

COL. ROBERT W. HUGHES.

The *Richmond Dispatch*, a Conservative paper, gives the following sketch of the life of Col. Robert W. Hughes, whom the Republicans of Virginia have nominated for the office of Governor of that State:

"Robert W. Hughes is a native of Powhatan County, and is a descendant of one of the pioneer families of the colony of Virginia. His grandfather, David Hughes, was a captain in the war of Independence, while his father, Jesse Hughes, was a captain in the war of 1812. His mother was a Morton, of Prince Edward County. Through her the subject of this sketch inherits the blood of the Huguenot families of Watkins, Mosely, Mosby, Daniel, and others. A great-great-uncle, Jesse Hughes, was a pioneer hunter and Indian fighter in West Virginia, from whom Hughes' River, flowing into the Kanawha, took its name. Having lost both parents in infancy, the subject of this sketch was reared to the age of twelve by Col. Edward C. Carrington, of Halifax. He was then sent to the carpenter's trade, in Princeton, N. J., and there worked for four years. He returned to Virginia, and having determined to obtain an education, went to the Caldwell Institute, Greensboro, N. C., for eighteen months. We next find him a teacher of mathematics in the Bingham High School, Hillsboro, N. C., where he grounded himself in a classical education; but, contrary to the general impression, he never went to college.

In 1844 Col. Hughes studied law in Fincastle, Va., and in 1846 settled in Richmond, where he lived until 1857. During nearly all this time he was a constant contributor to the *Richmond Examiner*, an independent Democratic paper of considerable celebrity and great influence in the South. When the editor of that journal, John M. Daniel, Esq., went abroad as United States Minister to Sardinia, in 1853, Col. Hughes assumed editorial charge of it. He continued in this position until the accession of Mr. Buchanan to the Presidency in 1857, when, on invitation of the President, he accepted the position of principal editorial writer for the *Washington Union*, the National organ, it will be remembered, of the Democratic Party. This position he filled with marked ability until the Summer of 1859, when he retired from politics to a farm which he had purchased in Washington County, in South-western Virginia, where he has since continued to reside, though during and since the war he has spent most of his time in Richmond.

The hostility of Mr. Buchanan to Judge Douglas was one of the reasons which induced the withdrawal of Col. Hughes from the *Washington Union*. He attended the Democratic Convention which convened in Charleston in April, 1860, as a zealous advocate of Judge Douglas; but owing to his personal relations with the Buchanan administration he took no part in the Presidential contest of that year.

After the secession of Virginia, Col. Hughes became an ardent supporter of the cause of Confederate independence, and at the earnest solicitation of his friend John M. Daniel spent the principal part of his time during the war in Richmond as an editorial writer for the columns of the *Examiner*. The influence and celebrity of this journal during that memorable period are well known. The paper was conducted in opposition to the Davis administration, but made encouragement of the Confederate soldiers and armies its leading study and effort. Contrary to the popular impression, Col. Hughes was not on the staff of the *Examiner* during the year 1860, nor until after the fall of Fort Sumter; but after that he was one of its most industrious contributors, a zealous defender of Southern institutions and aims, and a bitter opponent of the Federal Government. He left the paper about eight months before the evacuation of Richmond.

Immediately after the Federal occupation of this city a Union paper, called the *Republic*, was established, and Col. Hughes, to the great surprise of his old Democratic and Confederate friends, became its editor. This paper, though for a while successful, was short-lived, for it had no hold whatever upon the sympathies of the disappointed and broken-hearted people among whom it was circulated and from whom its patronage, if any, was to be derived. When it suspended, Col. Hughes resumed the practice of law, and resided on his farm in South-west Virginia.

On the removal of the *State Journal* from Alexandria to Richmond, he took editorial charge of that paper, confining his attention at first almost entirely to railroad questions. He wrote in the *Journal* a series of able articles favoring the consolidation schemes of Gen. Mahone, and in advocacy of national aid to the central water-line, or James River and Kanawha Canal. His report, prepared for the National Board of Trade, in favor of this water-line, attained considerable celebrity, and his article on the same subject published in *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine* for August and September, 1868, and republished in pamphlet form, has been widely circulated.

Before he had been many months editor of the *Journal* (his name never appeared in that paper as such, we believe,) Col. Hughes began to write articles in support of the Republican Party and its obnoxious policy of reconstruction, and some of these were so bitter that they caused much excitement among the people of Richmond, and attracted a great deal of notice from the Conservative Press. The *Petersburg Index*, then edited by Col. William E. Cameron, took occasion to denounce the *Journal's* course in unmeasured terms, and spoke of Col. Hughes, its supposed editor, as a venal writer, untrue to his past record and false to the people of Virginia. This led to a peremptory challenge from Col. Hughes to Col. Cameron, which having been accepted, a duel was fought on the 12th of June, 1869. The seconds were Col. Clarkson and Ernest Wiltz, Esq., on behalf of Col. Hughes, and Capt. Ernest Lagarde and Capt. Rogers on behalf of Col. Cameron. The latter was wounded. The duel having taken place before the adoption of the present Constitution of Virginia, neither of the parties are disfranchised by their participation in it.

Col. Hughes edited the *State Journal* from about the middle of April, 1869, until the middle of June, 1870. In February, 1871, he was appointed (without solicitation on his part) United States Attorney for the Western District of Virginia, and has ever since held that office, but, having received the nomination for Governor, will now forward his resignation to the President. He has, since the war, twice been a Republican candidate for Congress, but was each time defeated. In 1870 he was beaten by Gen. Wm. Terry, who received 9,910 votes, against 3,508 for Hughes and 4,017 for McMullin, (Independent.) Last Fall he was beaten by 5,028 majority, the vote standing—For Bowen, (Conservative,) 10,352; for Hughes, (Republican,) 5,324."