ANY study of either the political or military campaigns of the Civil War presents many conspicuous and notable figures whose names have gone down in history and will pass on to posterity. These outstanding characters are all men. Woman’s place at that time was at the “fireside of the heart.” Public advocacy of women’s rights was just beginning to make its first faint murmurings.

It is my privilege and purpose in this limited biographical sketch to present a woman, who at a very youthful age made her appearance among the men of public affairs. Recognized for her inherent talent and accepted by them she fought as earnest a battle for the abolition of slavery and the preservation of the Union as any soldier who sacrificed his life on the battle front in the same cause. Her name was heralded throughout the country and she was rewarded for her services as no other American woman had been before. To the people of the twentieth century she is quite unknown. That her name has been lost in obscurity may be attributed to many reasons, but to reasons that in no way would reflect on her claim to fame. Our nation as a “free country”—free from human bondage—owes a great debt to Anna Elizabeth Dickinson.

Anna Dickinson was born in Philadelphia on October 28, 1842. It is just a date, but what a significant epoch for this girl baby!
It was during this striking period of the century that the anti-slavery agitation in the north became militant, and its defenders renounced all the guarantees that had hitherto protected slavery. Agitators of the new movement demanded immediate emancipation without indemnification to the slave owners. To them emancipation came before and above the preservation of the Union. Some of these accepted William Lloyd Garrison's lawless measures, others preferred to follow peaceful and legal methods, and still others under cover of darkness helped fugitive slaves to a safe refuge in the north.

Antislavery agitators had been mobbed in New York. Elijah Lovejoy had been murdered, the "gag rule" had been passed in Congress and Texas had been annexed. After the Mexican War and the discovery of gold in California came the great territorial adjustments with the attendant sectional jealousies, which were temporarily lulled by the Compromise of 1850. Such was the situation in the United States when Anna Dickinson was born and grew into girlhood. How strongly these disturbing national affairs must have been impressed upon her can readily be understood when we learn that her father was a staunch member of the Anti-Slavery Society in Philadelphia and a public speaker for the cause, and that his home was a station of the Underground Railroad.

Her mother, Mary Edmondson, was descended from a long line of "Friends" who came from England and settled near Easton, Delaware in 1660, and also in a direct line from the early settlers of Maryland and Virginia. Anna's father, John Dickinson, also was a descendant of these early Maryland Friends, but his branch of the family came up into Pennsylvania early in the seventeenth century, some settling in Chester county and some in Berks. His father was a cousin of General John Dickinson of Revolutionary fame. From its inception he was a member of the Liberty Party and was a delegate to the convention of the party that nominated J. G. Birney to the Presidency of the United States; he was also

a presidential elector in the ensuing campaign. He was one of a
handful who in their protest for personal liberty and freedom of
tongue and pen forced their way into Pennsylvania Hall in Phila-
delphia on the evening that it was burned. John died before
any lasting trace could be graved on the face of his youngest
child Anna, then two years old, but the first impression of him
that she learned from others was that he spent his last evening at
an antislavery meeting and fifteen minutes of the last thirty of
his life in making an antislavery speech—dead in his prime from
a heart attack brought on by the vigor of his address!

Thus from this orthodox Quaker family with its strong anti-
slavery convictions came Anna Elizabeth, the youngest of five,
who was destined to render brilliant patriotic service to the nation.

After the husband's death Mary Dickinson became both father
and mother to her five children, and as the mercantile business had
failed shortly before this event, the family was left in destitute
circumstances. Undaunted, she opened a school in her own home
and took in boarders, having to practice self-denial at every turn
in order to make ends meet. So it was that under her close
tutelage Anna received the beginnings of an education. Though
the latter was said to have acquired from her father her inherent
gift of silvered speech, it was to her mother she owed the oppor-
tunity to acquire the sound education in English which gave her
such a strong grip on the language.

How far the mother carried on Anna's formal education is not
learned, but before the child was ten years old she was entered
at the Friend's Select School in Philadelphia under the patronage
of the Forrest Estate, where except for two years at the West-
town Boarding School, she remained until she was a little more
than fifteen and a half years of age. Though all in all she received
but a rudimentary formal education she gave evidence of an excel-

lent mind, studious habits, and a retentive memory.

