The University of North Carolina
at Greensboro

JACKSON LIBRARY

CQ

no. 994

Gift of
Ann Kearns Brooks
COLLEGE COLLECTION

BROOKS, ANN KEARNS. A Republican Governor and a Democratic Editor: Their Relationship During the Reconstruction in South Carolina. (1972) Directed by: Dr. Allen W. Trelease. Pp. 114.

Daniel Henry Chamberlain, as Republican Governor of South Carolina during the last two years of Reconstruction, was sustained in his position by the newly enfranchised Negro electorate. Francis Warrington Dawson, Democratic editor of the powerful News and Courier, was a spokesman of the conservative Charleston business elite and a proponent of fusion or political cooperation with those Republicans who best served the economic and social interests of this influential minority. For a short time the two men came together in a spirit of bipartisan cooperation as a means for obtaining their separate goals. The coalition--temporary and shaky at best--was opposed by elements in both parties. Chamberlain was charged by some in his party with having sold out Republican principles of Negro political equality, and Dawson was charged by an element within his party with abandoning Democratic fundamentals of white supremacy. Finally the connection was severed by the race issue, larger than the men and the beliefs they held.

The personal relationship of the two men derives importance as an illustration of the character of party politics in South Carolina during the Reconstruction period. Both Chamberlain and Dawson represent a tendency within their own political party in the State. This, in turn, creates a paradoxical kinship between the two parties

which were at the same time so apparently opposite. The study is intended to demonstrate that economic self interest, political opportunism, vindictiveness, humanitarianism, idealism and fear were forces which knew no party lines; sometimes they made strange bedfellows of men whose political commitments were essentially different.

The emphasis on the paper is on Chamberlain and Dawson, and through them South Carolina and the period as a whole. In attempting to portray the character and personality of the governor and the editor, they have been presented before and after Reconstruction as well as during those crucial years in order to show the complexity of their characters.

Judgments will be based on Chamberlain's letters to Dawson, editorials in the News and Courier, and references to the Governor in Dawson's correspondence with others. Regrettably, there are no surviving letters from Dawson to Chamberlain, so far as we know.

A REPUBLICAN GOVERNOR AND A DEMOCRATIC EDITOR:
THEIR RELATIONSHIP DURING THE RECONSTRUCTION
IN SOUTH CAROLINA

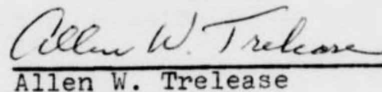
by

Ann Kearns Brooks

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

Greensboro
1972

Approved by



Allen W. Trelease

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Thesis Adviser Allen W. Trelease

Oral Examination Committee Members Richard Bardolph

Jean Gordon

Date of Examination

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER I. FROM MASSACHUSETTS AND LONDON TO CHARLESTON 4

Chamberlain--background; education; abolitionist influence; military career; arrival in Charleston. Dawson--background; education; military career; journalistic apprenticeship in Virginia; friendship with B. R. Riorden; arrival in Charleston. Chamberlain's rise to political and social importance. Dawson's establishment in community; with Riorden edits News and Courier; its influence.

CHAPTER II. PERSONALITY, CHARACTER AND POLITICAL THEORIES 16

Corruption of Scott administration--Land Commission, Railroad, Bond and Printing Rings; Chamberlain and Dawson's connection; charges made. Chamberlain's political theories; his personality. Dawson's view of the Negro; on dueling.

CHAPTER III. BIPARTISAN COOPERATION--AN UNEASY ALLIANCE 30

The Republicans--social and economic background; Radical versus Conservative plan of Reconstruction; as carried out in South Carolina; intramural conflicts. The native whites--up and low country differences; up-country's rejection of economic and social participation with Negroes; Bourbon class of Charleston; economic preferences; practice of fusion. National attitude toward Reconstruction; call for reform within Republican party. News and Courier's attitude toward Chamberlain as nominee for Governor; the Bolters and cooperation; Chamberlain elected. Taxpayer's Convention and "Conservative reform;" Chamberlain's inaugural; Dawson makes his play. Quid pro quo.

420235

CHAPTER IV. FACTIONAL DIFFICULTIES 52

Segment of Republican party opposes Chamberlain--corrupt elements; Negroes' fear of conservative alliance. Chamberlain's record; his vetoes; complaints from the Legislature; Charleston approves Governor's program; scattered complaints from up-country Democrats. Republican opposition mounts--Parker's threats to expose Chamberlain; charges from New York Sun; News and Courier assists Chamberlain.

CHAPTER V. "CLOSING OF THE RANKS OF THE WHITE MEN" 69

Judgeship issue; Governor's defiance of Legislature; response of Charleston and News and Courier; Republican dissension; Democratic party organization; News and Courier's stand against Straight-outs; Hamburg affair; political implications. Chamberlain's nomination. Hampton's nomination; News and Courier's support of Hampton; their stand on Chamberlain.

CHAPTER VI. REDEMPTION AND AFTERWARDS 91

Intimidation and violence; Hampton comes to Charleston; election of 1876; dual government; contest taken to Washington; government surrendered to Hampton; Democrats attempt to smear Republicans; settlement in U. S. and State courts. Dawson after "Redemption;" on Tillman; his murder in 1890. Chamberlain's activities in post '76; renews ties with South Carolina; a reversal in political views; his death in 1906. Conclusion.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 109

INTRODUCTION

Daniel Henry Chamberlain, as Republican Governor of South Carolina during the last two years of Reconstruction, was sustained in his position by the newly enfranchised Negro electorate. Francis Warrington Dawson, Democratic editor of the powerful News and Courier, was a spokesman of the conservative Charleston business elite and a proponent of fusion or political cooperation with those Republicans who best served the economic and social interests of this influential minority. For a short time the two men came together in a spirit of bipartisan cooperation as a means for obtaining their separate goals. The coalition--temporary and shaky at best--was opposed by elements in both parties. Chamberlain was charged by some in his party with having sold out Republican principles of Negro political equality, and Dawson was charged by an element within his party with abandoning the fundamental Democratic creed of white supremacy. Finally the connection was severed by this same race issue, larger than the men and the beliefs they held.

The personal relationship of the two--openly antagonistic in 1874, friendly in 1875, terminated in 1876, and half heartedly regenerated by 1887--is an interesting story in itself. It is important as an illustration of the

character of party politics in South Carolina during the Reconstruction period. Each of the two men represents a tendency within his own political party in the State. This, in turn, creates a paradoxical kinship between the two parties which were at the same time so apparently opposite.

Reconstruction was and continues to be a controversial subject, having to do with freed slaves struggling for equal rights, and a proud people badly defeated and subjected to a complete reorganization of their society imposed on them by the victors. As recently as thirty years ago American history textbooks presented the story in terms not too different from those popularized by Thomas Dixon _et al_. --the legendary tale of the ignorant blacks and their ruthless Northern allies feeding upon the starving and helpless Southerners. Realizing that some very basic facts had been ignored, Southern as well as Northern historians have endeavored to present another side. Within the last three decades revisionists have done much to force modifications in the traditional Reconstruction story. Their main contributions result from a different racial perspective, leading to more favorable views of Reconstruction as a whole.

It is hoped that this study will help in demonstrating that economic self interest, political opportunism, vindictiveness, humanitarianism, idealism, and fear were forces which knew no party lines; sometimes they made strange bedfellows of men whose political commitments were essentially different. My emphasis is on Chamberlain and

Dawson, and through them South Carolina and the period as a whole. In attempting to portray the character and personality of the governor and the editor, I have tried to present them before and after Reconstruction as well as during those crucial years in order to show the complexity of their characters.

In dealing with the period of Reconstruction the researcher is confronted with various problems, not the least of which are source materials colored by sectional, racial and political sentiments. He must also take into account his own personal feeling, influenced by inherited prejudices and circumscribed by geographic locale. I have sought to rely for the most part on original source materials. In the main judgments will be based on Chamberlain's letters to Dawson, editorials in the News and Courier, and references to the Governor in Dawson's correspondence with others. Regrettably, there are no surviving letters from Dawson to Chamberlain, so far as we know.

In spite of the difficulties, Reconstruction has been a period of major interest to historians for generations, and its relevance to present conditions in the South is obvious.

CHAPTER I

FROM MASSACHUSETTS AND LONDON TO CHARLESTON

Daniel Henry Chamberlain was born on June 23, 1835, in the town of Brookfield, Worcester County, Massachusetts. He was the ninth of ten children of Eli Chamberlain, a farmer of moderate means, and his wife, Achshal Forbes Chamberlain. Chamberlain spent his first fourteen years working on the farm and attending the local public schools. Life in a New England farmhouse some one hundred thirty-six years ago must have been somewhat rigid, lonely, and conducive to introspection--centering around the church as a source of entertainment and education.

> My education, environment and associations [Chamberlain wrote of his childhood] have been of the strictly orthodox Protestant sort. I will not quite say of the Calvinistic sort, though I might call them of a modified or modern Calvinism. Through Sunday-schools, prayer-meetings, church goings at the pace of four services a Sunday, including the Sunday-school, all forms of Christian nurture and training, so called, such as New England Protestant communities are apt to provide.[1]

At the age of fifteen, he spent a few months at an academy in Amherst where he was first introduced to the

---

[1]Daniel H. Chamberlain, "Some Conclusions of a Free Thinker," North American Review, CLXXXVI (October, 1894), 175-194.

study of Latin and Greek--disciplines which would remain with him a lifetime, forming the background of orations and phrases from which characteristically accented so many of his letters.

In 1854, he passed a year at Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, teaching school part time to defray his expenses. In 1856, at the age of twenty-one, he returned to Worcester and finished high school. He remained there another year as a teacher, in order to earn money for college. In the fall of 1858 he entered Yale and was graduated three years later with highest honors in oratory and English composition--fourth in a class of 110.

The Civil War broke out while Chamberlain was at Yale. From the age of fifteen or thereabouts, he had been in sentiment and sympathy a dedicated abolitionist, but one who believed in political action. In 1860 he cast his first vote for Abraham Lincoln. During this period Chamberlain claimed to have heard Wendell Phillips, the radical anti-slavery advocate, speak no less than fifty times, and he became personally acquainted with William Lloyd Garrison. The impact of the angry reformer on the student must have been formidable. Their friendship carried over into later years. When the young man had become Governor of South Carolina, Garrison wrote to him recalling the days at Yale:

> Our acquaintance and friendship are not of today. Years ago when you were completing your collegiate courses at Yale, I knew how clear, just, and decided were your convictions in regard to the anti-slavery

> struggle and how steadfast was your adhesion to them under circumstances requiring rare moral courage and a noble disregard for consequences to yourself.[2]

From Yale, Chamberlain entered Harvard Law School, where his stay was short but his record impressive. Writing to a friend in November 1863, he explained his decision to drop out of school:

> I am going to war within the next two months . . . . I have no plans beyond that . . . but go I must. I ought to have gone in '61, but the real reason I didn't was that, as I am now, in debt for my college expenses to those who cannot possibly afford to lose what I have borrowed from them. . . . But years hence I shall be ashamed to have it known that, for <u>any</u> reason, I did not have a hand in this life-or-death struggle for the Union and for Freedom. I find that I can insure my life for enough to cover the $2,000 I owe, and nothing shall hinder me longer than is necessary to get the money to do this.[3]

There appear to be no detailed accounts of Chamberlain's war years. Governor John Albion Andrew gave him a lieutenancy in the Fifth Massachusetts Cavalry, a Negro volunteer regiment. One can only speculate whether Chamberlain sought out this regiment or whether his assignment was determined by other factors. In any event, he saw very little military action. He was commissioned January 24, 1864, but for reasons unknown was not mustered. On March 15, 1865, at the end of the war he was commissioned a first

---

[2]William Lloyd Garrison, open letter to Governor Chamberlain, <u>New York Times</u>, October 16, 1876, cited by Walter Allen, <u>Governor Chamberlain's Administration in South Carolina: A Chapter of Reconstruction in the Southern States</u> (New York and London: The Knickerbocker Press, 1888), pp. 403-405.

[3]Chamberlain, "Free Thinker," p. 175.

lieutenant, mustered in on May 5 and then discharged October 31, 1865.[4]

In January 1866, Chamberlain went to Charleston, South Carolina, to settle the affairs of a deceased classmate. While there he was employed as a lawyer to prosecute claims in New Orleans. Finding himself handsomely rewarded for his practice, he decided to seek his fortune in the South. He returned to Charleston, and South Carolina remained his place of residence for the next twelve years.

On the 20th of May, 1840, five years after Chamberlain's birth and an ocean away, Austin John Reeks was born in London, England--the man later to be known as Francis Warrington Dawson. His father was Joseph Austin Reeks and his mother, Mary Perkins Reeks. His paternal ancestors bore one of England's oldest Catholic names, and the family cherished the tradition that no Reeks had ever renounced his religious faith, even under the severe persecutions of Henry VIII and Elizabeth. His father, Joseph, was educated at Monsignor Crookall's School for Catholics in Saint Omer, France. In an effort to corner a part of England's wheat market, he had made regrettable speculations during the Franco-English war scare of 1851 and suffered severe financial setbacks. With only a "gentleman's education,"

---

[4]Massachusetts, Adjutant General, Massachusetts Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines in the Civil War, 9 vols. (Norwood, Mass., 1933), VI, 493.

he was totally unprepared to support his family.

Under these circumstances Joseph's childless sister, the widow of Captain William A. Dawson of the British Army, took on the burden of young Austin John's upbringing. She secured private tutors for the boy and later sent him to his father's alma mater in Saint Omer. She also arranged for him to take the customary tour of the continent before he entered college. Unhappily, Mrs. Dawson died at this point and with her went his prospects of further formal education. For reasons unknown, Austin John was left out of her will. For the time being, he fell back on his literary talents which were not inconsiderable, and wrote poetry and plays. He later claimed that several of his plays were produced in one of the London theaters.

Being of a romantic and adventurous nature and without influence or money, he was especially attracted by news of the outbreak of the American Civil War. Austin John immediately resolved to come to America to serve on the side of the Confederacy. For years prior to the war, we are informed, he had been attentive to the industrial and social conditions of the United States. In later years he was to describe this interest as being more than academic. He was convinced that by joining the South in her crusade for independence, he would be "fighting for liberty and self-government as the Barons fought at Runnymede; and that it was his privilege and duty to take sides with her during

the fight."[5]

The American Civil War affected Great Britain disadvantageously. The great cotton factories were almost solely dependent on the cotton which the southern states could no longer supply, and thousands of laborers were thrown out of work. The ruling class, whose opinion found expression in the newspapers, generally favored the planters of the South. Influenced by the pro-Southern Times, the majority of upperclass Englishmen "tended promptly to side with the Confederacy."[6] Devotion on the part of an Englishman toward the American South was, therefore, not unusual.

Moreover the twenty year old Austin John was a military adventurer at heart. At the end of the war he wrote to his mother, with some regret, of the termination of his career in the military:

> As the War is over now . . . it is no harm to tell you that the profession of a soldier would be my choice above, far above, any other occupation with which I am acquainted. To me there is a singular fascination in all the soldier's trials and hardships, and I feel now that I would go a hundred miles to get into a fight . . . but don't be alarmed I am on parole and there is no fighting to do.[7]

---

[5]The Medium, Abbeville, S. C., Captain Francis W. Dawson; First Vice-President of the South Carolina State Press Association (Abbeville, S. C., 1876), p. 4.

[6]J. G. Randall and David Donald, The Civil War and Reconstruction, 2nd ed. (Boston, D. D. Heath and Company, 1961), p. 356.

[7]F. W. Dawson to Mother, June 5, 1865, Dawson Papers, Duke University.

By early 1862 he had found means of enlisting as a crewman aboard the Confederate naval steamship Nashville. This was not accomplished without some difficulties. His father refused to give his parental consent, for only one reason, Austin John was convinced--fear that in the event his son was captured aboard a Confederate vessel and found guilty of treason in defiance of Great Britain's neutrality laws, the family name would be tarnished. "Is that what you fear? Well, I'll go and be hanged under a name of my own," the son replied. Henceforth he was known as Francis Warrington Dawson.[8] How much of the Reeks-Dawson story was altered after Dawson's arrival in South Carolina will perhaps never be known. It should be kept in mind, however, that very often his professional and social acceptance in that state depended on his ability to convince upperclass Carolinians that he shared a common heritage and common beliefs.

His war record was impressive. For service on board the Nashville, Dawson was made master's mate in the Confederate Navy. After running the Union blockade, the Nashville landed in Beaufort, South Carolina on February 28, 1862. Dawson served at Norfolk and in the James River, but wishing more action, he resigned from the Navy in June 1862 and enlisted as a private in Purcell's battery, Hill's

---

[8]Francis W. Dawson, Reminiscences of the Confederate Service, 1861-1865 (Charleston, S. C., The News and Courier Job Presses, 1882), p. 12.

division, Army of Northern Virginia. He won a promotion to lieutenant by swimming the James River and taking the place of a gunner who had been shot down. Promotion to a captaincy soon followed. To say that Dawson enjoyed an active career in the Confederate service would be an understatement. He took part in the battles of Mechanicsville, Second Manassas, Chattanooga, Fredericksburg, Knoxville, Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, Northside James River, 1864, Valley of Virginia, 1864, and Five Forks. He was wounded at Mechanicsville, 1862; at Harrisonburg, Virginia, 1864; and at Five Forks, 1865. He was taken prisoner near Williamsport, Maryland on September 14, 1862, and released on parole a few weeks later. He surrendered at the close of the war and was paroled for the second time in May, 1865.

