

PLANTATION

EDITION



VOLUME XVIII



General Robert E. Lee.

❧ THE NOVELS, STORIES,
SKETCHES AND POEMS OF
THOMAS NELSON PAGE ❧

ROBERT E. LEE

MAN AND SOLDIER

II

*Ω ξείν' ἀγγειλον Λακεδαιμονίοις ὅτι τῆδε
κείμεθα τοῖς κείνων ῥήματι πειθόμενοι.*

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XV

THE WILDERNESS CAMPAIGN

IF Grant had harbored any delusion that Lee was a general strong only in defensive operations, he had reason quickly to be undeceived. Lee, who, for reasons of his own, had permitted him to cross the river unopposed, prepared to strike him amid the tangles of the Wilderness, where his superiority in men and arms might prove less preponderant, and two days later, having called in his widely separated divisions—separated for the want of subsistence—though he was outnumbered two to one*—threw himself upon him, inflicting upon him losses before which any other general who had yet commanded the Army of the Potomac would have recrossed the river, and even Grant recoiled. For two days (the 5th and 6th)

* Rhodes's "History of the United States," IV, p. 480. Humphreys' "Virginia Campaign of 1864 and 1865," p. 17.

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the battle raged, and Lee forced Grant, with losses of 17,666 men,* from his direct line of march and led him to call on his government for reinforcements. "Send to Belle Plain," he wrote on the 10th, "all the infantry you can rake and scrape." And he needed them all. On the evening of the second day an attack similar to Jackson's at Chancellorsville was made on Grant's flank, and his left taken in reverse was driven back when an accident similar to that which changed the issue of that day changed this day's issue. As Longstreet, who commanded the advancing troops, rode down the Plank Road accompanied by Generals Kershaw and Jenkins, a volley was poured into them by his own men. Jenkins was killed and Longstreet dangerously wounded. It stopped the movement which otherwise might have forced Grant back across the Rapidan. Lee's forces were largely outnumbered, but to make good the difference Lee offered at more than one critical moment to lead them in person. Officers and men alike refused to advance while he remained at a point of danger, and he was forced to the rear. But not only in the battle of the 6th, but also in the battle of the 10th and in the furious fight at the "bloody

* The Century Co.'s "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War," IV, p. 182.

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angle," where, when his army was imperilled, he again rode forward to inspire his straining troops and was again driven by them to the rear, the fact that he had felt it necessary to place himself at their head called forth new efforts from the jaded soldiers and stirred them to redoubled valor.

"These men, General," said Gordon, as he rode with him down the lines at Spottsylvania, where they rested for a moment prior to the final charge, "are the brave Virginians." Lee uttered no word. He simply removed his hat and passed bare-headed along the line. I had it from one who witnessed the act. "It was," said he, "the most eloquent address ever delivered." And a few minutes later as the men advanced to the charge, he heard a youth, as he ran forward crying and reloading his musket, shout through his tears that "any man who would not fight after what General Lee said was a ——— coward."

In no battle of the war did Lee's genius shine forth more brightly than in the great battle of Spottsylvania Court House, where, after the bloody battle of the Wilderness, he divined Grant's plans, and again cutting him off from the object of his desire, threw himself upon him in a contest whose fury may be gauged by the fact that the

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musketry fire continued in one unbroken roar for seventeen hours, and trees were shorn down by the musket balls.

By the evening of the 7th, while his staff were yet in darkness as to Grant's next move, Lee, with his unerring sense of the soldier, had divined it, and he sent General Anderson with his division to relieve Stuart at Spottsylvania.* His adjutant-general, who was sent to apprise Stuart of the approach of the infantry, found him already engaged. The supports arrived just in time; for the cavalry had been driven back, and Grant believed that he already occupied the Court House, as he reported in his despatch of the 8th. But Lee's promptness "deranged this part of the programme," driving him back and holding him off during a week's fierce fighting, when Grant, having lost 40,000 men, finding his enemy too obstinate and ready to die in the last ditch, drew off by the flank toward the southward, whereupon Lee again headed him and, facing him at Hanover Junction, forced him down the north bank of the Pamunkey to Hanover town.

"Before the lines of Spottsylvania," says Swinton, "the Army of the Potomac had for twelve days and nights engaged in a fierce wrestle in

* Taylor's "General Lee," p. 238.

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which it had done all that valor may do to carry a position by nature and art impregnable. In this contest, unparalleled in its continuous fury and swelling to the proportions of a campaign, language is inadequate to convey an impression of the labors, fatigues, and sufferings of those who fought by day, only to march by night from point to point of the long line and renew the fight on the morrow. Above 40,000 men had already fallen in the bloody encounters of the Wilderness and Spottsylvania, and the exhausted army began to lose its spirits."

Such was the defence which Lee presented to his able antagonist and his great army after the exhaustion of the hungry winter of '64. Had he not been ill and half delirious in his ambulance when Grant attempted to cross the North Anna and failed to get his centre over after his two wings were across, Grant's star might have set on the banks of the North Anna instead of rising to its zenith at Appomattox. But Lee was suddenly stricken down, and while he was murmuring in his semi-delirium, "We must strike them—we must never let them pass us again," Grant, after the most anxious night of the war, drew back his wings and slowly moved down the Pamunkey to find Lee still across his path at the historic levels of

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Cold Harbor, where valor and constancy rose to their highest point.

“I stood recently in the wood where Gregg’s Texans put on immortality,” wrote a Southern historian, “where Kershaw led three of his brigades in person to compensate them for the absence of the fourth.”* It was this need to compensate their troops for want of reserves or equipment which so often led the generals of the Confederacy to the firing line. But it was a costly expedient. Four times, in what appeared the very hour of complete victory, the prize was stricken from the hand by the commander being shot from his saddle. First, when General Albert Sidney Johnston was slain at Shiloh, in the moment of victory. Next, when, at Seven Pines, Joseph E. Johnston was struck from his horse, and what might have proved a crushing defeat for McClellan was turned into an indecisive battle. Again, when Jackson was driving all before him at Chancellorsville, and fell, like Wolfe, victorious. And finally, when in the Wilderness, Longstreet was wounded and incapacitated at the critical moment when victory hovered over his arms.

It is related that on one occasion during a battle

* Leigh Robinson’s Address on the Wilderness Campaign, Memorial Volume, Army of Northern Virginia.

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Lee, being asked by his staff to leave one spot after another where he had posted himself, finally exclaimed, "I wish I knew where my place is on the battle-field. Wherever I go some one tells me it is not the place for me."

In fact, so far from Lee being chiefly good in defence, the quality of his military spirit appears to one who studies his career to have been distinctly aggressive, possibly even too aggressive. This is Longstreet's charge against him. No captain ever knew better the value of a quarter of an hour or the importance of striking first when the enemy was preparing to deliver his blow. In truth, he was, as Henderson declares, an ardent fighter, and possessed in an extraordinary degree the qualities of both physical and moral courage. Lee's personal daring was the talk of his army. "I hear on all sides of your exposing yourself," wrote one of his sons during the Wilderness campaign, urging him to be more careful for the sake of the cause. And again and again, at some moment of supreme crisis, as at the Wilderness when Longstreet's van appeared at the critical moment, and as at the "bloody angle" at Spottsylvania, which Grant had seized and where he was massing his picked troops to the number of 50,000, he rode forward to put himself at the head of his exhausted

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soldiery to lead them in a charge on which hung the fate of his army. Yet, as Henderson says, in discussing Lee's audacity in attacking with an inferior force McClellan's well-equipped army, secure in their intrenchments, "he was no hare-brained leader, but a profound thinker, following the highest principles of the military art." That this will be the final verdict of history there can be little doubt.

After crossing the Rapidan the advance of Grant by the flank was under almost continuous attack by Lee. "Measured by casualties," says Rhodes, in his history of this campaign, "the advantage was with the Confederates." This far from expresses the real fact that Grant received a mauling which, as Lee's adjutant-general, Colonel Walter H. Taylor, said the next day in his note-book, would have sent any other general who had hitherto commanded the Union army back in haste across the river. It was Grant's fortitude which saved him, and led him to tell General James H. Wilson that he would fight again. As Lee had assaulted at the Wilderness, so again at Spottsylvania he barred the way of his indomitable antagonist, and again and again forced the fighting, until, after holding him at the North Anna, where he offered battle, he had wedged

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Grant from his direct march on Richmond and forced him down the left bank of the Pamunkey to end at last his direct march on Richmond on the doubly bloody field of Cold Harbor, the only battle which Grant declared afterward he would not have fought over again under the same circumstances.

Foiled in that campaign of his immediate object, and having lost more men than Lee had at any time in his entire army, Grant adopted a new line of attack, and secretly crossing to the south side of the James, which he might at any time have reached by water without the loss of a man, attempted to seize Petersburg, as McClellan had planned to do, by a coup, but, failing in his object, began to lay siege to that place with a view to cutting off Richmond from the South, a feat which he only accomplished after eight months' fighting, in which he lost over 60,000 more men.

Such in general terms was the last and, possibly, the greatest campaign of Lee. But as so much of Lee's fame as a soldier must rest on this final campaign in which he showed new powers and resisted the mighty forces thrown against him until the South collapsed from exhaustion, it is proper to give for those who may be interested in his mili-

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tary career a more detailed account of his masterly defence of Richmond and show clearly the reason of its ultimate failure.

When Grant, on the evening of the 4th of May, 1864, found the last of his four army corps on the south side of the Rapidan without a shot having been fired save by the pickets along the stream, he undoubtedly felt that he had taken a long step toward Richmond. Unlike McClellan, he did not overestimate his opponent's strength, nor did he, like Hooker, falter in the presence of his masterly ability. He had supreme self-confidence based on rare courage and rare ability to command and to fight, and he knew that he outnumbered Lee more than two to one, and that in his army were the flower of the North, men as valorous as ever drew breath. He knew that Lee's forces were dispersed over a considerable extent of country in the open region about Orange and Gordonsville from twenty to thirty miles to the westward, and that they were ill-clad, ill-shod, and ill-fed. It was, accordingly, without a tremor that, having crossed the river unopposed, he boldly committed himself to the narrow roads that led southward through the western part of the Wilderness, in the assurance that Lee would throw his army across his path somewhere beyond the Wilderness,

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and that in the battle which would thus be joined he would defeat him. Lee, however, had other plans than those Grant assumed he would follow. He had divined Grant's plans as well as if he had sat with him at his council board, and he had formed his own. He had predicted to his generals that Grant would soon move and would cross the Rapidan at the very fords he selected. Accordingly, he had given his orders, and on the day that Grant crossed the river and headed for Richmond, Lee struck his head-quarters tent, and sending orders to Anderson at Rapidan to follow without delay with his division, and to Longstreet at Gordonsville to follow with his two divisions there, he himself took Ewell's Corps—two brigades—and two of Hill's Divisions, with artillery and cavalry, and struck straight for Grant's army. Marching in two columns, Ewell to the left on the Turnpike and Hill on the old Plank Road, he pushed forward, and that night, while Grant supposed Lee was still about Orange or moving southward, Ewell's advance guard bivouacked within four miles of Warren's corps, which bivouacked at the old Wilderness tavern at the intersection of the Germana Plank Road and the Orange Turnpike. Still unsuspecting Lee's approach, Grant, on the 5th, moved on through the Wilderness toward

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Richmond, his army in two columns—on the right Warren's and Sedgwick's corps, heading for Parker's store, on the Plank Road toward the western edge of the Wilderness, while Hancock's corps (the Second) took the route to Shady Grove Church, to the south-eastward. It was not long, however, before Lee made known his intention to attack without waiting for Grant to emerge from the Wilderness. Ewell, advancing on the Turnpike at right angles to the Federal line of march, quickly came in contact with Griffin's division, which Warren had posted on the Pike to cover his flank during his march, and was soon heavily engaged. Warren, finding Ewell's Corps on his right, formed line of battle, and Sedgwick forming on his right, they advanced and attacked Ewell in heavy force. Meanwhile Getty's division was sent by Sedgwick to hold Hill, who was advancing on the Plank Road toward Parker's store, until Hancock could arrive with the Second Corps. Warren's sharp attack on Ewell was at first successful, for the Confederates had not on the field more than half the number of the Federals who attacked them.* But rallying, the Confederates swept forward, and not only regained the ground they

* Humphreys' "Virginia Campaign of '64 and '65," p. 17. Rhodes's "History of the United States," IV, p. 440. Nicolay and Hay, VIII, p. 352.

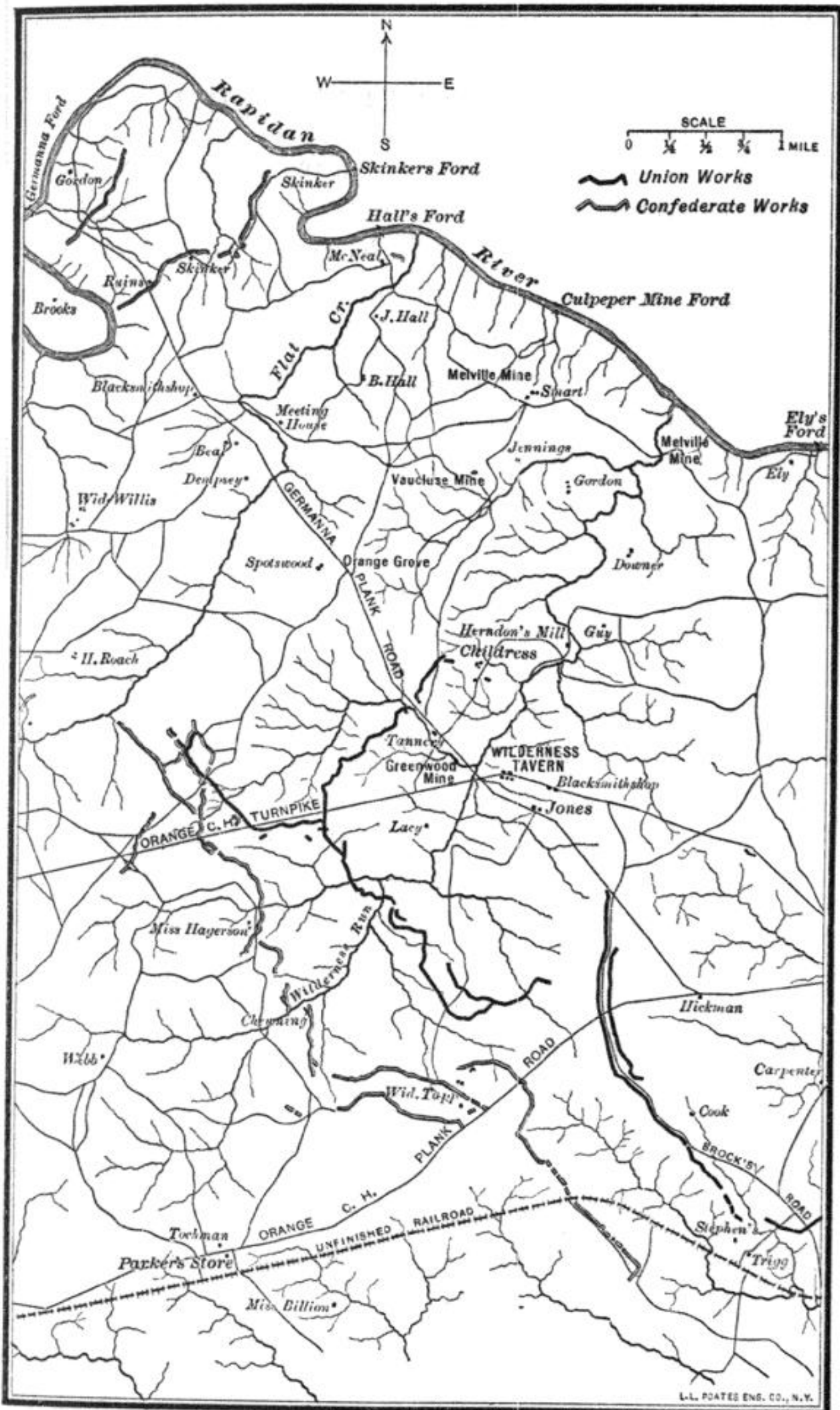
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had lost, but captured four guns and a large number of prisoners. But as the fight slackened on the left, where Ewell was pushing Warren back along the Turnpike, it began to increase in fury along Lee's right, where, on the Plank Road, Heth's and Wilcox's Divisions of Lee's Second Corps were holding back the masses of Grant's Second Corps. This they did all the afternoon, stubbornly maintaining their ground against the repeated assaults of Hancock's well-led divisions. Happily for Lee's army, the ground he had selected on which to bring Grant to bay was well adapted for his purpose. As in the battle of Chancellorsville, he had chosen the Wilderness for his battle-ground, because its tangles of far-stretching forest, intersected by only a few roads and broken by but a few openings, prevented the preponderant numbers of the enemy in men and guns from being availed of by his antagonist.

Lee, however, when he marched straight for Grant's army with his Second Corps and part of his Third Corps, had expected that Longstreet, who was at Gordonsville, little more than ten miles further away from his object of attack than he himself was, would follow immediately and join him not later than the afternoon of the 5th. To

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insure this he had sent him as guide an officer who knew the roads, to pilot him. But Longstreet was incurably slow. A large, heavy, ponderous man, his movements were correspondingly slow, and possibly his mental operations partook of the same deliberateness. Whether it was at Seven Pines or at Malvern Hill, at Second Manassas, or Gettysburg, or the Wilderness, he was late; and in this instance, as in those which had preceded it, he came near causing the most serious consequences to Lee's army. Had Longstreet been up when Ewell made his gallant attack, or even when Wilcox and Heth, in the afternoon, were holding on with desperation to the lines against which Hancock was dashing his straining brigades, an advance might have been made which might possibly have driven Grant back toward the Rapidan and have saved the carnage of the succeeding weeks. Longstreet had, however, sent off the guide furnished him and had subsequently missed the road. So, when darkness fell on Wilcox's and Heth's exhausted divisions in the Wilderness woods, the First Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia was going into bivouac at Verdiersville, some ten miles away. Fortunately, Longstreet was fully awake now to the urgency of the situation, of which Lee had apprised him,



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and, breaking camp soon after midnight, he pushed forward for the Wilderness, within whose western tangles the armies of Grant and Lee lay confronting each other. Had he been two hours later it might have been too late to save the situation. As it was, he was barely in time to save the rest of Lee's army from, possibly, irretrievable disaster. Lee's plan was that which he so often adopted with success: to assail one wing of the enemy—this time Grant's right—and while doing so to mass his forces on the enemy's other wing and overwhelm it. When night fell on the 5th, each commander knew that the next day's sun would rise on a great battle, and each prepared to take the offensive. Grant, whose plan was to use his preponderant numbers and attack along his whole line, prepared to move to the attack at five. Lee was so sure that Longstreet and Anderson would both be in place that the exhausted divisions of Wilcox and Heth had been told they would be withdrawn and their places taken by the fresh troops. Lee was obliged by Longstreet's absence to wait before advancing his right, and on the left, where Gordon was eagerly urging Ewell to give him permission to turn Grant's right, which he had discovered to be exposed, Ewell had felt compelled to refuse his assent and content himself with with-

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standing most of the day Sedgwick's fierce assaults. On the right Wilcox and Heth had not even replenished their ammunition chests and cartridge boxes, and when Hancock with his corps, Getty's division of Sedgwick's corps, and Wadsworth's division of the Fifth Corps attacked them in the early morning, the two Confederate divisions, unable to make an effectual resistance, were swept back in confusion. It looked as though Lee's right wing would be crushed. At this critical moment Longstreet arrived on the field. Whatever his dulness in preparation, or his sloth on the march, on the field of battle all his senses were quickened. As a fighter he had no superior in either army. Making his dispositions swiftly, he promptly threw his men across the space where the lines had given way and where men were now streaming to the rear, and, with Kershaw on the right of the Plank Road and Field on the left, pressed forward to meet the advancing Federals. The change was instant and complete, and as the fresh troops struck the long line of Hancock's men, who had supposed that they had overcome all opposition, they gave way under the shock and were pressed back to their original lines of intrenchment. The presence of Lee himself added to the ardor of the charge that swept back the advanc-

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ing Federal divisions and changed a reverse into a victory.

The Confederate commander must have felt during the early hours of the contest much more anxiety than he displayed, for the delay of Longstreet completely paralyzed his plans; and now as the troops advanced to the attack which was to re-establish his lines, Lee rode forward and put himself at their head. The effect was instantaneous. The cry arose, "General Lee, to the rear!" and as the men passed to the front he was called to, "Go back, General Lee; this is no place for you. Go back, we'll settle this." * And they did settle it. The lines of gray swept forward and Lee's broken line was re-established.

An account of this episode was given afterward by an eye-witness, General Lee's chief of artillery. After speaking of posting some guns in a clearing, he continues:

"All night Heth, Hill, and Wilcox remained at their posts in the thicket, with their men really under arms and not only ready for a night encounter, but occasionally exchanging shots with the enemy. By those guns I bivouacked that night and General Lee very near. Early next morning (the 6th) the fight was renewed by Hill

* Taylor's "Lee," p. 234.

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with his brave division commanders and their sternly enduring soldiers. Before long, however, they sent word to General Lee—by whose side I was on horseback—that they were much worn and even harder pressed than on the previous day, and must inevitably fall back if not reinforced. General Lee sent exhorting them to hold on and promising support; he also sent to hasten Longstreet to the rescue. . . . Not long after, our exhausted fellows came back in numbers and the occasion arrived for the grape from those guns to stem and shatter the hastening bluecoats. It was at this critical moment that General Lee, deeply anxious for the appearance of Longstreet's column, greeted a score or two of gray boys who rushed double-quick into the little opening occupied by our guns and ourselves. The general called out, 'Who are you, my boys?' They immediately cried out, 'Texas boys.' The general instantly lifted his hat and waved it round, exclaiming, 'Hurrah for Texas! Hurrah for Texas!' By this nearly a regiment had gathered, and at word from the general to form, they at once did so. The general placed himself at their left with the shout, 'Charge!' Many voices cried, 'General Lee, to the rear!' But he kept his place at the left, square up with the line, repeating with his

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thrilling tone, 'Charge, boys!' Then a tall gray-bearded man very near him stepped from the ranks and grasped the bridle of General Lee's horse near the bit and said to him respectfully, yet resolutely, 'General Lee, if you do not go back, we will not go forward.' The general yielded. But the gallant Texans sprang forward with a shout and the enemy's advance was driven back." *

Lee was not now able to carry out his plan as originally conceived. A reconnoissance to the right disclosed the fact that Hancock's left might be assailed with promise of good success, and of being turned by a movement around his extreme left south of the Plank Road. With R. H. Anderson's Division, now arrived on the field, added to his command, Longstreet attacked Hancock in front with three of his brigades (Gregg's, Benning's, and Laws's) and sent a strong force of four brigades under Mahone (G. T. Anderson's, of Field's Division; Mahone's, of R. H. Anderson's Division; Wofford's, of Kershaw's Division, and Davis's Brigade) to assail and turn his flank. "The movement was a success, as complete as it was brilliant." The enemy was swept from their front on the Plank Road, where his advantage of

* S. P. Lee's "Life of William N. Pendleton, D.D.," p. 326.

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position had been already felt by Lee's lines. The Plank Road was gained and the enemy's lines were bent back in much disorder. In the advance General Wadsworth, whose division, with that of Stevenson, had been fighting Field's Brigades on the north of the Plank Road, was mortally wounded and fell into the hands of the Confederates. The advance of the Confederates was impeded by the fire which had caught in the woods and was now raging furiously; but Hancock had been driven back nearly a mile to a second line of strong breast-works which had been erected along the Brock Road at right angles to the Plank Road.

Everything had gone in favor of the Confederates to this point, and now Lee prepared to dislodge Hancock by again turning his left. Longstreet, pressing his advantage, made his dispositions to turn his flank again while he threw against him his victorious brigades. His advanced brigades were already in action when again the same accident occurred that had befallen on the fatal 2d of May a year before in almost the same place and manner. Longstreet, riding along the Plank Road with his staff and a number of other officers to direct the advance of his ardent troops, received a volley that swept across the highway from a body of his own men lying in the woods less than

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a hundred yards away. The gallant Jenkins was killed outright and Longstreet was so badly wounded that he was borne from the field and was incapacitated for many months. To those who have studied the history of war it is not necessary to explain the fatal effects of the loss of a commander. In all history the story of battles is full of the tragic consequences of such a loss, from the time of Antony, in the moment of victory flinging a world away by turning his back on the field and following Cleopatra in her flight. The consequences that follow the relaxation of the commander's grasp are scarcely less dire in modern warfare. Three times already, as heretofore noted, the Southern armies had suffered from this far-reaching fatality—at Shiloh, at Seven Pines, at Chancellorsville, and now in the Wilderness—when the victorious soldiery of the South were sweeping forward in the full tide of victory with an ardor which would have been irresistible, the mind that directed them as one organic whole was suddenly removed; the carefully planned movement lost its directing force and the power that, continuously applied, would have been irresistible spent itself futilely in general but undirected application.

This catastrophe of Longstreet's wound and disablement brought to a stop a movement which

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bade fair to rival Jackson's famous flanking movement at Chancellorsville a year before. R. H. Anderson was assigned to the command of the First Corps, as Stuart had succeeded Jackson on the earlier field, and Mahone took Anderson's Division of Hill's Corps; but the time consumed was precious, and the impulse which might have swept Hancock from his stoutly held breastworks was lost. Portions of the line were carried, but time had been given to mass sufficient troops to retake and hold them. On Lee's left, Gordon having at last secured consent from Ewell to attempt a turning movement after Ewell had personally reconnoitred the ground and verified the report of the scouts that Grant's right was sufficiently exposed to promise good results, moved forward with three brigades about sunset, and, in a gallant attack, carried Sedgwick's lines, and, rolling back his right flank, drove him from his intrenched position for a mile, capturing some 600 prisoners, including two brigadier-generals, Seymour and Shaler.* It was, however, too late to accomplish more; and as darkness fell the combat died away in the thick tangles of the forest, each army glad to gain the merciful respite of the night's rest.

* W. H. Taylor's "Lee," p. 237.

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The darkness had settled down with Grant's lines driven back on both wings far beyond the points they had held in the morning, and with the Confederates attacking on both wings with marked success, while his army was decidedly shaken. Officers unsurpassed for gallantry found themselves in a maze of doubt as to what the morrow would bring forth. "If we do not die to-day we shall to-morrow," wrote a little later one who spoke for many others. But if the stoutest-hearted among them found cause for gloom, one heart had not quailed. As one of his generals rode up to Grant the following morning out of the confusion and gloom of the wretched night, he calmly called to him: "It is all right, Wilson; we will fight again."

That Grant had been terribly hammered, nearly all soldiers are agreed; that he had not in the least wavered in his resolution, is equally apparent. 17,666 men were his losses in these two days,* or, by Humphreys' reckoning, 15,380 men.

He had gotten a mauling that had cost him two men for one that his opponent had lost, and that would have put any one of his predecessors on the retreat; but he had not a tremor. He had calculated that he could afford to lose two men if his

* F. Lee's "Life of Lee," p. 322.

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hammering cost his antagonist one, and he would fight again.

What might have happened if Longstreet had been up when Lee struck Grant while his army was toiling through the narrow roads of the Wilderness, expecting to reach open country before forming line of battle, must be relegated to the gloomy sphere of the "might have been." Lee, opening the battle of the Wilderness when his opponent had three men for every one that he could put in his battle line, won the honors of one of the fiercest battles of the war and added new laurels to the chaplet of his imperishable renown.

Next day the two armies lay in each other's front, each strengthening his position as best he might and expecting the other to assault. As the Union commander was the aggressor, and had more than double Lee's force, the latter might well await his attack. Toward afternoon, however, it became known that Grant was moving his baggage-train covered by his heavy lines. It was believed by some in both armies that he was on the retreat for the Rappahannock. Lee's adjutant-general and military secretary recorded in his note-book a query as to this new general, adding that any one of his predecessors would have recrossed the river after such a defeat. Stuart,

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who was always alert, reported to Lee in the afternoon that Grant was moving his wagons toward Chancellorsville.* Lee alone divined that in moving, Grant would head, not for the north bank of the Rappahannock, but for the north bank of the James. All day he spent on his lines studying his enemy's designs, and, while his staff officers felt assured that Grant was fixed in their front, he penetrated his purpose with an infallible instinct. In wise anticipation of Grant's design, Stuart had already been sent to Spottsylvania Court House to guard the important roads which met there; and at nightfall Lee detached four brigades of Longstreet's Corps, now commanded in Longstreet's absence by R. H. Anderson, and sent them to this point, despatching with him his adjutant-general to apprise Stuart of the approach of the infantry. He was not a moment too soon. Grant had already formed his plan of withdrawing from Lee's front by night and, marching by the left flank, of seizing the strategic point of Spottsylvania Court House; and that night at 9 o'clock he began his march. So assured, indeed, was he of the successful execution of his movement that next day he sent his government a despatch speaking of it as though it were an already accomplished fact. He

* *Ibid.*, p. 333.

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“stated the positions to be occupied by his several corps at the end of the first day’s march, in which Warren’s corps was placed at Spottsylvania Court House.” But as Colonel Taylor, Lee’s adjutant-general, says in his “General Lee,” “Lee disarranged this part of the programme.”

Warren, marching for the Cross Roads at Spottsylvania Court House, found himself seriously delayed in the darkness by the staff and head-quarters equipment of Meade, as well as of the commanding general, which occupied the road ahead of him; and when he arrived within two or three miles of his destination he found Sheridan’s cavalry in his front, held back by Fitz Lee’s Cavalry, posted across the Brock Road and another road which joined it two miles from Spottsylvania. The gossip of the army was, that in an interview between Warren and Sheridan at this point were laid the seeds which were to bear such bitter fruit for Warren at the battle of Five Forks, nearly a year later. It is reported that Warren ordered Sheridan to get his men out of his way, and stated that if he could not drive the enemy from their front he (Warren) had men who could do it, a speech which offended Sheridan deeply. However this may have been, acting in accordance with this idea, Warren moved his men forward in

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line of battle and drove the Confederate cavalry from the position which they had hitherto held, driving them across an open field into the woods beyond it. Warren's line advanced across the field in pursuit, and when within a few score yards of the edge of the woods, found themselves unexpectedly facing Anderson's lines lying behind a fence on the edge of the woods, who suddenly poured into their faces a sheet of flame. Breaking under the shock, they were driven back across the field and along the Brock Road, and the lines were eventually established near this place in a wide crescent, with Lee's left and right resting on the Po and the coveted Cross Roads of Spottsylvania Court House well covered in the centre.

Humphreys pays General Fitz Lee the tribute of saying that he saved Spottsylvania that morning for General Lee. This is quite true. But General Lee saved it for the Southern Confederacy by the masterly ability with which he divined and met Grant's movement.

XVI

SPOTTSYLVANIA COURT HOUSE

THE lines of the two armies at Spottsylvania Court House were, says Humphreys, formed to hold the positions which each one occupied at the close of the fighting on the first day, the 8th. This accounts for the Salient.

About midway of Lee's line of fortifications, which on his left ran nearly eastward from the Po, lay a tract of rising ground about a half mile in width and from three-quarters of a mile to a mile in depth. Just back of it was a low bottom through which crept a small branch in front of a farm-house at the top of a gentle slope.* This rising ground appeared to command the ground in front of it, and in order to avoid the low ground and hold the elevation, the intrenchments suddenly swerved north-eastward for about three-quarters of a mile, following the conformation of the ground, then turned back at an angle and ran south-eastward for a distance of between three and four miles to the Po River. This space thus enclosed within the outjutting intrenchments came

* The McCool house.

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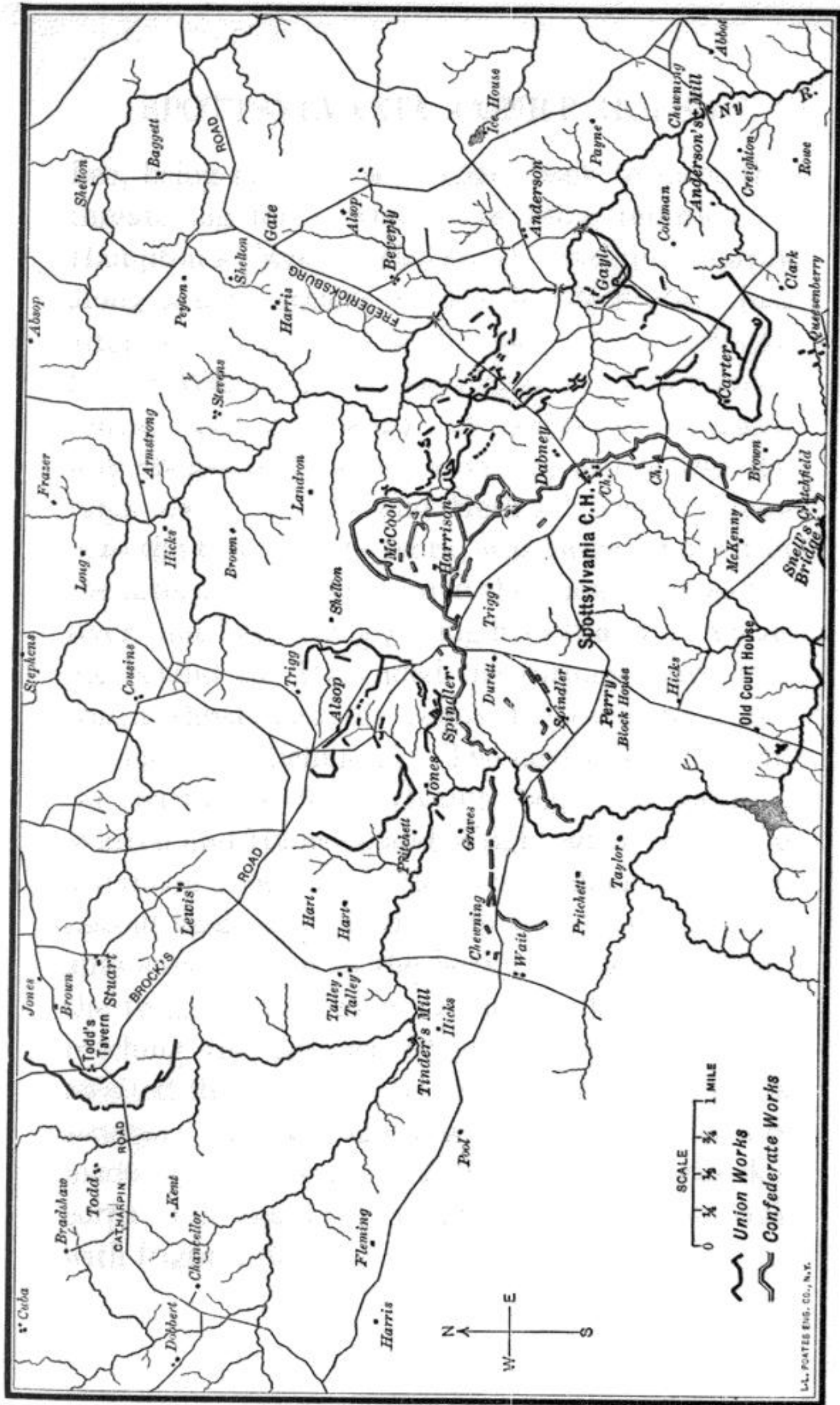
to be known later, when thousands of brave men had died for its possession, as the "Bloody Salient," or the "Bloody Angle." More properly, however, a crook in the western line near the apex of the Salient was the point known as the Bloody Angle. At a distance of two hundred yards or so on either side of the Salient was woodland which formed a protection for any force formed to attack it. Jutting out as it did for such a distance beyond the general direction of Lee's line, it was the weak point in the Confederate defences, and this Lee's eye detected the instant he arrived on the ground and rode along his lines as was his wont, and a second line of defences was run across this Salient. The lines of the Salient were, however, held on to. In Lee's dispositions Longstreet's Corps was on Lee's left, faced by the Fifth Corps (Warren's). Next to him came Ewell, his lines running north-eastward almost at right angles to Longstreet and embracing the Salient. At the apex they turned southward to join Hill, who defended Lee's right. Rodes's Division, of Ewell's Corps, occupied the west side of the Salient, with Johnson's Division next him holding the apex and the east side. Across the Salient about half-way to the apex was a second line of intrenchment, where Gordon was placed in reserve.

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Lee had outmarched and outgeneralled Grant so far, and had barred his way to the coveted point whence the roads led to Lee's own communications with Richmond. But Grant's preponderant force made the turning of his line always a danger to be met.

The next day, the 9th, was spent mainly in adjusting the lines and constructing fortifications, and except for the skirmishing between the lines, which was constant, and one movement to turn Lee's left, no fighting was done. The enemy, however, sustained a severe loss in the death of the gallant General Sedgwick, who in the skirmishing was shot on his lines at a fork on the Brock Road just after he had rallied a soldier for dodging the bullets of the sharpshooters and told him that they could not hit an elephant at that distance. The forces on both sides were working like beavers making intrenchments for the fight which all knew the morrow would bring.

Only one serious movement was undertaken this day. An effort was made on the afternoon of the 9th to turn Lee's left, and for this purpose Hancock was sent around across the Po with several divisions; but was unable to make much progress and waited for daylight to carry out his movement.



UNION AND CONFEDERATE WORKS AROUND SPOTTSVYANIA COURT HOUSE

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Lee, being notified, sent Early back to meet this threatening force, which was being retarded by Hampton's Cavalry, and Early, attacking sharply along a little stream known as Glade Run, just after two of the Federal divisions were withdrawn to aid Warren in a direct assault on Lee's left centre, moved forward. A stubborn resistance was offered by Barlow's division, which held the ridge above the Po, and Heth's Division, which bore the brunt of the work, was twice repulsed in the afternoon, but he drove the enemy across the river, and Lee, strengthening his left and intrenching behind the Po, ended the turning movement which threatened his communications with the railroad and Richmond. The next day, the 10th, the battle of Spottsylvania began in earnest. Warren and Hancock and Wright advanced in the afternoon about four o'clock in a gallant but futile assault against Lee's left; the whole line of assailants sweeping up to the heavy abatis in front of the trenches, and some of the assailants actually reaching the parapet where Longstreet's Corps awaited them, only to be shot down in the furious struggle. Three hours later another assault was made along this part of the line by Hancock's corps; but again the assailants were swept back with frightful loss.

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In another part of the line farther toward the centre the assault was for a time more successful. At the left of the Salient, above the intersection of the Brock Road and the Louisa Court House Road, where Doles's Brigade, of Rodes's Division, lay in what came afterward to be known as the "Bloody Angle," Upton's division, of the Sixth Corps, having formed in four lines behind a wood, made an assault under cover of a terrific fire from the Federal artillery, and sweeping over the breastworks, carried the line for several hundred yards, capturing a number of prisoners estimated at from 350 to 1,200, together with the guns of the battery defending that angle. Had the assailants been promptly supported as was ordered, the fight at this point might have been as renowned as was that which occurred two days later, when Hancock again carried the line of the Salient and for a time put Lee's army in such peril that Lee felt it necessary to place himself at the head of the troops sent in to recapture the line which had been broken. Upton, however, was not supported, and after a short time Gordon arrived from the second line, which he held as a reserve and, together with Battle's Brigade, Daniel's Brigade, and the remnant of Doles's Brigade, attacked the intruders, while Walker's Brigade attacked them in flank and

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recaptured the lost lines together with the guns and many prisoners. The total Federal loss on this day is set down by Federal authorities at something over 4,000 men, while the Confederate loss was about half that number.

The following day, the 11th, Grant, though still resolute in his belief that he could destroy Lee's army if he were but given men enough, must have begun to entertain some doubt, at least, as to the ease with which this destruction could be accomplished. On the 10th he sent a despatch to Washington, saying: "The enemy hold our front in very strong force and evince a strong determination to interpose between us and Richmond to the last. I shall take no backward steps. . . . We can maintain ourselves, at least, and in the end beat Lee's army, I believe. Send to Belle Plain all the infantry you can rake and scrape. . . ." This was far from the state of mind which declared that Lee's army was his objective. The next day he must have been in yet further doubt as to the manner of defeating his antagonist; for although his eulogists have declared that he never countermanded an order when once given, a statement in itself far from exact, on this day Burnside was first ordered to withdraw the Ninth Corps from the south side of the Ny; then was ordered to resume

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his position.* Later in the day such evidence was given of an attempt to turn the Confederate left that Early was ordered by Lee to take possession of Shady Grove by light next morning and hold it, a move necessary to protect the road to Louisa Court House, by which Lee secured his supplies. But during the night it was discovered that the real movement of the enemy was toward Lee's right, and Mahone's Division, with two brigades of Wilcox's Division, which had been sent with Early, were moved by Lee back to the right to meet this new movement.

Grant had, indeed, determined to repeat on a larger scale the attack on the outlying Salient which had so nearly succeeded and so signally failed on the evening of the 10th, and for this purpose he was massing his troops on both sides of the Salient under cover of the woods which stretched about it, with a view to making the assault next morning at daylight. In this he was favored by the fact that that evening Lee had received information that, added to the withdrawal of Burnside's Corps to the north of the Ny River, tended to show that Grant was preparing to repeat his manœuvre of moving by the left flank toward Richmond, and in consequence orders were given

* Humphreys' "Campaign in Virginia in '64 and '65."

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to withdraw the artillery from the Salient occupied by Johnson's Division, to have it available for a counter move to the right.*

In truth, Lee, intrenched across Grant's selected path to Richmond, was very difficult to dislodge, though he had little more than half as many men as Grant had in his front. Every effort which Grant had made to break his lines had failed disastrously, and whichever way he turned he found himself balked. As he had wired on the 10th for all the reinforcements that could be raked and scraped, even for 10,000 men from the defences of Washington, so on the 11th he wired again saying: "The arrival of reinforcements here will be very encouraging to the men, and I hope that they will be sent as fast as possible and in as great numbers." It was in this despatch that he declares, "I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer," a declaration which he found impossible to fulfil; for by the time the summer was half out he was in the trenches south of the James, having lost in fighting it out on this line as many men as Lee had in his army on any day since the campaign opened. Indeed, in this despatch Grant gives an idea of the terrible cost of the slight advance which he had made. "We have now," he

* Taylor's "Lee," p. 224.

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says, "ended the sixth day of very heavy fighting. The result to this time is much in our favor, but our losses have been heavy, as well as those of the enemy. We have lost to this time eleven general officers, killed, wounded, and missing, and probably 20,000 men." Had he waited until after the next day's battle at the "Bloody Angle" he might have added another 7,000 to the terrible tale, and had he waited but another six days, when he abandoned his efforts to destroy Lee at Spottsylvania, he must have given the dread score of killed, wounded, and missing at nearly twice 20,000 men. Lee's loss in the fight over the "Bloody Angle" he might have placed at possibly 10,000 men, including the prisoners taken. The numbers are so staggering that the mind fails to grasp the terrible truth that these were men and merely deals with them as ciphers, as Grant did in his despatch.

All the night of the 11th Grant was massing his troops, behind the screen of the darkness, about the top of the Salient, with a view to rushing it at dawn. Hancock led three of his divisions to the point, and staff officers were sent to Burnside to spur him to prompt action. Wright, who had succeeded Sedgwick in command of the Sixth Corps, was to give aid as needed. The movement

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in front of Lee's lines was not unnoticed, and Johnson sent word to return his artillery; which drew from General Lee the remark that his generals were sending different accounts, Early reporting that the enemy were moving around his left and Johnson that they were massing in his front. The guns were ordered back, but different artillery was sent, and the ground being unknown, it only reached the lines in time to be taken. The lines, indeed, were broken at the moment that the guns (Page's and Cutshaw's Battalions) were being wheeled in at a gallop. All but two of the twenty-two guns returned were captured, and only the two front guns got in a shot.* As the night fog lifted, out of the mist came something like 40,000 men sweeping forward, line after line, like the waves of the sea, enveloping the top of the Salient on all sides. Had Johnson's artillery been in place the result might have been different; but though the infantry poured a steady fire in their assailants' faces, the impulse was too great to be resisted. They swarmed over the breastworks in masses; the various commands mingled together, and inside the furious contest raged on with the men who held them to the last, many of whom

* These were Captain William Page Carter's guns. Letters of John W. Daniel, Robert M. Hunter, and A. W. Garber, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 26, 1905.

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were slain with the bayonet in the fierce hand-to-hand fight which ensued before they were overwhelmed and subdued. When the smoke cleared away the Federals were in possession of over a thousand yards of Lee's centre and had captured some 4,000 men, including Major-General Edward Johnson and Brigadier-General George H. Steuart, and twenty guns. It looked as though Lee's army were cut in two by a force fully equal to the destruction of both fragments. But this army was composed of the best fighting men of the South and was captained by one who, like Napoleon, left nothing to chance. Across the base of the Angle thus seized, another line of intrenchments had been thrown to meet precisely such an emergency, and here Gordon was posted in reserve. During the night he, on hearing that the enemy were massing to assault the line, had sent Pegram's Brigade to Johnson, and as soon as the firing began he sent R. H. Johnston forward only to be met by the onrush of Hancock's troops as they swept on down the interior of the Salient. Withdrawing Pegram's and Evans's Brigades to the cover of his reserve intrenchments, he reformed them and led them forward to recover the lost ground. It was at this critical moment, when the fate of his army appeared to hang in the balance, that Lee

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in person appeared on the scene and rode forward to place himself at the head of his men. Riding to the head of the column forming for the charge he took off his hat and pointed to the captured line. The cry was instantaneous from general and men: "Go to the rear, General Lee!" Lee, still determined, held his place; when Gordon appealed to his men. "Is it necessary," he demanded, "for General Lee to lead this charge?" "No! no!" they shouted; "we will drive them back if General Lee will go to the rear." And rushing forward they made good their word. Their first attack fell on Hancock's left, on the east side of the Salient, which they cleared after a bitter struggle, recapturing (for a time) some of the lost guns. At the same time Rodes was sending forward Daniel's and Ramseur's Brigades to clear the west side of the Salient. This also was done, though with immense losses, and for much of the time the enemy held the reverse side of the fortifications, the Confederates the inner side, the fight now being hand to hand; at other times the men firing at each other point-blank through the crevices of the logs which formed the fortifications. General Daniel was killed; General Ramseur was badly wounded. Two of Mahone's Brigades, Perrin's and Harris's, now came in on Ramseur's right, and

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one of Wilcox's Brigades (McGowan's) came up also. Perrin and McGowan both were shot soon after getting on the ground, the former being killed, the latter seriously wounded. From this time the fighting continued with unabated fury, and, indeed, ferocity; all through the day and on into the night until it ceased from the sheer exhaustion of the combatants. Meantime, while Hancock's and Burnside's corps were contending over the bloody Salient, under Grant's orders one of Burnside's divisions (Potter's) had attacked and captured a portion of Hill's line on Lee's right, held by Lane's Brigade, and, with the line, two guns. Lane, however, rallied his men and, reinforced by two of Wilcox's Brigades, and Doles's Brigade, promptly recaptured the fortifications and the guns, and pressing back the enemy, made good his line. Then with a view to relieving Ewell to the westward, they pushed on, driving Potter's troops before them, capturing a battery of six guns and many prisoners, until Lane found himself in front of a large force of the enemy advancing in two lines, when he retired to his lines without being able to bring off the guns. These advancing lines were Willcox's division, of Burnside's corps. Grant's plan was to press an advance along his whole line, and while the fight

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raged about the bloody Salient, where Sedgwick's old corps, Hancock's corps, and much of Burnside's corps were struggling to break through Lee's centre, Warren was ordered to attack Anderson's line, where Longstreet's men lay guarding Lee's left. Two assaults were made, after "Warren had opened all his guns," in a heavy fire on the lines, the men of the Fifth Corps advancing gallantly under a hail of lead and iron; but they were repulsed with heavy loss, and in a short time "a furious fusillade" broke out between two Federal brigades who, by mistake, attacked each other in the woods. Next, Warren was ordered to the west face of the Salient; but at the last moment it was given up. Lee's line, broken in the centre by the sheer weight of numbers in the dim dawn, had been reformed and held intact throughout the long day against an assault whose fury and duration were unknown in the annals of war. The fighting is said to have been more continuously fierce and deadly than in any battle of the war. For seventeen hours on a stretch a sleet of musketry swept the ground in front of the contending lines, gnawing down forest trees and eating away the fortifications in a leaden storm. The dead in the trenches had to be lifted out time and again to make room for the living who took their places

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only to follow them and be lifted out in turn by those who followed them. It is not a question of who was bravest where all were brave. Nearly 6,000 brave men fell that day on each side. It was the supreme proof of American constancy. On the Southern side two brigadier-generals were killed, four were severely wounded, and one major-general and one brigadier-general were captured.

When morning dawned on the 13th Lee had established his line across the base of the Salient and still presented to Grant an unbroken front resting as before on the Po and guarding the roads to his line of communication. But he had lost nearly 10,000 men.

