

ROBERT TOOMBS

A CONFEDERATE PORTRAIT

BY GAMALIEL BRADFORD, JR.

'He is the most remarkable man in many respects that the South has ever produced, and it is doubtful if the records of a lordlier life than his can be found in the history of our Republic. He has never moved as other men, never worked by ordinary standards. He has been kingly in all his ways, lavish in his opinions, disdaining all expediency or deliberation, and moving to his ambitions with a princely assumption that has never been gain-said by the people, and seldom by circumstances.'

This paragraph, printed in a Georgia paper at the time of Toombs's death, for all its extravagance of eulogy, strikes a good note for beginning the study of him. There was something lordly in the man, something commanding; and it is a matter of the greatest interest to see why his achievements did not correspond to his apparent gifts.

All agree that his physique was most impressive. Constant riding and other vigorous exercise kept him in excellent condition, and up to advanced years he was never ill. Mrs. Davis's admirable portrait of him should be borne in mind. 'Mr. Toombs was over six feet tall, with broad shoulders; his fine head set well on his shoulders, and was covered with long, glossy black hair, which, when speaking, he managed to toss about so as to recall the memory of Danton. His coloring was good, and

his teeth brilliantly white, but his mouth was somewhat pendulous and subtracted from the rest of the strong face. His eyes were magnificent, dark, and flashing, and they had a certain lawless way of ranging about that was indicative of his character. His hands were beautiful and kept like those of a fashionable woman.'

These physical qualities must be taken into account in considering Toombs's speaking, and it was in speech that his greatest strength lay. Though his enunciation was too thick and harsh, Alexander Stephens considered him to be one of the greatest stump orators of any age or country. All the vigor, all the violence, all the fiery ardor and eager enthusiasm of that passionate temperament were poured into his words. He spoke to convince, if possible; if not, to overwhelm.

For the man was essentially a fighter and would yield to no one. His college life, in the late twenties, was in the main a record of unruly pranks, ending in a hasty request for honorable dismissal before some exceptional enormity became known to the authorities.

A little later he earned the title of captain by serving under General Scott in the Creek War.

The chief fighting of Toombs's early life, however, was done at the bar. He threw himself into the study of law with the passion which he showed in everything. At first he did not succeed

in practice. Perhaps clients distrusted his too combative qualities. But his energy, enthusiasm, and splendid gift of speech soon overcame this coldness, and wealth began to pour in upon him in a steady stream. He not only had 'a passion for the contest of the court-house,' but he was willing to prepare himself for it by determined labor. He would bear down opposition by the rush and vehemence of his oratory; but, if necessary, he could also analyze a complicated question, financial or other, in its minutest details. No one was more voluble where speech seemed indicated; yet when circumstances required brevity, he could eliminate every superfluous word. In one instance his adversary had exhausted the court, the jury, and the subject. Toombs simply rose and said: 'May it please your Honor, Seizin, Marriage, Death, Dower,' sat down, and won his case.

Few lawyers of that day kept out of politics. None was less likely to keep out of them than Toombs. He early began to devote his thoughts and his tongue to what he considered the welfare of his country, and he continued to do so, in one way or another, almost till his death. But to Toombs the essential of politics was always opposition. Heaven knows, there is enough to fight in this world, if a man wants fighting. And Toombs did. When he saw a rascal's head, he hit it, and few even determined optimists will deny that he might be kept busy. I cannot vouch for the following comment on him. But if not true, it is well invented. 'Revolution was the one instinct of his nature, absolute as that of sex in other men. "Do you mean revolution?" a gentleman once asked of him in my presence. "Revolution, yes; always, and ever, and from the first, revolution. Revolutionary times," he added; "there are, and there will be no good times but revolutionary times."'

VOL. 112 - NO. 2

Thus, both as representative and senator, Toombs's voice was usually heard loud in the negative. Curiously enough, he and Alexander Stephens were intimate friends and their course was apt to be the same, but from very different motives. Stephens's cool intellect always saw the doubts, the modifications, affecting any popular course of action. Toombs, also, had his intellectual convictions, but he opposed much more for the pure pleasure of opposition itself.

To begin with, he hated the party system. 'A nursery of faction,' he called it. It was not recognized by the Constitution. Why should he recognize it?