At the close of the war, with only a "three cent postage stamp and a pocketful of inflated Confederate currency," but rich in battle scars, it was only natural that he continued to take his stand with the South.[9] "I have the friendship of many of the first men in the country," Dawson wrote to his mother in 1864, informing her of his decision not to return to England, "and if I wish to go into trade after the War I can command any stance that I may need."[10]

---

[9] Captain Francis W. Dawson; First Vice-President, p. 8.

[10] F. W. Dawson to Mother, June 1, 1864, Dawson Papers, Duke University.

After leaving the army, he took a job as bookkeeper in a dry goods store in Petersburg, Virginia. Some six months later, in the fall of 1865, he became a reporter on the Richmond Examiner. It was here that he met his future partner in journalism, B. R. Riorden, who at this point was news editor of the Examiner. The two became close friends, and talked of forming their own paper someday. Dawson accepted a better position with the Richmond Dispatch in the summer of 1866. Riorden too left the Examiner and went to Charleston, South Carolina, where he joined the Charleston Courier. Hearing that Colonel R. B. Rhett, editor of the Charleston Mercury, was looking for an assistant editor, Riorden persuaded him to offer the job to Dawson. On November 10, 1866, Dawson arrived in Charleston, where he was to make his home until his death in 1889.

And so they arrived, Chamberlain and Dawson, within the same year. Each rose rapidly to positions of political importance. South Carolina in 1866 was not what she had been six years earlier or what she was to become again ten years later: an aristocratic society dominated by considerations of blood, marriage, wealth, power and social position. Carolinians were in the midst of a formidable revolution, experiencing in rapid sequence slavery, secession, independence, war, defeat, emancipation, reunion, and reconstruction. Politics, economics and social institutions all reflected the gyrations of this unparalleled time.

South Carolina in the year Chamberlain and Dawson sought their fortunes there offered more opportunity for outsiders to get ahead than at any time in her recent history.

Chamberlain's first two years were spent in unsuccessful efforts at cotton planting on Wadamalaw Island near Charleston. In 1867, like so many recent Northern arrivals in the South, he seemed a fitting person to help implement the new "radical reconstruction" policies adopted by Congress. Accordingly he was chosen as a member of the state Constitutional Convention. Before its assemblage, early in 1868, he returned north briefly to marry Alice Ingersoll of Bangor, Maine. Back in South Carolina, Chamberlain was assigned to the convention's Judiciary Committee, where he earned the favor of Republican party leaders. When the party's state ticket was formed he won the nomination for Attorney General, and was elected along with the other Republican candidates in April 1868. After four years in this post Chamberlain retired to a private law practice in Columbia. In 1874 he returned to public life as the leader of his party and its successful candidate for governor. In addition he achieved another triumph of sorts--indeed quite an incredible accomplishment for a Republican governor of a southern state sustained in his position by the Negro electorate. By 1875, he "was admitted into the most aristocratic society . . . called on by fashionable

associations to respond to toasts, and lionized everywhere."[11]

Dawson worked for eleven months on the Charleston Mercury, then resigned in the fall of 1867 to join Riorden in buying an interest in the Charleston News. In April 1873 the two purchased the old Charleston Courier and consolidated the two papers under the name of the News and Courier. The relationship between Dawson and Riorden was an infinitely practical one from a business standpoint. Riorden was the silent partner, the business manager who stayed behind the scenes. He never failed to give his unflinching support to the views of Dawson, who in essence spoke for the paper.

On May 1, 1867, Dawson married into a respectable Charleston family, taking as his wife Virginia Fourgeud. She died five years later, and in 1874 Dawson married Sarah Fowler Morgan. One month before that he obtained his citizenship. As early as 1868, with an aristocratic wife, a successful newspaper editorship, sufficient military experience for his friends to familiarly refer to him as "The Captain," and membership in the Charleston Chamber of Commerce and Hibernian Society, he was well entrenched in Charleston society.

His professional success equalled his social success. The News boasted in 1870, "We began the new year [1869] with a larger total circulation than that of any other paper in the Southeastern States, with about double

---

[11] [Belton O'Neal], "The Political Conditions of South Carolina," Atlantic Monthly, XXXIX (February, 1877), 179.

the circulation in Charleston of any other newspaper; and with an advertising business second to none."[12] Walter Allen, in his laudatory history of the Chamberlain administration, said that the News and Courier in this period was "recognized as one of the leading newspapers of the South, and in the ability of its discussions of public questions among the foremost in the land. In South Carolina its influence has been almost autocratic."[13] According to Professor Robert Woody:

> Dawson's pen was persuasive and eloquent, often, we think a determining factor in the course of events. . . . He was a power and the State knew it. One may hesitate to assert it dogmatically, but the writer thinks that never in South Carolina's turbulent history has a single paper so dominated the thought of the State.[14]

As for Chamberlain, it is generally conceded that his administration was one of substantial political reform, and that in the partisan battles of the 1870's he was more sinned against than sinning.

---

[12] Charleston News, March 30, 1870.

[13] Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, p. 77.

[14] Robert Hillard Woody, Republican Newspapers of South Carolina, 1860-1880, Southern Sketches, no. 10, 1st series (Charlottesville, Va.: Historical Printing Co., 1936), p. 52.

CHAPTER II

PERSONALITY, CHARACTER AND POLITICAL THEORIES

Statistically the aftermath of the Civil War might be explained in terms of a million dead. More graphically, there were more casualities in proportion to population than the British and French suffered in World War I; billions in accumulated wealth were destroyed, and there was untold retardation in economic growth. The basis of the social order was changed in the South and the nature of the Federal Union was altered. There is a certain amount of finality in events themselves, but there are intangibles which linger long after the facts: grief, remorse, hate, intolerance, ignorance, fear, hostility and bitterness.

And so for Daniel Henry Chamberlain and Francis Warrington Dawson, who had fought on opposite sides of the bloodiest and most expensive holocaust ever to take place on our continent, their respective allegiances would continue for years to determine where they would fit and what positions they would assume in postwar life. This might seem to preclude any thought of cooperation between them. But despite their disparate political courses, their characters and political theories seemed to resemble each other more than they differed.

Both had come to South Carolina as outsiders, had risen simultaneously to positions of social and political importance and both would eventually join in mutual allegiance to a program of reform. Rather ironically, both were later charged with seeking to defraud the state in the use of public funds. After the Democratic victory of 1876, Chamberlain was officially indicted and Dawson was severely implicated in alleged financial irregularities. Because of the partisanship of the fraud charges, compiled at a time when Democratic "Redeemers" sought publicly to smear all those associated with Republicanism in the state, the credibility of both allegations is questionable. However there is sufficient evidence to warrant the judgment that neither man was above censure.

Chamberlain was Attorney-General of the State during the notoriously corrupt administration of Republican Governor Robert K. Scott, 1868-1872. There were a multitude of ways in which men sought to line their pockets, but the major schemes revolved around the Land Commission, the railroads, the Financial Board, and the public printing.

The Land Commission, a creation of the Constitutional Convention of 1868, was intended to give freedmen an opportunity to become landowners--one of the very few basic economic reforms attempted anywhere during the Reconstruction era. The Commission was authorized to buy up lands from private owners, then to resell them in plots of twenty-five to one hundred acres to settlers at its own

purchase price, payable in installments. The settlers were expected to pay taxes on the land plus six percent yearly interest on the loan. After a time the Land Commission's operations became more and more questionable from a legal and ethical point of view. Often lands were purchased privately by members of the Legislature and then resold to the Commission at double the price. Few Negro freedmen, the intended major beneficiaries of the plan, were able to obtain the homesteads or the economic independence which was originally intended.[1]

The Railroad Ring began in 1868 when Governor Scott and others persuaded the Legislature to guarantee private loans to the Blue Ridge Railroad for an amount in excess of four million dollars. Twelve state officers, among them Attorney-General Chamberlain, combined to buy stocks of the Blue Ridge Railroad, including a large share owned by the State itself. The twelve, known as the "ring," formed a partnership and at a later date purchased the Greenville and Columbia Railroad and its spurs, also partly owned by the State. Although unethical, the procedure was not illegal. But by 1870, ring members, acting in their official State capacity, arranged to sell the State's interest in both railroads to the ring at a greatly devalued price. "Not only had the state stock been purchased from state officials who

---

[1]Carol K. Rothrock Blesser, The Promised Land: The History of the South Carolina Land Commission, 1869-1890 (Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1969), pp. 155, 157.

were also members of the ring, but that stock as well as that secured from private parties was paid for by the funds of the State."[2]

The simplest, probably the most frequent, and certainly the most gigantic frauds consisted merely in issuing State bonds in excess of the amounts authorized by the Legislature. The State Financial Board, of which Chamberlain was a member, was authorized to market State bonds through a financial agent, H. H. Kimpton of New York, who was selected by Governor Scott and was a former classmate of Chamberlain's at Yale. The authorized issue being made, other issues were "clandestinely added." Aside from Scott, who signed each bond, and State Treasurer N. G. Parker, who issued them and honored the payment, no other officials of the Board were ever proven to have been party to this fraud.

However Chamberlain as Attorney-General of the State, ex-officio member of the Advisory Board of the Land Commission, stock holder in the Blue Ridge Railroad, and member of the Financial Board, certainly could not have remained ignorant of what transpired. It is believed that while he did not actually profit from the operations, he

---

[2]Francis Butler Simkins and Robert Hillard Woody, South Carolina During Reconstruction (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1932), p. 205.

must have suspected them.[3] If such were the case, and indeed it is hard to believe otherwise, he chose not to expose his findings. Perhaps this is why he chose to retire from politics in 1872. For his own reasons, he could not actively participate in the undertakings, but neither could he publicly deny that he was aware of them.

No party, class, or race had a monopoly on corruption. For instance, it was not at all unusual for white Democratic businessmen to combine with carpetbag politicians to extort lucrative monopolies from the Legislature, despite vetoes by Governor Scott. Very often Southerners of high position shared in the corruption through their willingness to accept profits derived from fraudulent issues of railroad bonds.

Dawson's brush with scandal is further evidence of bipartisan corruption. During the 1877 legislative investigation of fraud, several letters of Dawson to his one-time employee, Josephus Woodruff, were revealed. These letters indicated that Dawson himself had conducted a questionable correspondence with corrupt Republican officials in the early days of Reconstruction. They show clearly that Democrat newspapers too were eager to obtain and keep lucrative contracts for the publication of State legislative acts, even at the expense of private payoffs and editorial

---

[3]Joel Williamson, After Slavery: The Negro in South Carolina During Reconstruction, 1861-1877 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1965), pp. 384-385.

prostitution. Dawson, it seemed, had been willing to pay a twenty percent collection fee to Woodruff for prompt payment of the News and Courier's invoices for State printing. On November 24, 1868, Dawson addressed Woodruff:

> The fact is that we want to make all we can, and will go so far as we can to support Scott and the government if we are treated well . . . send all Bills, &c., that are printed, and post us about any scheme that wants puffing or crushing. . . .

On January 30, 1869, again to Woodruff, Dawson wrote:

> We count on you to push the State Printing. The least we can do is this: If we can get ten cents a line, which would be about twenty-four dollars per column, we can allow the paymaster twenty per cent, and yourself ten per cent . . . if we can get twelve and a half cents a line, which is thirty dollars a column, or more, we can allow twenty per cent, instead of ten. . . . We are willing to give a helping hand to any up-country project, railroad or otherwise, and free. . . .

And on January 22, 1871:

> My dear Joe: DeFontaine tells me that you want our proposal for State printing, and I enclose two proposals--one private and the other public. . . .

One of the enclosed offers was for fifteen cents a line, the other for ten with a commission to Woodruff for twenty percent.[4]

In their defense, both Dawson and Chamberlain claimed to have been guilty of only trying to make money as in any other business venture.

---

[4] Report of the Joint Investigating Committee on Public Frauds and Election of Hon. J. J. Patterson to the United States Senate, made to the General Assembly of South Carolina at the Regular Session 1877-78, Columbia, 1878, pp. 213-383. Henceforth cited as Fraud Report.

Chamberlain was a theorist and a scholar. As Republican governor of the "proudest Democratic state of the South" he found himself with the opportunity to solve what he termed "the most interesting political and social problem which this century had presented."[5] The particular problem to which he alluded was defined in his inaugural:

> The work which lies before us is serious beyond that which falls to the lot of most generations of men. It is nothing less than the reëstablishment of society in this State upon the foundation of absolute equality of civil and political rights.[6]

As early as 1871 Chamberlain had made a forceful condemnation of the Ku Klux Klan before the U. S. Circuit Court[7] and throughout his gubernatorial term he did not waver in his advocacy of equal rights.[8] Further indications of Chamberlain's political theories during the period were revealed in an address delivered at Woodstock, Connecticut, July 4, 1877, some months after he had been overthrown by an armed coup d'etat sanctioned in effect by President Rutherford B. Hayes. In essence it is a denunciation of the latter's Southern policy which according to Chamberlain represented:

---

[5] D. H. Chamberlain quoted by News and Courier, December 20, 1875.

[6] Chamberlain, Inaugural Address quoted by Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, p. 28.

[7] Proceedings in the Ku Klux Trials, at Columbia, S. C. in the United States Circuit Court, November Term, 1871 (Columbia, S. C.: Republican Printing Company, 1872), pp. 375, 399.

[8] Supra., pp. 103-106 for a complete reversal regarding Negro rights in his later years.

> the abandonment of Southern Republicans, and especially the colored race, to the control and rule not only of the Democratic party, but of the class at the South which legalized slavery as a Divine Institution, which waged four years of destructive war for its perpetuation, which steadily opposed citizenship and suffrage for the negro. . . . It consists in the proclamation to the country and the world that the will of the majority of the voters of a state . . . is no longer the ruling power . . . and that the constitutional guarantees to every State in this Union of a republican form of government and of protection against domestic violence, is henceforth ineffectual and worthless.

The ex-governor concluded his attack by justifying constitutionally the right of the federal government to send troops into a state when necessary to prevent domestic violence.[9]

While Governor, Chamberlain had expectations of turning South Carolina into a Massachusetts. In his inaugural, as he continued detailing the problems of the State, he expressed the hopes of a visionary:

> Those who opposed the policy upon which our State was restored to her practical relations with the Union have already visited us with the verdict of absolute condemnation. . . . For myself I here avow the same confidence in the final result which I hitherto felt. . . . The great permanent influences which rest in civilized society are constantly at work, and will surely lift us into a better life.[10]

Chamberlain spoke as a child of the Enlightenment. He believed the ordinary or common man was a sound and sensible fellow. And his medium for assurance was education:

---

[9]Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, pp. 507-527.

[10]Chamberlain, Inaugural Address quoted by Ibid., p. 28.

> The great subject of education will demand your most serious attention. I wish I could impress upon the General Assembly and upon all our people the fundamental and incalculable importance of this subject in its relations to every other interest of the State. The peculiar evils and dangers to which the people of this State are exposed will find their certain and permanent cure only in the thorough diffusion of education.[11]

Chamberlain did not take into account the irrational nature of man, but perhaps the greatest weakness of his idealism lay in his failure to see that political equality for blacks required a measure of economic equality as well. He was too wedded to the economic and social status quo.

He was a perfectionist and placed inordinate value on the approval and understanding of others. During his gubernatorial term, he drew strength from the intellectuals of the North as well as those persons of education and good breeding in the South. Dawson was one of several Bourbons who provided him with an intellectual outlet which he could not find with persons in his own party, many of whom, he wrote to Dawson, had "never heard of Socrates and Cicero."[12]

Alfred B. Williams, who was on the staff of the Charleston Journal of Commerce in 1876 had as his first assignment the coverage of the campaign of Wade Hampton, ex-Confederate General who opposed and subsequently replaced Chamberlain as Democratic governor of South Carolina. He gave a surprisingly sympathetic picture of the governor at

---

[11] Ibid., p. 26.

[12] D. H. Chamberlain to F. W. Dawson, April 20, 1876, Dawson Papers, Duke University.

the closing of his career:

> He was forty-one years old in 1876 absolutely and conspicuously bald except for fringes of hair around his ears and the back of his head and wore a dark moustache. His face bore the pallor of the indoors man. His features were good and well marked and his manners, dress and personal habits were those of the refined, well bred New Englander. His speeches and writings were models of style and diction, polished, sometimes impressively strong. His heart must have ached sometimes when we young vandal reporters, not restrained and disciplined as reporters wisely are now, savagely tore in pieces and undertook to be crudely smart with musical, handsomely constructed sentences over which he had labored and which we could not appreciate. He was not effective on the stump--was too precise and restrained. It was an instance of the delusion in which he lived that he toiled diligently to build elegant addresses, admirably suited for cultivated audiences, to be delivered to people who wanted, enjoyed and understood nothing but stories about hogs and mules and hound dogs. He had, too, heart aches other and far deeper than we raw critics could cause. As was known, long after, he craved praise and applause as ardently as any ambitious boy and was intensely sensitive to criticism and attacks on his character. . . . Truth was, however, that the people could not know or understand him as he was. He was something new in the neighborhood. . . . It was impossible for us to understand that any man could be so obsessed and saturated with theories, ideals and dreams as to be blind to the facts and conditions right before him.[13]

Chamberlain led with his intellect, Dawson with rough pragmatism--an observation not intended to imply any lack of overall perception in the latter. On the contrary, the Captain had a brilliant and capable mind, but it was a journalistic mind. His concern was immediate reality. He

---

[13]Alfred B. Williams, Hampton and His Red Shirts: South Carolina's Deliverance in 1876, 2nd ed. (Charleston, S. C.: Walker, Evans and Cogswell Co., 1935), p. 92.

was ready to change courses as new needs arose. Politically speaking, he was always clear on the end result he desired for South Carolina, if not the means: ultimate rule by white southerners, preferably without violence. Adept and pragmatic, he attempted to play both sides of the street in realizing his goal.