Lee having thwarted Grant's earnest and costly attempt to break through his lines, it was determined by the latter to try an assault on Lee's right, and at the same time assault his centre again with the Second and Ninth Corps, Hancock's and Burnside's. Accordingly, Warren and Wright were on the night of the 13th moved across opposite to where Hill held Lee's right, to open the attack next morning at daybreak. Lee, however, had brought Mahone from his left to support Hill. Again that power of divining what his opponent would attempt came to his aid, and when the enemy appeared in increased force on his right

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he was prepared to meet them. When Upton's brigade occupied a high and commanding point on the south side of the Ny, Lee had Mahone's Division (Wright's Brigade) in place ready to support his cavalry and dislodge him. Grant now tried approaches, and for three days gave himself up to advancing his intrenchments and establishing batteries for another assault, and on the night of the 17th Hancock's and Wright's corps were ordered back to their old lines under cover of darkness in the hope that Lee's left and left centre, denuded to strengthen his right, might be carried by a coup. But there, too, Lee was ready for them, and though the attack was made at daylight as planned and was pressed for hours by three corps of the Army of the Potomac, aided by their powerful artillery, they were met with a fire "which completely swept the ground in front," and the only result of the assault was to swell the already appalling roster of the dead and wounded by over 2,000 men.

Grant, balked in his effort to break Lee's line of defences, at last gave it up and planned once more to do that which he had once declared he never did—manceuvre. Orders were issued to move by the left flank on the night of the 19th to the south-west; but Lee, again suspecting him,

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sent Ewell forward around Grant's right to demonstrate and learn his intentions, which was effectually accomplished, Kershaw holding Ewell's lines while the latter was feeling the enemy, and Ewell making such a threatening attack that Hancock and Warren, who were already headed south, were forced to send troops back on the double-quick, and Grant's plan was broken up for at least that day.

Thus ended the famous battles of the Wilderness and Spottsylvania Court House, with Lee's army of half the size of his opponent's assuming the offensive after two weeks of such fighting as the American continent had never hitherto witnessed. The latter's losses had been over 32,000 killed and wounded. Lee's losses are not known, but were heavy enough. "The Confederate losses," says Alexander, "can never be accurately known for any of the battles from now until the close of the war, as few reports could be made in such active campaigns. Livermore's estimates give 17,250 for the same battles, the missing not included." *

Three facts stand forth pre-eminently during this deadly campaign: Lee's genius, Grant's resolution, and the infinite courage of the officers and men on both sides.

* Alexander's "Memoirs," p. 529.

XVII

NORTH ANNA AND SECOND COLD HARBOR

WHILE the death struggle was going on day after day in the Spottsylvania forests between Lee and Grant, a struggle was going on elsewhere in Virginia both to the north and south of the main battle-ground, yet which was intimately connected therewith. Sigel, whose part in Grant's general scheme to compass Lee's destruction was to sweep through the valley of Virginia and destroy not only the source of Lee's supplies, but the Virginia Central Railway, his line of communication therewith, was approaching Staunton with a force of 5,500 men when he was met and defeated at Newmarket, on the 15th of May, by Breckinridge with a force of 5,000 men. It was in this battle that the Cadet Corps of the Virginia Military Institute achieved fame by marching forward under fire as if on parade, dressing on their colors while shot and shell tore through their ranks, recalling, in their coolness and undaunted gallantry, the *Gants Glassés* at the siege of Rethel.

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Meantime Lee had to bear the burden of the defence of Richmond from attack in another direction. To the southward, on the day following Grant's move toward the James, another part of Grant's plan was attempted, with, if possible, more signal failure. At City Point, where the Appomattox empties into the James, lay General B. F. Butler with the Army of the James, two army corps, the Tenth and the Eighteenth, and a division of cavalry, in all some 38,600 officers and men, and 88 guns.* General Butler had been "instructed by General Grant that Richmond was his objective point," that he was to "move at the same time with the Army of the Potomac, take City Point and that vicinity, . . . operate on the south side of the James, . . . and that his army and the Army of the Potomac were to co-operate. . . . Should Lee fall back upon Richmond, the Army of the Potomac would unite with the Army of the James. . . . If he should be able to invest Richmond on the south side, so as to rest his left upon the James above the city, the junction of the armies would preferably take place there." † Should he learn that the Army of the Potomac was advancing on Richmond, he was to "attack

* Humphreys' "Campaign in Virginia in '64 and '65," p. 137.

† *Ibid.*, p. 138.

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vigorously"; and if he should not be able to carry the city, he would, at least, be able "to detain a considerable force of the enemy there." It was all very well conceived and, up to the actual execution, well carried out.

Butler, under these orders to co-operate with Grant, had moved on Richmond by way of the James on the same day (May 4) that Grant moved by way of the Wilderness. On the 5th, the same day that Lee struck Grant in the Wilderness, he reached Bermuda Hundred, twenty miles below Richmond, under cover of an imposing fleet of war vessels; and next day he advanced to within two miles and a half of the Richmond and Petersburg Railway, only six miles from Petersburg and sixteen from Richmond. An attempt to reach this railway line was defeated by a South Carolina brigade which was opportunely halted there on its way to Richmond by General Pickett, who was in charge of the defence of Petersburg, until relieved by Beauregard, when he was summoned from South Carolina for the defence of Richmond. At this time Petersburg was substantially ungarrisoned. Pickett had there but one regiment, and to the south-east, along the Blackwater, a part of Clingman's Brigade of North Carolinians, stationed there to contest any ad-

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vance from Suffolk; so completely had the south side been stripped to enable Lee to hold Grant back.

The next few days were spent by Butler in attempting to establish his lines near Richmond and to cut the railways both north and south of Petersburg. The destruction of the bridges south of Petersburg by the Federal cavalry delayed the troops being brought up from the South by Beauregard; but those whom he secured proved sufficient. By the time that Butler made his serious attack on Petersburg, Beauregard had got together some 20,000 men. At this time, however, when Butler first appeared, Beauregard had in Petersburg only Wise's Brigade, some 2,500 men, to which were later added Martin's Brigade and Dearing's Cavalry. On the 12th of May, the same day that saw the terrific battle over the "Bloody Angle" at Spottsylvania, Butler set out to turn Beauregard's right and to destroy him utterly. Advancing up the James he sent his cavalry to destroy the two railways from Richmond to the South, and he himself prepared to dislodge Beauregard, intrenched along a line between Drewry's Bluff and Petersburg, while he called on Admiral Lee, in command of the fleet, to ascend the river and keep pace with his advance. An attack on the intrenchments was repulsed, after

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which Beauregard withdrew to his inner intrenchments. Butler now thought that everything was going favorably and planned to attack next day with his whole army, but for some reason deferred the attack till the 16th. But a better soldier than Butler was commanding the force opposite to him, inferior in numbers as it was. The defences of Richmond and Petersburg had been laid out by masters of the science of fortification, at whose head was one equally the master of the science of fortifications and of their defence. So long as a thousand men to the mile to defend them could be found they were impregnable. Thus, when Butler attacked the defences of Petersburg, Beauregard was not only ready to defend them, but to assume the offensive. "General Butler," says the same high Union authority on whose studies so much of the history of this campaign has been based, "could not assault Drewry's Bluff intrenchments; he could not move to turn them, and he could not fall back to his Bermuda Hundred lines or to a new position on the river without abandoning his campaign against Richmond with the Army of the James. In other words, he was completely paralyzed so far as concerned offensive operations."*

* *Ibid.*, p. 149.

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Thus, when, on the morning of the 16th, Butler was preparing to destroy Beauregard, Beauregard forestalled him, and, having formed his men during the "sma' hours" of the night, at daybreak made an attack with Ransom's Division and two of Hoke's Brigades on Butler's right that shattered not only his dream of conquest, but, after a fierce contest of an hour's duration, carried the right of Butler's breastworks held by Heckman's brigade, of General Baldy Smith's corps, capturing the brigadier, many prisoners, and five stands of colors. The fight along the centre and right was more obstinately contested; but eventually Gillmore, who commanded there, was forced out of his intrenchments, having, he says, been ordered to retire and reinforce General Baldy Smith, who was being driven back and hard pressed. A dense fog which had fallen toward morning and enveloped everything doubtless contributed to the surprise of Smith's lines; but it also confused the advancing Confederates, who had to be halted and realigned. And the failure of Whiting to come up on the right from Petersburg with his two brigades, as he had been ordered to do, marred Beauregard's plan and prevented as complete a rout of Butler's army as he had anticipated. Yet, it was sufficiently complete. It saved Peters-

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burg, and for the rest of the month, Butler, who retreated that night to his Bermuda Hundred intrenchments, was "hemmed in" where he could not menace Richmond further; or, to use Grant's expressive phrase, was bottled up as tightly as if he had been corked up in a bottle. He had lost in the battle 3,500 men, 5 guns, and 5 stands of colors, while Beauregard had lost some 2,200 men. Butler lost, besides, pretty much whatever reputation as a general he had previously retained. Grant, on learning of his failure to accomplish anything, ordered him to forward to him, by way of the James and the York, under General Baldy Smith, all troops except enough to hold his position; and on the 29th, Smith left by water for West Point, on the York, with 16,000 men to join the Army of the Potomac, which he did in time to be one of the sufferers at Cold Harbor. Butler retained some 14,000 men, but so little was he considered that Beauregard sent Lee, under the latter's orders, more than half of his command.

Having failed in his plan to destroy Lee's army, Grant now moved by the left flank nearer to Richmond, with the design, says Humphreys, of drawing him into a battle in the open country before he could occupy and fortify a new position; or, if this trap should fail, of marching on and mak-

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ing a successful turning movement and throwing his army between Lee and Richmond. With this in view, Hancock's corps was moved on the night of the 20th to Guinea Station, on the Richmond and Fredericksburg Railway, and thence to Bowling Green and Milford Station, in the direction of Richmond; Warren's corps was moved on the 21st in the same direction; Burnside's corps was to follow, taking the Telegraph Road, the most direct of the highways; and Wright's corps was to follow last; the whole army being headed for Hanover Junction, beyond the North Anna River, only twenty-five miles from Richmond. The plan was an excellent one and its execution began duly on time. That it did not come to a successful conclusion was due solely to Lee's generalship. Watchful as ever, the enemy had no sooner begun to move than Lee moved also, and though Grant had the start and lay nearer the North Anna, Lee outstripped him for the goal. When the head of Grant's columns arrived in sight of the North Anna, there on the other side lay Lee's army across his path.

On the first intimation that Grant was withdrawing from his front, Lee had moved Ewell to his right; and when Burnside, marching for the North Anna, reached the Po, there on the south

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bank across the Telegraph Road lay Jackson's old corps to contest his way. It was not an inviting prospect, and the Ninth Corps was turned aside and followed Hancock's line by the more round-about way by Guinea and Milford.

Lee's transfer of his army on this occasion from Grant's rear to his front was one of the most skilful manœuvres of the war. He was not one to be caught in the trap which had been so carefully set. He let no man select a battle-ground on which to whip him. If adverse fate brought him there, he made the best of it; but no man was able to lure him to his destruction. He had no idea of becoming enmeshed in an engagement with Grant on disadvantageous terms, and in this race for the North Anna, while the Army of the Potomac rested, the Army of Northern Virginia marched. Hancock was across the Mattaponi at Milford, nearly half way to the North Anna, on the morning of the 21st, when the skirmishers of Grant's other corps pressed up to Lee's intrenchments at Spottsylvania to find him still there. When Hancock arrived at the North Anna, Lee was intrenched across his road. He had marched from Spottsylvania with only two hours' rest. All the afternoon and night of the 21st his army was marching parallel with Grant's army, reso-

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lute to gain the strong position of the South Anna. Warren's outposts heard the rumble of guns and trains all night long on the Telegraph Road; and when Warren, on the 22d, reached the Telegraph Road, the rear of Longstreet's Corps was only four miles ahead of him. Lee's cavalry kept in touch with the advancing Federals on every road throughout the entire march.

Lee, who was with the front of Ewells' Corps, having, on the morning of the 22d, reached Hanover Junction, where the two railways from Richmond to Fredericksburg and to Gordonsville and the south-west crossed each other, telegraphed his arrival to the government in Richmond, which was in some anxiety over the situation. Breckinridge, having defeated Sigel at Newmarket on the 15th, had been ordered to Hanover Junction, where he arrived on the 20th, and was awaiting Lee with some 2,500 men; and Pickett's Division and Hoke's Brigade, Colonel Lewis commanding, had been ordered from before Petersburg to join him. As Anderson and Hill came up, the former that evening, the latter next morning, Lee made his dispositions. Ewell was placed on his right, resting on the south bank of the North Anna, commanding a crossing some three miles below the railway; Hill, with Pickett's Division, some

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5,000 men which had been sent by Beauregard, commanding south of Richmond, to meet Lee at Hanover Junction, was on Lee's left, extending from the North Anna south-westward across the Virginia Central Railway to Little River, near Newmarket, three or four miles away, the two lines forming a wide angle, with the blunt apex resting on the North Anna for nearly a mile, commanding the Telegraph Road and the Oxford Crossings, the former a half a mile or more above the Richmond and Fredericksburg Railway bridge, the latter two miles or so above it where the North Anna runs between high bluffs. The next afternoon Warren's corps crossed the North Anna at a ford at Jericho Mills, opposite Noel's Station, on the Virginia Central Railway, about five miles above the Telegraph Road bridge, and was promptly attacked by Hill as he was deploying in line of battle and his line driven back on his artillery. Next morning the Sixth Corps followed the Fifth, which intrenched on the ground occupied above the river. That afternoon Hancock's corps reached the river by the Telegraph Road and after a spirited fight drove off the bridge guard posted on the north side of this stream. Burnside's corps also reached the river by the Telegraph Road, but failed to effect a crossing at the Oxford, as Grant

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had planned. That night Lee withdrew his advanced line and, holding the line along the river on the bluff above Oxford, occupied the fortifications extending from above the Oxford along the bluff and then south-eastwardly across the railway, where he had prepared to deliver his attack on Grant's wings, while he held back his centre beyond the river at the Oxford. Burnside was ordered on the 24th to carry the crossing of the river in his front, the Oxford; but although two divisions were thrown across the river higher up with a view to menacing the Oxford, it was found that Lee's disposition had been too well made to be successfully challenged. And that night Grant, having failed to make good his crossing, turned his back on Lee's intrenchments and withdrawing his wings, already across on the right and left, marched down the river to a point twenty-odd miles below that at which Lee had offered battle. It is said that Grant declared that this night, when with his wings beyond the North Anna he found himself unable to connect them, was the most uneasy night of the war. In his report he simply says that, finding Lee in a position stronger than either of the two previous ones he had occupied, he abandoned his intention to attack him there and crossed the Pamunkey at Hanover town

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below the junction of the confluent of the Pamunkey, and some thirty miles below Hanover Junction, with the design, as he stated to Washington, of turning Lee's position by his right.

Lee wrote his wife from Hanover Junction on the 23d: "General Grant, having apparently grown tired of forcing his passage through, began, on the night of the 20th, to move around our right toward Bowling Green, placing the Mattapony River between us. Fearing he might unite with Sheridan and make a sudden and rapid move upon Richmond, I determined to march to this point so as to be in striking distance of Richmond and be able to intercept him. The army is now south of the North Anna. We have the advantage of being nearer our supplies and less liable to have our communication trains, etc., cut by his cavalry. Still I begrudge every step he takes toward Richmond."

Lee's position was, indeed, a strong one, and it was a soldierly instinct of a high order that had led him to occupy it. Burnside was the object of considerable animadversion for not forcing a passage at the Oxford, as Hancock had done at the Telegraph Road. In fact, Lee's position above the Oxford was impregnable and no force could have carried it. The fortifications along the bluff

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and across the plateau are there to-day to show how Lee placed his army like a wedge between the lines which Grant chose for his two wings. With these wings on one side of the river and the centre on the other side it was a serious position which the Army of the Potomac occupied from the 23d to the 26th, and but for one of those strange fatalities which appeared to visit the Southern arms, Grant's divided wings might have found it fatal. It happened that Lee was suddenly struck down by an attack of what would now be probably termed ptomaine poisoning. And at the moment when he was about to reap the benefit of his masterly disposition he was prostrated in his tent and the opportunity passed. His adjutant-general tells how, as he lay in his tent, he kept murmuring in his feverish half-delirium, "We must strike them! we must strike them! They must never be allowed to pass us again." But the occasion was lost, and when Lee was able to leave his bed, Grant was crossing the Pamunkey, twenty-odd miles below the point where he had declined Lee's offer of battle.

On the afternoon of the 28th of May the greater part of Grant's army crossed the Pamunkey—at the ferries about Hanover town, some thirty miles below Hanover Junction and seventeen miles

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from Richmond—and took position across the roads leading to the Confederate capital. But once more Lee placed himself across his path. On the evening of that day Lee's army, having marched twenty-four miles since morning, took position between Grant's army and Richmond, covering those roads from the Chickahominy almost to Hanover Court House. It was the fourth time in the great manœuvres that Lee had headed Grant and forced him to fight for the line he had selected; and as before, so now, Lee had chosen his line of defence. It was already historic ground, for two years before, almost to a day, Lee had won his first victory over McClellan along the uplands above Beaver Dam Creek and Cold Harbor; and to reach Richmond Grant must pass across this historic field. Lee's cavalry, under Fitz Lee, Hampton, and Butler, had been sent to keep touch with the enemy should he advance directly toward Richmond; and on the 28th, as Sheridan moved forward along the Richmond Road in advance of Grant's corps to find what difficulties were in the way, he came on the Confederate cavalry dismounted and holding the road near Haw's shop, eight miles or so north-east of Richmond. A sharp engagement ensued which lasted until near nightfall, when the Confederate cav-

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alry, being heavily outnumbered, fell back. But so fierce had been the fight that Sheridan reported them as having been supported by a brigade of 4,000 South Carolinians armed with long-range rifles.

On the 26th, as he retired from before Lee on the South Anna, Grant, in explaining to Washington this retrograde movement, added that "Lee's army is really whipped." He was now to learn how wide this view was of the fact. He had manoeuvred Lee out of his defensive position on the South Anna only to find him across his path on the Chickahominy. Lee had posted on his right, resting on Beaver Dam Creek, Longstreet's Corps, which owing to Longstreet's wound was still commanded by Anderson; Ewell's Corps (Early commanding, as Ewell was ill) came next; and on his left, with their front protected partly by the head branches of Totopotomoy Creek and the impenetrable thickets through which they run, were posted Hill's Corps and Breckinridge's command, extending westward across the Virginia Central Railway, a mile or so north of Atlee Station. Opposite Lee, at first, on Grant's right, were the Sixth Corps; the Second Corps (Hancock's) next; the Fifth Corps (Warren's), with Wilson's cavalry on Grant's right wing and the rest of Sheridan's

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cavalry guarding his left wing, while Burnside's corps (the Ninth) was held in reserve. Grant had received already in reinforcements some 30,000 men, and was expecting some 16,000 more under General William F. ("Baldy") Smith. These men, whom he had ordered from Butler's army at Bermuda Hundred on the 28th, when he had reason to fear that Lee had again flung himself across his path, were on their way to him by the York River route. His army numbered now—before Smith's arrival, which took place on the 30th—not less than 110,000 men. Lee had received, since crossing the North Anna, reinforcements composed of Breckinridge's command from south-west Virginia, 2,500 men; Pickett's Division of Longstreet's Corps, 5,000 men; and lastly, Hoke's Division, 5,000 men, which joined him on the night of the 28th at Cold Harbor. His army now numbered about 60,000 men.

The next few days were spent in skirmishing and feeling the opposite force and in laying off the lines for the pitched battle which each commander knew was imminent. Grant's lines on his right extended a good distance beyond Lee's left, and on the 30th Wright's and Hancock's corps were ordered to try to turn Lee's left; but failed to reach the point necessary, owing, it is stated, to the im-

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passable character of the swamps and thickets in their course. Burnside's and Warren's corps were pushed forward at the same time (Warren on the left), but came on Early intrenched beyond a swampy bottom and were stopped. As the enemy were also extending toward his right, General Lee now sent Early to his right to stop it and moved Anderson to the right to take his place, thus keeping steadily ahead of Grant. Early was moved over to the Mechanicsville Road, and, advancing beyond Grant's left, encountered one of Warren's brigades moving forward, and Rodes's Division, sent forward in a charge, drove them back to the cover of their artillery, which stopped the pursuit. Next day Grant threatened to attack all along the line; but Lee's front appeared too perilous, and beyond a cavalry fight at the cross-roads at old Cold Harbor, in which Sheridan pressed Fitz Lee back, the day was mainly occupied in general skirmishing and strengthening lines. Lee now moved Anderson further to his right beyond Early, thus extending his lines southward to keep pace with Grant's manifest side-stepping toward the Chickahominy and Richmond. Heavy skirmishing went on every day.

Grant, so far balked, now began to direct his attention to securing the important point where

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various roads to Richmond and the lower James intersected, and for this purpose he ordered the Sixth Corps from his right to move by night to Cold Harbor to relieve Sheridan. Lee countered by moving Longstreet farther to the right, and Hoke yet farther. Lee was still too ill to mount his horse; but he rode along his lines in a little carriage, so great was the exigency of the situation.* That afternoon, the 1st of May, the battle of "Second Cold Harbor" really began. The Sixth Corps, supported by the newly arrived troops under General Baldy Smith, made an attack along the road leading westward from old Cold Harbor to Richmond, and broke through where Hoke, on Lee's extreme right, extended beyond Kershaw, of Longstreet's Corps, with an interval between them. Happily, Hunton's Brigade, of Pickett's Division, was near by, and marching promptly to Hoke's aid, the lost ground was quickly recovered, while Kershaw, on Hoke's left, recovered the lost ground on his right and connected with Hoke in a new line. Humphreys places the losses in the Sixth and Sixteenth Corps in this encounter at 3,300 killed and wounded. The Confederate losses were also heavy.

That afternoon the force opposite Lee's right

* "Life of General William N. Pendleton," by S. P. Lee, p. 337.

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was ordered to be increased by Hancock's corps, which marched by night from its position opposite Lee's left; but on arrival near old Cold Harbor the troops were too much broken down to engage, so the assault on Lee's right was deferred till late in the afternoon, and then was again deferred until daylight of the 3d. When daylight came Lee was ready for this, as he had been for Grant's former assaults. Anticipating the enemy's plan to attack his right, Lee, on the 2d, met Grant's move by extending his line south to the Chickahominy. He that morning sent Breckinridge and Hill with two of his divisions to his right, while Fitz Lee was sent across the Chickahominy to picket the roads on that side should Grant attempt to cross to the south side. The armies now lay in line of battle opposite each other for the final struggle on "this line," ranged as follows: On Lee's right, Wilcox's and Mahone's Divisions of Hill's Corps; then Breckinridge. Next came Longstreet's Corps, Kershaw with three brigades of Field's Division, and, on the left, Early with Heth's Division extended to the Shady Grove Church Road and beyond. On the Federal side, Hancock was now opposite Lee's right; next to him Wright (the Sixth Corps); then Smith with the Eighteenth Corps; then Warren (the Fifth

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Corps); and Burnside (the Ninth Corps) was in support of Warren. On Grant's right flank was his cavalry, while on Lee's left, opposite them, was his cavalry, except Fitz Lee's Division, which was beyond the Chickahominy. The whole line was some six miles long, with Grant overlapping Lee's left with his preponderant numbers. Both sides, officers and men alike, knew that the next day was to see a decisive battle, for both sides knew well that Grant was still resolved to fight it out on this line, and he was now at the end of the line. Officers passing among the Union troops found them sewing their names and addresses on their coats. Like the Spartans at Thermopylæ, they were preparing to die.

It was barely light on the 3d of June when Grant's left and centre, three full corps, moved from their breastworks and advanced against Lee's right and centre; Hancock, Baldy Smith, and Wright all moving in concert and rushing forward along a line extending nearly six miles from left to right. Grant had selected the region of Cold Harbor for his attack, because, it is said, he thought that if Lee attempted in his retreat to cross the Chickahominy he would be in a perilous position.*

He was now to discover his mistake, and at

* Humphreys' "Campaign in Virginia in '64 and '65," p. 181.

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what a terrible cost! The attack made by his army was gallant and desperate. Beginning with Hancock's left, where Barlow's veteran division led the way with a rush which swept over Lee's first line, and extending to where, far to the northward, Burnside was attacking Early beyond the Shady Grove Church Road, it continued until more men had been mowed down by the leaden sleet from Lee's steadfast lines than fell in the same time during the war. They were simply slaughtered along a stretch of nearly six miles. They were again and again sent forward only to be mercilessly torn to pieces by the lines of flame which swept them from front and oblique till flesh and blood could stand no more, and the gallant Army of the Potomac quailed and lay still in face of the order to charge again. Finally Grant and Meade both saw that it was a hopeless task to set and gave orders to desist; but not until, for the first time possibly in the history of that brave army, officers and men had throughout a long line failed to respond to an order to advance. Late in the evening, as Lee reported next day, one more attempt, "final but furious," was made to carry the position where Breckinridge and Hoke were establishing their skirmish line, but "the enemy was soon repulsed." Thus ended the furious bat-

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tle of Second Cold Harbor; for though Grant attempted to reach Lee's lines later it was not by assaulting again, but by approaches only, and by the 11th he knew that this move also was hopeless and was planning to cross to the south side of the James and effect what Butler had failed to accomplish—the capture of Petersburg.

Grant's account of this last battle on his chosen line was hardly sufficient. He dismisses in a sentence the bloodiest and most signal defeat he had ever suffered. "On the 3d of June we again assaulted the enemy's works in the hope of driving him from his position. In this attempt our loss was heavy, while that of the enemy, I have reason to believe, was comparatively light." This was hardly an adequate historical statement of a battle in which over 110,000 men were totally defeated by an army of less than 60,000, with a loss to the former of over 8,000 men and to the latter of less than 1,000 men. The number of casualties in the Army of Northern Virginia during this period, from the 27th of May to the 12th of June, are nowhere stated. Humphreys conjecturally places the killed and wounded at between three and four thousand, the missing at a thousand more.* The Federal losses from June 1

* *Ibid.*, p. 192.

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to June 3, inclusive, Humphreys gives at 12,970. McParlin, in "The Medical and Surgical History of the War," places Grant's losses, from the time he crossed the Pamunkey till he left Cold Harbor, at 17,129.* Whichever figure be correct, Grant's losses had been prodigious, and unless it be conceded that this sacrifice of more than three men for one of his opponent's was the only method by which Grant could achieve his end, the future historian is likely to revert to the judgment of the time when Grant lost 60,000 men in thirty days—that it was not good generalship. The harsh name given it then was "butchery."

In fact, Cold Harbor was one of the most signal and disastrous failures in the history of the war. Even Humphreys, usually so open and complete, fails to convey the least idea of the absolute and disastrous defeat to which Grant had led his brave army. Grant declared long afterward that Cold Harbor was the only battle of the war which he would not fight over again under the same circumstances. This was but a tardy and incomplete admission of defeat. He was defeated and, with the summer but begun, he was forced to abandon "this line" on which he had boasted three weeks before that he would fight it out if it

* *Ibid.*, p. 191 and note.

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took all summer. Lee with but half his force had outgeneralled him; within one month had destroyed over 40,000 men, the flower of his army, and on this day, when Grant had declared him whipped, he added to the dread tale over 8,000 more, and so shattered the confidence of his government in Grant that gold went to the highest point it had ever reached during the war. Instead of Lee's retreating across the Chickahominy, as Grant had planned, Grant, a little over a week later, on the 12th, moved secretly by night away from Lee's front, and by a distant and roundabout route took his army to the James, which he obstructed by sinking boats in the channel above him, and then by night on the 14th moved his army across the river. His move was skilfully executed, but, though it was inspired by a constant mind and an indomitable will, it was certainly not the act of a victor. He crossed the James with the hope of capturing Petersburg by a coup, only to be again defeated by Lee, and to be held off until he had lost another 60,000 men and Lee had succumbed, not to his generalship, as determined and resourceful as he was, but to the forces which undermined the power of the Confederate Government to furnish Lee with subsistence for his army.

XVIII

LEE'S STRATEGY AND THE FIRST ATTACK ON PETERSBURG

LEE not only defeated Grant at Cold Harbor, but a little later, with Grant still before him, he did what Grant was vainly endeavoring to prevent. He sent Hampton and Fitz Lee off after Sheridan, who was marching on Charlottesville, expecting to meet Hunter there; sent Breckinridge back to the valley of Virginia to intercept Hunter; and sent Early with his corps to cut off Hunter, who was marching down the valley, his course marked by the embers of burning mansions and the evidences of such ruthless destruction that even Halleck protested. It is said that at least forty of his officers declared that they would resign before executing Hunter's orders. Moreover, before this, Lee himself assumed the offensive, and, on both the 6th and 7th of June, sent Early around to attempt a turning movement against Grant's right, which failed to attain any success mainly because of the impassable nature of the region of swamps and tangled thickets on which Burnside's right rested. "The Slashes of

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Hanover" were not designed for the manœuvring of troops.

The detachment of Breckinridge and Early to meet Hunter in the valley of Virginia was forced on Lee by the exigency of the situation.

On the defeat of Sigel at Newmarket by Breckinridge, General David Hunter, a Virginian by birth, with a force of some 20,000 men, after Crook and Averell joined him at Staunton, had been sent up the valley of Virginia to sweep it clean and to capture Staunton, on the Virginia Central Railway; Lynchburg, the junction point of two railways from Richmond to the South-west; and Charlottesville, the junction point of the Virginia Central Railway and the railway to Lynchburg and the South-west. Having accomplished this, Hunter was to march on down the Virginia Central Railway, destroying it as he advanced, and join the Army of the Potomac before Richmond. He had performed the first part of his grateful task. He had swept the valley clean enough to realize Grant's subsequent suggestion, quoted by Halleck, that crows flying over it for the rest of the season should be forced to carry their provender.* He had defeated, on June 5, at Piedmont, a dozen miles north of Staunton, a force

* War Records, series I, vol. XXXVII, part 2, p. 366.

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consisting of Jones's, Vaughan's, and Imboden's Brigades, the gallant Jones being killed in the engagement; he had captured Staunton, and learning that Breckinridge with the force which he had defeated at Piedmont was posted at Waynesboro guarding the gap in the Blue Ridge on the road to Charlottesville, he had marched on toward Lynchburg through Lexington, where he had burned the Virginia Military Institute (the institution where Stonewall Jackson taught before the war), the professors' houses, and the mansion of Governor Letcher, and he was now supposed to be on his victorious and blazing way to Charlottesville en route to Richmond. Lee determined to stop this fiery progress. Accordingly he first sent Breckinridge back to the valley and then, learning that Sheridan had been sent to meet Hunter and aid in the destruction of the Virginia Central Railway toward Charlottesville, he, on the 8th of June, sent after him Hampton's and Fitz Lee's cavalry divisions; and on the 12th of June he ordered Early to follow Hunter and, if possible, destroy him and then march on Washington, as Stonewall Jackson had done in 1862. Thus, Lee, with Grant intrenched before him, had reduced his army by the 2,500 men sent with Breckinridge and 8,000 men sent with Early, besides his two

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cavalry divisions. It was an exhibition of serene confidence rarely equalled during the war.

It must be remembered that at this time Grant still lay in front of Lee with an army nearly if not quite double Lee's; for it was not until the night of the 12th that Grant began to withdraw his army from the trenches at Cold Harbor. One is scarcely more impressed by the exigency that called for such a sacrifice on Lee's part or the unhesitating courage with which he accepted the situation.

It should be said before leaving the matter that both Early and Hampton were completely successful in the tasks assigned them. Hampton set out after Sheridan, and intercepting him at Trevillian's Station, about ten miles from Gordonsville, fought a sharp battle with him, in which, though at first flanked and driven back with the loss of many men, he was joined by Fitz Lee, and next day drove Sheridan back, defeating him, with a decidedly greater loss than he had himself suffered and rendering his mission completely abortive.

Early, on his part, having reached Charlottesville, embarked his corps on the cars, and at Lynchburg defeated Hunter's plan, and pursuing him, drove him, with the loss of many men, into

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West Virginia, after which Early was sent by Lee down the valley to threaten Washington.

On the night of the 12th of June, as darkness fell, Grant began to withdraw his troops from his lines at Cold Harbor to cross to the south side of the James, having on the 11th moved Warren's corps to the rear, to a new line of intrenchments, to cover his move. His crossing-place was so far down the river that the crossing was effected without the interruption which a more direct crossing would have provoked. It was some thirty miles below Lee's lines. The nearest crossing-point on the Chickahominy was fifteen miles below Cold Harbor, the most distant twenty-four miles. Thence he marched across to the James, to cross which he constructed a pontoon bridge at Windmill Point where it was easily protected by his fleet, having sunk vessels in the channel above, opposite Butler's Bermuda Hundred intrenchments; and by means of this pontoon bridge and of ferry-boats, all his army except Smith's corps were transferred to the south side by midnight of the 16th. This corps was sent back the way it had come—by boat from the White House. His design was to effect what Butler had failed to accomplish a month before: capture Petersburg by a coup before Beauregard could be reinforced by

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Lee, which he felt sure of being able to do, as it was garrisoned at the moment only by Wise's Brigade of less than 2,500 men. If he had not in mind also the possibility of seizing Richmond by a dash up the north side of the James, between that river and the Chickahominy, it was because the last month had taught him that his long-tried method was hopeless, and Lee was too alert and able to be thus passed. Certain historians of the war write as though Grant's Wilderness campaign were a great feat of generalship and a harmonious part of a comprehensive plan wisely preconceived and successfully executed as planned, resulting in the complete, if costly, destruction of Lee's army. This is far from the fact, and is due to a confusion of ideas, a portion of which had their origin in events which transpired long after Grant was forced to abandon the line on which he had proposed to fight it out if it took all summer. That Grant eventually compassed the destruction of Lee's army with the never adequately recognized aid of the navy no one would deny; but in this destruction the campaign of May, 1864, bore but a subordinate part. The destruction of Lee's army was mainly due to Grant's work after he crossed to the south side of the James, and to extraneous causes in which Grant's generalship

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bore a commanding part, but with which his Wilderness campaign had less to do than had the campaigns beyond the Alleghanies. Grant had sacrificed 60,000 men in a month's fighting and was only where he might have been without the loss of a man. The policy of attrition, if not created afterward, had not, up to this time at least, worked successfully. Lee's army was still unshaken by his hammering, and had in the last battle given him the most terrible hammering he had ever received. So this was clearly not the way to capture Richmond.

Had he attempted its capture again from the north side, Lee was prepared again to fling himself between him and Richmond on that side, as later he did on the south side.

Lee knew on the morning of the 13th that Grant was crossing the Chickahominy, and he himself at once crossed to the south side, and, advancing across the White Oak Swamp, over which he had pursued McClellan, posted himself across the neck between the Chickahominy and the James, extending from White Oak Swamp to Malvern Hill, where he intrenched, covering the roads to Richmond. In front of Hill on Lee's left was Warren, with whom there was sharp fighting, resulting in his being driven from Riddell's Shop by Hill,

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leaving many dead and prisoners behind him.* In front of that portion of Lee's left where Anderson was posted was Wilson's Cavalry.

Grant's plan, however, was to keep Lee occupied on the north side of the James, and, crossing to the south side, seize Petersburg by a dash before Lee could interpose. And for this purpose General "Baldy" Smith, who had arrived at City Point from the White House with the Eighteenth Corps on the night of the 14th, was ordered to move at daylight next morning on Petersburg (the outer works guarding which were about six miles distant), his force being increased by a negro division and Butler's cavalry, the whole some 17,000 men. At the same time orders were given to Hancock, who crossed the James that same night (14th), to move on Petersburg as soon as his command received their rations, and, when these were delayed, to march without rations by the nearest route, which he did. The plan was well conceived and gave abundant promise of success. But the Federal generals had not reckoned on the ability of their opponent.

The regular troops at this time (June 15) in the Petersburg trenches, besides some artillery in the redoubts, were only Wise's Brigade, 2,600 men,

* Lee's despatch to Beauregard, June 17.

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and Dearing's Cavalry; whatever other force was there was a home guard. The situation appeared to Grant and Meade, as it appears now to every one else, to be such that the two corps should have walked over the defensive force with ease. But so brave was the defence made when Smith and Kautz attacked the Confederate lines, and so wholesome was the respect inspired in Grant's army by their last thirty days' experience of Lee's army, that the Federal officers in charge of the movement were made to believe that a strong force confronted them, and instead of assaulting at once, sent for reinforcements and wasted the hours in reconnoissances. When at last, about sunset, the attack was made, the outer defences were carried and 16 guns and 200 prisoners were captured in them. Beauregard, being almost without troops, had appealed to Lee on the 14th for aid. Lee, however, at this time felt that he must protect Richmond against the peril of Grant's attempting to march on it on the north side of the James, where the main portion of his army still remained. But on the morning of the 15th, Lee sent Hoke's Division back to Beauregard, from whom he had taken it on the eve of Cold Harbor. It arrived that night and took position on the lines where Wise's Brigade was posted.

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Its presence was worth more than could have been hoped for. The news that Lee's army was moving to Petersburg held Smith tight in his captured redans, he preferring to hold what he had to attempting to gain more and "have the troops meet disaster." But the danger was still imminent. That night Beauregard withdrew a division (Johnson's) from his Bermuda Hundred intrenchments before Butler to strengthen his lines before Petersburg, and notified Lee, who promptly moved Pickett's and Field's Divisions across the river to occupy the lines the other troops had left, which were then held only by Gracie's Brigade. These divisions arrived in time to retake the works there from Terry, who had advanced and seized them in the morning. On the 17th, when the Sixth Corps had crossed the river, Grant sent them to hold these lines; but when they arrived Beauregard held them with Pickett and Field and Gracie, and Lee had again balked him.

Much has been said of the fact that Lee did not know, as late as the afternoon of the 16th, that Grant's army had crossed to the south side of the James, and that even on the 17th he was not sure where Grant's army was. On the 15th, the Sixth Corps was still on the Peninsula in Lee's front, and the few roads leading up through the swamps

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and forest to the south of the Chickahominy were strongly held by cavalry, so that to one who knows the country it causes less surprise that information was lacking. On Lee rested the responsibility of protecting Richmond, and though he telegraphed Beauregard that he could not "strip the north bank," he sent him troops at his need, and whatever his mystification may have been, both Richmond and Petersburg were saved.

Grant, having failed to seize Petersburg by a coup, was now resolved to capture it by assault. It was believed that the force occupying it was not large, and ample means were employed, as was considered, to secure it. Beauregard's occupied lines extended in a curve before Petersburg, at first easterly, then southerly, some five miles. Beyond his right the defences ran westwardly from the Jerusalem Plank Road to the Appomattox, about five miles; but this stretch was wholly unoccupied save by cavalry pickets. Against this line, manned for but half its length, Grant, on the 16th, flung the weight of three of his army corps (the Second, the Ninth, and the Eighteenth), capturing four redoubts, and the following morning at daylight he assaulted again, this time adding the Fifth Corps to the others. Surprising the troops in the outer trenches, who were asleep in

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their exhaustion, the assailants swept over the first lines. But although they carried the outer lines, they got little farther. All day long, at one point or another, along Beauregard's second line, from the Appomattox to the Norfolk Railroad, Grant's crack divisions poured out their blood, only to be kept off or driven out if they made a momentary lodgement. When night fell, the ground in front of the Confederate lines was thick with the dead, and the defenders were piled high in the trenches; but Beauregard's lines were intact, and Lee, satisfied now that Grant could not attack Richmond from the Peninsula side, was hastening to his lieutenant's aid with the rest of the Army of Northern Virginia. That night Beauregard withdrew from the trenches he had defended so well to contract his lines, and throwing up new intrenchments several hundred yards to the rear awaited the renewal of the storm. It broke at daylight. The Second Corps, and the Ninth, were thrown against Beauregard's newly constructed defences, while the second division of the Sixth Corps and a division of the Eighteenth were held in reserve. Meade knew that the line occupied by Beauregard was hastily intrenched. Moreover, he had learned the numbers of Beauregard's force, and the assault was made with

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confidence. But he had not counted on the constancy of the men in those hasty intrenchments. And when the assault was made Lee had brought up Anderson's Corps and the divisions of Kershaw and Field, and Hill's Corps was on the way pushing hot-footed for the point where Grant's gallant troops were being thrown against Beauregard's steadfast lines only to be broken like the waves of the sea against the impregnable rocks. It was a repetition of Spottsylvania and Cold Harbor. All day long the assaults came, like the billows of the advancing tide, only to recede again, until, as evening fell, even the iron Grant grew weary of attempting the impossible and withdrew his shattered divisions to the shelter of his fortifications. Meade had informed him that Lee's army had arrived, and Grant knew that his most desperate assault would be in vain. His assault on Petersburg in the first three days of his occupancy of the south side of the James had cost him over 10,500 men. And he had failed. That night Lee held the lines which substantially he held till the end, ten months later, when the gallant Army of Northern Virginia, from causes, of which Grant's persistent hammering was but one, had almost perished from the earth.

Lee knew that Grant, having failed in his direct

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assault, would now endeavor with his superior numbers to extend his lines westward beyond Lee's lines, with the object of not only investing Petersburg on the south, but of reaching the railways which led from Richmond south and formed the lines of communication over which supplies and troops were brought from the Southern States. Also that his first move would be to reach the Petersburg and Weldon Railroad, which running due south from Petersburg connected this city and Richmond with the Southern States and such important seaports as Wilmington and Savannah, the most essential of the ports from which blockade-running could still be successfully carried on. Accordingly, Lee was on the watch, and when, on the 21st, Grant (or Meade) sent the Ninth and Fifth Corps toward the Jerusalem Plank Road and moved the Second and Sixth Corps beyond their lines toward the Petersburg and Weldon Railroad, Lee was ready for him, and as the Second Corps (now commanded by Birney, Hancock having been disabled on the 16th) marched westward beyond the Sixth Corps, A. P. Hill, who had been sent down the Richmond and Weldon Railway to foil the attempt, directed Wilcox's Division against the Sixth Corps, while with Mahone's and Bradley Johnson's Divisions he fell on Birney's flank and

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rolled back his corps in the utmost confusion, capturing some 1,700 men, 4 guns, and several colors. The attack was completely successful; but Lee was compelled by the comparative smallness of his army to withdraw Hill again that night to his original lines, and Grant was able later to extend his lines to within a mile and a half of the railroad.

This unsuccessful attempt to seize the railway to the south was followed by an attempt to destroy it and the other roads southward by means of a cavalry raid. On the 22d of June General James H. Wilson, a gallant and enterprising officer, set out on a raid southward, crossed the Petersburg and Weldon road, and moving toward Burkeville Junction, where the lines to Lynchburg and Danville crossed, destroyed both railways. Moving south-westwardly, he was brought to a halt at the Staunton River—the upper reach of the Roanoke—where the bridge was stoutly defended by the home guard and where a part of W. H. F. Lee's Division of cavalry attacked him in the rear. Unable to cross the river, he was forced to abandon his raid and head for the main army at Petersburg by a roundabout route. At Stony Creek, some thirty miles from Petersburg, he was attacked by Hampton, and his command

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was cut in two, and at Reams's Station, on the 29th, when within ten miles of Petersburg, he was caught between Fitz Lee's command and Mahone's Division, which had been sent down the railway to cut him off. Here, nearly surrounded, he was forced to destroy his wagons and caissons and retreat southward again with his main force across the Nottaway River, while Kautz, making a sweep around in the other direction, gained the shelter of the Federal lines only after losing his guns. Two days later, after being in the saddle almost continuously, Wilson himself was able to reach shelter likewise, his total losses having been 1,500 men and 12 guns.

The commonly accepted idea of the effect of this campaign on Grant's reputation as a general at this time is one that has been taken from subsequent events and is utterly erroneous. The simple fact is that when Grant's costly failure to capture Richmond was succeeded by his costly failure to capture Petersburg, the nation was utterly staggered. So much blood and money for nothing was something that they could not accept calmly. Happily for the Union cause, Mr. Lincoln and his war secretary had flung everything into the scale for the Union, and realizing that whatever the cost might be they had in Grant a

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resolute fighter, they were as resolute as their general. But the country was not so undivided in its views, and Grant himself, possibly, came nearer meeting the fate of his unfortunate predecessors than is usually understood. A wail of anguish and of rage went up throughout the country. Dissensions arose among the officers of the Army of the Potomac, and crimination and recrimination went on, which did not cease till long after the war. General W. F. Smith and General Butler became involved in a quarrel, and although Grant declared that the latter was clearly in the wrong and, at first, asked that he be relieved from active command, after a mysterious interview with Butler he retracted his request, and a short time later General "Baldy" Smith himself was relieved, while Butler was allowed to retain his active command.*

From this time the history of Lee and his gallant army is the history of the siege of Petersburg, with one week at the end occupied in the retreat to Appomattox. It is one of the most glorious chapters in a history which has few parallels in the records of war either for valor or fortitude. For Grant was at his best in these months of resolute and unremitting pressure and hammering with all

* Rhodes's "History of the United States," IV, p. 509, note.

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the men and equipment that the United States could furnish, and yet Lee's army held them at bay through ten long months and until his ranks had thinned to less than one thousand men to the mile along over thirty-five miles of lines. Lee had now to defend both Richmond and Petersburg, and his lines when completed extended from White Oak Swamp near its junction with the Chickahominy, eight miles north of the James, to Hatcher's Run, where the Claiborne Road crossed it five or six miles south-west of Petersburg—the whole making thirty-seven miles, including the lines on either bank of the James at Drewry's and Chaffin's Bluffs.

Had Lee been allowed to march his army southward and unite or co-operate with Johnson's army, which was retiring before Sherman, the entire field of the war might have been changed. Sherman would certainly not have reached the sea, and the final issue of the struggle might have been different. But this plan, though suggested by some others, if not by Lee, could not be accepted by the Confederate authorities. The political consequences of the loss of Richmond and the abandonment of Virginia were too serious to be contemplated, and Lee was compelled by the exigencies of the Confederate Government to maintain the defence of

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Richmond while the forces of the Confederacy were destroyed in detail.

Grant, rendered more cautious than he had been hitherto by the great outcry over his terrible losses, began now to attempt the reduction of Petersburg—which is but another way of saying the reduction of Richmond—by approaches.*

This was precisely what McClellan had proposed to do two years previously; but the conditions were now widely different. At that time the government at Washington was in a panicky condition and distrusted McClellan as much as they feared Lee and Jackson. The defeat of the Union army in the valley of the Shenandoah was sufficient to set them to clamoring for McClellan to come to their rescue—to do something which would relieve them from their peril. Now, however, Washington was fully defended, and experience had taught them that though the glow of his camp-fires might light the skies above the South Mountains or flame on the hills of the upper Cumberland, Lee himself could not capture it. They had learned from their general the arithmetical problem that if three men attack one, though two fall in destroying him, the third remains, and they were putting the problem to a practical test.

* Humphreys' "Campaign in Virginia in '64 and '65," p. 247.

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The country was mourning over the dreadful carnage of the Wilderness battles and their yet deadlier successors of Cold Harbor and Petersburg; but the government was firm. Its reply to the cry of anguish throughout the land was to call for another draft from its inexhaustible resources of men and treasure.

Lee was under no misapprehension as to the magnitude and desperateness of the struggle before him. He knew as well as Grant the answer to the arithmetical problem which the latter was working out along his lines in his process of exchanging two men for one on the field of battle; he knew as well as Grant the inevitable result of the continued destruction of the railway lines which formed his lines of communication; he knew, as possibly no one else did, that time and time again his gallant army was within two days of starvation. Richmond was hung like a millstone about his neck, and he could not seek the as yet undevastated regions to the southward. Nor could he deal with Grant as he had dealt with McClellan, and, leaving a small force in his front, lead his army to victory against the defensive forces of Washington. Grant was far too resolute and bold for him to attempt with him the daring strategy that had won Second Manassas

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and recalled McClellan from the gates of Richmond. Lee had gone to the extreme of boldness in sending Early off to stop the marching and burning of Hunter, while Grant lay within a dozen miles of Richmond, and only his knowledge of the staggering defeat he had inflicted on his bold antagonist at Cold Harbor can account for it. Now, in the face of Grant's next attack, he plans the only strategy left to him. Early had learned at Charlottesville that Hunter had burnt his way through the valley of Virginia and was now approaching Lynchburg, on the upper James. Lynchburg was his home, and its danger fired him to extraordinary activity. Putting his men on the train at Charlottesville, Early hastened to Lynchburg and reached there in time, on the 17th of June, to balk Hunter of his coveted prize and drive him out of Virginia into West Virginia. So rapid had been Early's march that he was on Hunter before the latter knew of his arrival, and Hunter's retreat was little less than a flight. On the 18th, the day Lee moved the main body of his army to the south side of the James to confront Grant in his attempt to possess himself of the southern gateway of Richmond, Lee sent a despatch to Early at Lynchburg, informing him of Grant's movement on Petersburg and directing him to "strike

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as quick as you can, and, if circumstances authorize, carry out the original plan."* This was to threaten Washington.

Early, finding Hunter gone on the morning of the 19th, pursued him into South-western Virginia, capturing, at Salem, a number of guns and caissons, and driving him at "headlong speed" beyond the mountains into the Kanawha Valley, putting him in such peril that Grant sent him a despatch to "save his army" as best he could. Having thus cleared the valley of Virginia of this menace, Early turned back to carry out Lee's strategy. Passing through Lexington and Staunton, he swept down the valley straight for Washington. It was Jackson's old corps, or what remained of it, and they knew the valley of the Shenandoah as a fox knows his covert. But not even in Jackson's day, when they had earned the title of "foot cavalry," had they made much better time.