Acting on this principle, he fought friends as well as foes. If the common cry was war, this panoplied herald of good tidings could raise his trumpet voice for peace. Why should we fight England over a boundary? He was for peace — for honorable peace. 'It is the mother of all the hopes and virtues of mankind.' Why should we annex Texas and plunder Mexico? Greed, greed, all greed. 'A people who go to war without just and sufficient cause, with no other motive than pride and the love of glory, are enemies to the human race, and deserve the execration of all mankind. What, then, must be the judgment of a war for plunder?'

With domestic matters there was the same strenuous ardor in attacking old tradition and new encroachment. Congress itself was not to be respected, if not respectable. He speaks of 'members of the two Houses of Congress who come here three months in one year and eight months in another — which is about three times too long in my judgment.' Public improvements and public facilities which tended to abridge the rights of the individual — he would have none of them. The post office — a dubious thing, the post

office. 'I do not think it right, before God, for me to make another man pay my expenses.' Rivers, harbors! What are they compared to corruption? 'Instead of leaving the taxes or the money in the pockets of the people, you have spent nine months in endeavoring to squander and in arranging to have more to squander in the next Congress.' Railroads! Why, our old Roman virtue will not allow us even to approve of one to benefit our own home town.

Then there are pensions, a pestilent legacy of a heroic struggle. The old soldiers themselves, if they are the men I take them for, will refuse them. Hurt my popularity? What do I care for my popularity? do you suppose I am here to please myself? I had rather be at home, on my farm, with my wife, my slaves, and my cattle. Another thing, — the cry of Americanism, Know-Nothingism. I scorn it to your faces. And you may turn me down, if you like. Are not Catholics as good as Protestants, if they serve God? So he spoke out, in the height of the fanatical fury; and openly gave a large subscription to a Catholic church.

Everywhere it was the individual against the mob, high or low, forward or backward. The rich were not to be favored at the expense of the poor. At the same time, let his enemies criticize his own lavish living and see what they would get. Who would say that he had not earned his money? He had a right to spend it as he chose. Perish such demagoguery — such senseless stuff. And the people cheered him for his candor and audacity.

As for that mysterious phantom, the money power, which broods like a shadow over the young twentieth century, this Boanerges of liberty divined, detected, and defied it sixty years ago, in a little different form, but in words which might come from the White

House to-day. 'I have perceived that this mischief is widespread, this corruption greater, this tendency to the destruction of the country more dangerous. The tendency to place the whole government under the money power of the nation is greater and greater.'

And while many of these protests were uttered in the name of the sacred principle of State Rights, let that principle itself once impose any obnoxious restraint, and its sanctity became as questionable as that of any other. Thus, in opposing certain obstructions to a projected scheme, he cries out: 'Public opinion will take them away, even though a sovereign state may stand up for them. Nothing else can reach Pennsylvania in this matter but public opinion; and public opinion will prevail in Pennsylvania as it has done elsewhere.' And the public opinion of the world was shortly to prevail in the states of the Confederacy, in spite of Toombs and thousands like him, with their inviolable sovereignty.

In all these various causes of opposition there was the same impetuous ardor of argument, the same splendid fury of invective, which, backed by the masterful presence and the thunderous voice, must have gone a long way to produce submission, if not conviction. Listen to the manner in which he upbraids the Senate for sloth and hesitancy. 'Are we incapable of deciding subjects here? Why, sir, the gravest questions of peace and war and finance and everything concerning a great government, are decided in almost all countries in one sitting. Here, after years of labor, seas of words, boundless, illimitable seas of words, and speeches to enlighten others, we come now to what I trust is a consummation of this difficulty, and we are asked for time because gentlemen do not understand it. I do not think they will ever understand it any better.'

But of course all other disputes and battles were trifling and of minor significance compared to the great struggle between slavery and abolition, between North and South. The opportunities given by such a conflict were things of ecstasy to a nature like Toombs's, and he breathed the fiery atmosphere as if it were his native clime. Scene after scene is depicted, in which he stood out alone against a howling mob, bellowing what pleased him without regard to what pleased them, and in the end overcoming hatred by mere force of temperament.

