he was a member, giving his opinion as to the probable effect of such proceedings in settling the distracting questions of the day. Although the notice was very brief, having only appeared at midday in the town papers, the hall was densely crowded by an eager and attentive audience, among whom were many ladies."

The report of the speech is full, and deals with all the vital questions which were discussed at the Peace Congress. Mr. Davis said that he shrunk from no criticism upon his course, but, indeed, invited and sought for it the most rigid examination. He had endeavored to discharge the duties of the trust imposed in him faithfully, manfully, and conscientiously, and whatever might be thought of his policy, he felt that he had a right to demand the highest respect for the motives which actuated him in pursuing that policy.

Referring to his own previous position, what he believed to be the position of the State, the course of the Legislature in appointing commissioners, and the objections to the action of the Peace Congress, Mr. Davis said he had gone to the Peace Congress to exhaust every honorable means to obtain a fair, an honorable, and a final settlement of existing difficulties. He had done so to the best of his ability, and had been unsuccessful, for he could never accept the plan adopted by the Peace Congress as consistent with the rights, the interests, or the dignity of North Carolina.

Mr. Davis concluded by emphatically declaring that the South could never—never obtain any better or more satisfactory terms while she remained in the Union, and for his part he could never assent to the terms contained in this report of the Peace Congress as in accordance with the honor or the interests of the South.

When Mr. Davis had concluded Hon. S. J. Person moved that the thanks of the meeting be tendered to him for the able, manly, and patriotic manner in which he had discharged the duties of his position as a commissioner from North Carolina. The motion was enthusiastically carried.

On June 18, 1861, Mr. Davis and Mr. W. W. Avery were elected by the State Convention delegates for the State at large to the Confederate Congress, and they took their seats in the Senate. In alluding to his election the *Journal,* the organ of the Democratic party in this section, said:

"Mr. Davis, in old party times, was an ardent and consistent member of the opposition, and was opposed to a severance from

the North until he felt satisfied by the result of the Peace Conference that all peaceful means had been exhausted." At the following session of the Legislature he and W. T. Dortch were elected Confederate States Senators, and later he became a member of the Cabinet.

Through the courtesy of Mrs. Parsley, whose husband, Col. William M. Parsley, of Wilmington, gave his brilliant young life to the cause of the Confederacy, I include as worthy of all honor the following narrative, to which her well-known devotion as one of the leaders of the Ladies' Memorial Society and as president of the Daughters of the Confederacy gives added authority and interest:

"In 1861, when, amid great popular excitement and enthusiasm, South Carolina seceded from the Union of States, the people of Wilmington were deeply stirred by conflicting emotions. Meetings were held at various local points, and speakers for and against secession swayed the multitudes which attended them. At a town meeting, an address by Dr. James H. Dickson, urging moderation and advising against hasty action as to secession, was regarded with close attention and respect, for Dr. Dickson was a man universally trusted and beloved, and one of the foremost to act in any movement for the welfare of Wilmington.

"His speech was followed by one from Mr. O. P. Meares, afterwards a colonel in the Confederate Army, and later a judge. He was an ardent secessionist and a fiery speaker, and the younger element was carried away by his eloquence, but the older citizens, devoted to the Union, were loath to break the bonds, and the community seemed equally divided until Mr. George Davis returned from the Peace Conference in Washington City, with his full account of the utter failure to arrive at an agreement, and gave as his judgment that the Union could only be preserved with dishonor to the South. The immense crowd gathered in the opera house received his words in profound silence, as though the speaker's judgment settled that of each one who heard him.

The Response to Lincoln's Call for Troops.

"Later, when Lincoln's call was made for 75,000 men 'to put down the rebellion,' the whole of the Cape Fear section was fired, and with scarcely an exception looked upon secession and war as the inevitable outcome.