

enough to enable him to pursue a college course. He graduated from Dickinson college in 1829, at the head of his class. He then resumed his teaching, spending his leisure time in reading law. He was admitted to the bar at Chambersburg, Pa., in 1831. He soon afterward removed to Pittsburg, where he commenced the practice of his profession. In 1836 he removed to Michigan, then a territory, and settled at Monroe, where he was again examined for admission to the bar, which examination he sustained with great credit to himself, gaining warm compliments from such rigid disciplinarians as A. D. Frazer, Warner Wing and others who were then at the head of the Michigan bar. After his admission Mr. McClelland entered upon the practice of his profession with great enthusiasm and bright prospects of success.

In 1835 a convention was called to frame a constitution for the proposed state of Michigan. Mr. McClelland was elected to a seat in that convention and soon proved himself one of its most active and influential members. He was clear-headed, convincing in debate, and displayed a knowledge of jurisprudence that would have reflected honor upon many an older head. The good work done by him in that convention will long stand in the fundamental law of the state a monument of his good sense and ability.

When the state government had been organized he was appointed by Gov. Stevens T. Mason the first bank commissioner of the state, and was tendered the office of attorney-general, both of which positions he declined. He was elected a member of the state legislature in 1838, was speaker pro tem., and did efficient service at the head of several important committees. In 1840, Gen. Harrison, as candidate for the presidency, swept the country, and for the first time the Democracy of Michigan, of which Mr. McClelland was one of the acknowledged leaders, suffered defeat. Gov. Woodbridge was sent to the senate and Jacob M. Howard was sent to the national house of representatives from the state of Michigan, which was then embraced in one representative district. In that and the succeeding campaign Mr. McClelland was re-elected to the state legislature, and in 1843 was chosen speaker of the house of representatives.

In the latter year the Democratic party had again recovered its prestige and power, and so great had been the change that in this year Mr. McClelland was elected to congress by a respectable rank in congress among the experienced veterans of that body. During his first term he was placed on the committee on commerce and originated what were known as the harbor bills, and carried them through. He was re-elected to the 20th congress by a strong majority. At the opening of this congress he had acquired a national reputation, and his name was mentioned for speaker of the house of representatives. He declined, however, in favor of John W. Davis of Indiana, who was elected. While serving his second congressional term he was chairman of the committee on commerce. In 1847 he was again re-elected to congress, notwithstanding the fact that the two-term principle had then become one of the standing rules of party discipline. At the opening of the 30th congress he was placed on the committee on foreign relations by speaker Winthrop, a Whig. As a member of this committee, what was known as the French spoliation bill came under his special charge, and his management of the same was such as to command universal approbation. While in congress Mr. McClelland was an advocate of the right of petition, as maintained by John Quincy Adams. This he regarded as a constitutional right of the citizen, which should not be impaired by any doctrines of temporary expediency. He also voted for the reception of Mr. Giddings's bill for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. Mr. McClelland was one of the 18 Democrats who brought forward for adoption by congress and the country, the celebrated "Wilmot proviso" with a view to prevent the further extension of slavery in new territory which might be acquired by the United States. He was in several national conventions, and in the Baltimore convention which nominated Gen. Cass for the presidency in 1848. He labored assiduously to secure the election of Cass.

On leaving congress in 1849 Mr. McClelland returned to his practice in Monroe. In 1850 a convention of the state of Michigan was called to revise the state constitution. He was elected a member of that body and was regarded therein as among the ablest and most experienced leaders. He advocated the compromise measure of Henry Clay, and, while a member of the constitutional convention in 1850 attended a meeting at Lansing, where he was active in giving form to a series of resolutions which were adopted in favor of the so-called compromise measure. He presided over the Democratic state convention the same year when resolutions were also adopted favoring the compromise measures. He was in the national convention in 1852 and in that year stumped the state with Gen. Cass and Gov. Felch. In 1851 Mr. McClelland was elected governor under the constitution for one year and was re-elected in 1853 for the full term of two years. His administration was regarded as wise and prudent, and when he resigned in March, 1853, the state treasury was full and the state otherwise prosperous.

On the organization of the cabinet by President Pierce, in March, 1853, Gov. McClelland was invited to take the position of secretary of the interior, a place which he filled during the four years of Pierce's administration most creditably. Again in 1857 Gov. McClelland was a member of the convention to revise the state constitution.

As a lawyer he was terse and pointed in the argument of legal questions, and clear, candid and forcible in his address to juries. In his political addresses before the people he was especially forcible and happy.

In 1870 Gov. McClelland made the tour of Europe. Since that time he has lived in the quiet and retirement of private life. For a long time he occupied a law office with Judge Campbell in the Butler block, but was not in active practice for several years prior to his death. He was a genial companion, a good neighbor and an earnest friend. He was a very methodical man, having regular hours for eating, retiring, etc., and never allowed himself to transcend any of his rules in these regards. It is said of him that frequently while enjoying a game of whist at a neighbor's house the clock would strike nine, his hour for retiring, and he would immediately start for home and no one could induce him to stay. He was a great reader and was a regular subscriber to all of the leading magazines and periodicals of the day. He lived an upright life, enjoying to the fullest degree the respect and esteem of the whole community, and as he approached the end which he knew was inevitable calmly waited for the summons which should call him hence.

Personal and Impersonal.