While still in attendance at the Friend's School, when only
fourteen years old, she wrote an article on slavery for the Libe-

ator,* having read in a local paper of the tar and feathering of a Kentucky school-teacher who had dared utter his sentiments on the institution of slavery. She wrote from a bursting heart—a heart full of the radical, uncompromising convictions of the abolitionists. It is not surprising that she should echo every sound and feeling and thought of those with whom she spent her daily life; but it is equally true, that as she grew older and more mature and experienced she was still as firm, if not firmer, in these very convictions.

At the age of fifteen Anna felt that the burden upon her mother for the support of the family was too great and "with the determination to stand on her own feet she did not wait for the day of Radicalism to act on the belief that regardless of sex environment a girl could and should make her way in the world as surely as a boy." She became first a copyist for a publishing house and taught a country district school for a term.

It was at the tender age of seventeen that she first burst forth into public-speaking and subsequent world fame. On April 3, 1860, she attended an open forum where all types of reform movements were espoused at Clarkson Hall in Philadelphia. At this particular period the hall was possessed by the "Friends of Progress," a group made up, to quote Anna herself, of "both wise and otherwise; of philosophers and fools; of helpers and hinderers; of devoted and atheists; of some sound in purse and position; and some 'bears' who must speak or burst."

At this meeting such a "bear" was speaking. He was well known locally, bristling and dictatorial, with an insufferable manner. He shook his finger and bawled: "I have daughters. My daughters are as good and bright as any man's daughters. They can do as much as any man's daughters. But they cannot be doctors, nor lawyers, nor preachers, nor bank presidents, nor college professors, nor brokers, nor traders. They cannot be anything but just what they are, housekeepers; nothing that their brothers could or might be." And with an added insolence of manner and an extra wag of his beefy finger, he concluded, "if my daughters cannot be, no man's daughter can be."

Her blood running like a flame brought the little Quaker girl

*See Liberator, Feb. 22, 1856.
to her feet. She knew nothing of parliamentary form nor of debate's restraint, but she cried forth a good many truths in sentences long forgotten, but this is recorded: "You, sir, you say that what your daughters cannot be, no man's daughter can be; that your daughters are incapable of being doctors, lawyers, priests, business-men, bank presidents, authors, editors. In a word, sir, as you yourself have summed it up, that your daughters are fools! In heaven's sake, sir, what else is to be expected of such a father?" This is how Anna Dickinson came to make her first speech. Emboldened by this effort and encouraged by friends, she went back a week later to attend another meeting and after a sneering speech on women's rights by one of the audience, she plunged into such a straightforward and vigorous answer that the audience was captivated by its boldness and audacity.

Mr. Elwood Longshore, who was present, became interested in her. He and his wife, Dr. Hannah Longshore, a pioneer woman physician, parents of Philadelphia's now most distinguished woman, Mrs. Lucretia Blankenburg, became her guardians and advisers. She always reported to the Longshores after a lecture tour and the recital of her experiences so captivated the members of the household that hours and work were entirely forgotten.

After these fiery outbursts on the local forum requests soon came from other places to hear this young orator and the newspapers now proclaimed her the "juvenile Joan of Arc."

In April, 1861, she left her teaching and accepted a position at the Philadelphia Mint. She continued, however, to speak and debate throughout the surrounding countryside, and it was in these heated discussions of the antislavery conventions that she acquired a clear comprehension of the province of laws and constitutions, of the fundamental principles of government and of the rights of man. She read constantly and fed on very solid books such as histories. It may be mentioned in passing that she was not allowed to go to the theatre much as the performances there excited her interest. Curiously enough Napoleon was her great hero.

From the very outset of the Civil War everywhere she spoke her utterances were radical. Although faithful to her duties at the...
mint her extreme criticisms on the conduct of the war and against its leaders cost her the loss of her position. At an antislavery convention at Kennett Square in Chester county, soon after the battle of Ball's Bluff, she said: "Future history will show that this battle was lost, not through ignorance nor incompetence, but through the treason of the commanding general, George B. McClellan, and time will vindicate the truth of my assertion." Though hissed all over the house, she repeated this statement three times. Philadelphia was the home of "Little Mac," then in favor as the ranking officer in the Union army, and the dismissal of the free-spoken miss from the mint soon followed.¹

When Miss Dickinson first offered to speak on the great questions of the hour she had in that field no predecessors. William Lloyd Garrison, who had heard her, was so enthusiastic about her that he invited her to lecture in the Fraternity Course at Boston in 1862 in the same course with such notables as Robert Collyer, Henry Ward Beecher and Wendell Phillips.