Leaving Staunton on the 28th of June, in such light-marching trim that even officers of rank were allowed to take only one extra suit of underclothing, the Second Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia was at Winchester on the 2d of July. Here Early received instructions from Lee "to

* S. P. Lee's "Life of William N. Pendleton," p. 360.

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remain in the lower valley until fully prepared to cross the Potomac and meanwhile to wreck the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and the canal.”* This task he accomplished by burning the bridges and destroying the railroad to within five miles of Harper’s Ferry, to the heights above which Sigel had retreated after being driven out of Martinsburg, with the loss of many valuable stores.

This strongly fortified position — Maryland Heights—commanded Harper’s Ferry, and Lee’s plan to relieve the pressure at Richmond did not admit of delay. So, after a demonstration against the place by Rodes and Ramseur, Early, having crossed the river at Shepherdstown, after burning such stores at Harper’s Ferry as he had not been able to send back, moved on beyond the South Mountains toward Frederick, his army passing on the way the scene of their former heroic struggle on the field of Sharpsburg.

On the morning of the 9th he was at Frederick, and that afternoon he attacked and routed General Lew Wallace at Monocacy Junction, where the latter had posted himself with some 6,000 troops to protect the important railway bridge at that point and to cover the roads to Washington and Baltimore. Having driven Wallace, with a

* Pond’s “Shenandoah Valley in 1864,” p. 47.

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loss of some 2,000 men, toward Baltimore, Early turned toward Washington, marching with a celerity which recalled and rivalled Stonewall Jackson. He encamped that night about four miles north of Rockville, having marched his whole army twenty miles that day, and a portion of it thirty miles.* By daylight next morning he was again on the march, pushing forward toward Washington, and before noon his advance guard was in sight of the dome of the Capitol. Three hours later he was in line of battle before the defences of Washington. But it was already too late to attack with his jaded force, with any hope of success, the powerful defences of the national capital manned as they were. One of his brigades (Bradley T. Johnson's) had been sent off toward Baltimore to try to release the prisoners confined at Point Lookout and to destroy the railway leading from the north, and Early's force before the capital did not exceed over 9,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry, while the forces garrisoning Washington and its immediate vicinity consisted of some 20,000 effectives, including 4,400 veteran reserves, who were on the afternoon of the 11th reinforced by two divisions of the Sixth Corps, under Major General Wright, sent from Peters-

* Early's report; Pond's "Shenandoah Valley in 1864," p. 67.

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burg by Grant, and by a portion of the Nineteenth Corps, which had just arrived from New Orleans. A demonstration was, indeed, made against the lines running west from Fort Stevens, on the Seventh Street Road, to Rock Creek, in which the Federal skirmishers were driven into their works; but Early, having satisfied himself that the garrison of Washington had been too strongly reinforced from Virginia for him to attack with safety, after lying in front of the city, at Crystal Spring, all day of the 13th and skirmishing sharply with Getty's division, withdrew that night to Darnestown, beyond Rockville, and on the morning of the 14th, having been rejoined by his foraging parties, recrossed the Potomac at White's Ferry.

Many conjectures have been made as to whether Early could have captured Washington. A full discussion of the question is beyond the scope of this volume; but to the writer it appears now, as it appeared then to those most charged with the responsibility on either side, that had Early attempted to enter Washington he would not only have been defeated, but would probably have lost his army. The conditions that summer were peculiar. In Eastern Virginia no rain fell from the 3d of June to the 23d of July; in Maryland the conditions were substantially the same. When

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Early arrived in front of Washington, it was after days of forced marching through heat so exhausting that his men fell by the wayside by hundreds, and to have entered the city it would have been necessary not only to capture defences on which the best military science of the world had been lavished, manned by a force possibly half as large again as his own, to which were added, in full time to have met him, the reinforcements of two divisions from the Sixth Corps and of one from the Nineteenth, but to march on to Washington, six miles away, through broken country well defended by these forces.

Early's own report gives his reasons for not attempting an assault, and he is borne out by the statements of all who were with him. He says: "The day [the 10th] was very hot and the roads exceedingly dusty, but we marched thirty miles. On the morning of the 11th we continued the march, but the day was so excessively hot, even at a very early hour in the morning, and the dust was so dense, that many of the men fell by the way, and it became necessary to slacken our pace. Nevertheless, when we reached the enemy's fortifications, the men were completely exhausted, and not in a condition to make an attack. . . . I determined to make an assault, but before it could

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be made it became apparent that the enemy had been strongly reinforced. . . . After consultation with my division commanders, I became satisfied that the assault, even if successful, would be attended with such great sacrifice as would insure the destruction of my whole force before the victory could have been made available, and if unsuccessful would necessarily have resulted in the loss of the whole force."

The capture of Washington was probably never a part of Lee's scheme when he despatched Early from Lynchburg to threaten the capital of the United States. His plan seems to have been to repeat the strategy of 1862, and by a menace of the national capital cause the raising of the siege of Richmond. The possibility of an attack on Washington itself probably occurred to Early first after the defeat of Lew Wallace at Monocacy Bridge.

If, however, when he recrossed the Potomac, Early's campaign in the valley of the Shenandoah had neither resulted in the capture of Washington nor in the withdrawal of Grant from before Petersburg and Richmond, it had accomplished everything else which Lee had planned, and had completely justified Lee's masterly strategy. It had cleared the valley of Virginia of Hunter's army and enabled the farmers of that fruitful land to

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reap their crops in peace; and it had shown the world that the idea that Lee's army was almost annihilated was so far from being sound that it could hold the combined armies of Meade and Butler at bay, drive Hunter in headlong retreat from the valley of Virginia, and, sweeping across into Maryland, could roll its drums at the very gates of the national capital. It is not too much to say that it so disheartened the North and enheartened the South that it probably prolonged the contest by six months.

It illustrated Lee's bold strategy that on the heels of a determined movement which Grant made on the north side of the James, Lee, learning that his opponent had detached cavalry and infantry to Washington, promptly detached on his side R. H. Anderson with infantry and cavalry to observe their movements.* It also illustrated the desperate need of the Confederacy that he should have been compelled to weaken his army before Grant at such a time. This force, after stopping for a short time at Culpeper, joined Early and remained with him till the middle of September, when Lee, under Grant's persistent hammering, found it necessary to recall the infantry to his own aid, leaving only Fitz Lee's Cavalry along the Shenandoah.

* Lee's despatch to Early, August 8.

XIX

THE SIEGE OF PETERSBURG AND RICHMOND

THE remainder of the Petersburg campaign, though forming one of the most glorious chapters in the title to renown of Lee and of the Army of Northern Virginia, was, in the words of the President of the Confederacy, "too sad to be patiently considered." Locked in his fortifications, with Richmond hung like a millstone about his neck, while the South was cut off piecemeal from possibility of contributing to his support, and his gallant army, like an overused blade, was being worn to a shadow by the attrition of continued battling, Lee, faithful to his trust, and obedient to the laws, put aside whatever personal views he might have held and continued to handle the situation with supreme skill. Before that army succumbed it had added to Grant's casualty list from the time he crossed the James another sixty-odd thousand men, thus doubling the ghastly record of his losses.

It is curious to note from the records of the time how utterly dependent the two contesting governments were on their commanding generals.

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Halleck's despatches to Grant from the Union War Office display an almost pitiful dependence on Grant. Again and again he writes assuring him that he "awaits his instructions." On the 4th of August he notifies him that he can give no instruction to Hunter or Sheridan till Grant decides on their commands. "I await your orders," he adds, "and shall strictly carry them out, whatever they may be." And, indeed, Grant appears to be the one firm, clear-headed, practical man in all the muddle of conflicting ambitions and confused orders. "This man Grant grows on me," Mr. Lincoln had said a year or more before—"he fights." It was the one solution of the problem—to fight and keep on, no matter at what cost, till the other side should be exhausted. Grant recognized it and acted on it. Happily for the Union cause, Grant was the commanding general of all the armies of the Union. Unhappily for the Confederate cause, Lee had not been given similar power. As dependent as was the cause of the South on his genius, the military command was still reserved in the hands of the civil authorities. He could not even appoint his chief of staff.

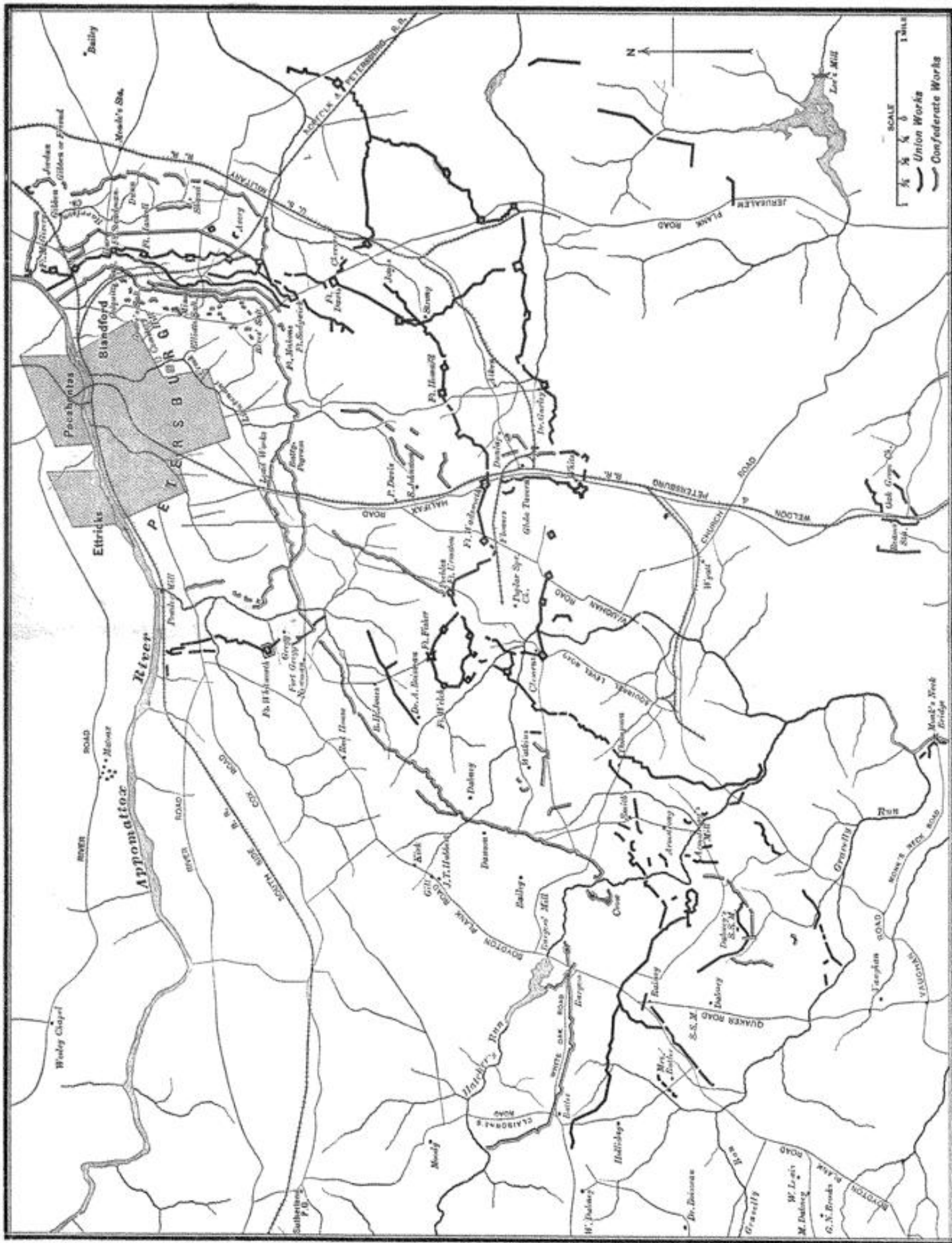
Lee's strategy in despatching Early against Washington gave him relief for some time, and deferred for months the seizure of Petersburg.

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The detachment of the Sixth Corps from the Army of the Potomac to defend Washington forced Grant to withdraw his left to the Jerusalem Plank Road from the position formerly occupied, menacing the Petersburg and Weldon Railroad. Instead, therefore, of Grant's cutting the railway by which Lee received supplies, Lee was now cutting the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Early's cavalry raiders were threatening the Cumberland Valley, while his main body lay just beyond the Potomac. Chaos reigned about Washington, and early in August, after suggesting Franklin, Meade, and one or two other commanders for the somewhat disorganized forces guarding the capital, Grant sent his young and energetic chief of cavalry, General Philip H. Sheridan, to take over the command in that region. A discussion of the remainder of Early's campaign in detail is not within the proper scope of this volume.

Sheridan's army, with the Sixth and Nineteenth Corps and General Crock's force, known as "The Army of West Virginia," numbered, present for duty on September 10, including Averell's cavalry, 48,000 troops. Early had at Winchester 14,000. After holding Sheridan in check for many weeks, Early was defeated by him at Winchester on September 19, and was again attacked and defeated

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UNION AND CONFEDERATE WORKS AROUND PETERSBURG

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at Fisher's Hill on the 22d, Sheridan outnumbering him on each occasion nearly three to one. Being reinforced by Kershaw's Division, Cutshaw's Artillery, and Rosser's Cavalry, Early now assumed the offensive, and advanced against Sheridan, who retired to Cedar Creek. Here Early, on October 19, surprised and at first defeated his army, capturing his camp; but instead of pursuing his advantage, he allowed his men to get out of hand, and while they were looting the captured camp, Sheridan rallied his men, and attacking in turn, completely defeated him, and almost destroyed his army. Meantime, Grant made a determined and threatening effort to possess himself of both Richmond and Petersburg by a bold and secret expedient. His lines on the north side of the James extended, as has been stated, across the Peninsula between the James and the Chickahominy, to within some seven or eight miles of Richmond, the lines on either side of the James being connected by his pontoon bridges, so situated that he could readily transfer his forces from one side to the other as he desired with both secrecy and despatch. His plan now was to transfer secretly the Second Corps and his cavalry to the north side of the James and to make a concerted attempt to seize Richmond on that side at the

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same time that he attempted to break through Lee's lines before Petersburg. It had been suggested by General Potter, the commander of one of his Pennsylvania brigades, composed largely of miners, that his men could run a mine under one of Lee's forts and blow it up. Accordingly, in preparation for the assault at Petersburg, mining operations had been going on for a month between the lines, the objective point being what was known as Elliott's Salient, a point some two hundred yards in front of Burnside's corps, to the east of Petersburg. The mine had been discovered on the Southern side, and some effort had been made at countermining; but this had been abandoned and intrenchments had been thrown up across "the gorge of the Salient, at which the mine was apparently directed." It had even been intimated in the press that this mine was being run. The mine was ready on the 23d or 24th of July, and just before exploding it, an attempt at an assault was made on the north side of the James, as stated, to compel Lee to thin his lines before Petersburg. Lee was not misled by it, as has been supposed; but it was necessary to meet the movement.* On the night of the 26th of July

* Letter of General William N. Pendleton, July 29, 1864. (S. P. Lee's "Life of William N. Pendleton," p. 355.)

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Hancock's corps, supported by Sheridan's cavalry, was sent secretly across the pontoon bridges at Deep Bottom, twelve miles below Richmond, and turning up the river, made a determined attack on Lee's left. It was hoped by Grant that while his infantry engaged such forces as Lee might have at Chaffin's Bluff, his cavalry might be able to dash into Richmond. Lee, however, was ready for them. As though he had read Grant's mind, he had despatched Wilcox and Kershaw to the north side "before the movement began," and on the 27th Heth's Division joined them. Thus, when the assault was made it was promptly repulsed, and on the night of the 29th, this coup having failed, Hancock and Sheridan both recrossed the river to take part in the capture of Petersburg, which was set for the following day. Everything was got ready for the assault, and it appeared to the Union commander as though the fall of Petersburg, as a result of his elaborate preparations, were a foregone conclusion. His movement against Lee's extreme left had taken from before Petersburg two of Longstreet's Divisions (Field's and Kershaw's), two of Hill's Divisions (Heth's and Wilcox's), and the cavalry divisions of the two Lees, and Lee now had left before Petersburg only Hoke's, Johnson's, and Mahone's Divisions—not

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a very strong force, certainly; but it served. Against these thin lines were massed, in the hours of darkness on the night of the 29th, Grant's great army. All arrangements were made carefully. The mine was charged; the fuses laid; the heavy guns and mortars were got in position to cover the assault and to sweep the open space beyond the doomed Salient, to prevent the approach of fresh defenders. The night was spent in massing troops for the assault and in clearing away the abatis to make ready for the passage and charge of the troops; the pioneers were marshalled with their axes and intrenching tools, and everything was prepared for the rush forward as soon as the explosion should occur. The time set for this was the first crack of dawn. Burnside, Warren, Ord, and Hancock were all in place—the major portion of their corps massed to rush forward and overwhelm the defenders' thin line. A delay occurred; the first fuse did not burn and it was nearly two hours before another could be lighted. The explosion, however, when it occurred was a complete success; the undermined redan was blown up, carrying a battery and nearly two companies to destruction and shocking the men in the trenches on either side for a considerable distance. A huge crater yawned in Lee's lines where one of his

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strongest forts had frowned. Promptly the assailing force poured out of their breastworks and rushed forward into the great gap opened in Lee's lines. It proved a death-trap. The huge yawning pit was nearly a hundred yards long and was sixty feet wide and twenty-five feet deep, and into this cul-de-sac poured the leading troops of Burnside, so that in a little time the troops were huddled together in much confusion. Other regiments being pushed forward obliqued to the right and left and captured a part of the lines on either side; but the delay had enabled the startled Confederates to regain their bearings, and by the time the Federals undertook to reach the crest beyond the crater the Confederate batteries were sweeping the open space which lay before it, and two of Mahone's Brigades (Weiseger's and Wright's), who had been hastily summoned by Lee on learning of the explosion, were filing down the covered ways, ready to contest every foot of ground. Elliott's men, driven from the outer line by the shock of the explosion and the on-sweep of Burnside's troops, had made a stand under cover of a ravine and had held back the advance until succor arrived, and now Lee himself had reached the field with Beauregard and assumed charge of the operations. As Wright's

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Brigade was moving into position, Ferrero's division of negro troops, who had been drawn out to make the assault in the first instance, but had been set aside for another division of Burnside's, were forced forward from the first line of captured intrenchments, where they had sheltered themselves from the terrible fire that was now sweeping the open space, and were ordered to carry the crest beyond. Pushed forward, they passed through the troops lying down to shield themselves and advanced up the slope. The presence of negro troops always infuriated the Southerners and redoubled their determination. So now the knowledge that negro troops were being used in the assault spurred every gray-clad soldier to put forth his utmost might. As Ferrero's black regiments advanced, Weiseger's and Elliott's men broke from their cover and dashed upon them in a counter charge so furious that they suddenly turned tail and fled for their lives to their own works or piled pell-mell into the crater as a place of refuge, sweeping away with them in their flight most, if not all, of the troops about the crater. By half past nine all chance of the capture of Petersburg by this coup had passed and the Federal generals were concerned only to save their men who were huddled in the crater or a section

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of the trenches to the south of that death-trap. Warren, who had been ordered by Grant to put his men in, but had reported that it would be a useless waste of life, as the opportunity had passed, was now ordered to make an attack toward Lee's right. But this, too, he found impracticable, a difference of opinion that was to cost him dear later on. Lee was now bending his energies to repair the break in his defences, and Mahone, after three assaults, carried the captured lines and drove out or captured all the troops left in the crater or the lines that had been broken. Among the captured in the crater was the gallant Brigadier-General William F. Bartlett, bravest of the brave, who was after the war to endear himself as much to his foes of the war time as he had previously done to his comrades on his own side.

The day ended with a loss of some 4,000 men added to Grant's ever-increasing list, while Lee's losses were less than a third of that number, mainly among Elliott's and Mahone's gallant brigades, who had done such yeomen's service. On the 1st of August Grant asked for an armistice to bury his dead, who lay in piles in and about the crater, and from five till nine on the 2d there was for the first time no firing along the lines about Petersburg, and many officers gathered from each

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side to see the effect of the strange attempt which had so nearly succeeded and so disastrously failed.

It is said that the negro troops had been given to singing over their camp-fires during the weeks of preparation a sort of chant with a refrain ending,

“For we are mighty men of war,”

but after the catastrophe of the crater they were never known to sing it again.

When Grant learned that Lee had sent away so important a part of his army as that which Anderson had taken to the Shenandoah Valley, he promptly proceeded to take advantage of the weakening of Lee's lines. Thus, while Lee had been compelled to weaken his own forces to strengthen Early in the valley of Virginia, he was obliged to withstand the renewed shocks against his lines which this detachment of troops called forth. But, as before, Lee's sleepless vigilance forestalled him. The first attempt made was against Lee's left, on the north side of the James. It was substantially a repetition of the attempt of July 26. Hancock's corps, and a part of the Tenth Corps, commanded by Birney, supported by Gregg's cavalry, were sent secretly to the north side of the James. On August 14 the infantry

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body embarked on boats with much ostentation, as if intended for Washington. Disembarking a little lower down the river on the north bank, they were marched up the James and a sudden attack was made on Lee's lines in the expectation of surprising them. The plan was that, while Gregg's cavalry should turn the left flank, the infantry was to assault and capture the lines, including Chaffin's Bluff, one of the chief defences of Richmond. Field and Wilcox, however, were on guard, the former at Deep Bottom, the latter at Chaffin's Bluff, and though, by reason of the thinning of the Confederate right to strengthen the left against the attack of Barlow's divisions, Birney was able to gain a temporary advantage and seize a part of the line, capturing four guns, Lee soon had a sufficient force on the ground to repel the movement. Mahone's Division with Hampton's and W. H. F. Lee's Cavalry Divisions were rushed across the river from Petersburg, and when Hancock, Birney, and Gregg attacked, on the morning of the 16th, along the Darbytown and Charles City Roads, though again they had a temporary success and captured between 200 and 300 prisoners and three stands of colors, they were ultimately repulsed with heavy loss and were driven back all along the line. For several days following

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this the skirmishing continued on the north side; but on the night of the 20th, the attempt on Richmond having been frustrated, Grant withdrew his troops again to the Petersburg lines, having lost in this attempt on Richmond 2,786 men.*

Meantime, Lee had to guard his extreme right to the south of Petersburg no less than his extreme left to the east of Richmond, thirty miles away, and here too he was able to repel Grant's assault. Grant's superiority in numbers gave him the power to attack both sides of Lee's extended lines at will. Accordingly, while the Second and Tenth Corps were operating directly against Richmond, he and Meade were planning to turn Lee's right also. Hoping to cut and, possibly, to secure permanent possession of the two railway lines connecting Petersburg and Richmond with the Carolinas and the far South, and figuring that, at least, he could compel Lee to recall Anderson from the Shenandoah Valley and thus weaken Early, who was still holding Washington and Western Maryland and Pennsylvania in terror, though Sheridan was now on hand to protect them, Grant, on the 18th of August, sent Warren with the Fifth Corps, and Parke with the Ninth Corps, or a good part of it, around Lee's right to seize the Petersburg and

* Humphreys' "Campaign in Virginia in '64 and '65," p. 272.

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Weldon Railway within a few miles of Petersburg. "In addition to the destruction of the road, he was to consider the movement a reconnoissance in force and take advantage of any weakness the enemy might betray." The enemy betrayed some "weakness," but in numbers only. Warren's corps, with three divisions of the Ninth Corps, was, indeed, able to strike the Petersburg and Weldon Railway at a point some three miles beyond Grant's left, having only Dearing's Cavalry Brigade opposed to their advance; but a few hours later, Heth, sent by Lee with two divisions, swept down on them, and though they were eventually driven back, Warren reported that night losses numbering 936 men. Lee met the situation, as usual, with promptness. Recalling Mahone's and Lee's Divisions from before Richmond, where Hancock still lay at Deep Bottom, he sent them against Warren where his right was stretched thin, while A. P. Hill attacked his centre and left. Breaking through to Warren's right, Mahone's Divisions rolled up Crawford's division on this wing until it came on his strongly posted centre, when they were driven back in turn. But Warren's losses that day were 2,900 men, and that night Warren fell back a mile or more and intrenched. Lee was under the necessity of pre-

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serving the railway which had thus been attacked, and for this purpose he began to mass his forces as Grant was massing his to resist him. Wilcox was brought over to the south side, and on the 21st two of Field's brigades and Butler's brigade of cavalry were transferred to Lee's left. A. P. Hill was sent to assault Warren's right; but the latter was too firmly established to be dislodged. That afternoon an attack was made on Warren's left along the railway by Mahone's Division; but equally without success. And Hagood's Brigade, having pushed gallantly forward, was almost surrounded and cut off. Meantime, Grant had ordered Hancock back from before Richmond to support Warren on his left, thus extended, and the space covered in his recent flank movement was heavily fortified from the Jerusalem Plank Road to the railway, a stretch of several miles. Lee was too dependent on this line to tolerate its loss if it could be prevented and he made his dispositions accordingly. On the evening of the 24th he sent A. P. Hill with his corps, a brigade of Longstreet's Corps (Anderson's), and Lee's Cavalry around Warren's left to interpose between him and Hancock at Reams's Station, ten miles south of Petersburg. On the afternoon of the following day they assaulted Hancock, who was

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posted in a fortified position extending along the railway with both wings refused, and after a spirited engagement carried the position, capturing "12 stands of colors, 9 guns, 10 caissons, 2,150 prisoners, 3,100 stands of small arms," and forcing Hancock to retreat under cover of night to avoid further disaster. Hill's own losses were reported by him to be 720 men, while Hancock's were 2,372. Still Lee was unable because of the superiority of Grant's numbers to dislodge him from his main fortified lines, which were gradually stretching westward, and he found it necessary to recall Anderson from the valley of the Shenandoah to help him withstand the resistless tide that was gradually sweeping away his resources and annihilating his army.* His enforced recall left Early alone to confront Sheridan's army of thrice his numbers.

Anderson's Divisions were brought back toward the latter part of September, and the exigency was great; for Grant was steadily attempting to break through first on one side of the James and then on the other.

The next serious attempt which had to be met

* The Confederate losses in these movements are not given with any accuracy, but are assumed by Alexander and others to be approximately proportioned to the Union losses according to the number of troops engaged.

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was at the end of September, on the north side of the James, where the lines still remained denuded. Grant sent by night the Eighteenth Corps (now under Ord) and the Tenth Corps (now under Birney) to the north side of the James to repeat the experiment of August, while at the same time Meade made a demonstration against Lee's right. Ord was to attack and capture Chaffin's Bluff and the forts connected therewith, while the Tenth Corps was to advance by the more northerly roads against the left of the Confederate lines. Lee was, however, no more taken by surprise than before. He promptly withdrew troops from his right to reinforce Ewell, who now commanded on the north side of the James, and though Fort Harrison was captured by Ord, Fort Gilmer, which lay nearer to and protected Chaffin's Bluff, was firmly held and the enemy was repulsed with heavy loss. Lee and Grant were both on the ground in this engagement, and the fighting, which was under their immediate supervision, was costly to both sides. On the Southern side the losses were some 2,000 men, while on the Union side they were reported at 2,272. At the same time Meade attacked Lee's right where Hill commanded, Beauregard having gone south to meet the exigencies there. With the design of capturing the

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intrenchments along the Boydton Road and the South-side Railroad, General Parke and General Warren were, on the 30th, thrown against these lines and captured a portion of the outer intrenchments; but in the end they were repulsed with losses stated at over 2,000 men, and were content to extend their own intrenchments farther to the westward.

Still the Federal losses, though staggering, were steadily made up by the ever-renewed reinforcements. The bounties for enlistment in the North—county, State, and Federal—amounted now to so large a sum—over \$1,500 in some States—that a new profession was created: that of the “bounty-jumper,” and while this class of soldier was ever ready to desert if occasion presented itself, he made “food for powder,” and filled in the gaps between the brave and the patriotic. The contingent of mercenaries grew ever larger and larger, and Northern historians state as one of the reasons of Grant’s continued failure to break through Lee’s lines—the loss of the flower of his army on so many fatal fields. Hancock attributed his defeat at Reams’s Station on the 25th of August mainly to his “heavy losses during the campaign, especially officers,” and says that “there were several regiments largely made up of recruits and sub-

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stitutes. One, General Hancock mentions particularly, as being entirely new, and some of its officers unable to speak English.”*

The remainder of the siege of Petersburg was like the beginning, save that Lee's lines steadily grew thinner under the wasting of battle and famine and sickness, while his opponent's lines as steadily refilled. Confident of being able to replenish his ranks, Grant's tactics were a repetition of those of the autumn—to attack now one wing and now the other of Lee's extended lines, in the assurance that in time they would be worn thin enough to break somewhere. This he was enabled to do with his preponderant numbers, and his line across the James, by leaving enough men on one side of the James to hold one wing and marching a large force under cover of night to the other side to attack the other wing. Lee's part was to hold his lines in obedience to orders, and, if possible, break through Grant's line if an opening were presented.

Thus, on the 6th of October, Hoke and Field were withdrawn from before Petersburg and sent to the Richmond side to recover the intrenchments across the Darbytown Road lost in the engagement of September 29. This they accom-

* Humphreys' "Virginia Campaign of '64 and '65," p. 283.

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plished, flanking and driving Kautz therefrom across White Oak Swamp, with a loss of over 300 men and 8 of his guns.

On the 13th of October an assault made on Lee's left before Richmond by the Tenth Corps of Grant's army was repulsed without great loss on either side. And for some ten days there was an intermission of the assaults, though the daily skirmishing went on as before, varied by the nightly bombardment from the mortars and siege guns.

A fortnight later Lee had to meet a yet more determined attempt to cut him off from the south and, if possible, turn his right. Grant undertook to attack both of Lee's wings at the same time, the serious effort being made against Lee's right with three army corps, while Butler attacked Lee's left, in front of Richmond. With this in view, on October 27, Meade, in pursuance of Grant's orders, attempted to move westward across Lee's right and seize the South-side Railroad. He was to leave enough men in front of Lee's centre to hold their lines and with three corps—some forty-odd thousand men—make the flank movement. Parke, with the Ninth Corps (Burnside's old command), was to move next Lee's lines, surprise his incomplete intrenchments on his right, and contain him

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until Hancock and Warren should have marched beyond Lee's right and seized the South-side Railroad, when Parke was to attack in unison with the other two corps. It was a formidable movement, and under Meade's careful hand it started like clock-work. But Lee was ready, as ever. When Parke and Warren reached the ground where they were to surprise Lee's unfinished intrenchments, they found them not only sufficiently completed, but sufficiently manned to withstand the assault, and Grant and Meade having both come on the field, Warren was sent westward to support Hancock, who was pushing forward beyond Hatcher's Run toward Lee's extreme right. But so difficult was the ground, so dense the undergrowth, and so cleverly were Lee's defences constructed, that it took four hours for the advancing troops to move a mile and a half, and it was four o'clock in the afternoon before Warren's advance brigades could be abreast of Hancock, who had halted at the Boydton Plank Road to await his aid. Meantime, while Wilcox alone was left to hold the intrenchments threatened by Parke, the divisions of Heth and Mahone had been sent forward by Lee to meet this threatening advance and, with Hampton's Cavalry, were now, not awaiting an attack, but making one—Hampton on Hancock's left

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flank, Heth in his front, and Mahone moving silently by a wood-road to flank his right. As Egan's division of Hancock's corps was attempting to carry the bridge across Hatcher's Run, Mahone, who had passed through an interval between Hancock's right and Warren, "broke out of the woods" on Hancock's right and sweeping away Peirce's brigade, which had been sent to hold this part of Hancock's line, pushed forward, while Hampton, on the other side, attacked so hotly his left flank, where lay Gregg's cavalry dismounted, that Hancock brought Egan back from the bridge to help withstand Mahone's furious attack. With these reinforcements Hancock was able to flank in turn, and Mahone was driven back into the woods with the loss of two stands of colors and several hundred prisoners. But on his side he had to show as spoils three stands of colors, four hundred prisoners, and six pieces of artillery, which he spiked, being unable to get them across the stream, as the enemy held the bridge. Moreover, the Confederates had to their account the complete defeat of Grant's well-laid scheme to seize the South-side Railroad; for that night the Federals retreated under cover of darkness to their original positions, leaving their dead and 250 wounded on the field, their total loss having been over 1,400 men.

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On the same day Butler attacked Lee's left before Richmond, where Longstreet, who had recovered from his wound of the Wilderness and returned to his command on October 19, now had charge. With Hoke's and Field's Divisions, the "Local Defences," or Home Guard, and Gary's Cavalry, Longstreet met and repulsed the assaults made along his lines by Butler, driving the Federals back and capturing nine colors and several hundred prisoners. In this attempt the Federal loss was over 1,100 men, while the Confederate loss was comparatively light. Thus, the total Federal loss of the day in both the attacks was over 2,500 men—so effective even at this late stage was the depleted Army of Northern Virginia. This repulse appears to have satisfied Grant that, for the present at least, even "persistent hammering" did not give the expected results, and though, as transpired later, the attrition was wearing away Lee's army with deadly effect, up to this time it appeared mainly to have worn the Army of the Potomac. Thus the hammering was for the time being suspended.

The losses of Lee's army are not known with any accuracy, though they were heavy enough to deplete the South; but the losses of Grant's army were enough to show what a powerful weapon Lee

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had wielded and with what masterly skill. The Army of Northern Virginia in December, 1864, numbered some 50,000 effectives. On the 7th of November the medical director of the Army of the Potomac reported to General Meade that "the number of wounded of the Army of the Potomac from May 3 to October 31, 1864, may be considered as amounting to 57,495." "This," says Humphreys, "was exclusive of the Eighteenth Corps while it served with the Army of the Potomac, and does not include the Ninth Corps at the Wilderness and Spottsylvania." Nor does it include the dead or the missing. Nearly 100,000 men had Lee's army destroyed in these six months.

Unfortunately for Lee, the attrition went on in other ways continuously. Early had, as stated, been decisively defeated at Cedar Creek by Sheridan on October 19, and his subsequent final defeat at Waynesboro substantially destroyed his force in the valley of Virginia, leaving that region at the mercy of Sheridan, and enabling the Sixth Corps to be sent back to swell Grant's ranks before Petersburg. Sheridan swept up the valley to Staunton, thence to Charlottesville, and Gordonsville, the object of so many futile movements. From there he crossed over to the James at Columbia, destroying the canal to Lynchburg, and

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having thus cut up Lee's two lines of supply, he passed on down through Goochland and Hanover and rejoined Grant on the 27th of March in time to take a prominent part in the final act of the drama which ended at Appomattox.

But other causes than Grant's persistent hammering were now wearing away Lee's army. Cut off from supplies of almost every kind on nearly every side, grim famine and its grisly sister, disease, were slowly wasting what battle had spared. The condition can hardly be better set forth than in the statement of the careful and patient historian of the Virginia campaign of 1864-65, whose account has been mainly followed in this chapter. He says: "The winter of 1864-65 was one of unusual severity, making the picket duty in front of the intrenchments very severe. It was especially so to the Confederate troops with their threadbare, insufficient clothing and meagre food, chiefly corn bread made of the coarsest meal. Meat they had but little of, and their Subsistence Department was actually importing it from abroad. Of coffee or tea or sugar they had none, except in the hospitals.

"It is stated that in a secret session of the Confederate Congress, the condition of the Confederacy as to subsistence was declared to be:

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“That there was not meat enough in the Southern Confederacy for the armies it had in the field.

“That there was not in Virginia either meat or bread for the armies within her limits.

“That the supply of bread for those armies to be obtained from other places depended absolutely upon keeping open the railroad connections with the South.

“That the meat must be obtained from abroad through a seaport.

“That the transportation was not adequate, from whatever cause, to meet the necessary demands of the service.

“That the supply of fresh meat to General Lee's army was precarious, and, if the army fell back from Richmond and Petersburg, that there was every probability that it would cease altogether.”

The bald statement of these facts gives little idea of the condition within the Confederate lines. The region about the armies was absolutely denuded of food and the men in the trenches not only starved themselves, but underwent the additional pangs of knowing that their families were starving at home.

These facts were as well known in the Union camp as in the Confederate, and Grant's objective

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now was far more the lines of supply than the lines of breastwork behind which Lee's ragged and shivering veterans, wasting away as they were, still proved too deadly to be inconsiderately attacked. So constant was the firing across the lines that no wagons could approach the front to bring fuel, and the ill-clad Southern soldiers were compelled to resort to the desperate expedient of burning the abatis in their front to keep from freezing. In consequence, when the final assaults came their lines had been weakened in many places, without as well as within the intrenchments. Numbers of them froze to death at their posts, and of those who remained, the entire body was so enfeebled as scarcely to be able to stand the fatigue of the retreat, and many of them dropped by the wayside in exhaustion.

XX

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NECESSARILY a comparison arises between the two captains who confronted each other in this great campaign of 1864. But the exalting of the one does not necessarily mean the depreciation of the other. To argue that Grant was not as great a soldier as Lee does not reflect on him. No more were Jackson or Johnston. Lee excelled them all.

Grant's fame, when he was made lieutenant-general and came into Virginia, rested on the three great feats of Donelson, Vicksburg, and Missionary Ridge. And to these three a fourth was added a year later, when at Appomattox, Lee, on the 9th of April, 1865, surrendered to him the starving remnant of the Army of Northern Virginia, which the exigencies of the Confederacy had held before Petersburg as in a vise till it had slowly shrunken to a shadow. Current history has chosen to assign to Grant the greater praise for this last campaign, partly because he finally crushed Lee, but chiefly because it ended the war. And possibly the lasting fame of the successful captain will be

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based chiefly on this. As a man, it should be based on this; for no victor in all history ever displayed nobler qualities than those which Grant showed when Lee asked him for terms. It may be well, however, to recall the simple but often overlooked principle, that while success is without doubt the gauge of a general's ability, this does not necessarily mean final success. History shines with the names of generals who have failed at last and have yet borne off the palm in the great contest in which Fame is the reward. Hannibal was not the less the superior of Scipio Africanus because the latter finally conquered him and saved Rome. Charles XII was not the less a greater captain than Peter's forgotten general because the latter drove him from Russia to seek an asylum in Turkey. Nor was Napoleon inferior to Wellington though he died defeated and a prisoner, while Wellington became prime minister and first citizen of the England he had been so capable and fortunate as to save.

A captain's rank must be measured by his opportunities and the manner in which he uses them. That Grant was a general of rare ability—clear-headed, capable, far-sighted, single-minded, prompt, resourceful, constant, resolute even to obstinacy—no one who studies his campaigns will

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deny; that he was the equal of Lee in that high combination of these and other rarer qualities which go to make up the greatest soldier, no one who studies with open mind the campaign of 1864 may successfully maintain.

The heroic manner in which Lee with his half-starved veterans sustained the repeated shocks of the "persistent hammering" of Grant's great army through so long a period must ever be a cause of wonder to the true student of history, and the key will only be found by him who, looking beyond mere natural forces, shall consider the inspiration that, springing from love of country, and nourished by love of liberty, animates the breast of those who, firm in their conviction of right, fight on their own soil for their homes and their firesides. Study of the subject has, at least, convinced one writer, who has desired to give the truth, and nothing but the truth, that rarely if ever has there been such an army led by such a leader. Grant's persistent hammering, as attritive as it was, was far less so than the attrition of hunger and want. Lee, who early in the war had sighed for a force of veteran troops to whom to confide the trust, had long been at the head of the most experienced veterans who ever fought on American soil. He believed in his soul that they

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would go anywhere when properly led. But he was too clear-eyed a soldier not to know that the most veteran legions that ever followed the eagles of Rome or France or the flag of the Confederacy must be shod and fed or they could not fight. From the first there had been difficulty in the equipment of the troops, owing to the absence of manufactories of even elementary articles. The arms with which the South entered the war were largely of the oldest and most obsolete kind; and many troops were armed with old muskets roughly changed from flintlocks to percussion; saddles were wanting to the cavalry, and swords were made on country forges.* Artillery had to be mounted on farm wagons,† and uniforms were woven on country looms. The ordnance department was created, said General Johnston, out of nothing. This deficiency was in time partially overcome by captures from the enemy; by building up hastily manufacturing establishments at a number of points, and by blockade-running; but the matter of subsistence of the army was one which always caused grave alarm and serious and, at last, fatal trouble. The means of transportation were so limited that any break in even one

* "Life of Forrest," by Dr. John A. Wyeth.

† "Life of William N. Pendleton," by S. P. Lee.

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line of railway was a perilous loss and the absence of manufactories contributed to frustrate Lee's boldest designs.

In the history of war it has ever pleased the romantic to find the commander sharing with his soldiers whatever hardships the campaign might bring. No captain ever measured up to this standard more fully than General Lee. The world has little conception of the scarcity among the Confederate soldiery of the commonest necessities of life. They were scarce from the beginning. Often shirts were made from curtains, for blankets were substituted squares of old carpet, shoes were made of rawhide, and uniforms of cotton. Medicine was made contraband of war by the Federal Government, and quinine and chloroform were as rigidly excluded as percussion caps and powder. After the middle of the war, except when they were in the enemy's country and could secure supplies, the army rarely had enough, often had the least that men can subsist on; at times had nothing. "Shoes were scarce, blankets were curiosities, and overcoats phenomena," writes a careful Northern student of the war.* This was nothing new.

"The troops of this portion of the army have for

* "The Campaign of Chancellorsville," p. 33 (Bigelow).

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some time been confined to reduced rations," wrote Lee to the Confederate Secretary of War in 1863. ". . . Symptoms of scurvy are appearing among them, and to supply the place of vegetables each regiment is directed to send a daily detail to gather sassafras buds, wild onion, garlic, lamb's quarters, and poke sprouts; but for so large an army the supply obtained is very small." *

It is tragic to think of being dependent for the supply of any army on the wild vegetables that could be found in the March woods and fields. No more unconscious or more damning indictment was ever framed against a commissariat. He had already written to Mr. Seddon ten days before on the same subject, and he now again is urging the necessity of a "more generous diet" for his men, not because of their dissatisfaction, for, said he, "the men are cheerful and I receive but few complaints, still I do not think it is enough to continue them in health and vigor, and I fear they will not be able to endure the hardships of the approaching campaign."

In his letter of March 17, he wrote: ". . . I am informed by the chief commissary of the army that he has been unable to issue the sugar ration to the troops for the last ten days. Their ration conse-

* Letter of March 27, 1863.

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quently consists of one-fourth pound of bacon, eighteen ounces of flour, ten pounds of rice to each one hundred men about every third day, with some few peas and a small amount of dried fruit occasionally as they can be obtained. This may give existence to the troops while idle, but will certainly cause them to break down when called upon for exertion. . . . The time has come when it is necessary that the men should have full rations. Their health is failing, scurvy and typhus fever are making their appearance, and it is necessary for them to have a more generous diet."

It was on this fare that the army was kept who fought the battle of Chancellorsville, and, for that matter, it was on less than this that they withstood Grant's tremendous assaults, fought the battles of the Wilderness campaign, and held the lines before Richmond and Petersburg.

But whatever the hardships of his soldiers were, Lee shared them. Many stories were told, by those who had opportunities to know, of the meagreness of his own table. He himself told of the hen which had made her home throughout the campaign in his head-quarters wagon and had inexplicably disappeared. On inquiry it turned out that some stranger had been invited to dinner, and his servant, ashamed to have the visitor see how

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little they had to eat at the general's table, had killed the hen and served her at dinner.

Another story used to be told which, though perhaps not having so high authority, was generally accepted as authentic. It is said that the general on one occasion, finding his meal to consist only of cabbage, questioned his servant on the subject, and on being informed that there was no bacon, asked what became of a piece of bacon which had been on the table the day before when they had had a guest. "That was borrowed bacon, sir," said the servant.

We have seen how at Sharpsburg the want of shoes prevented his meeting McClellan with his full force. Want of supplies held him in Virginia later, when strategy appeared to demand his again invading Maryland. A few extracts from Lee's letters at the time will show the situation plainly. In October, 1863, after Gettysburg, Lee writes of his troops: "If they had been properly provided with clothes I would certainly have endeavored to have thrown them north of the Potomac; but thousands were barefooted; thousands with fragments of shoes, and all without coats, blankets, or warm clothing. I could not bear to expose them to certain suffering on an uncertain issue." *

* Letter to Mrs. Lee, October 19, 1863.

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On October 28 he writes to his wife: "I am glad you have some socks for the army. Send them to me. Tell the girls to send all they can. I wish they could make some shoes, too. We have thousands of barefooted men. There is no news. General Meade, I believe, is repairing the railroads and I presume will come on again. If I could only get some shoes and clothes for the men I would save him the trouble."

Could anything be more tragic than this general bound in his trenches by the nakedness of his army, while his opponent prepared in his sight to overwhelm him! Or could anything be more pathetic than this general of an army acting as a receiver of a few dozen pairs of socks knitted for his barefooted army by his invalid wife! Not merely here, but from now on, he acts as dispenser of the socks knitted by her busy needles. Truly, the South may well point with pride to her gifted son, who in his head-quarters in a "nice pine thicket" showed such antique simplicity of character.

By the beginning of the year 1864, the subsistence of the army had become almost impossible. "Many of the infantry," writes General Lee in an official communication, "are without shoes, and the cavalry worn down by the pursuit of Averell.

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We are now issuing to the troops a fourth of a pound of salt meat, and have only three days' supply at that rate. Two droves of cattle from the West that were reported to be for this army, I am told have been directed to Richmond. I can learn of no supply of meat on the road to the army, and fear I shall be unable to retain it in the field."*

In another official letter to the commissary-general he writes: "I regret very much to learn that the supply of beef for the army is so nearly exhausted. . . . No beef has been issued to the cavalry corps by the chief commissary, that I am aware of, for eighteen months. During that time it has supplied itself, and has now, I understand, sufficient to last until the middle of February." †

Two weeks later he writes the quartermaster-general as follows: "General: The want of shoes and blankets in this army continues to cause much suffering and to impair its efficiency. In one regiment, I am informed, there are only fifty men with serviceable shoes, and a brigade that recently went on picket was compelled to leave several hundred men in camp that were unable

* Letter to President Davis, January 2, 1864.

† Letter to Colonel L. B. Northrop, commissary-general, January 5, 1864.

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to bear the exposure of duty, being destitute of shoes and blankets.”*

He thereupon urges that instead of trusting to the precarious supplies procured by running the blockade, the South should spare no effort to develop her own resources.

But the time had passed when the South could develop her resources, and it was soon to come when even the precarious supply by blockade-running was to cease altogether.

On the 24th of January he wrote his wife: “. . . I have had to disperse the cavalry as much as possible to obtain forage for their horses, and it is that which causes trouble. Provisions for the men, too, are very scarce, and with very light diet and light clothing I fear they suffer. But still they are cheerful and uncomplaining. I received a report from one division the other day in which it stated that over four hundred men were barefooted and over one thousand without blankets. . . .”

Such was the condition of the army in the depth of the winter of 1863-64, and it steadily grew worse. By the opening of spring Lee stood face to face with the gravest problem that can con-

* Letter to Brigadier-General R. A. Lawton, quartermaster-general, January 18, 1864.

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front a general—the impossibility of subsisting his army—and, moreover, his own strength was waning, although he was yet to put forth the supreme effort which was to make his defence of Virginia against Grant possibly the greatest defensive campaign in history. In a letter to his eldest son, expressing his hearty acquiescence in an order substituting a chief engineer in place of his son, for whom he had applied, with the design of making him chief of staff, he says: “I thought that position presented less objections to your serving with me than any other. . . . I want all the aid I can get now. I feel a marked change in my strength since my attack last spring at Fredericksburg, and am less competent for my duty than ever.”*

All through the spring, with undimmed vision, he had foreseen the tragic fate awaiting him, and his letters show plainly how clear this vision was, yet never once does he show aught but the same heroic constancy which had distinguished him in the past. “In none of them,” says Long, “does he show a symptom of despair or breathe a thought of giving up the contest. To the last, he remained full of resources, energetic and defiant, and ready to bear on his own shoulders the whole burden of the conduct of the war.”†

* Letter of April 6, 1864.

† Long's “Lee.”

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In March, when lying opposite Grant's great army on the Rapidan, he wrote the President of the indication that Grant was concentrating a great force to operate in Virginia. And on April 6 he writes of the great efforts that, according to all the information he received, were to be made in Virginia. A week later he writes him again:

HEAD-QUARTERS, *April 12, 1864.*

Mr. President: My anxiety on the subject of provisions for the army is so great that I cannot refrain from expressing it to your Excellency. I cannot see how we can operate with our present supplies. Any derangement in their arrival, or disaster to the railroad, would render it impossible for me to keep the army together, and might force a retreat into North Carolina. There is nothing to be had in this section for men or animals. We have rations for the troops to-day and to-morrow. . . . Every exertion should be made to supply the depots at Richmond and at other points. . . .

I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,
R. E. LEE, *General.*

Three weeks later in a letter stating the movements of Grant's troops along the Rappahannock, and the signs of "large preparations on the part of the enemy and a state of readiness for action," he adds: "If I could get back Pickett, Hoke, and

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B. R. Johnson, I would feel strong enough to operate. . . . I cannot get the troops together for want of forage and am looking for grass." It was a tragic situation. Three days later, on the night of May 3, 1864, Grant crossed the Rapidan with an army of over 140,000 men, many of them veteran troops, as brave men as ever carried a musket—armed and equipped in a manner unsurpassed, if equalled, in the annals of war, officered by the flower of the North. He had also 218 guns and a wagon-train that, stretched in a line, would have reached to Richmond.* He controlled, with the aid of the exceedingly efficient navy, the York and the James to Dutch Gap, where Butler lay with an army which could spare him 16,000 men, to help in the deadly assaults at Cold Harbor, and a few days later could carry the formidable outer defences of Petersburg.

