.), p. 12.

[60]Ibid., pp. 6, 7, 13.

After Biddle's "Monster" was successfully slain, the next most dangerous threat to Kelley's democratic creed, excepting slavery, was the protective tariff of 1842. An avowed free trader, Kelley believed that the imposition of "protective duties . . . abrogate/d/ the Constitution, remove/d/ all restrictions from the absolute will of the majority, and establish/ed/ the despotism of the many." He argued that an amendment to the Constitution was required before Congress could legally enact a protective tariff; however, such an amendment was undesirable. "Labor is too hardy and too honest to need protection. Discriminating duties protect the capitalist at the expense of the laborer," Kelley passionately asserted, "we must therefore oppose the whole so called protective . . . system which gives to the proletaire . . . just such protection as the vulture give the dove."[61]

Kelley worked "with zeal and industry" for the repeal of the Tariff of 1842 because he believed

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[61]Ibid., 9, 11, 15; and William D. Kelley to Thompson Westcoll, n.d. /ca. 1842/, Autograph Collection, HSP.

that it granted special privileges to some individuals, businesses, and states at the expense of the greater majority. When Vice President George Mifflin Dallas cast the tie breaking vote which substituted the free trade Walker tariff for the obnoxious earlier one, William Kelley congratulated him for his "unflinching adherence to Democratic principles—especially to that cardinal point: 'the greatest good of the greatest number.'" With the defeat or protectionism, Kelley was free to direct his attention to the most anti-democratic institution of them all—slavery.[62]

Kelley's economic philosophy was based upon the premise that "the Almighty had . . . put production, commerce and trade in the United States under the government of universal and immutable laws." The panic of 1857 forced Kelley to question some of those laws. On August 24, 1857, the Ohio Life

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[62]McClure, Old Time Notes, 1: 96; William D. Kelley, Speeches, Addresses and Letters on Industrial and Financial Questions (New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1969), p. vi: Pennsylvanian, August 5, 1846; and Malcolm Rogers Eiselen, The Rise of Pennsylvania Protectionism (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1932), chs. 7-11 passim.

Insurance and Trust Company failed, followed quickly by the Bank of Pennsylvania, marking the beginning of America's worst depression up to that time. Sidney George Fisher identified "the source of the trouble /as/ the sudden loss or contraction of the circulating medium." Whatever the cause, "the distress among the poor is becoming painfully evident." Fisher observed that "the factories and workshops have all stopped and thousands are without employment now at the approach of winter." He asked himself "what will it be two months hence?" The thought made him shiver—he "feared that the roads . . . /and/ our houses will not be safe."[63]

By the end of October there were between thirty and forty thousand people who had lost their jobs in Philadelphia alone. A Philadelphia company advertised for 250 workers at 60 cents per day to build a street railroad in the city, "and more than five thousand /applied/, a majority of whom were skilled

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[63]Kelley, Speeches, pp. vii-ix, 257; Kelley, "An Address . . . 1841," p. 14; Trefousse, "History of the Republican Party," p. 1153; and Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, pp. 278, 281.

artizans who could find no other employment." Iron prices fell to new lows resulting in the dismissal of "approximately one-half of the forty thousand ironworkers in the state." Kelley called it "one of the darkest periods ever seen by the laboring people of America." He sarcastically remarked that

> 1857 was a good year for sheriffs, constables and marshals, though few were purchasers at their sales except mortgagees, judgment creditors, and capitalists who were able to pay cash at nominal prices for unproductive establishments, and hold them till happier circumstances should restore their value.[64]

One Philadelphia newspaper had declared two days before Christmas 1854, that the tariff issue was "as dead politically as a United States bank." This obituary was premature. The depression that followed the panic of 1857 had a profound effect upon Kelley and his contemporaries. It was not long after the initial bank failures that a growing number of Pennsylvanians blamed the free trade policies of the government for hard times. The Republican gubernatorial candidate, David Wilmot, was an avowed free

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[64]Eiselen, Rise of Pennsylvania Protectionism, p. 244; and Kelley, Speeches, pp. vii, 257.

trader. The Democrats, sensing the shift in public mood, seized upon the tariff issue and represented their candidate as the champion of protectionism. Rather than forging an antislavery majority behind Wilmot's candidacy as Kelley had hoped, the election of 1857 became a referendum on the tariff. Although the author of the Wilmot Proviso concentrated his campaign efforts in Philadelphia, and local Republican leaders such as Kelley carefully organized every ward in the city, the returns were disheartening. Wilmot won only 10,001 of Philadelphia's 52,205 total votes cast for governor—the Democratic candidate received 27,749 votes, and the Know Nothing candidate received 14,455 votes.[65]

The depression and his party's defeat made Kelley re-examine his faith in free trade. "It was not easy to abandon opinions I had cherished through so many years," he later recounted, "but it was still more difficult to accept the opposite system, that of protection, which I had so often denounced as false, selfish, and exclusive." Kelley did not

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[65] Public Ledger, December 23, 1854; Eiselen, Rise of Pennsylvania Protectionism, pp. 237-239; Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 726; and William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Kelley, July 6, November 12, 1857, WDKC.

immediately embrace "the opposite system" but struggled with the tariff question for almost two years before making a decision. However, his party wasted no time in appropriating protectionism as a major Republican principle. The leaders of the Republican party in Pennsylvania, according to one observer, "approached the congressional elections of 1858 fully determined to make Kansas the moral issue and protection the material issue of the campaign." Led by the economist and arch-protectionist, Henry C. Carey, the Republican slate carried all but five of the state's twenty-five congressional seats.[66]

Carey believed that "protection is indispensable . . . /for/ human progress." He persuasively argued that a higher tariff "will cause an inflow of specie. The rate of interest will fall, enterprise will be stimulated to unparalleled heights, and wages, lands, and securities will rise." Sidney George Fisher called him "a man of one idea;" but it was

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[66]Kelley, Speeches, p. xii; Eiselen, Rise of Pennsylvania Protectionism, pp. 246-247; Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 728; and Biographical Directory of the American Congress 1774-1961 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1961), pp. 898, 1189, 1336, 1359, 1454, 1753.

a seductive idea to Philadelphia's unemployed workingmen. When asked if he advocated protection for the benefit of the wealthy manufacturers, Carey retorted "damn them if it were not for the people I would not lift a finger." This interest in the workingman was certain to attract Kelley's attention and approval.[67]

Early in 1859 Kelley renewed his friendship -- with Carey, an intimacy that had begun in 1846 when Kelley became a member of the First Unitarian Church but had since waned because of their political differences. Kelley quickly fell under Carey's influence and became an ardent disciple of protectionism. The economist persuaded his convert that free trade was based on the fallacious assumption that low duties meant two markets. "The investigation /of trade statistics/," admitted Kelley, "convinced me that the attempt to secure a second market by reducing our customs duties had destroyed our home

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[67]Henry C. Carey, Principles of Social Science (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1865), v. 2, pp. 268, 273; Dorfman, Economic Mind, 2: 803; Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 259; and Charles H. Cramp, "Carey's 'Vespers,'" Manuscript dated November 11, 1908, Edward Carey Gardiner Collection, HSP, p. 7.

market, but opened no other for any of our productions." Carey also convinced Kelley that there is a "harmony of interests" between the manufacturer, the laborer, and the farmer that a high tariff alone can preserve. "With the clear perception of this truth," Kelley gratefully reminisced, "I became a protectionist."[68]

Kelley's conversion was so complete that he equated the democratic creed with protection.

> When we shall determine to starve the bodies and minds of our operatives in order that we may successfully compete in common markets with the productions of the under-paid and poorly-fed peasants of Europe and the paupers of England, we shall assail the foundations of a government which rests upon the intelligence of its people. To defend our country against this result, is the office of a protective tariff, and for this duty it alone is sufficient.

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[68]Kelley, Speeches, pp. ix, xxiii; and Carey, Principles, 2: 268.

Carey argued that every American business cycle in the nineteenth century was the direct result of changing tariff rates. "Looking next to the United States, and comparing the movements of the various periods when the farmer has had protection, and when it has been withheld, we find a rapid forward and upward one in that ending in 1816, followed by a downward one in that ending in 1824—a forward motion from that year to 1834, followed by a backward one from 1835 to 1842—an upward and advancing one from 1842 to 1847, followed, in the decade that is just completed, by a downward one, the most remarkable that is recorded in the history of the

The converted Kelley felt compelled to justify his protectionism by "proving" that Jefferson and Jackson had both been protectionists.