Toombs's power in this regard was divined by Stephens long before the actual crisis came, and the latter gives a striking account of sending his friend to New York to face a bitterly hostile audience, and of the way in which Toombs, partly by clever ruse, partly by overmastering argument, succeeded in gaining a hearing and more than a hearing.

Then there was the furious contest over the speakership of the House, in 1849. Owing to the secession of the Southern Whigs, no majority vote could be secured, and Toombs insisted that the House, not yet formally organized, could take no action in the matter. Members proceeded to take action. Toombs protested. Members shouted him down. He would not be shouted down. 'You may cry "Order," gentlemen, until the heavens fall; you cannot take this place from me.' 'Confusion increased,' says the biographer. 'Members called out to encourage Mr. Toombs, and others to put him down. In the midst of this Babel he continued to speak, his black hair thrown back, his face flushed, and his eyes blazing like suns.' He continued to speak, and in the end they heard him. It was a disgraceful exhibition, said the Northern papers. No doubt it was; yet one cannot help agreeing

with Stephens that it was a splendid physical and oratorical achievement.

Even more notable, though the opposition was moral, not physical, was Toombs's defense of slavery in Tremont Temple, Boston, in 1856. The actual audience was decorous enough; but when one thinks of the man and the place, of all he represented and of the passionate anti-slavery spirit boiling about him, the occasion stands out as picturesque, to say the least.

Not less characteristic, in view of all it meant, is the coolness of his testimony concerning the assault made by Brooks upon Charles Sumner. Toombs was charged with having given Brooks the support of his presence, if not more. His answer, not merely to the indignant Senate, but to the angry millions of the insulted North, is startling in its imperturbable insolence. 'As for rendering Mr. Sumner any assistance, I did not do it. As to what was said, some gentlemen present condemned it in Mr. Brooks; I stated to him, or to some of my own friends, probably, that I approved it. That is my opinion.' And again: 'So far as relates to interfering, or giving assistance, he is right. I gave none. I did not put in and should not on that side.'

So we come to the break and the great parting. But before considering Toombs's activity in this, let us look at some of the other elements of his character. For the more I study these prominent men of the Civil War period, and indeed the prominent men of any period, the more I see that their greatness consists largely in a balance of qualities; that is, even when they have one quality in marked excess, it is tempered, restrained, and modified by a striking makeweight of its opposites. Thus, so far, we have seen Toombs as a fighter, riotous, rebellious, exulting in the extravagant and often ill-timed display of violence, almost a sort of

political mountebank. Yet he was also something far more than this, and something far different.

He had a splendid sense of humor. This, as might be expected, was often rough, noisy, and boisterous, and did him damage; but it had its charm, nevertheless. He enjoyed practical jokes, like a great boy, as when, at Taylor's suggestion, he switched off in the dark a train-load of Governor Brown's pet state troops for a fight in South Carolina. He used a shrewd and savage wit in assailing his political adversaries. 'You have heard what the gentleman says about my coming home to practice law. He promises, if elected to Congress, he will not leave his seat. I leave you to judge, fellow-citizens, whether your interests in Washington will be best protected by his continued presence or his occasional absence.' Some one urged that an antagonist had made at least one good appointment. 'That may be,' answered Toombs, 'but that was not the reason it was made. Bacon was not accused of selling injustice. He was eternally damned for selling justice.'

The same shining vivacity of repartee seems to have been always ready, in private society as in public gatherings. That keen and passionate tongue must indeed have been somewhat dreaded. How bitter is the story of the red-headed man! Toombs was dining with General Scott and told of a woman who rushed about in a steamer explosion, crying, 'Save the red-headed man, save the red-headed man.' The red-headed man was saved, but the woman appeared quite indifferent. 'He owes me ten thousand dollars,' she explained. 'General,' said Toombs, turning to Scott, 'the Union owes you ten thousand dollars.' These outbursts must have done Toombs more harm than anyone else, as when he remarked carelessly, 'We are the gentlemen of

this country,' and gave rise to William Whitmore's pamphlet of *The Cavalier Dismounted*; or when he stuffed an innocent English peer with monstrous tales of slave-holding obliquity which were afterwards recorded in print to the serious discredit of the narrator.

