

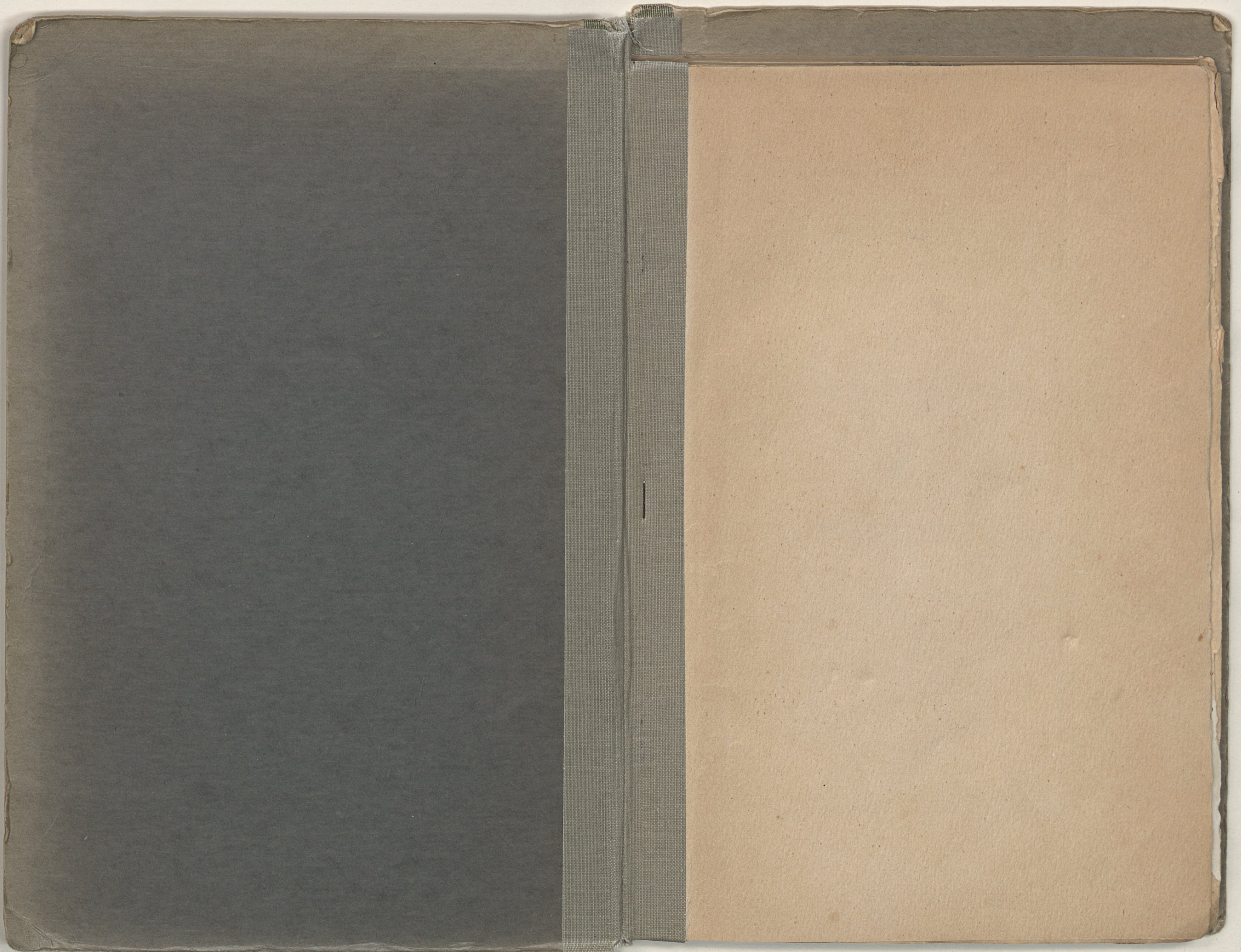
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General
Matt. W. Ransom



BY
WM. H. S. BURGWYN

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AN ADDRESS

ON THE MILITARY AND

CIVIL SERVICES

of

General Matt. W. Ransom



DELIVERED IN THE SENATE CHAMBER

AT RALEIGH, N. C.

BEFORE THE

*Ladies' Memorial Association
and Citizens*

MAY 10, 1906



By WM. H. S. BURGWYN

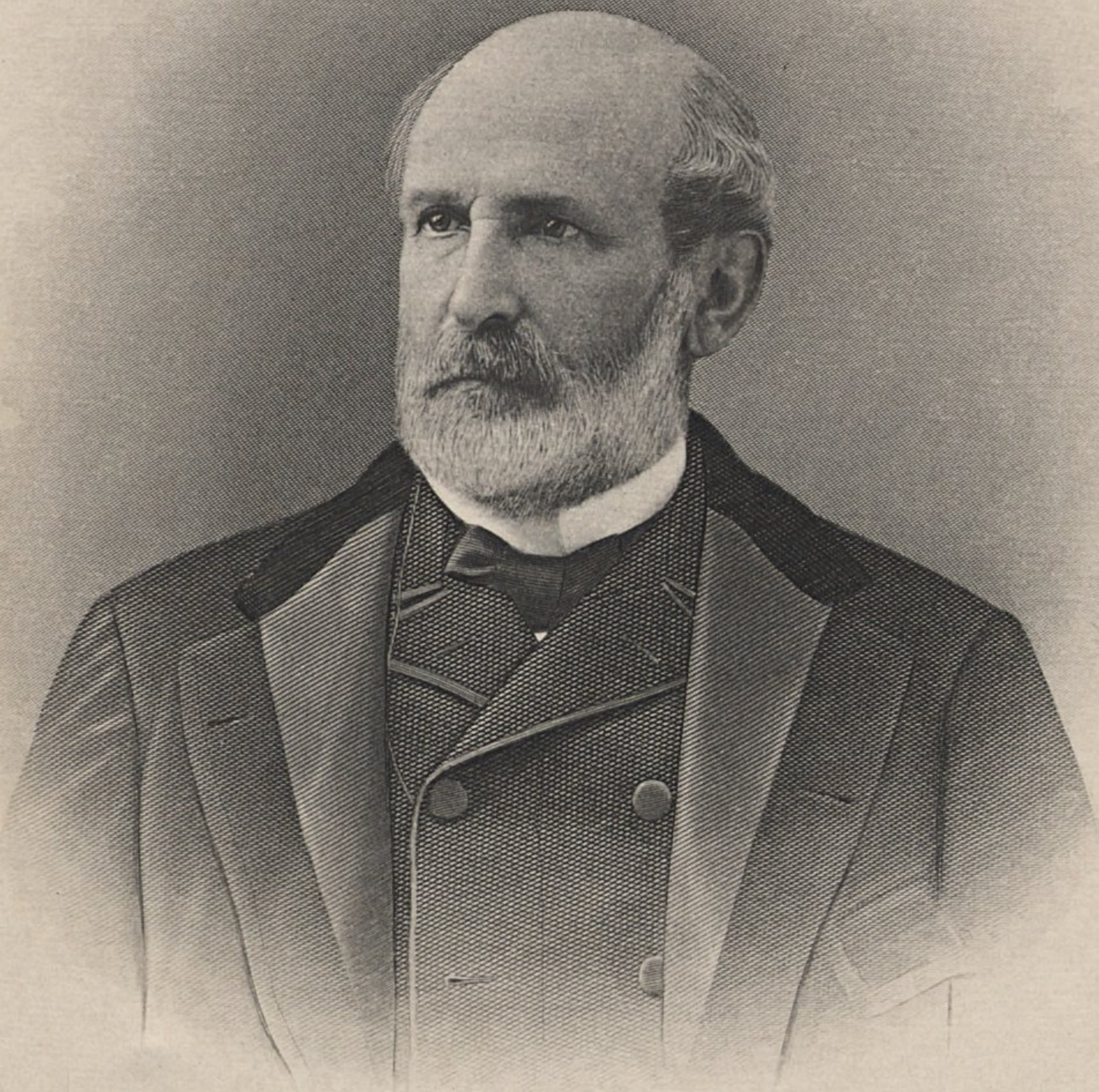
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*Given ever to me
M. W. Ransom.*

Chas. L. Van Noppen, Publisher



General Matt. W. Ransom



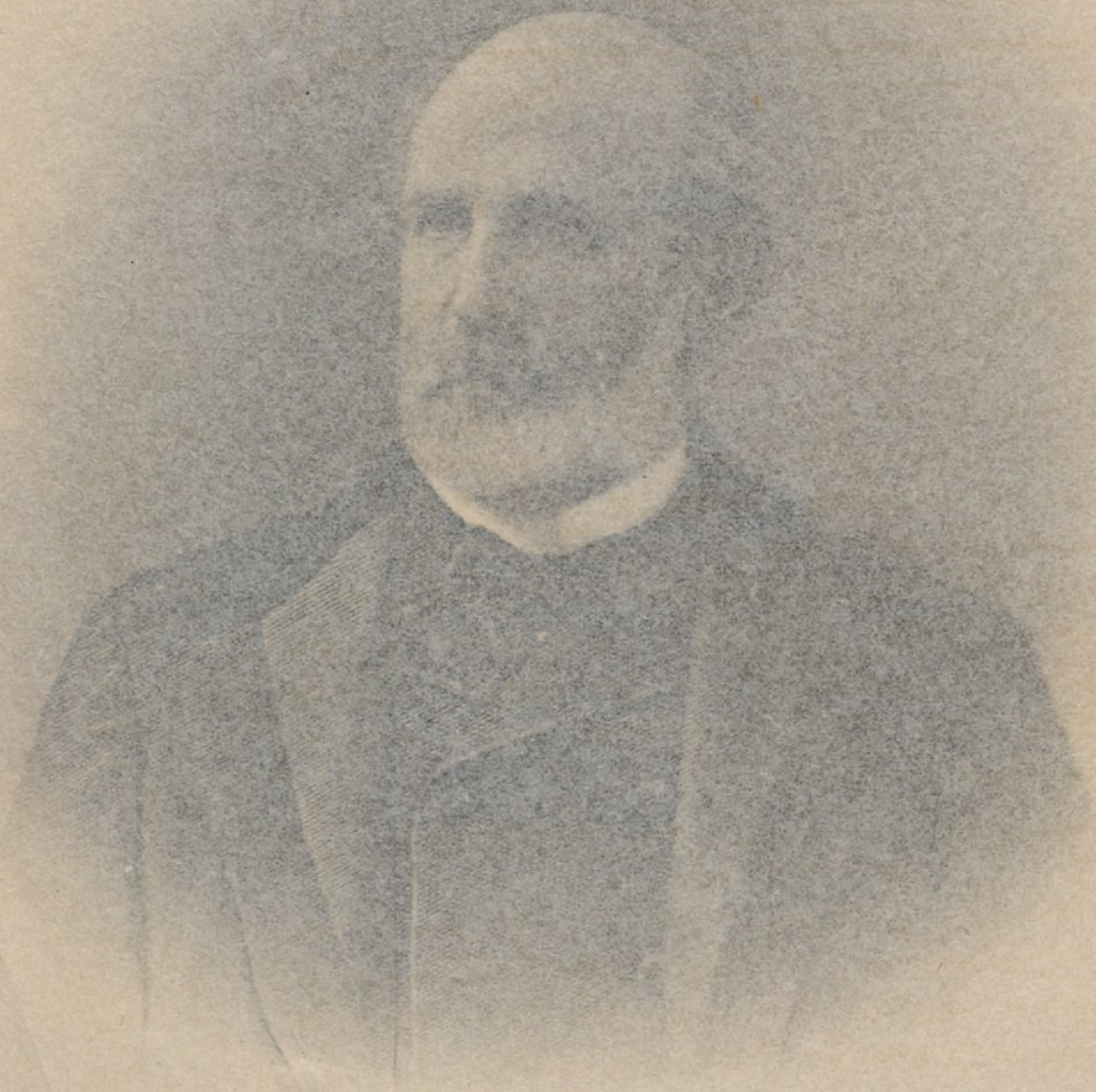
At some future time in a more enduring form we may hope that the services rendered his State and the Nation by the late Hon. Matt. W. Ransom, as a civilian, will be transmitted to posterity. Today, in this historic chamber with hallowed memories crowding upon me, I would carry you back some forty years and more and speak of General Ransom as a Confederate soldier in the army of Northern Virginia.

GENERAL RANSOM'S FIRST SERVICE TO THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERACY

came about in this wise. On January 28, 1861, the General Assembly of North Carolina, of which body Mr. Ransom was a representative in the House of Commons, from the County of Northampton, passed the following joint resolution:

"That for the purpose of effecting an honorable and amicable adjustment of all difficulties that distract the country . . . and for the purpose of consulting for our common peace, honor and safety, the Hon. David L. Swain, M. W. Ransom and John L. Bridgers are appointed commissioners to visit Montgomery, Alabama, for the purposes above indicated."

Governor Swain was a pronounced "Union man," as was his colleague and former pupil, Mr. Ransom. Mr. Bridgers was classed among the "Secessionists." At this time, the States of South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana,



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and Texas had seceded from the Union and delegates from said States had met in convention at Montgomery, Alabama, a provisional constitution for the Confederate States of America had been adopted and Jefferson Davis, of Mississippi, elected President and Alexander H. Stephens, of Georgia, Vice-President. Governor Swain, *clarum et venerabile nomen*, was President of the State University, was President when his associate, Mr. Ransom, graduated in June, 1847.

Mr. Bridgers was a member of the Legislature from the County of Edgecombe, soon to distinguish himself as Captain in the famous Bethel Regiment at the first battle and first victory for the Confederacy in the war between the States.

On February 11, 1861, this Commission wrote to Governor Ellis from Montgomery, Alabama, the practical failure of their mission in these words:

"We regret to be constrained to state as the result of our inquiries . . . that only a very decided minority of the communities of these States (those which had seceded) are disposed at present to entertain favorably any proposition of adjustment which looks towards a reconciliation of our National Union."