> And Mr. Jefferson, in his message of 1802, said that—"To cultivate peace, maintain commerce and navigation, to foster our fisheries, and protect manufacturers adapted to our circumstances, etc., are the land-marks by which to guide ourselves in all our relations."
>
> These expressions are inconsistent with the opinions adverse to the policy of fostering manufacturers in this country embodied by Jefferson in his Notes on Virginia in 1785; but he was not one of those fools who hold it a weakness to change an opinion, even under the discipline of experience.

His heroes had not changed—only his recollection of their ideas. This messianic advocacy of protectionism would win him the sobriquet "Pig Iron" Kelley.[69]

During the two years preceding Lincoln's inauguration, Kelley's belief that positive action by the federal government was necessary to check the growth of slavery, and his belief that federally

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world, to have been accomplished in so brief a period. So great is it, that should it be continued throughout another decade . . . it may well be doubted if universal anarchy will not prove to be the result. Principles, 2: 273.

[69] Kelley, Speeches, pp. v-vi, 50-51. Charles H. Cramp reported that Henry C. Carey "frequently stated to me that protection owed more to Judge Kell/e/y in its defense in Congress than the efforts of any other party there. "Carey's 'Vesper,'" p. 7.

imposed protective duties were necessary for the prosperity of the workingman, converged to change his views about the role of government. Kelley had made the states rights political philosophy that John L. O'Sullivan summarized in the "Introduction" to The United States Magazine and Democratic Review the foundation of his political career for over twenty years. However, depression and the apparent pro-slavery control of the government precipitated a change. Whereas he had once defended the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions, after 1859 he found them and the states rights principle "inimical to the good of the people." Whereas Kelley had once denounced public support of private businesses, in 1858 he applauded the government for "sustaining and aiding the efforts of their enterprising citizens" who had successfully laid the first trans-Atlantic cable. Kelley's conviction that federal government action was vital for the maintenance of the democratic creed led him to defend Lincoln's suspension of habeas corpus on the grounds that only a traitor "would fiddle while the Capitol was burning." Yet he asserted that "under our Government

we can have no justifiable cause of revolution, because there are open courts, frequent elections, peaceable means of amending the Constitution, and the right to impeach every officer under the Government." A remarkable metamorphosis had taken place in the twenty-seven year old Kelley who had exhorted his listeners to prevent the national government from becoming "a grand central despotism" by erecting "a wall of fire around the rights of the poorest and weakest of our brethern" by a strict construction of the Constitution and a jealous protection of "the rights of states."[70]

The period from 1848 to 1860 was an epoch of change in Kelley's life. From city dweller to suburbanite, from widower to married man, from free-soiler to abolitionist, from Democrat to Republican, from jurist to politician, from free trader to

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[70]Kelley, "Speech . . . September 26, 1864," pp. 20-26; William D. Kelley, "Oration Delivered by Hon. William D. Kelley, at the Celebration of the Laying of the Atlantic Cable, Held at Philadelphia, September 1, 1858" (n.p., n.d.), pp. 6-7; Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 728; Kelley, "Speech . . . September 29, 1864," p. 39; and Kelley, "An Address . . . 1841," pp. 7, 13, 16.

protectionist, and most significantly, Kelley traveled the infinite distance from states rights advocate to consolidationist. On the eve of the Civil War, William Darrah Kelley was prepared to make the federal government the vehicle for implementing his new vision of the democratic creed.

CHAPTER VI

CONSUMMATION

> The wise statesman . . . notes the ever recurring new facts of the new day. He watches the progress of sentiment and opinion. . . . He pays regard to the great eternal laws of justice, right, and truth, and from time to time so modifies those habits, customs, and institutions which are vicious or essentially temporary and transitory as to bring the order of society into harmony with nature's laws, and thus secure the prosperity and peace of the people.
>
> —William D. Kelley, Speech Delivered in the House of Representatives on February 23, 1864

1. "FROM THE RANKS OF THE PEOPLE"

"The year 1860 might be concisely described as a period of politics" reminisced Thompson Westcott a quarter of a center later. "From almost the beginning of January to the close of December," he wrote, "the slavery question, together with its bearings on the Presidential election, was a subject of continuous agitation." The January 2, 1860 entry made in Sidney

George Fisher's diary corroborates Westcott's recollections. "Slavery occupies all conversation now," the Philadelphia patrician resignedly confided to his diary. "The issue that is now in reality and ere long will formally be offered to the southern people is," Fisher asserted, "shall the slaves be emancipated peacefully or forcibly?" Political passions had reached such a fever pitch in the "City of Brotherly Love" that the normally staid octogenarian Horace Binney declared that he "would rather vote for the Devil himself than for a Democrat."[1]

Many Philadelphia Democrats believed that the Devil had already infiltrated their organization which seemed hopelessly divided into feuding factions. Buchanan's Kansas policy, and the administration-Douglas rupture had demoralized the local party leaders who remained loyal to "Old Buck," and also had driven a sizeable number of anti-Buchanan

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[1]J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884 (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884), 1: 733; and Nicholas B. Wainwright, ed., A Philadelphia Perspective: The Diary of Sidney George Fisher (Philadelphia: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1967), pp. 343-344, 347.

Democrats into open opposition. The Pennsylvania Democracy's 1860 gubernatorial prospects depended almost entirely on its ability to reconcile its warring factions, and create a schism within the ranks of the opposition.[2]

The Democratic state convention at Reading temporarily accomplished a reconciliation between the pro-Buchanan and anti-Buchanan wings of the party with the nomination of Henry D. Foster who was well-liked by both groups. Alexander McClure, Republican party state chairman, described Foster as "one of the most amiable men I have ever met in public life." "His nomination inspired the Democratic party with a degree of confidence its people had not felt for several years," McClure added. Democrats left Reading believing that victory in October was within their grasp. All that they had to do was to foster the internal antagonisms that plagued the opposition.[3]

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[2]James E. Harvey to Abraham Lincoln, June 13, 28, 1860, RTL; New York Times, March 1, 2, August 10, 1860; Morning Pennsylvania, October 2, 1860; The Press, October 19, 1860; and William Dusinberre, Civil War Issues in Philadelphia 1856-1865 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1965), pp. 96-98.

[3]Alexander K. McClure, Old Time Notes of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company,

The Democracy's opposition in the Keystone state was divided along ideological, geographical, ethnic, and personal lines. Conservative former Whigs such as Morton McMichael, editor of the influential North American, Congressman Edward Joy Morris, and patrician Sidney George Fisher objected to the anti-slavery rhetoric of the radical former Democratic members of their party such as Congressmen John Hickman and David Wilmot, and Philadelphia attorney William Kelley. Northern-tier Republicans resented the almost exclusive emphasis placed upon protectionism by party members in the iron and coal producing regions of the state. Hostility between the growing number of foreign-born Republicans and the large Know-Nothing wing of the party made campaign cooperation between them improbable. However, the most potentially damaging division within the ranks of the Pennsylvania Republican party was the personality conflict between Senator Simon Cameron and former Secretary of the Commonwealth Andrew Curtin.[4]

1905), 1: 425-426; and Public Ledger, March 1, 2, 1860.

[4]Kelley's admonition to Greeley after Fremont's defeat that "hostility to fusion must be a cardinal doctrine for Penna" was obviously ignored. In order

Curtin was the leading contender for the Republican gubernatorial nomination, and Cameron sought state party endorsement for his presidential bid. Both men fought for delegates to the People's Party state convention to consolidate their position and thwart their adversary. The convention convened in Harrisburg on Washington's birthday with the delegates evenly divided between Curtin and Cameron. During

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to attract Know-Nothing support, the Pennsylvania Republican party went so far as to drop its name and substitute the "less offensive" appellation of the People's Party. Both names are used in this chapter interchangeably. William D. Kelley to Horace Greeley, November 5, 1856, New York Public Library; and Henry D. Moore to Simon Cameron, November 4, 1859, SCP.

For divisions within the Republican party in 1860 see the following: Edward Joy Morris to Henry C. Carey, July 21, 1860, Edward Carey Gardiner Collection, HSP; James E. Harvey to Abraham Lincoln, May 21, 1860, RTL; Erwin Stanley Bradley, The Triumph of Militant Republicanism; A Study of Pennsylvania and Presidential Politics 1860-1872 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964), p. 227; and Dusinberre, Civil War Issues in Philadelphia, pp. 98-100.