From now on Miss Dickinson devoted herself exclusively to public speaking. As popular thought was everywhere centering on national questions, she thought less of the special wrongs of women and of the negroes and more of the causes of revolutions and the true basis of government. Hence she spoke chiefly on the political aspects of the war and thus made herself available in party politics at once.

When not lecturing she visited the hospitals in Philadelphia, where through long conversations with the soldiers she learned much of their personal lives and more of their hardships and experiences on the battlefield. From this fund of information she drew the material for one of her very successful lectures, "Hospital Life," which she delivered in many parts of the country.²

It was this lecture, "Hospital Life," presented at Concord, New Hampshire in the fall of 1862 that proved the turning point of her career. Up to this time most of her speeches had been gratuitous, save for traveling expenses, and she was despairing of making a livelihood in this new field where monetary returns were so small. In this lecture she showed slavery to be the


cause of the war and that the right of the slave to resist oppression was "obedience to God."\textsuperscript{14} She drew such vivid pictures of the horrors of both slavery and war that "with pathos and logic, she melted her audience to tears and won over the most prejudiced."\textsuperscript{16}

The secretary of the Republican State Central Committee heard her at Concord. Fully appreciating her magnetic powers over the audience and convinced that the Republican ticket could be carried if she delivered that lecture throughout the state, he arranged for her to assist in the coming campaign. In the latter part of January, 1863, she began her regular campaign speeches in New Hampshire.\textsuperscript{16}

The eyes of the whole nation were turned to the little state of New Hampshire for the contest to be waged there might well have effected the final destinies of the Union. The Republicans were in control of the state, yet discontent seemed to prevail more widely then ever. The war had been languishing and the previous winter had been more fruitful of defeats for the army than victories.\textsuperscript{17} The party leaders determined to make great efforts to maintain their majority of the previous year, and their plans called for imported speakers, including William Lloyd Garrison and Stephen Foster as well as Anna Dickinson.

Miss Dickinson was no less radical than these other orators. In fact, she was more radical now than several years earlier when she had written her fiery article for the \textit{Liberator}. Indiscreet in expression, always flaming out in passionate accusation or vindication,\textsuperscript{18} nevertheless she was so sincere, earnest and conscientious that she carried her audience with her completely, so completely, that if her hearers had any prejudices when she began to talk, these were soon removed. "She swayed her audiences from the first moment of her electric utterance down to the last syllable. She was a walking encyclopaedia of the events of the war, with all the pages open to her hearers at a glance. She would heap history, fact, proverb, warning, appeal, exhortation in convincing array, sweeping all before her in an avalanche of intellectual force.

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{National Cyclopaedia of Biography}.
\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid.}, II, 40-50.
\textsuperscript{17} \textit{New York World}, March 9, 10, 1863.
\textsuperscript{18} Ida M. Tarbell, "Women in the Civil War," \textit{American Magazine}, April, 1910.
She had her audience alternately crying, laughing, cheering, applauding, and listening with breathless suspense."

When she accepted the contract to go to New England, she was just twenty years old, a full gracefully rounded figure of medium size. She had a well balanced, firmly set head, a rounded oval face and a fresh, healthy complexion. She inclined to the brunet type. Her dark hair, always cut short, lay in full, heavy clusters about her neck. The Napoleonic mould of her jaw expressed energy, which was her leading characteristic. Her features otherwise were well chiseled, her forehead and upper lip of Greek proportions, and her nostrils thin. Her voice was of contralto fullness. Together with all these gifts she possessed a magnetic personality. In speaking, she had that peculiar carriage of the head and shoulders, the former slightly pitched forward and downward, which mark the combative temperament. In these days she invariably wore a plain black silk dress and no jewels. Indeed, she had not yet reached the estate where she could indulge her womanly fancy in luxuries, but that day was soon to come.

