

be persecution. It was even intimated that the officers and court were inspired by unworthy motives. He finally went into court and pleaded guilty, and was let go on suspended sentence. Public sentiment seemed to commend the leniency. No Grand Rapids newspaper approved, and few citizens countenanced the prosecution of the ex-city clerk.

In 1900, while the water conspiracy was in an incipient state, Grand Rapids had an exciting political canvass which demoralized politics and doubtless accelerated the corruption which followed. The three leading candidates for the republican nomination for governor were rich men, and each needed the delegates from Grand Rapids to make a proper showing in the state convention. All engaged campaign managers and spent money freely for political influence and votes. By common report, an unsuccessful candidate spent nearly \$40,000 in the city, and the successful one certainly did not spend any less. Votes and delegates were treated like merchandise. None of the candidates was a resident of Grand Rapids, and at home all were honorable men, active in religious, educational and philanthropic work, but the inordinate use of their money in Grand Rapids for political honors undoubtedly prostituted the town and prepared the way for the briber and the conspirator.

In 1899, during the second year of George R. Perry's first term as mayor, Lant K. Salsbury was elected city attorney by the common council of Grand Rapids. At first he was opposed by the mayor, who had another candidate, but after becoming city attorney he was taken into the mayor's confidence and became a member of his political cabinet. Salsbury was a young and successful attorney with a penchant for politics. He was brought up on a farm a few miles from Grand Rapids. After finishing school and being admitted to the bar, he came to the city and soon became connected with a law firm having a good business. His characteristics were not those of a profound jurist, but he quickly developed a genius for business ventures and obtaining law business for his firm. Ambitious for wealth and position, he was not, to those who knew him well, considered over-scrupulous in means and methods for achieving success. When elected city attorney he stood well, and had excellent prospects. Magnetic and engaging in manner, he was personally popular and easily made friends. He thoroughly understood men, their