

OUR JUDGES.

The Occupants of the Bench of the Criminal District Court.



ALFRED ROMAN.

The senior Judge of the Criminal District Court, Alfred Roman, is of medium height and weighs about 150 pounds. He has dark complexion and bright eyes. His expression is grave and commanding. He is a cultivated gentleman, in the true sense of the word, who has enjoyed the advantages of education and of foreign travel. He is a finished French and English scholar, and possesses artistic tastes for music and painting. His manners are remarkable for their courtesy. Conspicuous among his other admirable qualities is the virtue of courage; for this he is greatly admired and often appealed to as justly entitled to be an arbiter of differences between gentlemen. Judge Roman possesses to a remarkable degree the power of persuasive speaking, and his character as a citizen and a magistrate is built upon the strongest attachment and devotion to the State of Louisiana, where he was born and where his family have always commanded consideration and distinction.

The name of Judge Roman carries one back to the age of chivalry and romance, and when one calls to mind the fact that he is the son of that chivalrous gentleman, Gov. A. B. Roman, one naturally admits that the name has not lost, in Louisiana, its original meaning. Gov. Roman was a large sugar planter in Louisiana, owning thousands of acres of cultivated lands and hundreds of well-fed slaves. When Mr. W. H. Russell, L.L. D., the renowned correspondent of the London Times, came over to report the progress of our civil war, he was taken up to Col. Roman's plantation to see the workings of slavery. The Governor opened his doors and said: "See for yourself, I have no concealment to make." In his letter to his paper Mr. Russell admitted he saw slavery in its best form; admitted that, for the laboring classes, a better condition could hardly be imagined; but, said he, with all these surroundings, "I do not like it."

The Governor commenced political life when scarcely 23 years old, was Speaker of the House of Representatives, was twice Governor of the State, once declined the office of United States Senator, and was one of the three commissioners sent by the provisional Southern Government at Montgomery in 1861 to treat in reference to the grave complications that had arisen between the Northern and Southern States. Judge Roman says, "My main distinction is to be called his son." He died suddenly in New Orleans in 1867, in his 71st year.

Judge Roman's mother was of French extraction, nee Almee Parent, the daughter of Charles Parent, a planter in the parish of St. Tammany. Her mother was a native of Louisiana, and was also of French extraction. She led a modest and retired life, and died in New Orleans in 1878. She left three children, Charles, Alfred, and Jeanne, wife of K. P. La Villebois, a merchant of this city, and a member of one of the oldest Creole families.

Alfred Roman, the worthy son of such parents, was born in St. James parish, May 24, 1824.

He attended school in New Orleans and at Jefferson College in St. James. While Judge Roman was a student there, Alexander H. Everett was President of the college. After leaving college, without losing a week, he began to study law in New Orleans under Etienne Mazureau, the distinguished jurist of Louisiana, at that time Attorney General of the State, and a giant in his profession. After three years' study under him he was admitted to the bar in 1845, after examination before the Supreme Bench, the presiding Chief Justice being Francois X. Martin.

After admission to the bar he remained in New Orleans one year, perfecting himself for the law, but not doing much practice until the next year, when he entered into partnership with his cousin, J. J. Roman, in the parish of St. James, with whom he practiced three or four years. In those days he selected his cases, a course which will keep any lawyer eternally poor. A man to be worthy of the title of lawyer should always argue a case before the tribunal of his conscience, and then argue it before the court in the same conscientious manner. Such was Judge Roman's rule of conduct at the bar, and this prevented him from becoming a mere speaking machine in court.

In 1851 he began practice alone. In 1853 he abandoned the law practice to his father's great disappointment, but in 1855 he resumed it again, and practiced three years. In 1858 he went to France on account of the health of one of his children, and while in Paris his wife died.

At the news of the war he offered his services to Gov. Hebert, President of the Military Bureau of Louisiana. He was then captain of a splendid cavalry company, composed of the elite of the parish of St. James. Gov. Hebert having told him that the State needed no cavalry at that time, "give me muskets, then, Governor, and you will have an additional infantry company to muster into service," was Capt. Roman's reply. This was done; and in due course of time that company, known as the Chasseurs of St. James, was incorporated in the gallant Eighteenth Louisiana Regiment, at Camp Moore, with Alfred Mouton as Colonel, Alfred Roman as Lieutenant Colonel and Louis Bush as Major.

The career of that regiment is well known. After the battle of Shiloh, where the Eighteenth in one single charge, on the 6th of April, 1863, lost more than 800 men, and when the horses of both Cois. Mouton and Roman were shot under them, Col. Mouton being

promoted to the rank of Brigadier General, the colonelcy of the regiment was given to Lieut. Col. Roman. This position he did not keep, however, owing to a severe illness which had supervened after the hardships of the Shiloh campaign. He took a position on the staff of Gen. Beauregard, and remained with him as Inspector General, from the retreat of the Confederate forces from Corinth to the close of the war.

He was brought up a Whig by his father, and in the political campaign of 1850 canvassed his district for Bell and Everett.

He was clerk of the Supreme Court under the Nicholas Administration, from January, 1877, to April, 1879, when Gov. Wiltz offered him a judgeship in the Criminal Court of New Orleans, the position he now holds.