Out of necessity, Dawson supported political participation by the Negro. As early as 1867, he suggested to the Rhetts, father and son, managers of the Charleston Mercury, that they advise the South to swallow the Fourteenth Amendment in order to get the state back into the Union as quickly as possible. Early in 1868, he organized and financed the first political meeting ever held in Charleston in which Democrats and Negroes worked together. Moreover, he attempted to get some Negroes on the Democratic aldermanic ticket in the Charleston municipal election. This was a daring stand to take in 1868, and the effort failed. In February 1869 the Rhetts, with whom Dawson had very quickly fallen into disfavor, charged his present paper, the News, with treason to the South. Dawson retorted:

> Respect for ourselves and our fathers requires us to reverence the past; but we cannot rebuild the fallen structure, and it would be simply foolish in our people to spend the fleeting years of opportunity in lamentation; let us help rear it, and make it better if we can.[14]

---

[14] News, February 24, 1869.

By 1870 he had more widespread conservative support, as Democrats came to realize with Dawson that, like it or not, the Negroes were a political factor. As native whites made a spirited effort to recover the state from Republican control, Dawson called upon the Negroes to help. But he did not delude them as to his real object, and one cannot help but wonder what attraction he thought such expressions would hold for the blacks: "We do not offer, social equality or forty acres and a mule."[15] To conciliate the Negro, he promised legal rights for all citizens, regardless of color, to suffrage and office holding. And he promised if "minor differences" were forgotten, a "deliverance" from the Radical party, "a motley crew of vagabonds whose only principle is greed, and whose only policy is plunder."[16]

Dawson's feelings toward the Negro were paternalistic at best. He had held them since he arrived in the South, and they were substantially identical to those of the former slave holding aristocracy. A month after the end of the war, he wrote to his father:

> The Negro question is now the great difficulty for solution. I have seen slavery in every Southern State and I am convinced that for the slave it is the best condition in every way that has been devised. In Virginia and North Carolina the planters will be benefited by emancipation as soon as white labor can be obtained--and in the meanwhile the tens of thousands

---

[15] Ibid., January 22, 1870.

[16] Ibid., November 12-14, 1870.

old men, women and children will starve unless supported by the Yanks.[17]

Although Dawson was honest and forthright in his stand, like Chamberlain he would give way to larger events which he could not control. Years later he was to say:

> Whether a newspaper must, without reservation, proclaim whatever it believes to be true and knows to be unpopular is a moot question. It has a double bearing. Continual unpopularity, however gained, ensures failure in journalism. . . . I am free to say, however, that in my opinion, letting the whole truth, frankly and kindly, not with dogmatism and temper, will involve no newspaper in lasting loss. This requires nerve, and the financial strength to stand the temporary loss that will surely come.[18]

Nerve he had. Dueling was still accepted by some as a means of settling accounts and avenging insults. Dawson consistently opposed the practice; in fact he risked his social standing by refusing to accept challenges thrown his way. Alfred Williams, a Democratic critic, indicated that this stand like others the editor took might have been adopted for pragmatic reasons rather than from principle.

> Nobody who knew Captain Dawson could doubt his personal courage. His enemies charged that he took refuge behind the rules of the Catholic Church, of which he was a member, to avoid fighting. The truth is that, aggressive and outspoken and intolerent of opposition as Dawson was, he would have had a duel on his hand every week of every election year if he had continued to abide by the code. Nobody but the Almighty and the man himself could know whether

---

[17]F. W. Dawson to father, June 13, 1865, Dawson Papers, Duke University.

[18]Francis W. Dawson, <u>The Public Press: An Address Delivered Before the State Press Association by Capt. F. W. Dawson at Spartanburg, S. C., May 10th, 1876</u> (Charleston: The News and Courier Job Presses, 1876), pp. 8-9.

> hostility to that code was from conscientious conviction of its evils or from common sense, prudence, and natural impulse of self preservation. If he had begun to accept challenges in 1876 he would have had almost as many of them as stop notices for his paper--probably some hundreds from Edgefield, Laurens, Newberry and Richland to begin with.[19]

Dawson throve on opposition and the unrestricted use of his pen. His love of a good fight had not ceased with the termination of the war. Lost in his editorial disputations are the warmth, sensitivity, humor and emotion which punctuate his personal correspondence.

---

[19]Williams, Red Shirts, p. 53.

CHAPTER III

BIPARTISAN COOPERATION--AN UNEASY ALLIANCE

The conservative view of Reconstruction, which held for generations and is still popular with many today, portrayed the Southern population as clearly divided between virtuous, long-suffering white Democrats and wicked, corrupt, or ignorant Republicans, composed of carpetbaggers, scalawags, and Negroes.

Revisionist historians have done much to discredit the old stereotyped images. For instance they have demonstrated that Republicans represented in economic status, education and social standing every element of society.[1]

Native white Republicans (or scalawags) belonged to every economic and social class. Franklin J. Moses, Governor of the State from 1872 to 1874, had been secretary of the secession convention in 1860 and had "personally hauled down the United States flag from Fort Sumter." Thomas Jefferson Robertson, U. S. Senator throughout the Reconstruction period, was reportedly one of the richest

---

[1]W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, Black Reconstruction: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880 (Philadelphia: Albert Saifer, 1935), p. 404; Williamson, After Slavery, p. 359.

men in the State after the war. Dr. Albert Gallatin Mackey, collector of the port of Charleston, had been first in his class at the Charleston Medical School. A number of the "scalawag" judges came from the social elite of South Carolina families: Orr, Green, Vernon, Moses and Bryan. Many native white Republicans, on the other hand, were poor and ill educated. Some joined the party through expediency, others through wartime Unionism or devotion to Republican party principles.

The Northern natives, or carpetbaggers--Chamberlain was a case in point--were in nearly every respect "better educated than their Southern counterparts of the same age and economic background." Most of the Northern Negroes who came South were enthusiastic abolitionists, the "cream" of their race in intellect and ability.[2]

The native Negro officials, contrary to traditional mythology, were not just out of the cotton fields. F. L. Cardozo, having attended the University of Glasgow and the London School of Theology, "was as well educated as any [man] in the state." In 1868, of the seventy-two Negroes who sat in the Constitutional Convention, fourteen were Northerners; of the remaining fifty-nine who had been in the South prior to the war, at least eighteen had been free. Thirty-eight were former slaves, but twenty-six of these were artisans, professionals, or businessmen by 1868, and

---

[2]Williamson, <u>After Slavery</u>, p. 377.

most had pursued the same occupation as slaves.[3]

The Republican party, as emancipator of the Negro, advocate of his bearing arms, and champion of his civil and political equality was, for obvious reasons, the party of the Negro. In South Carolina with its substantial Negro majority, this fact was translated into firm Republican control.[4] Although the party was tied together by its common interest in Negro political equality and remaining in power, Republicans held strikingly different views on many issues, especially those with an economic and social bearing.

The national Republican party was similarly divided on Reconstruction policy and its implications. Radicalism of the Charles Sumner/Thaddeus Stevens School supported not only universal suffrage, which became party policy after 1867, but confiscation of the land of rich Southerners and its distribution among the freedmen. The conservative element of the party had little or no interest in a social revolution in the South; generally men of property themselves, they had no enthusiasm for its seizure and redistribution among the poor.

The Republican plan as carried out in 1867 and afterward--popularly referred to as Black or Radical Reconstruction--was in reality a compromise. It was neither

---

[3] Ibid.

[4] The South Carolina census of 1870 listed 62,547 white males of voting age, 85,475 Negroes.

Black nor Radical since no attempt was made to destroy white supremacy in the social or economic sphere; and, even in states like South Carolina with black majorities, Negroes never held political power commensurate with their numbers.[5] Among Democrats, however, Republicans in South Carolina and the South generally were referred to as "Radicals" while they frequently referred to themselves as "Conservatives."

Most of the intramural conflicts within the Republican party in South Carolina between 1868 and 1874 arose from personal rather than political causes. Having a virtual monopoly of statewide political power, they assumed the luxury of internal dissension. Republican leaders who were equally vociferous in their defense of Negro rights frequently engaged in petty in-fighting, not so much over how to beat the Democrats as how to defeat fellow Republicans for party nominations and other preferment. The losers often bolted and ran independently in the general elections. There was little or no choice between them on the issues. Intraparty alliances were so transitory that they hardly deserved the name of faction.

Meanwhile the Democrats or Conservatives had intramural differences too, despite a common goal of regaining power and restoring white supremacy. Contrary to popular belief, the majority of Southern whites were yeoman farmers,

---

[5]Francis B. Simkins, "New Viewpoints of Southern Reconstruction," Journal of Southern History, V (February 1939), 56.

neither aristocrats nor "poor whites." They were opposed to Negro suffrage and especially to any suggestion of racial equality or integration.

Some Democratic politicians, feeling hopelessly outnumbered, went into semi-retirement, refusing the Republicans even the dignity of formal opposition and awaiting the time of white "redemption." Others remained active, at least at the local level, in opposing Reconstruction policy. Both groups were known as straight-outs: the Democratic way or no way at all. Such men drew support mostly from the yeoman class in the up-country.

The low-country was dominated socially and politically by the city of Charleston and her conservative planter-business-professional elite. For practical reasons these people sought more subtle constitutional means of restricting Negroes' advancement instead of the aggressive racism of up-country whites. The Negro population was concentrated most heavily in the low-country, where it outnumbered the whites by proportions of up to ten to one.[6] In such areas, the whites could hardly afford racial conflict.

Moreover, unlike the yeoman farmers, low-country Bourbons very often held economic interests above racial concerns. Although they were motivated by racial prejudices shared with poorer whites, they reacted to the

---

[6]After the war, there were twice as many Negroes as whites in Charleston, while in Beaufort and Georgetown counties the ratio of Negro to white was ten to one. The ratio gradually decreased away from the coast.

enfranchisement of some 80,000 Negroes as an attack on property, much as they would have reacted to the enfranchisement of any laboring class. The Republicans, upon assuming control, initiated a program of high taxation with the burden falling on real property. For the first time the propertied class was being compelled by the poor to pay a heavy tax burden, which they regarded as unbearable and outrageous. Their reaction was at least as economic as it was racial. Far outnumbered by the Negroes, the Bourbons could either seek to win them over, as Dawson had tried in 1868, or failing that, cooperate with those Republicans whose views and economic interests most nearly resembled their own. Low-country Democrats proved more receptive than those elsewhere to a policy of fusion with dissident or conservative Republicans. Their objective in such cases was always to win enough Negro votes to gain political control.

Captain Dawson was probably responsible for introducing the idea of fusion into the State for the first time. Characteristically practical and to the point, he described the movement in 1868 as an attempt to "overthrow our Negro government and re-establish white supremacy."[7] When it was first adopted in 1870, the fusionist elements of the Democratic party supported dissident Republican R. B. Carpenter in preference to Governor Robert K. Scott. In 1872 they

---

[7]F. W. Dawson to father, July 30, 1868, Dawson Papers, Duke University

supported a "reform" bolt within the Republican party, led by James L. Orr, former Democratic leader turned Republican. In 1874 they favored John T. Green, the defeated candidate in the Republican convention which had nominated Chamberlain. Interesting but nevertheless confusing was the consistency with which they shied away from the Democratic appellation, every effort being made to conciliate the Negro as well as the Whiggish whites who had opposed the Democrats in days past and were opposed to the label now. As one man put it:

> We can't get it [the State] under the name of Democracy, for the Nigger has been taught to hate that as he does cold & we must spread our nets to get in all the disaffected of the Republican party, white & black & they are not few.[8]

In 1870 the conservative coalition was known as the Union Reform Party, in 1872 as the Radical Bolters, and in 1874 as Independents. They also called themselves at various times, fusionists or co-operationists. But to the Negroes a rose was still a rose; or, in this case a weed. The appeals by the Conservatives were negative and meaningless; Negroes were not convinced that they had their interests at heart. The regular Republican ticket consistently won by substantial margins.

Beyond these statewide considerations, the economic program of the national Republican party, with its high interest rates, protective tariff, national banks, and solid

---

[8]A. P. Aldrich to A. L. Burt, 1871, cited by Williamson, After Slavery, p. 353.

currency, was not adverse to Bourbon interests. Desire for industrialization and railroad building in the state during the fifties did not die with the war. Political power could be used to foster business development. As long as the favors were granted, it mattered little where they came from--scalawag, carpetbagger or Negro.

Many white small farmers resented the use of taxpayers' money to foster business interests, whether these were associated with Republicans or Bourbon Democrats. Such divisions among white Democrats must be seen in perspective --difference of opinion, yes; factionalism, no. The lines were never well enough defined to sustain regular factions. Democratic party leaders of all persuasions abandoned minor differences to join the ranks of the white man when the fortuitous moment for redemption seemed to have arrived.

By 1874 Radical Reconstruction had become the scapegoat for the nation's ills. For various reasons, men in the North were crying "enough." Psychologically, there was guilt on the part of some who found themselves sympathizing with the Southern white and his desire for "home rule." There was moral disillusionment on the part of those who believed that the Negro was being exploited by some Republicans and intimidated by Democrats. And there was the more practical desire for stable economic ties between the business communities of North and South. An inevitable desire for normalcy had returned, and Radical Reconstruction

seemed doomed.

As a consequence, the Republican party came into some disrepute nationally as agent of the policy. In the 1874 congressional election, the Democrats won a majority of seventy seats in the House and nearly overturned Republican control of the Senate. With the forthcoming Presidential election of 1876 in mind, many Republicans sought reform within the party and in the South.

Official Washington was alarmed. T. J. Mackey, returning from an interview with Grant, reported that the President would hold all South Carolina Republicans personally responsible unless they "reformed at the ballot box." Mackey, characteristically vivid in his description, said of his interview with the President, no neophyte to corruption:

> While the President speaks calmly of all the great battles in which he participated, yet when I speak to him of South Carolina, his apparently pulseless lips quiver, his veins and eyes enlarge and he says "You must stop the robbery!"[9]

This "suggestion to improve" was noted. In July 1874, the executive committee of the South Carolina Republican party issued an address to its members:

> The pledges given . . . in 1872 have not been fully redeemed, in many cases sound policy has been discarded and recklessness manifested. . . . The National Republican party admonishes us to at once retrace our steps, and vindicate the integrity of Republicanism.[10]

---

[9]T. J. Mackey, Interview with Grant, The Nation, XXI (August 27, 1874), cited by Williamson, After Slavery, p. 400.

[10]News, July 24, 1872.

Dawson's News and Courier was not impressed. As early as August 1874, it rather wearily and sardonically predicted that Moses, Scott and Chamberlain would be the trio of top contenders for Governor in the forthcoming Republican State Convention. Feeling perhaps that the records of Scott and Moses were already sufficiently notorious, the News and Courier centered its attack on Chamberlain who at this time was still regarded as a member of the corrupt ring, and not as a reformer. It insisted that he was the most dangerous of the three: "While he has not the vulgar audacity of Moses, he is more culpable as well as more adroit than that profligate debauchee and is even less worthy than he to fill the executive chair."[11]

It is not known what sort of personal relationship, if any, Dawson and Chamberlain enjoyed prior to 1874. It seems unlikely, given the positions of prominence they occupied, that the two had failed to meet. There certainly was little mutual admiration by 1874. The first record of correspondence between them was a letter from Chamberlain to the News and Courier in July 1874 inquiring about a failure to receive his papers:

> I knew I was not in favor with the editors of the News and Courier, but I did not imagine you would go to the extent of refusing to sell me your paper. . . . The News and Courier is like surgery to me, painful but necessary. I wish I could add, healthful.[12]

---

[11]News and Courier, August 4, 1874.

[12]D. H. Chamberlain to the Editors of the News and Courier, July 31, 1874, Dawson Papers, Duke University.

Not in favor was putting it mildly; the attacks on Chamberlain intensified daily as he emerged into leadership of the state Republican party:

> The crimes of Moses are no more to be compared with the crimes of Chamberlain than the brute force of the foot pad is to be compared with the larger operations of the confidence man or the skillfully combined schemes of the artistic forger.[13]

In a series of articles from August 7 through August 10, the News and Courier charged Chamberlain with active participation in the Land Commission swindle, involvement in the Railroad ring, abetting the sale of fraudulent bonds in New York, and acquiescence in the falsification of operations of the Financial Board. In September it charged: "As the highest law officer of the State . . . either he stole, or allowed others to steal; either he saw others steal and said nothing, or he was the only man in the State who did not see the stealing."[14]

Dawson's journalistic disapproval of Chamberlain was more than a routine castigation of the most probable opposition candidate. It became a personal obsession--the intensity of which he expressed in letters to his wife:

> Darling, I am tired; I have not had as hard a week for years as this past. The Chamberlain matter has overtaxed me.[15]

---

[13] News and Courier, August 8, 1874.

[14] Ibid., September 7, 1874.

[15] F. W. Dawson to wife, Friday, 1874, no month, no day, Dawson Papers, Duke University.

