

"Colonel Speed," says one of these papers, "was a man of large and capacious abilities, and these were studiously and unremittingly improved through life by close and careful observation and reflection. His reading was unstinted, especially in the practical departments of life. Chemistry and mechanism were favorite pursuits with him, and the sympathy of thought which these inspired, combined with a kind disposition and courteous manners, secured him a wider and more friendly relationship with a greater number of men distinguished in our country for practical learning and of large enterprises than any other individual with whom intercourse with men for thirty years has made us acquainted.

"A man so marked by large and intelligent views and notable for integrity of purpose could not escape the claims of the public; consequently, in 1832, he was elected a member of the Legislature of New York. He also held various places of public trust. In 1840 he was presidential elector of the Whig party. Until middle age he was an active supporter of the military system of the States, and held various grades of office under commissions from Governor DeWitt Clinton."

In 1846 Colonel Speed became associated with Mr. Ezra Cornell (the founder of Cornell University) for the establishment of the telegraph system in Western New York. He also became president and practically the sole manager of the line from Buffalo to Chicago. While engaged in these enterprises he resided with his family in Detroit.

In 1859 he was associated with business men of New York in extending the lines of the American Telegraph Company throughout the country. In 1862 he established an independent line from Portland, Me., to Washington City. His business led him to remove from Detroit to Maine, where he spent the latter part of his life.

In Shaffner's *Telegraph Manual* it is said of Col. Speed :

"His parents belonged to a very old family of the ancient Commonwealth of Virginia, well known and of the old patriotic school.

"From 1832 to 1846," says Shaffner, "Col. Speed made many experiments, having in view the perfection of telegraphing. He was aided by Mr. Charles J. Johnson, of Oswego, N. Y. Their attention was at first directed to the visual system, and they succeeded in making some very valuable improvements, greatly facilitating the transmission of intelligence by semaphore. In 1837 they sent their improvements to the Emperor Nicholas, of Russia, and in return received a highly complimentary letter fully appreciating