

each party, of course, formed its ticket, and Mr. Johnson, without being a candidate, was placed on both and was elected almost unanimously; which, under the circumstances, was certainly a most extraordinary event. That a young, inexperienced man, without wealth or connections in the county, and who had been but a short time therein, with a very imperfect knowledge of the French language, should have been thus elected, was totally unexpected even to himself. The Convention, on meeting, elected by ballot a committee of nine to report a plan for a Constitution. Mr. Johnson, though one of the youngest members of that body, containing many gentlemen of distinguished talents, was elected a member of the committee, and although the committee was composed mainly of men of eminent talents, to-wit: Brown, Blane, Watkins, Magruder, Bry, Desobry and others, Mr. Johnson, it is believed, exercised as much influence in the committee and afterwards in the Convention, as any other member of the body. In organizing the State Government, Mr. Johnson was appointed Judge of the Second Judicial District of the State, composed of the parishes of St. James, Ascension and those on the Lafourche, the duties of which he faithfully discharged until elected Senator of the United States, to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of Gov. Claiborne, in 1818. He was elected by a triumphant majority, though opposed by several gentlemen of eminent talents. During his first Senatorial term of six years, Mr. Johnson prepared and introduced into the Senate several very important bills for the adjustment of land claims in Louisiana, two of which related exclusively to the Florida parishes, as they were called, and by his indefatigable attention and exertions he succeeded, notwithstanding the powerful opposition made to them on account of the old British claims, in causing them to be passed into laws. He succeeded also in obtaining the passage of a very important act for the adjustment of land claims in Louisiana proper; as well as certain laws providing for the payment of numerous private claims in behalf of his constituents, growing mainly out of proceedings in regard to the late war with England, by the destruction of the troops of the United States, as well as those of the enemy. And such were the services rendered by Mr. Johnson, that he was re-elected to the Senate with great unanimity, and, after having served one session of his second term, he was called on by public sentiment to become a candidate for the office of Governor of the State at the impending election. Considering it his duty to yield to what appeared to be the wishes of his constituents, he at once resigned his office of Senator, though, in some respects, the most desirable office, and permitted his name to be used as a candidate for that situation. In this election he was opposed by Mr. Villere, who had previously filled the office to the satisfaction of the people, and who was the most popular Frenchman in the State, also by several other prominent candidates, but he was elected by a most flattering and triumphant vote, which was afterwards concurred in by a vote of the Legislature of the State. During Mr. Johnson's gubernatorial term the people of the State became politically divided in regard to the approaching Presidential election. Gen. Jackson being a candidate, who was mainly supported by a powerful party in the State, the great mass of whom had previously supported Mr. Johnson for Governor—which placed him in a very unpleasant position, particularly as he entertained a very high respect and friendship for the General—fully appreciated the services he had rendered to Louisiana in a military point of view; yet did not think himself well qualified for the high office to which he aspired, and he was thus compelled by a sense of duty to separate from the great mass of his political friends; and this course arrayed against him politically the Jackson party in Louisiana, and during the administration of Gen. Jackson, and, in fact, as long as the Whig party existed, he acted with that party, except in a single instance, the annexation of Texas. After the expiration of his gubernatorial term, Mr. Johnson retired to private life; but in the course of two years afterwards, being called upon by the Whig party, he at length permitted his name to be used as a candidate, and was elected to the House of Representatives, from the First Congressional District of Louisiana, and was twice re-elected. And after having served five sessions, again retired, and remained in private life until elected to the Senate of the United States, two or three years afterwards. During this Senatorial term Texas was annexed to the United States, mainly by his vote. This measure was opposed by the Whig party generally; but notwithstanding, the Legislature of Louisiana instructed their Senators in Congress to vote in favor of annexation; and some of the most prominent Whigs in the State wrote to Mr. Johnson urging him to support the measure; and so strongly impressed was he as to the propriety of the step, that he could not have opposed it without sacrificing what he believed to be the best interests of his country. For the first time he then separated from his party. In thus acting he was placed in the most painful and embarrassing position, and for his vote in favor of the bill was censured at the time by the most of his political friends. It is now believed, however, that all parties concur in the importance of the act. But whatever differences of opinion might then have existed, or may now exist on this question, it is believed that no public agent of Louisiana, in a civil capacity, ever rendered more services to the people of his State, or received higher evidence of their confidence and respect. During the latter years of his life he lived in retirement on his plantation, devoting himself to the welfare of his negroes and occupying his leisure by the perusal of standard literature, chiefly religious and historical. He maintained, without interruption, his taste for reading, and was constantly adding in this way to the vast fund of information which he possessed.

