

William Henry Stiles.

THE Honorable and Colonel William Henry Stiles was a descendant of an English family which had furnished many noted men in our country. There were several branches of the family, the Connecticut branch being the most numerous. In this Connecticut branch Dr. Ezra Stiles, president of Yale College from 1777 to 1795, was a prominent figure. Dr. Henry Reed Stiles, of New York City, born 1832, was for fifty years one of the foremost men in the medical profession in our country. William Henry Stiles came from the Bermuda branch, founded in those islands by John Stiles, who settled in Bermuda in 1635, and is said to have been about thirty-five years old at the time he came from England. He left numerous descendants, and about 1764 Capt. Samuel Stiles, the founder of the Georgia family, came from Bermuda and settled in what is now Bryan county. He left his family in Bermuda while opening up the plantation, and, notwithstanding this fact, when the Revolutionary War commenced, Captain Stiles took part with the Americans and rendered valuable service. He was a genial man of great physical strength, and some interesting stories are told of his physical performances. His son, Joseph, a rice planter, who inherited his father's splendid physique, was twice married, and of these marriages there were born ten children. There was an interval of forty-three years between the birth of his oldest and youngest child.

William Henry was a son of the first wife, whose maiden name was Catherine Clay, daughter of Joseph Clay, of Savannah. He was the fourth child, born in Savannah in 1809. His early life was spent in that city. He became a student at Yale College, but left before graduating. In 1832 he married Elizabeth Mackay. Colonel Stiles studied law, was admitted to the bar, and in 1833, when only twenty-four years of age, was made

solicitor-general of the eastern district of Georgia. He served in this capacity until 1836. He then returned to the practice of his profession, which he followed continuously until 1840, when he was sent by the Federal Government to pay the Cherokee Indians in North Georgia for the lands which they had deeded to the Government. He was so much pleased with the soil and climate of that section that he bought some of the newly-acquired lands and settled on the banks of the Etowah River in what was then Cass and is now Bartow county. He was elected to the Twenty-eighth Congress by the people of Georgia, serving from 1843 to 1845, and several times represented his county in the General Assembly of Georgia. From the completion of his congressional term in 1845 until 1849 he was Charge D'Affaires of the United States in Austria, and after his return in 1852, he published a valuable and standard work on Austria in 1849, which had a wide circulation at that time, as it was a complete exposition of conditions in that country at a very disturbed period.

At the commencement of the Civil War, he raised a regiment for the Confederacy, known as the Sixtieth Georgia, of which he became Colonel. His regiment was attached to Hayes's Brigade, Early's Division, Ewell's Second Corps, Army of Northern Virginia. His health failing, he returned to Savannah in 1863, and died there on December 21, 1864.

Colonel Stiles was a sparely built man of six feet, delicate features and blue eyes. He was a cultivated man, and as an orator was considered to rank in the first class. It is said of him that he never spoke without elaborate preparation, but after this preparation, so warm and so eloquent was his speech, that his hearers regarded it as the result of the inspiration of the moment. His voice was very clear and like the note of a trumpet. As Speaker of the Georgia Legislature, he made an excellent reputation for perfect impartiality and courteous manner towards all the members, and was very popular with the members of the House.

His wife, Elizabeth Mackay, whom he married in Savannah in 1832, was a descendant of Capt. John McQueen, who served as a special envoy from Washington to Marquis Lafayette during the Revolutionary War. She survived him but two years, dying at Etowah on December 12, 1866. He named his home place where he settled in 1840, "Etowah Cliffs." The village of Stilesboro in Bartow county, near where he settled, was named for him. Of his marriage three children were born, none of whom are now surviving, though several grandchildren are living, some in Georgia, and some in Great Britain. During his thirty years of activity, Colonel Stiles ranked among the leading men of the State in point of ability and irreproachable character, and was highly esteemed not only within the limits of the State, but at the National Capital, where it takes men of more than ordinary force to gain recognition.