

EKIN, GENERAL JAMES ADAMS, deputy quartermaster-general, United States army, the subject of this brief sketch, was born August 31, 1819, at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His ancestry were of the highest respectability. His father, James Ekin, was a native of the county of Tyrone, Ireland, but came to this country at an early age, and was for many years a successful merchant in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His mother was born in Elizabeth, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, and was a daughter of Colonel Stephen Bayard, of the Revolutionary army, and granddaughter of Aeneas Mackay, colonel of the 8th Regiment Pennsylvania Continental forces. After having received a liberal education, first at the academy of the Rev. Joseph Stockton, D.D., in Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, and subsequently under the enlightened instruction of William Moody, Esq., at Columbiana, Ohio, young Ekin, on reaching the years of manhood, entered into mercantile pursuits, and was afterward, for a long time, extensively engaged in steamboat and ship-building at Elizabeth. While in this business, he built some of the finest steamers on the Western waters, continually giving employment to a large number of skilled mechanics and other workmen, all of whom were deeply attached to him on account of the uniformly just and kind manner in which he treated them, and many of whom, yet living, cherish his name with profound esteem and gratitude. While a citizen of Elizabeth, and actively engaged in business, although personally very popular with the people among whom he lived, Mr. Ekin held but one public office, and that the honorable one of school director, the duties of which he performed, as he guarded other business interests confided to him, with signal ability and fidelity. In his earlier manhood, Mr. Ekin was identified with the Democratic party, and continued to support its measures and policy until the repeal, in 1846, of the tariff act of 1842. After that event he acted with the Whigs, and subsequently with the Republicans. Of the later party he has been an earnest and efficient supporter since its organization. He was a member of the Free-soil National Convention of 1848, and of the Republican National Conventions of 1856 and 1860. At the outbreak of the great rebellion, in 1861, Mr. Ekin was among the first to tender his services in defense of the imperiled Union of the states; and on the 25th of April of that year he was commissioned by the Governor of Pennsylvania as regimental quartermaster of the 12th Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers, and entered the service of the United States in that capacity at that date. In this regiment he served for three months (the term for which it was mustered), its duty being to guard the line of the Northern Central Railway from Baltimore to the Pennsylvania border, a distance of forty-five miles. The regiment having been mustered out of service at the city of Pittsburgh on the 5th of August, 1861, Lieutenant Ekin was, on the 7th of the same month and year, appointed, by the President of the United States, captain and assistant quartermaster United States Volunteers, and assigned to duty at Pittsburgh, relieving Lieutenant B. F. Hutchins, Sixth United States Cavalry, acting assistant quartermaster and acting assistant commissary of subsistence. After rendering faithful and efficient service at this important center of military operations, Captain Ekin was, on the 16th of October, 1861, directed to proceed at once to Indianapolis, Indiana, and relieve Major A. Montgomery, quartermaster United States army. Indianapolis was at that time one of the great depots for the receipt and transfer of all kinds of military stores and munitions of war, as well as a large recruiting station for the gallant troops of the Western armies. The great "War Governor" of Indiana, Morton, was then moving, guiding, and directing, with a masterly skill all his own, the masses of patriotic men who, at the call of his clarion voice, flocked around the standard of the Republic, and offered their lives in its defense. It was at this trying and perilous time in the history of the country

that Captain Ekin was brought into intimate personal and official relations with Governor Morton; and the close and cordial friendship then commenced was uninterruptedly continued until death closed the brilliant career of Indiana's great and patriotic statesman. On the 13th of March, 1863, Captain Ekin vacated his commission as captain and assistant quartermaster of volunteers, and was commissioned captain and assistant quartermaster in the regular army, in recognition of the valuable and efficient services he had rendered in the quartermaster's department. Having served for over two years, with marked distinction, at Indianapolis, he was, on the 21st of December, 1863, ordered to duty at Washington, District of Columbia, as chief quartermaster of the cavalry bureau, relieving Lieutenant-colonel C. G. Sawtelle. In this important and enlarged sphere of duty the fine executive and administrative abilities of Captain Ekin were more fully called into requisition, and he conducted with consummate skill and unswerving fidelity the great interests confided to his care. His position in this important branch of the military service gave him control not only of the extensive purchases of cavalry and artillery horses and mules for large portions of the great armies then in the field, but also the personal direction and supervision of the immense cavalry depot located at Giesboro', District of Columbia, on the northern bank of the Potomac, and within view of the Capitol at Washington. This was, indeed, during the war, known in the army as the model depot, and it was made so, in a great degree, by the remarkable administrative ability of Captain Ekin, and his keen sagacity in the selection of subordinate officers and agents to co-operate in the great work intrusted to him. In the discharge of these important duties he disbursed many millions of dollars, and to his undying honor be it recorded, not one dollar of deficiency was ever charged against him by the accounting officers of the treasury, after the most careful scrutiny of his accounts. This is, indeed, a fact of which the relatives and friends of General Ekin may well be proud, although he might not boast of it himself; for, if his attention were called to it, he would probably say, "I only performed my duty in preserving untarnished my honor." Nevertheless, an incident so praiseworthy should be recorded, not only because of its inherent merit in a time of war, when fraud and speculation were so rife in the land, but because it will serve as a bright example in our own day for the imitation of many who are the custodians of public and private funds, and mayhap will impress more deeply upon their minds the truth, that, after all, "honesty is the best policy." Soon after Captain Ekin's arrival in Washington, that is to say, on the 24th of February, 1864, he was appointed, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel, chief quartermaster of the cavalry corps of the Army of the Potomac, in addition to his charge of the cavalry bureau as chief quartermaster. On the 6th of August, 1864, under the act of Congress of July 4th of that year, for the better organization of the quartermaster's department, Lieutenant-colonel Ekin was, in recognition of his faithful and meritorious services, assigned to duty, with the temporary rank of colonel, in charge of the first division of the quartermaster-general's office, to date from August 2, 1864. Here his duties were still more enlarged and his labors greatly increased; but, as in all other positions, he was found fully equal to the new and important tasks devolved upon him. In this branch of the office he was charged with the multifarious business pertaining to all regular supplies and miscellaneous stores required for the army, to the numberless animals needed, to the barracks and quarters to be provided, and to the vast multitude of claims for property of various kinds taken for the use of the United States troops during the War of the Rebellion. Yet, under his intelligent administration, all the complex machinery of this important branch of the quartermaster-general's office moved

