



In the 1830s, Adelia Hayes became engaged to the law student Alphonso Gibbs. Grief and mourning replaced wedding and trousseau preparation when Gibbs died in October 1834. (Portrait by Washington Bogart Cooper, ca. 1834, Belmont Mansion Association)

academy trustee after 1826, educating his daughters remained a priority, and an 1839 academy roster lists Adelia's younger sister, Laura, among its students.<sup>20</sup>

In the mid-1820s, in order to accommodate his growing family, Oliver Hayes acquired the Rokeby estate in Nashville, comprised of two 640-acre military land grants<sup>21</sup> and a house described as "massive" and "palatial," with a front door large enough to allow "a carriage and pair" to pass. The happiest years were certainly those when the Hayes children were in residence, and it was said "during their tenure of the old house at

Rokeby it was the scene of constant gayety." It is certain the home was the site of parties, dances, and teas in abundance, as "gallants flocked a-courting there the three fair maids of Rokeby," referring to Adelia and her sisters, Laura and Corinne.<sup>22</sup> Rokeby may well have witnessed the initial meeting between Adelia Hayes and her first serious beau, for at some point in the early 1830s she made the acquaintance of Alphonso Gibbs, eldest son of George and Lee Ann Dibrell Gibbs. The Gibbs family relocated to Nashville from North Carolina, probably in the mid-1810s. George Gibbs practiced law and worked in banking, and certainly became acquainted with Oliver Hayes through these endeavors, perhaps leading to the introduction of the young couple.

Five years Hayes's senior, Alphonso Gibbs planned to follow his father into a career in the law and, once established, marry the lovely Adelia.<sup>23</sup> His dreams of a successful and lucrative law practice, and theirs of a long and happy life together were left unfulfilled, however, as Gibbs contracted typhoid fever, left Harvard prior to completing his studies in the spring or summer of 1834,<sup>24</sup> and died that October.<sup>25</sup> Grief and mourning replaced wedding and trousseau preparation for seventeen-year-old Hayes, and included in the scattered collections containing her documents is a revision of a poem written by Amelia Opie and published earlier in 1834, in a collection entitled *Lays for The Dead*.<sup>26</sup> Admittedly, Hayes took poetic license with Opie's poem and re-worked a number of its stanzas, but

through these lines her thoughts on Gibbs's passing, and what life might hold for her are clearly revealed:

There was an eye whose partial glance,  
Could ne'er my numerous faults see;  
There was an ear that still untried,  
Could listen to kind praise of me.

There was a heart time only made,  
I or me with fonder feelings burn.  
And which, where'er alas! I moved,  
Still long and pined for my return.

There was a lip which always breathed  
E'en short farewells with tones of sadness;  
There was a voice whose eager sound,  
My welcome spoke with heartfelt gladness.

There was a mind whose vigorous powers,  
On mine their fostering influence threw;  
and called my humble talents forth,  
Till thence its dearest joys it drew.

There was a love which oft for me,  
With anxious fears would overflow;  
And wept and prayed for me, and sought  
From future ills to guard—but now!

That eye is closed and deaf that ear,  
That lip and voice are mute forever;  
And cold that heart of faithful love,  
Which death alone from mine could sever.

And lost to me that ardent mind,  
Which loved my varied task to see;

And oh, of all the praise I gained,  
This was the dearest for to me!

Now I, unloved, uncherished, alone,  
Life's weary wilderness must tread;  
Till he who heals the broken heart,  
In mercy bids me join the dead.

But, "Father of the Fatherless,"  
Oh thou that hear'st the orphan's cry,  
And dwellest with the contrite heart,  
As well as in thy place on high.

Oh, Lord! Though like a faded leaf,  
That's severed from its parent tree,  
I struggle down life's stormy tide,  
That awful tide which leads to thee.

Still, Lord! To thee the voice of praise,  
Shall spring triumphant from my breast;  
Since though I tread a weary way,  
I trust that he I mourn is blest!

—Adelia

It seems Hayes mourned Alphonso Gibbs for some time, and not until about 1837 did she meet Isaac Franklin, the man who became her first husband. The exact date of this meeting is not known, but as the story goes, Hayes was in Gallatin, Tennessee, visiting her father's first cousin, Judge John J. White, and his wife, Catherine "Kitty" Waide. During her stay, the Whites suggested a visit to the stately Fairvue mansion so she might see its recent additions, and perhaps meet its owner.<sup>27</sup> According