Event followed event now in rapid succession. Mr. Lincoln took his seat as President, on March 4, 1861. He did not receive an electoral vote in any Southern State, and out of a popular vote of 2,804,560 only 1,857,610 were cast for those electors favorable to him. He carried but 16 of the 33 States then in the Union. He was inaugurated as President, without having received a majority of the popular vote either of the States or the people.

An attempt by President Lincoln to reinforce the U. S. Garrison at Fort Sumter in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina, was resisted by the Confederate forces under General Beauregard, and on April 14, 1861, after a bombardment lasting thirty-six hours, the fort surrendered.

On the next day, April 15, President Lincoln issued his proclamation calling upon the several States to furnish their quota of 75,000 troops "to suppress combinations in the seceded States too powerful for the law to contend with," and the same day

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Secretary of War, Simon Cameron, of Pennsylvania, telegraphed Governor Ellis, "Call made on you by tonight's mail for two regiments of militia for immediate service."

Reclining on his couch in the executive office, a mortal disease robbing his life's blood, Governor Ellis received the dispatch and at once replied: "Sir: I regard the levy of troops made by the Administration for the purpose of subjecting the States of the South, as in violation of the Constitution and as a gross usurpation of power. I can be no party to this wicked war upon the liberties of a free people. You can get no troops from North Carolina."

Governor Ellis at once issued his proclamation calling the Legislature to meet in special session. On its assembling, the Legislature issues a call for a convention of the people and authorizes the enrollment of 20,000 volunteers. The Honorable Matt. W. Ransom is among the first to respond and is commissioned Lieutenant-Colonel of the First Regiment of Infantry; this commission dates May 8, 1861. What about this young civilian appointed to so high a rank in an army and without previous military training?

HIS BIRTH AND YOUNG MANHOOD.

Matt. Whitaker Ransom was born on his father's plantation, near Warrenton, North Carolina, October 8, 1826. He was the oldest son of six children, two boys and four girls. His father, Robert Ransom, was a man of superior intelligence, the son of Seymour Ransom, who was a half brother of Nathaniel Macon.

His mother was Priscilla Whitaker, of the well known Whitaker family, of Halifax County. General Ransom never tired of speaking in the most reverential and affectionate manner of his parents and attributed much of his success to their teachings and examples. After making two visits south to Tuscomb, Alabama, and Columbia, Tennessee, with his family, Mr. Robert Ransom returned to Warren County about 1838, and lived with his mother, who was Birchett Greene, daughter of Wm. Greene, a wealthy planter of Warren County, who resided at her ancestral home, Bridal Creek, near Warrenton.

Young Ransom was prepared for Chapel Hill by Mr. Robert

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A. Ezell, a native of Virginia, who had a famous Academy at Warrenton. He matriculated at the University January, 1844, as a freshman half advanced and graduated in June, 1847. He was conspicuous during his university career not only for his studiousness, cleverness, courteous bearing, superiority in his studies and eloquence in debate in the Philanthropic Society of which he was a beneficiary, but he was exceptionally regular in attendance upon his classes and at prayers. He did not miss a recitation or fail to be present at prayers during his college career. In those days morning prayers were held at sunrise in summer, and in the winter at daybreak, the chapel was not heated, and in winter time the hearers sat in the cold.

When Henry Clay visited Raleigh in 1844 the student body from the State University, almost without exception, went to hear him. Young Ransom remained at the Hill so as not to miss any duty. The year he graduated, 1847, was the year President Polk visited Chapel Hill. To James Johnston Pettigrew, brilliant, versatile, a mathematical genius, afterward the brave and accomplished Confederate soldier, commanding a brigade in the army of Northern Virginia, mortally wounded at Falling Waters, Virginia, was given the valedictory. In honor of the President's visit it was decided a salutatory address in English should be delivered, and to young Ransom was given the distinction of making it, the first and only time in the history of the University under the old regime that a salutatory address in English was allowed. The New York *Herald* had a special correspondent to accompany the Presidential party and he thus writes of Mr. Ransom's address:

"Of the composition by the young disciples of Cicero, the salutatory by Mr. Ransom was unquestionably the best. His welcome to the President of the United States was superior to anything of the kind throughout the whole expedition. His welcome to the people at large was also in fine taste, while the beauty and finished elegance of the welcome to the ladies drew down upon his devoted head repeated rounds of applause."

After graduation Mr. Ransom located at Warrenton, and having studied law in his senior year under the late Judge Wm. H.

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Battle, as pure and upright a judge as ever adorned the Supreme Bench of a State—he was prepared to take his place at the Bar upon leaving the University.

His father was an earnest Whig and young Ransom was thus a Whig by inheritance. Warren County was overwhelmingly Democratic, but with superior talents and attainments far beyond his years, with the aid of a fine person, captivating manners and an eloquent tongue, he at once took high rank at the Bar. In 1852 he was a presidential elector on the Whig ticket. At a great meeting in Halifax County during the campaign, he had arranged with a friend to fill a log with gunpowder, which, at a given signal, was to be set off and thus excite the enthusiasm of his hearers, as he discarded on the praises of General Scott, the presidential nominee of his party. Mr. Ransom appeared on the platform dressed in a blue coat with brass buttons, buff vest and straw colored pants, a splendid attire faultlessly made.

Everything at first went as could be wished. General Scott was the military hero of the day. His brilliant successes in the War of 1812; his invaluable services in peace afterwards; his matchless victories in the war with Mexico then lately ended, furnished the theme. As the speaker warmed to his subject and began to recount the various successes of the American army under Scott, the surrender of Vera Cruz, the battle of Cerro Gordo, the capture of Contrera and Cherubusco, and was leading up to the climax in his flight of oratory, the storming of Chapultepec, which was the agreed signal for the explosion, his friend appeared on the edge of the crowd wildly gesticulating, and in an impassioned tone heard above the voice of the speaker, cried out, "Matt.! Matt.!! hold on! the damned old log won't go off." Forty-four years after this the young orator was to visit the scenes he so eloquently described, the representative of his Country as its Minister Plenipotentiary.

In December, 1852, following this brilliant campaign as a Whig elector, Mr. Ransom was chosen by a Democratic Legislature, Attorney-General of the State in competition with Honorable William Eaton, a Democrat and a lawyer of the highest standing and character.

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On January 19, 1853, Mr. Ransom was married to Miss Martha Anne (Pattie) Exum, one of the two daughters of Joseph Exum, Esquire, of Northampton County, a lady of rare excellence and many accomplishments, who has blessed and adorned her husband's household and been his inspiration through life. Six boys and two girls blessed this union, all of whom with their mother survive except the oldest girl (Pattie), who died when a child, and Thomas, a brilliant young man, whose untimely death in 1896, just as he was entering upon the practice of law with every prospect of success, saddened his father's life to the end.

In 1856 Mr. Ransom, having resigned his position as Attorney-General, moved from Warrenton to his wife's ancestral home at Verona in Northampton County, and there he died. At his home in Northampton County, Mr. Ransom devoted himself chiefly to looking after his landed estates, not taking an active part in the practice of his profession, but was elected to represent his county as a member of the House of Commons in 1858 and again in 1860.

RANSOM AS A SOLDIER.

North Carolina's military record is altogether honorable. As early as 1711, with the aid of troops from South Carolina, she destroyed the power of the fierce Tuscaroras. Two years later she sent an expedition under Colonel Maurice Moore to aid South Carolina against the Yemasee Indians. In 1740 she sent 400 men on Admiral Vernon's ill-fated expedition to Cartagena, South America, the same year she sent troops to aid Governor Oglethorpe against the Spaniards in Florida. In 1754 she sent a regiment under Colonel James Innes to Winchester, Virginia, who took command of the expedition, outranking Colonel George Washington, who then commanded the Virginia forces. The next year she sent 100 men in the disastrous Braddock expedition to capture Fort DuQuesne, now Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, and three years later (1758) she had three companies under Major Hugh Waddell in General Forbes' expedition which captured the fort, the North Carolinians being the first to enter the fortress. In 1756 she had four companies in the French War, and in 1759 and 1761 she sent a large force under Colonel Hugh Waddell against the Cherokees.

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Coming down to Revolutionary times we find women not less patriotic and daring than the men; and as early as October 25, 1774, fifty-one patriotic women met at the residence of Mrs. Elizabeth King in Edenton, and had such a "Tea Party" indeed as will be ever memorable in the nation's history; and when the city of Boston was under embargo for destroying the tea in that harbor and her citizens were in distress for want of food, the people of North Carolina declared "the cause of Boston is the cause of all," and, from Wilmington and New Bern, ships laden with supplies were sent as a contribution to their brothers in want in Boston.

At Alamance, May 16, 1771, was spilt the first blood in resistance to exactions of English rulers and oppressions by the Home Government; and from Moore's Creek (February 22, 1776), where was had the first armed conflict between the Colonists and the troops of the Mother Country in North Carolina, until the battle of Guilford Court House (March 15, 1781), the last battle in this State between the two, we have a long list of brilliant and daring conflicts. North Carolina troops won the brilliant victories at Ramsour's Mill, King's Mountain, Elizabethton, and participated in the battle of Camden Court House. Under Rutherford's leadership, early in 1776, they crashed the Tories in South Carolina, and later in the year the Indians in Tennessee. North Carolina troops shared in the battles of Stono, Briar Creek, the Cow Pens and in the defense of Charleston, and under Davidson and Graham gallantly resisted the passage of the Catawba by the British under Tarleton and Cornwallis. In the War of 1812 General Joseph Graham, a hero of the Revolutionary War, commanded a brigade of North and South Carolina troops that were sent to aid General Andrew Jackson in the Creek War, and in the Mexican War (1846-47) there were two regiments from North Carolina under Colonels Robert Treat Paine and Louis D. Wilson, after whom Wilson County is named.

Her people were schooled in war from the beginning of the 18th to the middle of the 19th century, and we are now to consider the part her soldiers played in that most gigantic war of modern

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times, the din of whose conflict was heard all over the world, and the people of all nations were spectators of the scene.

The General Assembly that met on May 1, 1861, in obedience to Governor Ellis' proclamation, authorized the Governor to raise ten regiments of State troops to serve during the war.

Mr. Ransom at once offered his services and was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel of the First Regiment, and left his seat in the Legislature to assume the uniform of a soldier in the Confederate Army. The regiment was organized at the race track near Warrenton and Mumford S. Stokes, a veteran of the Mexican War, was appointed Colonel. In July (1861) its organization perfected, the regiment was ordered to Richmond and assigned to General Holmes' brigade, then in camp at Brooks Station near the mouth of Acquia Creek, Virginia.

Lieutenant-Colonel Ransom was no Martinet, but he believed in discipline, and when in command required strict observance of the army regulations. This at one time rendered him unpopular. He was resolute not to give leaves of absence and while Colonel Stokes was in Fredericksburg in attendance on a court martial, Lieutenant-Colonel Ransom refused all applications for furloughs.

When his Colonel returned to camp he relaxed the stringent orders of his subordinate, and this made the unpopularity of Lieutenant-Colonel Ransom all the greater by contrast. Colonel Ransom protested, but in vain. When Colonel Stokes resumed his duties on the court martial and Lieutenant-Colonel Ransom was again in command, he let it be known that his views had changed, and in a brief space of time he had furloughed the larger part of the regiment, and Colonel Stokes on his return to duty, found to his dismay but a skeleton of the command in camp.

In a letter dated Acquia Creek, August 27, 1861, to his wife, Colonel Ransom writes:

"It is very late at night. I just heard the lonesome sentinel cry out, 'It is twelve o'clock and all is well.' The camp is very silent, scarcely a sound breaks the solemn stillness. All here is peace, and yet each minute may open on our ears the signal guns of death. There! went a musket, even while I wrote the last word. Doubtless some false alarm. Ah! there's another! I have waited five minutes and all is still again. Some nervous sentinel shot a phantom and that's all. It is so strange how I

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burn for the eager fray, I can hardly realize it. Tell dear Matt. that he need not fear that his father will run. Bless his soul. War is very savage. It soon fires the heart to daring and we scarcely think of the danger. Heaven return us all to peace and virtue. How I do desire it when the excitement is down. I am glad that you cannot see me in camp. There are no charms around me. A large tent, almost furnitureless; a few books, trunks and writing material, a pair of pistols, a sword, some scattered clothing make up the scene. Of course I am right particular in my dress and find tolerably good washing. The dull routine of camp duty, and the stupid drill are very irksome. They engage small minds very anxiously. I did not take the field for these. I hope that amid the storm and strife of making armies, when men are needed, it may be given me to be with a mind and soul equal to all the fortunes of the hour. Then I think what genius I have would appear, then what spirit I have shall be seen. But under all circumstances and amid every vicissitude of triumph or defeat, nothing shall ever make me forget the holy duties of humanity. The glory of victory is great, but how much greater is the virtue of charity in the hour of victory. No! I will give my life to my country, but I will leave to my wife and children the memory of a name unstained with the slightest speck of cruelty or revenge. Such are my feelings and such shall be my action. I shall be equal to all the reverses of the war and I will be superior to all of its successes if I share in them. But enough of these things."

Nothing occurred of moment during this service on the Potomac, and in the spring (1862) Colonel Ransom's regiment was ordered to North Carolina, and stationed near Kinston, reinforcing the troops collected at that point after the battle of New Bern (March, 1862).

Among the regiments engaged in the battle of New Bern, was the Thirty-fifth North Carolina, then commanded by James Sinclair. Colonel Sinclair had been chaplain of the Fifth North Carolina regiment, was elected Colonel of the Thirty-fifth regiment at its organization at Camp Mangum, near Raleigh (November, 1861). The conduct of this regiment in the battle of New Bern was, to say the least, disappointing to its friends. At a critical time in the battle and while occupying what was strategically an important part of the line of defense, "it quickly followed the example of the militia, retreating in the utmost disorder." The regiment keenly felt its disgrace and when the time of its reorganization for the war came around in April, 1862, the officers elected Lieutenant-Colonel Ransom as

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their commander. Colonel Ransom was doubtful as to his duty in the premises. His own regiment was loath to part with him. He consulted his personal friend and military superior, Major-General Holmes, the Department Commander. General Holmes advised Colonel Ransom not to accept, giving among other reasons the prediction that the regiment would feel the demoralization of its conduct at New Bern, and require its commander to greatly expose himself in any subsequent battle with almost the certainty of losing his life. To Colonel Ransom his duty now seemed plain, and disregarding his commander's advice and that of other friends, he notified the committee of his acceptance.