To meet this force, Lee had 62,000 men and 224 guns. His army was less efficiently armed and with an equipment which would have been hopelessly insufficient for any other army than the one he commanded: the war-worn veterans of the

* "The army immediately opposed to Lee numbered, when it crossed the Rapidan, on May 4, 1864, 149,166 men. While Lee had within call 62,000, but with only half that number he moved on and attacked Grant's army in the Wilderness." (Jones's "Life and Letters of R. E. Lee," p. 310.)

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Army of Northern Virginia, inured to hunger and hardship and battle.

On the 12th day of June, when Grant crossed the James to the south side, of the 140,000 men who had crossed the Rapidan one month and nine days before he had lost nearly 60,000, almost as many men as Lee had had during the campaign. On the 9th of April following, when Lee surrendered, Grant's losses had mounted up to 124,390, two men for every one that Lee had in his army at any time.* By this record posterity must judge the two captains. It will also pay its tribute to the valor which could stand up against such losses.

The adverse criticism of Grant is based on the charge that he sacrificed over 50,000 men to reach the James, when he might have reached the south side of James River and laid siege to Petersburg and Richmond without the loss of a man.† As to whether, had he done this, he could have succeeded in the destruction of Lee's army, the impregnable defence of the Confederate capital, can

* E. P. Alexander's "Memoirs," p. 619.

† Grant's losses, from May 4, when he crossed the Rapidan, to June 12, when, staggering back from Cold Harbor, he abandoned his first plan of attack and crossed to the south side of the James, was, according to the Union authorities, 54,929. (Rhodes's "History," vol. IV, p. 447; The Century Co.'s "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War," vol. IV, p. 182.) And among these were the flower of his army, as gallant officers and men as ever faced death on a battle-field.

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never be known. Grant thought not, and he was eminently clear-headed and practical. He is said to have declared pithily that his objective was Lee's head-quarters tent. It was, moreover, necessary for him not only to defeat Lee, but at the same time to protect Washington, failure to do which had cost McClellan his place.

No one knew so well as Lee the disastrous consequences of this policy of attrition. From August on his letters express plainly his recognition of the terrible fact that his army was wearing down without the hope of his losses being repaired.* His soldierly prevision enabled him to predict precisely what afterward occurred: the extension of Grant's lines to envelop him, and the consequent loss of Richmond.†

The design of Grant to capture Petersburg, and, by cutting off Richmond from the South, force the capitulation of the Confederate capital, was undoubtedly able strategy, and why it had not been attempted by him before seems even now an enigma, for McClellan had urged it warmly in July, 1862, and a dash had been made to seize Richmond from this side by a daring raid which, possibly, had failed only because of a rise in the

* Letter to Secretary of War, August 23, 1864. Letter to President Davis, September 2, 1864.

† Letter of October 10, 1864.

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James River which prevented the raiding party from crossing; and the mouth of the Appomattox was as securely in the possession of the Union as the mouth of the Delaware.

Applause has properly been accorded Grant for his skilful manœuvre when, after Cold Harbor, he slipped away from Lee and crossed to the south side of the James without molestation. It was a capital piece of work, and showed the utmost ability in moving troops secretly in large bodies under difficult conditions. In truth, however, he failed absolutely in the immediate object of this movement: the securing, as he wrote Halleck, of the city of Petersburg by a coup before the Confederates could get there in much force.*

His plan to seize Petersburg with its slender garrison of less than 2,500 men was foiled by Beauregard, to whom only on his urgent request Lee at length sent men from the north side of the James, and though Grant was enabled to take, on June 15, "the formidable works to the north-east of the town," when he attacked in force on three successive days he was repulsed with the loss of 10,000 men, losses which shook and disheartened his army even more, possibly, than the slaughter at Cold Harbor.†

* Official Records, vol. XI, pp. 1, 12.

† E. P. Alexander's "Memoirs," chap. XXI.

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The demoralization consequent on Lee's victories from the Wilderness to Petersburg, over "the crippled Army of the Potomac," which now enabled him to detach Early and, with a view to repeating the strategy of 1862, send him to the valley of Virginia, followed by that general's signal success, in conjunction with Breckinridge, in clearing the valley of Sigel and Hunter, and, after defeating Wallace at Monocacy Bridge, in immediately threatening Washington itself, sent gold up from 168, its rate in May, to 285, the highest point it reached during the war.*

The authorities in Washington, more alarmed even than when Lee was at Sharpsburg or at Chambersburg, were clamoring for Grant to come and assume personal command of the forces protecting the city. And it is alleged that Grant escaped the fate of his predecessors only because there was no one else to put in his place. It was even charged that he had fallen "back into his old habits of intemperance," a charge which Mr. Lincoln dryly dismissed with a witticism.†

* Rhodes's "History of the United States," IV, p. 509. Swinton, p. 494.

† "Despondency and discouragement," says Rhodes, the latest and among the most thoughtful of all the Northern historians of the war, "are words which portray the state of feeling at the North during the month of July, and the closer one's knowledge of affairs, the gloomier was his view; but the salient facts put into every one's mind the pertinent question, 'Who shall revive

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Congress, by resolution, requested the President "to appoint a day for humiliation and prayer," and the President, "cordially concurring . . . in the pious sentiments expressed" in this resolution, appointed the first Thursday in August as a day of national humiliation and prayer. Swinton declares that "there was at this time great danger of a collapse of the war." *

The simple truth is that, against great outside clamor, Grant was sustained by the authorities in Washington because he was manifestly the best general in sight, and not because he had proved himself the equal of Lee. That he was retained is a proof of Mr. Lincoln's wisdom, for he was thenceforth to prove the man for the occasion.

So great was the feeling of despondency at the North at this time that several serious, if somewhat informal, embassies were sent by the authorities at Washington to ascertain the feeling of the Confederate authorities touching peace on the basis of a restoration of the Union, coupled at first with a condition of "an abandonment of slavery," but later without even this condition.

the withered hopes that bloomed on the opening of Grant's campaign?" This question he quotes from the *New York World*, a paper which he states was not unfriendly to Grant. ("History of the United States," IV, p. 507.)

* Swinton's "Army of the Potomac," p. 494.

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On the very day that Mr. Davis, yielding to clamor at the South against the Fabian policy of the cautious Johnston, who had been falling back before Sherman, relieved that veteran officer of his command, he accorded an interview to two gentlemen who had come on an irregular mission, with the knowledge and consent of Mr. Lincoln, to ask whether any measure could be tried that might lead to peace. Mr. Davis rejected the proposal to make peace, unless with it came the acknowledgment of the right of the South to self-government; "and," declares the historian above quoted, "taking into account the actual military situation, a different attitude on the part of the Richmond government could not have been expected." *

Viewed in the cold light of the inexorable facts, the honors at this time in Virginia were all with the Confederate general, and later comparisons so invidious to Lee have all been made in the light of subsequent events, over which neither Grant nor Lee exercised control.

In truth, it was not until long afterward, and after it was found that the resources of the South were exhausted, that Grant's costly policy of attrition was accepted by the government or the

* Rhodes's "History of the United States," IV, pp. 514-516.

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people, and his star, which had been waning, once more ascended. That it ever ascended again was due in part to his constancy of purpose, and for the rest, to "successes elsewhere" and to the exhaustion of the South, particularly to the destruction of the means of communication.

While Grant was dashing his men against Lee's lines with such deadly consequences, Sherman, marching across the country, was forcing Johnston gradually back by manoeuvring and flanking rather than attacking in front as Grant attacked Lee. His force was about 100,000 men, while Johnston's army of about 40,000, with Polk's force of 19,000, which had been ordered from Mississippi to join him, aggregated less than 60,000. At Altoona, where Johnston awaited attack in a strong defensive position, Sherman refused battle and moved westward to Dallas. At New Hope Church, on May 24, Hooker's and Howell's corps assaulted Johnston's lines, but were repulsed with heavy loss. On the 14th of June, at Pine Knob, the assault was unsuccessful, but the defence cost the life of the gallant General Polk.

On June 24, and again on the 27th, Johnston was attacked at Kennesaw Mountain, but both attacks were repulsed with heavy loss, and Sherman drew off by the flank and forced Johnston to

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fall back. Johnston's plan was to draw Sherman farther and farther from his base, and then, when opportunity offered, as he felt sure it would in time, attack him and, if successful, destroy his army. The people of the country, however, were wild with dismay at Sherman's continued advance and clamored for Johnston's removal. The Confederate President accordingly, after a tart correspondence with him, removed Johnston on July 17 and placed General Hood in command. Hood had been assigned to command with the understanding that he must fight, and fight he did, with the result of being defeated and driven into Atlanta, which, a little later on (September 1), he was forced to evacuate to avoid being cut off and captured. On August 23 Admiral Farragut captured Mobile. These "successes elsewhere" did much to relieve the situation at the North, and they were soon followed by others. Sherman having occupied Atlanta, Hood moved back into Tennessee with the idea of destroying Sherman's communications and recapturing Nashville, believing that this would compel Sherman to abandon his project and return to the West. Sherman, however, after following him for a time, sent Thomas to Nashville, and reinforcing him with the Fourth and Twenty-third army corps,

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returned himself to Atlanta and a little later marched on to the sea, capturing Savannah.

Hood, with some 35,000 men, having been joined by the noted and able General Forrest, moved on into Tennessee, and on November 30 attacked Schofield at Franklin, and after a furious fight carried his lines and forced him to retire to Nashville. Following him up, Hood took position before Nashville. Here he was attacked by Thomas on the 15th and 16th of December, his lines broken and his army totally routed, losing 54 guns. His army was, indeed, substantially destroyed.

No step could have given more aid and comfort to the North, or have been more disastrous to the South, than the removal of Johnston at the moment when, if his strategy had not prepared the way for the possible destruction of the invading force, the veteran general was, at least, preparing to carry out the consistent plan he had laid down from the beginning. Abroad it satisfied the anxious nations of Europe that the South was at her last gasp and established their hitherto vacillating policy in favor of the Union cause, and the Southern cause thereafter steadily declined to its end.

The same day that the President of the Confederate States removed Joseph E. Johnston, the

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President of the United States, appalled at the effect of Lee's masterly defence of Richmond, issued a proclamation calling for 500,000 men, and before Grant learned of this call he wrote urging a draft of 300,000 immediately.*

Europe now changed front. The skilful diplomacy of Charles Francis Adams had prevented the delivery to the Confederacy of the rams which had been built for her; the sympathies of the European nations had shifted, and the South was, as has been well said by the son and namesake of the able diplomat referred to, as securely shut up to perish as if she had been in a vast vacuum. The victories of diplomacy are little considered beside those of the battle-field. But, taking into consideration what the *Merrimac* had accomplished during her brief but formidable cruise in Hampton Roads, where she sank the *Cumberland*, captured the *Congress's* crew, and drove the famous *Monitor* into shoal water, it is probable that the blockade of the Southern ports might have been broken had not Mr. Adams's unremitting efforts availed to prevent the Confederate rams being delivered.

As it was, the end was clearly in view to Lee. The destruction of Hood's army at Nashville re-

* Rhodes, "History of the United States," IV, pp. 506, 507.

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moved the only force capable of blocking the way of Sherman across the South, and left him free to march to the sea, and, having got in touch with the fleet there, continue northward through the Carolinas, marking his way with a track of devastation which has been aptly likened to that made when Saxe carried fire and sword through the Palatinate.

Grant having settled down to the siege of Richmond, Lee, with "Richmond hung like a millstone about his neck," a figure he is said to have employed, was now forced to guard a line extending from the south of Petersburg to the north of Richmond, and to withstand with his thinning ranks his able antagonist with an ever-growing army and an ever-increasing confidence.

The able and acute critic of the war, already cited, has given it as his opinion that it was not Richmond which hung like a millstone about Lee's neck, but the Tredegar Iron Works at Richmond. These works, he holds, were the "determining factor of Lee's strategy," and indeed of the strategy of the whole Civil War. He argues that, "without the Tredegar Works to supply him with artillery and keep his artillery in working order, Lee's army could not have held the field two months." The defence of Richmond, therefore,

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was not a mere matter of sentiment on the part of the Confederacy, but was vital to the continuance of the contest. No modern army can hold the field unless it has arsenals and machinery for the manufacture and repair of artillery, etc., at its command, and he states it as his opinion that "the capture by us of Richmond, or the abandonment of Richmond by Lee, including as it would the loss of the Tredegar Works, would have brought the war to a termination at any period, and from the very commencement to the end, Richmond, or the Tredegar Iron Works, was the vital point of the Confederacy." *

That this is, at least, a debatable question, Lee himself would appear to have thought, if he is quoted correctly as having referred to Richmond as the millstone about his neck. But whether it was Richmond or the Tredegar Iron Works which bound him to the line of the James, all that winter Lee lay in the trenches with his "hands tied," while his army withered and perished from want and cold, and while Sherman, almost unopposed, burnt, in sheer riot of destruction, supplies that might, had they been available, have subsisted that army for ten years, and yet by the policy of the Confederate Government were left unprotected.

* Charles Francis Adams's address on Lee.

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By the end of the year all available resources were exhausted.

On the 11th of January, 1865, Lee sent this despatch to the Secretary of War:

HON. J. A. SEDDON:

There is nothing within reach of this army to be impressed. The country is swept clear. Our only reliance is upon the railroads. We have but two days' supplies.

R. E. LEE.

Sherman, on December 21, reached the sea at Savannah, and thus was in a position to connect with Grant by sea or by a sweep up the coast. The latter plan was chosen, possibly in part to let South Carolina feel the iron enter into her soul. Sherman crossed her borders on February 21, and though Charleston was not "sown with salt," as Halleck had suggested, it felt the full weight of the hostility which prompted the suggestion and response.

Meantime, the navy, that vast force so little considered in all the histories of the war, was consummating its work. It performed the part of holding the South by the throat while the army hammered the life out of her. Following an unsuccessful attempt under Butler at the end of

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December, the capture of Fort Fisher, on the North Carolina coast, on January 15, closed, in Wilmington, the last door through which even the meagre supplies of the blockade-runner could reach the Confederacy, and thenceforth the South was, as has been well said, "hermetically sealed."

It may be stated, in passing, that Grant, relieved now of all political restrictions, promptly relieved Butler after his fiasco at Wilmington in December. At the end of January an attempt was made to bring about a peace through the Hampton Roads Conference, but nothing came of it.

In this extremity the Confederate authorities at last recognized what many men had long felt: that on Lee now rested the sole hope of the Confederacy, and Mr. Davis finally came to the tardy conclusion that he should be given command of all the armies of the South. He accordingly yielded to the Congress and conferred on Lee what Mr. Lincoln had conferred on Grant nearly a year before: untrammelled command of all the forces of the country. Unfortunately, it was too late. The President of the United States could furnish his general all the men he required and all the supplies they needed. The President of the Confederate States could furnish his general neither

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men nor supplies. The "seed corn" of the Confederacy had all been ground. Lee, when he received his appointment, faced an empty and broken-down commissariat, a country denuded of men, swept clean of supplies, with every avenue of entrance closed and every means of conveyance crippled. The South Atlantic States were clamorous, and not unnaturally, for protection against the army, which, under a vandal leader, was sweeping almost unopposed across them, marking its course with a swath of fire which spared nothing.

On February 6 Lee was appointed to the command in chief of the armies of the Confederacy. But it was too late. He telegraphed the Secretary of War on February 8, 1865, a statement of the deplorable condition of his army:

Sir: All the disposable force of the right wing of the army has been operating against the enemy beyond Hatcher's Run since Sunday. Yesterday, the most inclement day of the winter, they had to be retained in line of battle, having been in the same condition the two previous days and nights. I regret to be obliged to state that under these circumstances, heightened by assaults and fire of the enemy, some of the men had been without meat for three days, and all were suffering from reduced rations and scant clothing, exposed to

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battle, cold, hail, and sleet. I have directed Colonel Coler, chief commissary, who reports that he has not a pound of meat at his disposal, to visit Richmond and see if nothing can be done. If some change is not made and the Commissary Department reorganized, I apprehend dire results. The physical strength of the men, if their courage survives, must fail under such treatment. Our cavalry has to be dispersed for want of forage. Fitz Lee's and Lomax's Divisions are scattered because supplies cannot be transported where their services are required. I had to bring William H. F. Lee's Division forty miles Sunday night to get him in position. Taking these facts in connection with the paucity of our numbers you must not be surprised if calamity befalls us. . . .

R. E. LEE, *General*.

President Davis endorsed on this report: "This is too sad to be patiently considered and cannot have occurred without criminal neglect or gross incapacity. . . ." A comment as true to-day as when Lee set before him plainly the tragic fact that his army was fast perishing at its post.

Unfortunately for the South, the rest of the President's endorsement, "Let supplies be had by purchase or borrowing or other possible mode," was inefficacious. There was no longer any possible mode by which supplies could be had. The South was exhausted. Virginia had been swept

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clean and there were no means of transporting supplies from elsewhere.

Subsistence could not be, or, at least, was not, furnished, and while the sword attacked in front, hunger assailed in the rear. His men had, he wrote the War Department in February, endured all that flesh and blood could endure. In the battle line, suffering from cold and exhaustion, they not only had not had meat for three days, but to them came the cry from their starving families at home. His officers reported "not a few cases" in which men had gone insane from privation, hardship, and strain. No wonder that his numbers dwindled and that his tardy elevation, in February, to the position of commander-in-chief was futile to recoup the destruction.

Lee had already carried the fortunes of the Confederacy on his shoulders for, at least, two years longer than the Confederacy could have survived without his genius to sustain it; and now the time had come when no mortal power could longer support it.* Its end had come. All had gone except the indomitable and immortal spirit of its people.

In this desperate state of affairs, however, Lee applied himself to refill his depleted ranks by every possible means. His first general order,

* E. P. Alexander's "Memoirs," p. 599.

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after that in which he on the 9th of February assumed formally the chief command of the Confederate forces, was one "offering pardon to all deserters and those improperly absent if they returned to duty within twenty days (except those who had deserted to the enemy), and an exhortation to all Southern soldiers to respond to the call of honor and duty." He had for some time advocated the enlistment of negroes as soldiers. "Six months before he had advocated their employment as teamsters, laborers, and mechanics in place of whites, who, being replaced, could be restored to the ranks." * He now proposed to employ them as soldiers, feeling assured that he could make as good soldiers of them as the enemy.

But as imperative as was the need of men, an even more impossible requirement to meet was the supplies and equipment. Wilmington, the last port through which these had dribbled in from the outside world, had, as stated, been closed when Fort Fisher fell; and the main source of supply—capture from the enemy—had been cut off when the army, which had been wont to act as its own ordnance department, was confined to the defensive lines of a siege.

The Tredegar Iron Works at Richmond, the

* F. Lee's "Lee," p. 307.

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chief factory for ordnance within the Confederacy, as we have seen, the preservation of which is, perhaps, the key to much of the astonishing stubbornness of the Confederate Government to defend that city to the last, was compelled to perform itself every labor which entered into the manufacture of their guns. That is, it was obliged to mine the ore in the mountains, to mine the coal and cut the wood with which to smelt this ore, to transport it to the iron works, and to mine the coal with which to manufacture the guns.*

Thus, Lee, on his promotion, found himself with a barren honor and a useless authority. His appeal to the people to furnish him for his cavalry all saddles, revolvers, pistols, and carbines that might be in their possession is a proof of the extremity to which he had come.

One of the first acts he performed as commander proved how widely he differed from the authorities in Richmond in his views of the situation. Beauregard was in the South endeavoring, with such troops as could be mustered, to hold Sherman at bay; but the force under his hand was hopelessly inadequate for the task. Lee had Johnston reinstated in command, from which he

* Address of Colonel Archer Anderson on the Tredegar Company.

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had been so disastrously removed by the Southern President in the preceding July at the clamor of the South Atlantic States, panic-stricken by his Fabian policy. Lee's reason was unanswerable. "Beauregard has a difficult task to perform," he said to the Secretary of War, "and one of his best officers, General Hardee, is incapacitated by sickness. I have heard that his own health is indifferent; should his health give way there is no one in the department to replace him, nor have I any one to send there. General J. E. Johnston is the only officer I know who has the confidence of the army and the people, and if he were ordered to report to me I would place him there on duty." He was so ordered on the 23d of February, and was placed on duty in command of the Army of the Tennessee and all troops in the department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. But the major portion of the fine army he had commanded in the summer of 1864 had been extirpated on the bloody fields of Franklin and Nashville. Johnston's force before Sherman numbered only 18,761—truly "an army in effigy." With this force, as he wrote Lee, he "could only annoy Sherman, not stop him," for Sherman, after Schofield joined him at Goldsboro, had nearly 90,000 men.

XXI

THE LAST DITCH

LEE now knew that he had but one chance that gave promise of success. This was to withdraw his depleted army from its trenches, where it had wasted away in its long vigil, and, marching around Grant's extended left, head for Danville on the southern border of Virginia, where he could get supplies and where, uniting with Johnston, he might fall on Sherman and destroy him before Grant could come to his rescue. It was a plan which commended itself to both the Southern generals, and Johnston wrote Lee: "You have only to decide where to meet Sherman. I will be near him."

It was a difficult and hazardous undertaking, for his lines extended for over thirty miles so close to the lines of his alert and powerful antagonist that the men in the two armies used to call across to each other and exchange the rough banter of the trenches. A story went the rounds that winter that after one of the movements in which the Confederates had checked decisively the Union advance, they were shouting their exasperating

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triumph across the trenches. At length the hec-toring could be stood no longer and the challenge came back, "Swap generals with us and we'll come over and lick h—l out of you!"

On the face of conditions there were many chances against the successful accomplishment of Lee's design. Lee's army was terribly enfeebled by the hardship of the winter in the trenches with insufficient shelter and food and the strain of constant duty under deadly fire. His men were shadows, his horses wraiths. His wagon-trains were sent as far away as West Virginia and North Carolina in the effort to collect supplies.

Grant, on the other hand, had an army not only more than twice as large, but many times as well nourished and equipped as that with which Lee had held him at bay so long.

But for the indomitable spirit which Lee's force displayed, it might, indeed, have appeared but the shadow of an army which, on the night of April 2, with hushed and silent voices, moved in the darkness from the trenches which they had held so long against their foes.

Another determining factor was Grant himself. He had weathered the storms of the autumn and the winter and now possessed the entire confidence of his superiors at Washington. Sherman's "spec-

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tacular raid," as Schofield termed his "march to the sea," and Sheridan's sweep down the valley and across the Piedmont to Grant's camp on the Appomattox, had shown that the South was now but a shell, emptied of all that had made her formidable. It was known now in Washington that there was no longer any body to those spectral armies whose tramp had been wont to fly on the wings of rumor and keep Washington city in a constant nightmare. Grant had satisfied the authorities that the army of the South-west was no longer a peril, that Sherman could handle Johnston and he himself could crush Lee. He was now as well aware as Lee himself that Lee must soon abandon his defensive line or starve in it; and he prepared to prevent the former by a movement which should envelop and lock him in his trenches and force him to capitulate.

Lee's perception of the situation at this time was expressed by him to the Secretary of War in terms which could not have been clearer had the events he forecast actually occurred. "You may expect," he said to General Breckinridge on February 21, "Sheridan to move down the valley and Stoneman from Knoxville. What, then, will become of those sections of the country? Bragg will be forced back by Schofield, I fear, and until

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I abandon the James River, nothing can be sent from the army. Grant is preparing to draw out by his left with the intent of enveloping me; he may be preparing to anticipate my withdrawal. Everything of value should be removed from Richmond. The cavalry and artillery are still scattered for want of provender, and our supply and ammunition trains, which ought to be with the army in case of a sudden movement, are absent collecting provisions and forage in West Virginia and North Carolina. You will see to what straits we are reduced."

"To what straits," indeed!

To his wife, who had sent him "a bag of socks for the army," he wrote on the same day: "You will have to send down your offerings as soon as you can and bring your work to a close, for I think General Grant will move against us soon—within a week if nothing prevents—and no man can tell what may be the result. But trusting to a merciful God, who does not always give the battle to the strong, I pray we may not be overwhelmed. I shall, however, endeavor to do my duty and fight to the last. Should it be necessary to abandon our position to prevent being surrounded, what will you do? Will you remain or leave the city? You must consider the question and make up

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your mind. It is a fearful condition and we must rely for guidance and protection upon a kind providence." *

Thus, notwithstanding the odds against him, Lee, trusting in God and reliant on the heroic remnant of his army that remained, believed that he could extricate his army from the enveloping meshes of Grant's steadily extending lines and effect a union with Johnston. He so notified the government in Richmond early in March, and it was understood that he would move as soon as the roads would admit of his doing so.

The suggestion, slight as it was, of a possibility that something might prevent Grant's moving within a week related to a movement which had already taken form in his mind to make one final effort to forestall Grant and possibly surprise and defeat him. Before abandoning his defences and taking this final step which would surrender Richmond, he determined to make one last, desperate attempt to break Grant's line in the hope that, should fortune favor him, he might defeat his resolute antagonist at the very moment when he thought to pluck the fruit of his long waiting. In any event he hoped to compel Grant to withdraw troops from his extended left to protect his right

* Fitzhugh Lee's "Lee," p. 170.

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at the point of attack on his right near the Appomattox. This would, at least, defer the enveloping of Lee's right, which Grant was pushing forward, and would postpone the abandonment of Richmond and give him time till the roads became less impassable.

Arrangements were, therefore, now made to attack the forts on the right of the line held by the Army of the Potomac toward the Appomattox, with a view to seizing Fort Stedman and what were supposed to be a number of forts on the high ground in the rear commanding it, together with the lines on either side. Accordingly, before dawn on the 25th of March, Gordon, who now commanded Ewell's Corps, and who, having suggested it, and being eager to make the attempt, had been placed in charge of the movement, massed his men, his own corps with a part of Longstreet's and Hill's, behind the cover of the trenches opposite the Federal intrenchment known as Fort Stedman. At this point the opposing lines were only one hundred and fifty yards apart, and the ditches where the pickets lay only fifty yards apart. Fort Stedman, with three forts beyond it, was to be captured by a dash, and through the breach thus made, Gordon's troops and a large body ordered down by General Lee from Longstreet's Corps

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were to pass, seize the high ground in the rear, and sweep along the intrenchments held by the Ninth Corps, being "joined by the other troops as their fronts were cleared." The cavalry was to pass through the clearing and then "gallop to the rear, destroy Grant's railroad and telegraph lines, and cut away his pontoons across the river, while the infantry swept down the rear of the Union intrenchments."

In the darkness of the hour preceding dawn, Gordon, with three columns, preceded by a storming party of three hundred picked men, and by picked axe-men to cut away the abatis and fraise in front of the Union lines, led by guides, moved out of the Confederate lines, and, having seized and overpowered the pickets without the firing of a shot, rushed on, and, with a dash, captured Fort Stedman, together with a number of supporting batteries. This was accomplished with the loss of only a half dozen men, and the troops swept along the breastworks on either side, capturing cannon and mortars and nearly a thousand prisoners, including those in the fort itself, together with General McLaughlin, its commander. Having been completely successful thus far, they pressed forward with the expectation of seizing the forts in the rear. It happened, however, that what had

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been supposed to be forts open at the gorge, were in fact redoubts that had a commanding fire on both Fort Stedman and also on the lines and open batteries to the right and left. In these redoubts the Ninth Corps was now being concentrated, and as the day broke, its entire force was directed against Gordon's troops in the captured batteries below them. The storming parties had pushed forward and the skirmishers were already at the military railroad and telegraph lines; but in the *mêlée* and the darkness the guides had either deserted or been lost, and the storming parties, finding no forts as they expected, fell into confusion and were either forced back or captured. The large body of troops sent by General Lee from Longstreet's Corps had been delayed by the breaking down of trains and failed to reach Gordon in time to render assistance. Thus, daylight found Gordon with his plans only half executed, and General Parke's prompt concentration of his troops on the heights which commanded the captured batteries prevented further progress; and, more than this, it rendered the lines already seized untenable, for they were subjected to a cross-fire of artillery and infantry. Lee, finding that further advance was impossible, ordered Gordon to retire; but this was far more difficult than the advance had been.

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Both artillery and infantry swept the space beyond the lines and only a portion got back alive, the loss of the Confederates having been very heavy, including 1,949 prisoners, among whom were 71 officers.* Thus, came to a disastrous end one of the most daring, and what promised to be most brilliant, feats in the history of Lee's army.

This was, as General Gordon has well said, the inauguration of the period of more than two weeks of almost incessant battle, which began on the morning of March 25 and ended with the last charge of Lee's army, made likewise by Gordon's men on the morning of April 9 at Appomattox.†

As a sequel to these far-reaching conditions, under the policy of attrition which had gone on from month to month, on the fatal 2d of April, Lee, following an extension of Grant's lines around his flank, which broke his connection with the South and threatened to envelop him, announced to his government that he could no longer maintain the long line from south of Petersburg to north of Richmond.

On the 29th of March, as Lee was preparing to evacuate Petersburg and start south to unite with

* Humphreys' "Virginia Campaign in 1864-65."

† General John B. Gordon, "Reminiscences of the Civil War," pp. 400-413.

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Johnston and attack Sherman, Grant, who was so apprehensive of such a movement that he said he never awoke without expecting to hear that Lee had slipped away, began to move around his right to foil it. To prevent this, Lee was forced to withdraw troops from other parts of his line, and Grant promptly proceeded to take advantage of this fact.

On the 1st of April, following a repulse on the evening before in front of Lee's extreme right, Sheridan attacked and defeated, at Five Forks, Pickett, who had left a long gap of several miles defended only by pickets between his troops and the nearest line. And Grant, having carried Lee's outer defences, ordered a general assault for the next day. Lee, knowing the wasted condition of his army and the impossibility of holding against Grant's contemplated assault his long-stretched line, decided to execute at once, if possible, his plan to abandon the lines he had held for nearly ten months and move southward to effect a junction with Johnston. He notified the government in Richmond, arranged for provisions to meet him at Amelia Court House, and that night executed with skill the difficult feat of extricating his reduced army from its perilous position and started on a retreat southward. Such, in general terms,

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were the steps which led to the abandonment of Richmond.

In more detail these steps were as follows:

As early as the middle of March, Grant issued instructions to the Army of the Potomac for its guidance in anticipation of Lee's abandoning his lines. On the 24th of March he issued orders for a general turning movement to begin on the 29th, by which he proposed to seize the Danville and South-side (or Lynchburg) Railways and turn Lee's right. It was the next day on which Lee attempted unsuccessfully to break his lines at Fort Stedman.

On the 27th Grant held a conference with Sherman, who had come from North Carolina for the purpose, and, unfolding to him his plan for a general movement on the 29th, gave him his instructions. He was to threaten Raleigh, and then, turning to the right, strike the Roanoke River near Weldon, on the North Carolina border, from which point he could move to Burkeville, at the junction of the Danville and the Lynchburg Railways, and intercept Lee's retreat on Danville or Lynchburg, or could join Grant before Richmond.

Grant was now confident of success, and he might well be sanguine. He had 124,700 men ready for duty and 369 guns, while Lee had not

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over 35,000 muskets and perhaps not over 10,000 artillery and cavalry. Humphreys, in his careful and admirable work, "The Virginia Campaign of '64 and '65," states Grant's effective force at the end of March to have been 124,700 men of all arms, and Lee's effective force to have been 57,000 men of all arms. But General Fitzhugh Lee states that he had at that time "35,000 muskets, but after Five Forks and in the encounter of March 31 and April 1 and 2 he had only 20,000 muskets available, and of all arms not over 25,000, when he began the retreat that terminated at Appomattox Court House." *

Whatever the disparity in numbers, Grant's force was so vastly preponderant that he could mass more men at any one point of Lee's line of thirty-odd miles than Lee had in his whole army, and yet threaten with a superior force the entire remainder of those lines. On the 27th, Grant, having determined not to defer his movement till the 29th, as originally planned, but to act at once, despatched Ord with the Army of the James to his extreme left, who, marching by night, was enabled to take position unobserved in the rear of the Second Corps, thirty-six miles from his former

* F. Lee's "Lee," p. 373. E. P. Alexander's "Military Memoirs," p. 590.

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position. Sheridan was ordered next day to cross Hatcher's Run the following morning (the 29th), and proceeding to and beyond Dinwiddie Court House, near which the Second and Fifth Corps would be posted, push on and take a position which would so threaten Lee's right as to force him out of his intrenched lines. If Lee still held his lines, then Sheridan was to proceed against his lines of communication, the Danville and the South-side Railways, and destroy them effectively. This latter alternative was, however, countermanded next day. Humphreys, Warren, and Wright were also set in motion to strengthen Grant's left and carry through the turning movement, and Parke with the Ninth Corps was to occupy Wright's intrenchments when the Sixth Corps should be withdrawn. It was a formidable movement and was so recognized by Lee. But he was prepared to meet it with such force as he had. Having learned, on March 28, that Sheridan's cavalry was held on the left of the Army of the Potomac, Lee at once sent General Anderson with Bushrod Johnson's Division and Wise's Brigade to his extreme right, and brought over from his extreme left, on the north side of the James, Fitz Lee's Cavalry Division, and putting him in command of all the cavalry there, sent him to attack Sheridan, who was moving

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toward the important strategic position of Five Forks, where five roads met some four miles to the westward of Lee's extreme right. Pickett's Division, which under its brave commander had won for itself imperishable fame on the field of Gettysburg, was brought over from the left and sent to the extreme right to support Fitz Lee and protect that threatened portion of the Confederate line. At the same time Hill extended his line to the right from Hatcher's Run, where Lee's extreme right had rested. A road, known as the White Oak Road, runs westerly to the cross-roads at Five Forks, some four miles distant, where the Ford Road crosses it and the road to Dinwiddie Court House, eight miles to the south-east, joins them. Fitz Lee's Cavalry Division arrived at Sutherland Station, on the South-side Railroad, on the night of the 29th, and on the morning of the 30th moved to Five Forks, and thence on down the Dinwiddie Court House Road, where it met and held back Merritt's division, which was on its way to Five Forks. That evening Pickett seized Five Forks with three brigades of his own division—Corse's, Terry's, and Steuart's—and two of Johnson's Brigades—Ransom's and Wallace's—and was joined by Rosser's and W. H. F. Lee's Cavalry Divisions.

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Next day Lee made his last offensive counter move.

It rained heavily on the night of the 29th and all day on the 30th, rendering the clay soil so deep as almost to put a stop to Grant's movement, for at half-past eight o'clock on the 31st, corps commanders were notified that there would be no movement of troops that day.* But not so with Lee. He now knew the force in front of him and before turning his back he would strike one more blow. The Fifth Corps had been pushed forward by Sheridan and lay fronting the White Oak Road, on Warren's suggestion that he might be able to interpose between Pickett at Five Forks and the rest of Lee's army and isolate the former. Lee proposed to take advantage of this, and, in connection with Pickett's attack, turn the left flank of the Fifth Corps with a part of Hill's and Anderson's Corps and roll it up. Accordingly, on the morning of the 31st he sent McGowan's and Gracie's Brigades to attack Warren's flank, while Hunton's and Wise's Brigades were to attack in front. The opposing forces met as they were proceeding with the movements ordered and a sharp battle ensued, in which the Confederates drove Warren's troops beyond a branch of Grav-

* Humphreys' "Virginia Campaign of '64 and '65," p. 330.

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elly Run to the cover of their artillery, with a loss of 1,400 men; but here Humphreys' corps came to their support and the Confederates were in turn driven back to their intrenchments. Lee thought this movement of sufficient importance to direct it in person.

Meantime, on the morning of the 31st, Fitz Lee's Cavalry moved forward on the Dinwiddie Road, where Devin's division was encountered, and while Munford's Brigade was left to hold them, Pickett, with Fitz Lee's other two divisions, W. H. F. Lee's and Rosser's, moved by Little Five Forks to flank Sheridan, and after stiff fighting at the crossings of Chamberlain's Run, which were stoutly held by Crook, Davies, and Gregg, they carried the crossings, and Munford having forced Devin back, they drove back Sheridan's cavalry, which "fought stubbornly," forcing them back to the court-house, where "a spirited and obstinate contest ensued, which lasted until night." * This defeat of Sheridan caused so much uneasiness that Meade hastened to send forward heavy reinforcements of infantry to his aid, and a confusion of orders led to a widening of the breach between the commander of the Fifth Corps and the commander of the Army of the Potomac, which bore disas-

* Humphreys' "Virginia Campaign of '64 and '65," p. 335.

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trous consequences for the former next day. The knowledge that these reinforcements were on the way to Sheridan caused Pickett to withdraw that night to Five Forks, where he posted his command in so isolated a position that it led to its destruction on the following day and contributed to destroy the last chance which Lee might have had to defeat his adversary.

When he retired to Five Forks, Pickett intrenched along the White Oak Road, with the cross-roads near the centre of his line, which extended for nearly a mile on either side, with a short return at the left. This left an interval of some three miles between his left and the extreme right of Lee's regular defensive works at Hatcher's Run. It has been said that the line of battle itself was sufficiently well posted, with W. H. F. Lee's Cavalry guarding the right with three guns of Pegram's battalion, and Munford's Cavalry guarding the left, with McGregor's battery at the return, and with the brigades of Corse, Terry, Steuart, Ransom, and Wallace in order from right to left along the line, supported by three guns at the Forks. But the long interval of three miles between the left and Lee's works was held only by a line of cavalry pickets and offered a temptation to any enterprising enemy. Such a one now commanded the army in front of Five Forks.

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When Sheridan, now reinforced by the Fifth Corps, discovered at daylight of the 1st that the force which had driven him back the day before had been withdrawn from his front, he promptly pushed forward again and advanced to within a short distance of the White Oak Road, where he found Pickett posted along the road in line of battle. Having learned of the weakness of Pickett's line with the long interval left between him and the regular intrenchments of Lee's army, he made his disposition to break through this gap and cut Pickett off from the rest of the army. He directed his cavalry against Pickett's right, and ordered Warren to move forward against Pickett's left, with his troops so disposed as to contain him with a portion of them demonstrating against his front, while with the rest he should cross the White Oak Road, attack the angle of the return on White Oak Road, sweep around through the undefended interval and, wheeling, roll up his left flank. The flank movement was carried through successfully, and though the return on Pickett's left was found farther to the westward than had been supposed, the troops of the Fifth Corps, which had passed through the interval and reached his rear, changed their direction and, after a sharp fight at the angle, swept away his left, capturing over 3,000 prisoners and a number of colors. From

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here they swept on down the breastworks, and though they were held back for a while by the stout resistance offered by the Confederates who formed at right angles to the breastworks and held on stubbornly, they were too strong and overlapped the Confederate line too far to be long withstood.

The contest was, perhaps, too unequal to have been successfully maintained even had the Confederate commander been on the field. But both General Pickett and his cavalry commander, General Fitzhugh Lee, were several miles away, on the north side of Hatcher's Run. Here, by a curious mischance, owing, it is thought, to the conformation of the ground, the heavy forest, and the atmospheric conditions, the sound of the battle did not reach them until after the Confederate left had been flanked and destroyed. It was said that the two generals were engaged, after the arduous and hungry work of the preceding days, in enjoying a meal which some one had provided for them, when a messenger dashed up and informed them of the battle that was raging a few miles away and of the disaster which had befallen the Confederate left. They at once mounted and dashed to the front; but the advance of the Federals had proceeded so far that only General Pick-

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ett, who had gotten his horse first and was in advance, was able to cross the bridge over the stream before it was seized, and General Fitzhugh Lee was compelled to ride up the stream some distance to find a crossing place.

When Pickett arrived on the field he found his left shattered and almost destroyed, with the remnant that had not been captured falling sullenly back along the White Oak and Ford Roads toward Five Forks, with the Federal infantry, both on the flank and rear, pushing them hotly. Ayres's, Griffin's, and Crawford's divisions, under the personal supervision of General Warren, were moving on their rear. Pickett tried to stem the advancing tide by taking Terry's Brigade (commanded now by Colonel Mayo) from the intrenchments to the right and flinging it across the Ford Road to meet the force pushing toward Five Forks on the Confederate rear. Here for a time a stand was made by Mayo's and Ransom's Brigades and McGregor's Battery, which had escaped capture with the left wing; but the point could not now be held, and Mayo was ordered to get his men out and make his way to the South-side Railroad, the guns of the battery falling into the enemy's hands. Pickett, finding that Mayo could not hold his ground, now withdrew Corse also from the in-

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trenchments and placed him at right angles with them to cover the retreat, while Steuart, supported by Pegram's other guns, was still holding on at Five Forks; but they were soon forced to retreat, and the guns, like the others, fell into the enemy's hands, the gallant young Colonel Pegram meeting a soldier's death in his effort to hold on to the last.

Meantime, Custer with two of his brigades had charged the Confederate right, where W. H. F. Lee was holding the line, and had been held back by a counter charge of one of Lee's Brigades in what the historian of "The Virginia Campaign of 1864-65" terms a brilliant encounter, "in which Lee maintained his position." Later Fitzhugh's Brigade of Devin's Division carried the breastworks at Five Forks, capturing the three guns at that point, and Lee was withdrawn to the Southside Railroad, where Fitz Lee was in charge, where he was joined by Munford and the remnant of Pickett's shattered division of infantry. Here they were also joined by Hunton's Brigade of Pickett's Division and later by General R. H. Anderson with three other brigades (Wise's, Gracie's, and Fulton's), whom General Lee, on the announcement of Pickett's defeat, had sent to cover the retreat and to stop the Federal advance around the right wing of his army.

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The historian of "The Virginia Campaign of 1864-65" has stated, in his admirable work on this campaign, that it appeared a grave mistake to him "to require Pickett to fight at Five Forks," instead of allowing him to retire to Sutherland Station, where he could be reinforced at need from Lee's right. The statement would appear to show a misapprehension on his part. Pickett was sent to Five Forks on the 30th to prevent Sheridan's cavalry from seizing the point and destroying the South-side Railroad. At that time there was no infantry force near Dinwiddie Court House. In the battle of the 31st Sheridan was driven back to Dinwiddie Court House and nightfall found Pickett still pressing him back. When during the night, on finding the Fifth Corps coming up on his flank, Pickett withdrew to Five Forks, the situation had so completely changed that he should have promptly notified General Lee of the change, instead of posting his men at the Forks as though it were simply a raiding cavalry force in his front, and going off to the north side of the stream to refresh himself.

The battle of Five Forks was disastrous to the reputation of another gallant soldier and capable general beside the Confederate commander. At nightfall that evening General Sheridan, who had

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been expressly authorized to do so by General Grant should his judgment justify it, relieved General Warren of his command and ordered him to report directly to Grant. It was a sad and almost inexplicable termination of a fine career, for, although Warren was later acquitted of most of the charges formulated before the court of inquiry which he demanded, he was laid aside for the rest of the campaign and failed to be present at the close to which he had contributed so much. Sheridan's charge was that Warren did not exert himself to get up his corps as rapidly as he might have done; that later in the attack on Pickett's intrenchments he "became dissatisfied with him"; and that Warren did not exert himself to inspire confidence in his troops. The court's opinion was against there being ground for these charges, for Warren had acted with conspicuous gallantry during a part of the engagement, and it was generally considered among soldiers that the ground of the charges was Warren's "temperament," which had from time to time caused friction with his superior officers. He had done the State much service.

Lee, usually so tolerant of the mistakes of his subordinates, found it hard to forgive the error of Pickett, which cost him so fatal a loss, and but for the complete collapse which followed so soon on

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the disaster of Five Forks, the commander at Five Forks would probably have been called to account for it.

The end was now in sight. The troops sent by Lee on the night of the 1st under Anderson to cover the retreat of Pickett's shattered force weakened Lee's already thinned lines to the breaking point, and Grant was prompt to take advantage of it. Knowing that Lee would endeavor to rescue the remnant of the force that had been routed at Five Forks, and fearing that he might fall upon Sheridan and destroy him, and at the same time might withdraw from Petersburg and retreat to Danville, Grant ordered an attack "all along the line" at daylight next morning. To prevent the first, he ordered Humphreys with the Second Corps to assault Lee's right immediately if "a vulnerable point" could be found, and if not, to send Miles's division to Sheridan's aid. A fierce attack was accordingly made on Lee's intrenchments along his left and the pickets were driven in; but, though the assaults were continued through the night, the lines were held firmly.

The Army of Northern Virginia was but a remnant—less than one thousand men to a mile of its defences; but that remnant, as the next hours proved, was "still formidable."

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Lee recognized that the defeat at Five Forks was the end of his defence of Richmond and that Grant knew it equally well. He knew that it would inspire Grant and his lieutenants to bend every energy to reap the fruits of this signal fortune, and that he would promptly endeavor to overwhelm him and prevent his withdrawal and march on Danville. Accordingly, he prepared, as best he might, to meet the assault which was coming and arrange for his escape from Grant's converging lines. The two generals never handled their forces better.

The night assault on his right by the Second Corps had been repulsed, but with the break of dawn came the flood. The force that had been sent under Anderson to save Pickett's broken troops and bar Grant's progress around his right was away to the westward confronted by Sheridan's cavalry and the Fifth Corps, flushed with the victory of Five Forks. On his extreme right were four of Hill's Brigades commanded by Heth (McGowan's, McRae's, Cook's, and Scales's), and next on his right lay four more brigades of Hill's Corps (Davis's, McComb's, Lane's, and Thomas's) confronting Wright's and Ord's corps. To their left lay Gordon's Corps confronting Parke, who extended from Lee's centre to the extreme left on the Appomattox.

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On Lee's right the cannon had been roaring fitfully all night. On his centre and left they had subsided after midnight, but before the earliest crack of dawn they had begun again with renewed fury, announcing the storm about to break. Before the earliest dawn a signal gun boomed from the darkness in the direction of Fort Fisher, a strong redoubt to the south-west of Petersburg, at the angle where Lee had stopped Grant's endeavor to extend around his right during the winter and had deflected his line to the southward. In a few minutes the troops of the Sixth Corps were found coming out of the darkness, and within a short time a general assault was in progress.* As far to the eastward as the bank of the Appomattox the lines were aflame, for the Army of Northern Virginia, worn to a skeleton, was making its last concerted stand as a whole against the overwhelming number of the Army of the Potomac. It was a day which for daring and resolution was not exceeded by any day in the war.

Accompanied by pioneer parties armed with axes and tools to clear away the abatis and chevaux-de-frise, the columns came on like the waves of the sea. In some places they found that there were no abatis or chevaux-de-frise to cut away—they had been burnt for firewood during the deadly

* Humphreys' "Virginia Campaign in 1864-65."

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rigor of winter to keep the men in the trenches from freezing, or had been opened to give the troops within the trenches "convenience of access to the front." In some places at the point of Wright's attack on the right there were hardly more muskets than a double picket line to oppose the enemy. Yet these with the artillery in the redoubts made a stout defence before they were overwhelmed and their line carried. The commander of the Sixth Corps reckoned that he lost over 1,000 men in fifteen minutes. Lee's line, however, was pierced, and, leaving a brigade to hold the point, the enemy turned down the intrenchments and captured guns and prisoners as far as Hatcher's Run. While they were thus engaged, Wilcox made a gallant effort to recover the line and drove out the brigade left to hold it, but was in turn driven out again by the heavy reinforcements of Porter's division and two of Turner's brigades of the Twenty-sixth Corps. Thus fought to the end the Army of Northern Virginia.

The piercing of this line forced Lee to bend his right back to the bank of the Appomattox to close the approach to Petersburg to the force which, having broken through his line, was now heading for the city. So close had they come that General A. P. Hill rode into a party of "stragglers," and,

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as he turned to escape, was shot and killed by them.

Meantime, on Lee's left, his line had to meet a similar assault where Parke's corps on the Jerusalem Plank Road, pursuing the same plan, advanced at dawn with pioneers in front and, breaking through the abatis on either side of Fort Sedgwick, swarmed over the outer works and captured the guns in them and also some 800 prisoners. They found it, however, "a man's fight", every traverse had to be carried, and then the remnant of the defenders fell back to an inner line where Gordon not only maintained himself, but kept them busy during the rest of the day and into the night defending the outer line, which they had captured against his attempts at recapture.

Opposite the fort, at a point near what was known as the Crow House, on Lee's right and to the eastward of the Boydton Plank Road, was Humphreys' corps, the Second Corps. It had carried the picket line the evening before, but had been stopped by the strong and stoutly held defences in their front. On the morning of the 2d, having been notified by Meade that Wright and Parke both had broken through Lee's lines, General Humphreys made another assault and this time was successful, capturing the works with the

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guns and a part of the garrison. He now undertook to follow the retreating brigades under Heth, which had been cut off when Wright broke through Lee's line; but Meade directed him against Petersburg, and leaving General Miles's division to hold Heth, as Miles said he could do, Humphreys turned toward Petersburg with his other two divisions. Miles, ever bold, and now flushed with victory, attacked Heth's force, which, on finding itself thus pressed, turned on him, and although two gallant assaults were made, he was driven back each time, and it was not until the Confederate force was completely flanked that it yielded. Heth meantime had been called to Petersburg to take command of Hill's Corps on the death of that gallant commander.

