GRAHAM, William A., Secretary of the Navy, 1850-1852.
Born in Lincoln County, N.C., Sept. 5, 1804; died in
Saratoga Springs, N.Y., 11 Aug., 1875. Was graduated
at the University of North Carolina in 1824, admitted
to the bar at Newbern, N.C., and began to practice
law in Hillsborough. He was several times elected to
the state legislature between 1833 and 1840, and was
more than once chosen speaker. In 1840 he was elect-
ed to the U.S. Senate to fill the vacancy occasioned
by the resignation of Robert Strange, serving from
10 Dec., 1840, to 3 March, 1843. In 1844 he was elected
governor by the Whigs on a larger vote than was ever
before polled. He was re-elected in 1846 by an increas-
ed majority, but declined a third term, and retired to
private life. He was offered the Spanish mission by
President Taylor in 1849, but declined it, and in 1850
became Secretary of the Navy in Fillmore's cabinet, but
resigned in 1852 in consequence of having been nominated
by the Whigs for Vice-President on the ticket with Gen.
Scott. During his term of office as Secretary he pro-
jected and carried out the important expedition to Japan
under Com. Perry. Gov. Graham served as Senator in the
2nd Confederate Congress from 22 Feb., 1864, until the end
of the war. He was also a delegate to the Union Convention
at Philadelphia in 1866, which was called to sustain
the policy of Andrew Johnson. At the time of his death
he was acting as one of a commission that had been appointed
to settle the boundary dispute between the states of
Maryland and Virginia.