Yet there is general agreement that Toombs was one of the most brilliant and fascinating of talkers, and Linton Stephens, no bad judge, says, 'Toombs, or Tom Thomas, can, and frequently do, speak more witticisms in one night than Rabelais in a lifetime wrote.'

The sunniest, the sweetest, the most winning picture of Toombs and his laughter is that admirably given by Mrs. Davis. 'During the time of the highest excitement over the compromise measures, when Mr. Toombs was on his feet twenty times a day, he rose at daylight, took French lessons with his daughter, and became a good French scholar so far as reading the language went. He would sit with his hands full of the reporters' notes on his speeches for correction, with *Le Médecin Malgré Lui* in the other hand, roaring over the play. I said to him, "I do not see how you can enjoy that so much." He answered, "Whatever the Almighty lets his geniuses create, He makes some one to enjoy: these plays take all the soreness out of me."'

Something to love here, is there not?

And if the man liked laughter, he liked sunshine and quiet also; country air, and trees, and flowers. He himself said that in a 'very busy and tempestuous life a spacious garden, with orchards and vineyards, was to him an unfailing source of recreation and pleasure.' He was a practical farmer, too, himself superintended vast plantations and had an army of slaves under his charge. Alexander Stephens, an unimpeachable witness, tells us that 'his plantation discipline and his treatment of his slaves was on a perfect

system of reason, justice, and humanity, looking as much to the welfare of his dependents as to his own pecuniary interests,' and that 'his system and its success were wonderful. He would have as overseers only men of sobriety, good sense, and humanity.'

In the personal relations of life also, Toombs seems to have been full of charm. One vice he had, the taste for alcohol, which in later years overcame him disastrously. But even this, throughout his active life, he could and did control when necessary, and in any case it was but a feature of his strong social instinct and his love for the warm contact of his fellow men. A true Southerner, he was ready to entertain everybody, and protested against the establishment of a hotel in his home town. 'If a respectable man comes to town, he can stay at my house. If he is n't respectable, we don't want him here at all.' He was sensitive, emotional, ready to respond to any stimulus of affection or pathos. 'In speaking of the death of Mr. Brooks the other day in the Senate, he broke out in weeping and had to stop,' writes Stephens. •

Toombs's religious experience seems to have been somewhat elementary, but sincere. It was amusingly mixed with the impetuosity which characterized him in everything. When his wife was dying, he had some talks on serious subjects with the family doctor, who was anxious to put him in the right way. 'Why, doctor, I am a prayerful man. I read the Bible and the Prayer Book every day.' 'Then why not be baptized, general?' 'Baptize me, doctor,' was the prompt reply.

Especially attractive is Toombs's affection for his wife, and the tenderness apparent in the few published fragments of his letters to her. She was a woman well worth his attachment, and the perfect marital fidelity emphasized by all his biographers is distinctly

noticeable in a man of such a vigorous and impetuous temperament, beset at all times by so many temptations. The frankness, sincerity, and genuine humility of his nature show well in a passage written to Mrs. Toombs after their daughter's death. 'God bless you! Pray for me, that I may be a better man in the new year than in all the old ones before in my time.' And equally attractive is the following expression of gratitude after twenty years of marriage. 'I know for whatever success in life I may have had, whatever evil I may have avoided, or whatever good I may have done, I am indebted to the beautiful, pure, true hearted little girl, who on the 18th November, 1830, came trustingly to my arms, the sweetest and dearest of wives.'

Toombs's excellent balancing traits were by no means confined to domestic and social life. We have seen something of his headlong fury; but this was constantly tempered by shrewdness, by foresight, restraint and moderation, when these qualities were clearly called for by circumstances. We have already heard Stephens testify that his friend was an admirable man of business. Adversaries even asserted that 'he loaned like a prince and collected like a Shylock.' Certain it is that he had a remarkable grasp of finance, could unravel a complicated web of figures with precision and rapidity, and seize and clarify the essential features of the most bewildering business tangle.

In his profession I have before referred to his immense labor in getting at the facts. He was quick to grasp essential points, but he did not neglect supplementing them by details which were essential also. 'Reading the report of a case, or an author on any subject, he at once seizes upon the real ideas, gleaned the vital part from the general verbiage by a process rapid as intuition,' says Stephens. And when

the material was thus once prepared, it was presented to the court, with vigor and passion, indeed, but also with method and thoughtful intelligence. 'As a lawyer, I have never seen his equal before judge and jury,' adds the same excellent authority.