Curtin and Cameron became permanently estranged during the 1855 Senate contest. Both sought election, and as a result "they never met or exchanged the ordinary courtesies of life except on ceremonial occasions." McClure, Old Time Notes, 1: 387. For the consequences of the Cameron-Curtin feud see the following: John M. Pomeroy to Abraham Lincoln, August 27, 1860, RTL; and Alexander K. McClure to Abraham Lincoln, August 27, 1860, RTL.

the opening session, Morrow B. Lowry offered a resolution that would instruct the Pennsylvania delegates-at-large to the national Republican convention to vote for Simon Cameron for president. The resolution was easily carried with only forty-four dissenting votes. Cameron's victory made the Senator confident that he had sufficient strength to block Curtin's nomination. However, the Curtin forces countered his attack by proposing a resolution that delegates to the national convention should be popularly elected. Cameron's political strength rested upon his ability to manipulate lesser politicians and not his public support. If passed, this resolution would result in a convention delegation that Cameron might not be able to control. He therefore offered Curtin a compromise. Cameron would allow Curtin's nomination in return for an amended delegate selection resolution. The potentially explosive convention ended in a draw with Cameron being endorsed for the Republican presidential nomination, and Curtin nominated for

governor.[5]

Kelley was disappointed by both the conservative tone of the Harrisburg convention and the endorsement of Cameron. In his opening remarks before the convention, former Governor James Pollock denounced all fanaticism "whether in the form of Northern abolitionism or Southern slavery propagandism." Another party leader proudly declared that the Republican party "embodies all the . . . real conservatism and well-directed patriotism" in America. Kelley agreed with Andrew A. Reeder, the former governor of Kansas, who suggested that the Harrisburg convention should concentrate "upon the two great questions on which our future hangs." According to Reeder these were "whether slavery should be recognized, extended and

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[5]McClure, Old Time Notes, 1: 391-392; Bradley, Triumph of Militant Republicanism, p. 59; New York Times, February 25, 1860; and Public Ledger, February 23, 1860.

Cameron wanted delegates to the national convention appointed by the county committees where he wielded great influence. The compromise resolution left the selection process up to the discretion of the delegates to the state convention. The delegations from each congressional district would decide whether national convention delegates would be chosen by popular vote, appointment by county committee, or a vote among the delegates themselves.

perpetuated as a social blessing; and . . . whether free white labor shall be cherished and protected against ruinous foreign competition." Kelley feared, however, that the party leadership was not pursuing these questions forcefully enough because they were fearful of offending certain potential supporters. Judge Kelley was ready to battle for the holy causes of freedom and protection in the spring of 1860, and he could not tolerate considerations of political expediency.[6]

Shortly after the Harrisburg convention, the Central Republican Club of Philadelphia invited Kelley to speak at their ratification meeting. The Judge praised Andrew Curtin, denounced the assault upon John Hickman in the House of Representatives which had occurred two days before, extolled the party platform (i.e. what he believed the platform ought to have been); but he did not mention Simon Cameron. Kelley considered Cameron to be an

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[6]Ibid., New York Times, February 13, 25, 1860; and William D. Kelley to Andrew H. Reeder, May 28, 1860, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, New York Historical Society.

unprincipled man and "doubt/ed/ his integrity in political matters." He warned Abraham Lincoln that "Cameron was devoted to no party but sharing the advantages of victory let it crown what banner it might." Kelley could not support a man who cared more about winning the spoils of office than noble causes.[7]

Kelley was given a voice in the selection of a Republican standard bearer when his friends and neighbors elected him in March, 1860, as a delegate to the Republican National Convention. Cameron was planning to use the Pennsylvania delegation as a stepping stone to the nomination; but Kelley and the other antislavery radicals in the delegation were determined to frustrate the Senator's plan. On the eve of the Chicago convention, William H. Seward of New York was the leading candidate for the Republican nomination. "He represent/s/ the extreme opinions opposed to slavery and the South,"

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[7]Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 733; Bradley, Triumph of Militant Republicanism, p. 97; William D. Kelley to Abraham Lincoln, November 29, 1860, January 1, 1861, RTL; and A. H. Reeder to Charles Albright, letter published in the New York Times, February 13, 1860.

remarked Sidney George Fisher at the time the Republicans were meeting in Chicago, "and the selection of his name would . . . exasperate the southern people and alarm conservatives throughout the North." But notwithstanding Seward's identification with the antislavery wing of the party, Kelley considered him to be a "trimmer" and "jobbing politician" who was as unscrupulous as Cameron. In addition, Kelley agreed with his radical colleague David Wilmot's assessment that "Seward & Chase . . . had occupied positions of such mark in the conflicts of the past two years that the conservative and American Elements in /Pennsylvania/ were irrevocably committed against them."[8]

Among the other candidates for the nomination Kelley rejected Salmon P. Chase because he was too cold and aloof to appeal to the common man and was unelectable in Pennsylvania for the same reason that Seward was unavailable, and he rejected

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[8] Samuel A. Purviance to Simon Cameron, May 23, 1860, SCP; Congressional Globe, 37th Cong., 2d sess.: 1838; McClure, Old Time Notes, 1: 404-406; P. S. Sanderson to Simon Cameron, May 14, 1860, SCP; Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, pp. 348, 353; William D. Kelley to Norman B. Judd, June 1, 1860, RTL; and David Wilmot to Abraham Lincoln, July 11, 1860, RTL.

Edward Bates because of the Missourian's conservatism and Know-Nothing associations. Upon his arrival in Chicago, Kelley had narrowed the field of potential candidates who would receive his support to Benjamin Wade and Abraham Lincoln. Convention circumstances soon made the "Illinois Railsplitter" Kelley's choice.[9]

Everyone at the convention conceded that Seward would be hard to stop. New York had not only sent a united delegation pledged to Seward, and a skilled convention manager in the person of Thurlow Weed, but it had also sent over 1200 boisterous "Irrepressibles" who intended to wage psychological warfare on the opposition by creating the impression of an overwhelming public support for the New York Senator. On the evening before the formal opening of the convention, Weed planned to reinforce Seward's image as the people's choice by manipulating the huge crowd which was to gather in the Wigwam to

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[9]Ibid., E. C. Smith to Henry C. Carey, March 14, 1860, Edward Carey Gardiner Papers, HSP; and Allen Throndike Rice, ed., Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln by Distinguished Men of His Time (New York: North American Review, 1888), pp. 255-256.

listen to party luminaries. Weed instructed the meeting chairman, James Nye, to recognize only pro-Seward speakers. He hoped that after the audience had listened to an impressive array of Seward supporters that they would mistakenly believe that Seward was the unanimous choice of the convention. Realizing that most members of the audience that evening would crowd into the galleries of the Wigwam a few days later during the balloting for president, Weed hoped that his carefully orchestrated pre-convention meeting would foster a pro-Seward sentiment in the galleries. With the "Irrepressibles" demonstrating for Seward at the appropriate time, and this manufactured enthusiasm in the galleries, Weed could generate a bandwagon effect on the convention floor among the delegates. It was a very clever strategem that might have worked.[10]

Kelley was told about Weed's scheme a few hours before the meeting began, and he decided to

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[10]Glyndon G. Van Deusen, William Henry Seward (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 223; and Rice, Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln, pp. 255-256.

frustrate it if possible. That evening the Judge positioned himself next to the speakers platform, and before Nye could introduce the first speaker, Kelley "rushed onto the stage" as he had done twenty-five years earlier at Faneuil Hall. He delivered a passionate address against slavery in the territories, the Buchaman administration, and southern dominence of the federal government. Kelley said nothing that Seward supporters could take issue with, and was therefore impossible to remove from the platform without causing a stir. Kelley later gleefully reminisced that he "had deliberately undertaken to defeat the scheme by talking against time, till the trains that were to carry . . . /the audience/ to their homes beyond the city should be ready for the last departure" for the evening. The Judge spoke until midnight "in defiance of oft-repeated calls for Hon. James W. Nye," and thus won the first skirmish with the Seward forces.[11]

Cameron's convention managers, Joseph Casey, John P. Sanderson, and Samuel Purviance, not only

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[11] Ibid.

believed that Seward could be stopped but that their man could do it. Casey later reported to his chief that the Seward operatives "were independent and overbearing and refused to talk of anything but his unconditional nomination." This had antagonized many delegates and made Seward vunerable. "The contest would have been between yourself and Seward," Casey lamented, "if our state had been a unit." Samuel Purviance angrily echoed Casey's charge that "we were beaten by our own men" in a letter to Cameron.

> We tried hard in our Caucus to get a unit on you and when you consider we had 108 men from a large state and some of them the most impracticable fools I ever acted with you must conclude it was bringing them well together to give you 95—and leave but 13 against you—after the immense amount of clamor that was raised against you.