When it became known that Colonel Ransom was to leave them, the officers of his old regiment presented him with a handsome sword. In his letter of acceptance, dated May 11, 1862, Colonel Ransom says:

"I accept with emotions of pleasure and gratitude which I cannot express, the beautiful sword which the officers of the First North Carolina regiment have been pleased, through you, to present to me.

"Certainly the bestowal of no honor could have brought with it more gratification. The esteem of the chivalrous gentlemen with whom it has been my happiness to have been so long associated in the service of our country, so generously evinced, is a priceless attainment, and it will be my sacred duty through life to preserve untarnished this bright token of their confidence, and to transmit it as a sacred jewel to my sons. Around it will ever cluster pleasant memories of the cherished friends, the brave hearts, the patriotic spirits of that noble regiment, the gallant First. Cherishing in common with yourselves a holy purpose to assist in maintaining at all hazard the independence of our Country and the honor of our State, I remain, gentlemen, most sincerely yours."

RANSOM AS COLONEL.

The Thirty-fifth regiment, under its new commander, is now brigaded with the Twenty-fourth, Twenty-fifth, Twenty-sixth and Forty-ninth North Carolina regiments and is placed under the command of his brother, Brigadier-General Robert Ransom. From now on until he gave his parade at Appomattox, three years thereafter, Colonel and subsequently as its brigade commander, General Matt. W. Ransom is ever associated with this famous brigade, sharing its toils on march and in bivouac, lead-

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ing it in battle, rejoicing with it in victory, sympathizing with it in defeat and yielding up his sword only when his noble men had grounded their arms in surrender.

RANSOM'S BRIGADE.

What a record in war and in peace had this brigade. One of its Colonels, three times Governor of his State, dies in the service of his country as United States Senator after three successive elections. Another Colonel, for twenty-three years United States Senator, then United States Minister Plenipotentiary at the sister Republic of Mexico.

The Adjutant of one of the regiments, then a boy under seventeen years of age, afterwards a Judge of the Superior and Supreme Courts of the State for twenty-two years, and now its Chief Justice.

One of its regiments, though not at the time attached to the brigade, made an unequalled record for the most heroic fighting in open battle of all the commands in either army in the war, and the brigade's last stand at Five Forks, April 1, 1865, was the forlorn hope of the once proud and victorious army of Northern Virginia.

The rigid discipline, instituted by its first commander, rapidly welded the brigade into a well drilled and disciplined command, ready and eager to see more active service at the great theater of war then raging around the Capital of the Confederacy. Ordered to Virginia in June, 1862, the brigade was assigned to Huger's division. From June 25 to 28 it was involved in some sharp minor engagements with General Philip Kearney's division on the Williamsburg road, the scene of the battle of Seven Pines, and was part of Magruder's command, which assaulted Malvern Hill at the close of the day, July 1, 1862.

MALVERN HILL.

In this charge the Thirty-fifth regiment lost both its commanders. Colonel Ransom was twice wounded; first through the right arm, rendering it powerless, and then in his right side by a piece of shell. While he lay upon the field, Colonel Ransom hears in a few minutes that his gallant young Lieutenant-Colonel is

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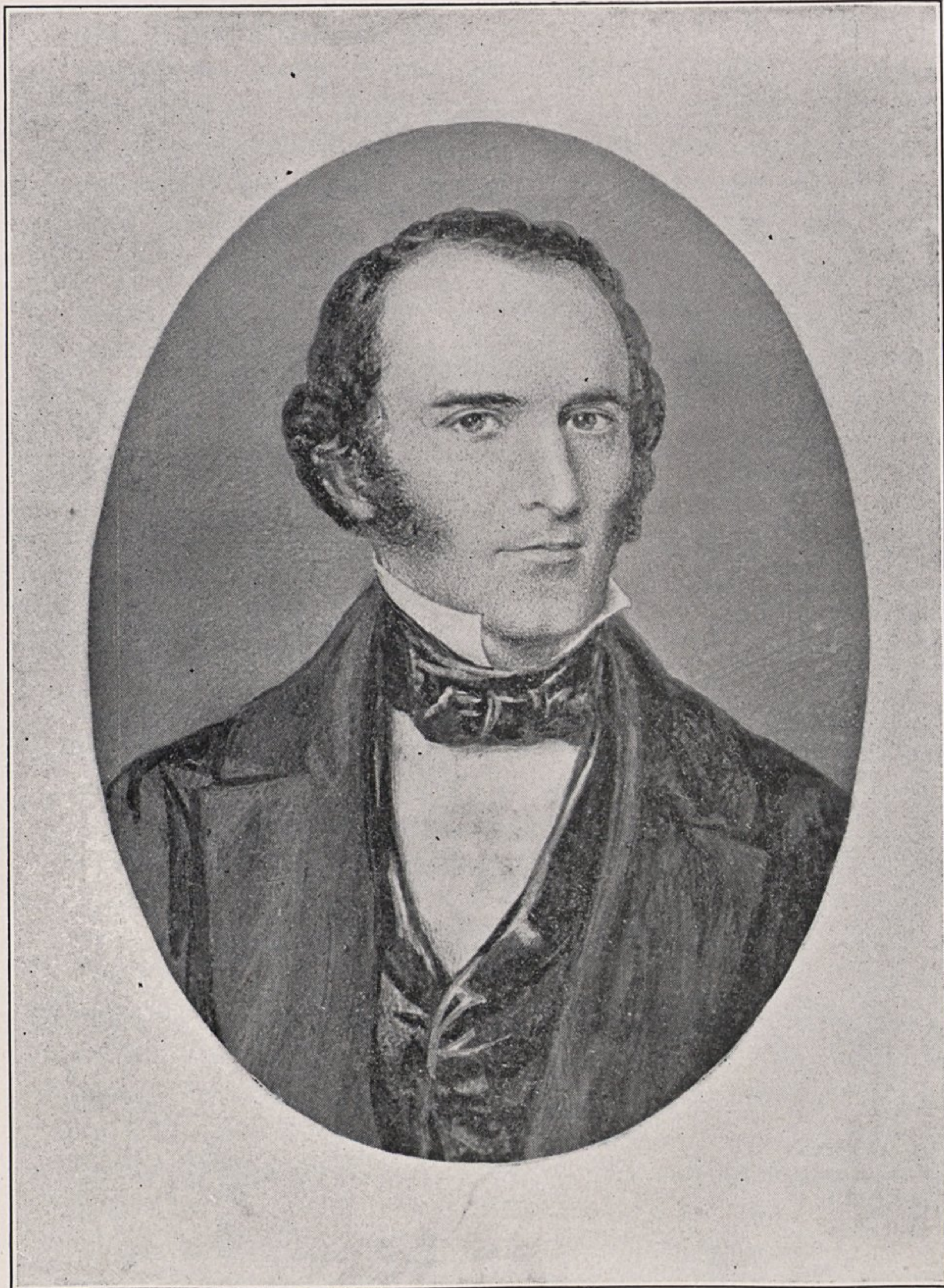
killed; but the noble men of the regiment hold their ground till night settles down and shuts out from view the gory scene and the combat ceases. Probably no regiment of Magruder's command suffered more in killed and wounded on this ever memorable assault than the Thirty-fifth regiment; and in this its first battle since New Bern, the regiment then and there established its reputation for unsurpassed fortitude and intrepidity in battle, a reputation maintained from Malvern Hill to Appomattox.

SHARPSBURG.

When Lee's army left Richmond to meet the Federal General, Pope, at the Second Manassas, Ransom's brigade remained with the troops left behind to defend Richmond, but on August 27, 1862, we left en route to join the army of Northern Virginia, then invading Maryland, and with the Twenty-seventh, Forty-sixth and Forty-eighth North Carolina regiments; Third Arkansas and Thirtieth Virginia regiments, under command of Brigadier-General J. G. Walker, formed "Walker's Division" during this campaign.

We reached the Potomac River September 7, 1862, and waded through at Cheek's Ford, about a quarter of a mile wide and waist deep. There was great enthusiasm. As the men would step on the Maryland side of the river they gave the rebel yell—marched to the Monocacy River, were ordered back to blow up the aqueduct over the canal. On September 11, recrossed the Potomac at Point of Rocks, occupying Loudon Heights on September 14, from which point our batteries shelled the enemy at Harper's Ferry until their surrender on the 15th. Same day marched twelve miles towards the Shenandoah and at one a. m. on the 16th crossed into Maryland, wading the Potomac for the third time within nine days. At three a. m., September 17, 1862, we were aroused from our bivouac, and marched to take our position in line for what was to be one of the great battles of the war.

Ransom's brigade was first moved to the extreme right of Lee's army, but about nine a. m., was ordered to the left to support Jackson. We moved rapidly along the rear of our entire line of battle, passing over the dead and meeting the wounded being car-



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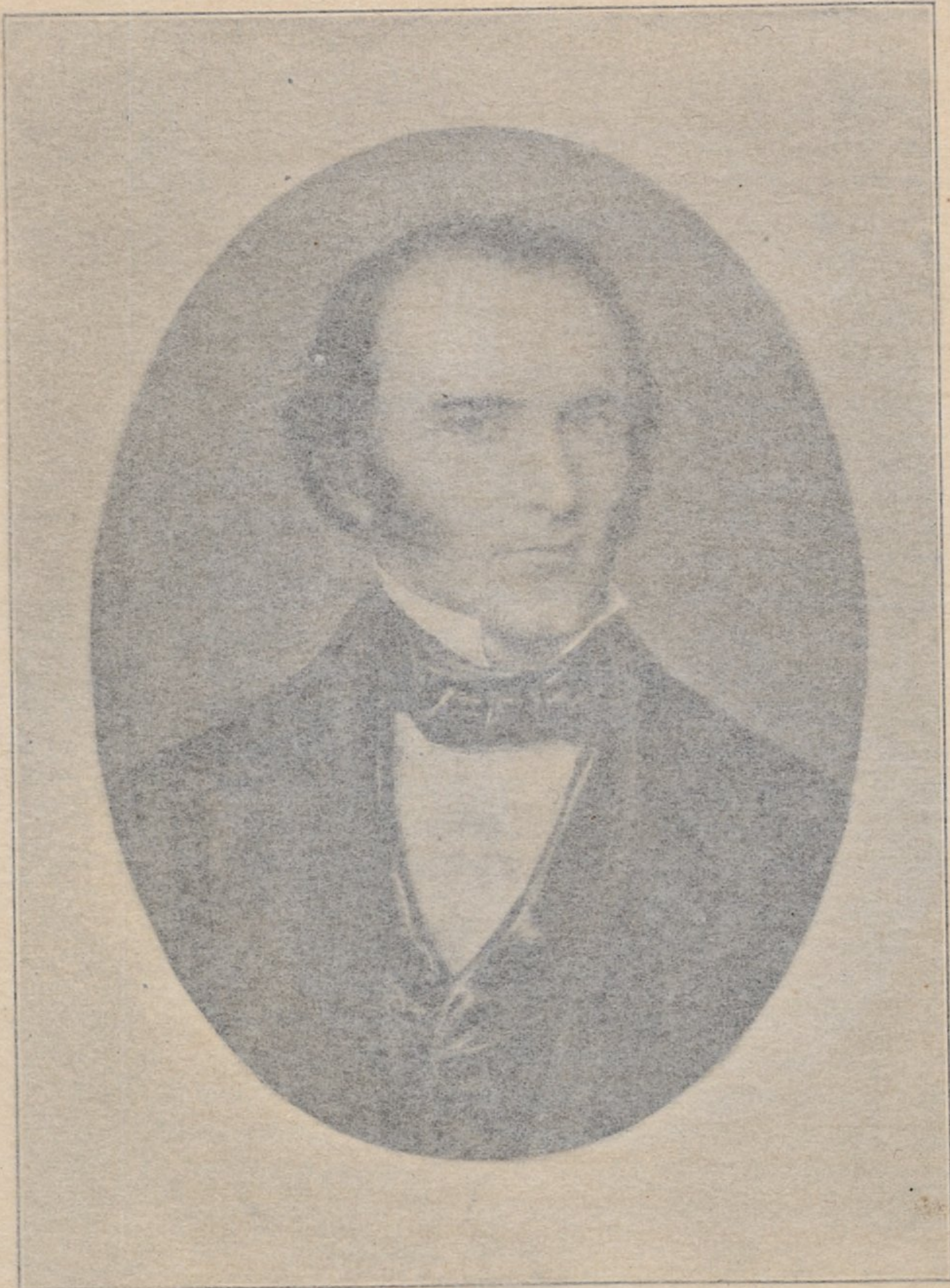
General Matt. W. Ransom

ried to the rear, while the steady booming of cannon, whistling of shells, pattering of the small arms and the hoarse yell of cheer rising above the roar of battle, as some advantage was gained by either side, filled our ears.

Marching by the right flank, as we neared our point of attack the brigade was deployed into column of regiments, and as each regiment discovered the one preceding it, was wheeled to the right and given the order to charge. "The crisis in the battle was at hand," says a writer. "The second stage of the battle was now reached. Hooker has retired. Mansfield has been brought to a stand. Jackson, worn and exhausted, has rested. Hood's brigade has been so cut to pieces, that when its dauntless commander was asked, Where is your brigade? he answers, 'Dead on the field.' D. H. Hill's three brigades have been drawn in and only a small force guards the Confederate left, not enough to stop a brigade, when Sedgwick, and Sumner in the lead with his three brigades moved towards the Dunkard church."