For four weeks preceding election day in New Hampshire Anna Dickinson was engaged to make twenty speeches. This was an innovation, having a woman on the hustings. Its influence for good was doubted by many. She was sent up and down the state crying out against slavery, especially in the smaller towns where her managers thought she did most good. On March 14, 1863, the official returns came in informing the world that the Republicans had carried the state. Acknowledgment was made of the credit due Miss Dickinson in this campaign, and the Governor-elect, Gillmore, publicly acknowledged that her eloquent speeches had secured his election.

So fruitful of success had been her efforts in New Hampshire that the Republican State Committee of Connecticut now invited her to aid them in their campaign. She began her work there about March 24, 1863. Now that New Hampshire was safe for

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News Clippings, Anna E. Dickinson Collection in the Library of Congress.

Scrantonian Republican, March 24, 1896.


the Republicans all attention was directed to Connecticut where the contest was to be even hotter. The contest in this state lay between Seymour, a Democrat, and Buckingham, a Republican, for the governorship. It was generally understood that if Seymour were elected Connecticut would contribute no more men or money toward the continuance of the war.\(^2\)\(^4\) The War Democrats objected to all the measures of the Administration, and staking a great deal on the general restlessness and discontent of the people, hoped to carry the state by 10,000 votes.\(^2\)\(^5\) Even the Republicans were disheartened. Not until Anna Dickinson came into the state and "galvanized the despondent loyalists to life," was there any hope for a favorable outcome. She spent but two weeks in Connecticut, yet in that short time she is credited with having completely turned the tide of popular opinion. The halls where she spoke were so densely packed that the Republicans stayed away to make room for the Democrats, and the women were kept out to make room for those who were eligible to vote. There had never been greater enthusiasm over an orator in the country.

Hartford—cold, critical, conservative Hartford—was the scene of her opening speech and it must have been with misgivings and trepidation that the young orator walked upon the stage to face her audience. At the close of her speech there was one enthusiastic movement toward the stage of men and women, who showered welcomes and blessings upon her. For many weary days and nights, up to the last day of the memorable struggle, some of the severest work in the campaign was entrusted to this girl of twenty years.\(^2\)\(^6\)

After this opening and successful speech Miss Dickinson spoke in various parts of the state, especially where the Democrats were strong, and everywhere she addressed an audience, its enthusiasm ran wild. Other outstanding speakers stumped the state, but how influential Anna Dickinson's speeches were in captivating and holding the minds of the masses was expressed when the Union men of the state paid her their highest compliment by inviting

\(^2\)\(^5\) *New York World*, March 13, 1863.
her to give the closing and most important speech in the campaign at Hartford. They were willing to rest their case upon her efforts. Her business was to obtain votes for the right side. To her there could be no question as to which side was right. Therefore, in support of right she gave heart and soul and utmost sincerity, addressing herself to that end with singular adaptation.

The excitement at the election next day was intense. When the news finally came that the state had been saved to the Republicans by just a few hundred votes, those who supported the war went wild. The crowds shouted and hurrahed for Miss Dickinson, who, they felt, had been instrumental in winning the election. They serenaded her with full bands of music, sent her books, flowers and ornaments, and in every possible way tried to show their appreciation and loyalty to this young girl who was devoting her life to her country's cause. The committeemen who had invited her presented her with a gold watch and chain. For every night she had spoken she was given $100 and for the eventful speech on the night before election she received $400.27

The chairman of the State Central Committee of Connecticut in urging a colleague in New York to invite Miss Dickinson to take part in their campaign wrote: "She is a really wonderful woman. . . . Her voice is clear and of sufficient power for any audience you can get, and yet not masculine. She speaks rapidly, but her enunciation is so complete and perfect that not a word is lost. She possesses a remarkably logical and argumentative mind, and she is not wanting in that brilliancy of thought and expression which give life and zest to a public speaker. With a fund of facts and information which would be a fortune for an editor or a politician, she makes her own mark and needs no endorsement after she has spoken. I trust that you will not deny yourself the pleasure of hearing the most eloquent woman of the century in the largest hall you can command in New York."28 It is little wonder then that with the triumphant returns from the New England campaigns for the Administration party and with Miss Dickinson's conspicuous participation in them her distinction as one of the great patriotic orators of the time was recognized and that invi-

tations poured in upon her from the most prominent groups in the country.