Kelley was one of those "impracticable fools" who raised such a "clamor" against Cameron.[12]

Cameron's managers realized that without a united Pennsylvania delegation that the prospects

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[12] Joseph Casey to Simon Cameron, May 23, 1860, SCP; Samuel A. Purviance to Simon Cameron, May 23, 1860, SCP; and William D. Kelley to Andrew H. Reeder, May 28, 1860.

for securing his nomination were not good. They therefore decided to arrange matters so that Cameron would receive credit for "making the nominee." After consultation with the Indiana and New Jersey delegation leaders, Casey approached Lincoln's convention manager David Davis, and offered Lincoln Pennsylvania in return for the Treasury Department. Davis and Leonard Swett, another Lincoln confidant, guaranteed that every member of the Illinois delegation would recommend Cameron's appointment, and that Casey could have access to Lincoln immediately after his election. "After everything was arranged carefully and unconditionally in reference to yourself," Casey informed Cameron, "we drove the anti-Cameron men from this state into it much against their own will."[13]

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[13]Joseph Casey to Simon Cameron, May 23, 1860, SCP; Williard L. King, Lincoln's Manager: David Davis (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1960), pp. 140-141; and McClure, Old Time Notes, 1: 405-406.

Samuel Purviance wrote to Cameron after the convention that "although you have not turned up triump/hant,/ you have not lost but gained ground." He continued: "The Illinois delegation . . . give you the credit of making the nomination and you have only to join heartily in the support of Lincoln to insure you a very exalted and enviable position with old Abe's administration either in the shape of influence for your friends or office for yourself or both." May 23, 1860, SCP.

The Pennsylvania delegation met in David Wilmot's room on the evening before the balloting began. Casey had instructed the loyal Cameron men to withhold their votes in caucus until the anti-Cameron men had voted, and then they were to cast their votes for Lincoln as the delegation's choice on the second ballot. During the caucus Casey strenuously supported Edward Bates for Pennsylvania's second choice. Believing that Cameron had made a deal with this "fossil of the Silurian era," antislavery radicals and the Curtin loyalists in the delegation joined with David Wilmot and William Kelley who had been advocating Lincoln. This is exactly what Casey had hoped they would do. The Pennsylvania delegation switched to Lincoln en masse on the second ballot creating the bandwagon effect Weed had wanted to generate for Seward. Lincoln was nominated on the third ballot, and everyone considered Cameron to be the king maker. The disappointed George William Curtis, who had enthusiastically supported Seward, wrote to his wife:

> But you may be sure, Darling, that if I had had any political ambition whatever, this convention would have cured it. It has been

> of the greatest service in showing me men and things, and I shall come home to you a great deal wiser, and certainly a little sadder man, than I came away.[14]

On May 19, 1860, the day after Lincoln's nomination, the chairmen of the state delegations journeyed to Springfield to officially notify the nominee of the convention's decision. Andrew H. Reeder, chairman of the Pennsylvania delegation, could not attend, so the convention chairman, George Ashmun, appointed Kelley to represent the Keystone state at the ceremony.

After Ashmun had indicated to Lincoln the purpose of the delegation's visit and formally handed him the party platform, the candidate acknowledged the honor then said, "Now I will not longer defer the pleasure of taking you, and each of you, by the hand." Lincoln approached Governor Edward Morgan

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[14]William D. Kelley to Andrew H. Reeder, May 28, 1860; McClure, Old Time Notes, 1: 405-406, Charles Buxton Going, David Wilmot Free-Soiler (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1924), pp. 540-541; Murat Halstead, Caucuses of 1860: A History of the National Political Conventions of that Year (Columbus: Follette, Foster, and Company, 1860), p. 129; and George William Curtis to Anna Shaw Curtis, May 19, 1860, Houghton Library.

of New York, one of Seward's chief lieutenants, with a friendly greeting. However, Morgan, who was still chafing under Seward's defeat, "made no audible response." Lincoln, still smiling cordially, asked, "Pray, Governor, how tall may you be?" Nearly six feet three," Morgan reluctantly replied. Kelley, who was standing next to Morgan, boisterously intervened after a brief but embarrassing silence, "and pray, Mr. Lincoln, how tall may you be?" Lincoln quickly responded, "Six feet four." Kelley, who was six feet even, made an exaggerated bow saying:

> Pennsylvania bows humbly before New York, but still more humbly before Illinois. Mr. Lincoln, is it not curious that I who for the last twelve years have yearned for a president to whom I might look up, should have found one here in a state where so many people believe they grow nothing but "Little Giants?"

Everyone had a good laugh. Kelley liked Lincoln, and he remarked to Carl Schurz as they were leaving the candidate's house: "Well, we might have done a more brilliant thing, but we could hardly have done a better thing."[15]

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[15]William D. Kelley to Andrew H. Reeder, May 28, 1860; Rice, Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln, pp. 255-260; and Carl Schurz, The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz (New York: The McClure Co., 1906), 2: 188.

There were many Philadelphians who disagreed with Kelley's conclusion. William Meredith regarded Lincoln as a "Western screamer" who represented "Western coarseness and violence." "The papers say he was fond of horse racing, foot racing, etc.," Sidney George Fisher disdainfully observed. "Such is democracy," the patrician sighed, "these very qualities connecting him in sympathy with the masses favor his success." It was "these very qualities connecting him in sympathy with the masses" that had attracted William Kelley to Lincoln in the first place, and made the Philadelphia politician sanguine of success in the fall. "It was a master stroke," Kelley bragged to an Illinois colleague shortly after the convention ended, "taking as we did a man from the ranks of the people."[16]

Pennsylvania Republicans officially launched their campaign with a statewide series of rallies

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[16]Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 354; William D. Kelley to Norman B. Judd, June 1, 1860, RTL; and William D. Kelley to Andrew H. Reeder, May 28, 1860.

which ratified Lincoln's nomination. Kelley spoke to an enthusiastic crowd in Pittsburgh on May 21. A few days later, he praised the "Illinois Rail-splitter" before a large crowd in his native city. Even though it was a stormy evening, "State Independence Square was filled." James Harvey wrote to Lincoln on the day after the Philadelphia rally, "I am now satisfied, we have touched the great popular heart, and excited all its strong emotions." Harvey concluded, "No man could look upon the spectacle last night, without feeling that the people were in motion spontaneously, and by no artificial appliances."[17]

One reason that "the people were in motion" was that "Old Abe" was "from the ranks of the people." Another reason for this outpouring of popular support in the Keystone State was that stump speakers such as Kelley cleverly tied the tariff, slavery, and public land policy issues to the economic

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[17]William D. Kelley to Norman B. Judd, June 1, 1860, RTL; Andrew G. Curtin to Abraham Lincoln, May 21, 1860, RTL; and James E. Harvey to Abraham Lincoln, May 27, 1860, RTL.

well-being of the workingman and his family. Republican state chairman, Alexander McClure, requested Lincoln to send "your most able and judicious stumpers" into Pennsylvania. However, McClure warned, "They should be thoroughly familiar with the tariff question." Sidney George Fisher understood the importance of the tariff as a campaign issue, but nonetheless maintained that "the overwhelming and exciting subject now before the country is slavery, out of which grows the question of the relative power of North and South. By its side all other issues are insignificant." The Pennsylvania Democracy was on the defensive with each of these issues. If that were not handicap enough, both the national and state party organizations were experiencing a revolution from which they would not completely recover for over seventy years.[18]

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[18]Bradley, Triumph of Militant Republicanism, p. 85; Allan Nevins, Ordeal of the Union (8 vols., New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), 4: 304; Alexander K. McClure to Abraham Lincoln, June 16, 1860, RTL; Simon Cameron to Abraham Lincoln, August 1, 1860, RTL; and Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 353.

The Democratic National Convention which convened in Charleston on April 23, 1860, erupted into a bitter sectional squable, and ended without adopting a platform nor nominating a candidate. Pro-Douglas Democrats reconvened in Baltimore, and nominated the "Little Giant." Southern Democrats met in Richmond, and nominated John C. Breckinridge for President. Buchanan quickly endorsed Breckinridge, and used his patronage power in Pennsylvania to force the state organization to reject Douglas. Alexander McClure later remembered that "the factional conflict became extremely bitter and greatly chilled the hopes of Democratic victory."[19]

Pennsylvania Republicans grew increasingly confident of victory as the summer progressed. Kelley wrote to Lincoln's trusted advisor, Norman B. Judd, as early as June 1, that "I have traversed our state from the Ohio line to the Delaware . . . and am prepared to say that the good old Keystone

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[19]Robert W. Johannsen, Stephen A. Douglas (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), ch 28 passim; New York Times, March 1, 2, August 10, 1860; Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 352-353; James E. Harvey to Abraham Lincoln, June 28, 1860, RTL; Morning Pennsylvanian, October 2, 1860; The Press, October 19, 1860; and McClure, Old Time Notes, 1: 425-427.

state is no longer in the category of doubtful things." A few weeks later, James Harvey assured Lincoln,

> The conviction is growing daily, that our success is nearly certain. I know that opinion is entertained in high quarters, not very friendly to such a result. Gov. Floyd, the secretary of war, who is shrewd and observing, told me yesterday in a frank conversation, he regarded your election as inevitable, because there was no prospect or hope of reconciling the Democratic divisions. That opinion is spreading.

