

THOMAS McDONALD WALLER
1883—1885 Two Years

In the life of Thomas M. Waller there is much romance. It is a matter of note that the majority of the governors of Connecticut have been the architects of their own fortunes, and it is especially true of Governor Waller. He was born in New York City about the year 1840, and was the son of Thomas Armstrong. His parents died when he was nine years old. Left an orphan at this tender age with absolutely no means of support, in a great city, he began at once to lead the life of a newsboy. From that time on he sold newspapers about the crowded streets in the lower portion of the city, and every day was filled with hard work. He started his successful career at this age by extraordinary devotion to duty and submission to the circumstances in which he was placed. His best customers were found about the old Tammany Hall of those days, and it is said that more than one night he "pillowed his head on the steps of the old Tribune building."

After a while he took to the sea and made several long voyages as cabin boy and cook-mate. This life agreed with him and he probably would have passed his days on the ocean had not a circumstance occurred which changed his whole career. In 1849 he made arrangements to ship to California on the "Mount Vernon," sailing from New London. About the time the ship was to sail the late Robert K. Waller of that city found the boy on the wharf, took a fancy to him at once, and adopted him. Recogniz-

ing the ability the young man possessed, Mr. Waller had him take his own name, and the boy was given every advantage by his benefactor. He attended the schools in New London, and was graduated from the Bartlett High School with honors. He then studied law and was admitted to the New London County bar in 1861. Soon after, however, he enlisted as a private in the Second Regiment, Connecticut Volunteers, and was appointed fourth sergeant in Company E.

After going to the front with his regiment Mr. Waller was compelled to resign because of an eye difficulty. Although very young he developed unusual oratorical powers, and throughout the war helped the Federal cause by delivering many patriotic addresses during those dark days. His magnetic words gave renewed courage to many faltering men. Returning to New London he entered the practice of his profession and soon gained an envious reputation as an able advocate. At the same time Mr. Waller entered politics as a democrat, and was an acknowledged leader almost from the start.

He was elected a representative from New London to the General Assembly in 1867, 1868, 1872 and 1876. During the last session he was speaker of the house. Mr. Waller was elected secretary of state on the democratic ticket with James E. English in 1870, and in 1873 was honored by being chosen mayor of his adopted city. He was chosen state attorney for New London County in 1875 a position which he held until 1883. In 1882 Mr. Waller was nominated for

governor and after a memorable campaign in which he visited all portions of the state, making speeches in his own behalf, he was elected by a majority of 2,390 over W. H. Bulkeley. He served as chief executive from 1883 to 1885. His charming personality, courtly manners, and pronounced ability made his name famous throughout the country. Soon after retiring from the governor's chair in 1885, President Cleveland appointed Governor Waller as United States Consul-General at London, England. He held this position until 1889, when he returned to the United States, and resumed the practice of his profession. His famous speech at St. Louis in 1888, when he placed in nomination Grover Cleveland for president proved remarkable as oratory.

Governor Waller has held no political office of late years but has attained great eminence at both the Connecticut and New York bar. A writer in commenting on his career says: "Governor Waller has consistently been a democrat in politics. He has been frankly independent on many occasions in conventions of his party, and in other places of partisan debate. As an orator he is impressive to a degree which on occasions of party strife in important gatherings, has given him a magnetic hold of men, and no man of his party in the state has so often carried convictions by the power of eloquence or any other influence."

HENRY BALDWIN HARRISON 1885—1887 Two Years

Henry Baldwin Harrison, one of the first members of the republican party in Connecticut, and a distinguished

lawyer of the state, was born in New Haven on September 11, 1821. He was the son of Annie and Polly Harrison, members of old Connecticut families. As a youth he was a student, and he became an assistant teacher in the famous old time school at New Haven, of which John E. Lovell was principal. He was fitted for college by Rev. George A. Thatcher, afterwards president of Iowa College, and a distinguished scholar. Entering Yale in 1842 the young collegian attained scholarship, at the same time continuing his duties as an assistant in Mr. Lovell's school. He was graduated in 1846 as valedictorian of his class and with the highest honors the college could bestow.

In the fall of 1846 he commenced the study of law with Lucius A. Peck, Esq., and after being admitted to the bar began practice in partnership with Mr. Peck. Mr. Harrison became interested in politics, and recognized as an anti-slavery leader in Connecticut. In 1854 he was elected a member of the state senate as a Whig. While a member of that body he was the author of the Personal Liberty Bill, and as an active Whig in 1855 was successful in bringing about the nullification of the fugitive slave law. During the years 1855-6 he was one of those men who were prominent in organizing the republican party in this state. He was the nominee of the party for lieutenant governor in 1857, but was defeated.

In 1865 Mr. Harrison again represented New Haven in the General Assembly and his name was frequently mentioned for United States senator