Recognizing her distinguished genius and eloquence and her sympathies in the cause for which it stood, the Union League of New York invited her to speak at Cooper Institute. On that occasion many hundreds were unable to obtain admittance. She was introduced by Henry Ward Beecher. For nearly two hours she held that large audience with interest and enthusiasm and electrified them by her earnest appeal to their patriotism. In this speech she bitterly denounced Secretary of State Seward for what she said was "his wavering, temporizing, hesitating, conciliatory policy," accusing him of a design to build up a great temporizing, conciliatory party chosen from conservative Republicans, Whigs, and temperate Democrats, and procuring the coöperation of the South. She condemned wholesale the conduct of the State and War Departments and the general administration of the war, declaring that "those who had shown a disposition to fight the rebellion down were first stricken, as witness Sigel, Butler and Fremont." Anna dared to speak whatever she thought was the truth. She seemed not afraid that her utterances would be distorted, and she did not confine herself to platitudes for fear of being misconstrued. The truth as she saw it she gave expression to; and it seems she had a clear insight into man and his affairs.

Her success at New York was so remarkable that the Union League of Philadelphia invited her to speak at the Academy of Music. This invitation she readily accepted and was greeted by a large audience of her townspeople. Her speech followed the same trend as that in New York, and as usual she severely criticized General George B. McClellan. The Philadelphia newspapers eulogized her beauty, grace and eloquence. It was a pleasant reception to receive in her native city.

Important soldiering in the political field was now demanded in Pennsylvania, for at the fall elections a governor was to be chosen. It was one of the most memorable conflicts in the history of the state. More than 75,000 Pennsylvanians were in the army without the rights of suffrage for they were not at that time per-

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Scrantonian Republican (Pa.), March 24, 1896.
Miscellaneous News Clippings, Anna E. Dickinson Collection in the Library of Congress.
mitted a furlough in order to vote. This contest did not signify merely the election of a governor; it was to be a crucial test as to whether or not the people of Pennsylvania would sustain Lincoln's administration and his prosecution of the war.

The Republicans knew that they must strain every fibre to carry the coming election. They asked Anna Dickinson to assist them and she willingly threw all her energies into the services of her own state. Her engagement was for six weeks. For two weeks of this period the committee sent her up into the coal regions, where the male campaign speakers feared to go as the region was unsettled and restless due to much opposition to the war.

It was on her visit to the mining hamlets that she showed her fearlessness and independence, for in Schuylkill county she was in the hot-bed of the Molly Maguires. Shamokin was the scene of a most thrilling and unpleasant experience. One of the miners, who in a way was a leader and disapproved very much of women speaking in public harassed her in every possible way. He was a very fine marksman. One night at a meeting he drew his revolver and firing, clipped off one of the crisp curls of her short dark hair. She never turned nor hesitated in her speech. Her tormentor was from that moment her devoted champion.

Her Pennsylvania campaign address entitled "The National Crisis," followed very much the tenor of her former addresses. "She seemed, however, to advocate no man or party, but spoke for her own dear country and the dear old flag." Her allusion to the soldiers both in the hospitals and on the battlefields always brought her listeners to tears. There seems no question but that the effectiveness of her speeches lay largely in her inspired eloquence and her absolute earnestness in what she expressed. Although she had played no such conspicuous rôle in the Pennsylvania campaign as she had in that of New Hampshire and of Connecticut, it certainly was a most daring one, which undoubtedly helped to swing public opinion for the administration and the re-election of Governor Curtin by more than a 15,000 majority.

The year 1863 had been a very difficult and trying year. Every political campaign since the beginning of the war had been a des-

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83. Appleton's Encyclopaedia of American Biography.
84. Chicago Evening Post, April 1, 1891.
85. Pottsville (Pa.) Miner's Journal, October 10, 1863.
perate fight for the Administration party to remain in control. Every campaign had been as much a battle for the preservation of the Union as any fought in the fields under military commanders. Anna Dickinson had certainly performed more than one person’s share in the cause which was so critically at stake during the year 1863. Leaders of the Republican party fully appreciated the value of her services and now planned a public recognition of it by inviting her to deliver an address in Washington in the House of Representatives. This without question was the crowning glory of her oratorical achievements during the war and an honor which never before had been tendered any woman. This summons to Washington typified the highest tribute to her genius.