McClure joined the growing chorus of optimism. "This State is confessedly ours," he wrote to Lincoln on July 2, "I can conceive of no possible contingency that could now endanger it." "Old Abe" was uneasy about this possible overconfidence in Pennsylvania until his crafty ex-opponent announced on August 1, "I can now . . . say that you will get this state, beyond the shadow of a doubt." Lincoln was relieved by this intelligence because he knew that Cameron understood that without a Republican victory in the Keystone State, the Pennsylvania Senator could not collect his due bill at the Treasury Department.[20]

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[20]William D. Kelley to Norman B. Judd, June 1, 1860, RTL; James E. Harvey to Abraham Lincoln, June 13, 1860, RTL; Alexander K. McClure to Abraham Lincoln, July 2, 1860, RTL; and Simon Cameron to Abraham Lincoln, August 1, 1860, RTL.

Since Kelley believed that Lincoln and Curtin were certain of victory in Pennsylvania, he decided to redeem a pledge he had made to Frank Blair during the Chicago convention. Blair had asked Kelley to campaign for him in St. Louis where Blair was seeking election to the House of Representatives in Missouri's First Congressional District. Blair's opponent was "Missouri Dick" Barret who promised to end "the eternal nigger question." Kelley was asked "to make a speech that will do to print as a campaign document for circulation" that would counter Barret's racist appeals. The Philadelphian emphasized the tariff issue relating it to the St. Louis laboring classes. Kelley's speeches may have contributed to Blair's victory the following week. The Judge returned to Philadelphia via Springfield where he reassured Lincoln that all was well.[21]

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[21]William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Kelley, July 29, 1860, KFP; William D. Kelley to Norman B. Judd, August 8, 1860, RTL; Rice, Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln, p. 260; and William Ernest Smith, The Francis Preston Blair Family in Politics (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933), 1: 489-496.

Kelley was nominated for congressman by the Fourth Congressional District's Republican caucus in August. He gladly accepted the nomination redoubling his campaign efforts—now in behalf of two men "from the ranks of the people." Kelley was acknowledged by the public to be Lincoln's closest associate in Philadelphia. This popular impression irritated the conservative journalist James Harvey who wanted that position for himself. He wrote to the Republican standard bearer that "Kelley, a Democratic recruit in our ranks . . . /is/ represented to be the personal exponent of your views and wishes, and in the event of success would be so regarded." Harvey warned that this impression was injuring Lincoln's campaign among "the conservative and commercial classes." Judge Kelley was much too radical for some of his future constituents.

His antislavery friends, however, were delighted with his candidacy. With the nominations of W. Morris Davis, Lucretia Mott's son-in-law, and Kelley by the Republican party, Philadelphia abolitionists became interested in politics for

the first time in almost fifteen years. Although the annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society instructed members not to vote in the fall, friends of Kelley such as James Miller McKim, William Henry Furness, and James and Lucretia Mott ignored the Society's injunction, and actively campaigned for him. A master on the stump, Kelley worked his district into a political frenzy. Frank Blair returned his friend's favor by appearing in Kelley's behalf the week before the state election. They addressed cheering crowds in Germantown on October 5, and were saluted by torchlight parades two nights later. That evening Kelley denounced the "slave power" and the Democratic party before a huge audience in the Philadelphia Wigwam. The delighted crowd chanted "Lincoln, Curtin, and Kelley" until well after midnight. If popular enthusiasm could be translated into votes, Kelley would be elected.[22]

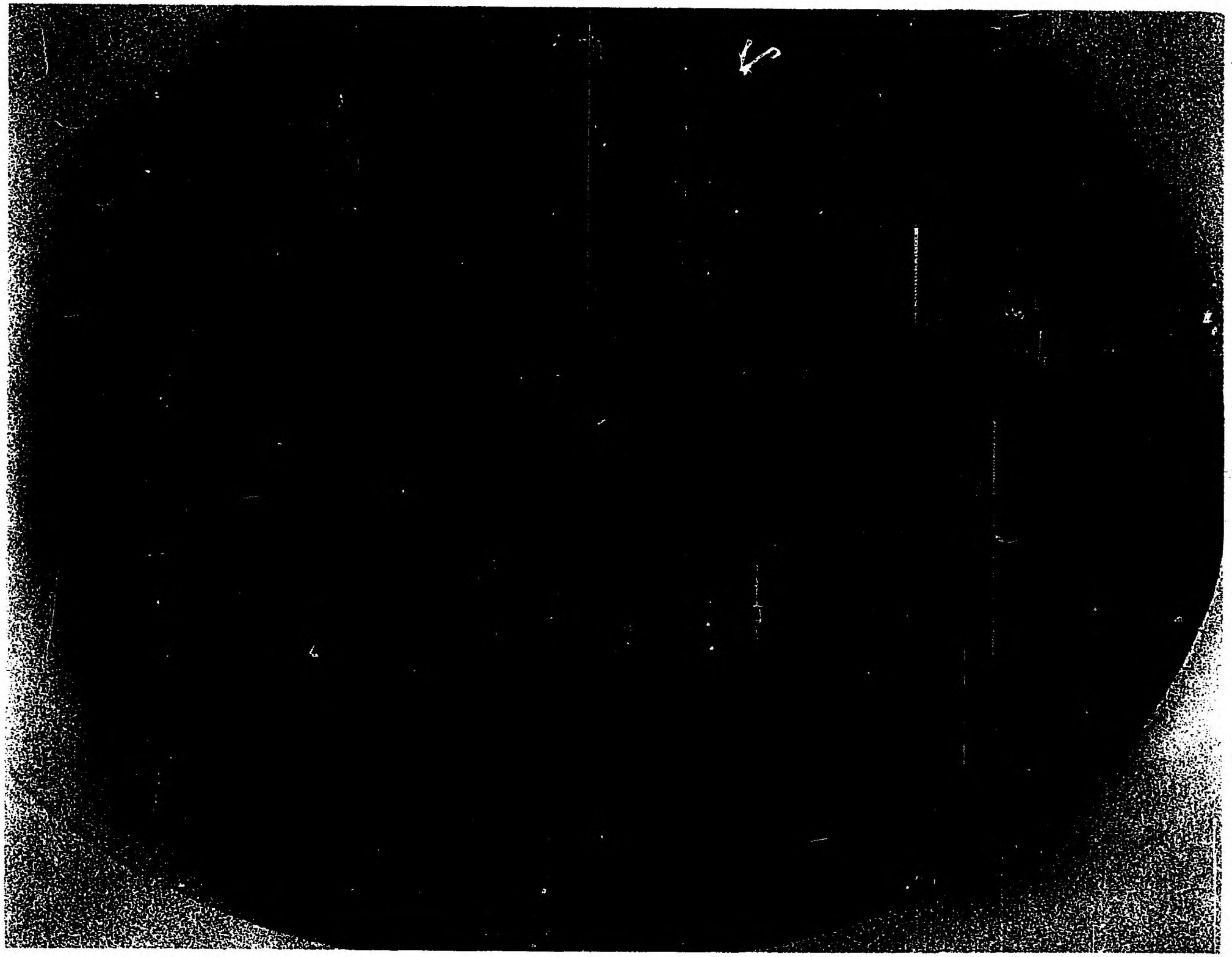
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[22]Edward Joy Morris to Henry C. Carey, July 21, September 18, 1860; James E. Harvey to Abraham Lincoln, September 22, 1860, RTL; Abraham Lincoln to James E. Harvey, September 27, 1860, The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln /Hereafter designated CWAL/, edited by Roy P. Basler (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 4: 122; New York

The New York Times announced that "the whole country awaits with intense interest the result of next Tuesday's election in Pennsylvania. It will go very far towards deciding the contest." The Times only echoed the opinion of most political observers who believed that Pennsylvania was an election barometer. Although badly divided over the presidential contest, Pennsylvania Democrats were still united behind Foster's candidacy. A Republican defeat in Pennsylvania could have disastrous consequences elsewhere in November. Judge Kelley anxiously awaited the election results at the "Elms." The verdict, he soon learned, was quite different from what it had been in 1856, Curtin won by a comfortable 32,000 vote margin of victory, and Kelley defeated his Democratic opponent by 1373 votes. Republican success in Pennsylvania proved to be a harbinger of a Lincoln