"Ten minutes, five minutes," says Judge Walter Clark, "the gallant boy Adjutant of the Thirty-fifth regiment, and our army would have ceased to exist." Just then Walker, at the head of his six North Carolina, one Arkansas and one Virginia regiments charged headlong upon the left flank of Sedgwick's lines. Taken at such disadvantage, and in spite of the heroic bravery of Sumner and Sedgwick, the division was driven off to the North with terrible loss.

In his official report General Walker says: "Ransom's brigade having driven the enemy through and from the woods (west) with heavy loss, continued, with his own brigade and Colonel Hall's Forty-sixth North Carolina, to hold it for the greater portion of the day. Notwithstanding three determined infantry attacks, which each time were repulsed with great loss to the enemy, and against a most persistent and terrific artillery fire, by which the enemy hoped doubtless to drive us from our strong position, the very key to the battle field, his hopes were not realized. True to their duty for eight hours our brave men lay upon the ground taking advantage of such undulations and hollow ravines as gave promise of partial shelter while this fearful storm raged a few



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feet above their heads, tearing the trees asunder, tossing off hugh branches and filling the air with shells and explosives, realizing to the fullest the fearful sublimity of battle.

"During this time, in the temporary absence of General Robert Ransom to post the Twenty-fourth regiment, the enemy made a furious attack with heavy masses of infantry upon that portion of the line occupied by General Ransom. Colonel Ransom, of the Thirty-fifth North Carolina, in temporary command of the brigade, not only repulsed the enemy, but pursued him across the field as far as the post and rail fences, inflicting upon him so severe a punishment that no other attempt with infantry was made on that position during the day."

The Thirty-fifth regiment nobly bore its part in this trying ordeal. Early in the action, while advancing on the enemy, the regiment had to surmount a strong post and rail fence, subjected to a heavy fire of artillery and small arms, the regiment was in confusion. Fearing his men were wavering, Colonel Ransom, who with his Adjutant were on horseback, spurred his horse to the color bearer and called for the flag. Doubtless General Holmes' warning word came up to his mind, for when he grasped the flag handed him by a young officer of the regiment he calls out, "If I am killed, tell Mrs. Ransom I died leading my men, colors in hand."

In a letter to Mrs. Ransom, dated Camp near Winchester, Virginia, October 5, 1862 (18 days after the battle), he writes:

"This day makes me feel unutterably sad. All day I have been sighing over our own precious little angel (his only daughter recently dead) and feel just as bad about the loss of our darling jewel as if it was only yesterday. All during the terrible battle, her little soul seemed to be with me, saving me. Let us trust it all to God. He knows and does what is best. As soon as I join you again, I will with you publicly embrace His holy religion, and try with all my heart to live by His law.

"His great mercy to me in battle has conquered all the obstinacy I ever had, and I feel from the bottom of my heart, that I ought to, and do love God and our Merciful Saviour.

"If you could only have seen the dangers I passed that day. From early dawn till nine at night, of all the men I saw on the field I was the only one who did not at some time during the day go under cover. But I am so proud, that not for one second during the fourteen hours of

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carnage did I seek the slightest shelter. My horse was shot under me, but she is recovering. Several times I was hid from my men in the smoke of the bursting shells, and over and over again the ploughing shot covered me all over with dust, and at all times I was far in the lead; far ahead, and yet I was not even scratched; not a thread of my clothing touched, and I felt all day that I would not be hurt.

"I proved myself a real soldier on that field. All the field officers of our brigade the day after the battle waited on General Walker, who commands this division, and represented my conduct to him and claimed that he should do me justice in his report. He promised to do so. If he does it is all right; if not, the praise awarded me by all the field officers is compliment enough; certainly nothing like it has happened during the war. It is a rare thing for all your brother officers to join in praising and demanding promotion for one of themselves, but they did this for me and I did not know many of them.

"I only wish to be done justice to, that our dear son may have something to be proud of. I hope, for myself, I care nothing for such things. Rom's (his brother General Ransom) report of the battle did not quite ignore me. I suppose, as he said, it would not seem right for him to praise his brother. He no doubt means right, but if our cases had been reversed, I would have put him in the stars. I know he means right and have nothing to say. I know I am bound, if I am not killed, to be distinguished in the army. But do forgive me for all this nonsense."

It was not until June, 1863, General Robert Ransom having been made Major-General, that Colonel Ransom received his merited promotion. He was unanimously recommended to succeed his brother in command of the brigade by the officers of the Twenty-fifth, Thirty-fifth, Forty-ninth and Fifty-sixth regiments over the three senior Colonels.

GENERAL RANSOM'S FIRST INDEPENDENT COMMAND. ENGAGEMENT
AT BOONE'S MILL, JULY 28, 1863.

Twice in his military career, it was General Ransom's good fortune to be able

"To strike for his altars and his fires,
To strike for the green graves of his sires
God! And his native land."

One of these occasions was his defeat of the enemy at Boon's Mill, in Northampton County, in their attempt to burn the railroad bridge over the Roanoke River at Weldon. To destroy

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this bridge would sever the chief means of provisioning Lee's army and the troops around Petersburg and Richmond with supplies from the South. The enemy made several attempts to do this. The first was by way up the river from Plymouth, July, 1861, by a fleet of gunboats under the gallant and accomplished Lieutenant-Commander Flusser, of the Union navy. This attempt was defeated by Lieutenant A. B. Andrews, of the First Cavalry, with forty-three of his company, who attacked the gunboats with his men dismounted, and using their pistols at close range inflicted such slaughter among the marines and troops on board as caused the abandonment of the expedition. So far as I am advised this was the first and most successful attack on gunboats by cavalry, unsupported by infantry or artillery, recorded in the war. A second attempt to burn the Weldon bridge, was in December, 1862, when General Foster, with a large force of all arms of the service, advanced from New Bern upon Goldsboro, but was driven back by Clingman's, Pettigrew's and other troops under General G. W. Smith. The third and most unexpected attempt was defeated by General Ransom as follows:

In July, 1863, Ransom's brigade was stationed near Petersburg, Virginia. On the evening of July 27, 1863, General Ransom received a telegram from his friend and neighbor, Mr. John Long, who lived near Garysburg, that Colonel S. P. Spear, with a large force of cavalry and artillery, was advancing from Winton (in Bertie County) on Weldon.

Ordering the Thirty-fifth regiment to Garysburg on first train, the General with his staff preceded his troops on a locomotive, pressed into service for the occasion, reaching Garysburg at day-break on the 28th. Four companies of the Twenty-fourth North Carolina regiment, under Lieutenant-Colonel Harris of the regiment, and a section of two guns of the Macon light artillery, under command of Lieutenant Vassar, were encamped near that place and were ordered to march to Boon's Mill, distant seven miles on the county road from Garysburg to Jackson, the county seat. Leaving orders that all troops arriving at Garysburg should follow him, early on the morning of July 28, General

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Ransom with his staff proceeded to Jackson, ten miles, to obtain information of the enemy's movements. Having no cavalry, except such as he could improvise for the occasion, the General had to do his own scouting.

Boon's Mill was a place of some strategic importance. It had been partly fortified by the throwing up of some rifle pits commanding the bridge over the water way leading from the mill pond to the grist mill. The county road led over this bridge, which was about thirty feet wide.

Without stopping at his home, which was in plain view of the road, as he hastened on to the mill about two miles distant, the General reached Jackson to learn that the enemy were rapidly approaching the town. Getting such information as he could, about noon General Ransom left the town on his return to Boon's Mill, where he intended to make the fight and had proceeded about half a mile, when a great shout was heard from the direction behind him, and stopping to ascertain the cause, the enemy's cavalry were seen in pursuit, charging over the hill about two hundred and fifty yards off.

It was now a question as to whose horses were the faster, as two miles lay between the Confederate commander and his forces, taking their enjoyment in the mill pond, ignorant of the perilous situation of their General.

John Gilpin, of famous London town, would have been distanced in this race. The horses of the General and his staff were rested; the thoroughbreds proved equal to the demands on them, and General Ransom reaches the mill in advance of his pursuers, unhurt, though subject to the enemy's fire during the race. Dashing across the bridge he calls out to have the planks taken up, the men to fall in ranks and gives orders in stentorian tones easily heard by the enemy, that certain well known commands in the army under Lee should take such and such positions in line of battle. The pursuers halted to reform their command more or less disorganized from the pursuit; this gave the Confederates, most of whom were bathing in the mill pond, time to get their guns.

Colonel Spear now brought up his artillery, and for an hour or

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more shelled the Confederate position. Dismounting his cavalry Colonel Spear attempted an advance down the road to the mill, he was met by a quick fire and driven back. About this time the two guns of the Macon light artillery arrived and opened fire. The enemy now attempted to carry our position by a simultaneous attack on both the flanks, and succeeded under cover of the thick swamp undergrowth in getting their men directly in our rear across the mill pond, which curves here nearly at right angles. This movement was promptly met by advancing the artillery to the front and shelling the woods with grape and canister, and by a brave fire of the infantry. The fight had now lasted some five hours. Foiled in his expectation to surprise the Confederates and reach Weldon bridge without serious opposition, Colonel Spear late in the afternoon withdrew, and during the night retreated through Jackson.

This repulse of Colonel Spear, whose force consisted of a brigade of cavalry and nine pieces of artillery, with a supporting force under General Foster at Winton, North Carolina, by not more than two hundred infantry and two pieces of artillery, was a brilliant achievement of the greatest moment. It saved the railroad bridge at Weldon, prevented the occupation by the enemy of a large section of the richest portion of the State, from which the Confederate government largely drew its supplies, when at times there were not ten days' rations in Richmond for Lee's army.

The crops of 1863 and 1864 were saved to the people in that section of Eastern North Carolina as if war was not raging; and the slave population remained quietly at work on the plantations during the balance of the war.

The enemy never made another attempt on the Weldon bridge. Ordering a pursuit, General Ransom now seeks his home to assure his anxious wife and trembling little ones that they are safe. This victory coming so soon after his promotion, was doubly gratifying to his friends and justified the high opinion formed of his capacity for independent command.

In the winter of 1863-1864 Ransom's brigade was assigned to the Department of North Carolina under General George Pickett,

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of Gettysburg fame. In January, 1864, the brigade was a part of General Pickett's command in the unsuccessful attempt to capture New Bern. On March 19, 1864, General Ransom, with his brigade and a cavalry force, drove the Federals from Suffolk, Virginia, capturing a piece of artillery and Quartermaster stores of much value.

THE CAPTURE OF PLYMOUTH, APRIL 20, 1864.

Of all his military services, General Ransom was best pleased with his own conduct and the gallantry of his soldiers at the capture of Plymouth. With rare magnanimity, General Hoke, in command of the expedition, assigned to his second in command the chief honor, and most difficult task, that of assaulting the defenses on the eastern side of the town, and the result fully vindicated his confidence in General Ransom and his brigade. To appreciate fully the important bearing upon the future operations of the war of this capture of Plymouth, a brief reference to General Grant's strategy in the campaign of 1864 is necessary.

When President Davis first met General Hoke on his return from Plymouth, on the day of the battle of Drewry Bluff, May 16, 1864, after congratulating Hoke on his victory, President Davis remarked that he had seen in the Northern papers that the Washington authorities had given him (President Davis) credit for having discovered and thwarted General Grant's plans for the campaign by the taking of Plymouth. It now appears that General Grant designed that the Confederates should be attacked simultaneously at three points, when the campaign should open. Grant was to attack Lee in the wilderness so soon in the spring as the roads were passable. General Butler was to advance on Petersburg with an army collected at Fortress Monroe, and disembark at City Point on the James River, and Burnside, who had been so successful in North Carolina in the first part of the war, was to collect a third army at Plymouth, and with the assistance of gunboats on the Roanoke River, was to capture Weldon and thus cut off all reinforcements and supplies for the Confederacy from the South.

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Entirely ignorant of the enemy's plans, the Confederate authorities had decided that an attempt should be made to capture some important place in Eastern North Carolina in possession of the enemy. Plymouth, North Carolina, was the place selected, and an Iron Clad (the Albemarle) built in a cornfield near Halifax and launched, when a freshet in the river made it possible, was to be used with the land forces. Hoke and Ransom, both Brigadier-Generals from North Carolina, with their respective brigades, Kemper's Virginia brigade, the Eighth North Carolina regiment of Clingman's brigade, part of a cavalry force under Colonel Deering and several batteries of artillery under Lieutenant-Colonel James Branch, constituted the attacking force, all under General Hoke's command.

Plymouth was garrisoned by four regiments of infantry, two companies of heavy and one battery of light artillery, two companies of cavalry and two companies recruited in North Carolina, aided by the gunboats Miami, Southfield, Whitehead and Ceres. The town was protected from river attack from the direction of Weldon by Fort Grey at Warren's Neck, manned by one one hundred pound and two thirty-two pound cannon, and above and below the fort the river was blockaded to prevent any vessel from getting past. The town is flanked on the west end by a woody marsh and on the east by a woody swamp, through which runs Conaby Creek, a narrow but deep stream. Fort Wessells in the western, Fort Williams in the central and Fort Comfort in the eastern part of the town command the approaches from the west, south and east respectively; while a strong breastwork with redoubts at intervals encircles the town. On the west there is an entrenched camp close to the river with a two hundred pound cannon in position at battery Worth, a gun intended expressly for the Ram Albemarle, says Major John Graham in his valuable account of the battle. These forts, redoubts and breastworks were laid out after the most approved military engineering skill, protected by moats and palisades and chevaux de frise—while the fleet of gunboats defended the river front of the town. Plymouth was a formidable fortress amply

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garrisoned and provisioned, and with a fleet of gunboats to aid the land defenses.

