

The
THIRTY-FIFTH GOVERNOR
of
C O N N E C T I C U T
was
THOMAS HART SEYMOUR

Born in Hartford, he received his early education in its public schools and at a military institute in Middletown—He studied law, became an editor, then a congressman, and led a regiment in the Mexican War, participating in the capture of the City of Mexico—Returning home, he was elected governor and later appointed United States minister to Russia by President Pierce—At a democratic national convention his name was presented as a candidate for nomination as President of the United States



Thos. M. Seymour

T H O M A S

H A R T

S E Y M O U R

THOMAS Hart Seymour was descended from a celebrated English family who settled in that country as early as the thirteenth century. He was born in Hartford, September 29, 1807, and when very young displayed those traits which made him a leader of men afterwards. His early education was obtained in the public schools of Hartford, and as he showed a predilection for a military life he was sent to Captain Alden Partridge's institute in Middletown. He pursued the course at this military school and was graduated in 1829. Returning to Hartford, Seymour was chosen as the commanding officer of the Light Guard of the city. He then studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1833, but before he gained much of a practice his love for politics changed his course in life. Becoming editor of "The Jeffersonian," a leading democratic organ, he threw himself into the political discussion of the day. Seymour possessed a very attractive manner and a pleasing address, so that he was one of the most popular men of his time. He was elected judge of probate of the district, and soon occupied a position in the front ranks of the Hartford democracy, as their acknowledged leader.

In 1843 Seymour was elected a member of Congress, and when his term had expired he refused a renomination. He was commissioned in March, 1846, major of the Ninth or New England regiment of volunteers which took part in the Mexican war. Going to the front with his regiment, he served with such distinction that on October 13th, 1847, Major Seymour attained high military honors. The capture of Melino opened the way to Chapultepec, the Gibraltar of Mexico, which was the key to the City of Mexico. As it was built on a rock 150 feet high, impregnable on the north and well-nigh so on the eastern and most of the southern face, only the western and a portion of the southern sides could be scaled. The commanders decided, after a council of war, that it must be taken.

Two picked American detachments, one from the west and one from the south, pushed up the rugged steps in face of an awful fire. The walls at the base of the castle fortress had to be mounted by means of ladders. One of these detachments was commanded by Colonel Ransom, but as that officer fell early in the assault, Major Seymour led the troops, scaled the heights, and with his command was the first to enter the fortress. The enemy was driven back into the city, and Seymour was placed in command of the regiment. He afterwards took part in the capture of the City of Mexico, and was present when it was fully in the hands of General Scott. When the war was over Seymour returned

to Hartford and received the nomination for governor in 1849, but although there were Democratic gains over the preceding year he was not elected. The following year, however, he was elected governor of Connecticut by a large majority. Governor Seymour was re-elected in the years 1851, 1852 and 1853, serving with distinction. He also served as a presidential elector in 1852.

In April, 1853, President Pierce appointed Governor Seymour United States minister to Russia, and he immediately resigned his position as governor.

He represented this country at the Russian court for four years, and during his residence there Governor Seymour formed a warm and lasting friendship for both the Czar Nicholas and his son.

From them he received many costly tributes of their regard for him. After retiring from the position in 1857, Governor Seymour spent a year in traveling on the continent, returning to the United States in 1858.

Governor Seymour was bred as a Democrat and always upheld the principles of the party with true Jeffersonian tenacity. During the dark days of 1860 and 1861 he clung to the policy of the Democratic party. When the Southern states withdrew from the Union, and the Civil War was precipitated, Governor Seymour's sympathies were with the South. He was opposed to the prosecution of the war until its close, and became leader of the Connecticut Peace Democracy.