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Times, October 5, 8, 1860; and Calvin J. Callaghan, "The Annual Meeting of the Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, 1860," Antislavery and Disunion, 1858-1861: Studies in the Rhetoric of Compromise and Conflict, edited by J. Jeffrey Auer (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963), pp. 242-261.



victory in November. "Old Abe" won 56.3% of the vote in a four-man race. Kelley was optimistic about the future—his crusade had been a successful one.[23]

2. A DIFFICULT APPOINTMENT

A few minutes before midnight of November 6, 1860, Simon Cameron jubilantly telegraphed the President-elect, "Pennsylvania 70,000 for you. New York safe. Glory enough." The telegram brought welcome news, and a painful reminder. Contrary to Lincoln's instructions, David Davis and Leonard Swett had promised Cameron a cabinet post in return for Pennsylvania's support at the convention. Cameron's telegram was Lincoln's notice that the Pennsylvania Senator's due bill would shortly be presented for collection.[24]

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[23] New York Times, October 1, 6, 1860; The Tribune Almanac for the Years 1838 to 1868 (New York: New York Tribune, 1868), 2: 47; and The Daily News, October 15, 1860. Pennsylvania election results:

Lincoln	268,030	Douglas	16,756	Bell	12,776	*	178,871
Curtin	262,403	Foster	230,239				
Kelley	11,568	Morgan	10,195	**	1715		

*Breckinridge ** Robinson

[24] Smith, Francis Preston Blair, 1: 508; Simon Cameron to Abraham Lincoln, August 1, 1860, RTL;

"Remembering that Peter denied his Lord with an oath, after most solemnly protesting that he never would," Lincoln sheepishly told his friend Lyman Trumball, "I will not swear I will make no committals; but I do think I will not." Although he did not explicitly make a "committal" to Cameron, Lincoln's agent had. In addition to Davis' convention pledge to Casey, the candidate encouraged Cameron to believe that "everything was arranged . . . unconditionally" by his behavior. Immediately after his nomination, Lincoln instructed Trumbull to "give my respects to . . . Gen. Cameron." A few weeks later, Leonard Swett reassured Cameron when they met in Harrisburg that Lincoln would honor "his commitments." Then, in early August, Lincoln sent David Davis to Pennsylvania to see firsthand how the campaign was going in the Keystone State. During his visit, Davis once again gave assurances of a cabinet post for Cameron.[25]

Samuel A. Purviance to Simon Cameron, May 23, 1860, SCP; Joseph Casey to Simon Cameron, May 23, 1860, SCP; and King, Lincoln's Manager, pp. 140-141, 165.

[25]Abraham Lincoln to Lyman Trumbull, May 26, June 5, 1860, CWAL, IV, 55, 71; Joseph Casey to Simon Cameron, May 23, 1860, SCP; King, Lincoln's

Lincoln was disturbed to learn from his emissaries that the Curtin-Cameron feud had resurfaced. Curtin, through Alexander McClure, controlled the state committee. Cameron unsuccessfully attempted to wrest control of the committee from his adversaries in August. Failing in his attempt, Cameron then established a rival organization in Philadelphia. "I was pained to learn . . . that some of our petty bickerings . . . have been obtruded upon you," McClure wrote to Lincoln in late August. "Rest assured that there will be no factious war in our ranks. Those who are charged with the responsibility of this great struggle in Penna. can afford to be wronged," he haughtily explained, "but cannot afford to quarrel." Cameron's actions made it clear to Lincoln that the Pennsylvania Senator would not allow himself to be excluded from decision making in the Keystone State. The Republican standard bearer quickly moved to reconcile the Cameron-Curtin factions before their feud endangered his election.[26]

Manager, p. 152; Abraham Lincoln to Whom It May Concern, August 2, 1860, The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln, Supplement 1832-1865, edited by Roy P. Basler (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1974), p. 58.

[26]Abraham Lincoln to Leonard Swett, July 15, 1860, CWAL, 4: 83-84; William D. Kelley to Abraham

All factions in Pennsylvania claimed responsibility for victory, and everyone pressed claims for patronage upon the President-elect. None were more insistent in their demands than Cameron and his friends. A few weeks after the election, Lincoln notified his running mate that he had received letters "from very strong and unexpected quarters in Pennsylvania, urging the appointment of General Cameron to a place in the cabinet." Lincoln invited Cameron to Springfield to confer with him about the formation of his cabinet. It is not known precisely what Lincoln promised the Pennsylvania Senator, but it seems probable that Cameron was tentatively offered the Treasury Department. Such a move was endorsed by all important Republican political factions in Pennsylvania except for Andrew Curtin and his partisans, and the Philadelphia radicals led by William Kelley.[27]

Lincoln, August 7, 1860, RTL; William D. Kelley to Norman B. Judd, August 8, 1860, RTL; Alexander McClure to Abraham Lincoln, August 27, 1860, RTL; and John M. Pomeroy to Abraham Lincoln, August 27, 1860, RTL.

[27]Abraham Lincoln to Hannibal Hamlin, November 27, 1860, CWAL, 4: 145; and Memorandum on the Appointment of Simon Cameron, CWAL, 4: 166.

Kelley warned Lincoln in late November that "a well concerted effort is making to mislead you as to the sentiment of this state." In a pointed reference to Cameron's "jobbing" in Harrisburg, and also to his frequent changing of political allegiance Kelley continued:

> The cardinal feature of your amiable character is integrity, and the true men of this state await your selection of cabinet officers in the undoubting faith that none but men of unsullied name will be called by you. Chosen first from the ranks of the people there is an abiding faith that Springfield, Harrisburg, Albany and other state capitals will be left by you to provide for the hordes that infest them, that having no friends to reward nor enemies to punish, you will not call to your immediate councils men whose lives have been passed in the financial and political intrigues of a state capital, and who have been ready to take the honors whether from a democratic caucus, a know nothing council or a republican majority.

The Philadelphia congressman-elect concluded that all of Lincoln's "true friends" would prefer that "any supposed claim of the state should be ignored," rather than risk the appointment of any Pennsylvanian who might discredit the administration with the people. The implication was that Cameron's appointment would be courting disaster.[28]

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[28]William D. Kelley to Abraham Lincoln, November 29, 1860, RTL; William D. Kelley to Caroline B.

Lyman Trumball agreed. The Illinois Senator wrote to his friend on New Year's Eve that "the probable appointment of Mr. Cameron to the office of Sec. of Treasury meets with the decided opposition of our trust friends in the Senate." Echoing Kelley, Trumball asserted that "there is an oder about Mr. C. which would be very detrimental to your administration." A few days later, Alexander McClure traveled to Springfield to entreat Lincoln not to appoint Cameron to his cabinet. The cumulative effect of Kelley's, Trumball's and McClure's denumciations was to persuade the President-elect not to bring Cameron into his administration. On January 3, 1860, Lincoln informed the anxious Pennsylvanian that "since seeing you things have developed which makes it impossible for me to take you into the cabinet."[29]

Cameron decided to fight for what had been promised to him rather than "retain his place in

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Kelley, November 15, 1860, WDKC; and Cong. Globe, 37th Cong., 2d sess.: 1838.

