

Good Friday.

Behold your King! Though the moonlight steals
Through the silvery shade of the olive tree,
No star-gemmed sceptre or crown it reveals
In the solemn shades of Gethsemane;
Only a form of prostrate grief—
Fallen, crushed, like a broken leaf.
Oh, think of this sorrow, that we may know
The depth of love in the depth of woe!

Behold your King! Is it nothing to you,
That the crimson tokens of agony
From the kingly brow must fall like dew,
Through the shuddering shades of Gethsemane?
Jesus Himself, the Prince of Life,
Bows in mysterious mortal strife.
Oh, think of this sorrow, that we may know
The unknown love in the unknown woe!

Behold your King, with His sorrows crowned!
Alone, alone in the valley is He!
The shadows of death are gathering round,
And the Cross must follow Gethsemane.
Darker and darker the gloom must fall,
Filled is the cup—He must drink it all!
Oh, think of His sorrow, that we may know
His wondrous love in his wondrous woe!

[Frances Ridley Havergal.]

A KING AMONG MEN.
THE LIFE AND TIMES OF COL. JAMES H. RION.

An Old Soldier's Recollections of the Gallant Deeds of the Leader whom he Followed in the Storm of Battle and whom he Loved in the Peaceful Walks of Life—Ex-Adjutant Thomas's Memories of the Commander of the Seventh South Carolina Battalion.

On the morning of Monday, the 13th of December last, I was surprised, at my home in Charleston, by reading an announcement in THE NEWS AND COURIER of the death of my friend, Col. James H. Rion, at his home in Wainsboro. He died on Sunday, the 12th, from a paralysis, with which he had been stricken on Saturday, the 11th, after entertaining his family physician, Dr. Hanahan, and others, at the anniversary dinner of his marriage. He had been unwell for some months; but I could scarcely realize that his life had ended.

Arriving at my office I found a business letter, marked No. 626, from him, dated the 11th—perhaps the last he ever wrote—requiring immediate answers in two directions. As the reminiscences of a life-time gathered around me, I recalled his wisdom, his reticence, his prudence and his systematic ability—so great as sometimes to be called "quaker." What was I to do in answer to the dead?

I had a somewhat similar experience with him once before, in 1883. He was then in Charleston attending the United States Court, and while dining with him he asked me to accompany him on a visit to Sullivan's Island and Fort Sumter by the 10 o'clock boat of the succeeding day. On the next day, upon going to my office before taking the boat, I found a letter, of the same series as above mentioned, from him in his own handwriting, dated and mailed from Wainsboro' on the day before—the day we had dined together in Charleston. I attended to the requirements of the letter, mailed in answer to Col. James H. Rion at

carelessly I had hurt Miss Annie's Union sensibilities.

It is also worthy of note that Col. Rion never made any professional charge against the widows or orphans of his war-comrades. Some of their estates he thus managed for twenty years. He had several scholarships in various seminaries, and always filled them with sons or daughters of Confederates.

Just before little Major Fickling died Col. Rion authorized me to be the almoner of his bounty for clothing and anything the little Major wanted; but upon inquiring at the Almshouse; I found it was too late—he was dead. The Major was in the same brigade, and his martial appearance as a sentry upon the ramparts at Cold Harbor, while the Federal bullets were flying around him, had been impressed upon the Colonel's memory.

