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President Davis' address at
Charlotte

Ashe.

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Ashes

The telegraphed account of President Davis' speech at Charlotte is somewhat misleading. It reads:

"McAlister Carson read the speech that Davis made when he was informed that Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. President Davis was traveling South when Lincoln was killed and stopped here overnight".

Mr. Davis made no speech on the death of Mr. Lincoln; he made a short speech before he had received information of Lincoln's death. Mr. Davis reached Charlotte on the 18th of April; on the 26th day of April, 8 days later, he held the last general meeting of the Cabinet at the residence of Major Phifer. The following is an account of what took place at that time:

"Secretary Mallory states in his diary that Mr. Davis with every member of his cabinet left Greensboro on the 16th of April, arriving in Charlotte on the 18th. President Davis writes in the "Rise and Fall of the Confederacy" - "On dismounting in Charlotte, I received a telegram announcing that President Lincoln had been assassinated". The spot is marked here where Mr. Davis was standing when he received this news. The street was filled with cavalry commanded by General Basil Duke of Kentucky, to whom Mr. Davis made a brief reply to a call for a speech. As he dismounted from his horse, before receiving the message of President Lincoln's death, he was met by Col. Wm. Johnston and given a cordial welcome to the city. Mr. Davis, who was dressed in a plain suit of grey, and wore a low crowned hat almost covered with crepe, bowed low and said: "I thank you sir". Then to the large crowd who were mostly soldiers, he made the following speech.

"My friends, I thank you for this evidence of your affection. If I had come as the bearer of good news, if I had come to announce the success of our arms and at the head of a triumphant army, this is nothing more than I would have expected, but coming as I do to tell you of a very great disaster; coming as I do to tell you that



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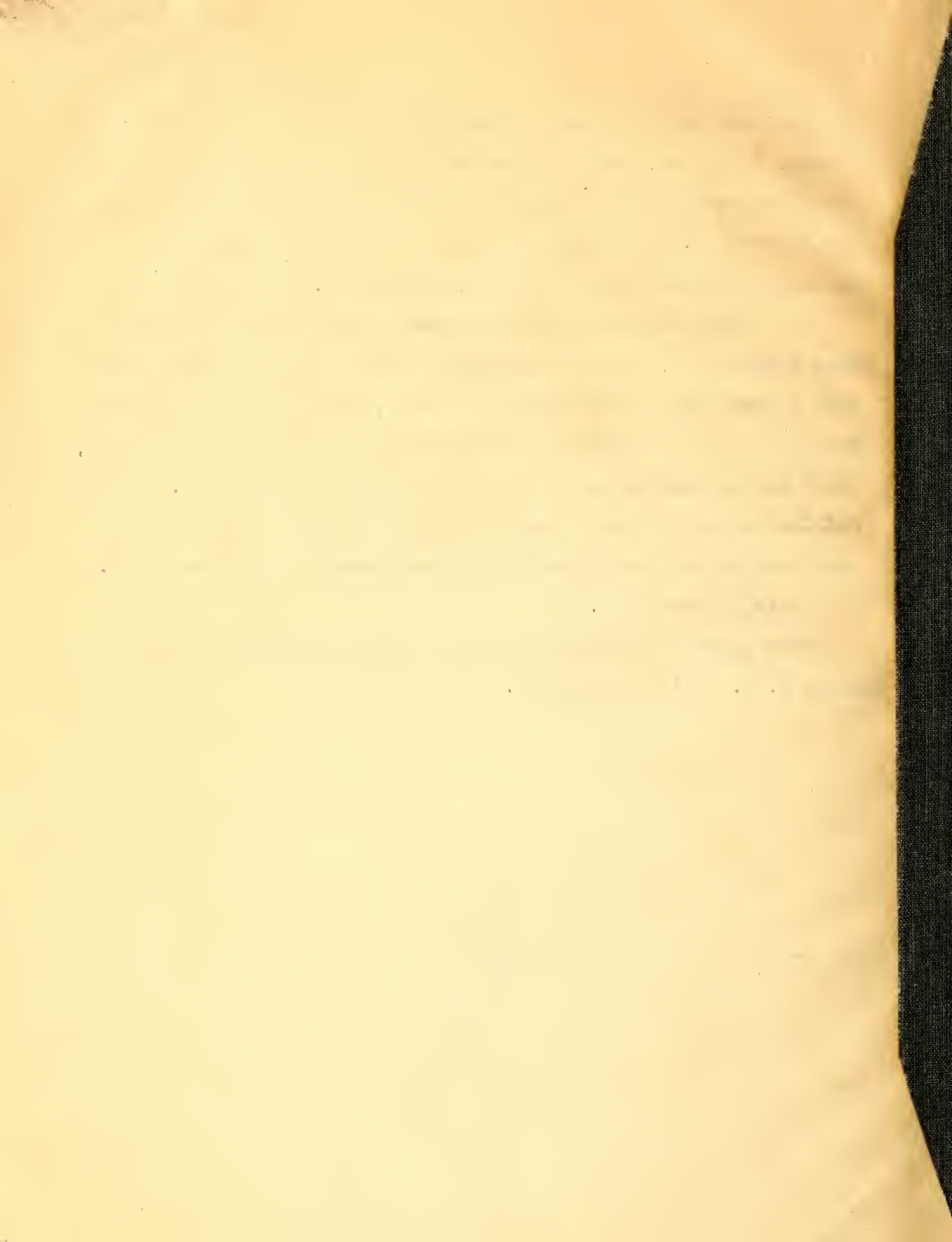
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our National affairs have reached a very low point of depression; coming, I may say, as a refugee from the Capitol of the country, this demonstration of your love fills me with feelings too deep for expression. This has been a war of the people, for the people and I have simply been their executive.

I am conscious of having committed errors; but in all that I have tried to do, I can lay my hand on my heart and appeal to God that I have had but one purpose to serve, one mission to fulfill, the preservation of the true principles of Constitutional freedom, which are as dear to me today as they were four years ago. I have nothing to abate or take back; if they were right then they are right now and no misfortune of arms can change right into wrong.

Again I thank you".

This speech was published in the "Land We Love" edited by General D. H. Hill in Charlotte.



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