And in law he was as honest as he was able. 'An able lawyer and an honest man,' writes Mr. Rhodes; 'though harsh and intolerant in expression, he was frank in purpose.' Good stories are told, illustrating his absolute probity and determination to keep his hands clean. 'Yes, you can recover in this suit,' he said once to a client, 'but you ought not to do so. This is a case in which law and justice are on opposite sides.' And on the client's insisting, Toombs remarked, 'Then you must hire some one else to assist you in your damned rascality.' Again, a lawyer asked him what fee should be charged in a certain case. 'Well,' said Toombs, 'I should have charged a thousand dollars; but you ought to have five thousand, for you did a great many things I could not have done.' And to the end of his life he boasted that he had never had a dirty shilling in his pocket.

Even in politics we find these curious contradictions of moderation and sagacity mingling with the ardor and violence of Toombs's general temperament. It was said of him that he was 'violent in speech but safe in counsel,' and many things prove that it was so. To one who has been startled by the vehemence of some particular outburst, the full reading of many of his speeches is a revelation of dignity, sobriety, and common sense. In numerous instances the course he recommended and urged and followed was the course of moderation and fairness. Thus, in 1851, he supported Clay and Webster in the Compromise measures, making himself extremely obnoxious to the Southern fire-eaters by doing so.

And I think the importance of this action by the moderate Whigs cannot be too much insisted upon. They roused the wrath of the violent partisans in all sections, and Webster, at least, earned the hatred and contempt of a large number of his constituents. Yet it would be easy to maintain that the patriotic course of that group of Whig leaders in 1851 saved the Union, not only then, but forever. They delayed the conflict for ten years, and during those ten years the North had time to accumulate the resources which, even so, were barely sufficient to enable it to overcome.

Again, in the great Kansas struggle, Toombs's voice was given for moderation and prudence. 'Senator Toombs introduced a bill which, in fairness to the free-state settlers, went far beyond the measures that earlier in the session had been drawn by Douglas,' says Mr. Rhodes. And elsewhere, 'When Toombs said he was willing to take the will of the people [of Kansas] in a proper and just manner and abide by the result, he was sincere. An old Whig, he had the Whig love of the Union.'

Still another curious case of Toombs's moderation is the Boston speech above referred to. In going straight into the centre of the hostile country and speaking on the subject of bitterest contention, slavery, he was indulging all his native instincts of combativeness. But once there, the speech he made was a model of simple, honest, reasonable statement of the very best that could be said for his fellows and for himself. No more persuasive, more manly, more human argument for Negro servitude was ever uttered than Toombs presented in the headquarters of abolition on the platform of Tremont Temple in 1856.

And so, when we come to the last great crisis of all, we find Toombs, the revolutionist, the hothead, the fire-

eater, not doing his best at all times and at every opportunity to foment sedition and urge an outbreak, but keeping his temper, counseling moderation, anxious, to the very end, to cling to the old ties, if it were possible. It is true, he had his moments of forgetfulness. 'Toombs has just delivered a speech of the most abusive and inflammatory character of [*sic*] Judge Douglas. He spoke like a madman and acted like a fanatic,' writes Stephens. Yet, during much of the time, his counsel was for restraint, deliberation, and endurance as long as endurance was possible. With calm foresight he deprecated any contemptuous assertion that the people of either section of the Union would be found cowardly when the crisis came. 'Sir, if there shall ever be civil war in this country, when honest men shall set about cutting each other's throats, those who are least to be depended on in a fight will be the people who set them at it.' So late as December, 1860, he earned the ill-will of the violent party in his own state by opposing immediate secession. He thought that definite action should be fixed for March 4, yet even to this he adds the admirable words: 'I certainly would yield that point to correct and honest men who were with me in principle, but who were more hopeful of redress from the aggressors than I am, especially if any such active measures should be taken by the wrongdoers as promised to give us redress in the Union.' It is only when he is forced to abandon hope that he commits himself in final and characteristically decisive language. 'I will tell you, on the faith of a true man, that all further looking to the North for security for your constitutional rights ought to be abandoned. . . . Secession by the 4th day of March next should be thundered from the ballot-box by the unanimous voice of Georgia on the 2d day of January next.'