Few speakers, especially those without high official position, had ever been greeted in Washington with an audience at once so numerous and so brilliant as listened to the gifted Miss Dickinson on that Saturday night of January 16, 1864. To have been invited by a committee of illustrious statesmen, to have been tendered by Congress the use of its magnificent hall, to have been saluted by an unusually distinguished and fashionable audience filling the seats and aisles of both floors and galleries, to have been presented by the one and supported by the other of the presiding officers of the Houses of Congress, with the President an eager listener, was no common honor to accord to a mere girl, untitled and almost unknown.

The lecturer spoke from a temporary platform erected in the space fronting the Speaker’s desk, while the Vice-President and Mr. Speaker Colfax occupied seats on either hand. At eight o’clock in the midst of the address President and Mrs. Lincoln entered the House, making the compliment to Miss Dickinson complete. She was speaking on President Lincoln’s administration and the Supreme Court when he came in, but she did not spare her criticisms of the Amnesty Proclamation because of the presence of its author. She said: “The Amnesty Proclamation was a piece of Northern meanness. The government had no right to get down on its knees to the people who were still in arms and who rejected it in disgust. There was another insuperable objection: the President had usurped the functions of the legislature in the offer.” She thereupon declared: “The men of the South...
must be punished! South Carolina should be cut up into 20 acre lots and as many negroes settled on them as can be got there. Other States should be treated as territories to be admitted into the Union as States when ready to do so with free institutions. As it is now no black is sure of his liberty at the close of the war. In the Border States no provision is made for emancipation. We want the wealth of the Border States developed, and slavery must be wiped out from them and the whole land.” Miss Dickinson closed her speech with an earnest appeal to the young men of the country to rush to the help of their brethren and fill the sad rents to be found in every brigade and every regiment. In such a candid and straightforward manner did this young radical address the distinguished audience. Mr. Lincoln sat with bowed head rarely looking Miss Dickinson in the face, but evidently catching every word and probably admiring her courage and honesty.

President Lincoln and Miss Dickinson, it may be pointed out, disagreed on various policies. The President repudiated the great radical doctrines of her speech, such as the confiscation of the real estate in fee of the southerners and its division among the negro race, and also immediate emancipation in the border states. Miss Dickinson, on the other hand, opposed very strongly Lincoln’s “workable policy,” which was one of gradual emancipation and was to rest as far as possible on voluntary state action.

The members of the Republican party were delighted with the success of Miss Dickinson’s speech. It expressed to the fullest the sentiments of the radical wing of the group, and through this spokesman their stand on the coming elections was placed squarely before the public.

The fall of 1864 was to see the election of a President. The radicals, who were strong in Congress and who were displeased with the President’s plan of reconstruction and emancipation, were planning to forestall his renomination by nominating Frémont at a mass-meeting in Cleveland. Before Frémont dropped out of the race, Miss Dickinson in an open letter to the Independent stated her position: “I wish to say: That I have never been in

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Notes, Anna E. Dickinson Collection in the Library of Congress.
favor of the Cleveland Convention and its representative. Last
winter, believing there were men in the country who would make
better presidents than the one we now have, I strove to build up
a public sentiment that would demand and support one of these
‘better’ men. Whatever words I then spoke I believed to be in
the best interests of the country. That has all passed. What
remains is the question! Naught save the heartiest union—the
most persevering work—the most determined support of the party
represented by Lincoln from this morning till election day. Either
this party must triumph, or the country will be led into an ignoble
peace. I shall work for the salvation of my country’s life that
stands at stake, for the defeat of this loyal peace party that will
bring ruin and death if it come into power.”

After this public announcement of her position she entered the
campaign, “not for Lincoln, but for the cause.” Her speeches
were confined largely to denouncing the Democratic platform and
its candidates. She must thoroughly have enjoyed picking flaws
in the Democratic nominee, General George B. McClellan, whom
she had from the beginning of the war distrusted and publicly
accused.