> I am terrified to abandon the fight which harrasses me . . . interferes with my business and costs me time and money, but if I do, who will try as I have tried.[16]

Indicative of the confusion and in-fighting among Republicans, some of them accused Dawson of acting in behalf of Moses, whom Chamberlain was threatening to supplant. The Republican Orangeburg News accused Dawson of being in a two and one-half hour conference with Chief Justice Franklin Moses, Sr., father of the governor, the day before the attacks on Chamberlain were initiated. The News and Courier violently denied the accusation and Dawson confided to his wife his frustration in having been the butt of such charges: "Merely, because of our exploring the character of a man who is as bad as Moses."[17]

On September 14, 1874, despite the efforts of the News and Courier, Chamberlain was nominated for governor by the Republican State Convention on the first ballot. The inevitable bolt occurred, with a minority faction walking out of the convention and calling for a separate meeting--for the reasons, real or ostensible, that Chamberlain, as a former associate of the Scott ring did not represent the interests of the party in its program of reform.[18]

---

[16] Ibid., September 4, 1874.

[17] Ibid., August 20, 1874.

[18] Simkins and Woody, South Carolina During Reconstruction, p. 471.

The next day the News and Courier called on the bolters to nominate an "honest reformer such as James T. Green," and promised in that case the full support of the News and Courier and nine-tenths of the conservative vote.[19]

On October 2 the bolting Republicans held their separate convention in Charleston. Interestingly they adopted the same rules and the identical platform as the "regulars" and nominated James T. Green and Martin T. Delany, the defeated candidates in the regular convention. Green was a white native of the State, and Delany an intelligent native black with a violent dislike for white carpetbaggers, including Chamberlain.[20]

The bolter's convention resolved that it was "not hostile to the Republican party in South Carolina but it designed to maintain its integrity against the corrupt 'rings' which controlled it and at the same time protect the common interests of the whole people." Moreover, the Conservatives were extended a special invitation to join "without regard to partisan politics."[21]

Among Democrats there appeared to be scattered support, mainly in the up-country, for a straight-out

---

[19] News and Courier, September 15, 1874.

[20] Simkins and Woody, South Carolina During Reconstruction, pp. 471-472. The leaders of the Republican bolters were T. C. Dunn, white native of Massachusetts; Edwin W. M. Mackey, native white; Richard Harvey ("Daddy") Cain, northern born Negro; and J. P. M. Epping, northern born white.

[21] Ibid., p. 472.

Democratic ticket. However, due to the influence of the News and Courier and of such men as James Chesnut, former Democratic State Chairman, when the Democratic convention met on October 8, it endorsed the nominees of the Republican bolters, or Independents.

The Independents were defeated, Chamberlain winning over Green by a vote of 80,403 to 68,818. But the election significantly produced the largest vote cast since 1868, indicating increased political participation by the whites.[22]

Chamberlain was most conscious of northern opinion, in particular the northern press. Prior to his nomination he had been unknown outside his state. But as a result of the attacks by the News and Courier he became an object of nationwide comment, the majority of which was unfavorable. Prior to the November election such influential Republican newspapers as the New York Tribune, the New York Times, and the New York Evening Post expressed sentiments similar to those voiced by "Grant's own," the Washington Post: "If there is any abiding sense of justice left in the Palmetto State, Mr. Chamberlain or any other person connected with

---

[22]

Year	Candidate	Votes
1870	Scott	85,071
	Carpenter	51,537
	Total	136,608
1872	Moses	69,838
	Tomlinson	36,553
	Total	106,391
1874	Chamberlain	80,403
	Green	68,818
	Total	149,221

Cited by Simkins and Woody, South Carolina During Reconstruction, p. 473.

the Moses ring, will be left out of office."[23] Chamberlain's alternatives--following the corrupt pattern of his predecessors or attempting to effect a program of reform--were now a matter of nationwide speculation. The News and Courier turned the screw: "The thieves say Governor Chamberlain is their Governor, we shall see."[24]

The business elite were in a politically strategic position; they dominated Charleston and Charleston dominated the low-country. Charleston had proved to be a political variable--a conservative stronghold predominantly controlled by advocates of a stable economy and low taxation who were willing to throw their support behind the Republican faction which best served their interests. To the planter and mercantile aristocracy, reform meant honesty and economy within the state government. Since the beginnings of Republican rule, successive Taxpayers' Conventions had articulated Bourbon complaints against the administration. A brief history of these conventions will demonstrate what type of reform the class demanded.

In March 1871 the Charleston Chamber of Commerce met to consider the financial situation of the state and called a Taxpayers' Convention which met two months later in Columbia. Thirty counties were represented, and the

---

[23] Articles cited by News and Courier, November 14, 1874.

[24] Ibid., December 7, 1874.

delegates included some of the most "influential citizens of the state."[25] James Chesnut praised the gathering as "the best body that I have seen assembled in South Carolina, except for the secession convention of 1860."[26] Conspicuously absent were members of the black community; only two or three Negroes were in attendance. Republicans were there, however; Governor Scott was admitted to the floor and Attorney-General Chamberlain was made third vice-president.

Although "startling disclosures" of mismanagement of state funds were presented, and impeachment proceedings were initiated against Governor Scott and Treasurer Niles G. Parker--which later came to naught--the convention concluded that the bonds and obligations of the state were valid. In 1878, two years after the Democrats "redeemed" the state from Republican control, the New York Sun charged that Chamberlain and members of the Taxpayers' Convention of 1871 had formed an unholy alliance: "It had been determined between the Chamberlain ring and the bondholders to appreciate the value of the bonds by inducing the Taxpayers' Convention to pass a resolution declaring the validity of the debt." The Sun used as evidence a letter from Chamberlain to H. H. Kimpton of April 23, 1871, which stated: "I will co-operate with Butler and Gary

---

[25] Simkins and Woody, South Carolina During Reconstruction, p. 156.

[26] News, May 8, 1871.

[Conservative delegates to the Taxpayers' Convention] in any possible way." From this the Sun concluded that "Chamberlain did co-operate with Democratic allies." Why else, it asked, was he not prosecuted by the Redeemers--why else, if not for the reason "that a free exposure of the inside history of the Scott, Moses and Chamberlain administration would involve a good many Democrats in lasting embarrassment."[27]

In February 1874 a second Taxpayers' Convention was held, again under Bourbon leadership. Plans were formulated for a tax union, composed of taxpayers from the various counties, whose purpose it would be to confer with the Governor to request low taxation and the appointment of honest officials. Vocal in their dissidence, the members were later "very active in supporting the reform programs of the Chamberlain administration."[28]

While Conservatives identified reform with low taxation, their reasoning was not always just or sound--high taxes were not necessarily evidence of corruption. The Republican program in South Carolina involved unprecedentedly heavy taxes on all property--real and personal, used and unused. The heaviest burden fell on unused land, for several reasons. If its owners were unable to bear the tax burden, they would either put the land under cultivation,

---

[27]New York Sun, February 11, 1878, clipping in F. W. Dawson scrapbook No. 1, Dawson Papers, Duke University.

[28]Williamson, After Slavery, p. 158.

subsequently employing laborers or renters; or, they would sell the land either to the state or directly to private parties. In any case the result would hopefully be to put the resources to work and divide them more equitably among the people. The program was designed to make land more readily available to Negroes and Republican party supporters, of course, as well as to provide revenue for the expansion of public and social services for the same people.

Although there were the proverbial gold spittoons in the State House, the Republicans in fact did much to benefit the state. They did a good deal toward restoring buildings, roads, railroads and schools destroyed by the war. In 1868 they organized a free public school system, and made it permanent in 1870; an orphan asylum was authorized in 1869; an institution for the deaf, dumb and blind was established in 1871; a lunatic asylum was provided and colored patients admitted the same year; the state prison system was revamped; courts were streamlined and made more efficient; and expenditures for railroads and other internal improvements were allocated. All this took money. Appropriations were high indeed in comparison with the niggardly budgets of the planter-controlled governments of the ante-bellum period.

Apart from lower taxation, Conservatives demanded the appointment of more honest officials--by which they often meant Democrats. The appointment of County Auditors and County Treasurers rested with the Governor, subject to

confirmation by the Senate. Although many businessmen had shared in the big steals, they opposed corruption when it adversely affected their own interests. They consistently attacked Charleston Customs Collector H. C. Worthington, whom they regarded as completely unscrupulous.[29] In addition they sought appointment of "fair minded" judges who would prosecute those who in their estimation were corrupt.

From a more liberal point of view, there were two basic needs or types of reform facing Chamberlain when he assumed control: the elimination of graft and waste in handling public funds, to be sure; but also the continuation of social uplift through land distribution, social welfare institutions, education, and labor legislation. The advocates of conservative "reform" conspicuously ignored the second category.

The spokesman of the top echelon financiers and businessmen of Charleston was Francis W. Dawson.[30] As a fusionist and proponent of "conservative reform," the editor would be a formidable ally for anyone intent on courting the Democratic-fusionist-conservative elements of the low-country.

Governor Chamberlain was inaugurated on December 1, 1874. In his address he admitted and described cases of mismanagement of funds by the past administration and made

---

[29] Ibid., p. 404.

[30] Ibid., p. 401.

clear his priorities for the future of the state:

> The paramount duty before us may be stated to be the practice and enforcement of economy and honesty in the Government. . . . Our earliest and most earnest attention should be directed to the subject of the collection, appropriation, and disbursement of the public funds . . . property has borne a valuation almost wholly arbitrary when different localities or separate pieces of similar property are compared, and excessive in amount when tested by any reasonable standard of value.[31]

Conservatives hailed the address with satisfaction and relief.[32] It became clear to Dawson that if the Governor were true to the reform program outlined in his inaugural address, then an alliance with Chamberlain would be advantageous for carrying through his long range goal of white Democratic supremacy: the state would profit from the reform, the sympathy of the North would fall with the Southerners who worked in a spirit of bipartisan co-operation, and ultimately the Republican party would fall apart with factionalism, leaving the white Democrats to assume their rightful place in the leadership of the State.

Ever pragmatic and flexible, Dawson did an abrupt about face. Even before the inaugural he dropped his "hate-Chamberlain" campaign and offered the hand of friendship: "I called on the Governor," he wrote to his wife on November 22, 1874, "and had a long and very pleasant talk with him."[33] The next day Dawson reported in the News and

---

[31] Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, p. 11.

[32] Ibid., pp. 34-37.

[33] F. W. Dawson to wife, November 22, 1874, Dawson Papers, Duke University.

Courier:

> I must put on record my own belief that Governor Chamberlain will make a much better Governor than has been predicted, or his antecedents would lead one to believe.[34]

Within two short months the News and Courier came out in full support of the "wise, prudent and just, Governor Chamberlain."[35]

Meanwhile Chamberlain too stood to gain from such a relationship. There was an advantage in cultivating the support of the News and Courier and the "respectable" elements of the state, who had heretofore opposed the Republican party and the state government. Presumably Republican control would have strengthened if Washington and the North had maintained Bourbon support of Reconstruction.

The new State Senate consisted of thirty-three members. Of these, sixteen were Negroes and seventeen were white; twenty-two were Republicans and eleven were Democrats. Of the 124 House members, sixty-one were Negroes, sixty-three white, eighty-two were Republicans and forty-two Democrats. This was the only session in reconstruction South Carolina where the whites had a majority. Moreover Republican factionalism was such that Chamberlain needed Democratic support if he hoped to pass his reform measures.

---

[34] News and Courier, November 25, 1874.

[35] Ibid., January 13, 1875.

Hence, from the standpoint of both the editor and the Governor, a cooperation between Conservatives and "reform" Republicans seemed advisable.

CHAPTER IV

FACTIONAL DIFFICULTIES

Chamberlain had campaigned for Governor on a platform of reform; characteristically so had his Republican opponent for nomination. But when Chamberlain, once elected, began to carry out some of his promises, he received strong opposition from other segments of the party.

Self-aggrandizement was a major factor in creating divisions between Chamberlain and others within the Republican party. Among the Governor's foremost opponents were some of the most corrupt men in South Carolina's history--John J. Patterson, formerly of Pennsylvania, U. S. Senator from 1873 to 1876; H. G. Worthington, collector of the Port of Charleston; Charles P. Leslie, originally from up-state New York, Land Commissioner during the Scott administration; Niles G. Parker, Treasurer of the State under Scott; and H. H. Kimpton, New York financier. Having been given a free rein during the Scott and Moses administration, they were thwarted by Chamberlain's determined efforts to clean up the State. The most spectacular steals had been transacted by whites, sometimes through their northern henchmen. Although a number of legislators of both races accepted bribes from Patterson to vote for the ring's measures,

rarely did blacks benefit much from the fraudulent undertakings.

Other Republicans, especially Negroes, opposed Chamberlain for different reasons. Some agreed with the Washington National Republican that Chamberlain's conservative associates represented "a blow to the Negro race."[1] Shortly after he assumed the governorship many prominent Democrats came out in his support. The Conservatives in the legislature voted in his favor on nearly every occasion; wealthy and influential Democratic businessmen publicly lauded him, and Dawson's News and Courier became his foremost champion. Within the Republican party, moreover, much of Chamberlain's financial support came from white members of wealth. Thomas Jefferson Robertson, U. S. Senator from 1868 to 1877, was a continual adviser and supporter. A native white and very wealthy businessman, he was generally judged to be a man of outstanding ability. He was also known as a conservative in economic and social matters.[2] Other prominent Republicans who supported Chamberlain were Judge Thomas Jefferson Mackey and his brother Albert Gallatin Mackey, influential and wealthy natives of the state. Significantly all three returned to the Conservative fold after the Democrats gained power in 1876. There was little in these associations to encourage those black men

---

[1]Quoted in News and Courier, March 8, 1876.

[2]Williamson, After Slavery, pp. 359-360.

who saw in Reconstruction the opportunity for a genuine social revolution.

Chamberlain's new conservative friendships brought scattered charges of an economic conspiracy on the part of a plutocratic minority to suppress the economically and socially deprived majority of the state. Negro W. H. Pinckney, known as the Santee orator and proponent of the Negroes' right to own land, charged the Governor and Broad Street (the financial district of Charleston) with "declaring war on the common man."[3] However, in most instances, economic discontent was simply a way of hinting at the main issue. Blacks did not trust Conservatives or even fellow Republicans who once sought to prevent their freedom or later endorsed and upheld Black Codes. Francis L. Cardozo, Chamberlain's Secretary of State and staunchest supporter, explained the opposition of some of his race to the Governor's program. The Negroes, Cardozo maintained, were distressed by corruption and the antagonism of the whites, but they would not act to establish "concord and harmony, if concord and harmony meant the sacrifice of their political and civil rights."[4] Fear of being stripped of those few rights which were now lawfully theirs precluded much contact in the political arena with men of conservative leanings, regardless of party affiliation.

---

[3] News and Courier, January 3, 1876.

[4] Williamson, After Slavery, p. 356.

Although much of the Negroes' fear was genuine, the charges based on it were without substance. Actually Chamberlain's program, as proposed in his inaugural and as administered, was not in any way threatening to the Negro. In his inaugural address, Chamberlain emphasized the need for economy and honesty in the state government. His promises of low taxation and the restoration of the State's credit brought support from Conservative businessmen, but the Governor did not neglect other aspects of public welfare, some of them of vital concern to the black community.

One such area was education. Prior to the Civil War, neither South Carolina nor any other Southern state had a workable public school system; certainly not for Negroes. In the 1868 Constitutional Convention public education was promised to all children for a minimum of two years. Responsibility for its implementation lay with popularly elected commissioners of education in each county. Financial support for the schools was to be derived from a state property tax and a special poll tax. Between 1868 and 1874, corrupt officials diverted a large share of the school funds to personal and political purposes. Chamberlain, in his inaugural, called for sweeping reforms in school administration and attacked the "absolute power of the School Commissioners." At the same time he warned against any reduction in school appropriations. He deplored the fact that scarcely more than one-third of the school age population were attending schools. In addition he

recommended the creation of public secondary schools, which did not exist.[5]

His recommendation regarding secondary schools was not heeded by the Legislature, but the State made significant gains in the area of education during Chamberlain's administration. At the end of his first year forty-six percent of the school age population were attending 2,500 schools staffed by nearly 3,000 teachers. The following year attendance was up to 123,000 pupils, representing approximately one-half of the school age children in the State. In 1873 only a quarter of the teachers in the public schools were Negroes; by 1876 they constituted more than a third.[6]

Moreover it was generally agreed that the character of the officers of the government during Chamberlain's term had been improved. Sureties upon the bonds of public officers were required to make affidavit of their ability to meet the liabilities assumed. Under this ruling the State was secured up to the full amount of the bond required by law to be given.

Republican factionalism can best be demonstrated in the number of occasions Chamberlain vetoed what he thought to be unwise or injurious legislation. During his term he disapproved nineteen acts and joint resolutions. The most

---

[5]Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, pp. 25-26.

[6]Williamson, After Slavery, p. 229.

controversial of these, discussed below, centered around the sensitive areas of finances and power.