General Hoke assembled his forces at Tarboro and set out from that place on April 15, 1864, arriving near Plymouth on the afternoon of Sunday the 17th. Detaching Kemper's brigade with Deering's cavalry and two batteries of artillery to attack Fort Grey, Hoke's and Ransom's brigades circling around, approach the town from the south by way of the Washington road, and about dark rest on their arms. Next day towards evening, Fort Grey having been captured, Hoke's and Kemper's brigades assault Fort Wessells. Ransom's brigade makes a demonstration in aid of this assault with fourteen pieces of artillery placed close to and threatening Fort Williams.

A correspondent of the Richmond *Examiner* thus graphically describes the scene:

"The action commenced about sunset; the night being perfectly clear with a full moon, every object visible. The sight was magnificent. The screaming, hissing shells meeting and passing each other through the sulphurous air appeared like blazing comets with their burning fires, and would burst with frightful noise, scattering their fragments as thick as hail. The gunboats had come to the assistance of the besieged forts and their fire added grandeur to the sight."

After repeated assaults, in which Colonel Mercer, leading Hoke's brigade, is mortally wounded, and Captain Macon, of the Forty-third regiment, and many others were killed, the commander of the Fort having been killed, it surrenders. This closes the second day's fighting on the part of the land forces. Let us for a moment see what the Ram Albemarle has been doing. On the morning of Monday, April 18, she left her mooring at Hamilton, under command of Captain James W. Cooke, a native of the State.

Forges were erected on her deck, blacksmiths and carpenters were kept hard at work, as she floated down the stream going stern foremost. The river was in a freshet; the proverbial inhabitant quotes, Mr. Elliot, her builder, said afterwards, "such high water had never before been seen in the Roanoke River." This was providential. It gave ten feet of water over the tor-

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pedoes, sunken vessels and piles that formed the barricade at Fort Grey, and reaching these about two a. m., they were safely passed under a fire from Fort Grey, which was not returned. Proceeding down the river, battery Worth, with its two hundred pound cannon, was also safely passed, when the gunboats, Miami and Southfield, lashed together, were met steaming up to the defense of the town; Captain Cooke dashing his prow in the side of the Southfield, she went down in less time than it takes to tell the story. Entangled in the frame of the sinking vessel, the Albemarle is in danger of sinking herself, and the Miami, seeing her perilous situation, steamed up to her side and opened fire with her nine inch one hundred pound Parrot rifles. So close were the vessels that Captain Flusser, commanding the Miami, Lieutenant Andrews' opponent in the Rainbow Bend fight in 1862, is killed by one of his own shells that rebounded after striking the Ram and exploding, tearing him all to pieces. The Albemarle now turning upon the Miami, the latter is soon disabled and seeks safety in flight. Having cleared the river of the gunboats, the Albemarle returns to Plymouth to assist in its capture.

As the result of the two days' fighting, General Hoke has captured Forts Grey and Wessells, completely invested the town, the Albemarle has put *hors de combat* the fleet of gunboats in the river, and now comes General Ransom's opportunity.

He is to assault at daybreak on the 20th (Wednesday) with his brigade and artillery, the line of forts and breastworks on the southern and eastern side of the town. In the afternoon of the 19th Ransom begins his movement. Protecting his men by a detour through the woods, he arrives after dark at the banks of Conaby Creek. By the uncertain light of the moon he drives the enemy entrenched, at the bridge crossing Conaby Creek at the Columbia road, from their strong position; he then pontoons the stream and by midnight he has his command safely across, and in line of battle to make the assault next morning. General Wessells, the Federal commander, speaks of this passage of Conaby Creek as a "great disaster," says it is "unexplained" and attributes to it much of the misfortunes of the next day. Undoubtedly it was a tactical move on the part of General Ransom of the

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greatest importance, effected with slight loss to his men and prophetic of his greatest success next day.

During the night the Thirty-fifth regiment is taken from its regular position in the brigade formation and placed near the centre opposite Fort Comfort, the most formidable of the defenses on the east side.

All arrangements made for the next day's battle, the men are allowed to lie down and rest.

Says Major John W. Graham, of the Fifty-sixth regiment: "It is now near midnight and the men lay down on the bare ground; the air is sharp and piercing. The enemy keep up a shelling through the night; our Iron Clad, the Albemarle, exchanges shots with the two hundred pound gun at the upper end of the town (Battery Worth). The night is perfectly calm and cloudless, with a full moon lending beauty to the scene, the skirmishing is at times sharp and terrific. Just as the moon is going down (and day breaks) a rocket shoots up in the air, and Hoke is advised that Ransom is about to attack."

On horseback with drawn sword, Ransom appears along his line, and his ringing voice, says Captain Graham in the sketch of his regiment, the Fifty-sixth, comes down the line, "Attention, brigade. Fix bayonets. Trail arms. Forward march," and the charge begins. Officers and men are animated with but one determination, to be the first to enter the enemy's works. On the right the Fifty-sixth and Twenty-fifth regiments are impeded by a swamp in places waist deep, but they flounder through and attack and route a regiment posted at the outer line of the town. The Eighth and Twenty-fourth regiments respectively capture redoubts on the left of the Columbia Road. It falls to the lot of the Thirty-fifth regiment to assault Fort Comfort. Reaching the deep ditch surrounding the fortification, the men rush in, climb up its sides bristling with guns, crowd through the embrasures, over the parapet and wherever they can find an entrance, and are in possession of the work before the defenders recover from the audacity of the attack. The enemy now retreat into the houses, making barricades of them, and fire from the upper stories.

Reforming his brigade, General Ransom successfully carries the works on the river; then a fight from house to house takes

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place. The enemy at length driven from all their positions, losing some two thousand prisoners, the balance flee to Fort Williams, the main fortification of the town. Preparatory to assaulting, General Ransom makes a reconnaissance of the fort, and finds it too formidable for capture by infantry, and signals to the Albemarle to open fire on the same. Hoke's troops on the west side of the town having now united with Ransom's from the east side, they surround the fort and General Ransom sends Colonel Deering, then acting on his staff, to demand its surrender.

It is at first refused, but a few shots from the Albemarle exploding inside the fort, about 10 a. m., a white flag is seen above the parapet, and sending for General Hoke, after a brief interview, General Wessells surrenders. The latter admits a loss of two thousand, eight hundred and thirty-four killed, wounded and prisoners, and some three thousand stand of small arms. In addition the armaments of the numerous forts and redoubts and large quantities of commissary and quartermaster supplies fell into the hands of the victors.

General Ransom at once telegraphed Mrs. Ransom as follows: "I am safe, my brigade greatly distinguished itself." In a letter he writes:

"I send you a short dispatch telling you of our victory. Thanks to our Heavenly Father, I am safe without any injury. Today I am on the gunboat Albemarle, and her gallant commander, Captain Cooke, sends you some presents. I must tell you that my brigade has immortalized itself. The charge and storming of the forts was the noblest thing of the war. I wish you could have seen it. How merciful God has been to me. I intend to be confirmed when the Bishop comes. We are all well. Kiss the dear boys. God bless and preserve us and bring us together in joy and love."

General Hoke was telegraphed by President Davis his congratulations and promotion to be Major-General. Later, Colonel Deering was promoted Brigadier-General. Lieutenant-Colonel Gaston Lewis, commanding Hoke's brigade after death of Colonel Mercer, was made Brigadier-General, and Matt. W. Ransom, the hero of the third and last day's battle by which the town's surrender was brought about, received no promotion. 'Tis true the General Assembly of the State at its next special session in May

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following, united his name with General Hoke's and Commander Cooke's in joint resolution of thanks to the officers and men of their respective commands for this brilliant victory, and the Confederate Congress passed similar resolutions, but there was no promotion of rank. Ransom planned and executed the day's bloody work. He called his Colonels to give them their orders on the night before the assault, but he asked no counsel from them. A great general needs no counsel of war to advise him. Imagine Cæsar asking what to do at Parsalia, or Hannibal while crossing the Alps, or Napoleon at Austerlitz.

Stonewall Jackson once called his subordinates into council and said he would never repeat the act, and General Lee assumed alone the responsibility for the defeat at Gettysburg. General Hoke gave Ransom a free hand at Plymouth and neither had cause to regret it.

General Hoke halted at Plymouth only long enough to rest his men. On April 25 he sets out to capture Washington, North Carolina. He reached that town next day. During the night the enemy evacuated the place. Pursuing the retreating enemy General Hoke has his command investing New Bern, and ready for its assault on May 6, when he is peremptorily recalled to Petersburg by telegrams from President Davis and General Lee, and making one of the most rapid marches on record, reaches Petersburg on the 10th, just in time to assist in repelling General Butler, who has advanced from City Point on that city.

On May 12 Ransom's brigade is on the extreme right of the Confederate line defending Drewry's Bluff. The enemy concealed by the woods get around his right flank and attack him from the rear. His men jumping over the works make a brave defense until night comes on, and they retire to an inner line of defense. Here Captain Cicero Durham, commanding a battalion of sharpshooters, known as the fighting quartermaster of the Fortyninth, was mortally, and Lieutenant Waverly Johnson, of General Ransom's staff, painfully wounded. On the 13th the brigade is attacked with overwhelming force. After gallantly repulsing the same, though flanked on the right and the enemy in its rear,

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the brigade held its own until night came on, and it falls back to the main line of defense.

On the next day (May 14) while rallying his line of sharpshooters, General Ransom is shot in the left arm by a minnie ball. The ball shattered both bones of the forearm and the surgeons at first advised an amputation. Dr. Charles J. O'Hagan, the surgeon of his old regiment and his personal friend, opposed amputation; and cutting off the ends of the splintered bones, it was left to nature to unite the separated parts, and in due time the surgeon's prognosis was verified, and though shorter, the arm became serviceable and the use of the hand preserved.

It is not until the fall that General Ransom is able to join his brigade, then in the trenches at Petersburg defending the line from the Appomattox River eastwardly to the Jerusalem Road.

ASSAULT OF FORT STEDMAN, MARCH 25, 1865.

Ransom's brigade, which had been continuously in the trenches around Petersburg from June 17, 1864, except an occasional detail as reinforcement to the troops on the right of the Confederate line, such as the engagement at the Jones House, south of Petersburg, June 22, the Crater, July 30, and the Davis House, August 21, was on March 16, 1865, ordered to the extreme right of the Confederate line at Hatcher's Run. Ordered to return to the trenches on the 24th, before day light on the 25th the brigade finds itself on familiar ground near the line between the City Point and the Norfolk Railroad, fronting the enemy's stronghold, Fort Stedman, located at Hare's Hill.

Ransom is put in command of Wallace's South Carolina brigade in addition to his own. It now develops that the enemy's lines are to be assaulted at Fort Stedman in the hope of cutting them in two, and by the assistance of Pickett's division from our lines north of the Appomattox to defeat that portion of Grant's army investing Petersburg. To Major-General John B. Gordon is assigned the honor of commanding the attacking forces. General Lee had consulted Generals Gordon and Ransom about this movement. Gordon thought well of it, Ransom was doubtful. Doubtless it was the dire necessity of the situation that deter-

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mined General Lee to make the attempt. He would anticipate Grant in the opening of the spring campaign. It was a forlorn hope, but those brave men with bright muskets, but faded uniforms, who had carried the fortune of the Confederacy for four years on the point of their bayonets

"Did not make reply,
Did not reason why,
But went to do and die."

Says Adjutant Thomas R. Roulhac:

"Just at daylight we advanced to the assault, Ransom's brigade directly in front of Hare's Hill (Fort Stedman). At the signal the sharpshooters of the Forty-ninth regiment, under First Lieutenant Thomas R. Roulhac, following the storming party led by Lieutenant W. W. Fleming, of the Sixth North Carolina regiment, moved across our works, through the obstructions in our front, and the whole brigade with a rush, climbed the *chavaux de frise* of the enemy, and clambering through and over the deep ditches in their front, went over the enemy's works, and captured them before they aroused from their slumbers. The surprise was complete.

"Sweeping down their lines the Forty-ninth opened the way for other troops, and Fort Stedman was in our hands. The expected assistance from the troops north of the Appomattox did not arrive. The enemy were given time to concentrate, and soon from both flanks and from the front Grant moved overwhelming forces against the small number of Confederates holding the captured works. Then one by one the Confederate forces give way, and return as best they can to their own defenses—shattered, bleeding at every pore, decimated, but undismayed. The enemy do not attempt to follow them, and with a loss of two thousand nine hundred and forty-nine, killed wounded and captured, this famous assault passes into history as one of the most brilliant, most desperate in the annals of the war."

In his report of the battle, General Lee says:

"The two brigades commanded by General Ransom behaved most handsomely. Ransom's brigade lost seven hundred men in all."

BATTLE OF FIVE FORKS.

Without resting Ransom is ordered to return to the extreme of the Confederate right and oppose Sheridan in the latter's attempt to turn the Confederate right flank, and get possession of the Southside Railroad. Ransom is to unite his forces with Pickett's

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division in aid of the cavalry under Fitzhugh Lee, taking position first at Burgess Mill on Hatcher's Run. On March 30, Ransom's brigade drove the enemy back into his entrenchments, and uniting with Pickett they march down the White Oak Road to Five Forks in Dinwiddie County, and on 31st of March engage in battle with Sheridan's cavalry, driving them back in "discomfiture." Sheridan informs Grant this force is too strong for him, and at ten p. m., Grant notifies him, "Warren's corps and MacKenzie's cavalry have been sent to his assistance."

The Confederates during the night retire to their works at Five Forks, and Sheridan, reinforced by Warren's corps and MacKenzie's cavalry, begins at daybreak an advance, and on April 1, 1865, is fought the battle of Five Forks, the last organized battle between the armies of the Potomac and of Northern Virginia.