with the regularity and precision of clockwork. Indeed, so well known and conspicuous had become the fine administrative talent of Colonel Ekin, that it did not fail to attract the attention of the highest officers of the government; and on several occasions, by direction of Presidents Lincoln, Johnson, and Grant, he was assigned to duty, during the absence of General M. C. Meigs, quartermaster-general, as acting quartermaster-general of the army; and from the last-named distinguished officer he has also been the recipient of many complimentary acknowledgments. In view of these facts, it is no wonder that Colonel Ekin's promotions in the army were frequent and rapid, for he fully earned them all by able, faithful, and efficient service. Hence we find that on the 8th of March, 1865, just before the close of the war, he was appointed brevet brigadier-general United States volunteers, having in less than four years, by his own acknowledged merits, and through the recognition of faithful services by his superior officers, risen from the rank of lieutenant to one of the highest and most honorable grades in the army. In order to preserve the chronological order of this narrative, it may here be stated that on the 19th of April, 1865, General Ekin was detailed as a member of the guard of honor to accompany the remains of the late President Lincoln from Washington, District of Columbia, to Springfield, Illinois; and on the 9th of May, 1865, he was detailed a member of the military commission appointed by Paragraph 4 of Special Orders War Department, No. 211, May 6, 1865, for the trial of the assassins of President Lincoln. It is known that, as a member of this historic military court, General Ekin favored a commutation of the death-sentence of the unfortunate Mrs. Surratt; and it is a well-authenticated fact that the paper containing the recommendation of a majority of the commission for executive clemency in her case – which, it was claimed by Judge Holt, was attached to the proceedings and findings of the commission, but which, it was alleged by President Johnson, was not thus appended to the papers, and, therefore, claimed by him not to have been seen – was in the clear, bold, and legible handwriting of General Ekin. This incident is here mentioned to show that the action of this distinguished officer in this serious and solemn matter, involving the question of the life or death of an accused woman, was governed by considerations of humanity and mercy. Resuming our narrative, the military record of General Ekin shows that on the 28th of June, 1865, he received three brevet appointments, as major, lieutenant-colonel, and colonel in the regular army, "for faithful and meritorious services during the war," to date from March 13, 1865. On the 17th of July, 1866, he was commissioned a brevet brigadier-general in the regular army, to rank as such from March 13, 1865. On the 1st of December, 1866, he was appointed deputy quartermaster-general, with the rank of lieutenant-colonel, United States army, under the act of Congress approved July 28, 1866, to rank as such from the 29th of July, 1866. After nearly six years' continuous service as chief of one of the largest and most important divisions in the quartermaster-general's office, during which he acquired high distinction as an able, efficient, and upright officer, and won the well-merited encomiums of presidents, secretaries of war, and more immediate superiors, General Ekin was, on the 1st of April, 1870, relieved from duty in that office, and on the 23d of the same month assigned to duty as chief quartermaster of the Department of Texas. On the eve of his departure from Washington for this new field of duty, the most affectionate and touching demonstrations of respect were paid him, not only by the officers who had been associated with, and the clerks and others who had served under him, but also by the citizens of the national metropolis generally, high and low, rich and poor, white and colored, to all of whom he had become endeared by his genial manners and generous friendships. A large

