

In Memory
of
Alston Grimes

1866—1914

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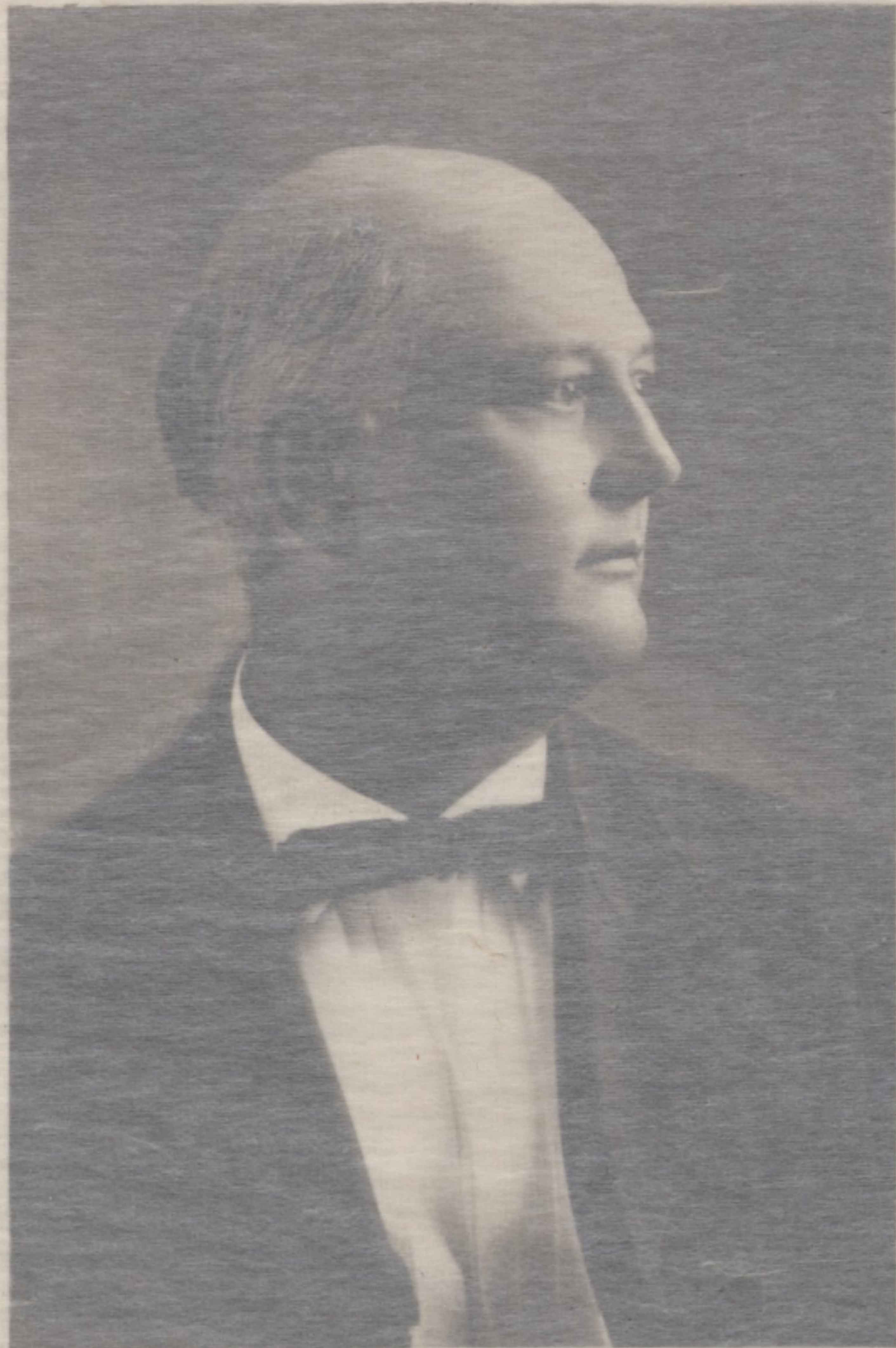
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COLONEL ALSTON GRIMES, oldest son of General Bryan Grimes and Charlotte Emily Bryan, daughter of Hon. John H. Bryan, was born in Raleigh, N. C., February 25, 1866, and died at Washington Hospital, Washington, N. C., October 20, 1914. He was buried in the old family burying-ground at Grimesland, his home and the home of his ancestors for generations. The services at the grave were conducted by the Masons, of whom there were large delegations from the Washington, Greenville, Grimesland, Ayden, and Pactolus lodges.