With the election of Lincoln settled Miss Dickinson still had
her greatest battle to fight. Everywhere she spoke she denounced
peace conferences and demanded a rigid prosecution of the war
with no amnesty, nothing but absolute unrelenting war and terms
of unconditional surrender

With the surrender of General Lee the war was formally ended.
But while the people of the north were giving themselves up to
rejoicing and thanksgiving, the dreadful tidings came that Presi-
dent Lincoln had been assassinated. At the untimely death of the
chief executive and leader of her party, though she had opposed
him so strongly, Miss Dickinson was one of the first to lend her
efforts toward the raising of funds for a memorial to him in
Philadelphia. Her lecture on the martyred President earned
$1,000 which she gave to the committee that erected in Fairmount
Park the statue of Abraham Lincoln.

40 Independent, September 3, 1864.
41 Anna E. Dickinson’s Unpublished Manuscripts in the Library of Con-
gress.
Anna Dickinson looked upon the war as a great struggle for human freedom and was unwilling to consider that the real contest was finished until the freemen were given the vote and were in possession of social as well as political privileges. The Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments had been adopted; yet these were found inadequate to protect the political rights of the colored men. The Republican party was casting about for a method to complete its work. Then came the suggestion that a Fifteenth Amendment be proposed which should prohibit disfranchisement on account of race, color and previous condition of servitude. The suggestion is said to have originated at the National Loyalists' Convention held at Philadelphia September 6, 1866, in a consultation of Anna Dickinson, Frederick Douglass and Theodore Tilton, and was in time accepted by the Republican party.

Indeed, Miss Dickinson became quite obsessed with the idea that federal legislation would fully protect the interest of the colored freedmen. To realize this now became her great life interest. Instead of following the hustings she became busily engaged in filling lyceum requests, and these took her all over the country. This gave her an excellent opportunity to get her message across to the people and to swing the public mind in favor of universal suffrage.

The essence of her speeches was that liberty, equality, and fraternity asserted that behind the rights of the federal government and the rights of the several states were fundamental rights more valued than either, namely, the right of the individual to life, liberty and happiness; and that whatever hindered the growth of the individual or restricted his liberty or destroyed his happiness was tyranny, it being his sacred duty to resist it to the death. She demanded a law by Congress asserting that there should be impartial and universal suffrage in every state of the Union as there was no guarantee for impartial suffrage in the south unless there was impartial suffrage throughout the whole land. She pleaded that the Republican party in its next convention for the election of 1868 should make the issue so distinct that there would be no turning back.

The Chicago convention met in May, 1868. Grant was nomi-
uated but the platform failed to include any provision for universal suffrage. Miss Dickinson was intensely disappointed at the delay of the issue, but she was sure “the triumphs were not lost.” And it was not lost, for the next year Congress took the matter in hand and in March, 1870, the measure for which she had so wholly devoted her energies became a part of the national Constitution.

The slave raised to the status of a freeman, the freeman raised to a citizen, the colored citizen raised to political equality with the white man—to realize these things Anna Dickinson had fought for more than ten years and in the prime of her young womanhood saw them all culminate in accomplished fact. She lived through the whole gamut of political victories and defeats which culminated in the glorious reality of freedom for 4,000,000 slaves and also in the ignominious death of their great benefactor. The needs and agonies of the hour called forth the remarkable powers of this young woman, powers of inspired eloquence which she so generously offered in the aid of her country.

The press of her native city, many years after her great work was ended, claimed that no woman born in Philadelphia in the last half of the nineteenth century surpassed her for vigor and audacity of intellect and none had equalled her for eloquence. It was frequently said that she was impracticable in many of her views. This is a common complaint against those daring spirits who are so much in advance of their time. A “radical” (politically) has been defined as one who always claims to act in the name of the sovereign people, and armed with all their powers is above all constitutions and laws, for he is the fountain of all law, the source of all power and right, and of necessity, therefore, above the stream of legal justice. With him “the good of the people is the Supreme Law,” and he is the only judge of what is good for the people. It is true that such radicals forced the issues during the war and in the following period of reconstruction in the name of the sovereign people. Anna Dickinson was not the least of these. Be that as it may one must perforce admit that she stands among the most able champions of human liberty and national unity in the dark days of our civil strife and can truly be called the “Joan of Arc” of the Civil War.