multitude of friends and admirers gathered at the railroad depot to bid him a heart-felt God-speed on his distant journey, and many kind and grateful words were spoken, and fitly responded to, before the train moved off on that well-remembered night. During General Ekin's two years' service as chief quartermaster of the Department of Texas, his administration was marked by the same high degree of intelligence, probity, and efficiency, which had signalized his supervision and control of previous important and responsible trusts. General Ekin was relieved from duty as chief quartermaster of the Department of Texas on the 29th of April, 1872, and on the 8th of May of the same year was assigned to duty at Louisville, Kentucky, as chief quartermaster of the Department of the South, succeeding the lamented General McFerran. On the 11th of December, 1872, he was announced as chief quartermaster of the Division of the South, on the staff of Major-general McDowell. Early in the fall of 1876 the headquarters of the Department of the South were transferred to Atlanta, Georgia; but General Ekin, being in charge of the Jeffersonville depot of the quartermaster's department, found it expedient to remain at Louisville, in view of the large public interests at the depot which required his personal attention. He continued, however, to act as chief quartermaster of the department for some weeks, and until a successor was appointed. In the mean time he continued in charge of the great supply depot at Jeffersonville, and was also appointed disbursing officer of the quartermaster's department at Louisville, Kentucky, and officer in charge of national cemeteries in Kentucky and Tennessee. These threefold important duties he is now (May, 1880) performing with the same ability, zeal, and faithfulness that distinguished his career on other fields of service. As officer in charge of the Jeffersonville depot, which, besides being a great storehouse for all kinds of army supplies, has, through the efforts of General Ekin, become also a large manufacturing depot, he has been enabled to give profitable employment to many hundreds of poor sewing women in Jeffersonville, New Albany, and the surrounding country. The materials for the manufacture of shirts, and other articles of clothing for the army, are taken by these worthy people to their homes, and made up in accordance with the requirements of the service. Under the careful system of accountability and inspection in practice, nothing is ever lost to the government, and the work is done with the utmost regularity and perfection. A "pay-day" at the Jeffersonville depot is always an interesting occasion; for then may be seen long lines of respectable sewing women awaiting their turn to hand in their pay certificates to the cashier, and receive their well-earned wages, which range as high, in some cases, as forty-five dollars per month. These women, with, in many cases, helpless little ones dependent upon them, are made contented and happy by this just, liberal, and certain reward of their labor; and in the humble homes that are thus made bright and cheerful, the name of their benefactor, General Ekin, is held in loving and grateful remembrance. One of the most conspicuous, as it is one of the most commendable, traits in the character of General Ekin is his strong, earnest, and practical religious conviction. He is, in the truest sense of the term, a sincere Christian gentleman, and diffuses around him, at all times and under all circumstances, the light of moral and religious example. In the fall of 1842 he united with the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Congregation of Bethesda, in Elizabeth Township, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, and was for several years a trustee of the Church. In the year 1858 the Associate Reformed Church and the Associate Church were united, forming the present United Presbyterian Church. Of this Church organization General Ekin is, and has been since its formation, one of the most active, zealous, and influential members. His name is as well known and as highly honored

in the Church as that of any layman connected with it. He has lost no opportunity to advance the interests of the organization. Many of his hours of retirement, when freed from the cares and responsibilities of official duty, have been devoted to this purpose. The columns of *The United Presbyterian*, published at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, bear abundant evidence of his zealous labors in that direction. He has, especially of late years, contributed many instructive and interesting articles to that paper, illustrative of the rise, progress, condition, and needs of the Church. His recently published "Memorials" of some of the most distinguished ministers of the United Presbyterian Church, written, as they were, in a graceful and vigorous style, are valuable contributions to the literature of the Church, besides being of great historic interest. As may have been conjectured from what has already been written, the personal traits of character most notable in General Ekin are integrity, kindness, and firmness, blended with great suavity of manner. So affable is he in official and social intercourse that even one who might fail to receive some expected favor at his hands would go away rejoicing in the happy remembrances of the pleasant interview. But with a warm and sympathetic heart that would, if it could, take the whole world to its embrace, General Ekin has never declined to grant to a worthy person any reasonable request, if within the range of possibility to do so. No government officer of his time, with necessarily limited opportunities, has been more instrumental than he in promoting the welfare and happiness of others. Many now in public office, and some of them in high position, are indebted to his generous influence for their elevation to honorable and lucrative trusts, and among all of them his name is cherished and revered. The fine personal appearance of General Ekin is indicative of his noble character. His figure is tall, well-proportioned, graceful, and commanding. His forehead is high and expansive, and his mild but expressive eyes look out from a countenance beaming with all the well-developed marks of intelligence and goodness. His voice is clear and musical, and his conversational powers, combined with his genial manners, render him exceedingly captivating. As a public speaker he is very pleasing but he rarely appears upon the platform, and then only in response to urgent calls to promote some good cause. Although his hair is silvered by the frosts of more than threescore winters, he walks erect, with all the vigor and elasticity of younger manhood. In any assemblage, however distinguished, his fine physique, and calm, dignified appearance, would attract attention, and indicate him as a man of mark. The domestic life of General Ekin has been one of great contentment and happiness. In early manhood (September 28, 1843) he was united in marriage to Miss Diana C. Walker. Since that bright and happy day they have journeyed hand in hand together, with more of sunshine than of shadow above their pathway. Theirs has always been a Christian home, in which mutual love and forbearance have uniformly dwelt. Five children have blessed this happy union, two of whom (a son and daughter) still survive, to cheer the declining years of their honored and affectionate parents, whose days it is fondly hoped may yet be long in the land, and continue bright and prosperous, until the golden sunset of their beautiful lives shall melt away into the perpetual sunshine of a glorious immortality.