It had been the practice of Chamberlain predecessors to keep State funds in one depository, the South Carolina Bank and Trust Company, at Columbia. It was commonly known as "Hardy Solomon's Bank," since that wealthy Republican businessman controlled it. The state's deposit sometimes amounted to more than one million dollars, while the capital of this bank was only $125,000. One of Chamberlain's early acts was to remove the bulk of the State's deposits and distribute them among five institutions, two in Columbia and three in Charleston, all having larger capital. As a consequence, the General Assembly passed a bill in March 1875 requiring the deposit of all State funds in the Solomon Bank as well as the Carolina National Bank of Columbia. Chamberlain vetoed this bill, thereby incurring the displeasure of those considerable political and business elements who had stood to gain by it.[7]

At the time of his inaugural, Chamberlain deplored the so-called floating indebtedness of the State, made up of legislative pay certificates, treasurer's due bills, and bills payable and claims passed by the General Assembly--"the unpaid balance of certificates issued under the guise of legislative expenses." Nevertheless he regarded this debt as a part of the public burden which had to be assumed,

---

[7]Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, pp. 90-91.

and in his first Annual Message he opposed any "hasty or present liquidation" of it.[8] He proposed the establishment of a Commission of three, appointed by himself, with the power to audit all claims and pay only those which it felt were sound. The Senate and House accepted his plan but substituted Commissioners of their own choosing. Chamberlain thereupon vetoed the bill, charging that the Commissioners named in it did not "command the confidence of the Governor or the public." Speaker R. B. Elliot now ruled that the act had become law without the Executive approval, on the ground that Chamberlain failed to return it with his veto within the time prescribed by the Constitution. This ruling was sustained by the Supreme Court. Chamberlain appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States. Possibly alarmed at the prospect of waiting two or three years for a decision, the legislature capitulated, passing at the 1875-1876 session a new bill giving the appointment of the Commission to the Governor.[9]

On March 26, 1875 the Governor vetoed "An Act to declare the true intent and meaning of the Consolidation Act." The Consolidation Act had been passed in 1873 in an effort to reduce the volume of the State debt. It provided for the funding of the recognized debt at one-half its nominal value in new consolidation bonds and stocks. The

---

[8] Ibid., p. 295.

[9] Ibid., pp. 94-98.

supplementary bill of March 1875 would have altered the conditions for drawing interest on these new securities.[10] In vetoing this measure Chamberlain argued that any change in the Consolidation Act would shake the confidence of bond holders and undermine the State's credit rating.[11]

Still another veto involved a revenue bill passed in the last hours of the 1874-75 session. This measure would have levied a tax of 1.3 percent for current State expenses. Chamberlain held that this amount was too high, and that the rate for current expenses should be reduced below one percent. He also advised that the payment of past indebtedness be distributed over a term of years in order to reduce the rate of immediate taxation. The veto was sustained and a new bill was passed making the total tax for both purposes eleven mills.[12]

In the Legislature, the chief opponents of the Governor's measures were Negroes: Robert Brown Elliott, William Beverly Nash, Stephen Swails, Paris Simkins, W. J. Whipper and Robert C. De Large. Added to these were C. P. Leslie and B. F. Whittemore, white Republicans.[13] Very probably the hostility created by the Solomon Bank issue and the Commission on Floating Indebtness was traceable

---

[10] Ibid., p. 100.

[11] Ibid., pp. 100-102.

[12] News and Courier, July 15, 1876.

[13] Ibid., December 6, 1875.

primarily to the corrupt Patterson group. It is a fact that Hardy Solomon, "Patterson's henchman," was one of the Commissioners appointed by the Senate prior to the Governor's veto.[14] The implementation of the Consolidation Act by Chamberlain was severely criticized by his opponents. A special legislative committee argued that many of the new bonds issued under the law belonged to a class which should not have been funded, and Treasurer F. L. Cardozo was accused of a "singular want of vigilance in guarding the public interest."[15] The legislature tried unsuccessfully to remove Cardozo, a friend and supporter of Chamberlain, from office. According to Joel Williamson, Cardozo's record "withstood the closest criticism"; he "became the bane of every corruptionist's existence by his miserly management of the treasury."[16]

Other complaints from the Legislature regarding the Governor's program had a firmer foundation. The Legislature ignored his repeated recommendations for a system of minority representation in all county and municipal elections. In theory parties would share political power in approximate proportion to their numerical strength. Chamberlain delineated the merits of the system in his

---

[14]Williamson, After Slavery, p. 388; Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, p. 98.

[15]Simkins and Woody, South Carolina During Reconstruction, p. 168.

[16]Williamson, After Slavery, pp. 378, 391.

Second Annual Message: "The rule of the majority is not thereby destroyed, while the voice and influence of the minority is not wholly suppressed."[17] Prior to his gubernatorial term he had been less cautious and politic in making the same essential proposal. In 1871 he had urged the Taxpayers' Convention to support a system of proportional representation for the two races:

> Do you believe, for a moment, that when you put into an ignorant Assembly, many of whom can neither read nor write, forty-seven gentlemen, whom I might select in this body, that you would not shame them into decency, or frighten them from crime?[18]

Dawson was even clearer in his defense of the plan:

> With forty seven Democrats in the lower House last session, and the independent vote, the Radical majority could have been checked at every turn. What the thirty-three Democrats did succeed in doing is evidence enough of the value of the additional votes that minority representation would have given them.[19]

Aside from this threat to their power, legislators also complained that Chamberlain was encroaching upon their prerogatives. Beverley Nash objected to the power given the Commission on Floating Indebtness, appointed by the Governor, to allow or disallow claims which the General Assembly might pronounce as "just and equitable":

---

[17] Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, p. 180.

[18] News and Courier, July 7, 1876, from "The Record of Governor Chamberlain," a series of articles, July 5-18, 1876.

[19] News and Courier, July 7, 1876.

> The General Assembly is honest enough to audit claims or appoint a commission. It gives to the Governor of this State a power which, if demanded or even requested by the Queen of England would hurl her tomorrow from her throne.[20]

Despite the opposition of some of the legislature, in no case was the anti-Chamberlain faction able to muster the two-thirds vote necessary to override his vetoes.

In November 1875, Chamberlain made his first trip to Charleston as Governor, in order to address the Charleston Chamber of Commerce. The News and Courier called this meeting "the largest and most influential that had been seen for a long time, and among those present were most of the oldest and most prominent merchants and business men in the city."[21] Chamberlain concluded his short speech with gratitude for the businessmen's support:

> If I have done anything which meets with the approval of the people of South Carolina in the administration of her affairs, it was simply my duty, and you may rest assured that my best services shall be devoted to the commercial interests of Charleston. The utmost I can say is to heartily thank you for your thoughtfulness in recognizing the efforts I have made to serve you. I have been sincerely engaged in working for the welfare of South Carolina, and the most valued testimonial that I have received is the testimonial this day extended to me by the business men of Charleston.[22]

---

[20] Ibid., December 25, 1875.

[21] Ibid., November 6, 1875.

[22] Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, p. 158.

While Chamberlain's success depended upon the cooperation of Democrats and "Reform" Republicans, his weakness lay in the friction alive in both parties and now growing with the dissension created by his program.

The native whites were not all so cordial in the treatment of their Governor. Obviously the largest and most vocal of these critics were the persons opposed to any co-operation with the Negro as a matter of principle. The greater the friendship between the Governor and Conservative Democrats, the greater the hostility of the straight-outs. Many continued to oppose what they regarded as ruinously high taxes--a prevalent complaint in the up-country or agricultural regions. For instance, the yearly taxes--county, educational, and state--in heavily agricultural Kershaw County amounted to about "2 percent of the total value of taxable property." Although the tax rate was not excessive, the common complaint was that the assessments were unduly high. Hence taxpayers such as those in Kershaw County were hardly impressed that Chamberlain "had saved them from a 2.2 percent levy."[23] "Does this mean reform or confiscation," demanded the Anderson Intelligencer, one of the most outspoken of the up-country newspapers. It for one refused to "blindly pledge allegiance to Chamberlain's political fortune."[24]

---

[23]Williamson, After Slavery, p. 152.

[24]Cited by Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, p. 109.

However, until the spring of 1876 the opposition from Democrats was minimal compared with that shown by members of the Governor's own party. As Chamberlain pressed for his reform program, Republican opposition mounted.

One Republican foe was Niles G. Parker, state treasurer under the two Scott Administrations. The Governor personally urged his prosecution for fraud in suits brought against him by the Sinking-Fund Commission. In an effort to silence Chamberlain, Parker threatened to expose the Governor himself as an active participant in schemes to defraud the state while acting earlier as attorney-general. A similar threat once before had proved effective. In 1870, when Chamberlain as attorney-general had considered bringing Parker to trial, the latter warned: "I am satisfied that you have too much discretion to do what you say or intimate. In other words, Mr. Cardozo is the only State official who would not be carried down and made odious to every honest man."[25] Chamberlain succumbed and remained silent. That case was never brought to trial. In 1875 Parker's threat centered around Chamberlain's involvement with the railroad ring. This time Chamberlain stood his ground. In May of that year, a series of articles attacking his character appeared in the New York Sun in the form of an anonymous correspondence from South Carolina. Among other things, a letter was published, apparently written by

[25] Cited by Williamson, After Slavery, p. 398.

Chamberlain as attorney-general to H. H. Kimpton in January, 1870:

> Do you understand fully the plan of the G & C [Greenville and Columbia] enterprise? It is proposed to buy $350,000 worth of the G & C stock. This with the 433,000 of stock held by the state, will give entire control to us. . . . There is a mint of money in this or I am a fool. . . .[26]

The News and Courier reprinted these charges, but permitted Chamberlain to respond to them in its pages. The Governor prefaced one of his explanations:

> There was nothing sinister in the plan. It was a purely speculative one. . . . I was 'a fool' no doubt in any calculations, but that was all. I leave it to you to treat the whole matter as you think best. I dreamed of thousands, there is no doubt, but I never knew of or was consultant to any dealings which involved any injuries to the State as I then understood it.[27]

In this same connection Dawson made a formal retraction of the charges which he had spent months formulating in the latter part of 1874. "We are confident," said an editorial in the News and Courier, "that whenever all the facts shall be known, the record of Attorney-General Chamberlain will be found to be every whit as clean as Governor Chamberlain."[28] Dawson hinted that the letter to Kimpton might have been forged, but even if not, he declared, "it was a legitimate business speculation, one very likely to command the support of any man who was not familiar with railroads."

---

[26]New York Sun, reprint by News and Courier, May 5, 1875.

[27]News and Courier, May 6, 1875.

[28]Ibid.

The News and Courier attributed the Sun accusations to "plans of the Radical party to arrange [the Governor] to be bound hand and foot to the Legislature next winter."[29]

Immediately, the Sun charged the News and Courier with receiving payments of up to $100,000 a month from the Governor for its support. The outraged News and Courier vehemently denied the charge, calling on the Sun to produce evidence; instead, there was a noteworthy silence.[30]

In the face of such opposition, Governor Chamberlain was fortunate in having the support of most of the newspaper press, both Democratic and Republican. With the demise of the Charleston Mercury in December 1872, the News and Courier was now the oldest daily in Charleston. Its reputation, circulation and influence were unmatched. Said Alfred B. Williams, a competitor:

> Captain F. W. Dawson, one of the strongest, most convincing writers this country ever had known . . . was backed by some of the most influential weeklies . . . but they reached one reader where the News and Courier reached fifty.[31]

The oldest and most reliable Republican paper was the Columbia Union Herald, which supported the Governor in 1874 and remained his staunchest advocate from then

---

[29]Ibid., June 11, 1875. Parker was convicted in June 1875 of malfeasance in office causing a loss by the State of $224,000, and a verdict for $75,000 was obtained. By a habeas corpus proceeding Parker was released from jail and subsequently left the state.

[30]Ibid., April 9, 1875.

[31]Williams, Red Shirts, p. 32.

forward.[32]

Chamberlain depended on the News and Courier to keep the Conservatives in line:

> You can do much [he exhorted Captain Dawson] members [of the Legislature] should be made to feel that they will be watched and their names defiled if they fail in their duty in this respect, and I write privately to ask you to do all in your power to keep down appropriations to the limits of our income.[33]

Favorable editorials followed each executive veto as the News and Courier expressed its appreciation. The praise became almost embarrassing in its excess. A notable example was an editorial entitled, "Savoir Faire." "What is it?" Dawson asks:

> It is totally different from the easy-going good-nature that makes a man hail fellow well met with the universal public. It is the knack, and the habit, of saying and doing the right thing, at the right time, and in the right way . . . . There is found in every message or letter that he [Chamberlain] writes some phrase which lingers in the memory, some new and happy expression of what good folk at once recognize and receive as true. . . . If we lived in the days of good Haroun al Raschid, his words would be written in letters of gold and counted with the treasures of the Kingdom . . . just such stirring enunciations of eternal truths, as have made the names of the Fathers of the Republic honored and honorable.[34]

The Governor enthusiastically expressed his pleasure and appreciation:

---

[32]Woody, Republican Newspapers, p. 50.

[33]D. H. Chamberlain to F. W. Dawson, February 7, 1874, Dawson Papers, Duke University.

[34]News and Courier, May 6, 1875.

Thank you for the article of yesterday. It is more than I could have asked or expected.[35]

Thanks for your editorial Peacocks and Crows . . . wonderfully effective.[36]

Let me serve you in any way that is right and proper which is all of course you would ask. <u>Cela va sans dire</u>.[37]

You know we must not be too good friends.[38]

---

[35] D. H. Chamberlain to F. W. Dawson, May 5, 1875, Dawson Papers, Duke University.

[36] <u>Ibid</u>., October 11, 1875.

[37] <u>Ibid</u>., May 7, 1875.

[38] <u>Ibid</u>., June 24, 1875.

CHAPTER V

"CLOSING OF THE RANKS OF THE WHITE MEN"

While opposition and support of the Governor's policy cut across party lines, there was one basic difference which divided the two parties--the race issue. By the end of 1875, the muddied waters of Democratic political disharmony started to clear; or, to paraphrase Alfred B. Williams, the ranks of the white man began to close.[1]

Race always had been the issue but it remained temporarily in the background until the Democrats had a justifiable excuse or reason to bring it forth again. Inadvertently the Republicans gave the straight-outs what they needed to raise the state once again to secession or nullification madness.

Taking advantage of the Governor's temporary absence from Columbia, the Legislature met in joint session on December 16, 1875, to elect eight circuit judges. Those chosen were: W. J. Whipper (Negro), Pierce L. Wiggins (Negro), Franklin J. Moses, Jr., and five incumbents who were re-elected for their respective circuits. Of the eight, the election of Whipper and ex-governor Moses evoked the

---

[1]Williams, Red Shirts, p. 79.

most criticism. Both had been unsuccessful candidates for judicial office at the previous session with Governor Chamberlain actively opposing them. On this occasion they were elected by substantial majorities. Moses' record was admittably not impeccable. Until that time Whipper had enjoyed a relatively favorable press, being recognized as an intelligent and articulate Negro, though no doubt to Conservatives excessively liberal in his opposition to capital punishment and support of female suffrage. But it was not until after his election that the citizens of South Carolina found him so offensive.[2] South Carolina had had her fair share of questionable officials, but few had aroused such frenzied excitement as these. The uproar was instantaneous, and presumably influenced the Governor in his own reaction. In an unprecedented decision, he refused to issue commissions to Moses, Whipper and Wiggins on the ground that their predecessors, who had been chosen at the preceding session to fill unexpired terms, were legally elected for a full term of four years.

Chamberlain, in an interview with the News and Courier the day after the Legislature's action, referred to the judgeship election as:

> a conspiracy . . . carefully concocted. The color line, the party line, and the line of antagonism to my administration, all were sharply drawn. . . . This calamity is infinitely greater, in my judgment than any which has yet fallen on this state; or, I

---

[2]Williamson, After Slavery, p. 331.

> might add, upon any part of the South. The gravest consequence of all kinds will follow. One immediate effect will obviously be the reorganization of the Democratic party within the State, as the only means left, in the judgment of its members, for opposing a solid and reliable front to this terrible crevasse of misgovernment and public debauchery.[3]

The same day Chamberlain sent a telegram to the New England Society of Charleston reaffirming his solidarity with the Bourbon elite:

> If there ever was an hour when the spirit of the Puritans, the spirit of the undying, unconquerable enmity and defiance to wrong ought to animate their sons, it is this hour, here, in South Carolina.
>
> The civilization of the Puritan and the Cavalier, of the Roundhead and the Huguenot, is in peril. Courage, Determination, Union, Victory, must be our watch-words. The grim puritans never quailed under threat or blow. Let their sons now imitate their example![4]

The response of Charleston conservatives was overwhelmingly in support of their Republican Governor. All but three members of the Charleston Bar publicly supported the legality of the Governor's action, despite the fact that it was a mere makeshift without substantial foundation --a pretext for keeping the two men off the bench.[5] In addition, a telegram signed by every bank president in the Charleston area and by numerous members of prominent mercantile firms was sent to the Governor expressing gratitude

---

[3]News and Courier, December 20, 1875.

[4]Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, pp. 200-201. Italics in original.

[5]Francis B. Simkins, "The Election of 1876 in South Carolina," The South Atlantic Quarterly, XXI (July, 1922), 228.

and endorsing his stand against the Legislature. Captain Dawson was the chief instigator of a meeting in Hibernian Hall, calling on the citizenry to support the Governor. "Governor Chamberlain must be assured that what he has begun the people will finish. And this assurance can only be given by mass meetings in every county in the State."[6]

Chamberlain and "reform" Republicans regarded the issue as critical because it might justify Democrats in ceasing to support the administration on grounds that the Republicans were incapable of providing good government. But the Democrats were actually in arms over the race issue--in the words of the News and Courier: "The Conspiracy to Africanize South Carolina. . . . The plans of the Radical leaders are now pretty well known. They are to unite the Negroes in a solid front against the whites."[7]

It is difficult to understand what the initial complaint of corruption against Moses and Whipper had to do with the race issue, since Moses was white, and two more Negro judges, Wiggins and Whipper, hardly spelled Africanization of the state. But to Dawson the judgeships and white supremacy were closely related. "The election of incompetent and even venal judges is not in itself so unusual a thing in America as to excite general alarm," he admitted in an article of December 18, but in this particular

---

[6]News and Courier, December 23, 1875.