[29]Lyman Trumbull to Abraham Lincoln, December 31, 1860, RTL; William D. Kelley to Abraham Lincoln, January 7, 1861; and Abraham Lincoln to Simon Cameron, January 3, 1861, CWAL, 4: 169.

the Senate" as Lincoln suggested. The Senator "leaked" the false information that he had been appointed to Lincoln's cabinet to several newspapers which were friendly to him. The New York Herald published an editorial on January 8, 1861, that praised Lincoln's supposed appointment of Cameron. "General Cameron is universally known as a republican conservative, entirely untrammeled by party . . . platforms when great expediences of government policy are at state." Striking a blow where Lincoln was most vulnerable the Herald asserted, "No Cabinet selection could be made within the lines of the republican camp better calculated to assure the South of the conservative inclinations of Mr. Lincoln than this appointment of Simon Cameron."[30]

Lincoln, at first, fought back. He told a visiting delegation of prestigeous Pennsylvania politicos who asked him to appoint Cameron to the cabinet that "any man whom I may appoint to such a position, must be, so far as possible, like Caesar's wife, pure and above suspicion, of unblemished

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[30]Abraham Lincoln to Lyman Trumbull, January 7, 1861, CWAL, 4: 171; and New York Herald, January 8, 1861.

reputation, and undoubted integrity." But after Cameron flexed his political muscle by successfully electing Edgar Cowan to the U. S. Senate, Lincoln capitulated and appointed him Secretary of War. Kelley was bitterly disappointed that the "man from the ranks of the people" had rejected his advice, and brought into his administration the "intriguers from Albany, Harrisburg, and Springfield."[31]

3. ONE NATION INDIVISIBLE

The Alabama legislature had threatened action if a "black" Republican should be elected President in 1860. Pennsylvania Republicans scoffed at what they considered to be "idle threats." James E. Harvey, "a southern man born & bred," assured Lincoln in June, 1860, that he regarded the statements of southern "extremists . . . as idle raving." One Democratic newspaper editor fulminated, "Nothing seems to afford our Republican friends so much positive enjoyment . . . as the subject of the dissolution of the United States." Concerned that his political

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[31]Abraham Lincoln, "Remarks to Pennsylvania Delegation," January 24, 1861, CWAL 4: 179; McClure, Old Time Notes, 1: 444; D. N. White to Salmon P. Chase, February 25, 1861, Chase Papers, LC; and William D. Kelley to Abraham Lincoln, November 29, 1860, RTL.

adversaries did not take southern protestations seriously, the Post editor complained, "you have but to mention the possibility of a disturbance of our political condition, to raise a loud guffaw on the street corner." Kelley shared his fellow Republican's conviction that southern secession noises were mere bombast.[32]

Lincoln was elected on November 6. Within five weeks after his election, seven southern legislatures called for conventions to consider the question of secession. During the next eight weeks, five additional southern legislatures called for state conventions, seven states adopted ordinances declaring that they were no longer members of the Union, and six of these states met at Montgomery, Alabama, to form a new southern republic. Kelley initially responded to "the madness of the south" by assuring Lincoln that "the strife will be settled by commercial & financial operations. Present indications are that cotton will go down to eight cents

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[32]David M. Potter, Division and the Stresses of Reunion, 1845-1876 (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1973), p. 95; James E. Harvey to Abraham Lincoln, June 28, 1860, RTL; Pittsburgh Post, October 31, 1860; William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Kelley, July 29, 1860, WDKC.

per pound." However, as the crisis deepened Kelley challenged the southern right to secede, and called upon the President to "uphold the laws of the land, by force if necessary."[33]

Many Philadelphians, including influential members of his own party, violently disagreed with Kelley. Henry Carey and Simon Cameron advocated compromise on slavery to avoid a sectional confrontation. Their opinion was succinctly expressed in a New York Times editorial that asserted "Force, as a means of restoring the Union, or of permanently preserving it, is out of the question." The Philadelphia Morning Pennsylvanian placed responsibility for the secession crisis on abolitionists and anti-slavery politicians such as Kelley. The "Constitution has been misconstrued, perverted, abused by the dominant Anti-Slavery party," the Pennsylvanian's editor argued, "and converted into an instrument of oppression and injury." In a moment of passionate irresponsibility, the Pennsylvanian threatened

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[33] Potter, Division and the Stresses of Reunion, p. 95; William D. Kelley to Abraham Lincoln, November 29, 1860, RTL; North American and United States Gazette, November 20, 1860; William D. Kelley, "Speech of Hon. Wm. D. Kelley in the Northrop-Kelley Debates, at Spring Garden Institute, Wednesday, September 28" (Philadelphia: Collins, Printer, 1864), p. 7; and Daily Evening Bulletin, January 14, 1861.

Republicans with "civil war in the North" if they tried to use force against secession.[34]

The majority of Philadelphians, who were traditionally conservative and who were bound to the South by strong commercial ties, favored a conciliatory policy. At the beginning of the crisis, Kelley had reported to Lincoln that "our people are standing up bravely under the commercial pressure precipitated by the madness of the south." However, shortly thereafter, Kelley's father-in-law, Isaac Pugh, suffered bankrupcy because of numerous defaults by his southern accounts, and other economically pressed Philadelphians with less moral courage than Pugh began demanding "Concession before secession."[35]

Mayor Alexander Henry spoke for most of his constituents when he declared during Philadelphia's December Union meeting:

> The misplaced teachings of the pulpit /Furness/, the unwise rhapsodies of the lecture-room /Kelley/, the exciting appeals of the press /McKim/, on the subject of Slavery, must be frowned down by a just and law abiding people.

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[34]New York Times, March 21, 1861; Morning Pennsylvanian, March 21, 1861; and Dusinberre, Civil War Issues, p. 102.

[35]Philip S. Klein and Ari Hoogenboom, A History of Pennsylvania (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1973), pp. 159-160; Dusinberre, Civil War Issues, p.

Most Philadelphians also agreed with the editorial sentiments of the Philadelphia Inquirer regarding secession and the nature of the Union. "The Union is not a consolidated Republic," the Inquirer declared in February, 1861, and "the Constitution is not a system of pure democracy, conferring omnipotence upon a simple majority of . . . citizens." Kelley had agreed with these sentiments in 1841 and 1851, but vigorously opposed them in 1861. He had become convinced by the events of the preceding two decades that the democratic creed could be realized only by a "consolidated" state with sufficient power to implement it. He agreed with the Daily Evening Bulletin's assertion that

> to allow secession once or any where, is to give up the very idea of the Union. There is no law without penalty; there is no government without power. If every fragment of this nation can secede whenever passion or faction dictates, then indeed we have a miserable embecility of a country, that will fall to pieces, because it is not worth preserving.

Kelley also applauded District Attorney William Mann's vow to "march to Washington to aid the inauguration, if need be, at the point of the

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110; and William D. Kelley to Abraham Lincoln, November 29, 1860, RLT. See p. 196 for details of the financial impact of the secession crisis on Isaac Pugh.

bayonet."[36]

On April 12, 1861, General P. G. T. Beauregard opened fire on the United States garrison at Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor. When news of the outbreak of hostilities reached Philadelphia, her citizens erupted in a spasm of patriotic furor. The Philadelphia Press, which had earlier favored conciliation with the South, reported that "the assault upon Fort Sumter and its surrender . . . has wrought a revolution in public sentiment never before equalled." Sidney George Fisher also noted that the attack upon Fort Sumter "has roused the war passions of the North to a fearful pitch." A large mob of about 10,000 people gathered in the Philadelphia streets, and moved against suspected "traitors" in their midst. "Several well-known persons," Fisher lamented, "who had openly expressed secession opinions had been assaulted in the streets." The excitement in the "City of Brotherly Love" became so great after President Lincoln called for volunteers to suppress

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[36]Horace Greeley, The American Conflict (Chicago: G. C. W. Sherwood, 1864-66), pp. 362-363; Philadelphia Inquirer, February 23, 1861; Daily Evening Bulletin, January 14, 1861; Morning Pennsylvanian, December 31, 1860; and Sarah Pugh to Elizabeth N. Gay, April 12, 1861, Sydney Howard Gay Collection, Columbia University.

the insurrection that Mayor Henry addressed a threatening mob chitching the "Stars and Stripes" in his hands. He assured them that "no traitor shall rear his head or have a foothold in the city of Philadelphia." The throng of patriots responded to his promise with wild cheering and applause.[37]

Congressman-elect Kelley addressed a meeting of Philadelphia businessmen on the evening of April 17, two days after the surrender of Sumter. He admonished them to forget their political differences, and pledge to fully support the government by bearing their share "of the sacrifices and perils of the hour." The businessmen, many of whom were Kelley's bitter political foes, endorsed resolutions along the lines he had suggested. During the next few days several thousand Philadelphians signed this pledge to support the Union. Flags were flown on every house, office, and factory. Those who failed to display the national colors were suspected of being southern sympathizers, and were soon visited

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[37] Press, April 16, 1861; The American Annual Cyclopaedia and Register of Important Events of the Year 1861 (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1862), pp. 570-571; Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, pp. 385-386; and North American and United States Gazette, April 16, 17, 1861.

by irate patriots. "It is at the risk of any man's life that he utters publicly a sentiment in favor of secession or the South," Sidney George Fisher confided to his diary, "and . . . southern men living here . . . are in a painful position." Kelley applauded the "rallying 'round the flag" in his native city, and looked forward to suppressing the "slave power" that had threatened his beloved democratic creed for so long.[38]

Bellicosity in the "City of Brotherly Love" waxed even higher a few days later when the Philadelphia volunteer companies, under the command of General William F. Small, straggled back to town after they had been assaulted and humiliated by a secessionist mob in Baltimore. "Everyone I saw," one Philadelphian wrote the day after the Baltimore incident, "is filled with rage and resentment. The cry is now for a war of extermination on the South." Kelley advised Lincoln that "our whole community are quivering under the apprehension of a truce or armistice." He added that "the most conservative among our loyal men contemplate such a possibility