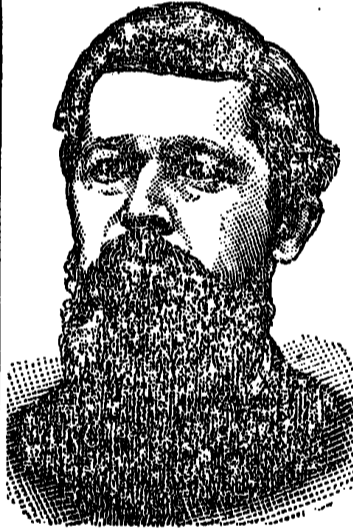
Judge Roman first married in the parish of St. James, in 1840, Miss Follie Aime, a first cousin, the daughter of Valcour Aime, of French origin, but a native Louisianian, one of the wealthiest and kindest men in the State. He gave in charity \$1000 every month to help the poor.

She was a lady of fine personal presence, of very modest, quiet, domestic habits. The only child living of this marriage is Andre L. Roman, born in St. James parish, in 1851, who was city editor of the New Orleans Bee for seven years, and has conducted several other newspapers gallantly in the interest of the Democracy of Louisiana. He is a forcible and talented writer.

Judge Roman next married in Charleston, 1843, Miss Sallie Rhett, daughter of Hon. Robert Barnwell Rhett, Sr., called the Father of Secession, one of the leading men of South Carolina, for many years a member of both houses of Congress from that State. He was a descendant of Sir John Yeomans and Sir William Rhett, both Barnwells, and among the first Lords proprietors of South Carolina in 1600. Her mother was a granddaughter of Chancellor De Saussure, of a very distinguished South Carolina family. In intellect, refinement and culture she has few superiors. Mrs. Roman is a sister of R. Barnwell Rhett, Jr., who was at one time editor of the Pleasure.

The best achievement of Judge Roman is the work he wrote some few years ago, "Military Operations of Gen. Beauregard." In point of elevation of style, clearness and force it cannot be excelled. As a historical work it has been unanimously stamped by the press in this country and in England as the best and most reliable account yet published, not only of the military operations of the war, but of the policy and management of the Confederate Government. Judge Roman has elucidated and brought to light many obscure and unknown facts, and his calm and powerful judgment of men and events will go down to posterity as history. It is to be regretted that the work is not more widely known among us.

There remains but one thing to be said concerning Judge Roman, and that is to eulogize the able, careful and distinguished manner with which he presides on the bench. He is courteous and polite to the gentlemanly lawyers practicing before the bar of his court and is justly strict in so far as other attorneys are concerned. The quiet and silence which prevail in his courtroom are commendable and are to be attributed to the Judge's great fondness for law and order.



JOSHUA G. BAKER.

Joshua G. Baker, Judge of Division B of the Criminal District Court, was born Aug. 3, 1833, in the parish of St. Mary, on the plantation of his maternal grandfather, Gabriel Laclaire Fusilier. His paternal grandfather was Joshua Baker, a native of Kentucky, born in 1790, near Lexington, and who died in 1855 after a brilliant and active career. Appointed a cadet from Louisiana Sept. 18, 1817, he graduated from the Military Academy at West Point in July, 1819, and was commissioned a second lieutenant of artillery. He served as assistant professor of natural and experimental philosophy from Oct. 25 to June 10, 1820, and resigned Oct. 31, 1820. At the time of his death he was the oldest surviving graduate of West Point. After leaving the Military Academy young Baker studied law in Litchfield, Conn., and practiced for a brief time in Kentucky. In 1829 he took up his residence at Opelousas, La., where he followed his profession for ten years, being associated with John Brownson as partner. From 1837 to 1839 Mr. Baker was Engineer of the Plaquemines Navigation Company, and March 8, 1831, he was appointed Surveyor General of the State, but declined the office. He was Assistant Engineer of the State from 1833 to 1838; director of the Board of Public Works from 1840 to 1845; State Senator in 1853; member of the Board of Visitors to the Military Academy in 1853; and was appointed Military Governor of Louisiana in 1863 by Gen. Hancock. From 1839 up to a late period in his life he was a sugar planter.

The only child of Gov. Baker was Anthony Wayne Baker, who died in 1854, when Joshua G. Baker was 2 years of age. He was a graduate of Yale College, in the same class with Col. T. L. Bayne, and had entered fairly on a prosperous career when removed by death while still in the prime of life. Like his father, he was a member of the Legislature, and took an active interest in public affairs.

Judge Baker spent his early boyhood in St. Mary parish, and when still very young was sent to school in Connecticut at an institution near New Haven and subsequently to Yonkers on the Hudson. Thence he went to Bellevue High School, in Virginia, an educational establishment of high repute directed by Prof. James P. Holcombe, brother of Dr. Holcombe, of this city. Mr. Baker's school life covered about four years, and upon leaving Bellevue he came to New Orleans and attended two sessions of the

Law Department of the University of Louisiana. He also studied law in the offices of Mr. T. L. Bayne and Messrs. Fellows & Mills. In 1879 he passed the examination, but being under age was not graduated. However, in February, 1874, he appeared before the Supreme Court and received his diploma. For about three years Mr. Baker steadily pursued the practice of his profession, and in the spring of 1877 he was appointed Assistant District Attorney to Mr. John J. Finney, in which position he remained until Dec. 1, 1883, when he was commissioned by the Governor to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Judge Charles H. Luzenberg, of Section B. This term expired in April, 1884, and in May, 1884, Judge Baker was reappointed for a period of eight years.

Judge Baker is quiet and courteous in manner, self-contained and dignified. He devotes himself assiduously to study and adds constantly to his legal acquirements. On the bench he is calm, dispassionate, firm in his rulings, and ready in his decisions. As the presiding Judge in the Ford murder trial, the most important probably in the criminal annals of this State, he displayed remarkable self-possession and resolution, and judicial abilities of a high order.