[7]Ibid., December 17, 1875. Italics in original

case such apprehension is warranted.

> We do not exaggerate the meaning or effect of the election of the Three Judges. It is true, with three exceptions, the Independent members of the Legislature from Charleston . . . stood manfully to their pledges and refused to lend themselves to the base uses of the Whipper-Moses combination. But the other Independents melted away. And we see no prospect that the Independent Republican organization can be continued. This is one point gained by the Black Band. And there is another and greater gain. The Three Judges of the Black Band will have judicial control of the whole of the low country of South Carolina, containing nearly ninety thousand voters, more than one half the voting population of the State. The counties in their three circuits have overwhelming Negro majorities. A Judge who is elected for political reasons alone, who is chosen, not for his integrity and capacity, but for his strength with the illiterate and prejudiced masses, and who is himself base and easy of approach, can as a rule, control the nomination, and therefore, the election of the Sheriff and Solicitor in his Circuit. By and through them, he can rule the Circuit. In this lies the frightful aspect of the election of the Three Judges. They are expected to be absolute masters of the low-country, and by the low-country to rule the State.[8]

In essence the election of the three judges threatened white supremacy by putting control of three important low-country circuits into the hands of Negroes or Negro sympathizers.

Dr. H. V. Redfield, viewing events as an outsider as correspondent of the Cincinnati Commercial, made some astute observations regarding the methods employed by the outraged Democrats. His predictions regarding the political future of the State were equally shrewd:

> A rumpus has begun in South Carolina which will end in the white people getting control of the State, as they now have control in Mississippi. . . . I say to the reader, and hope he will remember it hereafter, Look out for Democratic gains in South

---

[8] *Ibid.*, December 18, 1875.

> Carolina. For a long time the whites have wanted a sufficient excuse to rise up and overthrow the African government under which they live; and now they have it. . . . The campaign in South Carolina next year will be very bitter, if not bloody. The whites will now draw the "color line," and at the same time throw all the blame upon the blacks. We know what the color line means. If any there are who don't comprehend the term, they can have light by spending a few days in Mississippi.[9]

Tennessee and Virginia had passed under Conservative control in 1869; North Carolina in 1870; Democrats assumed power in Georgia in 1871; and Arkansas, Alabama and Texas followed in 1874. That same year Mississippi began to devise a plan of "redemption," by arousing enthusiasm among the Democratic masses, coercing native white Republicans into leaving the party, and intimidating the Negroes--preferably by peaceful means, but by violence if necessary. The famed Mississippi Plan reached its zenith in November 1875, culminating in the election of a Democratic Legislature. In January 1876 the new Legislature proceeded to impeach the Lieutenant Governor and secured the resignation of Governor Adelbert Ames. This left only Louisiana, South Carolina and Florida with Radical governments. The timing of the South Carolina judgeship issue could not have fit better the designs of the straight-outs, who had just witnessed in Mississippi the careful use of force combined with a threat of unlimited violence to overwhelm a Negro majority;

---

[9]Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, p. 221.

President Grant, it was noted, had refused to intervene. Moreover, with the Chamberlain Republicans bickering with the Radical Republicans, they saw the weakening of Republican control in their own state. Taking their cue from Mississippi, the Democrats began to organize.

A call was issued for the Democratic State Executive Committee to meet in Columbia on January 6, 1876. As a result of its work, the News and Courier predicted: "Seventy thousand white voters in South Carolina shall be banded together in a way that has not been attempted since 1868." An editorial called on the people to support such a campaign:

> The union of the white people of the State is a prime necessity. Cost what it may, that must be had. . . . This is our belief--it can be done. The spirit of '76 is in the air. . . . To the deliverance of the State should the people now devote themselves as their forefathers pledged life, fortune, and honor to the deliverance of Carolina from a yoke infinitely less galling than that which is ready for the necks of this people, if they now hesitate or halt.[10]

Thus early in 1876 the News and Courier moved away from its support of Chamberlain and took up the position of the straight-outs.

In February it conceded that Chamberlain's objective was good government but:

> We do not believe that he can reach it because of the character of elements with which he has to deal. . . . It is certain we hold that he will fail--if fail with the Republicans he will abandon

---

[10] News and Courier, January 10, 1876.

> the rascally Republican leaders while remaining a Republican and leave the field open to the Democrats. This, in our judgment will be the result of the noble efforts of a fearless and brilliant statesman to purify a party which as now led, has not within it the first area of purification.[11]

Dawson and the News and Courier thus hoped that, due to the breach in the Republican party, the Governor would be written out of his own party, and would subsequently throw his support to a Democratic candidate. The Radicals, without a reform governor, would in turn be abandoned by the national Republican party, thus permitting a Democratic victory.

A letter from Chamberlain to Dawson on April 7, 1876, reveals a certain amount of bewilderment on the part of the Governor:

> Dear Captain, I concluded that I would not ask you to come up here merely to have a talk with me--perhaps it would do just as well bye and bye. I wished to get your views on the feeling of the Conservatives about our coming campaign but I will see you later.[12]

That same day the News and Courier was busy scolding Orangeburg for being tardy in the organization of her Democratic clubs.[13]

Meanwhile the Governor's Republican opponents, following his action on the judges, denounced him as a

---

[11]Ibid., February 7, 1876.

[12]D. H. Chamberlain to F. W. Dawson, April 7, 1876, Dawson Papers, Duke University.

[13]News and Courier, April 7, 1876.

traitor to his party. A mass meeting was held in Charleston on January 1, 1876, for the purpose of sustaining the action of the Legislature. The News and Courier gave an account of the gathering, or in their words, the "Moses Mass Meeting." There was some talk of impeaching the Governor, from which action, said Moses, "all of the money on Broad Street cannot save him." W. G. Pinckney accused Chamberlain and the Conservatives of attempting to "start Ku-Kluxism again. They will drive the negroes from the polls and kill every one, if necessary, to carry the next election. Broad Street is supporting the Ku-Klux business, as she did before." William H ("Red Hot") Jones, Jr., Negro native of Philadelphia and State Senator from Georgetown County, wanted to know why the News and Courier did not think it possible that Whipper and Moses had "reformed." They had witnessed a similar transformation in Chamberlain from sinner to reformer in the course of a year. Representative Richard Nesbit, who was elected on the Independent Republican ticket by the white votes of Charleston county, joined ranks with his regular Republican colleagues from Charleston, Michael McLaughlin, Thomas A. Davis and Pinckney in opposing Chamberlain. Nesbit publicly apologized for voting against Whipper on December 16. "I was wrong. Now, I am an ardent supporter of Whipper. Whipper is being persecuted on account of his color." Negro Congressman Joseph H. Rainey, who had previously opposed Whipper and Moses, admitted that he was "not now assured that the political rights of the

colored people are placed beyond the possibility of subversion." C. P. Leslie, white State Senator from Barnwell County, prophesied the "downfall of the Republican party and the complete subjugation of the Negro race in South Carolina and proclaimed that the next candidate for Governor will be Wade Hampton."[14]

In March 1876 Chamberlain's former law partner, Samuel W. Melton, resigned as Attorney-General of the State, with the comment that "If Chamberlain's measures were not checked he would eventually bring disaster and defeat to the Republican party, and that if he presumed to be a candidate for re-election as Governor [Melton] would feel obligated to sever his legal relations with him."[15] Robert Purvis, a Freedman's Bureau Commissioner on a trip to South Carolina, reported to the Washington National Republican: "The situation is distressing. I saw nothing on all sides but elated Democrats and depressed, dispirited Republicans."[16]

It was Whipper, however, who delivered the most telling and poignant denunciation. In a speech before the Legislature, January 19, 1876, he declared:

> I do not believe that the charges made were intended for either Moses or Wiggins [the other black judicial appointee, with Whipper]. The real thrust was aimed at the Negro, who has been the source of trouble for almost a century in this country both in Church and

---

[14] News and Courier, January 3, 1876.

[15] Ibid., March 8, 1876.

[16] Ibid.

> State, in Congress halls and in Sabbath-schools, stage coaches and railroad cars. He could not even walk the streets without insult or injury. Just so long as he stands ready with brush in hand to black boots or play the part of cook or waiter this prejudice will not manifest itself--so long as he can be called by the familiar names of Sam, Dick or Jake; but, just as soon as he raises his head above the position of a menial, he is made the object of Democratic spleen all over the country. . . . So far as the News and Courier is concerned their very sanctum reeks with the foulest corruption, and nothing truly respectable or decent can be expected to emanate from that source. So far as Daniel H. Chamberlain is concerned, I regard him as unfit for earth; to heaven he cannot ascend, and were he to make his advent in hell, I fear he would incur the displeasure of his Satanic majesty.[17]

On April 12, a Republican state convention met in Columbia for the purpose of nominating delegates to the national convention to be held in Cincinnati in June. This presented the first occasion since his inauguration for a formal judgment of the Governor by his party. Rival delegations from several counties competed for membership. The State Executive Committee seated only those which were hostile to Chamberlain, including twenty-nine delegates from Charleston alone. Chamberlain was defeated for temporary chairman by Negro S. C. Swails by a vote of eighty to forty.

The high point in the proceedings was a debate between the Governor and Judge R. B. Carpenter. Carpenter indicated the vigor and temper of the opposition:

---

[17]Ibid., January 1876. On February 4, 1876, a resolution was adopted and passed by the House to expunge from the Journal the remarks of Mr. Whipper. See Ibid., February 5, 1876.

> From the day he entered the office of Chief Magistrate of this State . . . Chamberlain turned his back upon the men who fought for him and with him, and . . . sought only to advance himself at the cost of his allegiance to his party. . . . You are asked to say that this Governor has represented the Republican party properly. He can't say that for me. I won't let him say it. . . .

Carpenter charged that Chamberlain had refused to counsel with his party friends, and had acted dictatorially; this alone, he declared, was the reason they had revolted from his leadership. He continued:

> In my judgment Daniel H. Chamberlain has been murdering the Republican party from the hour he became Governor of South Carolina. . . . It was he who sent that famous dispatch to the New-Englanders at their dinner in Charleston, in which he announced that the civilization of the Roundhead and Cavalier, of the Puritan and the Cavalier was in danger. . . . The freedom of the Cavalier and the Puritan was the civilization of the master and the slave. . . . Thank God that the civilization of the Puritan and Cavalier is gone never to be reinstated. . . . When freedom came it came to the whites as well as to the blacks. I have no tears to shed over the graves of the civilization of the Puritan and Cavalier.[18]

Harold Carroll, special correspondent of the New York Times, was present on this occasion and submitted a graphic description of the events that followed.

> So Chamberlain was left almost unaided in the Convention. State Treasurer Cardozo . . . was his strongest supporter, and the only man upon whom he could depend. . . . It was 2 o'clock this morning when the business of electing [national convention] delegates at large was reached. . . . Elliott was the first delegate at large elected; then United States Senator Patterson was nominated, and against him was named Governor Chamberlain. His nomination was greeted with shouts of derisive laughter, and if the call had then been made, he would not have received

---

[18] Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, pp. 265-266.

> twenty-five votes. The scene at this point was an exceedingly interesting one. . . . It was just five minutes after four o'clock and daylight was coming in through the window, as Gov. Daniel H. Chamberlain . . . rose to defend himself against his accusers. His slight frame trembled, and great drops of sweat hung on his forehead as he commenced the speech which would bring to him political life or death in South Carolina. Then for an hour and a half he spoke. . . . As the speech progressed, the colored delegates gathered around the speaker; then they stood on chairs and desks to get a better view of him. Those who were nearest to him sat on the floor, looking up into his face with open-mouthed wonder at his terrible denunciation of his foes and his grand vindication of himself. Some of the negroes were entirely carried away by his oration; they shouted with delight at some of the most effective passages; and as the Governor took his seat, pale and exhausted from over-exertion . . . the name of "Chamberlain, Chamberlain, our Chamberlain," was echoed from every part of the Capitol. Carpenter tried to reply, but they would not listen to him. The roll was then called, and Chamberlain was elected over Patterson by a vote of 89 to 32.[19]

Later Chamberlain was voted to head the delegation to Cincinnati. The Governor failed to obtain a resolution endorsing his administration, nor did he get his own supporters chosen as delegates to Cincinnati, but the climax of the Convention indicated that he was still the popular leader of the party.

This fact led Editor Dawson and the News and Courier to reverse itself, and urge again Democratic support of the Chamberlain administration. If Chamberlain were renominated for Governor later in the year, which now seemed likely, Dawson reasoned:

---

[19] Ibid., pp. 260-261. For like testimony see report of J. F. Keegan, Washington (D. C.) Chronicle quoted in Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, p. 261.

> He will have the undivided support of the Radicals. There will be no bolt. Add to that the solid Republican vote, the power to obtain Federal troops as they may be needed, the Executive appointment of Commissioner of Election, the broad and undefined powers of the Board of State Canvassers and what prospect is there that he could be defeated? It could be done in only one way, by armed force. To run a Democratic candidate against him would be folly. It would force the Executive to exert his whole influence for the election of the whole Radical ticket; and the Democrats, losing the State officers as well as the county officers and the members of the Legislature in the low-country, would find no compensation in the thirty or forty members of the Legislature who, if no protest prevailed, can be elected in the up-country.

Dawson encouraged the Democrats to waive a nomination of their own and concentrate on the other state and legislative offices. He appealed to the interests of the low-country, insisting that straight-outism

> with its threat and bluster, with its possible disturbances and certain turmoil is the foe of mercantile security and commercial prosperity. . . . Charleston cannot afford to sacrifice the voice she has had in County affairs, and the representation she has in the Legislature, nor can she countenance any other policy which will drive capital away, and render her powerless to aid and sustain the agricultural interest of the State.[20]

But things had gone too far. Even the powerful News and Courier could not mitigate the emotional character of the race issue nor the events which were soon to follow. For several years the more militant South Carolina Democrats had been organized in Rifle and Sabre clubs, ostensibly to oppose the predominantly black militia which had been organized in 1870 under Governor Scott. The military clubs

---

[20] News and Courier, May 8, 1876.

flourished under the guise of social assemblies. In 1876, they began to emerge unabashedly as Democratic political action groups. As they did so the Negro militia, having lapsed through the years into apathetic obscurity, began to reorganize and rearm.[21]

Such was the case in Hamburg, a small community opposite Augusta, Georgia. It was inhabited almost exclusively by Negroes and was governed completely by Negro officials. The militia, organized locally in 1872, frequently drilled in the streets. They were doing this on July 4, 1876--on a practically deserted thoroughfare, overgrown with grass and over 100 feet wide--when they were confronted by two young white men who demanded the right of way. Neither side would give way and after a heated argument both parties withdrew. A cursory investigation was initiated by white citizens, who concluded that the Negroes should be asked to apologize. The militia refused and retired with their rifles to their armory. The whites surrounded the building, opened fire, and forced the garrison to surrender. The first casualty was a nineteen year old white boy. Whites sacked the town and Negroes, many of whom did not belong to the militia, were captured indiscriminately. It was obvious that the primary object of the whites in pressing the issue had been to disarm the Negro militia. Now while escorting the prisoners to the county

---

[21]Simkins and Woody, Reconstruction in South Carolina, pp. 269-270.

jail in Aiken, the guard ordered four of the most prominent Negroes to run, and as they did so they were shot down. The main body of prisoners were then ordered to run in the same fashion; seven Negroes in all were killed.[22]

Chamberlain immediately sent the Attorney-General of the State, William Stone, to investigate the circumstances. After reviewing his report, the Governor wrote to President Grant asking if Federal troops would be made available in the event they were needed. "It is," Chamberlain wrote, "only the beginning of a series of similar race and party collisions in our State, the deliberate aim of which is believed to be the political subjugation and control of the State and foreshadows a campaign of blood and violence."[23]

Although Grant had recently made it a policy not to interfere in the internal affairs of the southern states, he replied in the affirmative; troops would be made available if needed to preserve law and order.[24]

A coroner's inquest was held at Hamburg, and seven white men were charged as accessories to murder. They were released on bail with the entire bar of Aiken volunteering its services in their behalf. This action, plus the fact

---

[22] William Stone, Attorney-General of South Carolina, Report, July 12, 1876, in Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, pp. 314-317. Cf. Williamson, After Slavery, pp. 268-269 for a similar account.

[23] Chamberlain to Grant, July 22, 1876, quoted in Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, p. 323.

[24] Grant to Chamberlain, July 26, 1876, quoted in Ibid., p. 325.

that the seven ultimately escaped punishment, was fairly indicative of the social conditions of the state at that time.

The News and Courier supported the Governor's action in notifying the President of the events at Hamburg, and expressed indignation at the action of the whites.[25] But so incensed were white South Carolinians in general over the Governor's condemnation of the Hamburg whites that most of the Conservatives who until now had remained loyal to the Governor abandoned all idea of cooperation and threw their support to the straight-outs. "Politically, the Hamburg riot abruptly ended Chamberlain's alliance with Conservatives of the fusionist persuasion."[26] On July 19 the Democrats of Newberry met and adopted the straight-out policy--the first such formal resolution to be made. Edgefield soon followed. So numerous and influential were those favoring the straight-out position that the News and Courier was forced into the embarrassing position of reversing itself again and making a public apology for its stand on the Hamburg affair. On August 12, 1876, the paper carried the following headlines:

> The truth about Hamburg--Ample truth of the lawlessness of the Black Soldiery--A militia company organized to kill the Whites--Their threats and violence--No shots fired by the Whites Till

---

[25] News and Courier, July 6-8, 1876.