The same spirit of provident foresight followed Toombs even into the inception of the Confederate policy, when all the hotheads were clamoring for fire and steel. During the discussion in the cabinet over attacking Sumter, Toombs spoke vehemently and decidedly in opposition. 'Mr. President, at this time it is suicide, murder, and will lose us every friend at the North. You will wantonly strike a hornet's nest which extends from mountains to ocean, and legions, now quiet, will swarm out and sting us to death. It is unnecessary; it puts us in the wrong; it is fatal.'

We might, then, suppose that this arch rebel, with brains tempering his rebellion, who had been so prominent all through the long political contest, would have stood out among the first when rebellion took organized shape. It is most curious and instructive to see how, after all, the dominant instincts of his nature prevented this from coming to pass. At first his name was mentioned for president of the Confederacy, and he was thought of by many very seriously as a candidate. How far he himself sought the office may be questioned. Writing with entire frankness to his wife he disclaims all ambition: 'I want nothing but the defeat of the public enemy, and to retire with you for the balance of my life in peace and quiet in any decent corner of a free country.' But such disclaimers do not count for much.

Alexander Stephens, who liked Toombs and disliked Davis, but who was not usually much blinded by his feelings, would have preferred to see the former at the head of the government. 'Thrift follows him, unthrift Davis. Had Toombs been made President — that he was not, was only an accident — it is my conviction that the whole scheme of action, nay, the results would have been changed. . . .

The object sought would have been less objectionable to the North. It would, after two years of war, have been gained by a special treaty because it was strictly constitutional. . . . But Davis, Davis — I know not why he was elected President of the Confederacy, except that he never succeeded in anything he undertook.'

In spite of Stephens's weighty authority, I cannot imagine Toombs succeeding at the head of a great government. Is it possible that one so utterly untrained to obey should ever have been able to command? Those who are inclined to Stephens's view should consider well the little scene depicted by the diarist, Jones, as occurring in the War Office at Montgomery, when the Confederacy was hardly born. Toombs was holding forth to members of the cabinet — in a public office, mind you, before the gaping clerks. 'He was most emphatic in the advocacy of his policy, and bold almost to rashness in his denunciation of the mainly defensive idea. He was opposed to all delays as fraught with danger. . . . He was for making the war as terrible as possible from the beginning. It was to be no child's play. . . . He denounced with bitterness the neglect of the authorities in Virginia. The enemy should not have been permitted to cross the Potomac. . . . Virginia alone could have raised and thrown across the Potomac 25,000 men, and driven the Yankees beyond the Susquehanna. But she, to avoid responsibility, had been telegraphing Davis to come to the rescue; and if he (Toombs) had been in Davis's place, he would have taken the responsibility.' This is the tongue which, Stephens thinks, could have saved the Confederacy!

Well, he did not become President, at any rate, and it is to be noted that he characteristically gave his hearty support to the election of Davis. What

happened further? Davis, who realized how mighty a power the man had been, was ready to offer him a place in the cabinet, the most honorable, if not the most important. And Toombs became Secretary of State. He held the position about four months. His biographer implies that, having put everything in the best possible shape, he sought a more active life. This is not the general view. Some maintain that he had not the system or the practical gifts for managing so great an office, and they cite his sarcastic remark that he carried the records of the State Department under his hat. They misjudge him. We have already seen that he was master of all the details of handling a great plantation, and that in these he could be systematic enough. Such of his state papers and dispatches as have been printed are admirable in their vigor, brevity, and point.

The true explanation of his failure is supplied by Mrs. Chesnut in her usual terse and vivid fashion: 'Incompatibility of temper. Mr. T. rides too high a horse; that is, for so despotic a person as Jeff Davis.' And Toombs himself indicates the same condition of things in a letter to his wife referring to a later suggestion that he should be Secretary of War, — a post, by the way, for which Stephens considered him peculiarly qualified: 'I thought I had been very explicit on that point. I would not be Mr. Davis's chief clerk. His Secretary of War can never be anything else. . . . So far as I am concerned, Mr. Davis will never give me a chance for personal distinction. He thinks I pant for it, poor fool.'