In 1895 I called to pay my respects to General Longstreet at his home near Gainsville, Georgia. During the interview the General spoke most feelingly of the gallantry of the North Carolina soldiers and desired me to convey to General Ransom his personal regards and high esteem; and requested me to say to him that he (General Longstreet) had just completed his account of the battle of Five Forks, to be published in the book he was writing, and that the North Carolina soldiers had never, to his knowledge, acted more gallantly than in that battle, so disastrous to the Confederate cause. I felt emboldened after this to say to General Longstreet that I had read in some paper, that he had replied in answer to an inquiry as to the respective gallantry of the soldiers from the different States, that he found as the general result of a battle there were more North Carolina soldiers killed and wounded in proportion to their numbers engaged, and more of the enemy killed and wounded in front of where the North Carolinians fought, than was the case with the troops from any other State; and asked him if he had so stated. He answered me, "substantially so, yes," such has been my experience with the North Carolina soldiers I have had the honor to command."

A concluding word about this

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BATTLE OF FIVE FORKS, APRIL 1, 1865.

The Confederate troops consisted of Corse's, Terry's and Stuart's brigades of Pickett's Division, commanded by Major-General George Pickett, and Wallace's South Carolina and Ransom's North Carolina brigade of Bushrod Johnson's Division, commanded by General Ransom, and the cavalry divisions of Rosser, W. H. F. Lee and Fitzhugh Lee, commanded by the latter, a total of about seven thousand men of all arms.

The Federal forces were the First, Second and Third Cavalry Divisions, nine thousand men; First, Second and Third Infantry Divisions of Warren's corps, five batteries of artillery, fifteen thousand, seven hundred and eighty-seven men, and MacKenzie's cavalry one thousand strong, all under command of General Phil. H. Sheridan.

The Confederate forces were occupying the works along the White Oak road at the junction of three roads; hence the name Five Forks. They faced to the east. General Sheridan's plan of battle, he writes in his report, was to make a feint with his cavalry to turn the Confederate right flank, and meanwhile quietly move up Warren's fifth corps with a view to attacking the Confederate left flank, crush the whole force, and drive westward those who might escape, thus isolating them from their army at Petersburg.

The Confederate forces at the beginning of the battle were posted as follows:

On their right the cavalry under Fitzhugh Lee, in which was Barringer's North Carolina brigade, which so distinguished itself at the awful fight at Chamberlain's Run the day before. Next on the left, Pickett's division, next to Pickett's, Ransom's command, two brigades, and on his left, Mumford's cavalry connecting with Brigadier-General Roberts' brigade, which filled the gap between our left and the right of our main army at Burgess' Mills, several miles distant.

By two o'clock p. m., the Federal cavalry, under Generals Meritt and Custer, have the Confederate cavalry at Five Forks hard pressed; but the latter held their ground with a determination and grim tenacity never surpassed. It is between four and five

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o'clock before Warren advances. Sheridan complains of his delay and that night relieves Warren of his command. Shielding the movement of his infantry under the operations of the cavalry, Warren's corps advances through the undefended lines on the left of the Confederates; getting completely in their rear. Deploying his columns Sheridan begins his attack with Ayre's division on Ransom's extreme left held by the Twenty-fourth regiment. At first the enemy are successfully resisted, several distinct charges have been repulsed, but Griffin's Federal division now appearing on the scene, soon to be followed by Crawford's, the handful of Confederates are swept away, and the Fifty-sixth, Twenty-fifth, Forty-ninth and Thirty-fifth regiments are successively driven from their works. They form from time to time these new lines of battle, ignorant that Crawford's and Griffin's divisions have gotten entirely around them and are attacking Pickett in the rear with overwhelming force. General Ransom conceives it his duty to make one final charge to break through the enveloping lines. One horse has been killed under him. He sends for his favorite charger, a thoroughbred stallion named Ion. Captain Sterling H. Gee, his brigade Adjutant, has been killed, and Lieutenant R. B. Peebles, the Adjutant of his old regiment, is promoted on the field to take Captain Gee's place.

Calling on his brigade to follow him, bareheaded, on his superb war horse, who smelleth the battle at hand and is eager for the fray, obeying the slightest command of its rider, Ransom leads his brigade for the last time in a charge against the enemy. Emerging from the woods, as he appears in front of his advancing line the enemy, who are in line of battle just beyond, open fire. As the smoke clears away, rider and horse are seen on the ground, the rider underneath. A cry runs down the line, "Our General is shot," and men rush to save him from capture. The enemy see the act and a message is wired to Major-General Thomas, of the Federal army, that his kinsman, General Ransom, has been killed.

But not so—Captain Johnson, of the Thirty-fifth, and Captain Sherrill, of the Forty-ninth regiments, rush forward and find the

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General unhurt, but pinioned under his horse and in danger of being crushed in the dying struggles of the noble animal. When shot the horse reared high up in the air and fell backward on his rider, who, with his wounded arm in a sling, is powerless to extricate himself.

With the enemy now closing in on both flanks and from the front, and no hope of assistance, there is no thought of surrender; sable night setting down on the gory scene favors the few survivors, and General Ransom and the remnants of his command, in the language of Colonel Rutledge, of the Twenty-fifth regiment, "backed through the small loop hole left, emptying into the enemy's faces the last cartridge we had." We are here reminded of Marshal Ney firing the last musket in the retreat of the grand army from Moscow. During the night General Ransom with the brave few left unites with General Anderson's corps on the Southside railroad. The noble cavalry under Fitzhugh Lee, and especially Barringer's North Carolina brigade, all that was left of it, after their dreadful losses at the passage of Chamberlain's Creek the day before, heroically breast the enemy's advance, and slowly falling back take position at Pott's Station, on the Southside railroad, about two miles from the battlefield.

From April 1 until the surrender at Appomattox on the 9th, the retreat of the Confederate army was one series of disasters, until at the end, only seven thousand, eight hundred and ninety-two organized infantry, sixty-three pieces of artillery, twenty-one hundred effective cavalry remained of the once proud and conquering army of Northern Virginia. Ransom surrendered at Appomattox, forty-one officers and three hundred and ninety-one enlisted men. Dating from his commission as Lieutenant-Colonel of the First regiment, May 8, 1861, General Ransom served four years, lacking twenty-nine days, as a Confederate soldier.

On his journey home from Appomattox, the brigade head-quarter's wagon with all his belongings was lost, and when General Ransom joined his family at Warrenton, North Carolina, he had to accept from his brother, the necessary garments for a change of clothing.

General Ransom was not a Martinet. He was never known to

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court martial or put an officer under arrest, never had a private punished or put on extra duty, never asked for a court martial in any case, and never preferred a charge against an officer or private, but the discipline of his command was excellent. He placed great confidence in young officers. He had many such in his brigade. His Adjutant at Sharpsburg and Fredericksburg, was a mere boy of sixteen years, the present eminent Chief Justice of your State. On one occasion when a vacancy in the Colonelcy of one of the regiments in the brigade was to be filled, and the next in rank was a young man under twenty-one years of age, the brigade commander opposed the promotion of the "boy," as he termed him; Colonel Ransom did not sympathize with this view of his brother, the General; and the heroic conduct of this young Colonel on the battlefield of Gettysburg vindicated Colonel Ransom's better judgment.

General Ransom was sympathetic with his soldiers in their privations and misfortunes. I have this incident from General Ransom's friend and relative, Dr. F. J. Picot. One day not far from Petersburg General Ransom rode upon a file of soldiers taking a prisoner out to be shot. He stopped and enquired the cause. The man having been refused a furlough for one night, and encamped only a short distance from his home, ran away for a few hours to see his wife and children, intending to return to his command the next day, but somehow missed it on the line of march, was arrested, tried and condemned as a deserter. The poor fellow's narrative convinced General Ransom of his innocence of intent to desert.

General Ransom ordered the escort not to shoot him before his return, saying, as he wheeled his horse and spurring to the full run, "I'll try my man. I'll try my poor fellow." In a brief time he returned from General Lee's headquarters, his horse and himself covered with mud, waving the reprieve above his head. It is of pathetic interest to know that this soldier, the next day, was killed by a musket ball through the heart received in the fore front of battle.

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In Judge Montgomery's interesting account of "Appomattox and the return home," I quote this passage:

"We heard of General Ransom along our road, helping the tired and footsore, often dismounting and placing such in his saddle, and speaking to them words of hope and cheer. We greatly wished to come up with him and to talk to him, for we had great interest and pride in him. We had watched his career as a soldier, which had reflected honor on his State and upon the South, and especially his strikingly brilliant conduct at Five Forks a few days before."

General Ransom never became a master of tactics, the drill was irksome to him. He probably undervalued the importance of both, but as his rank increased and his perspective of a battlefield enlarged, he instinctively seized upon the strategic points in a fight and was always equal to the occasion. At Sharpsburg in the temporary absence of his superior, and though junior in rank, he commanded and handled his brigade in a way to excite the admiration of his soldiers, and command the encomiums of his superiors.

At Boon's Mill, when he had himself alone to rely upon, on which occasion he was chased for two miles by the resolute and confident enemy before he reached his own command, his presence of mind never left him, and he turns upon his pursuers and defeats them with one-fifth the number of soldiers opposed to him. At Plymouth he measures up to the capacity of a commander of the first rank in storming and capturing the defenses on the eastern side of the town and compelling the surrender of its garrison. He was fortunate above his comrades in being a commander in the only two victories gained in the State in the four years of the war, and his good fortune did not desert him at the end, for he was privileged to command in the last organized battle of the armies in Virginia, and was with his soldiers when they gave their paroles at Appomattox.

Time forbids us to extend this story. We reluctantly leave this brief sketch of General Ransom's military career. Of all North Carolinians I would liken him most to General William R. Davie, the accomplished soldier of the Revolution, member of the

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United States Congress, representative of his Country abroad, orator, statesman, patriot.

Listen to the story, my countrymen,
Lest we forget, Lest we forget.

RANSOM IN CIVIL LIFE AFTER THE WAR.

To close the account of the Confederate soldier with his surrender, would not complete the record of his great services to his country. For years after Appomattox the Confederate soldier fought a harder fight and against greater odds in civil life than when he confronted an armed enemy on the field of battle.

From 1868 to 1871, our homes, our property, our civilization hung in the balance, with a National Government hostile, foreign nations unsympathetic, our State Government in arms against us and our former slaves, our legislators, and in charge of our county affairs, any people but the white people of the South would have given up. Not so the soldiers who had followed Lee and Jackson and our own leaders, Hill, Branch, Grimes, Scales, Pettigrew, Hoke, Ransom and Jarvis, and those in civil life, Governors Graham and Bragg and Vance, Judges Merrimon and Battle, B. F. Moore and Josiah H. Turner, Jr.

JUDGE GEORGE W. BROOKS AND HABEAS CORPUS.

On July 1, 1868, Honorable W. W. Holden took the oath of office as Governor, under what is known as the "Canby Constitution." On March 7, 1870, Governor Holden declared the County of Alamance in insurrection, and on July 8 following he likewise declared the County of Caswell in insurrection. In June, July and August Governor Holden organized some five hundred soldiers under the command of George W. Kirk, of Tennessee, as Colonel, and having suspended the writ of "habeas corpus" by his proclamations, these soldiers under Colonel Kirk and his subordinates arrested numerous citizens of the counties of Alamance and Caswell, under charges of being members of the Ku Klux Klan and guilty of the murder of J. W. Stephens and Wyatt Outlaw.

On July 15, 1870, Adolphus G. Moore, of Alamance, was arrested by Kirk, and the next day he sued out a writ of "habeas corpus"

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before Chief Justice Pearson, Captain E. S. Parker and Judge A. S. Merrimon, his counsel. The writ was delivered to A. C. McAlister, now of Graham, North Carolina, who on the following day, which was Sunday, July 17, 1870, served the same on Colonel Kirk as his command rested about nine miles from Company Shops (Burlington) on the road to Yanceyville. Kirk's reply was, "Tell them such things are played out. I have my orders from Governor Holden, and shall not obey the writ. I will surrender my prisoners as Governor Holden orders, but not otherwise, unless they send a sufficient force to whip me."

This answer was reported to Judge Pearson on the 18th. The Judge notifies Governor Holden that Colonel Kirk refused to make return to the writ, and asked if Kirk was acting under the Governor's orders. On the next day Governor Holden replies that "Colonel Kirk made the arrests and now detains the prisoners by my orders." The Judge thereupon announced as his decision that the Governor had no power to disobey the writ of "habeas corpus," and issued an order that Mr. Moore be brought forthwith before him and directed the same to the Marshal of his court with instructions to exhibit it and a copy of his opinion to the Governor with this famous statement: "If he, the Governor, orders the petitioner to be delivered to the Marshal, well. If not, following the example of Chief Justice Taney in the Merrimon case, I have discharged my duty. The power of the Judiciary is exhausted, and the responsibility must rest on the Executive." Governor Holden in reply, under date of July 26, 1870, gives his reasons at length for refusing to obey the writ and Judge Pearson declines to take any further action.

The condition of those in confinement, the best and most influential citizens in their respective communities, now no hope of release by the process of the law, a Court Martial organized to try them ordered to convene in a few days, was so deplorable that a few determined and able men came to the city of Raleigh to consult as a committee of safety on the liberties of the people. Governors Graham and Bragg, Honorable B. F. Moore, Judge W. H. Battle and his two sons and others met at Judge Battle's

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office last of July. General Ransom was telegraphed to at his home to attend, and he came at once.

The situation was laboriously and carefully gone over. It was thought useless to apply to the United States civil authorities, as Governor Holden had called upon President Grant for his aid, and the State's representatives in the United States Congress were urging upon that body to pass a Federal statute suspending the writ of "habeas corpus" in North Carolina.

General Ransom asked for a copy of the fourteenth amendment to the United States Constitution lately proclaimed; and relying upon its words, "All persons born or naturalized in the United States are citizens of the United States, and no State shall deprive any person of life, liberty or property, without due process of law, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction, the equal protection of the law," he advised that application be made to the United States District Judge, George W. Brooks, at Elizabeth City, for a writ of "habeas corpus." His suggestion prevailed, and General Ransom was requested to see Judge Brooks in person and make the application, and Josiah Turner, Jr., was to be the petitioner. Riding on a locomotive from Raleigh to save time, General Ransom reached Elizabeth City, Saturday afternoon about supper time, July 30, 1870.