Upon the threatening of hostilities in November, 1860, he was elected Captain of "minute men," in Fairfield, and on the 10th January, 1861, upon the call for troops, he was the Captain of the Fairfield Fencibles; on the 23d February, of the same year, he was elected Colonel of the 6th regiment of South Carolina Volunteers, and tendered it to the Hon. Jefferson Davis, on the 2d April, 1861; on the 2d May, he was elected an honorary member of the Washington Artillery of Charleston, and on the 7th he was in command at Fort Pickens, on Battery Island. On the 15th June Col. Rion resigned from the 6th regiment, at Summerville; and on the 21st November he organized and commanded the Lyle's Rifles, mostly composed of 6th regiment men who had resigned with him. This company, with seven others, was shortly afterwards organized into a battalion under Lieut. Col. P. H. Nelson, of Camden, with James H. Rion as major. In 1863 with the battalion he was engaged at the siege of Fort Wagner. In May, 1864, the battalion was moved with the rest of Hagood's brigade to Virginia, and on the 27th Col. Rion was wounded at Drewry's Bluff in the left forearm; and on the 18th of June, in front of Petersburg, while commanding the Washington Light Infantry, of Charleston, as skirmishers, he was wounded in the right forearm. Col. Rion was then obliged to go home on sick leave of absence, and remained absent until about the 22d of August, when, after the bloody fight on the Weldon Railroad, he returned to the command, and remained with it until the surrender.

When I joined the battalion at Battery Marshal Col. Rion had a handsome sword and belt which had been presented to him on the 10th of May, 1851, by the two companies of cadets at Mount Zion. But upon going to Virginia a pistol was found more useful to an officer than a sword, and his sword was left in Richmond at the hospital with Mr. George H. McMaster for safe-keeping. They were forgotten at the evacuation, and doubtless some Federal carried it home—a bloodless trophy. It had Major engraved on it.

The 7th battalion consisted of eight large companies of as brave soldiers as the Confederacy controlled. Company A was first com-

When Hoke's division, of which we were a part, was on its way from Richmond to Fort Fisher, we stopped at Goldsboro' one bitter, cold night while the icicles were pendant from the trees. I sought refuge, after my usual duties were performed, in a car shed, where I found a jolly old client of mine from Greenville, named Smyer. He opened his arms, his heart, his provision box and his mountain dew to me, around a roaring log-hear fire. I thought I was fixed for the night, but the Colonel hunted me up, and, though Smyer pressed him to stay, we bunked that night in an open piazza at the head of the battalion. He would not go inside of the house, though invited so to do; and next morning my blanket was frozen so hard that I had to break it into seams so that it might be folded.

In Wilmington a relative of mine prepared a fine dinner, with a \$100 (Confederate money) turkey, for the Colonel and myself. But we received orders to march to Fro-Lawk Landing, near Fisher, just at dinner time, and though I thought we could catch up, the Colonel sent his orderly, George McCants, who was sick, with his respects and regrets, to represent us. George said he had a good time for a week or more. The Colonel tried to console me by walking me a race some twenty miles to the landing. He claimed to be the best walker in the brigade, but when his other orderly, John McIntyre, brought up his marsh tackey charger and the Colonel rubbed his hands with glee, then I knew that I had had my revenge for the loss of the turkey.

Such was his reputation as a skirmish leader that in such position he has been assigned the place of priority. But to my mind he was better as an engineer. His burning the bridges and covering the retreat from Fort Anderson was masterly. His sallyports which he cut through the breastworks from the fosse in front, (while we were below Richmond), were adopted first by Gen. Lee's engineer officer and then by the whole army. By means of it the skirmish line, in falling back, was protected from exposure in crossing over the breastworks. It is true he had many a brilliant skirmish, especially on the 18th of May, 1864; but Rion's sallyport will last while wars continue.

During our Virginia campaign I had written for Col. Nelson the accounts of several of our battles, and he had me to promise him to be the historian of the battle. Col. Nelson (the father of the present talented Solicitor of Camden) was the first honor man of the class of 1844 in the South Carolina College, of which Prof. J. H. Carlisle was the second honor man. No braver or nobler soldier ever lived than Col. Nelson; and after he was killed upon the Federal breastworks in front of Petersburg on the 24th June, 1864, while leading a storming party, I wrote his obituary. And now, in discharging that duty for Col. Rion I give those events which either came within my own experience with him, or were gathered from him, as my messmate and bed-fellow in the bivouac, or from others who have authenticated them to me. He was the most remarkable man I ever knew, and were it not for our peculiar relations I would shrink from the duty of describing him and his career.