There remains the army. Here, at least, Toombs should have shone out. Did he? A friend who knew him well said of him: 'He had one ambition, and that to the highest office within the Confederacy. That could not be gratified. He had another, to be Comman-

der-in-Chief of the armies. That could not be gratified. He had no more.' As to the ambitions, who shall say? The fact is that the disappointed statesman plunged into a military career with headlong energy, and that he came out of it pretty much as he had come out of the political. Why?

Certain excellent military qualities he had, undoubtedly. He was brave; rashly, extravagantly brave. He had the gift of inspiring others with his bravery. History will not forget his magnificent defense of the bridge at Antietam. General Lee's praise of any man is the most enduring badge of glory, and Lee said, 'General Toombs's small command repulsed five different assaults made by greatly superior forces, and maintained its position with distinguished gallantry.'

Also, Toombs was beloved by the men of his brigade and took excellent care of them. He looked out for their health and comfort in every possible way. 'Whether against Johnston, Longstreet, or Hill, the First Brigade, First Division, was sure of a fearless champion in the person of its commander,' says the ardent biographer.

The biographer seems to overlook the somewhat extraordinary sound of commending an officer with so much enthusiasm for his bellicose attitude against his own superiors. But here, as everywhere, we meet in Toombs the same old defect. He was a splendid individual fighter; but he could not learn that fighting, like everything else, to be fruitful and efficient, requires, first of all, subordination. He could not learn discipline.

Thus, one of his sick soldiers was refused hospital on account of some technicality. Toombs was told that the rules were fixed by General Johnston. He rode right up to the general's tent and spoke out in his emphatic fashion. 'You have been too rash,' protested his

own surgeon, 'you will be arrested.' Johnston did not arrest him, because he liked Toombs and was generous himself. But another commander would have done so.

Again, Toombs was fond of holding forth, even to the common soldiers, on the proper conduct of the war. If he disapproved of the action of his superiors, he did not hesitate to say so, and often without very thorough knowledge of what his superiors were aiming at. He hated West Point because it meant discipline and training, and he hated Davis because Davis supported West Point. When the general rejoined his regiment after arrest, he is said to have cried out, 'Go it, boys! I am with you again. Jeff Davis can make a general, but it takes God Almighty to make a soldier.' Comment is needless.

Nor did he hesitate at direct disobedience, when it suited him. The attack at Golding's farm, during the Seven Days' battles, made against Lee's explicit orders, is a doubtful case, because Toombs claimed to have instructions from his immediate superior. But in the campaign of Second Bull Run, Toombs's brigade was ordered by Longstreet to guard a certain ford. Longstreet's delicious, patronizing account of the affair should be read in full. Toombs was absent at the time, dining with a friend. When he returned, he swore that nobody should put his men in an exposed position like that without his knowledge, and ordered them back to camp, for which piece of independence, with accompanying bravado, Longstreet very properly arrested him.

And ready as he was to criticize others, this fiery spirit had no notion of being criticized himself. D. H. Hill, not distinguished for his soft tongue, rode up in the middle of an action, and not understanding the circumstances,

blamed Toombs for the conduct of his troops. 'You are always crying out, fight, fight,' said Hill, in substance. 'Why don't you fight?' Toombs resented it bitterly and would have insisted on a duel, if Hill would have met him.

It is hardly necessary to follow Toombs the soldier any further. Many fine things are told of him, notably his whole-hearted submission when taken back to duty after his arrest by Longstreet. Longstreet liked him, as indeed did everyone, and is said to have remarked of him admiringly that he needed only discipline to make him a great general. Perhaps he needed some other things; but discipline was the crying need of his whole life, and it is indeed pathetic to see such exceptional gifts falling, falling, by rapid stages, from the candidacy for president to a petty and insignificant position in the Georgia militia. Mrs. Chesnut sums up his career with splendid vividness, if perhaps a little too vividly: 'Toombs is ready for another revolution, and curses freely every Confederate from the President to a horseboy. He thinks there is a conspiracy against him in the army. Why? Heavens and earth! Why?'

