

# Vice Presidents Who Failed to Reach the White House

## XVII—Garret Augustus Hobart

**G**ARRET AUGUSTUS HOBART, Vice President under President McKinley, was born at Long Branch, N. J., in 1814. He died at Paterson, N. J., in 1899. He came from an old New England colonial family. His early education was received at Keyport, N. J., where his family settled shortly after his birth. After graduating from Rutgers college, New Brunswick, N. J., in 1863, he taught school for a while and then began the study of law in the office of Socrates Tuttle, at Patterson, N. J. He subsequently became Mr. Tuttle's partner, and married his daughter.

In 1871, he was elected city solicitor of Paterson. He served in the state legislature from 1872 to 1875, and was twice elected speaker. In 1877 he was elected state senator, and was reelected in 1879 and 1881, being president of the senate during his last term, after which he declined renomination. In 1884 he was an unsuccessful candidate for the United States Senate. He was five times offered the nomination for Congress, but each time declined. He was a member of the Republican state committee from 1880 to 1891. During these years he worked incessantly to overthrow the control of the Democratic party, which for years held possession of every office. Through his efforts New Jersey went solidly Republican in 1893.

In 1884, 1893 and 1896 he was a delegate to the national Republican conventions, and on each occasion was unanimously elected a member of the national Republican committee, of which he was chairman from 1892 to 1896.

During these years of political activity Mr. Hobart became one of the biggest business men, and most active lawyers in New Jersey. His executive ability and judgment were of a remarkably high character. John W. Griggs, Attorney General under President McKinley, said of him: "Hobart has the clearest intellect, the largest business capacity, and the keenest intuition of any man I ever knew."

As Vice President he helped defeat the Senate resolution granting the Filipinos independence on the same terms as the Cubans. During the Spanish war Mr. Hobart was a close adviser of President McKinley.



Garret A. Hobart

On the day after his death, Theodore Roosevelt, then governor of New York said: "Mr. Hobart occupied the very trying position of one with great titular rank who nevertheless was not supposed to have an active share in formulating the policy of the government and helping carry it through. What he did was done not by force of position, but by force of character, his rare tact, his extraordinary common sense, and the impression of sincerity created upon every man with whom he was brought in contact."

Previous to Mr. Hobart's election as Vice President it was the custom of the British minister in Washington to take precedence at public functions over every one but the President. Mr. Hobart asserted his right to this distinction, and was supported by President McKinley. After the change of considerable diplomatic correspondence Sir Julian Pauncefote, the British minister, backed down.