James H. Rion was born in Montreal, Canada, on the 17th of April, 1828. His mother was Miss Margaret Hunter, born in Liverpool, England, on the 1st of December, 1810. She knew her husband as Henry Rion, an engineer officer of the English army, who died on the 7th of March, 1828, aged 42 years, 11 months and 10 days.

On the 16th June, 1881, Col. Rion left home, and spent a month in visiting the place of his nativity, in Montreal, Canada, and verifying his early recollections.

Young Rion was thus a posthumous child; and a French nurse, who had been employed by his father, clandestinely had him baptized in the Catholic Church—the memento of which was in his possession, and is now a cherished souvenir in the family. His mother was an Episcopalian, and when she learned of this baptism had him again baptized in her own church. In after years, however, when Col. Rion joined the Presbyterian Church he had himself immersed according to the ordinance

friend Col. Rion, and recalled his story to my mind. After my return home I went to see the Colonel at his home in Wainsboro. I had brought back with me hundreds of stereoscopic views, which he desired his family to see. While explaining the pictures to the group, I came across the pictures of the cathedral, and recalling the epitaph I said: "Col. Rion, I saw your name in an epitaph there, and having never seen Rion spelled so before or since, except in your name, I was reminded to tell you about it," and gave my remembrance of it. To my observation he changed the subject, and soon afterwards the family retired. He and I were then alone; and with some old Amontillado sherry, which he said he had gotten from Mr. John Kilmeck, and some fine Spanish cigars, which had been sent to him by Capt. James Salvo, of M. C. Mordecai & Co., I thought we were to fight our battles over again, but he was quiet and pensive for a while, and then asked "Can you get that epitaph for me?" He said that it was his father's. I suggested that he write to the American minister, or to the consul and get a copy; but that I could write, as I knew them personally. He said, no, that he did not want any official to have anything to do with it, but that I certainly had some acquaintances, hotel-keeper, host or merchant, who would get a copy for me. I promised him to write to a haberdasher, whose card I had, and who kept opposite to the door by which I had entered. I kept my promise. I had been a good customer of the haberdasher, and asked that he would send one of his clerks over and transcribe the epitaph. By due course of returning post my correspondent sent me a printed guide-book of the cathedral. Upon one of the pages was the picture of the cenotaph, with the epitaph printed below. This I gave to Col. Rion, and, after thanking me, he said it was what he wanted. I never pressed him further upon the subject, and he never volunteered his confidence to me.

This circumstance I have mentioned to several friends, and amongst them Mr. Snowden, of THE NEWS AND COURIER, who asked to publish it, but, owing to private reasons, I have heretofore declined so to do.

Col. Rion was very fond of Mathematical, historical novels, and the officers' mess at the old Executive house, near Battery Marshall, had them when I joined it. Of these novels, the Court of Joseph II and Queen Hortense were the subjects of general conversation with Col. Rion, and he would always maintain that the Communio did save the Dauphin (who was born in 1785) when they took him from his father and placed the Ind beside their President, saying that "the Dauphin belongs to Franco," and that he was finally saved through his grandmother, Maria Theresa of Austria, by some of her counteresses, and brought to America. Col. Rion had a beautiful likeness of the Dauphin, which he carried with him for years. Beyond his father we cannot positively go; but certainly Col. Rion was not a man who would nurse a chimerical hope for a lifetime.

To me Col. Rion was so good and great that I looked upon him as the progenitor of his own race, who required no antecedents to add their lustre to his name; and I know that he had the blood of the Bourbons in his veins would not increase my love and admiration for his memory.