The Confederacy falls and Toombs falls with it, what distance he has left to fall. In his own opinion, at any rate, the North was thirsting for his blood, and the melodramatic incidents of his escape from capture must have afforded him infinite pleasure: flights, disguises, concealments, thrilling hints of treachery, also the protection of lovely and intellectual young women. He was 'a Chesterfield with ladies,' says his biographer. 'The general would walk to and fro along the shaded walks and pour forth, in his matchless way, the secret history of the ruin of the Confederate hopes.' I wish I could have heard him!

And now comes the last curiosity in this extraordinary career. Before the war, in times of organized society, the man had stood forth a splendid rebel. Then, when rebellion became the fashion and had spread to everybody about him, he sank into complete insignificance. Comparative peace was restored, comparative organization; and immediately, as a rebel and a fighter, he came again to the front. After he returned from his brief exile in Europe, he struck in at once with vehement battle against all the sins and errors of carpetbag reconstruction. It certainly was a fine opportunity! How he must have luxuriated in the tempest of epithets which he hurled against the dominant party that was over-riding him and his fellows. 'Its tyranny, its corruption, its treachery to the Caucasian race, its patronage of vice, of fraud, of crime and criminals.' What hearty wealth of honest egotism rings in his cry of disgust at the things that were going on about him. 'I am sorry I have got so much sense. I see into the tricks of these public men too quickly. When God Almighty moves me from the earth, he will take away a heap of experience. I expect when a man gets to be seventy he ought to go, for he knows too much for other people's convenience.'

In this later phase again, as so frequently before, we should observe the makeweights of sound common sense and real constructive intelligence. No one's brain was more helpful than his in framing the new constitution of Georgia. And in opposing everything in general, he opposed some particular things for which wise men can never commend him too much. He opposed the popular election of judges, and when told that it worked well where it had been tried, answered, with the classical colloquialism he loved to use: 'It is easy to take the road to hell, but few

people ever return from it.' He opposed the too hasty allotment of privileges and powers to railroads and other corporations. His words would find many to-day to echo them, few to improve them. 'What do I see before me? The grave. What beyond that? Starving millions of our posterity, that I have robbed by my action here, in giving them over to the keeping of these corporations. The right to control these railroads belongs to the State, to the people, and as long as I represent the people, I will not relinquish it, so help me God!'

A fighter, you see, while breath was in him; a rampant individualist, a champion of all the wordy ideals of the eighteenth century, the embodiment of passionate will, which would not be over-persuaded, or over-ridden, or broken-down. Although he nominally accepted Christianity, and even declared on his death-bed that he 'had

not a resentment, I would not pang a heart,' yet he remained proud, haughty, self-confident, to the very end. 'Yes, I know, I am fast passing away. Life's fitful fever will soon be over. I would not blot out a single act of my life.' The United States government had conquered him, subdued him, constrained him. It governed Georgia and he was a Georgian. But he never forgave. 'Pardon?' he said, when they asked him to sue for amnesty, 'pardon for what? I have not pardoned you all yet.' And he declared that he would die as he had lived, 'an unrepentant, unreconciled, unreconstructed rebel.'

Together with not a few others of the admirable qualities of Milton's Satan, he had in a high degree the one quality which we respect most in that heroic, if somewhat unregenerate, type of Promethean rebellion: —

The courage never to submit or yield,
And what is else not to be overcome.

CAIN, THE KEY

BY MARGARET PRESCOTT MONTAGUE

A SMALL blind girl sat on the veranda steps of the Lomax School for deaf and blind children, and blew upon a tin horn. She was an appealing scrap of humanity, with her thin little body and dreamy face, and her big blank eyes which had a wistful trick of rolling up and down and from side to side, suggesting a little the restless pacing of a caged animal, as they continually quested the dark for some tiny loophole of light.

At present she was utterly happy.

The spring sunshine warmed her all over, and she drank it in at every sensitive pore. She had blown at first soft little tentative notes upon her horn, just tasting, as it were, its delightful possibilities all over; but now she had settled to one thrilling blast emitted again and again. It is possible that in the note's apparent monotony she divined shades of sound which the casual listener would have missed; but it was not merely sound to her, it was color, and emotion, and filled her with