When the commanders of the Second and Sixth Corps headed their commands for Petersburg it might have appeared to them that with the propulsive force of the victory of the morning they would be able to sweep straight on to the heart of the town. But Lee was an engineer as well as a soldier. He had long foreseen the issue of this day, and he had an inner line laid down for this contingency. In the crisis of the last few days Lee had endeavored to strengthen his weakened lines to the westward by bringing Longstreet from

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the north side of the James, where he commanded, to help defend the chief points of attack. On his extreme right where the lines "closed on the Appomattox" the main lines were protected by a creek (Old Town Creek), while a half-mile or more to the front lay advanced works in which were two redoubts, Forts Gregg and Whitworth, which commanded the ground about them, including the forks into which the Boydton Plank Road divides as it approaches Petersburg. They were not large nor heavily garrisoned, only some two hundred and fifty men and two or three guns in each, but the men were picked men and were put there for a purpose and they knew it. That purpose was the same which held the Spartans at Thermopylæ. In Fort Gregg were detachments from two of Hill's Brigades (Thomas's and Lane's) and one of Gordon's (Harris's). The remainder of Harris's Brigade was in Fort Whitworth, which lay nearest to the Appomattox. In the main line of works, stretching on either side, lay "Field's Division of Longstreet's Corps, two of Gordon's Brigades, and some of Wilcox's troops." Against these lines were now thrown the columns of Ord and Wright. Foster's division of Gibbon's corps charged Fort Gregg, but found it more stoutly defended than they had counted on, and on their repulse Tur-

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ner's brigades were sent to their support. The fight for these forts was one of the most desperate of the whole war, and when finally Gibbon's men poured over the parapet of Fort Gregg, which had been almost completely surrounded, they left the space about it like that in front of Fort Whitworth, strewn with the dead and wounded, and the remainder of the garrison that was left alive within the fort was not conquered until after "several determined dashes with the bayonet."

With the fall of Fort Gregg, Fort Whitworth, attacked as it was, was no longer tenable, and Wilcox withdrew such of the garrison as survived to the main lines.

The possession of these commanding forts by the enemy rendered these lines no longer tenable against the overwhelming forces massed against them, with the impulse of victory upon them, and the end of the long struggle for the possession of this gateway of Richmond was now a matter of but a few hours.

General Gibbon, who declared that the assault upon Fort Gregg was one of the most desperate of the war, reckoned his own losses, most of which occurred around these two works, at 714 officers and men.

Thus, even to the last, the Army of Northern

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Virginia showed the temper which Lee had given it in his three years' training, and, overwhelmed by sheer might, fought for every foot of ground before yielding. By a little after sunrise Lee knew that Petersburg and Richmond were lost and that it was all he would be able to do to hold on till night and try to save his army. He so notified President Davis, and advised that Richmond should be evacuated simultaneously with the withdrawal of his troops that night. His telegram was handed to Mr. Davis in St. Paul's Church during the morning service as he was about to take the communion. He immediately left the church.

It was recognized instantly that something unusual had occurred, and in a short time it was further known from the sinister preparations for its abandonment that Richmond, which through Lee's genius had held out for four years against every assault of war, was lost.

That night the high officials of the Confederate Government left Richmond for Danville. Such military stores and equipment as remained there were destroyed, and from the fire a large part of Richmond was burnt over, thus adding to the terrors of evacuation the horrors of a vast conflagration.

While Richmond was not unnaturally in a panic and the Confederate Government in confusion,

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Lee himself, lying in the face of an overwhelming army in the flush of final victory, was as serene as if he were the victor himself. At three o'clock in the afternoon, Lee wrote Mr. Davis a letter which not only casts a vivid light on the general situation, but shows the serenity and indomitable character of his mind. It deals first with the matter of recruiting negro troops, then reports Pickett's defeat at Five Forks, and finally states his own views as to the abandonment of the James River line.

PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA, 3 P. M., *April 2, 1865.*

HIS EXCELLENCY, JEFFERSON DAVIS,
Richmond, Virginia.

Mr. President: Your letter of the 1st is just received. I have been willing to detach officers to recruit negro troops, and sent in the names of many who are desirous of recruiting companies, battalions, or regiments, to the War Department. After receiving the general orders on that subject establishing recruiting depots in the several States, I supposed that this mode of raising the troops was preferred. I will continue to submit the names of those who offer for the service and whom I deem competent to the War Department; but, among the numerous applications which are presented, it is difficult for me to decide who are suitable for the duty. I am glad your Excellency has made an appeal to the governors of the States,

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and hope it will have a good effect. I have a great desire to confer with you upon our condition, and would have been to Richmond before this, but, anticipating movements of the enemy which have occurred, I felt unwilling to be absent. I have considered our position very critical, but have hoped that the enemy might expose himself in some way that we might take advantage of and cripple him. Knowing when Sheridan moved on our right that our cavalry would be unable to resist successfully his advance upon our communications, I detached Pickett's Division to support it. At first Pickett succeeded in driving the enemy, who fought stubbornly; and, after being reinforced by the Fifth Corps (United States Army), obliged Pickett to recede to the Five Forks on the Dinwiddie Court House and Ford's Road, where, unfortunately, he was yesterday defeated. To relieve him, I had to again draw out three brigades under General Anderson, which so weakened our front line that the enemy last night and this morning succeeded in penetrating it near the Cox Road, separating our troops around the town from those on Hatcher's Run. This has enabled him to extend to the Appomattox, thus enclosing and obliging us to contract our lines to the city. I have directed the troops from the lines on Hatcher's Run, thus severed from us, to fall back toward Amelia Court House, and I do not see how I can possibly help withdrawing from the city to the north side of the Appomattox to-night. There is no bridge over the Appomattox

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above this point nearer than Goode's and Bevil's over which the troops above mentioned could cross to the north side and be made available to us; otherwise I might hold this position for a day or two longer, but would have to evacuate it eventually, and I think it better for us to abandon the whole line of James River to-night if practicable. I have sent preparatory orders to all the officers, and will be able to tell by night whether or not we can remain here another day, but I think every hour now adds to our difficulties. I regret to be obliged to write such a hurried letter to your Excellency, but I am in the presence of the enemy, endeavoring to resist his advance.

I am most respectfully and truly yours,
R. E. LEE, *General*.

No one of all Lee's letters casts more light on his character than this. If any question as to the final result lurked in his mind, it is not revealed here. On this last day of the defence of Richmond, he deals with the questions submitted to him relating to his army quite as he might have dealt with them on the morning after Seven Pines, when he first assumed command. In the letter speaks the constant soul of the South, to which she is entitled for all that she has achieved in the history of the country.

From this letter it will be seen that even to the last hour Lee clung tenaciously to his lines to give

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the Confederate Government time to withdraw from Richmond. Nothing is more characteristic of him than the courtesy with which he closes this last despatch to the President of the Confederacy, at the very moment when the overwhelming forces of the enemy were sweeping over his last lines of defence.

It is the same spirit which animated him when, at Appomattox, a week later, as he surrendered to Grant, he attired himself as if he were to review his troops.

His letters show his entire appreciation of the difficulty and peril of his situation; but there is not a trace of dismay in all his writing. Never more than now, when he made his last move in the great game of war, did the *mens æqua in arduis*, that mark of noble minds, which ever distinguished him, shine forth in him.

His letter to his wife, on the eve of the movement which was to prove the closing act in the great drama of the war, reflects his serenity amid the rising difficulties which were soon to engulf him. He thanks her for the socks she had knitted for his barefooted and suffering men, encloses for her a life of General Scott, for whom he had a word of old-time affection and esteem, and commends her to God.

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That night he executed successfully the difficult movement to which he referred and withdrew his famished troops from their long-held and historic intrenchments.*

* "The Siege of Petersburg," Captain W. Gordon McCabe.
"Memorial Volume of Army of Northern Virginia."

XXII

THE RETREAT TO APPOMATTOX

BY nightfall Lee knew that he could no longer remain on the James for another day, and he devoted all his energies to extricating his army. At eight o'clock he began to withdraw from the trenches, and it was late in the night before the last of his infantry moved like shadows through the darkness from the trenches in which valor had made its long and desperate stand against the massed forces of the new era. As he was now hemmed in in a great semicircle, with Grant's army resting on the Appomattox both above and below him, it was necessary to cross the Appomattox to the northward, and, passing up the left bank beyond Grant's army, recross the Appomattox to march southward. It must have been after the letter of the 2d was despatched that General Lee issued his final orders for the retreat which was to commence at dark. The artillery was to be withdrawn first, then the infantry. The wagon-trains were to follow parallel roads to avoid impeding the troops. Having withdrawn his troops on the south side from the lines, he crossed

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the Appomattox in the darkness by the pontoon bridge and the Pocahontas and railway bridges. Longstreet crossed first with Field's Division, Heth's and Wilcox's Divisions of Hill's Corps, and turned up the river. "Bevil's Bridge," which General Lee mentions in his last letter to Mr. Davis, was "out of order," but at Goode's Bridge a pontoon was laid and the army recrossed here to the south bank. Next to Longstreet, who moved by the river road, was Gordon, who followed what was known as the Hickory Road, and next to him came Mahone's Division, which passed through Chesterfield Court House.

So close were the lines of the two armies that Ewell, who commanded the troops to the north of the James, was unable to withdraw until after the moon went down. The wagon-trains on the north side of the James were sent up in the afternoon of the 2d to cross at Richmond, and General G. W. C. Lee, at Chaffin's Bluff, crossed the James at Wilton's Bridge, while Kershaw, with Gary's Cavalry Brigade, dismounted, crossed at Richmond, uniting on the night of the 3d near Tomahawk Church. This column was headed for the railroad bridge at Mattoax Station, on the Richmond and Danville Railroad, which had been repaired for the passage of artillery and troops.

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The Appomattox was reached and crossed on the night of the 4th, and the following day the column, which was joined by the naval battalion under Commodore Tucker and the artillery battalion from Howlett's Bluff, moved to the southward to join the rest of Lee's army.

The withdrawal of his army from the immediate contact in which it lay along its whole line with Grant's great army, with every sense quickened and every nerve strained tense to prevent it, was one of the most skilful movements of Lee's career. On the morning of the 3d of April he had crossed and recrossed the Appomattox with the troops from Petersburg, and having been joined by the other troops, was headed for Amelia Court House, on the Danville Railway, where he had, as stated, ordered supplies to be forwarded from Lynchburg. Everything appeared propitious for the success of the movement, for the troops from the north side of the James followed the next day and reached him duly. But again, by one of the strange fatalities which so often appeared to frustrate the best-laid plans of the Confederate leaders, an unkind fate prevented his success. When he arrived at Amelia Court House, where he should have found his supplies, it was found that the supply train which he had ordered had, indeed,

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been sent, but by some curious and inexplicable misadventure had been ordered away, and had left hours before. Even if his men, inured to hunger, could stagger on without food, it was imperatively necessary to get feed for his horses, and a day was spent in scouring the already well-swept region to find forage and food, a day which under propitious circumstances should have placed him well beyond the power of Grant to overtake him with sufficient force to hold him. But not less fateful than this was the curious fact that for a third time Lee's complete plan had fallen into the hands of his opponent and had disclosed to him full information as to his movements. As on the upper Rappahannock, in the summer of 1862, Pope accidentally received information of his plan to cut him off from his communications, and, before Sharpsburg, McClellan, through an accident, got a copy of his plans which led to his advance against him in the South Mountains, so now Grant by a similar fortune came into possession of Lee's entire plan of retreat on Danville. It is stated on the authority of General G. W. C. Lee that on the morning of the 3d, when the Federal troops took possession of Richmond, there was found in some place a letter from Lee which gave his entire route and plan of retreat. This despatch was promptly

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transmitted to General Grant, and enabled him to counter every move that Lee made and eventually overhaul and surround him with his overwhelming force.* General G. W. C. Lee's account of it is as follows:

After I was taken prisoner at Sailor's Creek, with the greater part of the commands of General Ewell and General Dick Anderson, and was on my way to Petersburg with the officers of the three commands, we met the United States engineer brigade under command of General Benham, whom I knew prior to the breaking out of the war as one of the captains of my own corps—the engineers.

He did not apparently recognize me, and I did not make myself known to him; but he began talking to General Ewell, in a loud tone of voice which could be distinctly heard by all around.

I heard General Benham say, among other things, that "General Weitzel had found, soon after his entrance into Richmond, a letter from General Lee, giving the condition of the Army of Northern Virginia and what he proposed to do should it become necessary to withdraw from the lines before Richmond and Petersburg, and that the letter was immediately sent to General Grant." In answer to some doubt expressed by General

* Mrs. Davis's "Memoir of Jefferson Davis," II, p. 595; also "A Soldier's Recollections," by Dr. R. H. McKim, pp. 265-267.

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Ewell or some one else, General Benham replied, "Oh, there is no doubt about the letter, for I saw it myself."

I received the impression at the time, or afterward, that this letter was a confidential communication to the Secretary of War in answer to a resolution of the Confederate Congress asking for information in 1865. When I mentioned this statement of General Benham to General Lee, some time afterward, the latter said, "This accounts for the energy of the enemy's pursuit. The first day after we left the lines he seemed to be entirely at sea with regard to our movements; after that, though I never worked so hard in my life to withdraw our army in safety, he displayed more energy, skill, and judgment in his movements than I ever knew him to display before."

G. W. C. LEE.

[A true copy.]

It was not until about three o'clock in the morning of the 3d of April that Grant discovered that Lee had slipped away from his front. There were two routes by which Lee's design of joining Johnston might possibly be accomplished: one, the more direct route, by way of the Richmond and Danville Railroad, the other by way of Lynchburg. Grant took as efficient means as possible to provide for both contingencies; but which route Lee would follow would have been a mere con-

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jecture unless Grant had received the intelligence that he had selected Amelia Court House as his first objective point.

Thus, the letter stating that Lee would march on Amelia Court House, where he expected to receive supplies, gave Grant precisely the information he needed and enabled him to concentrate all of his energies to seize this point and cut Lee off from the direct route to Danville. Leaving to subordinates the entry into Richmond, the aspiration and destruction of so many hopes, he with characteristic directness applied himself to the work of capturing Lee's force. After a brief interview with Lincoln in Petersburg early in the morning, he proceeded sturdily with the work in hand. Sheridan with the Fifth Corps was directed at daylight to push forward to the westward and, if possible, strike the Danville Railroad between the Appomattox and its point of juncture with the Lynchburg Railroad at Burkeville, some thirty miles to the south-west; while General Meade with the Sixth Corps was to follow Sheridan closely and march on Amelia Court House, and General Ord with the Twenty-fourth Corps and Birney's colored troops and the Ninth Corps was to move directly on Burkeville Junction, along the line of the South-side Railroad.

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Longstreet with the head of Lee's column reached Amelia Court House on the afternoon of the 4th of April. Gordon was but four or five miles behind. Mahone's "fine division" was ten or twelve miles away. Anderson, with Fitz Lee guarding his rear, was at Deep Creek, some ten miles distant, where, after a sharp engagement between Custer and Fitz Lee at Nimosine Church, to the eastward, Fitz Lee made a stand "in a strong defensive position," with Wise's and Hunton's Brigades in support, and though sharply attacked, held back Merritt and gave Anderson time to march on to Amelia, which he reached next morning, the 5th. The last of Lee's troops, Ewell's force from the lines beyond the James, including the naval battalion, arrived about noon.

Mahone's Division was now assigned to Longstreet, while Anderson retained Bushrod Johnson's Division and what remained of Pickett's Division. The naval battalion remained with G. W. C. Lee's Division.

Sheridan's advance guard did not strike the Richmond and Danville Railway on the 4th until the late afternoon, when Griffin reached the line at Jetersville and Crook struck it at a point some miles south of Jetersville, toward Burkeville Junc-

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tion. Here Sheridan learned of Lee's presence at Amelia Court House, eight miles away.

The Fifth Corps intrenched to await reinforcements, while Mackensie of the Twenty-fifth Corps advanced his cavalry to within four miles of the Court House.

The Second and Sixth Corps, having to give way to the cavalry, did not reach Deep Run until night, and the first of them did not reach Jetersville till in mid-afternoon of the 5th, while the Sixth was yet later.

Had Lee been able to procure rations at Amelia as he had expected, he might have brushed aside the cavalry force which Sheridan interposed between him and Burkeville and have continued his march to Danville, with the Danville Railroad to keep him supplied, and thus, probably, have escaped. As it was, he marched on the 5th straight for Danville, certain that he could sweep Sheridan from his path. Precious hours, however, had been lost and Sheridan had now been reinforced. Learning from his cavalry (W. H. F. Lee's) division that "Sheridan had been heavily reinforced," he countermarched a short distance and turned westward on the road to Farmville, by way of Amelia Springs, Deatonsville, and Rice's Station.

With this in view Lee, selecting a few of the

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best-equipped battalions of artillery to accompany the troops, had sent the rest of his artillery (under General Lindsay Walker) toward Lynchburg by a road lying to the north-west of that which the infantry followed, and his wagon-train moved on his right flank by a road yet nearer the Appomattox. The infantry and cavalry thus protected the artillery and wagon-trains. That afternoon, however, Crook's cavalry, scouting toward the Appomattox to ascertain Lee's lines of march, came on and destroyed one of these wagon-trains. It is said that General Lee's head-quarters wagon with most of his papers was among those thus destroyed.

General Lee, himself, stated, however, that all his "records, reports, returns, etc., with the head-quarters of the army were needlessly destroyed by the clerks having them in charge on the retreat from Petersburg, and such as had been forwarded to the War Department in Richmond were either destroyed in the conflagration or captured at the South in the attempt to save them." * General Fitzhugh Lee's head-quarters wagon was burned, which probably gave rise to the report that General Lee's wagon had been destroyed.

* Letter to W. B. Reid, of Philadelphia, Pa., in "Recollections and Letters of General Lee," by R. E. Lee, p. 219.

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Lee, having turned toward Lynchburg, marched all the night of the 5th, hoping to get beyond the possibility of being overtaken, and by morning had passed beyond Grant's left on the Danville Road, where he had been disposing his advanced corps to attack him. Longstreet, who was in front, had by sunrise reached Rice's Station, on the Lynchburg Road, where he was soon joined by General Lee, and later by Fitz Lee's Cavalry from Amelia Springs, while Anderson, Ewell, and Gordon were following in the order named. General Meade, who had been marching on Amelia Court House, finding that Lee had passed him, turned the Army of the Potomac about and started westward in pursuit, heading the Second Corps, with the Sixth following it, for the cross-roads at Deatonsville, the Fifth Corps, by the road for Paineville, on its right.

Although Lee had again passed beyond Grant, he could not keep ahead of him, for his army was now in a state of complete exhaustion, exhaustion of everything save the spirit of fight. This they retained in full measure, as they were ready to show on every occasion which presented itself. The attack on Petersburg began on the night of the 1st. It was now the 6th, and there had not been an hour's cessation of the struggle. With

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frames enfeebled by the long strain of the winter, in constant battle-line in the trenches without adequate food or shelter, they had now been fighting or marching through bottomless mud for five days without food save what could be secured by foraging in the naked region through which they passed.

On the road to Deatonsville, beyond Flat Creek, Gordon, who was covering Lee's rear, found himself harassed by a pursuing force which proved to be the Sixth Corps, and all day this gallant command fought as it marched to hold back the pursuers and give Lee time to save the army. Every defensive position in the broken country was seized and held until it was carried by assault, when they would fall back only to repeat the manoeuvre at the next opportunity. But the losses were heavy and the strain on the men disheartening.

About four miles west of the cross-roads at Deatonsville a stream known as "Sailor's Creek" runs northward through a little valley to the Appomattox, and on the higher land on the east side above the valley the road from Deatonsville to Rice's Station and Farmville divides, one fork running northward above the valley, the other keeping on west across the creek to Rice's Station.

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Here Anderson formed line of battle, covering the cross-roads for which Sheridan, with tireless energy, was pushing with a view to cutting off the trains which moved on Lee's right. Crook attacked him here about noon, hoping to break through and strike the trains, but was driven back, and here later Merritt came up and with Crook made another assault, only to be again beaten off by Anderson, who was now reinforced by the advance troops of Ewell. Every move was now in the face of the enemy, and it was necessary to cover and protect the baggage trains on the right, so that the Confederate forces were disastrously impeded. The men were exhausted, and many were unable, from want of food and sleep, to stand on their feet. Gordon, guarding the rear, arrived at the fork above Sailor's Creek a little later, and Anderson, relieved of the guard of the cross-roads, continued his march and, followed by Ewell, crossed the creek by the direct road to Rice's Station, while Gordon, who stood guard during the passage of the trains, after they had crossed moved along the eastern fork of the road to cross the creek at Perkinson's mill, a few miles lower down Sailor's Creek, on the road to Farmville by High Bridge, the point at which the Lynchburg Railway crossed the Appomattox and

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where there was a wagon bridge. His pursuit was taken up by the Second Corps, while Sheridan followed the troops on the Rice's Station Road, with the Sixth Corps behind him. Ewell, following Anderson, having crossed the creek on the direct road to Rice's Station, was hotly pursued by the Sixth Corps and Sheridan's cavalry, and formed on a crest on the west side to cover the road, Kershaw on his right, G. W. C. Lee on his left, the navy battalion in reserve.

Sheridan, having pushed across the creek and passed beyond the Confederates, posted his cavalry across the road to Rice's Station, in front of Anderson, while Wright's corps (the Sixth) formed line of battle across the creek and opened with artillery on Ewell, on the crest on the opposite side. The latter had only some 3,000 men and no artillery and was in the act of preparing to unite with Anderson to dislodge the cavalry from his front when the Sixth Corps came upon them. Seymour's and Wheaton's divisions attacked them in flank, Getty in front, with the artillery sweeping them with a deadly fire, and Sheridan's dismounted cavalry in their rear. It was one of the most furious fights of the war, finally becoming a hand-to-hand conflict in which the Confederates, though surrounded and without artillery, fought

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with desperation; but the issue could not be doubtful, and finally, surrounded on all sides by overwhelming numbers and their ranks decimated by the fire from every direction, almost the whole of Ewell's command surrendered, as did nearly half of Anderson's command. The rest, some 250 of Kershaw's Division, who promptly formed a battalion, and about half of Anderson's men, made their way to Rice's Station, having been met on the road by Mahone's Division, which Longstreet sent back to their assistance. The losses comprised, of Ewell's command, some 3,000 men, and of Anderson's command, nearly as many more, and included six generals captured, viz., Generals Ewell, Kershaw, Custis Lee, Dubose, Hunton, and Corse.*

That night (the 6th) Lee moved on to Farmville with the force that remained to him—Longstreet's and Gordon's commands, with the remnant of Ewell's—Fitz Lee's Cavalry bringing up the rear. Longstreet and Fitz Lee crossed the Appomattox at Farmville, Gordon and Mahone at High Bridge, four or five miles below, and marched thence by the railroad line to the town, having only partially destroyed the railroad bridge

* General E. P. Alexander states the losses at 8,000. ("Memoirs," p. 597.)

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before the enemy came up. On the way to the river they met a small force of cavalry under Colonel Washburne and two small regiments of infantry under General Theodore Read, who had been sent forward by Ord to burn the bridges over the Appomattox and were now returning, having been recalled. The small force made a gallant stand to hold back the Confederates, but were soon destroyed, both of the officers named having been killed. But Grant states that their self-devotion enabled him to overtake Lee's army. On the Confederate side General Dearing, Colonel Boston, and Major Thompson were among the killed.

At Farmville rations were found by Lee for the first time since leaving Petersburg, but not all of the troops were served even then, so close on them pushed Sheridan.

Next morning Lee, having destroyed the bridges at Farmville, moved on toward Appomattox on the road to Lynchburg, leaving Grant's main army on the south side of the river, which was nearly unfordable for infantry. Humphreys with the Second Corps, however, was on the north side, having crossed behind Gordon at High Bridge, lower down the river. Gregg's cavalry was with him, while Crook, who had forded the river at Farmville, was now also on the north side.

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Lee was moving toward Lynchburg by the Stage and Plank Roads, when the rear-guard skirmishing, which had been constant all the while, increased about mid-day, revealing a serious attack. Gordon's Corps, which was first assaulted by Barlow, lost some wagons, but gave a good account of itself, driving back the pursuing force. By one o'clock Lee found himself pressed by so large a force that he was forced to form a line of battle to repel the attack, which was successfully done. It was the Second Corps which had come up and was endeavoring to hold him until the Twenty-fourth and Sixth Corps could cross the river and attack their redoubtable foe from toward Lynchburg. Gregg's Brigade, coming up, was charged by Munford and Rosser, and Gregg himself was captured, on which the division was withdrawn. Following Humphreys' lucid account, "he [Miles] suddenly came in contact with the enemy, who opened on him with Poague's sixteen guns; dispositions were at once made for attack, and a heavy skirmish line was pressed close up against the enemy, to develop his position. It was soon found from the prisoners taken that Lee's whole army was present in a strong position covering the Stage and Plank Roads to Lynchburg, which had been intrenched sufficiently for

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cover and had artillery in place. It was on the crest of a long slope of open ground. Fitz Lee's Cavalry was covering their rear toward Farmville, supported by Heth's Infantry. A heavy skirmish line was pressed against the enemy and an attack threatened with the two divisions, both of which were now up, and an unsuccessful attempt was made to take them in flank. Barlow was now sent for and General Meade informed that Lee's whole remaining force, probably about 18,000 infantry, had been come up with, and suggesting that a corps should attack Lee from the direction of Farmville at the same time that the Second Corps attacked from the opposite direction. Upon this General Meade sent directions for General Gibbon with the Twenty-fourth Corps and General Wright with the Sixth Corps, both of which were then near Farmville, to cross the river there and attack jointly with the Second Corps." *

It was plain now to many of the officers that the situation of the remnant that remained of the army was desperate, and while at Farmville a number of the superior officers got together and held a conference at which it was decided that the cause had become so hopeless that they deemed it wrong to continue the killing of men of both sides and that they should not leave on Lee "the entire trial

* "Virginia Campaign of 1864-65," pp. 388, 399.

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of initiating the idea of terms with the enemy." General Gordon communicated the sense of this conference to General Lee's chief of artillery, General William N. Pendleton, who had been at West Point with Lee and stood very close to him, and General Pendleton was requested to consult General Longstreet, and then, if he agreed, to convey their views to General Lee. "At first," says General Pendleton, "General Longstreet dissented, but, on second thought, preferred that himself should be represented with the rest." General Pendleton, therefore, sought Lee, who was found "lying alone, resting at the base of a large pine tree." Lee listened quietly, "and then courteously expressing thanks for the considerations of his subordinates in desiring to relieve him in part of existing burdens," said that he trusted it had not come to that; that they certainly had too many brave men to think of laying down their arms. "They still fight with great spirit," he added, "whereas the enemy does not. And besides, if I were to intimate to General Grant that I would listen to terms, he would at once regard it as such an evidence of weakness that he would demand unconditional surrender, and sooner than that I am resolved to die. Indeed, we must all determine to die at our posts."

Pendleton's reply to him was that they were

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perfectly willing that he should decide the question, and that every man would no doubt cheerfully meet death with him in discharge of duty.*

Grant, however, knew as well as Lee's generals to what desperate straits the retreating Confederates were reduced. He knew, further, that while their cause was hopeless, they "still fought with spirit," and he knew that his pursuing force was rapidly getting beyond the reach of supplies. He had no desire to insist on hard terms. What he wished for was peace through the ending of the war. Accordingly, within twenty-four hours of the time when Lee stated to his chief of artillery his conviction that a request to Grant for terms would bring the same reply which had been given by him at Fort Donelson three years before, Grant himself made overtures to him that he should surrender the remnant of his army on honorable terms.

General Grant states that having heard at Farmville of a remark of General Ewell's as to the condition of Lee's army, and having received from Sheridan a letter saying that he was on the way to Appomattox Station to cut off some supply trains which were there awaiting Lee's arrival,

* "Life of William N. Pendleton," by S. P. Lee, p. 402. Fitzhugh Lee's "Life of Lee," p. 392.

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the two facts led him to open negotiations with Lee for his surrender.

Some historians have undertaken to assert that "the conditions were not unequal: that Lee might have withdrawn his army and effected a junction with Johnston, but was outgeneralled by Grant." To support this claim they assign to Lee the highest number of men that by any computation could possibly be assigned to him and take no account of the absent and the disabled.

The latest of these historians, and among the most broad-minded of the class, has assigned to Lee at the beginning of his retreat 49,000 men, against Grant's 113,000, and declares that with "the game escape or surrender the conditions were not unequal, and Lee was simply outgeneralled." *

Conditions can scarcely be said to have been not unequal, when Grant, as commander of all the Northern armies, had nearly 1,000,000 men under his command, and Lee, as commander of the Southern armies, had less than 200,000 under his command. If Lee was simply outgeneralled some change must have taken place in the two men, since, with an army never more than 10,000 in excess of the numbers assigned him here,† Lee

* Rhodes's "History," vol. V.

† In fact, the 49,000 was before the great losses at the end of February.

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fought through the month of May, 1864, Grant's army of 140,000, defeated him in battle after battle from the Wilderness to Petersburg, caused him losses of 124,000 men, and must have destroyed him but for his inexhaustible resources of men and munition.

But, by the records, the statement quoted is erroneous, and, laying aside the imperfect records of the Confederate army, the evidence is beyond question that when Lee began his retreat he had only about half of the number of men assigned to him by these historians. Colonel Walter H. Taylor, of his staff, estimates that Lee had, on March 31, 33,000 muskets, and General Lee told General Fitz Lee that he had at that time 35,000 men; "but after Five Forks and in the encounters of March 31, April 1 and 2 he had only 20,000 muskets available, and of all arms not over 25,000 when he began the retreat that terminated at Appomattox Court House." *

Whatever may be the numbers shown on records scatteringly made, and, at best, most imperfect, Lee's statement for those who know him settles the question.

But even these men were little more than spectres. Ill-fed, ill-clad, kept for ten months on

* Fitzhugh Lee's "Life of Lee," p. 373.

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a constant strain in the face of an army that might at any time mass treble their number on either flank; stretched in a line thirty-five miles in length, every point of which it was vital to hold; wasted by hunger, disease, and cold, these veterans made no plea of being outnumbered. Under Lee they answered every demand and held Grant at bay until not only subsistence, but hope of subsistence, perished.

Even at the last, when Lee recrossed the Appomattox to the south side beyond Grant's lines and directed his course for Amelia Court House, to which point he had ordered provisions to be sent to meet him, had his orders been obeyed, it is the opinion of many competent critics that he might have eluded Grant's pursuit, prompt and efficient as it was. But no provisions were there. Some one had blundered. It appears that a provision train had arrived on April 1, but had been fatuously ordered to Richmond. However it was, a day was lost in the effort to obtain subsistence from the depleted countryside for his famished army, men and horses, and in the interval Grant was enabled to come up, and thenceforth, in the light of subsequent events, further retreat was unavailing. From this moment it was merely a question of whether the endurance of his starving

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force would hold out to march and fight until he had outstripped Grant with his preponderant force possessed of ample subsistence and baggage trains. So great was the confidence of his men in Lee that many of them believed that the retreat was a movement designed by him to draw Grant from his base of supplies with a view to turning on him and destroying him.

Every step was in face of the enemy massing in force under the able direction of men like Meade, Ord, and Sheridan. The fighting was almost hourly, and, while fortune varied, the balance of success was largely with the pursuing forces.

So denuded was the country of all that would sustain life, that men thought themselves well off when a corn-house was found with grain yet left in it and corn was distributed to them to be parched. Even this was not always to be had, and as corn was necessary for the artillery horses, guards were posted where they fed to prevent the men from taking it from the horses. They were reduced to the necessity of raking up the scattered grains from the ground where the horses had been fed and even to picking the grains from the droppings of the horses. Many of the men became too weak to carry their muskets. Small wonder that they dropped out of the ranks by hundreds! Yet, still the remainder kept on, with

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unwavering courage, unwavering devotion, and unwavering faith in their commander.

In their rags and tatters, ill-clad, ill-shod, ill-fed, ill-armed, and, whenever armed, armed for the most part with the weapons they had captured from brave foes on hard-fought battle-fields, they were the abiding expression of Southern valor and fortitude; the flower of Southern manhood; the pick of every class; the crystallized residue of the Army of Northern Virginia, with which Lee had achieved his fame and on which to future ages shall rest the fame of the South.

Like a wounded lion that spent and wasted army dragged itself across the desolated land, now turning at bay and at every turn leaving its deep mark on its pursuers, now retreating again without haste or fear, and simply in obedience to the instinct of self-preservation, and, at the last, sinking with exhaustion, with crest unlowered, heart undaunted, and face steadfastly set to the foe. As we contemplate their constancy we can but recall Pericles' words over the Athenian dead in the Peloponnesian war: "Thus choosing to die resisting rather than to live submitting, they fled only from dishonor, but met danger face to face, and after one brief moment, while at the summit of their fortune, escaped, not from their fear, but from their glory."

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The spring rains had made the roads so deep in that region of deep roads as to be wellnigh impassable to the well-equipped troops of Grant, and operations, just before the evacuation of Richmond, had once to be suspended. To Lee's ill-fed teams they became at times actually impassable, and batteries had to be abandoned because the exhausted horses could not longer pull the guns. In some cases the artillerymen armed themselves with muskets picked up on the march and were formed into infantry companies. But in face of Grant's capital generalship, using his great army to best advantage, attacking and capturing bodies of troops day after day, the end could no longer be doubtful.

Long before, in writing to one of his brothers from Mexico, where he contributed so much to the brilliant victories which ended in the capture of the Mexican capital, Lee had said: "We have the right, by the laws of war, of dictating the terms of peace and requiring indemnity for our losses and expenses. Rather than forego that right, except through a spirit of magnanimity for a crushed foe, I would fight them ten years, but I would be generous in exercising it." *

* Letter to his brother, Sidney Smith Lee, March 4, 1848, cited in Jones's "Life and Letters of Lee," p. 57.

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Would it not be likely that this letter should recur to him in this crisis of his life?

In another letter he says, in referring to the terms of peace: "These are certainly not hard terms for Mexico, considering how the fortune of war has been against her. For myself, I would not exact more than I would have taken before the commencement of hostilities, as I should wish nothing but what was just." *

The continuous fighting held Lee back and enabled Sheridan, followed by Ord, marching by a parallel route, to reach Appomattox Station before him and bar his further progress.

This was the end. The final scene has been depicted so often that there is no need to repeat it here for information, and yet the story of Lee and of Grant is not complete without it. In the two weeks between Lee's desperate effort to break Grant's right and their personal meeting at Appomattox, where Lee's surrender took place, both Lee and Grant reached their zenith. In Lee every high quality which had enabled him to carry the Confederacy on his shoulders for more than two years shone forth. In Grant noble and hitherto

* Letter cited in Jones's "Lee," p. 54. John Russell Young once told the writer that Grant stated to him that he could not have kept up his pursuit a half day longer.

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unsuspected qualities discovered themselves. At the end he stood forth the Grant of the monuments. If magnanimity be a test, then Americans may well be proud of the victor at Appomattox; if dignity be a test, then Americans may well be proud of the vanquished at Appomattox. History there repeated itself, so that it may be truly said, as was said of Caractacus in the triumphal train of Vespasian, that the dignity of the conquered eclipsed the glory of the conqueror.

In the late afternoon of the 7th of April, General Grant penned his first letter to General Lee, asking the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia. This letter was sent by his adjutant-general, General Seth Williams, to General Humphreys, commanding the Second Corps, who was on the front line in immediate touch with the Confederate rear, and General Humphreys was requested to have it delivered to General Lee. He states that he "sent it at once through his picket line, at the same time authorizing a truce for an hour at that point," in accordance with a request that had been made him by the Confederates to enable them to gather up their wounded that were lying between the lines. This letter was received by Lee about half-past eight in the evening. General Lee's answer was sent back to him within an

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hour, and, having been delivered to General Williams, was taken at once to General Grant, who was at Farmville.

The two letters containing Grant's demand and Lee's response are as follows:

April 7, 1865.

General: The result of the last week must convince you of the hopelessness of further resistance on the part of the Army of Northern Virginia in this struggle. I feel that it is so, and regard it as my duty to shift from myself the responsibility of any further effusion of blood by asking of you the surrender of that portion of the Confederate States army known as the Army of Northern Virginia.

U. S. GRANT, *Lieutenant-General.*

GENERAL R. E. LEE.

April 7, 1865.

General: I have received your note of this date. Though not entertaining the opinion you express on the hopelessness of further resistance on the part of the Army of Northern Virginia, I reciprocate your desire to avoid useless effusion of blood, and, therefore, before considering your proposition, ask the terms you will offer on condition of its surrender.

R. E. LEE, *General.*

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL U. S. GRANT.

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General Grant states that Lee's reply was not satisfactory, but he deemed that it required a further communication, and the following morning he sent his second letter to General Humphreys, who was in advance in the pursuit, to be forwarded through the lines to General Lee. Lee received this letter only in time to despatch his reply in the later afternoon, and it did not reach Grant until about midnight, when he had halted for the night at Curdsville, some ten miles in Lee's rear. These letters run as follows:

April 8, 1865.

General: Your note of last evening in reply to mine of same date, asking the condition on which I will accept the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia, is just received. In reply, I would say that peace being my great desire, there is but one condition I would insist upon, namely, that the men and officers surrendered shall be disqualified for taking up arms again against the Government of the United States until properly exchanged. I will meet you, or will designate officers to meet any officers you may name for the same purpose, at any point agreeable to you, for the purpose of arranging definitely the terms upon which the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia will be received.

U. S. GRANT, *Lieutenant-General.*

GENERAL R. E. LEE.

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April 8, 1865.

General: I received at a late hour your note of to-day. In mine of yesterday I did not intend to propose the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia, but to ask the terms of your proposition. To be frank, I do not think the emergency has arisen to call for the surrender of this army, but as the restoration of peace should be the sole object of all, I desire to know whether your proposals would lead to that end. I cannot, therefore, meet you with a view to surrender the Army of Northern Virginia, but as far as your proposal may affect the Confederate States forces under my command, and tend to the restoration of peace, I should be pleased to meet you at 10 A. M. to-morrow on the old Stage Road to Richmond, between the picket lines of the two armies.

R. E. LEE, *General.*

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL U. S. GRANT.

Grant, meanwhile, had given orders to Humphreys to continue the pursuit; but Humphreys, after having resumed the march, "finding his men dropping out of the ranks from exhaustion, owing to want of food and to fatigue, halted the head of his column at midnight, after a march of twenty-six miles," about three miles in the rear of Longstreet's troops.

A proposal was made to Lee by General E. P. Alexander that the army should scatter and make

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its way to Johnston by various routes. This plan Lee promptly disposed of. He declared that they had no right as Christian men to consider only how the surrender would affect them—they must consider its effect on the country as a whole, and, after explaining his views of the demoralizing effect of such a course, he added that he would go to General Grant and surrender himself, though he went alone, and take the consequences of his acts.*

On the 8th of April orders were issued for a last effort. The artillery was directed to be brought up during the night and massed with a view to breaking through Grant's forming lines, and steps were taken to deliver battle once more. All night the men toiled, but next morning the officer charged with the task † notified Gordon that his utmost efforts had been able to bring up only two batteries—the rest of the artillery had taken another route and could not be reached—the horses of the other batteries available were gone; the residue of that artillery which had once helped to make the artillery duels of Lee and Grant the fiercest in the records of war was silenced forever.

* "Military Memoirs of General E. P. Alexander," p. 605.

† Colonel Thomas H. Carter, a gallant and efficient soldier and Lee's near kinsman.

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On this small fragment of his once redoubtable artillery, and on the remnant of his infantry and cavalry, one more call was made by Lee. As the sun rose on the morning of the 9th of April, the worn and wasted squadrons, with a response as prompt and generous as in the best days of his most victorious campaigns, advanced to their last charge to drive for the last time their foes before them. The first onset was successful. Sheridan's cavalry was driven back in confusion and the situation was possibly saved only, as the supporting general himself stated, by the timely arrival of Ord, the commander of the Army of the James, with abundant troops to bar the way.* And Gordon sent Lee word that he had fought his troops "to a frazzle," and could do nothing more unless heavily supported by Longstreet's Corps. "Then," said Lee, "there is nothing left for me but to go and see General Grant, and I would rather die a thousand deaths." But he went, and by this act he saved the South from the horrors of Jacobinism.

On the morning of the 9th, General Grant, who was still at Curdsville, wrote, and forwarded

* "Ord left Petersburg with 20,000 troops, all arms; Fifth Corps, 15,973 (report of March 31, 1865); Sheridan's cavalry, 13,810; to which add 1,000 for the Fifth Corps Artillery, makes 50,783." (Fitzhugh Lee's "Life of Lee," p. 388, note.)

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through General Humphreys, his third letter to General Lee. It is a noble letter:

April 9, 1865.

General: Your note of yesterday is received. I have no authority to treat on the subject of peace. The meeting proposed for 10 A. M. to-day could lead to no good. I will state, however, general, that I am equally anxious for peace with yourself, and the whole North entertains the same feeling. The terms upon which peace can be had are well understood.

By the South laying down their arms they will hasten that most desirable event, save thousands of human lives, and hundreds of millions of property not yet destroyed.

Seriously hoping that all our difficulties may be settled without the loss of another life, I subscribe myself, etc.,

U. S. GRANT, *Lieutenant-General.*

GENERAL R. E. LEE.

This letter was received by General Lee as he was on his way toward his rear to meet the appointment he had suggested for that day at ten o'clock on the Old Stage Road to Richmond, should Grant have seen fit to act affirmatively on the suggestion. As soon as he had read the letter, Lee dictated a reply to it, Colonel Marshall, of his staff, acting as his amanuensis. This letter, which

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was written about nine o'clock in the morning, was then despatched by Colonel Whittier "with verbal messages to General Grant from General Lee expressive of regret at not having met him," and ran as follows:

April 9, 1865.

General: I received your note of this morning on the picket line, whither I had come to meet you and ascertain definitely what terms were embraced in your proposal of yesterday with reference to the surrender of this army. I now ask an interview in accordance with the offer contained in your letter of yesterday for that purpose.

R. E. LEE, *General.*

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL U. S. GRANT.

This letter was delivered by Colonel Whittier to General Meade at about ten o'clock, and was forwarded by him to General Grant, who had ridden in the direction of Appomattox Court House and had taken a cross-road for this purpose. Grant was overtaken at a point about eight miles from Appomattox Court House, and immediately wrote his reply to General Lee. Though Lee had declared to General Alexander his conviction that Grant would offer as good terms as he was entitled to receive, as he now awaited his reply with Long-

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street beside him, he, as Alexander says, could not feel confidence that Grant "might not demand unconditional surrender." And as Grant's messenger approached, the last thing said was by Longstreet, who knew no fear: "General, unless he offers us honorable terms, come back and let us fight it out." * It was the spirit of the South. But Grant was not less noble. He had resolved to do all he could to spare a vanquished foe. He offered terms not only honorable, but magnanimous. His last note was as follows:

April 9, 1865.

GENERAL R. E. LEE, *Commanding C. S. A.:*

Your note of this date is but this moment (11.50 A. M.) received. In consequence of my having passed from the Richmond and Lynchburg Road to the Farmville and Lynchburg Road, I am, at this writing, about four miles west of Walker's Church, and will push forward to the front for the purpose of meeting you.

Notice sent to me on this road where you wish the interview to take place will meet me.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
U. S. GRANT, *Lieutenant-General.*

On the receipt of General Grant's last note, which was brought to him by Colonel Babcock,

* E. P. Alexander's "Memoirs," p. 609.

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of Grant's staff, General Lee, accompanied by Colonel Marshall, of his staff, Colonel Babcock, and a mounted orderly, rode into the little village of Appomattox Court House, and, requesting of Mr. McLean, of that place, to be allowed the use of his sitting-room, awaited General Grant's arrival. Here, after a meeting which was so pleasant that Grant says he was in danger of forgetting the business that had called them together, the terms of the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia were quickly arranged. Grant, taking his seat at a marble-topped table in the centre of the room, quickly drafted the terms, and upon the paper being handed to Lee, who sat at a small table by a window, the latter drafted his acceptance of them. They are as follows:

APPOMATTOX COURT HOUSE, VA., *April 9, 1865.*

General: In accordance with the substance of my letter to you of the 8th inst., I propose to receive the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia on the following terms, to wit: Rolls of all the officers and men to be made in duplicate, one copy to be given to an officer to be designated by me, the other to be retained by such officer or officers as you may designate. The officers to give their individual paroles not to take up arms against the Government of the United States un-



General Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House.

From a drawing by B. West Clinedinst.

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til properly exchanged, and each company and regimental commander sign a like parole for the men of their commands. The arms, artillery, and public property to be parked and stacked and turned over to the officers appointed by me to receive them. This will not embrace the side arms of the officers nor the private horses or baggage. This done, each officer and man will be allowed to return to his home, not to be disturbed by United States authority so long as he observes his parole and the laws in force where he may reside.

U. S. GRANT, *Lieutenant-General*.

GENERAL R. E. LEE.

HEAD-QUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
April 9, 1865.

General: I received your letter of this date, containing the terms of the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia as proposed by you. As they are substantially the same as those expressed in your letter of the 8th instant, they are accepted. I will proceed to designate the proper officers to carry the stipulation into effect.

R. E. LEE, *General*.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL U. S. GRANT.

The attitude of the commanding generals toward each other at the close of the surrender is one on which the outside world gazed with astonishment, and to which we may all look back with pride.

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General Long in his memoirs of Lee relates an anecdote which casts a pleasant light on the situation. It appears that on the afternoon of the day of the surrender, Meade paid a friendly visit to Lee at his head-quarters, and in the course of conversation "Lee turned to Meade, who had been associated with him as his officer of engineers of the 'old army,' and said pleasantly: 'Meade, years are telling on you. Your hair is getting quite gray.' 'Ah, General Lee,' was Meade's prompt reply, 'this is not the work of years. You are responsible for my gray hairs.'"

Lee, after his surrender, asked for 25,000 rations, and this is accepted as the number of his army. But the actual number of muskets surrendered on the 9th of April was by his report less than 9,000. Lee had fought his army until it had simply worn away.

Whatever men Lee had on his rolls, whether 10,000, 25,000, or 40,000, they were, in their famished and spent condition, too few to defeat Grant's ably led force, whether that force were 100,000 or 180,000, and Lee, acting in accord with the views of his general officers who had urged on him this course, was right to avail himself of Grant's generous proposal. It is to Grant's eternal honor that he offered him such honorable

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terms for the surrender of what remained of the Army of Northern Virginia. A detached portion of the cavalry had broken through and started to make its way to Johnston, but Lee recalled the officer in command and informed him that he was included in his surrender.

The greatness of the occasion appears to have lifted Grant to a higher plane than that of the mere soldier from which he had looked apparently unmoved on the sacrifice of the thousands of gallant men and officers who, from the Wilderness to Cold Harbor, had died at his bidding, and from which he had refused with cold calculation the offers of the South to exchange prisoners and had left men to die like sheep in prisons made noisome largely by their numbers.

In the long vigils before Petersburg, faced by a brave and steadfast foe, his mind had apparently been elevated as it mainly became in the presence of a great crisis—as it became years afterward when, clutched fast in the grip of his last and conquering foe, he held death at bay while he completed the remarkable work on which his family were to depend for their support. However this was, his generosity justified Lee's declaration that he would give his army as good terms as it had a right to expect, and his correspondence with Lee

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will bear comparison with that of any victor in history.*

The following day Lee issued his farewell address to his army:

HEAD-QUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
April 10, 1865.

After four years of arduous service, marked by unsurpassed courage and fortitude, the Army of Northern Virginia has been compelled to yield to overwhelming numbers and resources. I need not tell the survivors of so many hard-fought battles who have remained steadfast to the last, that I

* An incident of the surrender, told by Grant to Dr. Fordyce Baker, was related by him to Dr. William M. Polk. Dr. Barker asked Grant how he felt when he met Lee at Appomattox. Was he not sensible of great elation over his achievement?

Grant replied that, on the contrary, he was sensible rather of humiliation. When he found Lee in full-dress uniform, while he himself was in a simple fatigue-suit—a private's blouse, with only a general's shoulder-straps to denote his rank, and with his boots spattered to their tops—he was afraid that Lee might imagine that he intended a discourtesy to him because of an incident that had occurred in Mexico. General Scott, he said, was exceedingly particular as to all matters of etiquette, and had given orders that no officer should appear at head-quarters without being in full dress. On some occasion thereafter Grant had gone to head-quarters in an ordinary fatigue-uniform, and that not as neat, perhaps, as it should have been, and had reported to Lee, who was at the time serving on Scott's staff. After the business had been transacted, Lee said: "I feel it my duty, Captain, to call your attention to General Scott's order that an officer reporting at head-quarters should be in full uniform."

This incident, said the general, suddenly flashed across his mind and made him uncomfortable lest General Lee should recall it also and imagine that he intended to affront him.

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have consented to this result from no distrust of them, but, feeling that valor and devotion could accomplish nothing that could compensate for the loss that would have attended the continuation of the contest, I have determined to avoid the useless sacrifice of those whose past services have endeared them to their countrymen.

By the terms of the agreement officers and men can return to their homes, and remain there until exchanged. You will take with you the satisfaction that proceeds from the consciousness of duty faithfully performed, and I earnestly pray that a merciful God will extend to you His blessing and protection.