[26] Williamson, After Slavery, p. 270.

> Merriwether was Killed--The Absolute Falsity of the Testimony at the Inquest.[27]

Three days later, the Straight-outs carried the Democratic state convention by a vote of eighty-four to sixty-four and nominated Wade Hampton as the party's candidate for Governor. Immediately the News and Courier fell in line with an editorial entitled "Wade Hampton and Victory!"[28] Alfred Williams described his reaction to Dawson's change of attitude:

> The closing of the ranks of the white men was instantaneous. . . . The News and Courier promptly took the lead . . . an audacious, masterly, somersault at which everybody laughed, but which everybody approved. . . . This was typical of what occurred throughout the state.[29]

Dawson's "somersault" was not as surprising or audacious as Williams indicated. In December 1875, the Captain had publicly stated: "When our people fix upon their policy for 1876, we shall go with them. Until they do, we shall advocate our own views and with what force and effect we can."[30] What was surprising is that Dawson had for the first time misjudged the people of South Carolina.

Being a practical man, he saw clearly that his journalistic career depended on his taking a stand with the Hampton movement. On March 1, 1876, the Charleston Journal

---

[27] News and Courier, August 12, 1876.

[28] Ibid., August 17, 1876.

[29] Williams, Red Shirts, p. 79.

[30] News and Courier, December 14, 1875.

of Commerce made its first appearance on the streets. It was established by a group of Charlestonians as a

> purely Democratic--straight-out organ, representing no cliques, advocating no compromise with principles, but standing on the honest platform of the only party which has never brought dishonor on the country. . . .[31]

It promised daily and tri-weekly issues at eight and four dollars per year, the News and Courier's rates being ten and five dollars respectively. Dawson's former employer, R. B. Rhett, Jr., was called from New Orleans to edit the paper, and a journalistic battle squared off. Sentiments became so heated that Rhett challenged Dawson to a duel. Dawson refused. Williams described the tension felt in the streets of Charleston when the two met on the day following the challenge and refusal:

> The steps and porch of the postoffice at the foot of Broad Street and the doors of offices in the neighborhood were crowded with men anxious to see the fight and Mayor Cunningham had policemen and detectives ranged along the sidewalks, apparently idling there. Captain Dawson came down the south side of Broad Street with his brother-in-law, Colonel Jimmy Morgan, both keeping sharp eyes about them but neither making any sign, and Colonel Rhett strolled tranquilly up the north side. To the disappointment of the onlookers, and my relief, there was no battle. . . . It developed that Colonel Rhett was acting strictly according to the code, which provided that one insult might not be resented effectively by another. If a man called you a liar you were expected to hit, shoot or challenge forthwith. . . . Colonel Rhett, having given the insult, had nothing more to do, under the code, than to put himself in position to be shot at, if anybody elected to shoot.[32]

---

[31]Journal of Commerce, March 4, 1876, quoted in Logan, "Captain F. W. Dawson," p. 145.

[32]Williams, Red Shirts, p. 65.

More important, the News and Courier declined in circulation during the summer of 1876:

> The Journal of Commerce collected its mail in tall wicker baskets--literally by the bushel--new subscriptions, all with money enclosed, from all parts of the state and neighboring states. The News and Courier was deluged with stops. Paid in advance subscribers refused to take it from post offices or returned its copies unopened, with derisive and insulting messages and letters.[33]

There were limits to which an editor could go. Dawson was politically bound by his Conservative readers.

On September 12, Governor Chamberlain was renominated by the Republican State Convention. Shortly afterward, the News and Courier called on him to withdraw from the race on the grounds that his devotion to reform should compel him to abandon associations with the corrupt elements which dominated the Republican party. The Governor refused. On September 22 the following declaration of his position--understood to have been written by the Governor himself--appeared in the Columbia Union Herald:

> The relations of the News and Courier to Governor Chamberlain during the past two years--relations of cordial and honorable cooperation in the cause of reform in our State affairs--give a peculiar significance to the attitude of these parties today, and make it important to present Governor Chamberlain's views of his present position and duty in contrast and opposition to those of the News and Courier. . . . A clear majority of that party [Democratic] are today enlisted under leaders and seeking to carry out a policy which does not command the approval of either their heads or hearts. This policy has been forced on them by the most unwise, impractical, reactionary, and aggressive men of their party. The essence of the policy is intimidation. . . . The

[33]Ibid., p. 35.

> editors of the News and Courier know this. Every intelligent man in this State knows this. . . . Is it not, then, a most marvellous example of assurance when we find this paper, with apparent seriousness, calling upon Governor Chamberlain, to assist in securing the success of a ticket and policy which three months ago the News and Courier itself openly and earnestly denounced? It has already been notified by the Chairman of the State Democratic Committee that its former liberality cannot and will not be forgiven. . . . We tell the editors of the News and Courier that Governor Chamberlain is a free man no matter who else are slaves. . . .[34]

Just as the Democratic nomination had succeeded in reuniting that party, the prospects of a bitter contest in November brought cohesion to the Republicans as well. "Burying the Hatchet" was the headline used by the News and Courier to describe the Republican Convention when the "Patterson, Moses and Elliott wing" swung in support of Chamberlain--"as soon as it was clear that he had cast off his new-made friends, meaning the white citizens."[35] The News and Courier criticized the implications manifest in the realignment, even to the point of questioning the motives and morals of the Governor.

> As a sincere reformist, Governor Chamberlain could not receive the approval of the Patterson faction. As the candidate of the Patterson faction, no honest citizen can afford to give Governor Chamberlain moral or other support.[36]

---

[34] Union Herald, September 22, 1876, cited by Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, pp. 360-362.

[35] News and Courier, September 15, 1876.

[36] Ibid., September 19, 1876.

By his action in the Hamburg affair, Chamberlain virtually severed his ties with the Conservatives. He had had to take this step to avoid losing essential Negro support within his own party. There had always been the danger that this support and his informal association with the Conservatives would prove incompatible. Now, at the crossroads, he was forced by Conservative policy to renounce that connection and go with his own party.

CHAPTER VI

REDEMPTION AND AFTERWARDS

What had begun in the up-country community of Hamburg spread throughout the State, making of the campaign a series of racial conflicts. More subtle, and certainly more in line with Captain Dawson's conservative inclinations were the silent economic pressures to keep the black population in subservience. These tactics had been used repeatedly in the past, with only indifferent success; now it was planned to pursue them more systematically. Editorials in the News and Courier reflect the methods employed: whites were urged to show preference to "Hampton Labor," or Democratic Negroes; merchants who refused to give credit to "Chamberlain Negroes" were cited and praised; and a planter in Greenville who promised more wages in the event of Hampton's election was celebrated as an example for good citizens to imitate.[1]

Although Negro violence was less formidable in the long run than white, scattered incidents were nonetheless frightening to the white citizenry. Workers in the rice fields of Colleton County went on strike--a unique economic

---

[1]News and Courier, October 14, 1876.

occurrence in itself, but even more so when the strikes grew to rioting. By July 1876 passions in the black community had reached the danger point. On July 10 they held a mass meeting in Charleston to denounce the slaughter of Negroes at Hamburg. A week later at a similar meeting black men declared that they would fight if confronted with another such outrage. "Put Chamberlain out if he don't stand by us," cried one voice from the crowd. Others speculated whether, in the eyes of the Republican party, "a colored man's life was as good as a white man's."[2] On September 6 riots broke out in Charleston and Negro "rioters held King Street, the main thoroughfare, from midnight until sunrise."[3]

On October 17 Chamberlain ordered the Democratic Rifle Clubs around the State to disperse, and he got the President to reinforce the eight companies of Federal troops already in the State. "By election day there were more federal soldiers in South Carolina than at any other time since the close of the war."[4]

On October 30 Wade Hampton made a triumphant campaign appearance in Charleston. The News and Courier paid its tribute: "It is time that Charleston put on her gayest

---

[2]News and Courier, July 18, 1876.

[3]New York Times, September 8, 1876, p. 5, quoted in Williamson, After Slavery, p. 272.

[4]Williamson, After Slavery, p. 270.

robes, for the bridegroom of Carolina is at hand."[5] Three days before his arrival every business house in the city had signed and published an agreement to close, stop everything else, and release the entire population for the procession and speechmaking on the thirtieth.[6] In the line of carriages conveying the candidate into the city was Francis W. Dawson, who subsequently reminisced that the News and Courier had "regained whatever popularity it lost in the first half of 1876 before the second half of the year was over."[7]

On November 7, 1876 the election was held, involving the Presidency as well as State offices. Considering its prelude the South Carolina election was notably lacking in violence. No doubt the presence of Federal troops served to mitigate the intense mutual hostility felt by Democrats and Republicans. But the troops did not prevent cheating or intimidation. That Negroes were kept from the polls in large numbers is generally conceded. It is impossible to determine the degree of fraud and intimidation, but by comparison with the State census of 1875, more ballots were cast than there were eligible voters. In all but four counties, the voters were classified as to color. Reputable

---

[5]News and Courier, October 27, 1876.

[6]Williams, Red Shirts, p. 332.

[7]News and Courier, July 25, 1878.

white men boasted openly of having voted eighteen to twenty times in the election. There were uncountable irregularities, and massive fraud was charged in Edgefield and Laurens counties.[8]

Under law the Board of State Canvassers (appointed by Chamberlain) was to disclose the results of the election except for the offices of Governor and Lieutenant Governor, which were to be canvassed by the General Assembly after its organization. The Board also entertained judicial powers to hear and determine the legality of election procedures. It was tacitly understood, however, that the party which controlled the Legislature would "count in" its candidates for Governor and Lieutenant Governor.

Under the circumstances both sides claimed victory. Two days prior to the date set for assemblage of the Legislature, President Grant sent a telegram to General Ruger, commander of the troops in South Carolina, recognizing Chamberlain as Governor--his first term had not yet expired, regardless of the election outcome--and directing the General to sustain him in his authority against domestic violence.[9]

Meanwhile the Democrats initiated proceedings in the State Supreme Court to prevent the Board of Canvassers from performing its function. But while the case was pending,

---

[8]Simkins and Woody, South Carolina During Reconstruction, p. 515.

[9]U. S. Grant, telegram to General Ruger, November 26, 1876, in Allen, Chamberlain's Administration, p. 435.

and to the Democrats' chagrin, the Board proceeded to canvass the votes anyway. It declared that irregularities and frauds in Edgefield and Laurens made it impossible to determine who was chosen to the Legislature in those counties--in effect, declaring the election there void and leaving them without representation. Certificates of election to the House of Representatives were issued by the Secretary of State to fifty-nine Republicans and fifty-seven Democrats, leaving eight vacancies from Edgefield and Laurens. In the Senate, the Republicans were declared to hold a majority of five, with two vacancies.

On November 28, the new House and Senate met, refused seats to the Democratic claimants from Edgefield and Laurens, and proceeded to canvass the votes for Governor and Lieutenant Governor. The Edgefield and Laurens votes were thrown out. Chamberlain was declared the winner by 86,216 votes to Hampton's 83,071, and he was inaugurated on December 7, 1876.

Meanwhile, when the Legislature refused to seat the Democratic contestants, the entire Democratic membership withdrew and declared itself to be the constitutional Legislature with a legal quorum--fifty-seven members holding certificates plus eight from Edgefield and Laurens. They in turn canvassed the votes, and nineteen days after Chamberlain had been inaugurated, declared victory for Wade Hampton.

On December 21 a mass meeting was held in Charleston to support Hampton. Dawson was selected to draw up a resolution calling for the establishment of a Democratic State government. It declared

> that the pretended government of which Daniel H. Chamberlain is the head has no power, force or authority save that which is given it by the continuous support and actual use of the United States troops. It is the creature of political fraud and armed force. Without that armed force it is as impotent as it is audacious and unlawful.[10]

In addition, Dawson supported a plan whereby the whites should refuse to pay taxes to the Chamberlain government, and instead voluntarily pay ten percent of the previous year's levy to the Hampton administration. Whites were also encouraged to refrain from buying land being sold for taxes. "That meeting," noted Dawson later on his copy of the resolutions, "in cutting off the supplies from Chamberlain, sealed his fate."[11]

For four anxious months the dual government co-existed. But Chamberlain rapidly lost ground. Although retiring President Grant supported the Chamberlain government with Federal troops, he did not formally recognize it, leaving that decision for the incoming President. The Supreme Court of South Carolina, however, did take a stand by adjudging Hampton to be Governor and the Democratic claimants the lawful legislature. Consequently, in spite

---

[10] News and Courier, December 22, 1876.

[11] F. W. Dawson Papers, December 1876, Duke University.

of Chamberlain's probable majority vote among the people, he was sustained in his position only by the presence of Federal troops. The contest was taken to Washington, where the presidency itself was in dispute.

Democrat Samuel J. Tilden won a majority of the reported national popular vote in the Presidential contest, but he had only 184 undisputed electoral votes, one less than the number needed to elect him. Republican Rutherford B. Hayes held 165 undisputed electoral votes, twenty short of the necessary majority. Of the remaining twenty disputed votes, one was in Oregon and the others were in three Southern states which both parties claimed to have carried: South Carolina with seven electoral votes, Florida with four, and Louisiana with eight.

On January 29, 1877, Congress created an Electoral Commission of fifteen members--five from the House, five from the Senate, and five from the Supreme Court--to decide which of the electoral votes were valid. On February 23, by a vote of eight to seven, the commission assigned every one of the disputed votes to Hayes. There is evidence of an "informal understanding" between Hayes and Southern Democrats. It was made clear that if elected he would follow a conciliatory policy toward the South including political non-interference and the withdrawal of troops, thereby allowing the Republican regimes in Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina to be overthrown. Presumably in the light of these intentions, Southern Democrats in Congress agreed

not to filibuster against the Electoral Commission result, and allowed Hayes to be counted in.

Nineteen days after Hayes was inaugurated Hampton and Chamberlain were asked on March 24, 1877, to come to Washington to talk with the new President. Interestingly, Hampton was accompanied by a committee of Charleston businessmen including Captain Francis W. Dawson.[12] Shortly after the two delegations returned from Washington, the troops were withdrawn from South Carolina, and on April 10 Chamberlain peacefully surrendered the government to Hampton. The News and Courier heralded the event: "It is finished . . . achieved at last . . . the noblest work ever undertaken in South Carolina."[13]

Anxious to present their case to the State and Nation, the Democrats sought to prove that every Republican in South Carolina was either corrupt, incompetent or both. A supposedly bipartisan legislative committee was selected to investigate the frauds of the previous regime. In fact, Republicans on the committee were "hand picked by the Democratic managers and were themselves in the process of changing their political clothes."[14] Some of the charges backfired. Dawson himself was accused of conspiring to rob the state treasury as part of the public printing frauds of

---

[12] Logan, "Francis W. Dawson," p. 158.

[13] News and Courier, April 11, 1877.

[14] Williamson, After Slavery, p. 414.

the Scott administration. However the committee exonerated him by crediting his denial of having paid improper fees or charged exorbitant rates in connection with the State printing.[15] Eighteen months after Hampton took over, the grand jury of Richland County, sitting at Columbia, returned an indictment against Chamberlain and four others for conspiracy to defraud the State. These charges all referred to the years preceding Chamberlain's gubernatorial term. Bail was fixed and given at $20,000.[16]

In the Spring of 1879, Democrats and Republicans made a general political settlement in South Carolina. Republicans promised to drop a variety of Federal charges which they had brought against Democrats for their conduct in the election of 1876. In exchange Democrats agreed to dismiss the charges pending against Republicans in the State courts. The arrangement was largely engineered by Dawson and three Congressmen, E. W. M. Mackey, a Republican, and M. C. Butler and M. P. O'Connor, Democrats. A "private and confidential" letter of April 17, 1879 from O'Connor to Dawson indicated the terms which were informally agreed to by Governor Hampton and President Hayes. Among other things it proposed that the federal courts continue to the November term all election and political cases; the State would postpone all quasi-political cases now pending, including those

---

[15]Fraud Report, pp. 213-238.

[16]Ibid., pp. 7-208.

growing out of the state elections; and the State would permanently discontinue all such cases, upon the United States discontinuing the election and political cases. This proposal was presumably accepted with some minor changes. Hence no other punitive measures were taken against Chamberlain or other Reconstruction Republican officials.[17]

After "Redemption" Dawson continued as editor of the *News and Courier*, remaining active in regional politics and as a promoter of Charleston's industrial and commercial interests. By 1889 he became involved in another bitter political campaign, this time against the up-country agrarian candidate for governor, Benjamin R. Tillman. The white masses had shown themselves to be a power in 1876. They came to resent Hampton and the mercantile clique which surrounded him. "They were angered that the merchants of the towns, a class which came into greater prominence during Reconstruction, were able through high prices and high interest rates on loans, to appropriate much of the profits of their farms."[18] Tillman became their spokesman and leader. To Dawson a fight against "Tillmanism" was a fight for the leadership of Charleston and the low-country in

---

[17]The correspondence and propositions regarding the settlement are preserved in the Dawson manuscripts, Duke University, April 17-April 21, 1879.

[18]Simkins and Woody, *South Carolina During Reconstruction*, p. 552.

controlling the politics of the State. In the end, Tillman and his party triumphed over Hampton--a triumph for the plain man and the decline of the Bourbon aristocracy. But that is another story, and one which Dawson never saw to the end.