At once seeking the Judge at his home, he opened the subject of his visit. From then till late at night the matter was discussed, but without avail. After breakfast the next morning General Ransom again called upon His Honor, and remained to dinner, and in the afternoon they took a walk along the shore of that beautiful sheet of water, on which Elizabeth City is located. We can well imagine General Ransom never ceased to plead his cause.

At dinner the Reverend Thomas P. Crowder, the Methodist minister, now living near Suffolk, Virginia, joined the party, and with his inimitable grace and unsurpassed diplomacy, General Ransom proceeded to enlist Mrs. Brooks and the Divine on his side. That he succeeded goes without saying.

During the dinner this took place. Bowing to Mrs. Brooks and the clergyman, General Ransom remarks, "I will have to get Mrs. Brooks and Mr. Crowder to join me in my petition, as

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we now stand one to one. The Judge on one side and I on the other." Mr. Crowder is the first to respond, and turning to the good lady he says, "Sister Brooks, I always believe in joining the weaker side; we will have to help the General here and petition the Judge; what say you?" What could the noble woman say but, "Brother Crowder, I agree with you."

After all the General's arguments, eloquence and tact, His Honor is not fully persuaded and does not then issue the writ, but when General Ransom left early the next morning for his home, he carried this from Judge Brooks: "If I were satisfied I had the power to issue the writ I would do so. These men ought to have a fair and impartial hearing somewhere. Leave with me your copy of the fourteenth amendment, which happily General Ransom had brought with him, and I will let you hear from me." We know the result. On August 6, 1870, Judge Brooks arrived in Raleigh. Messrs. Moore, Battle, Graham, Bragg and Merriam sign a petition on behalf of Josiah Turner, Jr., praying for the writ, the same is sworn to by James H. Moore before Judge Brooks himself, and the Judge issues the writ commanding Kirk, in the name of the President of the United States, to produce his prisoners before him at Salisbury on August 18, 1870.

Governor Holden dies game. On August 7 he writes President Grant, denying Judge Brooks' right to interfere, and says, "It is my purpose to detain the prisoners unless the army of the United States under your orders shall demand them."

The Attorney-General of the United States replies next day by direction of President Grant and closes his letter as follows: "I advise that the State authorities yield to the United States Judiciary." At the trial in Salisbury, Colonel Kirk marches into the court room with his prisoner under military escort. He is indignantly ordered out of the room by the Judge. The trial proceeds, its record reads as follows: "No cause being shown for the capture and detention of the prisoner, it is ordered by His Honor that he be discharged and allowed to go without day, and that George W. Kirk pay the cost of the proceedings to be taxed by the clerk of this court."

Judge Brooks died in January, 1881, and his remains repose

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under a monument in Hollywood Cemetery, Elizabeth City, erected by his wife. This upright Judge, this noble Christian woman, his wife, the petitioner and his able and faithful attorneys, the gallant soldier, accomplished statesman, orator and diplomat, have gone to their rewards, but, "lest we forget,"

"These are deeds which should not pass away
And names that must not wither tho' the earth,
Forgets her Empires with a just decay
The enslavers and enslaved; their death and birth."

RANSOM IN CIVIL LIFE.

From February, 1872, until March 4, 1895, General Ransom was United States Senator. Time forbids me, at this late hour, to attempt more than a reference to these twenty-three years of service in that most august body of Representatives of Sovereign States. General Ransom spoke but seldom in the Senate; for this he has been censured by the thoughtless. But those who saw beneath the surface, now realize the supreme wisdom of this self-restraint, for who can doubt it was but self-restraint in carrying out the great object of his political existence, "the sacred purpose to reconcile the once divided people of his country," that he did not often speak in the Senate. He begins his great speech on the "South Faithful to Her Duties," in these words, which are the key note of his senatorial career: "For nearly three years I have sat silently in this chamber with the hope that by pursuing a course, as I thought, of impartial and patriotic duty towards all and every part of the country, I might have some influence in satisfying Northern Senators that the South desired peace with the North, and a restored and fraternal union of all the States of the Republic," and this sacred purpose remained to the end. But he was vigilant of all that was going on. "General Ransom," writes a brother Senator in 1891, "regards nothing lightly" that transpires in the Senate; his State is first above all in his thoughts and affections.

In respect of the Force bill campaign, Gen. Ransom looked as nearly to the bottom of the gulf we so nearly plunged into as any other man, and I was grieved to see how he was impressed in mind and body, with fearful apprehensions of the danger. It

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was on this crisis of the South's political fortunes that the wisdom of Gen. Ransom's course in the Senate became manifest. Going to the Vice-President and to Senators Hoar and Aldrich, he succeeded, as probably no other Southern Senator could have succeeded, in getting the journals of the Senate amended so as to establish the exact history of the proceedings, "without which, falsehood would have supplemented outrage, and our cause would have been lost," says Senator Morgan.

If for the reasons above given Senator Ransom spoke but seldom in the Senate, how different was his course in his own State. What election was ever on in North Carolina, from 1872 to 1905, that Ransom's clarion voice was not heard rallying his followers from the mountains to the seas. Who having once heard one of those campaign speeches ever forgot it. There was no anecdote telling, no vituperation, no misrepresentations; but he appealed to the patriotism of his hearers; to their love of home; to their fidelity to duty; to their intelligent understanding of the respective policies of the two political parties and with merciless criticism and inexorable logic brought conviction to the hearers of the wisdom of the course he advocated.

Of the effect of his oratory I ask your indulgence while I read two letters written to the Senator after two of these speeches. One bears date July 28, 1900, and is so characteristic of the writer it is unnecessary to name him.

"I thank you most noble citizen for the beautiful and wise counsel given our veterans and young manhood. Full of years and laden with honors, you put away all personal considerations and laid before our people the beauty of duty well done, and patriotically accomplished. I open the secrets of my inner soul to you, and render homage to your services.

"When I heard you were coming, I framed an introduction to be spoken in your presence. It happened that this agreeable task was taken over by other and very capable hands. I coveted the privilege of setting the audience aflame with my ardor if not vehemence. I know your taste and refinement in this respect so well I could have added to your gratification if not to your happiness by my zeal and directness. I had the images in mind which I meant to rear and salute, and around these I hoped to shed light. Even Ajax prayed for light."

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The other letter was written on Christmas Eve, 1903. The writer has since died. He was an upright man, an able lawyer, an unselfish patriot. We may hope the two are again united in those bonds of mutual friendship and esteem never to be severed.

"Dear Senator, Soldier and Citizen :

"Thank God that I have lived in your day, and that your example has been before me and my children, and will be long imitated by those aspiring to good and noble deeds; that your faithfulness shall be an ever present example for the youth of the State you loved and served so well; that I'm permitted to tell you in the flesh how I appreciate you. In this season of memory of all that is good, beautiful and true. Thou example of courage, fortitude and noble life. I rejoice that I do you reverence and homage."

Captain S. A. Ashe writes as follows:

"As an orator General Ransom was superb; his powers being of the highest order. Some of his campaign speeches were masterful, so eloquent, so powerful that well informed men have declared that they could not be equalled by any other living American."

On the one hundredth anniversary of the ratification by North Carolina of the Constitution of the United States, held at Fayetteville, November 21, 1889, Senator Ransom was the orator of the occasion. The Marine Band from Washington, D. C., came down to honor the occasion and the speaker, and seldom if ever before was there such a large gathering of representative men and women of the State. Senator Ransom regarded his address on this occasion as his greatest oratorical effort. The subject matter of his discourse had for months occupied his thoughts, and never before had he taken such labor in the preparation of a speech. He was applied to for a copy for publication, but with that remarkable disregard of self which was so inexplicable at times, he neglected to comply with the committee's request, and now alas! the great intellect that created it and the noble patriotism that inspired it are buried in the grave.

In 1902 Senator Ransom was invited by the Grand Lodge of North Carolina to be their orator on St. John's Day, June 24, 1902. Under date of September 2, 1902, Grand Secretary John C. Drewry, in a letter transmitting the resolutions of thanks passed by the Lodge, uses this language:

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"The noblest band of men in North Carolina, numbering about fourteen thousand of the best and purest citizens in our grand old Commonwealth, desire to bear record of the noble life which you have led and the love and esteem which we all bear for you. I am sending you by this mail under another cover, a copy of the resolutions adopted by the Grand Lodge, which I trust will reach you safely."

THE RESOLUTIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

"The Grand Lodge of North Carolina desires to place on record a testimonial of its gratitude to the Hon. Matthew Whitaker Ransom for his presence and participation in the exercises of the Order at Oxford on St. John's Day, June 24, 1902.

"His prompt response to our invitation, his cheerful endurance of the fatigue of travel, his splendid presence, his cordial greetings, and his eloquent oration all touched our hearts and gave a richer glow to the love, admiration and esteem, which we have so long cherished for his noble character, his splendid talents, and his life-long patriotic deeds.

"Brave as a soldier, wise as a statesman, eloquent as an orator, and useful as a citizen, he has rounded out a life of glory and true nobility rarely equalled and never surpassed in the annals of our State. It is a credit to our people that they have spontaneously conferred upon him unexampled honors in every field of public service, and equally creditable to him that he has won worthily every honor and performed nobly every service.

"He stands among us today the foremost citizen of the State. Our Nestor in wisdom and eloquence. His life is a beacon light to the aspiring youth of the land.

"He will be known as one who nobly served his people and his country through long years of active labor, and in his old age remained a patron of every manly virtue."

As evidence of the esteem and respect entertained for Gen. Ransom by his brother Senators, he was given the chairmanship of important committees, and the only Senator from the South, since the war, who was elected President *pro tem* of the Senate. The traveler, as he enters or leaves the Capital of the Nation, little thinks that he owes to Gen. Ransom, chairman of the committee on the Potomac River fronts, the beautiful grounds that greet his eye, and the pure water over which he glides in his Pullman car. Senator Ransom secured the passage of the law establishing the committee on private land claims and Spanish grants and was its chairman. While occupying this position of influence, this incident occurred: Four Senators were enjoying an evening

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at cards, at the home of one of them, when the Senator from Ohio addressed the Senator from Kentucky this enquiry: "Senator, what kind of a man is your friend, Ransom, from North Carolina? I understand he owes everybody, pays nobody, always is hard up, but he can't be induced by Col. I— to introduce a certain bill in the Senate, for which he could demand and get thousands, and I want to know what sort of a man Ransom is." The Kentucky Senator replied that it might be true all he said about Senator Ransom's financial condition, he could not say how this was, but he could tell him one thing, Col. I— and all the clients he represented did not have money enough to make Gen. Ransom do an act as Senator which he thought wrong."

In the fierce light of 23 years' service in the Senate, no one has ever had the temerity to suggest that Gen. Ransom was at any time influenced to do a public service from pecuniary considerations. As was once said by his illustrious colleague, Senator Vance, on a memorable occasion, when he felt himself called upon to vindicate his conduct as Senator, "These hands are clean," there has never been a suggestion of graft or bribery against Gen. Ransom in his long and conspicuous public service.

As chairman of committee on commerce and rivers and harbors, Gen. Ransom was enabled to obtain for his State and the South the most liberal provisions for the expenditure of public moneys in the improvement of its water-courses and harbors. In a five minutes speech he got passed in the Senate a bill appropriating a half million of dollars for the erection of a light house at Hatteras Inlet. "No such result ever before followed a five minutes speech," said Senator Edmunds, of Vermont.

Senator Ransom was untiring in looking after the interests of his constituents and getting them positions of honor and emolument. His first effort was to get Gov. Vance's disabilities removed. When the Democratic party came into power in 1885, his influence with the Democratic administration was great, and he used it for the advancement of Southern men, notably the appointment of Gov. Jarvis to be Minister Plenipotentiary to Brazil.

For twenty years or more he was member from his State on the National Democratic Committee, and his services, advice and pecu-

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niary assistance were always freely given to those in charge of the State's political campaigns. More than once, when in dire need of pecuniary help, the State chairman of his party would appeal to him, and though sorely pressed himself, he never hesitated to sell what cotton he had and at whatever prices he could get for it, and turn over the money to those in charge of the political fortunes of his party in the State. There is not a man in public life today in the State who at one time or another has not had the helping hand of Senator Ransom.

Most of Gen. Ransom's senatorial life was spent in Washington, without the society of his wife and children. This fact has subjected him to much criticism. I have reason to know this was the decision of the joint counsel between wife and husband. General and Mrs. Ransom lost their property as the result of the war. Theirs was a large and increasing family. Neither wished their young children to grow up or be educated in a city. It was decided Mrs. Ransom should remain at home and keep the family together—the boys were to be taught in the private schools of North Carolina, notably Horner's, and complete their educations at the State University. As each finished his college course, he returned to the parent nest to look after the farms that each year are added. The only son who studies a profession also comes home to practice it; and when the end comes to their honored father, all his boys are with or near him, managing their respective plantations. General Ransom had a passion for owning land. When he died he possessed some 25,000 acres, all arable, capable of the highest cultivation. How did he get hold of so much land, one may ask? By giving more for it when any piece was for sale than any one else would give, I answer. How did he get the money to buy the land? He bought largely on time. His salary as Minister to Mexico, he saved and put into land. The lands he bought were well timbered. He often sold the timber for more than the land cost. In his boys he had five good farmers. For years, when prices were good, it was not unusual for General Ransom to sell his cotton crop and cotton seed for between \$70,000.00 and \$75,000.00. Does not this evince the wisdom of the Senator's course which once subjected him to cen-

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sure? But I must hasten to the close. General Ransom's senatorial term was to expire March 4, 1895; the elections in 1894, in his State, resulted in the defeat of his party. The seat of the noble Vance had been vacated by death, Ransom's was now to be vacated by change in the political fortunes of his party. The members of the United States Senate, irrespective of party, unite in a recommendation to the President to appoint their associate, so soon to part from them, Minister Plenipotentiary to Mexico. This recommendation was unnecessary. The President, so soon as he knew such a position would be agreeable to Senator Ransom, had determined to offer him the place. There was not a discordant note in the tone of approval that went abroad on this appointment. A special to the *News and Observer*, under date of February 26, 1895, says:

"An ovation was given Senator Ransom in the Metropolitan Hotel. When the new Mexican Minister walked into the dining room, the applause and cheers that greeted him were deafening. The Metropolitan Hotel is itself a landmark, having held a prominent rank among Washington hotels for forty years; but Senator Ransom has been the one thing to stand with the landmark. For twenty odd years he has made it his home, and the Southern guests, for which it is noted, have been brought there partly by his magnetism. When he leaves the Metropolitan, the first pillow of the old hotel has fallen."