With an increasing admiration of your constancy and devotion to your country, and a grateful remembrance of your kind and generous consideration of myself, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

R. E. LEE, *General*.

On the 12th of April he announced to President Davis the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia.* Like all of his papers, it is direct and casts a light on his character. Moreover, it gives the simplest and most authoritative account of the retreat to Appomattox that is on record.

Ten days after Lee's surrender, Sherman, moved thereto by a more generous impulse than had

* Report to be found in the Appendix.

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hitherto appeared to inspire him, and plainly influenced by Grant's magnanimity, offered to Johnston terms not more generous but more far-reaching, if possible, than Grant had proposed to Lee, and after a brief period of negotiation, in which Sherman's far-sighted views were scornfully disavowed and rejected by the authorities in Washington, just unbridled by the tragic death of Lincoln, Johnston surrendered on the same terms that Lee had accepted.

In this convention all the remaining forces of the South were included, and, in so far as the South could effect it, the war was over. The war, however, practically ended when Lee surrendered his army at Appomattox.

The highest tribute to this army is the simple fact that with its surrender the war was over. The fortunes of the Confederacy had been nailed to its tattered standards and with them went down.

XXIII

GENERAL LEE AND THE CONFEDERATE GOVERNMENT

THE student of the Civil War will be likely to reach the conclusion that for at least the last two years of the struggle General Robert E. Lee carried the fortunes of the Confederacy on his shoulders.

It will possibly always be a question how far Lee's military operations were affected by his relation to the Confederate Government, and to what extent he was interfered with by the Richmond authorities. That he was much hampered by them seems quite certain, both from the nature of his subordinate relation to Mr. Davis and from the interference which is continually disclosed in the correspondence that took place between them.

The great generals of history have almost invariably had a free hand in their campaigns and have been able to call to their aid all the powers of their government. Alexander, Cæsar, Hannibal, Cromwell, Frederick, Napoleon were supreme wherever the interests of their armies were concerned. Turenne, Eugene, and Wellington had

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the fullest and most absolute backing of their governments. Moreover, they lived under different conditions from those of our time and subsisted their armies on the countries in which they operated. Until Grant received command the Union generals were hopelessly interfered with by the Washington government, and it was only when Grant stipulated that he should be commander in fact as well as in title that success, after long delay, rewarded the Northern arms.

On the Southern side, though the interference was never so flagrant, and though Lee appears to have always had the confidence of President Davis, and, from the time when he assumed command of the Army of Northern Virginia, to have had that of the Confederate Government, yet it is a question whether the interference, or, what was equally disastrous, the lack of prompt, practical, and efficient support on the part of the government, was not in the end as fruitful of misfortune. Colonel Henderson, in his "Life of Stonewall Jackson," declares that "a true estimate of Lee's genius is impossible, for it can never be known to what extent his designs were thwarted by the Confederate Government."

It may, indeed, be said briefly that a confederated government based frankly on the supreme

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power of the civil government over the military is not one under which a revolution can be fought out with best results. In the constitution of things the Confederate Government of the Southern States was inefficient to carry on such a war as that between the States. Each State was of equal dignity and authority with the others. Each one was of more importance in its own eyes than any of her sisters. Most of them were at times seriously, if not equally, threatened, and it was quite natural, when States' Rights were the corner-stone of the confederation, that each one should feel that her own interests were to her paramount to those of her sister States. Certainly, this was the case, and at times, particularly toward the close of the struggle, more than one of the South Atlantic States was in a ferment of opposition to the Richmond authorities bordering on secession.

The Confederate Government, indeed, was founded on certain principles of civil equality, which, however sound in themselves and making for liberty, yet furnished but a cumbrous machine with which to carry on a war. Theory, extending to dogma, controlled the minds of its legislators and of its officials. A few instances will illustrate this.

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The war on the Southern side was conducted on the dogma of constitutional rights, and thus was limited during its earliest and most propitious stages to repelling invasion. No victory—not even one as complete as Bull Run—was considered to give warrant to invade non-seceded States, and while the government at Washington was with a strong hand breaking up sessions of the Maryland Legislature, making wholesale arrests and flooding the territory of “neutral” Kentucky with armed forces to prevent her seceding, the armies of the South were held on the south side of the Potomac and the Ohio until the time had expired when they might, by an advance, have changed the destiny of the States and of the country.

The Confederate Government had theories about cotton; theories about political economy in which cotton played a controlling part; theories about the necessity of the South’s being recognized by the leading powers of Europe. They held the opinion that not only the North, but Europe, was dependent on cotton—“King Cotton,” as it was termed. To control the supply of cotton and withhold it from Europe was, in their opinion, to compel the recognition of the Southern Confederacy by Great Britain and France. Thus, though the Southern armies starved and supplies could

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have been had for cotton, the government forbade the transactions which might have relieved the situation, and while the ports of the South were being steadily sealed up, one after another, by blockade squadrons, and the cotton was being captured, abandoned, or burned, they still followed to the end the fatal *ignis fatuus* of foreign intervention, and failed to utilize to the utmost their own resources. The leaders were more high-minded than practical.

The Confederate Government had theories of finance. So, though the necessities of life in the region where the war was carried on rose till it was said that it took a basketful of bills to buy in the market a pocketful of food, they went on printing the money. In this they were ably seconded by the printing establishments of the North, which at times did a thriving business printing Confederate bills. Lee is said to have had meat on his table only twice a week on principle, and he protested against the order allowing officials in Richmond to get government meat at government prices while the men "in the field were on starvation rations," but was overruled in the matter. Lee advocated at one time making Confederate money a legal tender, but this did not commend itself to those who controlled the Confederate finances.

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In fact, the Confederate Government — by which is signified its officials—had theories about nearly everything—on which, indeed, they were quite willing to stake their lives, if this would have done any good.

Unfortunately, however, these views, whatever their soundness in the abstract, when put to the practical test in the crucible of war did not result in success, and the sincerity with which they were held did not add to their value. Lee's army starved and dwindled while the Confederate Congress debated and debated, often debating for weeks the most important measures till the exigency of the occasion had passed and the necessity for the particular action debated had been crowded from the stage by some new demand. Mr. Davis, in his Message to Congress on the 13th of March, 1865, complains of the "long deliberation and protracted debate," which caused a delay that "in itself was a new source of peril." Even when earlier there had been abundant supplies in the country, and the transportation was fully adequate, these "were not under control." It was not, indeed, until March, 1865, that the railroads were taken by the government. Up to this time no right was asserted.* Yet, that the public

* Letter of Judge John A. Campbell.

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men of the South were in the main good, high-minded, and patriotic men there can be no doubt. The truth was that such a form of government was not suited to the needs of a revolution. What was required was the power to direct vested in one man responsible for the result. This was recognized at the time by many. The Confederate Congress in the early spring of 1862 passed an act creating the office of commander-in-chief with a view to having the conduct of the military operations free from the control of the civil power. This bill Mr. Davis vetoed as unconstitutional—as indeed it was—but he “assigned” General Lee “to duty at the seat of government and under the direction of the President,” where he was “charged with the conduct of military operations in the armies of the Confederacy.” The first clause of this order governed the whole. He was “under the direction of the President.” And the President exercised his authority. No strategy on a grand scale could be attempted without securing the approval of the Richmond authorities.

The chief disaster, perhaps, was the persistent policy of the government to attempt to hold all of the South instead of adopting the military policy, urged by Lee, of concentrating its armies and dealing the adversary a crushing blow. Joseph

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E. Johnston, when in command, proposed a campaign for the invasion of the North, in which Beauregard agreed with him; but the plan was not in accordance with the views of the Confederate Government and was rejected. Later on, Lee likewise was hampered in the same fashion, and to the end submitted his most far-reaching plans to the President for the approval of the government. It was a matter of common repute that toward the close of the struggle people constantly discussed the advisability of vesting in General Lee the power of dictator. Lee would have been the last man in the Confederacy to consent to this; but possibly it was the only way in which the South could have achieved its independence. It would, at least, have prevented the interference which kept the armies from reaching their highest efficiency.

When, after the expedition to Romney, the Richmond government, through Mr. Benjamin, the Secretary of War, on a remonstrance of subordinate officers in Loring's command, reversed an order of Stonewall Jackson's, and directed him to recall Loring's force from Romney, Jackson complied promptly with their instruction and then tendered his resignation. Johnston, who had likewise been slighted, remonstrated with him, but

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Jackson said that "the authorities in Richmond must be taught a lesson or the next victims of their meddling will be Johnston or Lee." They learned the lesson so far as not to go again to such an extreme, but they meddled much in a different way, and both Johnston and Lee were the "victims." Johnston, who commanded in Georgia, in 1864, was finally, in response to public clamor, removed from his command at the most critical period of his campaign, and with results so disastrous to his command that, whatever the alternative, nothing could have been worse. Happily for Lee's peace of mind, he was of a temper and held views as to the relative province of the civil and military authority which prevented friction and saved him all heart-burning. "As obedient to law as Socrates," was well said of him. If the law empowered others with authority he recognized it as fully as they themselves and governed his course accordingly. He did his duty and left consequences to God. But this did not alter the unhappy mistakes made in Richmond.

He differed with the authorities radically on many vital matters, as may be gathered inferentially from his correspondence and action, but he neither interfered nor criticised. His duty, as he apprehended it, was to obey those above him and

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command those under him. He was a soldier, and as a soldier he handled his army, leaving the rest to those on whom the responsibility devolved. The difference at times touched him nearly, for it touched his army. The authorities believed in the popular election of officers by their men. Inasmuch as the government of the Confederate States was a free government, based on the will of the people, it was decided that her soldiery, as free citizens of a republic, should have the privilege of electing their officers below the rank of brigadier-general; this, too, in the face of the enemy and though the election was destructive of discipline. Lee knew that it would result in demoralization, but his reference to it was simply that we are "in the midst of the fermentation" incident to the reorganization of the army. Many of the most efficient and experienced officers of the line were, in fact, thereby deprived of their commands and supplanted by men who might never have worn a sword and "smelt damnably of the halberd." The Confederate authorities believed that England and France would certainly come to the aid of the South after "the *Trent* affair." Lee foresaw with clearer vision that the Federal Government would yield and surrender the envoys with apologies, and in private letters

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he stated the necessity of abandoning all expectation of foreign intervention and substituting therefor self-reliance and fortitude.

However on questions of vital policy he differed with the civil authorities, he acted under their authority with unabated zeal. For example, on the subject of the employment of the negroes as soldiers, Lee held very different views from those of the authorities at Richmond. Many of them had been in the service all along as teamsters, axemen, and farriers, and by the autumn of 1864 the question was seriously debated whether they should not be armed and employed as soldiers. Lee was strongly of the opinion that they should be. He knew as no one else did the importance of filling his depleted ranks. He felt as well as others the difficulties of the measure he advocated, but he believed they could be overcome. He knew that the enemy used them by tens of thousands, and that under proper training and command they made good soldiers. He felt that it would only be proper to give them the reward of freedom. But on this point the authorities held different views, and the result was destructive.

They had theories about the institution of slavery, and in the main sound theories—moreover, it was a most complex and delicate matter

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to handle with reference to domestic concerns, and the new complication growing out of war and invasion. So, though the Union armies had mustered in some two hundred thousand negroes, it was not until the winter of 1864-65, when the Army of Northern Virginia had almost perished, that it was decided to recruit negroes for service in the field.

The plan was proposed in the autumn, was agitated all winter, and was acted on only as Lee was being forced out of his intrenchments before Richmond, and then in a form which robbed it of the essential feature of granting freedom, which alone could have made it effective. Lee's last letter before Petersburg dealt with this matter.

Lee's views are expressed in a letter which he wrote to a prominent Virginian in February, who had asked his views on the subject.

HEAD-QUARTERS CONFEDERATE STATES ARMIES,
February 18, 1865.

HON. E. BARKSDALE,
House of Representatives, Richmond.

Sir: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th instant, with reference to the employment of negroes as soldiers. I think the measure not only expedient but necessary. The enemy will certainly use them against us if

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he can get possession of them; and as his present numerical superiority will enable him to penetrate many parts of the country, I cannot see the wisdom of the policy of holding them to await his arrival, when we may, by timely action and judicious management, use them to arrest his progress. I do not think that our white population can supply the necessities of a long war without overtaxing its capacity and imposing great suffering upon our people; and I believe we should provide resources for a protracted struggle—not merely for a battle or a campaign.

In answer to your second question, I can only say that in my opinion the negroes, under proper circumstances, will make efficient soldiers. I think we could at least do as well with them as the enemy, and he attaches great importance to their assistance. Under good officers and good instructions, I do not see why they should not become soldiers. They possess all the physical qualifications, and their habits of obedience constitute a good foundation for discipline. They furnish a more promising material than many armies of which we read in history, which owed their efficiency to discipline alone. I think those who are employed should be freed. It would neither be just nor wise, in my opinion, to require them to serve as slaves. The best course to pursue, it seems to me, would be to call for such as are willing to come with the consent of their owners. An impressment or draft would not be

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likely to bring out the best class, and the use of coercion would make the measure distasteful to them and to their owners.

I have no doubt that if Congress would authorize their reception into service, and empower the President to call upon individuals or States for such as they are willing to contribute, with the condition of emancipation to all enrolled, a sufficient number would be forthcoming to enable us to try the experiment. If it proved successful, most of the objections to the measure would disappear, and if individuals still remained unwilling to send their negroes to the army, the force of public opinion in the States would soon bring about such legislation as would remove all obstacles. I think the matter should be left, as far as possible, to the people and to the States, which alone can legislate as the necessities of this particular service may require. As to the mode of organizing them, it should be left as free from restraint as possible. Experience will suggest the best course, and it will be inexpedient to trammel the subject with provisions that might, in the end, prevent the adoption of reforms suggested by actual trial.

With great respect,

Your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE, *General.*

The proposition to enlist negroes, though introduced in November, was not passed until March,

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1865, and then the bill merely authorized the President to accept for service such slaves as the masters might choose to put into military service, and General Lee's recommendation as to their emancipation was not acted on. It came to nothing, and it is quite possible that it might have done so even had the measure been adopted in time; but the delay and the failure to approve General Lee's recommendation illustrate the difficulties with which Lee had to contend in dealing with the government. It was inherent in the existing conditions.

The interference of the government affected even the constituency of his army.

"The government, at the opening of the year 1864," says one familiar with the subject, "estimated that the conscription would place four hundred thousand troops in the field."* Lee saw with clearer eyes. The measure not only failed to provide what was expected of it, but by the end of the year it was, in the opinion of Lee, "diminishing rather than increasing the strength of his army."†

The pernicious system of details which prevailed contrary to Lee's wishes, and the not less

* "Life of General Lee," by J. D. McCabe (1866), p. 573.

† Letter of December 31, 1864.

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pernicious habit of setting aside the findings of the courts-martial and pardoning deserters, contributed to render his difficult position one of yet more extreme difficulty.

Desertions were perilously frequent, and the government at Richmond prevented the execution of sentence on the culprit. Longstreet protested and Lee endorsed on his protest, "Desertion is increasing in the army notwithstanding all my efforts to stop it. I think a rigid execution of the law is mercy in the end. The great want in our army is firm discipline."

To this, which was referred by the Secretary of War to the President for his information, Mr. Davis, on November 29, 1864, replied: "When deserters are arrested they should be tried, and if the sentences are reviewed and remitted, that is not a proper subject for the criticism of a military commander."

Hardly any fact lets in a clearer light than this on one of the basic difficulties with which Lee had to contend in his titanic task of defending the South. Mr. Davis was so jealous of his constitutional rights that he could insist on them in face of Lee's solemn statement that his army, the chief bulwark of the whole Confederate fabric, was being undermined by the erroneous exercise of the right.

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The idea had got abroad that men who left Lee's army could be enrolled for service in organizations nearer home, and under this temptation in the fearful winter of 1864-65 numbers of men left his lines and went to their own States with this in view. Indeed, it might almost be said that toward the latter part of the war the people of more than one of the States to the southward considered themselves so neglected by the government as to be almost ready for open revolt against the Confederacy. At least three States had "passed laws to withdraw from service men liable to it under existing laws." * And as late as the 13th of March, 1865, Mr. Davis sent in a message asking the Congress to provide a law for organizing the militia and empowering him to call them out. He stated in this message that the governor of one State had declared that he had no power to call the militia to cross a county line, while the executive of another State had "refused to allow the militia to be employed in the service of the Confederate States in the absence of a law for that purpose." † The government had doubtless done the best that it could

* Letter of Judge John A. Campbell to General John C. Breckinridge, Secretary of War, March 5, 1865.

† "The Civil War during the Year 1865," by John A. Campbell, pp. 49, 50.

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do; but it is certain that if it had not lost the confidence of the people at large, it was rapidly doing so. By the end of 1864, all eyes were turned to Lee. He was recognized as the sole hope of the Confederacy. In January, 1865, the Virginia Legislature testified unmistakably its lack of confidence in the general government, and a committee with the speaker at its head waited on the President to inform him of the fact, while a yet more significant omen was the opposition of the Congress. Before the close of the last session of the Congress, they were almost at an open breach, as is shown by the tart reply of the Senate Committee to the President's message of March 13, 1865, taking them to task for their "protracted debate" on vital subjects. Among other resentful charges, they twit him with their having created the office of general-in-chief, without any suggestion from him, "with a view to the restoration of public confidence and the energetic administration of military affairs." It was apparent at last that some other plan of conducting the war than that which had hitherto been followed was necessary. A change was made in the War Department, and General Breckinridge became Secretary of War, while General Lee was made Commander of the Armies of the Confederacy.

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The Legislature of Virginia passed a resolution declaring that the appointment of General Robert E. Lee to the command of all the armies of the Confederate States "would promote their efficiency and operate powerfully to reanimate the spirits of the armies, as well as of the people of the several States, and to inspire increased confidence in the final success of our cause." To this Mr. Davis replied with dignity that the opinion expressed by the General Assembly in regard to General Lee had his full concurrence; and that Virginia could not have a higher regard for him or greater confidence in his character and ability than was entertained by him. "When General Lee," he added, "took command of the Army of Northern Virginia he was in command of all the armies of the Confederate States by my order of assignment. He continued in this general command of the Army of Northern Virginia as long as I would resist his opinion that it was necessary for him to be relieved from one of these two duties. Ready as he has ever shown himself to perform any service that I desired him to render to his country, he left it to me to choose between his withdrawal from the command of the army in the field and relieving him of the general command of all the armies of the Confederate States. It

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was only when satisfied of the necessity that I came to the conclusion to relieve him of the general command, believing that the safety of the capital and the success of our cause depended, in a great measure, on the retaining him in the command in the field of the Army of Northern Virginia. On several subsequent occasions, the desire on my part to enlarge the sphere of General Lee's usefulness has led to renewed consideration of the subject, and he has always expressed his inability to assume command of other armies than those now confided to him, unless relieved of the immediate command in the field of that now opposed to General Grant."

Mr. Davis, however, had unyieldingly opposed the proposition for Congress to call Lee to the position as an infringement on his constitutional rights, and earlier in the war had, as already stated, vetoed the bill passed for this purpose. Alexander H. Stephens declares that Lee asked to be relieved from the position of responsibility because he had no power. In the imminent danger of immediate collapse it was now agreed that the Congress should provide the position, and the President then appointed Lee to fill it, the order being dated February 5, 1865. The measure even in this form was opposed by many of Mr.

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Davis's friends, and one of the historians of the time states that on the final passage of the bill fourteen of the President's friends voted against it, and that Mrs. Davis declared that had she been in the President's place, before she would have submitted to the humiliation of being deprived of her rights in this matter she would have been hanged.* Another difficulty, however, stood in the way. Lee himself had declared that he would not accept the position in opposition to Mr. Davis, but only at his hands. The phrase in his first general order to his armies is significant of his point of view:

HEAD-QUARTERS CONFEDERATE ARMY,
February 9, 1865.

General Order No. 1. In obedience to General Order No. 3 . . . I assume command of the military forces of the Confederate States. . . .

Longstreet declares his astonishment at Lee's failure to exercise the enormous powers now vested in him. But it was too late now for any exercise of power to have changed the issue.

Fortunately for Lee, the relations between him and the President of the Confederacy were ever of the most cordial kind. They had known each

* McCabe's "Life of General R. E. Lee."

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other long and well, and each recognized in the other the qualities that ennobled them. During a considerable portion of the war the President kept near him General Lee's eldest son, General Custis Lee, himself an accomplished engineer and soldier. Mr. Davis was a man of the highest character and of absolute devotion to the constitutional principles, to whose preservation he pledged his life and powers. He was a trained soldier, and in the Mexican war had displayed marked dash, courage, and ability as a regimental commander. Moreover, he had had great experience, and as Secretary of War of the United States had made a reputation for breadth of view and power of organization which to-day places him second to none among those who have held that important office. It was under him that the first regiments of cavalry as an independent arm of the service were organized, and one of these Lee had commanded. Thus the two men knew and respected each other, and when, after the unsuccessful "West" Virginia campaign, Lee was the object of much foolish criticism and clamor, Mr. Davis stood by him and not only relied on him as his military adviser, but, on Johnston's being wounded at Seven Pines, appointed him commander of the army before Richmond—the Army

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of Northern Virginia. When he assigned Lee to the duty of defending the South Atlantic coast, and protest was made against his choice, he wrote to the governor of South Carolina: "If Lee is not a general, I have none to send you."

"As he was courageous, physically and morally he was a man of convictions—absolutely direct, frank, and positive," says one of his friends of Mr. Davis (General Breckinridge). Or, to use Lee's own expression about him, who ever held him in high and affectionate esteem, he was "very tenacious in opinion and purpose." This, however, did not prevent Mr. Davis's being a doctrinaire, and one whose theories, at times, honest as they were, interfered disastrously with practical action. Possibly he was too positive. At least he had the courage of his convictions, and, conscious of his own rectitude of intention and conduct, he was hard to change. He was subject to strong impressions, and was consequently not only inclined to favoritism, but was liable to be influenced by persons of strong convictions and determined will who might be about him; and at times he displayed what was not far from sheer obstinacy. He was described by an enemy—and he had many—as "standing in a corner telling his beads and relying on a miracle to save the

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country.” It was not true; but it contained this grain of truth, that he shut his eyes at times to facts plain to other men, and stood firm for a policy which, sound under other conditions, was now destructive. Against all criticism of him—and he was the target for much abuse and adverse criticism—we have Lee’s judgment that he did “as well possibly as any other man could have done in the same position.”

Toward Lee he was ever considerate and kind, yet he held on to his own power even where Lee was concerned. Lee could only get Major—afterward General—Long promoted to the rank he wished him to have, by appointing him his military secretary, and his request for the appointment of his chief of staff was not granted. And though, as we have seen, Mr. Davis declared afterward in his autobiography that Lee had long been, to all intents and purposes, commander-in-chief of the Confederate States armies, every experienced man knows the vast difference between being the untitled adviser of an official and the responsible official himself.

The difference would have been peculiarly marked in Lee, who never exceeded authority nor shirked responsibility. Had he been commander of all the armies of the Confederacy, John-

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ston would probably not have retired from the line of the Rappahannock in 1862. And it is certain that he would not have been relieved from command before Sherman in the summer of 1864. It is also probable that the wellnigh impregnable line of the North Anna would have been selected as the defensive line against Burnside and Hooker instead of the heights of Fredericksburg, which in the judgment of critics, though likewise impregnable, did not present the advantage of a field for efficient pursuit of the defeated assailants. But, quite apart from these errors, had Lee been in supreme command of the armies of the South, his handling of the weapon with which he fought McClellan and Pope and Burnside and Hooker and Grant would have been freer, and probably it would have been a more efficient weapon than it was, as efficient as Grant's casualty list proves it to have been.

Not only was Lee's judgment as to strategy and the disposition of troops, even in the face of the enemy, often in overwhelming force, cramped by the need to defer to the authorities in Richmond; but the very life of the army was subject to the same disastrous influences. Reinforcements, exemption, straggling, desertion, promotion of inferior men and failure to promote superior men,

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subsistence, and equipment were all dealt with by the Richmond government.

And Lee, already overburdened, was weighted down by the additional burden of having to bow to the inevitable in the form now of political interference, and now of personal incompetence.

Lee repeatedly found himself obliged to write to the President urging with insistence the absolute necessity of upholding his hands with respect to the suppression of straggling and desertion and other offences that were "injurious to the cause." His urgency appears, as has been stated, to have been taken, in one case at least, as a usurpation of executive authority.

That "an army moves on its belly" has as good authority as Napoleon. But the belly of the Confederate armies was nearly always empty. The commissary-general of subsistence was an old comrade and a favorite with the head of the government, and he had theories as to the regular way in which to gather supplies and subsist an army which nothing could shake. It mattered not that the armies starved and the generals protested. He took orders only from the President, and naught could move him. That he was patriotic and honest did not make amends for his unpractical theories or fill the haversacks of the

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Confederate soldiery. Johnston said his army had not more than two days' provisions stored, and we know what the necessities of Lee's army were during the years he fought it, and the well-meaning incompetents of the Commissary Bureau undertook with so little success to feed it. Lee at times had not one day's rations. The tale of the killed and wounded in battle may be arrived at with reasonable approximation; the tale of the starved and depleted victims of incompetence will never be imagined. But we know that among the most disastrous consequences of Lee's dependence on the civil authority was his inability to command the production of the necessary supplies for his army. An illustration may be found in his correspondence with the government at Richmond in the winter of 1863, when his army was at Fredericksburg, after the victory of Fredericksburg and before that of Chancellorsville.

On the 26th of January he wrote to Mr. Seddon, the Secretary of War—himself a high-minded and unselfish patriot of large experience: "As far as I can learn, we have now about one week's supply: four days' fresh beef and four days' salt meat of the reduced ration.* After that is exhausted I

* One-quarter pound. Lee's letter to J. A. Seddon, Secretary of War, April 17, 1863.

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know not whence further supplies can be drawn. The question of provisioning the army is becoming one of greater difficulty every day. The country north of us is pretty well drained of everything the people are willing to part with, except some grain and hay in Loudoun. Nor can impressment be resorted to with advantage, inasmuch as provisions retained for domestic use are concealed. A resort to impressment would, in my opinion, in this region produce aggravation and suffering among the people without much benefit. But I think if the citizens in the whole country were appealed to they would be willing to restrict themselves and furnish what they have to the army.

“I am more than usually anxious about the supplies of the army, as it will be impossible to keep it together without food.”

On this letter the following endorsement was made at Richmond by General L. B. Northrup, the commissary-general of subsistence:

SUBSISTENCE DEPARTMENT,
January 28, 1863.

Fifteen months ago this bureau foresaw that the supply of cattle in Virginia would be exhausted. . . . The meat has held out longer than was expected. . . . The order of the War Department

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reducing the ration of meat and increasing that of flour as referred to has not been observed in the Army of Virginia for a period of between three and four months by order of General Lee, and the use of the whole beef (necks and shanks included) which was attempted to be instituted by the commissary-general of subsistence has not been observed in that army, the discontent and other obstacles being urged as insurmountable in the field. . . . All the transportation that can be begged will be needed to get wheat to be converted into flour for the same army that now wants meat. General Lee's suggestion that an appeal be made to the citizens to forward supplies is noted by this bureau and is not approved. . . .

Respectfully,

L. B. NORTHRUP,*

Commissary-General of Subsistence.

Could anything be imagined more tragic than this—a commissary-general disallowing the suggestion of a commanding general as to food for his army, and rebuking him for insubordination?

It is small wonder that Lee's health gave way that winter and that a year later he asked for his son to come and act as his chief of staff, on the ground that he was sensible of a diminution of his strength since this illness.

* O. R., VIII, pp. 674, 675. Bigelow's "Chancellorsville Campaign," pp. 33, 34.

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Two years after this, Sherman destroyed what he estimated as one hundred million dollars' worth of crops in the South and made other disposition of the transportation which the commissary-general of subsistence could only secure by begging.

All during the winter of 1863 and early spring of 1864, and, indeed, throughout that winter, Lee's official correspondence shows with what clear eyes he viewed the situation and how he was powerless to meet it. From time to time he shows impatience at the publication of his plans through the press, and time and again we discover in his letters the disastrous want of the supplies absolutely needed to enable him to use his army efficiently. Even as far back as the 19th of October, 1863, for example, he writes to Brigadier-General A. R. Lawton, the quartermaster-general at Richmond, and to the Hon. James A. Seddon, the Secretary of War, letters which show this need:

HEAD-QUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
October 19, 1863.

LAWTON, BRIGADIER-GENERAL, A. R.,
Quartermaster-General, Richmond, Va.

General: I have received your letter of the 12th, and am very glad to find that your exertions to supply the army have been so successful. The want of the supplies of shoes, clothing, overcoats,

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and blankets is very great. Nothing but my unwillingness to expose the men to the hardships that would have resulted from moving them into Loudoun in their present condition induced me to return to the Rappahannock. But I was averse to marching them over the rough roads of that region, at a season, too, when frosts are certain and snows probable, unless they were better provided to encounter them without suffering.

I should otherwise have endeavored to detain General Meade near the Potomac, if I could not throw him to the north side.

The supplies that you now have at your disposal for this army will be most welcome, and I trust that your exertions to increase them will meet with full success.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
R. E. LEE, *General*.*

HEAD-QUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
19 October, 1863.

HON. JAMES A. SEDDON,
Secretary of War, Richmond, Va.

Sir: I have had the honor to receive your letter of the 16th inst. I am doubtful as yet whether General Meade will remain on the defensive. . . .

If General Meade is disposed to remain quiet where he is, it was my intention, provided the army could be supplied with clothing, again to advance and threaten his positions. Nothing pre-

* Long's "Lee," p. 629.

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vented my continuing in his front but the destitute condition of the men, thousands of whom are barefooted, a greater number partially shod, and nearly all without overcoats, blankets, or warm clothing. I think the sublimest sight of the war was the cheerfulness and alacrity exhibited by this army in the pursuit of the enemy under all the trials and privations to which it was exposed. . . .

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
R. E. LEE, *General*.*

On January 2, he writes to the President that he can learn of no supply of meat on the road to the army, and he fears that he will be unable to retain it in the field. Three days later he writes to the commissary-general, Colonel L. B. Northrup, that he regrets very much to learn that the supply of beef for the army is so nearly exhausted; that no beef had been issued to the cavalry corps by the chief commissary for eighteen months, and that "during that time it has supplied itself, and has now, I understand, sufficient to last until the middle of February. . . ."

"I cannot adopt," he says, "your suggestion to employ the organization of your bureau to impress provisions. Neither the law nor regulations of the War Department, in my opinion, give me that power. . . ."

* *Ibid.*, p. 629.

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To President Davis, who had written suggesting that he should go to North Carolina and take charge of the expedition to capture Newberne, he writes on the 20th of January: "In view of the opinion expressed in your letter, I would go to North Carolina myself; but I consider my presence here always necessary, especially now when there is such a struggle to keep the army fed and clothed."

On the 3d of February he writes him that "the approach of spring causes me to consider with anxiety the probable action of the enemy, and the possible operations of ours in the ensuing campaign. If we could take the initiative and fall upon them unexpectedly, we might derange their plans and embarrass them the whole summer. There are only two points east of the Mississippi where it now appears this could be done." . . . "We are not in a condition, and never have been, in my opinion, to invade the enemy's country with a prospect of permanent benefit. But we can alarm and embarrass him to some extent, and thus prevent his undertaking anything of magnitude against us."

On April 12, 1864, he writes to President Davis: "My anxiety on the subject of provisions for the army is so great that I cannot refrain from ex-

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pressing it to your Excellency. I cannot see how we can operate with our present supplies. Any derangement in their arrival or disaster to the railroad would render it impossible for me to keep the army together, and might force a retreat into North Carolina. There is nothing to be had in this section for men or animals. We have rations for the troops to-day and to-morrow. I hope a new supply arrived last night, but I have not yet had a report. Every exertion should be made to supply the depots at Richmond and at other points. All pleasure travel should cease and everything be devoted to necessary wants."

This letter he follows up on the 15th of April, when he writes the President: "We shall have to glean troops from every quarter to oppose the apparent combination of the enemy. If Richmond could be held secure against the attack from the east, I would propose that I draw Longstreet to me and move right against the enemy on the Rappahannock. Should God give us a crowning victory there, all their plans would be dissipated, and their troops now collecting on the waters of the Chesapeake would be recalled to the defence of Washington. But to make this move I must have provisions and forage. I am not yet able to call to me the cavalry or artillery. If I

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am obliged to retire from this line, either by a flank movement of the enemy or the want of supplies, great injury will befall us. I have ventured to throw out these suggestions to your Excellency in order that in surveying the whole field of operations you may consider all the circumstances bearing on the question. Should you determine it is better to divide this army and fall back toward Richmond, I am ready to do so. I, however, see no better plan for the defence of Richmond than that I have proposed.”

Subordination to the civil authority was the key to Lee's action throughout the war. It speaks in all of his correspondence and utterances relating to the civil government of the Confederacy. It is found in the very beginning of the war in a letter to Mrs. Lee, where in reply to her suggestion of the rumor that he was to be made commander-in-chief, he stated simply that this position was held by President Davis. It is found at the end of the war in his reply to General Gordon, who, in an interview with him in the beginning of February, 1865, having learned from his lips his view of the almost desperate situation, inquired if he had made his views known to President Davis or to the Congress. He received the reply, states his corps commander, “that he

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scarcely felt authorized to suggest to the civil authorities the advisability of making terms with the government of the United States. He said that he was a soldier, that it was his province to obey the orders of the government, and to advise or counsel with the civil authorities only upon questions directly affecting his army and its defence of the capital and the country." * Though his administration of every office which he ever filled showed his ability to grapple successfully with whatever problems life presented to him, he was careful to abstain from all that savored of political work. He gave his advice frankly when it was requested; but beyond this held himself scrupulously aloof from interference in political matters. His views on this subject were set forth clearly when on one occasion, toward the end of the war, Senator B. H. Hill, of Georgia, approached him with the suggestion that he should give his views on "the propriety of changing the seat of government and going further South."

His reply was: "That is a political question, Mr. Hill, and you politicians must determine it. I shall endeavor to take care of the army, and you must make the laws and control the government."

* "Reminiscences of the Civil War," General John B. Gordon, p. 390.

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“Ah, General, but you will have to change that rule,” said the Georgia senator, “and form and express political opinions; for if we establish our independence the people will make you Mr. Davis’s successor.”

“Never, sir,” said Lee; “that I will never permit. Whatever talents I may possess (and they are but limited) are military talents. My education and training are military. I think the military and civil talents are distinct if not different, and full duty in either sphere is about as much as one man can qualify himself to perform. I shall not do the people the injustice to accept high civil office with whose questions it has not been my business to become familiar.”

“Well—but, General,” persisted Hill, “history does not sustain your view. Cæsar, Frederick of Prussia, and Bonaparte were great statesmen as well as great generals.”

“And great tyrants,” replied Lee promptly. “I speak of the proper rule in republics, where I think we should have neither military statesmen nor political generals.”

“But Washington was both,” urged Hill, “and yet not a tyrant.”

“Washington was an exception to all rules and there was none like him,” said he, smiling.

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It was doubtless this conversation which led Hill in after years, in pronouncing his eulogy on General Lee, to utter the fine saying that "he was Cæsar without his ambition, Frederick without his tyranny, Napoleon without his selfishness, and Washington without his reward."

Lee also held different views from those which controlled in the Confederate civil councils on the more vital subjects of proposals for peace.

When he first crossed the Potomac he had in mind the possibility of its leading to negotiations for peace, and so wrote Mr. Davis.* And again, on the eve of his second invasion of the North, he addressed to Mr. Davis a letter advocating measures for encouraging "the rising peace party of the North," almost urgent in its terms.† "Nor do I think," he wrote, "we should in this connection make nice distinctions between those who declare for peace unconditionally and those who advocate it as a means of restoring the Union, however much we may prefer the former. . . . When peace is proposed it will be time enough to discuss its terms, and it is not the part of providence to spurn the proposition in advance." This was certainly a very different view of the case

* Letter of September 8, 1862, quoted *ante*.

† Letter of June 10, 1863, quoted *ante*.

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from that held by the civil rulers in Richmond, who, even as late as the Hampton Roads Conference, were as firm in their demands for independence as on the day after First Manassas. They could not understand that conditions had changed since the preceding summer, and they were still misled by accounts of disaffection at the North and by the *ignis fatuus* of foreign intervention.

Thus we see that however little inclined Lee was to interfere in civil matters, he was ready, at need, to lend his aid to further the cause of peace whenever it was desired by the civil authorities. Such an occasion occurred in February, 1865, and Lee, on finding that it was the wish of the President, acceded to the suggestion to open a correspondence with Grant, who had been reported as desirous to discuss with him the possibility of arriving at a satisfactory adjustment of the unhappy difficulties in the way of a peace settlement by means of "a military convention."

Longstreet, who it appears was first approached on the subject, has given the following account of the negotiations. He states that on the 20th of February, 1865, General Ord, commanding the Army of the James, sent him a note asking him to arrange a meeting with him with a view to putting

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a stop to the bartering which went on between the troops on the picket lines; and that inasmuch as Ord knew that he could at any time put a stop to his men doing this by a simple order, he surmised that there must be some other matters which he wished to discuss with him, and accordingly acceded to his request. They met next day between the lines, and presently Ord asked for a "side interview," which was acceded to.

"When he spoke of the purpose of the meeting," says Longstreet, "I mentioned a simple manner of correcting the matter, which he accepted without objection or amendment. Then he spoke of affairs military and political.

"Referring to the recent conference of the Confederates with President Lincoln at Hampton Roads, he said that the politicians of the North were afraid to touch the question of peace, and there was no way to open the subject except through officers of the armies. On his side they thought the war had gone on long enough; that we should come together as former comrades and friends and talk a little. He suggested that the work as belligerents should be suspended; that General Grant and General Lee should meet and have a talk; that my wife, who was an old acquaintance and friend of Mrs. Grant in their girl-

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hood days, should go into the Union lines and visit Mrs. Grant with as many Confederate officers as might choose to be with her. Then Mrs. Grant would return the call under escort of Union officers and visit Richmond; that while General Lee and General Grant were arranging for better feeling between the armies they could be aided by intercourse between the ladies and officers until terms honorable to both sides could be found.

“I told General Ord that I was not authorized to speak on the subject, but could report upon it to General Lee and the Confederate authorities, and would give notice in case a reply could be made.

“General Lee was called over to Richmond and we met at night at the President’s mansion. Secretary of War Breckinridge was there. The report was made, several hours were passed in discussing the matter, and finally it was agreed that favorable report should be made as soon as another meeting could be arranged with General Ord. Secretary Breckinridge expressed especial approval of the part assigned for the ladies.

“As we separated I suggested to General Lee that he should name some irrelevant matter as the occasion of his call for the interview with General Grant, and that once they were together they

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could talk as they pleased. A telegram was sent my wife that night at Lynchburg calling her to Richmond, and the next day a note was sent General Ord asking him to appoint a time for another meeting.

“The meeting,” continues Longstreet, “was appointed for the day following, and the result of the conference was reported. General Ord asked to have General Lee write General Grant for an interview, stating that General Grant was prepared to receive the letter, and thought that a way could be found for a military convention, while old friends of the military service could get together and seek out ways to stop the flow of blood. He indicated a desire on the part of President Lincoln to devise some means or excuse for paying for the liberated slaves, which might be arranged as a condition and part of the terms of the convention and relieve the matter of political bearing; but those details were in the form of remote probabilities to be discussed when the parties became advanced in their search for ways of settlement.”

On the 1st of March, Longstreet wrote General Lee, giving a report of the second interview with Ord, and on the 2d of March, Lee wrote Grant the following letter:

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HEAD-QUARTERS CONFEDERATE STATES ARMIES,
March 2, 1865.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL U. S. GRANT,
Commanding United States Armies.

General: Lieutenant-General Longstreet has informed me that in a recent conversation between himself and Major-General Ord as to the possibility of arriving at a satisfactory adjustment of the present unhappy difficulties by means of a military convention, General Ord states that if I desired to have an interview with you on the subject you would not decline, provided I had authority to act. Sincerely desiring to leave nothing untried which may put an end to the calamities of war, I propose to meet you at such convenient time and place as you may designate, with the hope that upon an interchange of opinions it may be found practicable to submit the subjects of controversy between the belligerents to a convention of the kind mentioned. In such event I am authorized to do whatever the result of the proposed interview may render necessary or advisable. Should you accede to this proposition, I would suggest that, if agreeable to you, we meet at the place selected by Generals Ord and Longstreet for their interview, at 11 A. M. on Monday next.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE, *General.*

This letter was sent to Longstreet open, with instructions to read, seal, and forward. Long-

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street, having read it, disapproved of the true object of the interview being so frankly mentioned, and, as he states, "rode into Richmond to ask that some other business should be named as the cause of the call for the interview, but he [Lee] was not disposed to approach his purpose by diplomacy, and ordered the letter to be delivered. He, however, wrote and sent another letter also, which related to the exchange of prisoners, and closed by saying: 'Should you see proper to assent to the interview proposed in my letter of this date, I hope it may be found practicable to arrive at a more satisfactory understanding on this subject.'"

To this proposal of Lee's, Grant replied two days later in a letter, the first part of which related to the question of the exchange of prisoners mentioned in Lee's second note. As to the matter suggested by Ord, he replied, declining the interview, saying:

" . . . In regard to meeting you on the 6th instant, I would state that I have no authority to accede to your proposition for a conference on the subject proposed. Such authority is vested in the President of the United States alone. General Ord could only have meant that I would not refuse an interview on any subject on which I have a right to act, which, of course, would be

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such as are of a military character, and on the subject of exchanges which has been intrusted to me.

U. S. GRANT, *Lieutenant-General*.

It appears that Grant, on receiving Lee's letter, notified the government in Washington, and Mr. Lincoln sent him, through Stanton, on the 3d of March, a telegram instructing him to "have no conference with General Lee, unless it were for the capitulation of Lee's army," or on some minor and purely military matter, and stated further that Grant was "not to decide, discuss, or confer upon any political question."

This third effort which Lee had made to bring about peace having disappeared, Lee went back to his post behind the trenches in which his army now but a wraith, still held back the foe, in no small part by the awe which its valor and fortitude had inspired. Here, still obedient to the civil government, as he deemed it his duty to be, he held on until swept away by Grant's irresistible numbers ably thrown against him. And even then by a tragic fate he was the victim of the incompetence of the civil authorities. He had successfully accomplished one of the most difficult movements of his career. He had withdrawn his army by night from Grant's front extending

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against his lines for thirty-odd miles, in places so close that the movement could not be begun till the moon set. He had crossed the Appomattox twice and, marching past Grant's left, was well on his way to Danville when the disastrous consequence of civil incompetence overtook him. In the first place, as we have seen, a letter in which Lee had stated the condition of his army and his plans to the civil authorities had been left in Richmond and fell into the hands of the Union commander, thus apprising him fully of Lee's route and the desperate condition of his army. And secondly, when Lee reached Amelia Court House, where he had ordered that rations should meet his army, it was found that though they had been sent, the train carrying them had been ordered away again a few hours before his arrival. It used to be charged that this train was ordered back to Richmond to help take away the retiring government officials; but this charge Mr. Davis indignantly denied, and no one has since believed it. As to the effect of this disaster we have Lee's own views given in his final report of the surrender at Appomattox:

“. . . Not finding the supplies ordered to be placed there," he says, "nearly twenty-four hours were lost in endeavoring to collect in the country

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subsistence for men and horses. This delay was fatal and could not be retrieved.”

When Lee sheathed his sword the Confederate Government vanished like a morning cloud. Of its policy, he declared, he knew nothing and “had no hand nor part in it.” He was only a soldier, obeying his country’s laws, and striving with all his might to preserve the blessing of peace.

With this report to the President of the Confederate States the Army of Northern Virginia passed into history.

XXIV

LEE'S CLEMENCY

AS the years pass by, the military genius of Lee must be more and more restricted to the study of a class. His character will ever remain the precious possession of his kindred and his people. In all the annals of his race none has excelled it.

Possibly Lee's chief, if not his one, fault as a soldier was that he was not always rigorous enough with his subordinates; that is, if such a thing be possible, he was too magnanimous. He took blame on himself where it should rightly have been adjudged to others. Yet, this weakness as a soldier but added to his nobility as a man, and it is as a man that we would now consider him.

While many competent critics in his army were charging Longstreet with having been the cause of the disaster at Gettysburg, Lee gave no hint of dissatisfaction with him. His reports contain no suggestion that he had failed to secure his approval. He wrote him a letter such as only a man of noble nature could have written to an old comrade who had failed him. He showed him a magnanimity

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which was ill-requited when Longstreet wrote his own story of the war.

Among his characteristics his humanity stands forth to distinguish him forever from possibly nearly all his noted contemporaries. Colonel Charles Marshall, of his staff, who knew him best among men, declares that he never put a spy to death, and the story is well known of his clemency in the case of a deserter who had been found guilty by a court-martial and condemned to death. It was during the terrible campaign of 1864, when the women at home wrote such heart-rending accounts of their want to their husbands in the field, that Lee was compelled to forbid the mails to be delivered. A soldier who had disappeared from his regiment and gone home was arrested and tried as a deserter. His defence was a letter which he had received from his wife, which showed that she and her children were starving. It was held insufficient, and he was sentenced to be shot. The case, however, was so pitiful that it was finally presented to General Lee. Lee's views on the mistaken mercy of reversing courts-martial in cases of desertion have been set forth. In this case, however, he wrote beneath the finding his approval, and then below this an order that the man should immediately rejoin his regiment. There

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were, of course, unhappily, other instances enough in which discipline had to be enforced, and when the exigency arose he was rock. But, as has been well said by Mr. Charles Francis Adams, possibly his surest and loftiest title to enduring fame was "his humanity in arms and his scrupulous regard for the most advanced rules of modern warfare."*

An incident, small in itself but illustrative of the compassionate character of Lee, occurred during one of his fiercest battles. He was standing with officers of his staff in the yard of a dwelling on an eminence, when the group attracted the attention of the enemy and a hot fire was directed on them. General Lee suggested to his companions to go to a less exposed spot, but he himself remained where he was. A little later, as he moved about, he stooped and picked up a young bird, and, walking across the yard, placed the fledgling on a limb.

It was characteristic of him that ordinarily, wherever he might be, he slept in a tent, for fear of incommoding the occupants of the houses he might have taken for his head-quarters, and at times when he was inspecting the long lines from Richmond to Petersburg, he even hesitated to seek shelter at night in the camp of an acquaint-

* Address delivered at Lexington, Va., January 19, 1907.

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ance lest he might inconvenience him.* On his return from Appomattox he, even at his brother's home, slept in a tent in his yard.

We have seen how in the midst of the arduous duties of commander of the army, he took the trouble to carry out his father-in-law's directions about the manumission of his slaves. He writes later, during the stress of war, to his eldest son: ". . . I hope we will be able to do something for the servants. I executed a deed of manumission embracing all the names sent me by your mother and some that I recollected, but as I had nothing to refer to but my memory, I fear many were omitted. It was my desire to manumit all the people of your grandfather, whether present on the several estates or not. I believe your mother only sent me the names of those present at W.[hite] H.[ouse] and Romancoke. Those that have left with the enemy may not require their manumission. Still, some may be found hereafter in the State, and, at any rate, I wished to give a complete list, and to liberate all to show that your grandfather's wishes, so far as I was concerned, had been fulfilled. . . . I shall pay wages to Perry [his body servant], and retain him until he or I can do better. You can do the same with Billy.

* Long's "Lee," quoting Colonel Thomas H. Carter.

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The rest that are hired out had better be furnished with their papers and be let go. But what can be done with those at the W. H. and Romancoke? Those at and about Arlington can take care of themselves, I hope, and I have no doubt but all are gone who desire to do so. At any rate, I can do nothing for them now." *

In another letter, dated March 31, 1863, he writes further, showing his solicitude about his freed servants. One he wishes a place gotten for on a railway; two others, who had been hired out, he advises to remain where they are till the end of the year, when they are to have their earnings devoted to their own benefit. "But what can be done," he asks, "with poor little Jim? It would be cruel to turn him out on the world. He could not take care of himself." †

This is an epitome of the old Virginian's relation to his servants, and it will be observed that this representative of his class never speaks of them as his slaves, even in discussing intimately with his son their legal status.

His love of children and his companionship with them shine forth in his letters and mark the simplicity that is so often allied with true great-

* Letter to General G. W. C. Lee, January 11, 1863.

† Jones's "Life and Letters of Robert E. Lee," pp. 286, 287.

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ness. In one of his letters to his wife long before the war, when he was on duty in the West, he gives a glimpse of this tenderness toward children which ever distinguished him. He says of a ride he took: ". . . I saw a number of little girls, all dressed up in their white frocks and pantalets, their hair plaited and tied up with ribbons, running and chasing each other in all directions. I counted twenty-three nearly the same size. As I drew up my horse to admire the spectacle, a man appeared at the door with the twenty-fourth in his arms. 'My friend,' said I, 'are all these your children?'

"'Yes,' he said, 'and there are nine more in the house, and this is my youngest.'

"Upon further inquiry, however, I found that they were only temporarily his. He said, however, that he had been admiring them before I came up, and just wished that he had a million of dollars, and that they were all his in reality. I do not think the eldest exceeded seven or eight years old. It was the prettiest sight I have seen in the West, and, perhaps, in my life. . . ." This love of children ever distinguished him.