He was educated by private tutors and at the Bingham School, Lynch's School, and the University of North Carolina. He was engaged in farming and kindred occupations in Pitt and Beaufort counties from early manhood to his death.

On June 30, 1914, he was happily married to Miss Anna B. Lawrence, who survives him.



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He was an ardent Mason, a member of Grimesland Lodge, A. F. and A. M., and of the Greenville Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, exemplifying in his life the principles of that great order.

He was aide-de-camp on the staff of Governor Fowle and of Governor Holt. For many years he served his neighborhood as a Justice of the Peace, magnifying the office and using it as a peacemaker to settle disagreements among his neighbors, without recourse to the courts. Because of his high character and the confidence of his neighbors in his justice and his judgment, his decisions were almost always accepted by them without question or appeal. He also served for many years as Chairman of the Democratic Executive Committee of his township, and was an active and influential worker in every campaign. He was Secretary of the Board of Trustees of his community school and was a leading spirit in securing a local school tax and a bond issue for the maintenance of a good school and the erection of a beautiful modern brick school building for his school district. In all movements for the upbuilding of his community and the betterment of his people he took a leading and active part.

A TRIBUTE

*For who can always act? but he,
To whom a thousand memories call,
Not being less but more than all
The gentleness he seemed to be,
But seemed the thing he was, and joined
Each office of the social hour
To noble manners, as the flower
And native growth of native mind;
And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of Gentleman.*

—TENNYSON.

The tribute that I would bring to the memory of Alston Grimes, my pen has not power to deliver. Through one who had known and loved him in the close relationship of college-mate and room-mate in the "Old East" at Chapel Hill, I knew him long before we ever met. When we did meet and I had looked into those clear, unflinching eyes where the steady fire of kindness always shone, I recognized the "Dear, big-hearted, loving and lovable old Alston" that his friend was wont to call him.

The friendship between these two men—my husband and Alston Grimes—was typical of that loyalty and constancy which were among the latter's distinguishing and most natural traits. Though his friend preceded him into the Beyond by more than seventeen years, this

constancy reached out in unobtrusive, unselfish guardianship over the wife and child who through all the years have felt the dependableness of his friendship.

This constancy accounts, too, for the fact that his childhood's playmates continued through the years to be among his closest friends. One of them says of him: "Alston Grimes was so natural that both deceit and diplomacy were impossible to him; so natural that he always followed his inclinations, which God had made so good that the little bad in them was forgotten; so unselfish that his whole life meant cheerful self-sacrifice."

There was nothing of the meteoric or phenomenal in him. Steadily through the years he showed himself the worthy son of a noble house. Laudably proud, yet no man was farther from bigotry and egotism, for the spirit of *noblesse oblige* was in him both an innate and a governing factor. Made on broad lines, nothing to him was more despicable than littleness. He could pay no man a greater tribute than to say of him, as he did so often of his loved friend whose loss he never ceased to feel, "He was the straightest man I ever knew," for Alston Grimes himself was "straight."

He was a quiet, modest, unassuming gentleman and citizen, loving and serving his friends and neighbors, ever willing to spend and to be spent for them, and, in turn, loved and honored by them as few men have been.

He was a generous giver to churches and schools and all other worthy causes, a devoted friend and benefactor to the old Confederate soldier, an open-handed helper to the poor, the needy, the sick, and the helpless.