As voicing the sentiment of his own people, I quote from an article written to his home paper by one of his neighbors, Dr. A. R. Zollicoffer:

"In your town a few days ago, it was my pleasure to meet and shake the hand of a gentleman whom I consider the ablest of North Carolina's living sons. He was on his way to Washington to attend a reception and dining given complimentary to him by the Minister from Mexico. From Washington General Ransom will go direct to Mexico to enter upon the discharge of his duties. While holding his hand and bidding him adieu, a feeling of sadness and sorrow came over me, but as I looked into his genial face, these vanished and I felt proud of the noble man before me. I was proud that he and I were North Carolinians; that North Carolina was the mother of such an endowed son, such an able statesman, that this mighty nation would be represented in a foreign country by a man of such magnanimity, learning and ability, such rare diplomacy and statesmanship, a true and tried Democrat, a son of Old

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North Carolina. It is true that his mother State refused to honor him longer, that she failed to remember or appreciate his beneficent works of the past, and in her last political campaign, he, like Cæsar and Montezuma fell from the Senatorial chair by blows from the hands of his own people and those whom he had served with ability and faithfulness for 23 years, even at the risk of his life. Yet I felt glad that I lived in a country and belonged to a magnanimous nation that could appreciate his worth, could recognize his honor and influence and know how to honor and reward the same."

GENERAL RANSOM'S DEATH AND BURIAL.

About one o'clock on Saturday morning, October 8, 1904, on the 78th anniversary of his birth, General Ransom died at his home, Verona, with his sons, Matt. W., Jr., George and Joe, at his bedside. Robert and Patrick arrived a few hours afterwards. Mrs. Ransom and their only daughter, Miss Esther, were at Blowing Rock, their summer home, but reached Verona Sunday morning. The burial was on Monday afternoon. Who has not read of the imposing funeral ceremonies at the obsequies of the great, and had their patriotism kindled afresh as they dwell in imagination on the glorious deeds of the honored dead.

It was a great fleet that accompanied the remains of Germanicus across the seas to be burned on the funeral pile at Rome. A national holiday celebrated the return of the bones of Napoleon from St. Helena to France, and the funeral car of his great antagonist, Wellington, is still preserved in the city of London. We have seen a mighty ship of war sent by one of the great empires of the world, as an escort to the remains of a private citizen, as George Peabody, dying in England, is to be buried in America. Recently a fleet of battleships, tendered by a friendly nation, participates in the re-interment of the great Admiral, John Paul Jones, in his final resting place in the soil of his adopted country, and the President of the United States takes part in the ceremonies.

Who of us has not read that noble oration pronounced in the Senate of the United States, in the presence of that great gathering of dignitaries of the land in memory of Zebulon B. Vance. But it is not for Ransom to be thus honored. No funeral car caparisoned with emblems of mourning and accompanied by representatives of the great departments of the Government is to

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bear Matt. W. Ransom to his last resting place. Listen to the account of his burial, as given in a letter to his paper by its correspondent, Mr. R. L. Gray:

"At the gate a wagon, with a negro driving a mule, took the coffin and carried it for the hundred yards to the grave in the garden; the Masons, the pall bearers, his neighbors, the family, and the women with their arms full of flowers, following slowly along the path, under the long staves of the Masons, past the cabbages and the turnips to the clump of trees at the bottom of the garden, where the grave was dug. And then, with the throng standing about with lifted hats, the hundreds of negroes in unobtrusive manners of ante bellum days, standing in the rear, the white-robed rector, the reverend, and gallant Confederate soldier, Major J. A. Weston, read the Episcopal services for the dead, spoke some heartfelt words for his friend that was gone, and all was over. While he was speaking, the level rays of the sinking sun shown through the dust of the wide fields upon the homely scene; horses neighed in the 'lot,' and from a cedar in the yard a mocking bird twitted its evening lay. There under the sturdy walnut and locust, in its straggling dress, the Masons laid the Senator. And one knew that he was placed in death as he would have wished; in his own ground, near the ivy-covered grave of his dead son, Tom, under a tree with the cotton fields beyond the fence, in hearing distance of the spot where he fought and defeated in battle the invaders of his State."

In this sequestered spot so beautifully spoken of above, a monument has been erected over the grave by the family. It is of granite, about eighteen feet in height, a shaft surmounting a square base.

On the east face appear these words:

Matt. Whitaker Ransom,
Born
October 8, 1826,
Died
October 8, 1904.
Ransom.

On the north face:

Graduate of the University.
The State's youngest Attorney-General.
Commissioner to the Peace Conference at Montgomery.
Brigadier-General of the Confederacy.
Promoted for gallantry in battle.

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On the south face:

United States Senator 24 years.
Minister to Mexico.
Orator, soldier, statesman.

Through life he retained the confidence of his people.

On the west face nothing is written.

I must now close, ladies of the Memorial Association, having taxed your patience beyond prudence.

If any doubted General Ransom's hold upon the people of North Carolina, and their esteem for the man, let him read what was said and spoken of him after his death. I will ask you to bear with me while I make three quotations. The *News and Observer* of October 8, 1904, has this to say:

"Senator Ransom, in many respects, attained greater reputation than any other citizen who has represented the State in the Federal Congress. From the standpoint of length of service, no other Senator has ever served the State in the Senate so long. He was regarded as one of the leading and ablest members of that great forum. It has been the distinction and privilege of few citizens of this country—less than a score—to serve longer in the upper branch of Congress. But it was the ability and leadership of the man that counted for so much.

"He easily took rank as one of the foremost members of the Senate. His wisdom and experience gave him a prestige that placed him at the front of the statesmen of his time. In a crucial period in the history of his country, he had given his life and his energies to its cause, and his memory will live for time to come, for his was a glorious career.

"Vance and Ransom! Who will forget these magic names? Both the greatest statesmen North Carolina has produced in modern times."

In the *Charlotte Observer* of the same date, the editor closes as follows:

"We have not the heart to write further at this moment of General Ransom. There remains not his like. He was our fittest scholar, our most accomplished diplomat, the handsomest man among us, the ablest man, the man who did us most credit in the eyes of the country. He is indeed the last of the Romans. We shall not look upon his like again."

The distinguished editor-in-chief of the *Biographical History of North Carolina*, in his admirable sketch of General Ransom, speaks of him:

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"Distinguished as a soldier, statesman, scholar and orator, and by his public services and influence upon the people of North Carolina, the most illustrious citizen of the State, the key note of the life of General Ransom was courage. He was courageous in action, whether on the battlefield or in the equally important contests in civil life."

A life-long neighbor, whose plantation adjoins the General's, writes thus to his home paper:

"The tongues of dying men enforce attention like deep harmony.
Where words are scarce, they are seldom spent in vain,
For they breathe truth, that breathe their words in pain."

"In his quiet country home, in the full possession of his faculties and perfect knowledge of his condition, he faced death with the same fearlessness and calmness with which he had faced every other crisis in his life, the late ex-Attorney-General, Brigadier-General, Confederate States Army, United States Senator and ex-Ambassador to Mexico, gave utterance to these words, which, if he had never given utterance to any others, are sufficient to render his name immortal: 'Do right, boys. Always do right. God bless your mother, I am going,' and instantaneously fell over upon the bed, and in a few seconds his soul, we hope, passed to smoother and gentler shores.

"The writer has reason to believe that one of the most important objects the late Senator set himself to accomplish was to do right upon any and all occasions, let the consequences be what they might. Perhaps he often failed, who is to be the judge? for to our Saviour alone was it given never to do wrong. Is it not reasonable to suppose that the great eminence he attained, the success that he met with, can in no slight degree be attributed to this effort and determination to do right? Can language be more simple and results more grand and far reaching? Is it inconceivable that the words, 'Always do right, boys,' were intended, not only for those present, but as his last words of advice to the people at large, whom he had served so long and so faithfully, and whose interests and well being he ever had at heart? North Carolina owes much to General Ransom, but never more than for these last grand words from a grand old man."

Of the innumerable telegrams and letters of sympathy received

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by Mrs. Ransom and other members of the family, I will ask your indulgence while I read one letter. It bears date Washington, D. C., October 10, 1904, the day of the funeral. The writer is the present senior Senator from Maryland, the Hon. Arthur P. Gorman:

"MY DEAR MRS. RANSOM:—It is indeed a great shock to me to learn of the sudden death of your honored husband. I give you and all of your household my sincerest sympathy. The General and I were associated together for a great many years in the Senate, and there grew up between us a warm friendship which does not often exist between men in public life. We were devoted to each other and agreed in nearly every thing relating to public affairs. He was a wise counselor and a devoted friend. The world will probably never know the great service he rendered in critical times in public questions, because he never cared to display what he had accomplished. His death is a decided loss to his country."

At a meeting of the Council of State, held on the morning of October 10, in the Governor's office at Raleigh, resolutions were adopted, from which I quote as follows:

"We thank God that his life was spared for so many years, in order to accomplish this great work for his State, and that he might complete a great and perfected life, and that he died in the autumn, when the rich harvests were being gathered, when the roses had faded and the sere and yellow leaf of the year had appeared, and the golden rod was in bloom, thus indicating the end of the perfected year. We desire to express our deepest sorrow at the loss of North Carolina's greatest citizen, statesman and patriot."

The flag on the Capitol building was ordered to be placed at half mast and all the departments of the State Government closed during the hours of the funeral.

Ladies, comrades and gentlemen, I must now close. As I stand here facing the portrait of the illustrious Vance, I am reminded how strangely connected were the public services of Vance and Ransom. Each completed his education at the State University, each in his young manhood held a seat in this chamber. Later on, each commanded a regiment in the same brigade; and later still, each served his people in the Senate of the United States, until the one died and the political fortunes of the party of the other

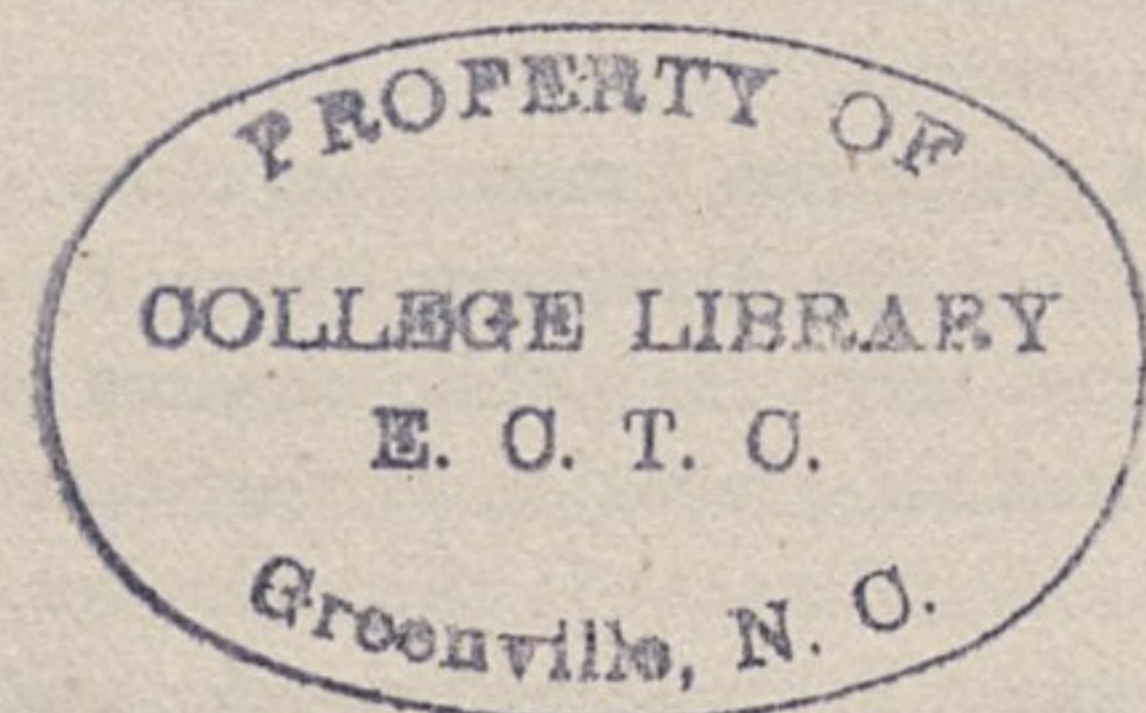
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went down in defeat. The younger died first, and in the Senate Chamber at Washington, with the President, his Cabinet, Representatives of foreign governments, members of the Supreme Court and the Joint Assembly of the two houses of Congress, as his audience, the older delivered the funeral oration. A matchless piece of rhetoric—to become a classic, a monument alike to the orator and the honored dead.

The older has now passed away. Could it have been that Vance had survived Ransom, and was standing here before this cultured audience to deliver a funeral oration on his deceased colleague, do we not know Vance would appeal to you, with all the fervid eloquence of his nature to do justice to the memory of Ransom; that a portrait of the man as he stood up in the Senate of the United States after three years of silence, and pleaded for justice to his State and the South should adorn these walls; that a monument of native granite to remind the passers by of the eminent services rendered his people by their dead statesman, should be erected at the northern front of this Capitol square, and a eulogy fit for the occasion be delivered before the Joint Assembly of the Representatives of the people?

Ladies of the Memorial Association, I have finished the task entrusted to me.

WM. H. S. BURGWYN.



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