Justin Ralph Loomis was born in Bennington, N. Y., August 21, 1810. He was a descendant of Joseph Loomis, who came from Braintree, England, in 1638. At the age of seventeen he entered the Hamilton Literary and Theological Institution—now grown to Colgate University—where he was prepared for college. He subsequently entered the Freshman Class of Brown University and was graduated with the class of '35. Rev. Jonah G. Warren, D. D., so long the Secretary of the American Baptist Missionary Union, was a classmate.

After teaching for a year in the State Agricultural School, of Rhode Island, Mr. Loomis was called to be tutor, and soon professor, of Chemistry and Natural History in Waterville College, Maine—now Colby University. He was married January 16, 1838, to Miss Sarah Anne Freeman, of Richfield Springs, N. Y. One son, Professor Freeman Loomis, Ph. D., born in Waterville, survives this union. In addition to his instruction in Science, Professor Loomis gave instruction in Philosophy and Ethics to the Senior Class during the interim following the resignation of Dr. R. E. Pattison from the Presidency. At Waterville he was the teacher and afterwards the associate of Dr. Martin B. Anderson, his life-long friend. Benjamin F. Butler, Esq., was also a pupil.

Upon the death of his wife, March 3, 1852, and after some months of preparation in New York City, Professor Loomis under-
took an expedition to South America, in the interest of an extensive commercial house, involving a careful geological examination of Bolivia, Peru and part of Chile. At Panama he wrote letters descriptive of the progress of the Panama railroad to the New York Courier and Inquirer. His South American journey did not result in the discovery of gold mines for the employers, but it furnished excellent training for the earnest geological student and professor. Hundreds of students have benefited by the explorations of that vacation.

Returning to New York, he spent some time in revising his textbooks upon Human Philosophy (published in 1851), and Geology (published in 1852). In 1854 he was married to Miss May Gilbert, a niece of Deacon William Colgate, of New York. In this year also he was called to the professorship of Natural Science in the University at Lewisburg—now Bucknell University—whence he received the doctorate in Philosophy in the same year.

Here again, as at Waterville, he gave instruction in Philosophy and Morals after the retirement of President Howard Malcom, D. D., in 1857; and in 1858 he was chosen to the vacant presidency. In this year he received the degree of LL. D. from the University of Rochester.

At this point began the second half of a long life devoted to the mental and moral improvement of his fellow men. He saw the possibilities of the youthful college, then in its second decade, situated in the heart of a growing commonwealth, not only gathering about it the local sympathy of a community, but also allying to it the sympathies and patronage of a great Christian denomination.

President Loomis' inaugural address upon the "Collegiate System of the United States" was a notable and impressive discussion of a great theme. He considered the distinctive peculiarity of the American people, "regarded as a force and an excellence," to be
"individuality." The claim he made for the Collegiate System of that day was, that it furnished: (I), A culture that reaches the general character, and (II), instruction that embraces the elements of human knowledge, and (III), that this culture and instruction may reach, more or less directly, the entire people.

He rejoiced in the multitude of colleges scattered throughout the land; and in their control by the various Christian denominations, seeing therein the largest adaptation to popular needs.

But who could foresee the Civil War of 1861-'65 or estimate its effect upon such an enterprise as a college? Yet fresh from the excitement and distress of that troublous time, fresh from the chaplaincy of the 28th Pennsylvania Volunteers, and the return of the students to their books, Dr. Loomis threw himself into the work of raising the endowment of 1864-5. One hundred thousand dollars were raised, troublesome debts were paid, the chair of Rhetoric was endowed, and the funds of the University were put upon a solid foundation.

No sooner was this great work accomplished than Doctor Loomis undertook the erection of the present Baptist Church edifice. He desired that it should educate the young people gathered in the University schools, in the art of church building. Little did the congregation comprehend the magnitude of the work. They thought they could raise $10,000 if the friends of the University elsewhere could raise $10,000 more. But at the completion of their task they had paid $45,000 out of a total expenditure of $60,000. In addition to drawing all the plans, supervising the work of construction, supplying an incredible amount of manual labor and handi-craft, Dr. Loomis contributed over six thousand dollars in money to emphasize his convictions of the need of such an edifice for the church and the college.

The story of the slating of the spire is worthy of a place in the
annals of heroic deeds. In the absence of a carpenter or a slater willing to risk his life swinging on so slight a scaffolding in midair, Dr. Loomis, then 61 years old, mounted the scaffold, and despite the summer heat, often bare-headed by the loss of his hat in a gust of wind, he drove every slate and finished a task that younger men shrank from attempting. It was an object lesson in the President's dominant characteristic—a determined will power.

After the completion of his arduous toil in the building of the church, Dr. Loomis secured leave of absence for a year, and, with Mrs. Loomis, made a tour of the world in 1871-2. They were present at the dedication of the Scott monument, in Edinburg, at the centenary of Sir Walter's birth, and at the meeting of the British Association for the advancement of science. They were entertained by C. Piazzi Smyth, the astronomer royal of Scotland, and the investigator of the pyramids of Egypt.

Dr. Loomis was greatly interested in the study of art, and used his time in Paris and in Rome with reference to his future art lectures before his classes. While in Paris he sat for his portrait, which has been presented to the University by Dr. Freeman Loomis. From Rome he brought a number of paintings, which now adorn the walls of his home, and give delight to his numerous friends. While journeying in the Alps the geologist turned to investigate the glacier problem; and at Naples, Vesuvius had greater attractions for him than Pompeii. In Egypt the petrified forest east of Cairo divided his attention with the pyramids. On his journey through India, China and Japan he was greatly interested in the working of the Christian missions. He returned by way of the Pacific and San Francisco, and arrived in Lewisburg on commencement morning, 1872, amid great rejoicings. These, alas! were soon to be turned to tears by the sudden death of Mrs. Loomis, just three weeks after their arrival home, July 16, 1872.
She left one daughter, Carrie Gilbert Loomis, now Mrs. E. G. Owens, Jefferson, Ohio.

