fantile weakness, and industries were developing and multiplying.

On the completion of the North Carolina Railroad, Colonel Fisher and Mr. Ashe arranged for western products to come to Wilmington through Goldsboro, and a line of steamers was put on from Wilmington to New York, carrying North Carolina's products to the markets of the world from a North Carolina port—the consummation of Mr. Ashe's purpose when he drew the charter of the North Carolina Railroad.

But passenger traffic was of equal importance to the road, and Mr. Ashe sought to build up a great through passenger business. He sought to eliminate as far as practicable all breaks at terminals, and to relieve travel of its inconvenience and tedium, and in conjunction with Senator David L. Yulee, the president of the Florida Railroad, he developed Florida travel until it reached large proportions and became a highly remunerative business.

Recognized throughout the South as a dominant influence in railroad matters and a most successful manager, in 1861, at the request of President Davis, Mr. Ashe took supervision of all Confederate transportation east of the Mississippi River, but he still remained president of the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad until his death, in September, 1862.

THE COMMERCE OF WILMINGTON.

From the beginning among the merchants of Wilmington were some men of enterprise, who owned their own ships, which were engaged in trade with Great Britain as well as with our Northern ports and the islands of the Caribbean Sea.

Forest products at first furnished a considerable part of the exports, while the imports were such as a newly settled country needed. But as the population of the interior thickened and products became diversified, Wilmington became the center of a varied and extensive commerce and its importance as a commercial *entrepôt* increased, while many of its merchants became men of importance who deserved to rank as eminent in the world of trade. The following quotations indicate the commercial importance of Wilmington between 1830 and 1840.

The *Boston Courier* of July 23, 1830, says: "One hundred and fifty-one more vessels have entered the port of Wilmington

this year than last, including in the number 1 ship, 2 barks, 181 brigs, the rest (410) schooners. These tar-and-shingle skippers, which carry large topsails, everywhere besprinkle our coast. Now Wilmington is the grand railroad and steamboat thoroughfare. She is taking the position that belongs to her and recalling the proud days of her prosperity before the American Revolution."

The *Richmond Compiler* says: "One hundred and fifty-one more vessels have entered the port of Wilmington this year than last. This shows great advance in trade. We have been surprised to hear that the tonnage of Wilmington exceeds that of Richmond, although the town has not one-fourth of our population. It must be a place of great enterprise, if we judge from what has been done within the last few years. We feel admiration for such a people and take pleasure in expressing it."

A memorial of the Internal Improvement Convention to the General Assembly of North Carolina at the session of 1838, embodying the following tables, shows what the foreign trade was at that time:

"The tables annexed show the tonnage employed in the foreign trade, entered and cleared at Wilmington from October, 1836, to October, 1837; also the tonnage employed in the foreign trade of the ports of Norfolk, Petersburg, and Richmond for the same time, as taken from the report of the Secretary of the Treasury.

"From these tables it appears that in the year 1837 the tonnage entered and cleared in the foreign trade from Wilmington exceeded that of Norfolk 6,384 tons, and exceeded both the ports of Richmond and Petersburg together 17,694 tons. We are informed on high authority that the coast trade of Wilmington employs a greater tonnage than her foreign trade. We have not the means of ascertaining its actual amount, as it is not reported. If this be true, and we believe it to be so, not only on the high authority from which we received it, but because we know the maritime trade of North Carolina is principally a coasting-trade, it would follow that the tonnage employed in the trade of the port of Wilmington is greater than the three great ports of Virginia—Norfolk, Richmond, and Petersburg."