Such was the heart of this great captain, who, to some, seemed cold and aloof when, as Emerson says, genius was only protecting itself by solitude.

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Writing from before Petersburg, years after, to his wife of three little girls, the children of an old neighbor in happier days at Arlington, who had paid him a visit in his camp, each with a basket in which they had brought him fresh eggs, pickles, and a pair of socks, "I begged them," Lee said, "to bring me nothing but their kisses and to keep the eggs, corn, etc., for themselves."

Of Lee's tranquil mind, even amid the most difficult conditions, we have constant proof. No apparent disadvantage of position, no threats or impending dangers, appear to have disturbed that equanimity which so marks him as among the great.

While McClellan, accepting the wildest tastements of "intelligent contrabands," was rating the force in his front at two and a half times its actual numbers and was throwing away precious weeks while he clamored for reinforcements, and while his successors often saw a vast army in their front whose shadows caused them much delay, Lee, from the first, even amid the deepest darkness of the situation, saw with a clearness which no gloom could obscure. Writing from his camp, during the Western Virginia campaign, he says: "The force of the enemy, estimated by prisoners captured, is put down at from 17,000 to 20,000. Gen-

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eral Floyd thinks 18,000. I do not think it exceeds 9,000 or 10,000, but it exceeds ours." *

From camp near Orange Court House he writes on the eve of the battle of Second Manassas, under date of August 17, 1862: "General Pope says he is very strong and seems to feel so, for he is moving apparently up the Rapidan. I hope he will not prove stronger than we are. I learn since I have left that General McClellan has moved down the James River with his whole army, so we shall have busy times. Burnside and King, from Fredericksburg, have joined Pope, which, from their own report, has swelled Pope to 92,000. I do not believe it, though I believe he is very big."

"General Hooker," he wrote, "is agitating something on the other side, or, at all events, he is agitating his troops. . . . Yesterday he was marching his men up and down the river. . . ."

If Hooker prided himself on his fine army, Lee had no less confidence in his own, however outnumbered. "I agree with you," he wrote Hood, "in believing that our army would be invincible if properly organized and officered. There never were such men in an army before. They will go anywhere and do anything if properly led.

* Letter to Mrs. Lee, October 7, 1861; letter to his son, Major W. H. F. Lee, October 12, 1861.

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But there is the difficulty—proper commanders. Where can they be obtained?" *

It has been customary to think of piety as the peculiar attribute of Jackson, the Puritan in type, rather than of Lee, the cavalier. But, if possible, Lee was even more pious than his great lieutenant. In fact, both were men who, in the early prime of their manhood, consecrated themselves to God, and thenceforth served Him with a single heart. It shines forth in every page they ever penned, in every act they ever performed. It was the basis of their character; it formed the foundation of that wonderful poise which, amid the most difficult and arduous situations, left them the supreme tranquillity which was the atmosphere in which their powers found vitality. No one can familiarize himself with Lee's life without seeing that he was a man consecrated to the work of his divine Master, and amid all conditions possessing a mind stayed on Him.

Not Cromwell's army was more religious than that which followed Lee, and the great Protector was not so pious as the great captain who led the Army of Northern Virginia.

The principle on which he acted was stated in one of his letters. "We are all in the hands of a

* Letter to General J. B. Hood, May 21, 1863.

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kind God," he wrote, "who will do for us what is best, and more than we deserve, and we have only to endeavor to deserve more and to do our duty to Him and to ourselves. May we all deserve His mercy, His care, and His protection." *

Such was the man to whom first Virginia, and later the entire South, confided the leadership of her soldiery, and on whom they laid the burden of their destiny.

His advice to his youngest son, whom he had advised on leaving college to enlist in a good company, was characteristic of him: "To be obedient to all authority, and to do his duty in everything, great or small." †

It was also characteristic alike of him and of the soldiery of the South that he should have refused to procure for this son a commission, as long afterward he promptly discountenanced the idea of promoting his eldest son (though a soldier so accomplished that he wished for him as his chief of staff) over the heads of officers who had served under him and proved their capacity under his eye.

"I do not think," says the former, in his interesting "Recollections" of his father, "that it ever

* Letter of September 1, 1856; cited in Jones's "Lee," p. 81.

† "Recollections of General Lee," by Captain R. E. Lee.

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occurred to my father to have me, or rather get me, a position in the army. I know it never occurred to me, nor did I ever hear at that time, or afterward, from any one that I might have been entitled to better rank because of my father's prominence in Virginia and in the Confederacy." *

It was not until that son had fought as a private through the valley campaigns of Jackson, the battles around Richmond, the Maryland campaign, and had distinguished himself,† that he received the promotion to the staff of his brother, General William H. F. Lee.

Indeed, among the troubles with which Lee had to contend were the efforts made by politicians in the civil government to procure commissions and promotions for their constituents, and the delay experienced in getting his recommendations for promotion for merit acted on.

The fact constitutes one of the few complaints in his letters, and he set the example by steadfastly setting his face against any favoritism toward his own family. His two sons, who became generals, were both officers in the old army and were both in the retreat to Appomattox until one of them was captured, with five other general officers and

* "Recollections of General Lee," by R. E. Lee.

† Moore's "Recollections of a Cannoneer under Jackson."

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some 6,000 men, at Sailor's Creek, in one of the last fights of the war. Of their character some idea may be formed from the fact that when one of them, General William H. F. Lee, was held as a hostage under sentence of death, the other, General G. W. C. Lee, wrote, asking to be accepted as a hostage in his stead, placing the offer on the ground that his brother had a wife and child, while he, his equal in rank and the eldest son, was unmarried.

Of his son's confinement under sentence as a hostage, which, the father says, was "grievous" to him, Lee writes to his other son. "I had seen in the papers the intention announced by the Federal Government of holding him as a hostage for the two captains selected to be shot. If it is right to shoot those men this should make no difference in their execution; but I have not thought it right to shoot them, and differ in my ideas from most of our people on the subject of reprisal. Sometimes I know it to be necessary, but it should not be resorted to at all times, and in our case policy dictates that it should be avoided whenever possible." *

Happy the people that can produce such a father and such sons!

* Letter to General G. W. C. Lee, August 7, 1863.

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It is told of Sidney, that, when wounded and perishing of thirst, some one brought him water, and he ordered it given to a dying soldier, whose need was greater than his. Lee's army was full of soldiers who would have done that which gave Sidney fame, and the same thing may be said of the better element of the Army of the Potomac. Such was the temper and character of the men who followed Lee, and such was the temper and character of their beloved commander, whom they loved to call in affectionate phrase, "Marse Robert." He was their idol and their ideal, and his impress was stamped on his army.

The Master whom he so faithfully and humbly tried to serve, whose precepts were ever in his heart and whose spirit shone ever in his life, had laid down for him the law as had His forerunner and prophet: "And to the soldiers he said, Do violence to no man."

This high rule, like all others of his divine Master, Lee ever followed, and, so far as possible, inculcated on his army, by whom, to their eternal honor be it said, the noble example was nobly followed. Unhappily for the world, and for the future reputation of some who otherwise might as able soldiers have won the admiration of a whole people, rather than of a mere section of that peo-

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ple, though McClellan, McDowell, Burnside, and numberless gentlemen who followed them conducted war on high principles, it was not the invariable rule among all commanders.

Butler had damned himself to everlasting fame by orders and acts in Louisiana which no soldier can think of without a blush.* Hunter, in despite of expostulations, had burnt his way through the beautiful valley where Lee was to find his last resting place, and had left in his track the scarred and blackened ruins of countless dwellings. To the honor of the brave men he commanded it is said that he "had to deprive forty of his commissioned officers of their commands before he could carry into execution his infamous orders."† Even Halleck declared his action "barbarous."‡ It was reserved for Sherman, possibly the second greatest general on the Northern side, to reverse most completely the advances of civilization and hark back almost to the ferocious methods of mediævalism. To find the proof of this, one has no need to go outside of this officer's own recorded words.

* In his infamous "Order 28" he had ordered that any woman in New Orleans who should "by word, or gesture, or movement insult or show contempt for any officer or soldier of the United States, should be regarded and treated as a woman of the town plying her avocation."

† "Official Report of History Com., Grand Camp C. V.," in "The Confederate Cause," p. 103.

‡ Sherman's "Memoirs," II, p. 129.

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“War is hell,” he was quoted long after as saying. He did more than all others to make it so. He ruthlessly devastated, not only for the needs of his army and to deprive his enemy of subsistence, but to horrify and appall. He made war not only on men, but on women and children. He shelled defenceless towns which had not an armed man in them and had offered to surrender.

“In nearly all his despatches after he had reached the sea,” says Rhodes, an historian from his State, who is his apologist and his admirer, “he gloated over the destruction of property.” *

He gloated over the havoc he wrought, first, in anticipation, as he wrote, how he could “make a wreck of the country from Chattanooga to Atlanta, including the latter city,” † and again, how he could “make Georgia howl”; ‡ next, in the act of its perpetration, as he issued his orders for his army to “forage liberally on the country,” and expressly forbade his officers to give receipts for property taken; authorized the wanton destruction of mills and houses; and while subordinate officers, like Howard and Cox and Schofield, were writhing under the robberies of defenceless women, extending even to the tearing of rings from their

* Rhodes's “History of the United States,” vol. V, p. 22.

† Official Records, vol. XXXIX, part 2, p. 202.

‡ *Ibid.*, part 3, p. 162.

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fingers, he chuckled over the robberies committed by his men—who quoted his orders to his face—and reviewed his “bummers,” an organized corps of robbers, who have never had their counterpart since the Free Companies passed from the stage under the awakening conscience of modern Europe.

If these are strong words they are largely taken from his own writings.

He sent an express message to the corps commander, General Davis, at General Howell Cobb's plantation, “to explain whose plantation it was and instruct him to spare nothing.”* This was but warring on women, for General Howell Cobb was far away at his post of duty in command of his brigade in Virginia and his brother, General Thomas Cobb, was in his honored grave two years ere this, having fallen at the foot of Marye's Heights, as a brave man falls, holding back brave men. “I would not restrain the army,” Sherman wrote coolly, “lest its vigor and energy should be impaired.” †

Speaking of the burning of Columbia, which Sherman wrote his brother he had in his report “distinctly charged to General Wade Hampton,” he adds, “I confess I did so pointedly to shake the

* Sherman's “Memoirs,” II, p. 185.

† *Ibid.*, II, p. 255.

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faith of his people in him." * A distinguished historian from his own State has declared of this destruction of Columbia, a defenceless city which had surrendered, that "it was the most monstrous barbarity of this barbarous march. Before his movements began, General Sherman had begged permission to turn his army loose in South Carolina and devastate it. He used this permission to the full. He protested that he did not wage war upon women and children. But under the operations of his orders the last morsel of food was taken from hundreds of destitute families that his soldiers might feast in needless and riotous abundance. Before his eyes rose, day after day, the mournful clouds of smoke on every side that told of old people and their grandchildren driven in mid-winter, from the only roofs that were to shelter them, by the flames which the wantonness of his soldiers had kindled. Yet, if a single soldier was punished for a single outrage or theft during that entire movement we have found no mention of it in all the voluminous records of the march." †

Place Lee's general order from Chambersburg on invading Pennsylvania beside Sherman's correspondence with Halleck, and let posterity judge

* *Ibid.*, II, p. 287.

† "Ohio in the War," by Hon. Whitelaw Reid.

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thereby the character of the commanders. Halleck, chief of staff and military adviser to President Lincoln, writes to Sherman, "Should you capture Charleston, I hope that by some accident the place might be destroyed, and if a little salt should be sown upon its site it might prevent the growth of future crops of nullification and secession," and Sherman replies,* "I will bear in mind your hint as to Charleston, and do not think salt will be necessary. When I move on, the Fifteenth Corps will be on the right wing, and their position will bring them naturally into Charleston first, and if you have watched the history of that corps you have remarked that they generally do up their work pretty well."

While this general was given orders to burn mills and destroy all food sources on which non-combatants depended for life, and to convey prisoners first, or if prisoners were wanting, then non-combatant inhabitants, over all bridges and other places suspected of being mined, and "could hardly help laughing at their stepping so gingerly along the road where it was supposed sunken torpedoes might explode at each step";† and while even Grant, not yet risen to his last splendid act of

* Despatch of December 24, 1864. Sherman's "Memoirs," II, pp. 223, 227, 228.

† Sherman's "Memoirs," II, p. 194.

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magnanimity, as he was brought to do in the long vigils before Petersburg, was expressing his hope to Hunter that his troops would "eat out Virginia clear and clean, as far as they could go, so that crows flying over it for the balance of the season would have to carry their provender with them";* Lee, as he marched into Pennsylvania, issued orders to his troops to remember that they made war only on armed men, and that no greater disgrace could befall the army, and through it the whole South, than the perpetration of barbarous outrages on the innocent and defenceless. This whole order can never be too frequently repeated. It gives the man as he was.

HDQRS. ARMY OF NORTHERN VA.,
CHAMBERSBURG, PA., *June 27, 1863.*

GENL. ORDER, No. 72.

The commanding general has observed with marked satisfaction the conduct of the troops on the march, and confidently anticipates results commensurate with the high spirit they have manifested. No troops could have displayed greater fortitude or better performed the arduous marches of the past ten days. Their conduct in other respects has, with few exceptions, been in keeping with their character as soldiers and entitles them to approbation and praise.

* Official Records, vol. XXXVII, part 2, pp. 300, 301.

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There have, however, been instances of forgetfulness on the part of some that they have in keeping the yet unsullied reputation of the army, and that the duties exacted of us by civilization and Christianity are not less obligatory in the country of the enemy than in our own. The commanding general considers that no greater disgrace would befall the army, and through it our whole people, than the perpetration of the barbarous outrages upon the innocent and defenceless, and the wanton destruction of private property, that have marked the course of the enemy in our own country. Such proceedings not only disgrace the perpetrators and all connected with them, but are subversive of the discipline and efficiency of the army and obstructive to the ends of our present movements. It must be remembered that we make war only on armed men, and that we cannot take vengeance for the wrong our people have suffered without lowering ourselves in the eyes of all whose abhorrence has been excited by the atrocities of our enemy, and offending against Him to whom vengeance belongeth, without whose favor and support our efforts must all prove in vain.

The commanding general, therefore, earnestly exhorts the troops to abstain with most scrupulous care from unnecessary or wanton injury to private property, and he enjoins upon all officers to arrest and bring to summary punishment all who shall in any way offend against the orders on this subject.

R. E. LEE, *General.*

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Colonel Freemantle, of the British army, who was along with the army, says: "I saw no straggling into the houses; nor were any of the inhabitants disturbed or annoyed by the soldiers. I went into Chambersburg and witnessed the singular good behavior of the troops toward the citizens. To one who has seen the ravages of the Northern troops in Southern towns, this forbearance seems most commendable and surprising."

In this he is sustained by the testimony of a multitude of reliable witnesses.* It is an error to imagine that Lee was lax in the enforcement of his orders. It was only with those higher officers whom he could not replace that he overlooked failure to comply with his orders. An excellent illustration of this is the story of his having sent for a colonel of artillery whose command had rendered conspicuous service in a battle a few days before. It was supposed that the summons was for the purpose of complimenting the colonel. But on his arrival all he received was a reprimand from the general for having allowed some of his

* Colonel William Nelson, of the artillery, on the retreat from Gettysburg, witnessed a cow break out of her pasture and join the beef herd which was passing by. The farmer's wife was in much distress. Riding back, Colonel Nelson directed Captain Woolfork, who was near by, to order one of his lieutenants to take a squad of reliable men and cut the cow out of the herd and return her to her mistress.

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men to ride on his guns, which was against orders. The colonel used to say that he thought of replying that if the general had seen his men in the battle next day he would have seen many of those same men lying under the guns. But he did not say it. Few men in the Army of Northern Virginia, whatever their devotion to "Marse Robert," ventured to reply to him. They stood mightily in awe of him.

His orders against depredation, even in the enemy's country, were rigidly enforced, and having seen a soldier running away from a farm-yard with a stolen pig, he is said to have promptly ordered his execution. Whether this story be authentic or not, it is unquestioned that he was stern in enforcing discipline in this regard. The story is known how, on being told by a bare-headed prisoner in reply to the question, "Where is your hat?" that a soldier had taken it, he had a search made and the hat returned.

In his admirable "Review of the Gettysburg Campaign," Colonel David G. McIntosh, whose battalion was among the most noted for service on that fatal field, and who was in the fight from the first morning, relates that when on the retreat to the Potomac his command reached St. James's College, it was given the first opportunity

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to rest and cook rations which it had had since the struggle began on the first day. Having gone into camp in a grove, he was so worn out that he flung himself on the ground and was at once asleep. He was soon aroused by a message that General Lee wished to see him, and on making his way to where the general was, he was received "with great austerity of manner" and suddenly "awoke to the fact that a long row of camp-fires were blazing brightly in full view, piled high with fence rails." Pointing to the fires, General Lee inquired if he had received "Order No. 72." He replied that he had, and that the order had been duly published. "Looking at me for a moment," continues Colonel McIntosh, "he said: 'Then, sir, you must not only have them published, but you must see that they are obeyed,' and with a bow and majestic wave of the hand, he turned and rode away, leaving me decidedly crestfallen."

Illustrations might be multiplied indefinitely to show that, while he fought with all his might, he fought only armed enemies, and, whatever the provocation, bore himself toward others with knightly consideration.

It is a record of general and of men of which the South may well boast and of which the whole nation will some day be proud.

XXV

LEE IN DEFEAT

AND now, having endeavored to picture Lee during those glorious campaigns which must, to the future student of military skill, place him among the first captains of history, I shall not invite attention further to Lee the soldier—to Lee the strategist—to Lee the victorious, but to a greater Lee—to Lee the defeated.

As glorious as were these campaigns, it is on the last act of the drama—the retreat from Petersburg, the surrender at Appomattox, and the dark period that followed that surrender—that we must look to see him at his best. His every act, his every word, showed how completely he had surrendered himself to Duty, and with what implicit obedience he followed the command of that

“Stern daughter of the voice of God.”

“Are you sanguine of the result of the war?” asked Bishop Wilmer of him in the closing days of the struggle. His reply was:

“At present I am not concerned with results.

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God's will ought to be our aim, and I am quite contented that His designs should be accomplished and not mine."

On that last morning when his handful of worn and starving veterans had made their last charge, to find themselves shut in by ranks of serried steel, hemmed in by Grant's entire army; he faced the decree of Fate with as much constancy as though that decree were success, not doom.

"What will history say of the surrender of an army in the field?" asked an officer of his staff in passionate grief.

"Yes, I know they will say hard things of us; they will not understand that we were overwhelmed by numbers; but that is not the question, colonel. The question is, is it right to surrender this army? If it is right, then I will take all of the responsibility."

It was ever the note of duty that he sounded.

"You will take with you," he said to his army in his farewell address, "the satisfaction that proceeds from the consciousness of duty faithfully performed."

"We are conscious that we have humbly tried to do our duty," he said, a year or more after the war, when the clouds hung heavy over the South;

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“we may, therefore, with calm satisfaction trust in God and leave results to Him.”

The sun which has shone in the morning, but has become obscured by clouds in the afternoon, sometimes breaks forth and at its setting shines with a greater splendor than it knew even at high noon.

So here. Sheathing his stainless sword, surrendering in the field the remnant of an army that had once been the most redoubtable body of fighting men of the century, the greatest captain, the noblest gentleman of our time, expecting to slip into the darkness of oblivion, suddenly stepped forth from the gloom of defeat into the splendor of perpetual fame.

I love to think of Grant as he appeared that April day at Appomattox: the simple soldier, the strenuous fighter who, though thrashed, was always ready to fight again; who, now though he had achieved the prize for which he had fought so hard and had paid so dearly, was so modest and so unassuming that but for his shoulderstraps and that yet better mark of rank, his generosity, he might not have been known as the victor. Southerners generally have long forgiven Grant all else for the magnanimity that he showed that day to Lee. By his orders no salutes

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of joy were fired, no public marks of exultation over his fallen foe were allowed. History contains no finer example of greatness. Not Alexander in his generous youth excelled him.

Yet, it is not more to the victor that Posterity will turn her gaze than to the vanquished, her admiration at the glory of the conqueror wellnigh lost in amazement at the dignity of the conquered.

Men who saw the defeated general when he came forth from the chamber where he had signed the articles of capitulation say that he paused a moment as his eyes rested once more on the Virginia hills, smote his hands together as though in some excess of inward agony, then mounted his gray horse, Traveller, and rode calmly away.

If that was the very Gethsemane of his trials, yet he must have had then one moment of supreme, if chastened, joy. As he rode quietly down the lane leading from the scene of capitulation, he passed into view of his men—of such as remained of them. The news of the surrender had got abroad and they were waiting, grief-stricken and dejected, upon the hill-sides, when they caught sight of their old commander on the gray horse. Then occurred one of the most notable scenes in the history of war. In an instant they were about him, bareheaded, with tear-wet faces; thronging

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him, kissing his hand, his boots, his saddle; weeping; cheering him amid their tears; shouting his name to the very skies. He said: "Men, we have fought through the war together. I have done my best for you. My heart is too full to say more."

The cheers were heard afar off over the hills where the victorious army lay encamped, and awakened some anxiety. It was a sound they well knew:

"The voice once heard through Shiloh's woods,
And Chickamauga's solitudes,
The fierce South cheering on her sons."

It was reported in some of the Northern papers that it was the sound of jubilation at the surrender. But it was not. It was the voice of jubilation, yet not for surrender: but for the captain who had surrendered their muskets but was still the commander of their hearts.

This is Lee's final victory and the highest tribute to the South: that the devotion of the South to him was greater in the hour of defeat than in that of victory. It is said that Napoleon was adored by the men of France, but hated by the women. It was not so with Lee. No victor ever

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came home to receive more signal evidences of devotion than this defeated general.

Richmond was in mourning. Since the Union army had entered her gates, every house had been closed as though it were the house of death. One afternoon, a few days after the surrender, Lee, on his gray horse, Traveller, attended by two or three officers, crossed the James and rode quietly up the street to his home on Franklin Street, where he dismounted. That evening it was noised abroad that General Lee had arrived; he had been seen to enter his house. Next morning the houses were open as usual; life began to flow in its accustomed channels. Those who were there have said that when General Lee returned they felt as safe as if he had had his whole army at his back.

His first recorded words on his arrival were a tribute to his successful opponent. "General Grant has acted with magnanimity," he said to some who spoke of the victor with bitterness. It was the key-note to his after-life.

Indeed, from this record a few facts stand forth beyond all others: Lee's nobility and genius; the fortitude of the Southern people; Grant's resolution and magnanimity, and the infinite valor of the American soldier.

Over forty years have gone by since that day in

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April when Lee, to avoid further useless sacrifice of life, surrendered himself and all that remained of the Army of Northern Virginia and gave his parole d'honneur to bear arms no more against the United States. To him, who with prescient mind had long borne in his bosom knowledge of the exhausted resources of the Confederacy, and had seen his redoubtable army, under the "policy of attrition," dwindle away to a mere ghost of its former self, it might well appear that he had failed, and, if he ever thought of his personal reputation, that he had lost the soldier's dearest prize; that Fame had turned her back and Fate usurped her place. Thenceforth he who had been the leader of armies, whose glorious achievements had filled the world, who had been the prop of a high-hearted nation's hope, was to walk the narrow by-way of private life, defeated, impoverished, and possibly misunderstood.

But to us who have survived for the space of more than a generation, how different it appears. We know that time, the redresser of wrongs, is steadily righting the act of unkind Fate; and Fame, firmly established in her high seat, is ever placing a richer laurel on his brow.

Yea, ride away, thou defeated general! Ride through the broken fragments of thy shattered

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army, ride through thy war-wasted land, amid
thy desolate and stricken people. But know that
thou art riding on Fame's highest way:

“This day shall see
Thy head wear sunlight and thy feet touch stars.”

XXVI

AFTER THE WAR

THE sternest test of Lee's character was yet to come. Only those who went through it can know the depth of the humiliation in which, during the next few years, malignity, with ignorance for ally, strove to steep the South.

Out of it Lee came without a trace of rancor or of bitterness. In all the annals of our race no man has ever shown a nobler or more Christian spirit.

Lincoln, who was of Southern blood and whose passion was a reunited Union, was in his grave, slain by a madman, and after life's fitful fever was sleeping well, his last message being one of peace and good-will. His successor began by flinging himself into the arms of those who had hated Lincoln most.

On the 29th of May President Johnson issued a proclamation of amnesty, but General Lee, with all others of rank, was excluded from its operation, and he was indicted for treason by a grand jury, composed partly of negroes, especially selected for the purpose of returning indictments

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against him and Mr. Davis. There were those who stood proudly aloof and gave no sign of desiring reinstatement as citizens. Some scornfully declared their resolution to live and die without accepting parole. Not so the broad-minded and wise Lee. He immediately wrote (on June 13) to the President, applying for the "benefits and full restoration of all rights and privileges extended to those included in the terms of the proclamation." This application he inclosed on the same day in a letter to General Grant, informing him that he was ready to meet any charges that might be preferred against him and did not wish to avoid trial, but that he had supposed that the officers and men of the Army of Northern Virginia were by the terms of surrender protected by the United States Government from molestation so long as they conformed to its conditions.

Grant immediately rose to the demand of the occasion—as he had a way of doing in great emergencies. He informed General Lee that his understanding of the convention at Appomattox was identical with his; and he is said to have threatened Johnson with the surrender of the command of the army unless the indictment were quashed and the convention honorably observed.

The assassination of Lincoln had played per-

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fectly into the hands of the radical element of his party, which had fought him with virulence, and now turned the outbreak of popular vengeance at the North to their own profit. They surpassed Johnson, and Johnson, finding himself confronted by an ever-strengthening phalanx of enemies within his own party, the same who had fought Lincoln so bitterly, enlarged by the new contingent of his personal foes, soon, for his own reasons, underwent a change of heart. From denouncing against the South measures that should "make treason odious," he began to speak of the South to Southerners in a more conciliatory manner. Governor Letcher, of Virginia, who had been arrested, was treated in Washington with kindness and consideration. It was on learning of this that General Lee declared his opinion that the decision of war having been against the South, it was "the part of wisdom to acquiesce in the result, and of candor to recognize the fact." The interests of the State of Virginia, he said, were the same as those of the United States. Its prosperity would rise or fall with the welfare of the country. The duty of its citizens then appeared to him too plain to admit of doubt. He urged that all should unite in honest efforts to obliterate the effects of war and to restore the blessings of

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peace. That they should remain, if possible, in the country; promote harmony and good feeling; qualify themselves to vote and elect to the State and general legislatures wise and patriotic men who would devote their abilities to the interests of the country and the healing of all dissensions. "I have," he asserted, "invariably recommended this course since the cessation of hostilities, and have endeavored to practice it myself." *

From this time he gave all the weight of his great name to the complete re-establishment of the Union, and as his old soldiers followed and obeyed him on the field of battle, so now the whole South followed him in peace. Only the South knows as yet what the Union owes to Lee.

Happily, as we know, his serene soul, lifted too high to be disturbed by any storms of doubt, was untroubled by any question born of his failure. "I did nothing more," he said to General Hampton, one of his most gallant lieutenants, "than my duty required of me. I could have taken no other course without dishonor, and if it were all to be done over again, I should act in precisely the same manner."

Thus, in the lofty calm of a mind conscious of having tried faithfully to follow ever the right,

* Letter of August 28, 1865, to ex-Governor Letcher.

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of having obeyed without question the command of duty, in simple reliance on the goodness of God, the great captain passed the brief evening of his life, trying, by his constant precept and example, to train the young men of the South as Christian gentlemen.

A story was told just after the war which illustrates the devotion of Lee's old soldiers to their defeated general.

Not long after the surrender, a soldier rang at General Lee's door and called for the general. "General," said he, as General Lee entered, "I'm one of your soldiers, and I've come here as the representative of four of my comrades who are too ragged and dirty to venture to see you. We are all Virginians, general, from Roanoke County, and they sent me here to see you on a little business. They've got our President in prison, and now—they—talk—about—arresting—you. And, general, we can't stand—we'll never stand and see that. Now, general, we five men have got about two hundred and fifty acres of land in Roanoke—very good land, too, it is, sir—and if you'll come up there and live, I've come to offer you our land, all of it, and we five men will work as your field-hands, and you'll have very little trouble in managing it with us to help you. And, general,

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there are near about a hundred of us left in old Roanoke, and they could never take you there, for we could hide you in the hollows of the mountains, and the last man of us would die in your defence."

With a great deal of delicacy he went on to suggest that the ladies of General Lee's family would lack society on a lonely mountain farm, but said that the Springs were hard by, and that out of the proceeds of the farm General Lee and his family could afford to spend all their summers there and thus find the society which these devoted field-hands did not dare to offer.

General Lee was, of course, forced to decline; but he would not allow the brave fellow to depart until he was better clad than when he came in.*

He was much disturbed about this time by the tendency of some of his old friends in their despair to emigrate from the South. That constant soul knew no defeat, much less despair, and he had not despaired of the South. He protested against leaving the State for any reason, avowing his unalterable belief in the duty of every man to remain and bear his part in whatever trials might befall. "The thought of abandoning the country and all that must be left in it,"

* George W. Bagby's "Old Virginia Gentleman," p. 62.

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he wrote, "is abhorrent to my feelings, and I prefer to struggle for its restoration and share its fate rather than to give up all as lost, and Virginia has need for all her sons." * And this devotion he exemplified to the fullest extent in his life.

The war had scarcely ceased and his condition of narrow circumstances become known, when offers of places of honor and profit began to come to him: offers of the presidency of insurance companies and of other industrial enterprises—proposals that he should allow his name to be used for the highest office in the gift of the State; even offers from admirers in the old country of an asylum on that side of the water, where a handsome estate was tendered him, as a tribute of admiration, so that he could spend the residue of his life in peace and comfort.

His reply to all these allurements was that which we now know was the only one he could make: a gracious but irrevocable refusal. During the war, when a friend had suggested to him the probability that the people of the South would demand that he should be their president, he had promptly and decisively declared that he would never accept such a position. So now, when the governorship of Virginia was proposed to him, he

* Letter to Commodore M. F. Maury, September 8, 1865.

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firmly refused to consider it. With the same firmness he rejected all proposals to provide him with honorable commercial positions at a high salary.

On one of these occasions he was approached with a tender of the presidency of an insurance company at a salary of \$50,000 a year. He declined it on the ground that it was work with which he was not familiar. "But, general," said the gentleman who represented the insurance company, "you will not be expected to do any work; what we wish is the use of your name."

"Do you not think," said General Lee, "that if my name is worth \$50,000 a year, I ought to be very careful about taking care of it?"

Amid the commercialism of the present age this sounds as refreshing as the oath of a knight of the Round Table.

Defeated in one warfare, he was still a captain militant in the service of Duty: Duty that, like the moon, often shows her darkened face to her votary, though in the future she may beam with radiance.

Duty now appeared to him to send her summons from a little mountain town in which was a classical school which Washington had endowed, and Lee, turning from all offers of wealth and ease, obeyed her call.

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“They are offering my father everything,” said one of his daughters, “but the only thing he will accept: a place to earn honest bread while engaged in some useful work.” That speech, made to a trustee of the institution referred to, brought Lee the offer of the presidency of Washington College at a salary of \$1,500 a year; and after some hesitation, due to his fear that his association with an institution might in the state of political feeling then existing prove an injury rather than a benefit to it, he accepted it. So poor were the people that Judge Brockenbrough, the trustee who bore the invitation, had to borrow a suit of clothes from a friend to make himself presentable.

Thus, the first captain of his time, and almost, if not quite, the most famous man in the world, with offers that might well, in that hour of trial, have allured even him, with all his modesty, turned his back on the world, and following the lamp with which Duty appeared to light his way, rode quietly to that little mountain town in Rockbridge County to devote the remainder of his life to fitting the sons of his old soldiers to meet the exactions of the coming time. On his old war-horse he rode into Lexington alone, one afternoon in the early autumn, and, after a hush of reverent silence at his first appearance, was greeted on the

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streets by his old soldiers with the far-famed rebel yell which he had heard last as he rode down the lane from Appomattox.

Ah! ride on alone, old man, with Duty at thy bridle-bit: behind thee is the glory of thy military career; before thee is the transcendent fame of thy future. Thou shalt abide there henceforth; there shall thy ashes repose; but thou shalt make of that little town a shrine to which pilgrims shall turn with softened eyes so long as men admire virtue and the heart aspires to the ideal of Duty.

He was sworn in as president on the 2d of October, 1865, in the presence of a few professors and friends, and thenceforth his life was devoted to the new service he had entered on with the same zeal with which he always applied himself to the duty before him.

In the winter of 1865-6, when the radical element that had secured control of the government at Washington were reaching out in every direction to try to find some evidence that would implicate Mr. Davis and General Lee in the conspiracy to murder Mr. Lincoln, General Lee was, with many others, summoned to Washington to appear before the committee of the Congress having the investigation in charge. His examination cov-

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ered a wide range and throws so much light, not only on his character, but on the situation at that time, that it justifies giving a summary of the whole and its most important parts in full.* His answers are a complete refutation of the idea held—possibly even now—by many, that the reconstruction measures adopted by the radical wing of the party whom Lincoln's death had brought in power had some justification. It had not a shred.

In reply to direct questions by his inquisitors as to what was the state of feeling toward the government of the United States of the "secessionists" in Virginia, he stated that he had been "living very retired" in Lexington for the last five months and had "had but little communication with politicians"; that he knew nothing save from his own observation, and such facts as had come to his knowledge; that he did not know of a single person who either felt or contemplated any resistance or opposition to the government of the United States; that he believed that the people of the South entirely acquiesced in the government of the United States, and were for co-operating with President Johnson in his policy

* Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction, 39th Cong., p. 133.

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of reconstruction, in the wisdom of which they had great confidence, and to which they looked forward as a hope of restoration. He believed that they expected to pay their share of the taxes levied by the government, including the war debt, and had never heard of any opposition to such payment, or of their making any distinction between that and other just debts. Indeed, he believed, from his knowledge of the people of Virginia, that they would be willing to pay the Confederate debt also, though he thought the people generally looked upon it as lost entirely.

This was far from what his inquisitors wished to hear, and they pressed him along other lines, among them as to the feeling of the "secessionists" in Virginia toward the freedmen, whom they were supposed to be oppressing. In reply, he declared, what every one now knows to have been the fact, that every one with whom he associated expressed the kindest feelings toward the freedmen, and wished to see them get on in the world, and particularly to take up some occupation for a living and to turn their hands to some work, and that efforts were being made among the farmers near his home to induce them to engage for the year at regular and fair living wages. He did not know, he stated, of any combination to keep down

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wages or establish any rate which the people did not think fair.

He further stated that where he had been the people were not only willing that the blacks should be educated, but were of the opinion that this would be for the advantage of both the blacks and the whites. He personally did not think that the black man was as capable of acquiring knowledge as the white man, though some were more apt than others, and he had known some to acquire knowledge in their trade or profession, and had had certain ones of his own who had learned to read and write very well.

He had heard of no combination having in view the disturbance of the peace or any improper or unlawful acts, and had seen no evidence of it. On the contrary, wherever he had been they were "quiet and orderly, not disposed to work, or, rather, not disposed to any continuous engagement to work, but just very short jobs to provide them with the immediate means of subsistence," as they tended to "look rather to the present time than to the future."

In response to further questions, he stated that he did not believe in an amendment to the Constitution extending the suffrage to the colored people, as it "would open the door to a good deal

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of demagogism and lead to embarrassments in various ways. What the future may prove," he added, "how intelligent they may become, with what eyes they may look upon the interests of the State in which they may reside, I cannot say more than you can."

When further pressed on the subject, in reply to direct questions, he expressed as his opinion that it would be for the benefit of Virginia, both then and in the future, if she were relieved of the burden of her colored population by their moving to the Cotton States. "That is no new opinion with me," he added. "I have always thought so, and have always been in favor of emancipation—gradual emancipation."

In reply to the question whether "in the event of a war between the United States and any foreign power, such as England or France, if there should be held out to the secession portion of the people of Virginia or the other recently 'rebel' States a fair prospect of gaining their independence and shaking off the government of the United States," it was or was not his opinion that they would "avail themselves of that opportunity," he declared that he could not speak with any certainty on that point; that he did not know how far they might be actuated by their feelings, and

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had nothing whatever to base his opinion on; but that, so far as he knew, they contemplated nothing of the kind at that time; and that, so far from having heard in his intercourse expressions of a hope that such a war might break out, he had heard those with whom he associated express the hope that the country might not be led into a war.

Having been pressed at this point by the question, what, in such an event, would be his own choice, he settled the matter by saying quietly, "I have no disposition now to do it, and I never have had."

On the point whether, during the Civil War, it was not contemplated by the government of the Confederacy to form an alliance with some foreign nation, if possible, he stated his belief that it had been their wish to do so if they could, as it had been their wish to have the Confederate Government recognized as an independent government, but that he knew nothing of the policy of the government, and "had no hand or part in it."

Touching the question as to the bearing of the people in the South toward the people of the North, he stated as his opinion that they accepted frankly the results of the war; that they were endeavoring to work and improve their conditions; and that their relation to Northerners who

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went down there would depend upon the personal attitude of the latter and their manner of conducting themselves; that they felt that the North could afford to be generous, and their generosity and liberality toward the entire South would be the surest and the speediest means of regaining their good opinion.

The questions then turned upon the political views of the Southern people, and he was asked whether, if the Southern States were again given the opportunity of seceding, as they had been given under Mr. Buchanan, they would, in his opinion, avail themselves of that opportunity. He thought that this would depend upon the circumstances existing at the time, and that they might do so if they thought that it was to their interest; but he did not know of any deep-seated dislike or discontent against the government of the United States among the "secessionists" generally. He believed that they would perform all the duties that they were required to perform, and that the policy of President Johnson would naturally result in restoring the "old feeling," and in improving the material interests of the country.

Possibly with a view to entangle him the question was put to him whether "it would be practicable to convict a man in Virginia of treason for

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having taken part in this rebellion against the government, by a Virginia jury, without picking it with direct reference to a verdict of guilty." To this he replied: "On that point I have no knowledge, and I do not know what they would consider treason against the United States, if you refer to past acts."

He was then asked a more direct question, which, indeed, discovered the object of the entire inquisition: "Suppose a jury was empanelled in your own neighborhood, taken by lot, would it be possible to convict, for instance, Jeff Davis for having levied war upon the United States, and thus having committed the crime of treason?" His reply was: "I think it is very probable that they would not consider he had committed treason."

This was interesting, and the examination was pressed as follows:

Q. Suppose the jury should be clearly and plainly instructed by the court that such an act of war upon the part of Mr. Davis, or any other leading man, constituted in itself the crime of treason under the Constitution of the United States, would the jury be likely to heed that instruction, and, if the facts were plainly before them, commit the offender? A. I do

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not know, sir, what they would do on that question.

Q. They do not generally suppose that it was treason against the United States, do they? A. I do not think that they so consider it.

Q. In what light would they view it? What would be the excuse or justification? How would they escape in their own mind? I refer to the past. I am referring to the past and the feelings they would have. A. So far as I know, they look upon the action of the State in withdrawing itself from the government of the United States as carrying the individuals of the State along with it; that the State was responsible for the act, not the individuals, and that the ordinance of secession, so-called, or those acts of the State which recognized a condition of war between the State and the general government, stood as their justification for their bearing arms against the government of the United States. Yes, sir, I think they would consider the act of the State as legitimate; that they were merely using the reserved rights, which they had a right to do.

Q. State, if you please—and if you are disinclined to answer the question you need not do so—what your own personal views on that question are. A. That was my view, that the act of Vir-

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ginia, in withdrawing herself from the United States, carried me along as a citizen of Virginia, and that her laws and her acts were binding on me.

Q. All that you felt to be your justification in taking the course you did? A. Yes, sir.

In this he had set forth the whole principle on which the South stood. He repudiated the idea that he had ever stated that he had been "wheedled or cheated" into his course by politicians. "I may have said," he explained, "and may have believed, that the position of the two sections which they held to each other was brought about by the politicians of the country; that the great masses of the people, if they understood the real questions, would have avoided it; but not that I had been individually wheedled by the politicians. . . . I may have said that, but I do not recollect it; but I did believe at the time that it was an unnecessary condition of affairs and might have been avoided if forbearance and wisdom had been practised on both sides."

Having failed to entangle him in admissions of treason, one more ground for hope still remained. The inquisitors hoped to connect him and Mr. Davis with the cruelties charged to have been practised in Southern prisons. Accordingly,

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he was examined as to what knowledge he had of the cruelties practised toward the Union prisoners at Libby Prison and on Belle Isle. His answer was complete: "I never knew that any cruelty was practised, and I have no reason to believe that it was practised. I can believe, and have reason to believe, that privations may have been experienced by the prisoners, because I know that provisions and shelter could not be provided for them."

Q. Were you not aware that the prisoners were dying from cold and starvation? *A.* I was not.

"I desire that you will speak your mind fully and freely on this subject," said his questioner (Mr. Howard), "for it is useless to conceal from you the fact that there seems to have been created a sad feeling in the hearts of the people at the North." To this Lee replied: "As regards myself, I never had any control over the prisoners, except those that were captured on the field of battle, when it was then my business to send them to Richmond, to the proper officer, who was then the provost-marshal-general. In regard to their disposition afterward I had no control. I never gave any order about it. It was entirely in the hands of the War Department."

Q. And not in your hands? *A.* And not in mine.

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Q. Did these scenes come to your knowledge at all? A. Never. No report was ever made to me about them. There was no call for any to be made to me. I did hear—it was mere hearsay—that statements had been made to the War Department, and that everything had been done to relieve them that could be done, even finally so far as to offer to send them to some other points—Charleston was one point named—if they would be received by the United States authorities and taken to their homes; but whether this is true or not I do not know. It was merely a report that I heard.

Q. Were you in the same ignorance of the scenes at Andersonville and Salisbury? A. I never knew the commandant at Andersonville until I saw by the papers, after the cessation of hostilities, that Captain Wirz had been arrested on that account, nor do I know now who commanded at Salisbury.

Q. And of course you know nothing of the scenes of cruelty about which complaints have been made at those places? A. Nothing in the world, as I said before. I suppose they suffered from the want of ability on the part of the Confederate States to supply their wants. At the very beginning of the war I knew that there was

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suffering of prisoners on both sides, but as far as I could I did everything in my power to relieve them and to establish the cartel which was established.

Q. (By Mr. Blow.) It has been frequently asserted that the Confederate soldiers feel more kindly toward the government of the United States than other persons or other people of the South. What are your observations on that point?

A. From the Confederate soldiers I have heard no expression of any other opinion. They looked upon the war as a necessary evil and went through it. I have seen them relieve the wants of Federal soldiers on the field. The orders always were that the whole field should be treated alike. Parties were sent out to take the Federal wounded as well as the Confederate, and the surgeons were told to treat the one as they did the other. These orders given by me were respected on every field.

Thus, we have the highest authority—Lee's own word—that a wounded foe was treated by him as a friend.

XXVII

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NO part of his life reflects greater honor on his memory than that which was now to come. Here, as in everything else, he addressed all his powers to the work in hand. He found the institution merely an old, denominational college, dilapidated and wellnigh ruined, without means and without students. The mere fact of his connection with it gave it at once a reputation. He changed the little college, as if by an enchanter's wand, from a mere academy, with but forty students and less than a half dozen professors, to a great institution of learning.* He instituted or extended the honor system—that Southern system which reckons the establishment of character informed with culture to be at once the basis and end of all education. Students flocked there from all over the South. He knew them all, and, what is more, followed them all in their work. He was as prompt at chapel as the chaplains; as interested in the classes as the professors and certainly

* Address on Lee as a college president, by Dr. Edward S. Jaynes.

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more than the students. The standard he ever held up was that of duty.

One of his pleasures was the planting of trees, and the beautiful trees about the institution to-day are a part of the legacy he left.

His old soldiers, often at great sacrifice, sent their sons to be under his direction, and to learn at his feet the stern lesson of duty. But it was he who made the college worthy of their confidence. He elevated the standards, broadened the scope, called about him the most accomplished professors to be found and inspired them with new enthusiasm. No principle was too abstruse for him to grasp, no detail too small for him to examine. He familiarized himself alike with the methods employed at the best institutions, and with the conduct and standing of every student at his own.

An educational official has stated that of a number of college presidents to whom he addressed an inquiry relating to educational matters, General Lee was the only one who took the trouble to send him an answer. He who had commanded armies, "the lowliest duties on himself did lay." He audited every account; he presided at every faculty meeting; studied and signed every report.

In fact, the chief stimulus to the students was the knowledge that General Lee was familiar with

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every student's standing, and, to some extent, with every man's conduct. An invitation to visit him in his office was the most dreaded event in a student's life, though the actual interview was always softened by a noble courtesy on the president's part into an experience which left an impress throughout life and ever remained a cherished memory.

To one thus summoned, the general urged greater attention to study, on the ground that it would prevent the failure which would otherwise inevitably come to him.

"But, general, you failed," said the youth, meaning, as he explained afterward, to pay him a tribute.

"I hope that you may be more fortunate than I," replied the general quietly.

On another occasion, a youth from the far South having "cut lectures" to go skating, an accomplishment he had just acquired, was summoned to appear before the president, and, having made his defence, was told by the general that he should not have broken the rule of the institution, but should have requested to be excused from attendance on lectures.

"You understand now?"

"Yes, sir. Well, general, the ice is fine this

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morning. I'd like to be excused to-day," promptly replied the ready youngster.

It was occasionally the habit of the young orators who spoke in public at celebrations to express their feelings by indulging in compliments to General Lee and the ladies, and the reverse of compliments to "the Yankees." Such references, clad in the glowing rhetoric and informed with the deep feeling of youthful oratory, never failed to stir their audiences and evoke unstinted applause. General Lee, however, notified the speakers that such references were to be omitted. He said: "You young men speak too long, and you make three other mistakes: what you say about me is distasteful to me; what you say about the North tends to promote ill feeling and injure the institution, and your compliments to the ladies are much more valued when paid in private than in public."

Among the students at this time were quite a number who had been soldiers and were habituated to a degree of freedom. Pranks among the students were, of course, common, and were not dealt with harshly. But he let them know that he was the president. When the Freedmen's Bureau agent was hooted by a number of persons, two students who were in the party were "sent home," a phrase which General Lee preferred to

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“dismissal.” One episode occurred which showed the strong hand in the soft gauntlet.

Prior to General Lee's installation as president, it had always been the custom to grant at least a week's holiday at Christmas. This custom the faculty, under the president's lead, did away with, and thenceforth only Christmas Day was given as a holiday.

A petition to return to the old order having failed, a meeting of the students was held and a paper was posted, containing many signatures, declaring the signers' determination not to attend lectures during Christmas week. Some manifestation appeared on the part of certain of the faculty of giving in to the students' demand. General Lee settled the matter at once by announcing that any man whose name appeared on the rebellious declaration would be expelled from the college. And if every student signed it, he said, he would send every one home and simply lock up the college and put the key in his pocket.

The activity displayed in getting names off the paper was amusing, and the attendance at lectures that Christmas was unusually large.

Many stories have been told of his method of administering a rebuke where he thought it needed.

One was related by a gallant engineer officer to

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whose attention, when before Petersburg, the general had called some defect in the defences which were under his charge. The officer assured him that the matter should be attended to at once, and accordingly gave orders that it should be done. A day or two later the general met him and asked if the work had been done, and he in good faith said it had, on which the general said he would go and inspect it and invited him to attend him. To his dismay, on arrival at the spot, the work had not been done at all, and he found himself in the embarrassing position of having to explain that he had given orders to have it done. The general said nothing further, but soon after remarked on the mettlesomeness of the fine horse which the officer was riding, and the officer, glad to get off the subject of the neglected defences, explained that it was his wife's riding horse, but had proved so wild that he had taken it to get it suited to her hand. As they parted the general said quietly: "Captain, I think it might prove a good way to train that horse to ride him a little more over that rough ground along the trenches."

I cannot forbear to relate a personal incident which I feel illustrates well General Lee's method of dealing with his students. I was so unfortunate while at college as to have always an early class,

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and from time to time on winter mornings it was my habit "to run late," as the phrase went. This brought me in danger of meeting the president on his way from chapel, a contingency I was usually careful to guard against. One morning, however, I miscalculated, and as I turned a corner came face to face with him. His greeting was most civil, and touching my cap I hurried by. Next moment I heard my name spoken, and turning I removed my cap and faced him.

"Yes, sir."

"Tell Miss ——" (mentioning the daughter of my uncle, General Pendleton, who kept house for him) "that I say will she please have breakfast a little earlier for you."

"Yes, sir." And I hurried on once more, resolved that should I ever be late again I would, at least, take care not to meet the general.