As a neighbor and friend he was just, generous, loyal, unselfish, warm-hearted. In his nature he was as gentle as a woman, in his convictions as inflexible as adamant, and in advocacy and defense of the right as he saw it, as courageous as a lion.

In his business he was thorough, thrifty, progressive, scrupulously honest, and always considerate of others and their rights.

As a husband he was thoughtful, provident, and never forgetful of love's tender and delicate attentions.

Nothing in his life was more beautiful and admirable to his friends than his tender devotion to his widowed mother through the long years and his constant care to shield her from care and to anticipate and supply her every want. In him she found a loving son and a provident head of the home.

He was a shining example of that class of quiet citizens, the backbone of State and Nation, that have no "itching palm" for notoriety, that are content to tread the peaceful paths of life and find their chief joy in unselfish service to their communities and in the faithful performance of the simple daily duties that lie nearest to them.

His entire life was largely a loving service to others. In the home of his fathers on the old ancestral farm, so noiselessly flowed the current of that beautiful life that men scarcely understood, until he was gone, how lofty was his soul, how deep was his heart. At his burial the great concourse of sad-hearted friends that gathered from many miles around bore silent, striking testimony to their love, their sorrow, and their loss, and to his worth.

His monument is in the hearts of his neighbors, his reward in the hands of his Maker.

"God accept him, Christ receive him."

J. Y. J.

RALEIGH, N. C., October, 1914.

Strength he had; of his strength he was conscious; and because he was right-hearted, this conscious strength ennobled his character. The South's most chivalrous, gentle manhood had its expression in him. In politics, in finance, in literature—in none was he a genius, in all he was intelligently interested. He knew the meaning of true citizenship and used the knowledge for the uplift of his community, his county, and his State.

I never knew a more patriotic man. The slightest allusion to North Carolina's extent; to the diversity and richness of her resources; to her War records; to the sterling worth and possibilities of her people, never failed to fire his enthusiasm. In the vanguard with the leaders of her progress during the last two decades, he rejoiced in that progress as only one can who feels the thrill of "something done" in whose doing he has had a vital part.

The Grimesland Graded School will be a material monument to his unselfish devotion to the welfare of his community; but the most enduring memorial to him is the imperishable love which he inspired in the hearts of his fellowmen.

His sympathies, always alert, were held in leash by a delicate subconscious tactfulness—a rare grace in this hurrying, utilitarian age. A very man among men, he was not “to his marring, always and utterly man”; for chivalrous soul that he was, he could bring “to a woman the heart of a woman, to children the heart of a child.”

If ever there was a man who sincerely “rejoiced with those that rejoiced,” it was Alston Grimes. He envied no man his success; but, modestly preferring to lend his aid where the worthy raised a standard, the successes of either relative or friend in whom he had confidence brought him genuine joy.

Carlyle says, “Life should be attuned to joy; but only a master-purpose can so attune it.” Alston Grimes’ life *was* attuned to joy; because the master-purpose of unselfish devotion to his loved ones and to humanity was there. Who of us who knew and loved him can forget the child-like abandon and spontaneity of his laugh? Such a foe it was to morbidness and pessimism! About him was an atmosphere of habitual happiness. And yet, when on the threshold of his greatest happiness, there came to him last Spring—

*“a shuddering sense
Of earth, and its pale changes; even like that
Which vaguely mingles with our glorious dreams,
A restless and disturbing consciousness
That the bright things must fade.”*

So, coming events casting their shadows before, induced him to plead for an earlier marriage than had been contemplated. He was married in June. In October the summons came. He made a hero’s fight for life. He wanted to live. The world was good. There was work for him in it. The richest of its gifts were his. With his habitual determination to guard those about him from all unnecessary pain, he watched with calm courage the veil fall between him and the world so full of the loved and loving.

K. R. B.

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