The conservative editor was shot to death on March 12, 1889, by a Charleston physician named McDow. McDow claimed to have acted in self defense when Dawson came to his home to reproach him for his conduct toward a domestic employed in the Dawson household. McDow waited over three hours before reporting the death, which occurred well over an hour after the shot was fired. In addition there was strong evidence to indicate that he tried rather unsuccessfully to dispose of the body.[19] Oddly enough, the doctor was acquitted by the jury and set free. The jury was composed of seven Negroes and five whites; many believed that their decision sprang from Dawson's recent editorial policy of favoring resort to speedy lynchings in cases of Negroes involved in rape attempts.[20]

Dawson's death was as inscrutable as his birth. Somehow we think the Captain would have been rather pleased with the curiosity and aura of mystery which surrounded his life--his entrance into and departure from the South

---

[19] News and Courier, March 13, 1889.

[20] F. Warrington Dawson II, News and Courier, December 7, 1930. See Logan, "Francis W. Dawson" for corresponding opinion.

Carolina society where he functioned publicly for a quarter century. Just as we think he must have relished the speculation and anxiety which his appearance on Broad Street, vis a vis Colonel Rhett, had created some thirteen years earlier. He would, we think, have frowned upon the total disclosure which we dubiously demand of our public figures today. And if, as some say, there is some kind of life after this, we can imagine Dawson telling a story of his death--half embellished and half forgotten where it suits his purposes--but one certain to be entertaining.

Chamberlain was forty-two years old when he left the Governorship. Shortly after turning over the government to Hampton, he moved to New York, where he established himself in a profitable law practice. In 1882 he traveled in Europe for a year, returning to become a non-resident professor of Constitutional Law in Cornell University. Later still, during the '80's, Chamberlain returned to South Carolina as receiver for the South Carolina Railroad and spent several years there. In 1897 he retired from his profession, and for five years lived on the old family homestead at West Brookfield, Massachusetts. After the death of his son in 1902, he sold the place in an effort to dispel his grief. The next four years were spent in South Carolina and in extensive foreign travel. Chamberlain settled in Charlottesville, Virginia in 1906, but soon entered the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore where he died of cancer

on June 23.

Just as Chamberlain never lost his attachment for South Carolina, his respect for Captain Dawson never wavered. In 1887 he nostalgically renewed his correspondence with the editor:

> It's no use! The old love will not off. I want to keep au courant with matters generally in South Carolina and I must have the N & C.[21]
>
> You see I am resuming somewhat my old habit of conferring with you a little confidentially. . . .[22]

There is evidence that the correspondence was prolific. On one occasion, after an absence from home, Chamberlain wrote, "I find your several letters with encloseures and I lose no time in acknowledging their receipt."[23] For the most part the letters were devoted to the new tariff law, on which both men agreed as advocates of free trade. After Dawson's death, Chamberlain continued to keep in touch with South Carolina, corresponding with J. C. Hemphill, Dawson's successor as editor of the News and Courier, about various political matters.[24]

By this time Chamberlain's political views were hardly distinguishable from those of Dawson, Hemphill or other Bourbon Democrats who overthrew him. In 1890

---

[21] D. H. Chamberlain to F. W. Dawson, December 21, 1887, F. W. Dawson Scrapbook II, Dawson Papers, Duke University.

[22] Ibid., December 8, 1888.

[23] Ibid., February 13, 1887.

[24] W. R., F. C. R. R. Hemphill Papers, Duke University.

Chamberlain addressed himself to the "Race Problem in the South" and showed a drastic reversal in his thinking compared with the views he had expressed thirteen years before.

> Recently a business errand has taken me to the State which was for twelve years my home. I have for several months mingled freely with all classes in the State. I find, almost without exception, harmonious and friendly relations existing between the two races, except upon the subject of political parties: I find that on this latter topic the relations of the races are far less embittered than they were before 1876. I find the negro more industrious than ever before, and I find him contented and happy, except when he is incited to political activity or unrest by the professional or party politicians who still keep his ear. . . .

The immediate problem as Chamberlain saw it in 1890 was whether the North had any right or obligation to interfere in the political affairs of the South in order to secure a "free and full vote of the colored race." He concluded that such action would be both immoral and illegal. He argued:

> The negro has been helped as no race was ever helped before. . . . The whole power of the United States was at his call for eight years, and what was the result of it all? Am I wrong when I say the result was that the negro in South Carolina, in Mississippi, in Louisiana, is unequal to supporting a respectable or substantial government? . . . I confess I would not again put the negro, if I could, in the positions he held in 1876. . . . If the State neglects or refuses to punish the offender or to enforce the rights denied, Congress is powerless to legislate respecting it, and the whole general government in all its separate and aggregate powers and departments is powerless to act. Such is our constitutional system as interpreted and fixed by our highest Court. . . .[25]

---

[25] Daniel H. Chamberlain, "The Race Problem at the South," New Englander, LII (June, 1890), 507-527.

On June 27, 1904, Chamberlain wrote to Hemphill enclosing an article he had written on the "Negro Problem," with the following comments:

> A few persons have known of the preparation of the paper and I have been much beset with urgings to have it published; and at last I have concluded that I prefer to have it appear in the News and Courier rather than anywhere else.[26]

The article is naive in its failure to explain why people act as they do; it is theoretical and should be read in its entirety to be believed or appreciated. Chamberlain, concerned with the problem of lynching, began: "My answer is to stop the crime." The surprise comes when he makes clear which "crime" he refers to. Lynchings are deplorable, he declared, but

> If half the energy and thought and money that is now wasted in [Negro] pulpits and politics and schools were devoted to one grand overwhelming crusade against the crime, the nameless crime which first caused lynchings [Negro assaults on white women], the monstrous thing could be stamped out. . . . If all the agencies now working for the Negro race were turned to this single end for the next decade more could be done to forward the Negroes' welfare than all that Hampton or Tuskegee or all the other educational and religious institutions have done or could ever do.

As for the white man, Chamberlain reasoned:

> With the abatement and extinction through the actions of the Negroes themselves of the crime which first caused lynching, only the old tried, commonplace virtues are wanted on the part of the white race.[27]

---

[26]D. H. Chamberlain to J. C. Hemphill, June 27, 1904, Hemphill Papers, Duke University.

[27]D. H. Chamberlain article, <u>News and Courier</u>, August 1, 1904.

What caused this reversal in views? Professor Richard Current in his Introduction to Reconstruction in Retrospect suggests that Chamberlain's later expressions reflect the attitude of inherent Negro inferiority which permeated the North as well as the South by the turn of the century. Indeed Chamberlain's sentiments appear representative of what Professor Current terms the "tired white idealist" who having seen to it that the Negro obtained political equality, retired from his labors with good conscience.[28] By 1890 Chamberlain for all practical purposes had abandoned his earlier political equalitarianism altogether and taken up the social Darwinism of the late 19th century, which American aphorized in such pat phrases as: "God helps those who help themselves."

Chamberlain's views on other matters changed too. The religious convictions of his youth receded. But frankness in attitude and expression remained his constant companion. Only months before his death he wrote a treatise entitled, "Some Conclusions of a Free Thinker," with instructions that it not be opened until after his death. In essence, the document was a formal denial of God and an afterlife. Characteristically critical, composed and calm, he gave his reasons for venturing into such a controversial subject: "When one believes one has found the right way,

---

[28]Richard Nelson Current (ed.), Reconstruction in Retrospect (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969) Introduction, pp. xiv-xv.

what is there for one but to fare forward in the never-ending quest of truth. . . ." It was composed under strenuous circumstances while he was confined in the Johns Hopkins Hospital, where he died.

> I little cared whether or not it killed me, and I was actually so weak that when I had partially raised myself on the pillow and had my pencil in my hand, I could write only a dozen or twenty words, and then give up exhausted and panting. It was wrote during five long days, and then from my notes, indecipherable to any one but me, I dictated it to a stenographer. What I did now seems almost incredible even to myself. Considering the circumstances, I must consider it the greatest feat of my life. I reckon it shows how the spirit can triumph over the flesh.[29]

Some thirty-six years earlier Chamberlain had gone South--young, idealistic and enthusiastic. Since then life had been a struggle. To him death was a release. Contemplating his deduction that "Death ends all," he said: "It summarily puts a quietus on the painful and gloomy thought of a system of future rewards and punishments which has so long harrassed the world. . . . It has," he said, "its reliefs and compensations."[30]

Chamberlain and Dawson, one as Governor of South Carolina and the other as its most important editor, were representatives of certain tendencies within their respective parties. They demonstrated that even in Reconstruction

---

[29] Chamberlain, "Free Thinker," p. 176.

[30] Ibid., p. 194.

South Carolina, social and economic aspirations frequently transcended party lines. Race was the great divider, which broke the back of the short lived alliance. Fusion failed because it overlooked the racial fears which animated the great mass of white voters. Unable to prevent the establishment of Negro suffrage, unable to control it after it had been established, the fusionist ultimately joined with his straight-out brothers to overthrow even the conservative and often congenial Republicanism of Daniel H. Chamberlain.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

A. Manuscripts

Dawson, Francis Warrington. Papers. Duke University Archives.

Bulk of letters were from Captain Dawson to his wife, including frequent references to the political situation in South Carolina during period covered by this paper. Of significance in giving personal opinions as opposed to journalistic sentiments. In addition, numerous letters from Governor Chamberlain to the editor which proved invaluable in tracing the relationship from 1874 to 1876.

Dawson, Francis Warrington. Scrapbook, I and II. Duke University Archives.

Additional letters from Chamberlain after 1876. Also editorials from New York _Sun_ which implicated Chamberlain and Dawson in a fraudulent relationship.

Hemphill, W. R., F. C., R. R. Papers. Duke University Archives.

Simpson, William Dunlap. Papers. Duke University Archives.

B. Printed

Allen, Walter. _Governor Chamberlain's Administration in South Carolina: A Chapter of Reconstruction in the Southern States_. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, The Knickerbocker Press, 1888.

Hopelessly uncritical, although copious and accurate in its compilation of original sources. Used extensively for letters, speeches, newspaper articles.

Chamberlain, Daniel H. "The Race Problem at the South," New Englander, LII (June, 1890), 507-527.

Chamberlain, Daniel H. "Some Conclusions of a Free Thinker," North American Review, CLXXXVI (October, 1894), 175-194.

[Dawson, Francis Warrington.] A Catholic Soldier [by the Rev. Joseph W. Reeks. London, 1889.]

Dawson, Francis Warrington. The Public Press: An Address Delivered Before the State Press Association by Capt. F. W. Dawson at Spartanburg, S. C., May 10th, 1876. Charleston, S. C.: The News and Courier Job Presses, 1876.

Dawson, Francis Warrington. Reminiscences of Confederate Service. Charleston, S. C.: The News and Courier Job Presses, 1882.

Green, James. "Personal Recollections of Hon. Daniel H. Chamberlain, Ex-Governor of South Carolina," The Worcester Historical Society Proceedings for the Year 1907, XXIII (Worcester, Mass., 1908), 257-269.

The Medium, Abbeville, South Carolina. Captain Francis W. Dawson: First Vice-President of the South Carolina State Press Association. [Abbeville, S. C. ? 1876.]

News and Courier. Charleston, South Carolina, 1874-1907.

Letters of Dawson from Chamberlain and editorials from this paper constitute major part of material used. Editorials were used to determine not only Dawson's political attitudes but his feeling toward the Governor, as regrettably there are no surviving letters from Dawson to Chamberlain. Moreover the paper is of value in presenting conflicting opinions, as reprints from newspapers of the State and Nation appeared almost daily. Although these articles are disposed of journalistically in the editorials, they nevertheless are presented in entirety and show cross currents of opinion. The news is handled adeptly and for the most part appears based on fact--so much so that practically every secondary work cites the News and Courier as evidence of events of South Carolina during the period. Prior to 1874, the paper is cited as the News.

[O'Neal, Belton.] "Political Conditions of South Carolina," Atlantic Monthly, XXXIX (February, 1877), 177-194.

Interesting account of the last days of Reconstruction, favorable to Chamberlain and the Republican party.

Proceedings in the Ku Klux Trials, at Columbia, S. C. in the United States Circuit Court, November Term, 1871. Columbia, S. C.: Republican Printing Company, 1872.

South Carolina. General Assembly. Report of the Joint Investigating Committee on Public Frauds and Election of Hon. J. J. Patterson to the United States Senate made to the General Assembly of South Carolina at the Regular Session of 1877-78. Columbia, 1878. Cited as Fraud Report.

1700 page report. Biased as it is voluminous. Four or five selected cases investigated with usually the same seventy-five witnesses giving similar testimony.

South Carolina. General Assembly. Senate. Journal of the Senate of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina being the Regular Session of 1874-75. Republican Printing Company, State Printers, 1875.

South Carolina, General Assembly. Senate. Journal of the Senate of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina being the Regular Session of 1875-76. Republican Printing Company, State Printers, 1876.

South Carolina. General Assembly. House. Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of South Carolina for the Regular Session of 1874-1875. Columbia: Republican Printing Company, 1875.

South Carolina. General Assembly. House. Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of South Carolina for the Regular Session of 1875-1876. Columbia: Republican Printing Company, 1876.

The above Journals used to determine those legislators who supported or opposed the Governor's policies.

Thompson, Henry T. Ousting the Carpetbagger from South Carolina. 2nd ed., Columbia, S. C.: R. L. Bryan and Company, 1927.

Extremely biased account of a South Carolina Democrat's eyewitness view of the last days of Reconstruction.

Williams, Alfred B. Hampton and His Red Shirts: South Carolina's Deliverance in 1876. 2nd ed., Charleston, S. C.: Walker, Evans and Cogswell Co., 1935.

Attempt by South Carolinian to smear all Republicans connected with Reconstruction. Lively and vivid descriptions by a contemporary of the period.

Secondary Works

Biographical Directory of the Senate of the State of South Carolina, 1776-1964. Compiled under the direction of the Senatorial Research Committee by Emily Bellinger Reynolds and Joan Reynolds Faunt. Columbia, S. C. Archives Department, 1964.

Used in conjunction with the Journals of the Senate and the House in determining economic status and background of the legislators. Unfortunately the party affiliation and race of the member is often omitted; these would have proved valuable for my purposes.

Blesser, Carol K. Rothrock. The Promised Land: The History of the South Carolina Land Commission, 1869-1890.

The only work on the South Carolina Land Commission. Discriminating and thorough.

Current, Richard Nelson (ed.). Reconstruction in Retrospect. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969.

A compiliation of several early 20th century essays by men directly involved with Reconstruction. Convincing attempt by Professor Current to show their complete reversal in attitudes toward Reconstruction, influenced by attitudes of Negro inferiority which permeated North as well as South by turn of the century.

Du Bois, W. E. Burghardt. Black Reconstruction: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880. Philadelphia: Alfred Saifer, 1935.

One of the earlier revisionist writings on Reconstruction. So intent on making a case for the Negro, often unreliable value judgments. Hostile account of Chamberlain.

Fowler, Wilton B. "A Carpetbagger's Conversion to White Supremacy," The North Carolina Historical Review, XLIII (July, 1966), 286-304.

Step-by-step account of Chamberlain's transformation from equalitarian to racist.

Johnson, Allen (ed.). Dictionary of American Biography. Vol. III. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929.

Logan, S. Frank. "Francis W. Dawson: 1840-1899." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1947. 344p. mimeographed.

Critical and seemingly fair account of the life of Dawson and his influence on politics of the State. Salient features include: author's interviews with members of the Dawson family, private letters made available to the author by the family, very good annotated bibliography.

Massachusetts. Adjutant General. Massachusetts Soldiers, Sailors and Marines in the Civil War. Vol. VI. Norwood, Mass., 1933, pp. 492-544.

Randall, J. G. and Donald, David. The Civil War and Reconstruction. 2nd ed., Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1961.

Background material. Used in determining overall impact of Reconstruction on national situation and vice versa.

Reynolds, John S. Reconstruction in South Carolina, 1865-1877. New York. Negro Universities Press Reprint, 1969.

Example of early writings on Reconstruction. Copyright 1905. Hostile to Negro and hostile to Chamberlain as friend of the Negro.

Simkins, Francis B. "The Election of 1876 in South Carolina," The South Atlantic Quarterly, XXI (July and October, 1922), 225-240, 335-351.

Unflattering view of Chamberlain as the dupe of Dawson and the Charleston Conservatives.

Simkins, Francis B. "New Viewpoints of Southern Reconstruction," Journal of Southern History, V (February 1939), 49-61.

Simkins, Francis B., and Woody, Robert Hillard. South Carolina During Reconstruction. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1932.

The first reliable account of South Carolina in this period. Considering the date of publication unusually fair-minded toward the Negro and the white Reconstructionist. Best in describing the social and economic forces at work in the State.

Stampp, Kenneth M., and Litwack, Leon F. (eds.). Reconstruction; an Anthology of Revisionist Writing. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969.

Williamson, Joel. After Slavery: The Negro in South Carolina During Reconstruction: 1861-1877. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1965.

The best account of the Negro in South Carolina during the period. Most important and useful secondary source consulted.

Woody, Robert Hillard. Republican Newspapers of South Carolina: 1860-1880. Southern Sketches, No. 10, 1st Series. Charlottesville, Virginia: Historical Printing Company, 1936.

Critical resume of Republican newspapers in South Carolina during period. Of use in evaluating contents of News and Courier and other papers of the State.