The financial stress of 1873, losses in the funds of the University invested in Chicago, occasioned grave anxiety for the welfare of the institution. The transfer of Dr. Bliss to Crozer Theological Seminary in 1874, removed the senior professor from the college, and the intimate friend and adviser of its president from his counsel. In 1875 Dr. Lowry resigned the combined professorship of Rhetoric and pastorate of the Baptist church he had held for six years. The attempt to raise an additional endowment of one hundred thousand dollars in the centennial year, 1876, ended in lamentable failure. In 1877 came the removal of Professor James from the chair of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy he had held for twenty-six years of continuous service, and the consequent appeal to the courts. January 1, 1879, Dr. Loomis retired from the office he had filled with distinguished ability for twenty-one years, and spent the next six months in Europe.

President Loomis never did better work than during the last five years of his administration. Former students point with pride to the entire second decade. Many of the most successful and influential alumni sat under his instruction during those years. He kept the courses of study up to the demands of a rapidly advancing period. He developed the new and able young men gathered into his faculty. He expanded the instruction in his own department with great ability.

But it was a time of depression and discontent, rather than of appreciation and rallying to the standard. Not to progress was to fall behind. Grave difficulties within led to heroic measures. But action and reaction are equal and in opposite directions. There was nothing to do but submit to the inevitable. He laid down the task when he felt sure of its future completion. He maintained a dignified silence under widespread misunderstanding. He did not
accept the challenge to spread the flames of controversy. He bided his time, and time brought him the justification of his policy.

Never did an ex-president retiring under such circumstances render more invaluable aid to the succeeding administration. Partisanship there could be none, for he knew only the good of the University. His submission to the new order was as unflinching as his dominance had hitherto been unflinching. He saw changes, radical and deep, in the organization dear to him as life; but he uttered no protest. He trusted the future, his brethren, and God. Nor has that trust been in vain. He has seen his intellectual sons take up the task he taught them to accomplish. He has seen a progress steady and assured. He has received the tardy gratitude of a generation who are now aware of the invaluable services he rendered. May he live long to enjoy the fulfillment of the present signs of promise!

Dr. Loomis in his prime was a splendid specimen of physical manhood. Tall, of powerful frame, yet well proportioned, noble in presence and distinguished in bearing, he impressed his fellows everywhere as a born ruler of men. He was cast in the heroic mould. Vigor, force, determination were corresponding characteristics of his mind.

Dr. Loomis was not gifted with fluency of extemporaneous speech; but his public addresses, sermons and lectures, prepared with scrupulous care, and delivered with a force and clearness characteristic of the man, were impressive without declamation or oratorical effort. His sermons upon days of prayer for colleges, and his baccalaureate addresses were the productions of an earnest spirit, of large experience in the inner life, and of intense interest in his youthful listeners. Some of these were published and attest his generous scholarship, his strength of conviction and his faith in the Truth as the educator of man. "The Retributive Power of Memory" is well worth the perusal of every college student of this generation.
His class-room work aimed to give the student power to grasp the author's thought, to test its truth for himself, and to analyze its constituents of fact and inference. He was an apt questioner and a close reasoner. His method was inductive and not dogmatic. His scientific training and pursuits had given him the right approach to philosophy.

In his teaching of Philosophy, Dr. Loomis did not aim at the present historical basis of presentation, nor at the exhaustive examination of the numerous systems of psychology or metaphysics; but he endeavored to make the pupils masters of the principles of the human mind as set forth by the Scottish school of philosophy. While deeply interested in the Hegelian school, and in German philosophy generally, he felt that Hamilton formed the best basis for the instruction of American youth.

In Ethics he followed his teacher, Wayland, until the publication of Calderwood, which he hailed with delight. But whatever the text-book, or the fashion of treatment, the teacher was always the embodiment of the subject to his pupils. He was greater than the book or the lecture; for he was the righteous man, devoted to the highest ideals, self-sacrificing for the good of others, interested in nothing so much as their personal moulding by the truth of the Spirit. Says one gratefully, "He taught us, not books, but life!"

In his presidency he is worthy to be ranked with that illustrious body of the makers of men of whom Wayland and Wolsey, Hopkins and Anderson were princes. If in his administration he seemed autocratic, it was because he knew obedience to be the foundation of worthy human character, a foundation to be laid only in youth. In his view a college was a kingdom, and submission to authority was its first principle. Many students who fretted under the restraint of his sovereign will, in the days of their pupilage, confess with gratitude the beneficial influence of his government upon their maturer years.
To obey is better than sacrifice. Moses preceded the gospel in our education.

Since 1879 Dr. Loomis has continued to live in Lewisburg in the new and tasteful dwelling on South Third street, erected soon after his retirement. The present Mrs. Loomis, who presides so graciously over his home, was Miss Augusta Tucker, of Lewisburg, to whom he was married August 20, 1873. Their son, Andrew Gregg Loomis, is a member of the class of 1895 of the University. The years of the ex-president's well earned rest have been filled with travel and reading, with a deep interest in the temperance reform, and in the church for which he did so much in earlier days. Every good work has known his generosity, every human interest has had his sympathy. Though generally enjoying good health, he has suffered much at times from rheumatism. But his mind is clear and active. His heart and his purse, as of yore, are devoted to the cause of higher Christian education. His gift of one thousand dollars to the endowment subscription of 1892 is proof that the needle of his life's compass points true to its pole.