His habits of observation and penetration of character—his clearness of memory and large intercourse with all the prominent men of the last half century, rendered his society and conversation extremely interesting and instructive. He was a liberal patron of talent. His bounties were given privately and unostentatiously, and in some instances were anonymous. Many young men in this State can bear testimony to his generosity and friendship, by which they were enabled to adopt and pursue an honorable course of professional independence. Gov. Johnson has been for many years past a communicant of the Episcopal Church, and when attacked by his last illness had a strong conviction upon his mind that this sickness was the messenger of death, and indeed proved to be. He retained, almost to the latest hour, complete possession and exercise of all his faculties, and had made every arrangement and provision with a view to his final departure out of this world. Having, a few minutes before his death, expressed his steadfast trust in God's mercy through Christ, his soul quit the body which it had so long animated as quietly as a child falls asleep. Thus has passed away from our midst one of a generation which is rapidly disappearing, and whose public services and private virtues challenge our greatest admiration.

The Late Governor Henry Johnson.

Gov. Henry Johnson departed this life July 31, 1831, at his residence, Woodley, Pointe Coupee parish, La., after a short illness, in the 61st year of his age. Thus has this venerable man, one of the ancient landmarks of the State, come to his grave full of years and honors, "like a sheaf of corn cometh in his season." For nearly thirty years he filled the highest offices in the State, and in every position, whether as Judge, Senator, or Governor, discharged his duty with an ability, integrity and disinterestedness which has few parallels. Born in the same year which England abandoned her attempt to subjugate her American Colonies, his life is identical with the establishment, growth and prosperity of the United States, while his public career, which embraced the vigor of his years, is intimately connected with the most interesting period in the history of this State. He was born on the 14th of September, 1770, at or near Nashville, Tennessee, and was educated, in part, at a classical academy in his vicinity. His father, with his family, removed to the Mississippi Territory, now State of Mississippi, at an early period, where he resided until his death. Mr. Johnson, after having pursued the studies of the law for some time in the office of Mr. Polkexter, at Washington, Mississippi in the year 1795, went to New Orleans and resumed his studies in the office of Mr. James Brown, who was at the head of the Bar in New Orleans, and who was afterwards his colleague in the Senate of the United States, and Minister to France; who, until the day of his death, manifested the warmest regard for him, to whom he addressed one of the last letters he ever wrote, couched in terms of the highest respect and affection. On being admitted to the Bar in New Orleans, Mr. Johnson went to the county of Opelousas, where he commenced the practice of the law, but soon afterwards established himself in the county of Attakapas, where he pursued his profession with success until the year 1811, when an act was passed by Congress authorizing the people of the Territory of Orleans to elect members to a convention to form a constitution preparatory to admission into the Union as a State. Attakapas having the largest population of any county in the Territory, that of New Orleans only excepted, was entitled to five members in the Convention. The population being composed principally of French Creoles, there being then in the county but few Americans, and it so happened that the people were nearly equally divided into two parties, arrayed against each other with strong feelings of opposition. Mr. Johnson so conducted himself as to keep on the most friendly terms with both parties, taking part with no other, and in providing for the election of members to the Convention,