Young Rion's mother in his early life was a housekeeper in Savannah, Ga., and young Rion's first job in life was to lay out Bonaventure Cemetery. Col. Willgoose, who kept the Pulaski House in these days, purchased the plantation upon which Bonaventure was located and employed young Rion, the intuitive engineer, to lay it out for him, with a view of making it one day a public cemetery. How well did the young artist perform his task! It is to day a marvel of beauty. On the 25th of July, 1849, in a communication to the Savannah Republican, young Rion wrote: "This beautiful place, Bonaventure, (situated four miles below the city, it is quite a level place, but none the less beautiful on this account, as it is on elevated ground, and the view from the

Clerk of the Senate; T. J. Goodwyn, James P. McKee and John J. Mobley, of Fairfield; Horace Vans, of Beaufort; and Confederates Gen. States Rights Gist, John Bratton, Stephen Elliott, and John A. Wharton, of Texas; Capt. James Carson and Dr. Robert Leiby, of Charleston.

Such was the popularity of the two men that Prof. Barnwell was elected the first orator of their class for its fifth year reunion after graduation, and Col. Rion for the second reunion, which took place 13th November, 1860.

He had great power among his fellow-citizens. During the recent earthquake shocks at Wainsboro', one evening, there was an entertainment at the Courthouse and the gathering crowd were just entering the building when the shock came. "Halt!" cried Col. Rion. "Halt, Col. Rion says so," shouted the sheriff, and the multitude stood fast until the danger was over.

He would frequently amuse me with queer scientific rules. For instance, he had a rule by which he could calculate, in his head, and tell correctly (the day of the week for the given date of any month in any year, making allowances even for leap years, and every fourth century year. He told me that he once won a case by the application of this rule to the testimony of a witness against him—who misstated the day of the week.

He said mathematics could lie, as well as any other method of reasoning, and he actually proved to me by an algebraical problem that twice two were not equal to four, at least I could not find the error, if there was one.

Col. Rion was an Odd Fellow, and belonged to DeKalb Lodge, No. 6. In 1852 he was elected Scribe, and in November Vice Grand, and on 30th June, 1857, Noble Grand.

He was also a Mason, and was elected senior warden of the Wainsboro' Lodge, No. 11, on the 23d December, 1858, Worshipful Master on the 10th December, 1859, and again on the 16th December, 1860. On the 9th December, 1860, he became a Royal Arch Mason of Flat Hill Chapter, No. 2, and on the 19th May, 1875, he was made Knight of the Red Cross, Templar and Malta.

In banking matters he was prominent, and was elected a director of the Planters' Bank of Fairfield on the 10th October, 1857, while Jas. R. Allen was its president; and he was re-elected in 1858 and 1859, and on the 4th October, 1860, he was made its president. I remember his telling me that he was so elected because he could say no. He was re-elected in 1861. On the 18th January, 1873, he became a director in the Central National Bank of Columbia.

In railroad matters, on the 23d April, 1863, he became a director in the Charlotte, Columbia and Augusta Railroad, and remained so to his death; and I think he was also a director of the Union and Spartanburg Railroad.

In the State militia he was elected major of the East Battalion, 25th regiment, on the 17th May, 1863; Lieutenant Colonel on the 25th May, 1864, and Colonel on the 18th October of the same year; and after the war he was appointed by Governor Orr as Colonel to reorganize the regiment.

He never would allow his name to be used for any civil office, though frequently requested so to do. He might have been Circuit Judge, Associate Justice, member of the Legislature and Senator; but he always declined. I have before me a letter saying, politely but concisely, that he "cannot consent." But he always took a great interest in public affairs, and in party matters, and in popular conventions he always had a place. In 1852 he was secretary and treasurer of the Auxiliary Calhoun Monument Association; on the 25th July, 1857, Governor It. F. W. Aiston appointed him a delegate to the Southern Commercial Convention, at Knoxville, Tenn.; on 9th June, 1859, he became the corresponding secretary of the Fairfield Agricultural Association; on the 9th July, 1866, he was appointed, by Governor Orr, to distribute charities to widows of Confederate soldiers in Fairfield County, under a contribution from Mrs. J. J. Abell, of St. Joseph, Mo.; on the 20th August, 1867, he was a delegate to