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[38]Scharf, Philadelphia, 1: 756; American Annual Cyclopaedia, p. 571; and Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 385.

with something akin to horror." A few days later Kelley told Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase that "the now unanimous north" would vigorously prosecute the war as one. Thus, the temper of Kelley's constituents was inflamed when the President called the Congress into special session.[39]

4. BELONGING

William Darrah Kelley officially began his long and distinguished career in the House of Representatives on July 4, 1861. He was sworn in as a member of the Thirty-Seventh Congress by Speaker Galusha Grow, a fellow Pennsylvanian. Kelley took a room on F Street which he shared with Walter McMichael. Several of his friends held seats in the House so that Kelley usually dined at Willards Hotel with one or more other members. The one major complaint Kelley made against his new circumstances was Washington's inervating heat and humidity. The day

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[39]Winnifred K. Mackay, "Philadelphia During the Civil War, 1861-1865," The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, 70 (January, 1946): 8-10, 16-17; Wainwright, Diary of Sidney George Fisher, p. 386; William D. Kelley to Abraham Lincoln, April 24, 1861, RTL; William D. Kelley to Salmon P. Chase, April 29, 1861, Salmon P. Chase Papers, LC; and Salmon P. Chase to William D. Kelley, April 29, 1861, Salmon P. Chase Papers, HSP.

after he was sworn in, Kelley wrote to his wife that "this is I think the hottest and closest day I ever experienced." Despite his discomforture caused by the weather, Kelley felt quite at home on the floor of the House among such kindred spirits as James Ashley, Frank Blair, John Covode, John Hickman, George Julian, and Thaddeus Stevens. He had not experienced such a heady feeling of "really belonging" since he had left Boston in 1838.[40]

One of Kelley's first actions in consort with his Radical colleagues was to vote for Owen Lovejoy's resolution that declared "it is no part of the duty of the soldiers of the United States to capture and return fugitive slaves." That evening Will proudly wrote Carrie that our black "friends . . . will applaud it." Several days later, Kelley delivered his maiden speech during the debate on the military reorganization bill. His animosity toward Maryland for allowing his fellow Philadelphians to

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[40]Cong. Globe, 37th Cong., 1st sess.: 5; William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Kelley, July 5, 6, 1861, WDKC; and Hans L. Trefousse, The Radical Republicans: Lincoln's Vanguard for Racial Justice (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p. 15.

be brutally mobbed in Baltimore was barely disguised, nor did he attempt to soften his criticism of the other border states for not fully supporting the Union cause. In response to a proposal that the loyal slaveholding states be allowed to fill all of the vacancies created at West Point by the absence of cadets from the seceded states Kelley said:

> Nor am I in favor of giving to the loyal slaveholding States permission to fill these vacancies. The loyal slaveholding States have not won that privilege. They did not hasten to put troops in the field to sustain the Government. It was in the streets of a city in what is called a loyal slaveholding State, that the blood of our loyal soldiers was shed when hastening to the defense of this capital. I am for filling these vacancies, but for filling them with men who will not resign their commissions in the face of the enemy, or turn their hands against the parent that has maintained and educated them.

It was obvious by his remarks that Kelley had carried the inflamed passions of his constituents with him to the Capitol.[41]

Kelley defined a conservative as "a man who

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[41] Cong. Globe, 37th Cong., 1st sess.: 32, 213; and William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Kelley, July 9, 1861, WDKC.

came into the world one generation too late." Although he never said so publicly, Kelley must have thought that his old friend Wendell Phillips belonged in this category when the latter warned that "we are tending toward that strong government which frightened Jefferson; toward that unlimited debt, that endless army. We have already those alien and sedition laws which, in 1798, wrecked the Federal Party, and summoned the Democratic into existence." In his defense of Lincoln's suspension of habeas corpus, Kelley underscored both his differences with Phillips and the changes which the crises of the preceding decade had wrought in his political philosophy:

> Talk about illegality! Talk about formalities! Why, there was one formality to be observed, and that was the formality of directing the cannon, and destroying the enemy, regardless of the means, whether it be by the seizure of cannon-bags, or the seizure of persons, if the necessity of the case required it. The God of nature had conferred this right on men and nations; and therefore let him /Lincoln/ not be told that it was unconstitutional to use the necessary means.

Men who talked about "the best government is that which governs least" in 1862, were reactionaries

who threatened the democratic creed.[42]

Kelley viewed the conflict as "a war in defense of free institutions." It was a crusade on behalf of the victims of the moneyed aristocracy—workingmen, slaves, and small farmers—for their liberty. It was not only a "question /of/ whether man shall have wages for his labor," but a question of whether the small farmer could be freed from the domination of eastern financial institutions and southern planters. Kelley believed that the energy released by the war afforded an unparalleled opportunity for implementing the democratic creed. "It is for us, the existing generating," the Philadelphia Congressman told his constituents, "to determine what shall be the character of the political institutions of /our country/." He had attempted to make those political institutions more democratic by centralizing power in Washington. Kelley wrote to his wife before the 1864 elections, "Thank God my vote was

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[42] Cong. Globe, 37th Cong., 2d sess.: 593-595; Wendell Phillips, Speeches, Lectures, and Letters, First Series (Boston, 1902), pp. 422-423; and William D. Kelley, "Speech of Hon. Wm. D. Kelley in the Northrop-Kelley Debate, at Spring Garden Institute, Monday, September 26" (Philadelphia: Collins, Printer, 1864), p. 19.

steadily cast for every effective measure proposed however unpopular it might promise to be."[43]

One might question labeling Kelley's first years in the Congress as the consummation of his political career. After all, it could be argued, he did not reach the zenith of his power until 1882-83 when as Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee Kelley was able to dictate American tariff policy. However, the Judge's later congressional career follows a pattern established during the Civil War years. His daughter Florence reminisced after his death that "there was always in /father's/ mind the . . . idea of a juster, nobler, happier life for all the American people." She also remembered that he had impressed upon her as a child "that the duty of his generation was to build up great

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[43]William D. Kelley, "Speech of Hon. Wm. D. Kelley, in the Northrop-Kelley Debate. Delivered at Manayunk, Monday Evening, October 3, 1864" (Philadelphia: Collins, Printer, 1864), pp. 47-49; Cong. Globe, 38th Cong., 1st sess.: 570, 573, 774-775; 2d sess.: 492; William D. Kelley, "The Safeguards of Personal Liberty. An Address by Hon. Wm. D. Kelley, Delivered at Concert Hall, Thursday Evening, June 22, 1865" (Philadelphia: Social, Civil and Statistical Association of Colored People of Pennsylvania, 1865), p. 1; and William D. Kelley to Caroline B. Kelley, July 13, 1864, WDKC.

industries in America so that more wealth could be produced for the whole people." "The duty of your generation," William Kelley admonished his daughter, "will be to see that the product is distributed justly. The same generation cannot do both." "We may go on through centuries realizing the Utopian dreams of More," Kelley promised a Philadelphia audience in 1865, "if we will but be true to the great principles that underlie our institutions and should regulate the administration of our Government." That the "Tribune of the People" and "Pig Iron" were the same man is not a contradiction but an indication of the Civil War's impact on the ideas of men.[44]

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[44]S. Walter Poulshock, "Pennsylvania and the Politics of the Tariff, 1880-1888," Pennsylvania History, 29 (July, 1962): 299-300; Florence Kelley, "My Philadelphia," The Survey, 57 (October 1, 1926), pp. 8, 10; Kelley, "Safeguards of Personal Liberty," pp. 2-3; and Robert P. Sharkey, Money, Class and Party: An Economic Study of Civil War and Reconstruction (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1959), pp. 281-282.

VITA

Michael R. Greco was born in Gilroy, California on January 30, 1943. He attended public schools, and graduated from San Jose High School in 1960. Mr. Greco worked for several years as a jewelry salesman before he entered San Jose State College in 1966. He received the BA degree from that institution two years later, and was named the Department of History's Distinguish Honors Scholar. Mr. Greco then began graduate studies at the Johns Hopkins University in 1968 specializing in American intellectual history. Dr. Kenneth S. Lynn was his major professor and dissertation adviser. While pursuing his graduate studies, Mr. Greco was a special assistant to Congressman Paul S. Sarbanes. Mr. Greco was married to Elizabeth Hansen in 1968. They have two boys—Michael Angelo age 4, and Matthew Paul age 3.