Craving due allowance alike for the immaturity of a boy and the mellowing influence of passing years, I will try to picture General Lee as I recall him, and as he must be recalled by thousands who yet remember him. He was, in common phrase, one of the handsomest men I ever knew and easily the most impressive-looking. His figure, which in earlier life had been tall and admirably proportioned, was now compact and rounded rather than

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stout, and was still in fine proportion to his height. His head, well set on his shoulders, and his erect and dignified carriage made him a distinguished and, indeed, a noble figure. His soft hair and carefully trimmed beard, silvery white, with his florid complexion and dark eyes, clear and frank, gave him a pleasant and kindly expression, and I remember how, when he smiled, his eyes twinkled and his teeth shone. He always walked slowly, and even pensively, for he was already sensible of the trouble which finally struck him down; and the impression that remains with me chiefly is of his dignity and his gracious courtesy. I do not remember that we feared him at all, or even stood in awe of him. Collegians stand in awe of few things or persons. But we honored him beyond measure, and after nearly forty years he is still the most imposing figure I ever saw. Efforts were made time and time again to induce him to accept a position at the head of some establishment or enterprise, the emoluments of which would enable him to live in ease for the rest of his life; but all such invitations he promptly declined. To one of these invitations urging him to accept a position "at the head of a large house to represent Southern commerce, . . . reside in New York, and have placed at his disposal an immense sum of money,"

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he replied: "I am grateful, but I have a self-imposed task which I must accomplish. I have led the young men of the South in battle; I have seen many of them die on the field; I shall devote my remaining energies to training young men to do their duty in life." *

Even here, in his seclusion, while honored by the best of those who had bravely fought against him, he was pursued by the malignity of those haters of the South who, having kept carefully concealed while the guns were firing, now that all personal danger was over, endeavored to make amends by assailing with their clamor the noblest of the defeated. It was a period of passion, and those who, under other conditions, might have acted with deliberation and reason, gave the loose to their feeling and surrendered themselves blindly to the direction of their wildest and most passionate leaders. Those against whose private life the purity of his life was an ever-burning protest reviled him most bitterly. The hostile press of the time was filled with railing against him; the halls of Congress rang with denunciation of him as a traitor—the foolish and futile yelping of the cowardly pack that ever gather about the wounded and spent lion. And with what noble dignity and

* R. E. Lee's "Recollections of General Lee," p. 376.

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self-command he treated it all! To the nobility of a gentleman he added the meekness of a Christian. When, with a view to setting an example to the South, he applied to be included in the terms of the general amnesty finally offered, his application was ignored, and to his death he remained "a prisoner on parole."

He was dragged before high commissions and was cross-examined by hostile prosecutors panting to drive or inveigle him into some admission which would compromise him, but without avail, or even the ignoble satisfaction to his enemies that they had ruffled his unbroken calm.

"Seest thou not how they revile thee?" said a youth to Diogenes. "Yea; but seest thou not how I am not reviled?" said the philosopher.

He read little on the war, though he at one time contemplated writing a history of the campaigns of the Army of Northern Virginia in which he had been engaged, and he began, indeed, to collect the materials for the work. He wrote letters to some of his friends, and issued a circular to his old officers asking their co-operation. "I am desirous," he wrote to his former adjutant-general, Colonel W. R. Taylor, "that the bravery and devotion of the Army of Northern Virginia shall be correctly transmitted to posterity. This is the

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only tribute that can now be paid to the worth of its noble officers and soldiers."

When he applied to the War Department in Washington for permission to copy papers and documents in the department, the request was refused, and the labor of collecting the materials from other sources was so great that, taken in connection with his other duties, he put aside the work and contented himself with writing a brief memoir of his honored father to accompany a new and revised edition which he edited of the latter's "Memoirs of the War in the Southern Department of the United States." Long states that "he relinquished the work with less reluctance because he felt that its truths and indispensable facts must expose certain persons to severe censure." *

That he did not, however, abandon the idea is apparent from a letter which he wrote to a kinsman of his in the early summer of 1870, but a few months before his death.

LEXINGTON, VA., *6th June*, 1870.

MY DEAR CASSIUS: I am very much obliged to you for your letter of the 1st, and the interest you evince in the character of the people of the South, and their defence of the rights which they believed were guaranteed by the Constitution. The repu-

* Long's "Memoirs of Robert E. Lee," p. 422.

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tation of individuals is of minor importance to the opinion which posterity may form of the motives which governed the South in their late struggle for the maintenance of the principles of the Constitution. I hope, therefore, a true history will be written and justice be done them. A history of the military events of the period would also be desirable. I have had it in view to write one of the campaigns in Virginia in which I was more particularly engaged. I have already collected some materials for the work, but lack so much that I wish to obtain that I have not commenced the narrative. I am very much obliged to you for the offer of the materials which you have collected. I think it probable that I have all the official reports, and I would not like to resort to any other source for a statement of facts. . . .

I am, very truly, your cousin,
R. E. LEE.

C. F. LEE, JR., Alexandria, Va.

It was his diversion to ride his old war-horse, Traveller, among the green hills of that beautiful country about Lexington, at times piloting through the bridle-paths the little daughters of some professor, sun-bonneted and rosy, riding two astride the same horse; or now and then meeting an old soldier who asked the privilege of giving for him once more the old cheer, which in past days had

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at sight of him rung out on so many a hard-fought field.

In a horseback ride to the peaks of Otter, in the summer of 1867, he was accompanied by one of his daughters, who related afterward this pleasant incident of the trip. Having crossed the James at a ferry, where the ferryman, an old soldier, refused to accept any payment from his old general, they were riding up a steep hill when they came on a group of little children playing in the road, with hands and faces both much besmeared with dirt. The general, as they passed, rallied them on their muddy faces, and they suddenly dashed away and scampered off up the hill. A few minutes later, as the general and his daughter rounded the hill, from a little cabin on the roadside rushed the same children, with their faces washed, their hair brushed, and the girls with clean aprons, and as they passed one of them called out: "We know you are General Lee. We have got your picture." * It was the epitome of the South: his picture and his influence are in every Southern heart.

His love for children, which, as mentioned before, had always been a noted trait of his character, still marked his life, and many stories are

* R. E. Lee's "Recollections of General R. E. Lee," p. 271.

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told of its manifestation, as well as of their love for him. On one occasion, having learned during a visit to a friend (Colonel Preston) that two little boys in the family were sick with croup, he trudged back next day in the midst of a storm with a basket of pecans and a toy for his two little friends.

As he rode in the afternoons on Traveller, he was often greeted by the children, to whom at times he extended an invitation to come and ride with him, and this invitation came to be a coveted honor. On another occasion as he was riding he came on two little daughters of ex-Governor Letcher, the elder of whom was vainly trying to get her six-year-old sister to return home. As General Lee rode up, she accosted him: "General Lee, won't you please make this child go home to her mother?" The general stopped and invited the little rebel to ride home with him, which she graciously consented to do, and was thereupon lifted up in front of him, and "was thus grandly escorted home." When the mother asked the other child why she had given General Lee so much trouble, she said: "I couldn't make Fan go home, and I thought he could do anything."

Another pretty story was of a little boy (the son of the Rev. Dr. J. William Jones, one of General Lee's earliest biographers) who, during a col-

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lege commencement, slipped from his mother's lap, and going upon the platform where the general sat, seated himself at his feet, and snuggling against his knees, fell fast asleep, the general sitting motionless all the while, so as not to disturb the child.*

One of his biographers † relates that seeing him one day talking at his gate with a stranger to whom, as he ended, he gave some money, he inquired who the stranger was. "One of our old soldiers," said the general. "To whose command did he belong?" "Oh, he was one of those who fought against us," said General Lee. "But we are all one now, and must make no difference in our treatment of them." Indeed, that Lee had never any bitterness is evidenced by an incident which General Long mentions. During the campaign of strategy which followed Gettysburg, when Lee manœuvred Meade back from the Rapidan, as his army passed through Culpeper, from which Meade had retired, a lady of the place who had been "somewhat scandalized by the friendly relations between some of her neighbors and the Yankees," took occasion to complain to the general that certain young ladies, then present, had

* R. E. Lee's "Recollections of General Lee," pp. 266, 267, 325.

† Rev. Dr. J. William Jones.

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been in the habit of visiting General Sedgwick at his head-quarters, which was pitched in the ample grounds of a citizen whose house he had declined to use. The young ladies were troubled, for the general looked very grave; but they were soon relieved, for he said: "I know General Sedgwick very well. It is just like him to be so kindly and considerate, and to have his band there to entertain them. So, young ladies, if the music is good, go and hear it as often as you can, and enjoy yourselves. You will find that General Sedgwick will have none but agreeable gentlemen about him."

Thus, in simple duties and simple pleasures, untouched by the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, he passed life's close among his own people, a hallowed memory forever to those who knew him, an example to all who lived in that dark time or shall live hereafter; the pattern of a Christian gentleman, who did justice, loved mercy, and walked humbly with his God.

The board of trustees wished to give him as a home the house erected for him as president. He superintended the erection of the house—which he always was careful to speak of as "the president's house," and never as "my house"—but declined to accept the gift of it for himself or family. He

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wrote to the board of trustees: "Though fully sensible of the kindness of the board, and justly appreciating the manner in which they sought to administer to my relief, I am unwilling that my family should become a tax to the college; but desire all its funds should be devoted to the purposes of education. I know that my wishes on this subject are equally shared by my wife."

Knowing that Lee and his family had lost everything by the war, and were without means, efforts were made by friends and admirers to add to his comfort by increasing his salary; but, while assuring them of his appreciation of their kindness, he firmly declined to accept anything beyond his salary, either for himself or his family. General Ewell made a donation of \$500 to the board of trustees of the college, with the stipulation that it should be used to increase General Lee's salary. Lee refused to accept it, and in a clear and forcible statement showed the needs of the college. Somewhat later, when his declining health had begun to cause his family and friends anxiety, he was induced to take a trip to the South, and while he was absent the board of trustees of the college voted an annuity of \$3,000 to his family. This also, however, General Lee declined, though he must have known, as every one else knew, that his con-

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nection with the institution was worth many thousands of dollars a year to it. In fact, he was above not only all sordid but all material motives. In peace as in war his high soul by a natural law reached the highest elevation to which human nature may attain.

The following facts appear pertinent as illustrative of Lee's character. His abstemiousness was well known to his army, and, like his piety, was held as an example which all admired even though they might not always emulate it. His wife stated that on his return home from the Mexican campaign he brought back unopened a bottle of brandy which she had sent along in case of sickness.

On one occasion he illustrated his ideas on this subject in the quiet way that he had, when, before Petersburg, he one evening walked in on a number of young officers of his staff who were discussing earnestly a mathematical problem, with a stone jug and two tin cups on the table beside them. He made no comment at the time, but next morning when one of the young officers mentioned the fact that he had had a strange dream the night before, the general observed that "when young gentlemen discuss at midnight mathematical problems, the unknown quantities in which are

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a stone jug and tin cups, they may expect to have strange dreams."

After the war, when a friend commented on his abstemiousness, he said that on taking command he knew he should inevitably make many mistakes, and he determined that at least it should not be charged to intemperance.

Lee's personal piety shines so through every letter he ever wrote that it would appear almost superfluous to mention it; yet it is quite certain that it was one of the mainsprings not only of his daily life, but of his genius. That serene mental composure in which he worked out his most difficult problems sprang from his abiding confidence in the divine wisdom and trust in the divine goodness. Not a chaplain in his army excelled him in personal piety or in devoutness. The result was a spiritual gain to his army which has never been sufficiently considered in the reckoning of its forces. Time and again during the war a wave of spiritual awakening swept over the army whose head was the most pious and devout Christian that any army ever followed.

No misfortune ever dimmed for him this light, and the darkest cloud only served to increase his faith. After the war universal and ever-increasing gloom rolled over the South, not from

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the defeat of her armies, but from the profound humiliation in which the defeat enabled her political enemies to steep her. Yet even amid this, Lee's constant mind, stayed on God, suffered no arrows, not the most poisoned, to pierce him.

As illustrating his serene piety, we may take this from one of many similar letters to his children:

“. . . And though the future is still dark and the prospects gloomy, I am confident that if we all unite in doing our duty and earnestly work to extract what good we can out of the veil that now hangs over our dear land, the day will soon come when the angry cloud will be lifted from our horizon and the sun in his pristine brightness again shine forth. I therefore again anticipate for you many years of happiness and prosperity, and in my daily prayers to the God of mercy and truth, I invoke His choicest blessings upon you. May He gather you under the shadow of His almighty wing, direct you in all your ways, and give you peace and everlasting life. It would be most pleasant to my feelings could I again, as you propose, gather you all around me; but I fear that will not be in this world. Let us all so live that we may unite in that world where there is no more separation, and where sorrow and pain never come. I think after next year I will have done all the good

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I can for the college, and I should then like, if peace is restored to the country, to retire to some quiet spot east of the mountains where I might prepare a home for your mother and sisters after my death, and where I could earn my daily bread." *

Most men who think, set down on paper, from time to time, the result of their reflections. These reflections are rather memorabilia for ourselves than for others. It throws light on Lee's mind to find among his papers thoughts, set down here and there for his own guidance, which are so in keeping with his conduct that they might almost appear to have been written on the tablets of his heart. Among them we find these:

"God disposes. This ought to satisfy us."

"Charity should begin at home. So says—? No. Charity should have no beginning or ending."

"Those who oppose our purposes are not always to be regarded as our enemies. We usually think and act from our immediate surroundings. (See Macaulay on Machiavelli.)"

"The better rule is to judge our adversaries from their standpoint, not from ours." †

* R. E. Lee's "Recollections of General Robert E. Lee," p. 260.

† Quoted from Long's "Memoir," pp. 485, 486.

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Though Lee was too grave to be generally humorous, yet he had a certain dry humor of his own—too shy to be exhibited in public, and too delicate to bear translation in print. To those who knew him it gleams in his letters often with a pleasant glint—as, for example, where he amuses himself over his young unmarried daughter giving advice on the management of husbands and children, or when he writes home from the Springs: “You do not mention the cow; she is of more interest to me than the cats, and is equally destructive of rats.” In a letter to one of his sons he says: “We are all as usual—the women of the family very fierce, and the men very mild,” a picture which will be appreciated by those who recall the days following the war.

At the end of December, 1868, some one wrote to General Lee suggesting that General Grant, then President of the United States, should be invited to Washington College, to which General Lee replied, under date of January 8, thanking the gentleman for his letter, and saying: “I should be glad if General Grant would visit Washington College, and I should endeavor to treat him with the courtesy and respect due the President of the United States; but if I were to invite him to do so, it might not be agreeable to him, and I fear my

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motives might be misunderstood at this time, both by himself and others, and that evil would result instead of good. I will, however, bear your suggestion in mind, and should a favorable opportunity offer, I shall be glad to take advantage of it." *

Though General Grant never visited Washington College, and was never formally invited to do so, General Lee had an informal interview with him at the White House a few months later, when at the end of April he was returning from Baltimore, where he had been attending a meeting with a view to getting the Baltimore and Ohio Railway extended from Staunton to Lexington. It having been intimated to him that it would be most agreeable to General Grant to receive him, he went to Washington from Baltimore on an early train, accompanied by his host and hostess (Mr. and Mrs. Tagart), and was driven immediately to the White House.

It would be most interesting if the minutes of this last meeting between Lee and Grant had been kept, but unfortunately nothing is known of what took place beyond the fact stated by Captain Lee in his "Recollections" of his father, that "this meeting was of no political significance whatever;

* R. E. Lee's "Recollections of General R. E. Lee," p. 334.

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but General Lee's visit was simply a call of courtesy," and that during the fifteen minutes of the interview "neither General Lee nor the President spoke a word on political matters."

In the winter of '69-'70, the old trouble of rheumatic pain about the heart, which had first begun during the winter spent "in front of Fredericksburg," recurred, and General Lee was sent off by his physicians to the South in hopes of relieving him. He was accompanied by one of his daughters, Miss Agnes, and his trip was one continued ovation from beginning to end. The whole population wherever he went turned out to do him honor, and to testify their devotion to him. This reception, however touching to him, was, as he well recognized, not conducive to his restoration. Toward the end of April he turned homeward. "Though the rest and change, the meeting with many old friends, and the great love and kindness shown him by all had given him much pleasure, and for a time it was thought that he was better, the main cause of his trouble was not removed," and in his letters to his wife he was forced to admit that though he felt stronger than when he came, and the warm weather had dispelled some of the rheumatic pains in the back, he could "perceive no change in the stricture in his chest." "If I

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attempt to walk beyond a very slow gait," he says in one letter, "the pain is always there." And in another: "I hope I am better, and I know that I am stronger; but I still have the pain in my chest whenever I walk."

He returned quietly to his work, and at the beginning of the ensuing session no one would have known that he was not in his usual health. But the burden he had so long carried had been too heavy. The overtaxed heart at length gave way. His last active work was done in a vestry meeting of his church, whose rector was one of his old lieutenants, the Rev. Dr. William N. Pendleton, formerly his chief of artillery; his last conscious act was to ask God's blessing at his board. As he ended, his voice faltered and he sank in his chair.

Surrounded by those who honored and loved him best, he lingered for a few days, murmuring at times orders to one of the best of his lieutenants, the gallant A. P. Hill, who had fallen at Petersburg, after the disaster of Five Forks, till, on the twelfth day of October, 1870, he that was valiant for truth passed quietly to meet the Master he had served so well, "and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side."

Many places claimed the honor of guarding his sepulchre; but to Lexington it was fittingly

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awarded. Here he lived and here he died, and here in the little mountain town in the Valley of Virginia his sacred ashes lie hard by those of his great lieutenant, who, in the fierce 'sixties, was his right arm. Well may we apply to him his own words, written about the proposal to remove the remains of the Confederate dead from Gettysburg: "I know of no fitter resting-place for a soldier than the field on which he has nobly laid down his life."

Happy the town that has two such shrines! Happy the people that have two such examples! Both have forever ennobled the soldier's profession, where to face death in obedience to duty is a mere incident of life, and whose highest function is not to make war, but to end it. Both were worthy successors of that noble centurion of whom Christ said: "I have not found so great faith; no, not in Israel."

To those of us who knew him in the impressionable time of our youth, as, untouched by the furious railing of his enemies, he passed the evening of his life in unruffled calm, he seems the model of a knightly gentleman, ever loyal to duty and ever valiant for truth.

Well might he have said with that other Valiant-for-Truth: "My sword I give to him that

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shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me to be a witness for me that I have fought His battles who will now be my rewarder."

No sooner had he passed away than the ignoble enemies of the South, safe at the moment from her resentment, set forth anew to insult her people by the rancor of their insults to her honored dead. While her bells were tolling, the halls of Congress and the hostile press rang anew with diatribes against her fallen leader who was, to use the words of one of them, to be left to "the avenging pen of history."

But the wolfish hatred that had hounded him so long and now broke forth in one last bitter chorus was soon drowned in the acclaim of the world that one had passed away whose life had honored the whole human race. The avenging pen of history had already begun to draw the portrait of one worthy to stand beside Washington.

The world had already recognized and fixed him forever among her constellation of great men, and the European press vied with that of the South in rendering him the tribute of honor. Thus, the only effect of the attacks made on him by the

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enemies of the South was to secure for them the hatred or contempt of the Southern people.

“As obedient to law as Socrates,” wrote of him one who had studied his character well, and the type was well chosen. All through his life he illustrated this virtue. Among the foolish charges made by some in the hour of passion was this: that he believed the South would win in the war and achieve its independence, whereupon he would be its idol. In other words, that he was lured by Ambition. Only ignorance wedded to passion could assert so baseless a charge. Even had he thus imagined that the South might win its independence, Lee was, of all men, the last to be swayed by such a consideration. But, as a fact, we know that it was at a great sacrifice he made his choice and that only the purest motives of love of liberty and obedience to duty influenced his choice. The entrance of Virginia into the Confederacy of the South threw him out of the position to which his rank entitled him. But while others wrangled and scrambled for office and rank, he with utter self-abnegation declared himself “willing to serve anywhere where he could be most useful.” And it is known to those who knew him well that at one time he even thought of enlisting as a private in the company commanded

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by his eldest son, Captain G. W. C. Lee.* Such simplicity and virtue are antique.

Field-Marshal Viscount Wolseley, referring long afterward to his first meeting with Lee, in the summer of 1862, says: "Every incident in that visit is indelibly stamped on my memory. All he said to me then and during subsequent conversations is still fresh in my recollection. It is natural it should be so, for he was the ablest general and to me seemed the greatest man I ever conversed with, and yet I have had the privilege of meeting Von Moltke and Prince Bismarck. General Lee was one of the few men who ever seriously impressed and awed me with their inherent greatness. Forty years have come and gone since our meeting, and yet the majesty of his manly bearing, the genial, winning grace, the sweetness of his smile, and the impressive dignity of his old-fashioned style of dress come back to me among my most cherished recollections. His greatness made me humble, and I never felt my own insignificance more keenly than I did in his presence. . . . He was, indeed, a beautiful character, and of him it might truthfully be written, 'In righteousness did he judge and make war!'"

* Jones's "Life and Letters of Robert E. Lee," p. 164.

XXVIII

SOURCES OF CHARACTER

THERE is something in all of us that responds to the magic of military prowess. That wise observer, Dr. Johnson, once said: "Every man thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier or been at sea"; and when Boswell said, "Lord Mansfield would not be ashamed of it," he replied, "Sir, if Lord Mansfield were in the presence of generals and admirals who had seen service, he would wish to creep under the table. . . . If Socrates and Charles XII of Sweden were in company, and Socrates should say, 'Follow me and hear a lecture on philosophy,' and Charles XII should say, 'Follow me and help me to dethrone the Czar,' a man would be ashamed to follow Socrates."

Military glory is so dazzling that it blinds wholly most men, and a little all men. An Alexander conquering worlds until he weeps because no more are left to conquer; a Hannibal crossing the Alps and blowing his trumpets outside the very gates of Rome; Cæsar and Napoleon oversweeping Europe with their victorious eagles, are so splendid

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that the radiance of their achievements makes us forget the men they were. Alexander carousing at Babylon; Cæsar plotting to overthrow his country's liberties; Napoleon steeping the world in blood, but bickering in his confinement at St. Helena, are not pleasant to contemplate. There the habiliments of majesty are wanting; the gauds of pomp are stripped off and we see the men at their true worth.

Now, let us turn for a moment to Lee. Had we known him only as the victor of Gaines's Mill, Fredericksburg, Manassas, Chancellorsville, and Cold Harbor, we should have, indeed, thought him a supreme soldier. But should we have known the best of him? Without Gettysburg, without the long campaign of 1864, without the siege of Petersburg, and without Appomattox, should we have dreamed of the sublime measure of the man?

History may be searched in vain to find Lee's superior, and only once or twice in its long course will be found his equal. To find his prototype, we must go back to ancient times, to the antique heroes who have been handed down to us by Plutarch's matchless portraiture; yet, as we read their story, we see that we have been given but one side of their character. Their weaknesses have mainly

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been lost in the lapse of centuries, and their virtues are magnified in the enhaloing atmosphere of time. But, as to Lee, we know his every act.

There was no act nor incident of his life on which a light as fierce as that which beats upon a throne did not fall. He was investigated by high commissions; his every act was examined by hostile prosecutors. His conduct was inquired into by those who had every incentive of hostility to secure his downfall and his degradation. Yet, amid these fierce assaults, he remained as unmoved as he had stood when he had held the heights of Fredericksburg against the furious attacks of Burnside's intrepid infantry. From this inquisition he came forth as unsoiled as the mystic White Knight of the Round Table. In that vivid glare he stood revealed in the full measure of nobility—the closest scrutiny but brought forth new virtues and disclosed a more rounded character:

“Like Launcelot brave, like Galahad clean.”

Had he been Regulus, we know that he would have returned to Carthage with undisquieted brow to meet his doom. Had he been Aristides, we know that he would have faithfully inscribed his name on the shell intrusted to him for his ban-



Monument to General Robert E. Lee, Richmond, Virginia.

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ishment. Had he been Cæsar, none but a fool would have dared to offer him a crown. Ambition could not have tempted him; ease could not have beguiled him; pleasure could not have allured him.

Should we come down to later times, where shall we find his counterpart, unless we take the Bayards, the Sidneys, and the Falklands, the highest of the noblest?

So, to get his character as it is known to thousands, we must take the best that was in the best that the history of men has preserved. Something of Plato's calm there was; all of Sidney's high-mindedness; of Bayard's fearless and blameless life; of the constancy of William the Silent, *tranquillus in arduis*.

But, most of all, he was like Washington. Here—in that great Virginian—and here only, do we find what appears to be an absolute parallel.

Something must account for this wonderful development. Character does not reach such consummate flowering alone and by accidental cause! It is a product of urgent forces, and such a character as Lee's is the product of high forces met in conjunction. Genius may be born anywhere; it is a result of prenatal forces. A Keats may come from a horse-jobber's fireside; a Columbus may

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spring from a wool-comber's home; a Burns may issue from an Ayrshire cottage; but it is a law of nature that character is a result largely of surrounding conditions, previous or present.

A distinguished scholar has called attention to the resemblance between the Southerners in the Civil War and the Southern Greeks in the Peloponnesian War. He has especially noted the resemblance in certain fundamental elements of character between the Virginians and both the Greeks and the Romans, among the elements of which were a passion for liberty and a passion for dominance. He marks particularly their poise, a poise unaffected by conditions which might startle or seduce. Both, peoples of the South, like the Southern people, their successes were founded upon their character as a people. It was this poise which Lee illustrated so admirably throughout life, a poise which, as Dr. Gildersleeve has said, gave opportunity for, first, the undazzled vision, and then the swoop of the eagle.

Whatever open hostility or carping criticism may say in derogation of Southern life, and it may be admitted that there was liable to be the waste and inertia of all life that is easy and secluded; yet, the obvious, the unanswerable reply is that it produced such a character as Robert E. Lee. As

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Washington was the consummate flower of the life of Colonial Virginia, so Lee, clinging close to "his precious example," became the perfect fruit of her later civilization.

It was my high privilege to know him when I was a boy. It was also my privilege to see something of that army which followed him throughout the war, and on whose courage and fortitude his imperishable glory as a captain is founded. I question whether in all the army under his command was one man who had his genius; but I believe that in character he was but the type of his order, and as noble as was his, ten thousand gentlemen marched behind him who, in all the elements of private character, were his peers.

As I have immersed myself in the subject of this great captain and noble gentleman, there has appeared to troop before me from a misty past that army on whose imperishable deeds, inspired by love of liberty, is founded the fame of possibly the greatest soldier of our race—that army of the South, composed not only of the best that the South had, but wellnigh of all she had. Gentle and simple, old and young, rich and poor, secessionist and anti-secessionist, with every difference laid aside at the call of duty, animated by one

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common spirit, love of liberty, they flocked to the defence of the Southern States. Through four years they withstood to the utmost the fiercest assaults of fortune, and submitted only with their annihilation.

“The benediction of the o’ercovering heavens
Fall on their heads like dew, for they were worthy
To inlay heaven with stars.”

Of them, in conclusion, we may use the words of Pericles, spoken over the Athenian dead who fell in the Peloponnesian War:

“So died these men as became Athenians. You, their survivors, must determine to have as unfaltering a resolution in the field, though you may pray that it may have a happier issue. . . . You must yourselves realize the power of Athens, and feed your eyes upon her from day to day, till love of her fills your hearts; then when all her greatness shall break upon you, you must reflect that it was by courage, sense of duty, and the keen feeling of honor in action that men were enabled to do all this, and that no possible failure in an enterprise could make them consent to deprive their country of their valor, but they laid it at her feet as the most glorious contribution they could offer. For

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this offering of their lives, made in common by them all, each of them individually received that renown which never grows old, and for a sepulchre not so much that in which their bones have been deposited, but that noblest of shrines wherein their glory is laid up to be eternally remembered upon every occasion on which deed or story shall call for commemoration. For heroes have the whole earth for their tomb, and in lands far from their own where the column with its epitaph declares it, there is enshrined in every breast a record unwritten, with no tablet to preserve it, except that of the heart."

Through more than twice four years their survivors and their children endured what was bitterer than war, and, strong in the consciousness of their rectitude, came out torn and bleeding but victorious, having saved constitutional government for the Union. Such fortitude, such courage, and sublime constancy cannot be in vain. The blood of patriots is the seed of liberty. The history of their valor and their fortitude in defence of constitutional liberty is the heritage of the South, a heritage in which the North will one day be proud to claim a share, as she will be the sharer in their work.

No better words can be used in closing this

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record than Lee's own words after the battle of Gettysburg:

“They deserved success so far as it can be deserved by heroic valor and fortitude. More may have been required of them than they were able to perform; but my admiration for their noble qualities and confidence in their ability to cope successfully with the enemy have suffered no abatement from the issue of this protracted and sanguinary conflict.”

Some day, doubtless, there will stand in the nation's capital a great monument to Lee, erected not only by the Southern people, whose glory it is that he was the fruit of their civilization and the leader of their armies, but by the American people, whose pride it will be that he was their fellow-citizen. Meantime, he has a nobler monument than can be built of marble or of brass. His monument is the adoration of the South; his shrine is in every Southern heart.

APPENDIXES

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APPENDIX A

LEE'S ORDER FOR THE BATTLE OF GAINES'S MILL

HEAD-QUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,

June 24, 1862.

General Orders No. 75.

1. General Jackson's command will proceed to-morrow from Ashland toward the Slash Church, and encamp at some convenient point west of the Central Railroad. Branch's Brigade, of A. P. Hill's Division, will also to-morrow evening take position on the Chickahominy near Half-Sink. At three o'clock Thursday morning, 26th inst., General Jackson will advance on the road leading to Pole Green Church, communicating his march to General Branch, who will immediately cross the Chickahominy and take the road leading to Mechanicsville. As soon as the movements of these columns are discovered, General A. P. Hill, with the rest of his division, will cross the Chickahominy near Meadow Bridge and move directly upon Mechanicsville. To aid his advance the heavy batteries on the Chickahominy will, at the proper time, open upon the batteries at Mechanicsville. The enemy being driven from Mechanicsville and the passage across the bridge opened, General Longstreet, with his division and that of General D. H. Hill, will cross the Chickahominy at or near that point, General D. H. Hill moving to the

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support of Jackson and General Longstreet supporting General A. P. Hill. The four divisions—keeping in communication with each other, and moving *en échelon* on separate roads, if practicable, the left division in advance, with skirmishers and sharpshooters extending their front—will sweep down the Chickahominy and endeavor to drive the enemy from his position above New Bridge, General Jackson bearing well to his left, turning Beaver Dam Creek, and taking the direction toward Cold Harbor. They will then press forward toward the York River Railroad, closing upon the enemy's rear and forcing him down the Chickahominy. Any advance of the enemy toward Richmond will be prevented by vigorously following his rear and crippling and arresting his progress.

2. The divisions under Generals Huger and Magruder will hold their positions in front of the enemy against attack and make such demonstrations on Thursday as to discover his operations. Should opportunity offer, the feint will be converted into a real attack, and should an abandonment of his intrenchments by the enemy be discovered, he will be closely pursued.

3. The 3d Virginia Cavalry will observe the Charles City Road. The 5th Virginia, the 1st North Carolina, and the Hampton Legion (cavalry) will observe the Darbytown, Varina, and Osborne Roads. Should a movement of the enemy down the Chickahominy be discovered, they will close upon his flank and endeavor to arrest his march.

4. General Stuart with the 1st, 4th, and 9th Virginia Cavalry, the cavalry of Cobb's Legion, and the Jeff Davis Legion, will cross the Chickahominy to-morrow and take position to the left of General Jackson's line of march.

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The main body will be held in reserve with scouts well extended to the front and left. General Stuart will keep General Jackson informed of the movements of the enemy on his left, and will co-operate with him in his advance. The 10th Virginia Cavalry, Colonel Davis, will remain on the Nine Mile Road.

5. General Ransom's Brigade, of General Holmes's command, will be placed in reserve on the Williamsburg road by General Huger, to whom he will report for orders.

6. Commanders of divisions will cause their commands to be provided with three days' cooked rations. The necessary ambulances and ordnance trains will be ready to accompany the divisions and receive orders from their respective commanders. Officers in charge of all trains will invariably remain with them. Batteries and wagons will keep on the right of the road. The chief engineer, Major Stevens, will assign engineer officers to each division, whose duty it will be to make provision for overcoming all difficulties to the progress of the troops. The staff departments will give the necessary instructions to facilitate the movements herein directed.

By command of General Lee.

(Signed) R. H. CHILTON,
Assistant Adjutant-General.

APPENDIX B

EXTRACTS FROM LETTER TO AUTHOR FROM GENERAL MARCUS J. WRIGHT

WASHINGTON, *September* 26, 1907.

* * * * *

The military population (men between eighteen and forty-five years old, not exempt by law) of the Northern States in 1860 was 3,769,020, omitting California, Colorado, Dakota, District of Columbia, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington Territory, and West Virginia, not given in the tables, but which may be stated as aggregating 135,627. This, added to 3,769,020, the military population of eighteen Northern States, makes a total of 3,904,647 subject to military duty in the States and Territories of the North.

The military population of the Southern States (exclusive of Kentucky, Maryland, and Missouri) in 1860 was 1,064,193. Deducting from this number the 86,000 that entered the Federal service and 80,000, the estimated number of Union men who did not take up arms, there remained to the Confederacy 898,184 men capable of bearing arms from which to draw.

It stands thus:

Military population of the North . . .	3,904,647
Military population of the South . . .	<u>898,184</u>
Difference in favor of the North . . .	3,006,463

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The military population in 1860:

Of Kentucky	180,589
Of Maryland	102,715
Of Missouri	232,781
	<hr/>
	516,085

These three States gave to the Federal army 231,509 men. Of these 190,744 were whites and 40,765 were negroes.

An official published statement of the Adjutant-General of the United States army gives the total number of men called for and furnished to the United States army from April 15, 1861, to the close of the war as 2,865,028 men. Of this number 186,017 were negroes and 494,900 were foreigners.

From all reliable data that could be secured, it has been estimated by the best authorities that the strength of the Confederate armies was about 600,000 men, and of this number not more than two-thirds were available for active duty in the field. The necessity of guarding a long line of exposed sea-coast, of maintaining permanent garrisons at different posts on inland waters and at numerous other points, deprived the Confederate army in the field of an accession of strength.

The large preponderance of Federal forces was manifest in all the important battles and campaigns of the war. The largest force ever assembled by the Confederates was at the Seven Days' fight around Richmond.

General Lee's report showed 80,835 men present for duty when the movement against General McClellan commenced, and the Federal forces numbered 115,249.

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At Antietam the Federals had 87,164 and the Confederates 35,255.

At Fredericksburg the Federals had 110,000 and the Confederates 78,110.

At Chancellorsville the Federals had 131,661, of which number only 90,000 were engaged, and the Confederates had 57,212.

At Gettysburg the Federals had 95,000 and the Confederates 44,000.

At the Wilderness the Federals had 141,160 and the Confederates 63,981.

At the breaking of the Confederate lines at Petersburg, April 1, 1865, General Lee commenced his retreat with 32,000 men, and eight days after he surrendered to General Grant, who had a force of 120,000 men.

From the latter part of 1862 until the close of the war, in 1865, there was a constant decrease of the numerical strength of the Confederate army. On the other hand, the records show that during that time the Federal army was strengthened to the extent of 363,390 men.

The available strength of the Confederate army at the close of the war has been the subject of much discussion.

Estimates have been made varying from 150,000 to 250,000 men.

The number of paroles issued to Confederate soldiers may be taken as a basis of calculation. Mr. Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War, on November 22, 1865, made the following official statement of prisoners surrendered by different Confederate armies that were paroled:

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Army of Northern Virginia	27,805
Army of Tennessee	31,243
Army of Missouri	7,978
Army of Department of Alabama	42,293
Army of Trans-Mississippi Department	17,686
Army of Department of Florida	6,428
	133,433
Miscellaneous Departments of Virginia	9,072
Cumberland, Maryland, etc.	9,377
Department of Washington	3,390
In Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas	13,922
Nashville and Chattanooga	5,029
	40,790

These two lists aggregate 174,223, the number of paroled Confederates reported by Secretary Stanton. Those who have estimated the strength of the Confederate army at the close of the war at 250,000 reached that result by adding to the 174,223 the number of men, 75,777, which they assumed to have returned to their homes without paroles. If this were true, it would appear, taking into account the 40,790 men reported as paroled at various places, that 116,567 Confederate soldiers did not surrender, and were not paroled with the armies to which they belonged.

This is at variance with the estimated strength of these armies just previous to the surrender.

The report of Secretary Stanton is misleading, because it conveys the impression that the 174,223 men reported

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as paroled were bearing arms at the time of their surrender. An examination of the parole lists shows that such was not the case. These lists embrace men in hospitals, men retired from the army by reason of disability, and non-arms-bearing men who sought paroles as a safeguard. There were Confederate soldiers who returned to their homes without paroles, but they did not exceed in number those embraced in Secretary Stanton's list that were not borne upon the roll.

In April, 1865, the aggregate of present and absent showed the strength of the Confederate army to be about 275,000 men. Of this number 65,387 were in Federal military prisons and 52,000 were absent by reason of disability and other causes. Deducting the total of these two numbers, 117,387, from 275,000, we have 157,613 as showing the full effective strength of the Confederate army at the close of the war:

SUMMARY

Strength of Federal army at close of war:

Present	797,807
Absent	202,700
	1,000,507

Strength of Confederate army at close of war:

Present	157,613
Absent	117,387
	275,000

* * * * *

(Signed) MARCUS J. WRIGHT.

APPENDIX B

EXTRACT FROM LETTER TO AUTHOR FROM COLONEL THOMAS L. LIVERMORE

GRANT'S ARMY PRESENT FOR DUTY

On the Rapidan and James, April 30, 1864, 168,198
(68 War Records—69 W. R., pp. 195-198-427).

On the James, May 31, 1864, 133,728 (69 W. R., pp. 426,
427).

On the James, January 31, 1865, 99,214 (95 W. R., p. 61).

On the James, February 25, 1865, 98,457 (*ibid.*).

On the James, March 31, 1865, 100,907 (*ibid.*).

LEE'S ARMY PRESENT FOR DUTY

On the Rapidan and James, Army of Northern Virginia,
April 30, 1864, 54,344 (60 W. R., pp. 1,297, 1,298).

Two divisions and McLaws's Brigade (estimated 1,253)
of Longstreet's Corps, March 31, 1864, 10,428 * (59
W. R., p. 721).

Department of Richmond, April 20, 1864, 7,265 (60 W. R.,
p. 1,299).

Total, 72,037.

On the James, January 31, 1865, 57,387 † (95 W. R., p.
386—95 W. R., pp. 387, 388, 389, 390).

* Colonel Taylor, of Lee's staff, and Longstreet in their books estimate Longstreet's command at 10,000.

† Excluding the cavalry of the Valley District, the number of which is not reported, but probably was about 1,000. (Warren Court, p. 482.)

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On the James, February 25, 1865, 63,500.*

On the James, March 31, 1865, 56,840 † (97 W. R., p. 1,331; Warren Court, p. 482).

(Signed) T. L. LIVERMORE.

* The number of the infantry estimated at about 7 per cent and the cavalry at about 15 per cent more than the "effectives" reported.

† The result of deducting estimated losses and desertions reported and estimated, at 6,760 for March, from number given above for February 25.

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LEE'S REPORT OF THE GETTYSBURG CAMPAIGN

HEAD-QUARTERS ARMY NORTHERN VIRGINIA,
July 31, 1863.

GENERAL S. COOPER,

A. and I. General, Richmond, Va.

General: I have the honor to submit the following outline of the recent operations of this army for the information of the department:

The position occupied by the enemy opposite Fredericksburg being one in which he could not be attacked to advantage, it was determined to draw him from it. The execution of this purpose embraced the relief of the Shenandoah Valley from the troops that had occupied the lower part of it during the winter and spring, and, if practicable, the transfer of the scene of hostilities north of the Potomac.

It was thought that the corresponding movements on the part of the enemy, to which those contemplated by us would probably give rise, might offer a fair opportunity to strike a blow at the army therein, commanded by General Hooker, and that in any event that army would be compelled to leave Virginia, and possibly to draw to its support troops designed to operate against other parts of the country. In this way it was supposed that the enemy's plan of campaign for the summer would be broken up.

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and part of the season of active operations be consumed in the formation of new combinations and the preparations that they would require.

In addition to these advantages, it was hoped that other valuable results might be attained by military success.

Actuated by these and other important considerations that may hereafter be presented, the movement began on the 3d of June. McLaws's Division of Longstreet's Corps left Fredericksburg for Culpeper Court House, and Hood's Division, which was encamped on the Rapidan, marched to the same place.

They were followed on the 4th and 5th by Ewell's Corps, leaving that of A. P. Hill to occupy our lines at Fredericksburg.

The march of these troops having been discovered by the enemy, on the afternoon of the 5th and the following day he crossed a force, amounting to about one army corps, to the south side of the Rappahannock on a pontoon bridge laid down near the mouth of Deep Run. General Hill disposed his command to resist their advance; but as they seemed intended for the purpose of observation rather than attack, the movements in progress were not arrested.

The forces of Longstreet and Ewell reached Culpeper Court House by the 8th, at which point the cavalry, under General Stuart, was also concentrated.

On the 9th a large force of Federal cavalry, strongly supported by infantry, crossed the Rappahannock at Beverley's and Kelly's Fords and attacked General Stuart. A severe engagement ensued, continuing from early in the morning until late in the afternoon, when the enemy was

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forced to recross the river, with heavy loss, leaving 400 prisoners, 3 pieces of artillery, and several colors in our hands.

General Jenkins, with his cavalry brigade, had been ordered to advance toward Winchester to co-operate with the infantry in the proposed expedition into the lower valley, and at the same time General Imboden was directed, with his command, to make a demonstration in the direction of Romney, in order to cover the movement against Winchester and prevent the enemy at that place from being reinforced by the troops on the line of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Both of these officers were in position when General Ewell left Culpeper Court House on the 10th. Crossing the Shenandoah near Front Royal, he detached Rodes's Division to Berryville, with instructions, after dislodging the force stationed there, to cut off the communication between Winchester and the Potomac. With the divisions of Early and Johnson, General Ewell advanced directly upon Winchester, driving the enemy into his works around the town on the 13th. On the same day the troops at Berryville fell back before General Rodes, retreating to Winchester. On the 14th General Early stormed the works at the latter place, and the whole army of General Milroy was captured or dispersed. Most of those who attempted to escape were intercepted and made prisoners by General Johnson. Their leader fled to Harper's Ferry with a small party of fugitives.

General Rodes marched from Berryville to Martinsburg, entering the latter place on the 14th, where he took 700 prisoners, 5 pieces of artillery, and a considerable quantity of stores. These operations cleared the valley

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of the enemy, those at Harper's Ferry withdrawing to Maryland Heights. More than 4,000 prisoners, 29 pieces of artillery, 270 wagons and ambulances, with 400 horses, were captured, besides a large amount of military stores. Our loss was small. On the night that Ewell appeared at Winchester, the Federal troops in front of A. P. Hill at Fredericksburg recrossed the Rappahannock and the next day disappeared behind the hills of Stafford.

The whole army of General Hooker withdrew from the line of the Rappahannock, pursuing the roads near the Potomac, and no favorable opportunity was offered for attack. It seemed to be the purpose of General Hooker to take a position which would enable him to cover the approaches to Washington city. With a view to draw him farther from his base, and at the same time to cover the march of A. P. Hill, who, in accordance with instructions, left Fredericksburg for the valley as soon as the enemy withdrew from his front, Longstreet moved from Culpeper Court House on the 15th, and advancing along the east side of the Blue Ridge, occupied Ashby's and Snicker's Gaps. His force had been augmented while at Culpeper by General Pickett with three brigades of his division.

The cavalry, under General Stuart, was thrown out in front of Longstreet to watch the enemy, now reported to be moving into Loudoun. On the 17th his cavalry encountered two brigades of ours under General Stuart, near Aldie, and was driven back with loss. The next day the engagement was renewed, the Federal cavalry being strongly supported by infantry, and General Stuart was in turn compelled to retire.

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The enemy advanced as far as Upperville and then fell back. In these engagements General Stuart took about 400 prisoners and a considerable number of horses and arms.

In the meantime a part of General Ewell's Corps had entered Maryland, and the rest was about to follow. General Jenkins with his cavalry, who accompanied General Ewell, penetrated Pennsylvania as far as Chambersburg. As these demonstrations did not have the effect of causing the Federal army to leave Virginia, and as it did not seem disposed to advance upon the position held by Longstreet, the latter was withdrawn to the west side of the Shenandoah, General Hill having already reached the valley.

General Stuart was left to guard the passes of the mountains and observe the movements of the enemy, whom he was instructed to harass and impede as much as possible should he attempt to cross the Potomac. In that event, General Stuart was directed to move into Maryland, crossing the Potomac east or west of the Blue Ridge, as in his judgment should be best, and take position on the right of our column as it advanced.

By the 24th the progress of Ewell rendered it necessary that the rest of the army should be in supporting distance, and Longstreet and Hill marched to the Potomac. The former crossed at Williamsport and the latter at Shepherds-town. The columns reunited at Hagerstown, and advanced thence into Pennsylvania, encamping near Chambersburg on the 27th.

No report had been received that the Federal army had crossed the Potomac, and the absence of the cavalry ren-

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dered it impossible to obtain accurate information. In order, however, to retain it on the east side of the mountains, after it should enter Maryland, and thus leave open our communications with the Potomac through Hagerstown and Williamsport, General Ewell had been instructed to send a division eastward from Chambersburg to cross the South Mountains. Early's Division was detached for this purpose, and proceeded as far east as York, while the remainder of the corps proceeded to Carlisle.

General Imboden, in pursuance of the instructions previously referred to, had been actively engaged on the left of General Ewell during the progress of the latter into Maryland. We had driven off the forces guarding the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, destroying all the important bridges on that route from Cumberland to Martinsburg and seriously damaged the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal.

He subsequently took position at Hancock, and, after the arrival of Longstreet and Hill at Chambersburg, was directed to march by way of McConnellsburg to that place.

Preparations were now made to advance upon Harrisburg; but on the night of the 28th information was received from a scout that the Federal army, having crossed the Potomac, was advancing northward, and that the head of the column had reached the South Mountains. As our communications with the Potomac were thus menaced, it was resolved to prevent his further progress in that direction by concentrating our army on the east side of the mountains. Accordingly, Longstreet and Hill were directed to proceed from Chambersburg to Gettysburg, to which point General Ewell was also instructed to march from Carlisle.

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General Stuart continued to follow the movements of the Federal army south of the Potomac after our own had entered Maryland, and, in his efforts to impede its progress, advanced as far eastward as Fairfax Court House. Finding himself unable to delay the enemy materially, he crossed the river at Seneca and marched through Westminster to Carlisle, where he arrived after General Ewell had left for Gettysburg. By the route he pursued, the Federal army was interposed between his command and our main body, preventing any communication with him until his arrival at Carlisle.

The march toward Gettysburg was conducted more slowly than it would have been had the movements of the Federal army been known.

The leading division of Hill met the enemy in advance of Gettysburg on the morning of the 1st of July. Driving back these troops to within a short distance of the town, he there encountered a larger force, with which two of his divisions became engaged. Ewell, coming up with two of his divisions by the Heidlersburg Road, joined in the engagement. The enemy were driven through Gettysburg with heavy loss, including about 5,000 prisoners and several pieces of artillery.

He retired to a high range of hills south and east of the town. The attack was not pressed that afternoon, the enemy's force being unknown, and it being considered advisable to await the arrival of the rest of our troops.

Orders were sent to hasten their march, and in the meantime every effort was made to ascertain the numbers and position of the enemy and find the most favorable point of attack. It had not been intended to fight a general

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battle at such a distance from our base unless attacked by the enemy; but finding ourselves unexpectedly confronted by the Federal army, it became a matter of difficulty to withdraw through the mountains with our large trains. At the same time the country was unfavorable for collecting supplies while in the presence of the enemy's main body, as he was enabled to restrain our foraging parties by occupying the passes of the mountains with regular and local troops. A battle thus became, in a measure, unavoidable. Encouraged by the successful issue of the engagement of the first day, and in view of the valuable results that would ensue from the defeat of the army of General Meade, it was thought advisable to renew the attack.

The remainder of Ewell's and Hill's Corps having arrived, and two divisions of Longstreet's, our preparations were made accordingly. During the afternoon intelligence was received of the arrival of General Stuart at Carlisle, and he was ordered to march to Gettysburg and take position on the left. A full account of these engagements cannot be given until the reports of the several commanding officers shall have been received, and I shall only offer a general description.

The preparations for attack were not completed until the afternoon of the 2d.

The enemy held a high and commanding ridge, along which he had massed a large amount of artillery. General Ewell occupied the left of our line, General Hill the centre, and General Longstreet the right. In front of General Longstreet the enemy held a position, from which, if he could be driven, it was thought that our army could

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be used to advantage in assailing the more elevated ground beyond, and thus enable us to reach the crest of the ridge. That officer was directed to endeavor to carry this position, while General Ewell attacked directly the high ground on the enemy's right, which had already been partially fortified. General Hill was instructed to threaten the centre of the Federal line, in order to prevent reinforcements being sent to either wing, and to avail himself of any opportunity that might present itself to attack.

After a severe struggle, Longstreet succeeded in getting possession of and holding the desired ground. Ewell also carried some of the strong positions which he assailed, and the result was such as to lead to the belief that he would ultimately be able to dislodge the enemy. The battle ceased at dark.

These partial successes determined me to continue the assault next day. Pickett, with three of his brigades, joined Longstreet the following morning, and our batteries were moved forward to the position gained by him the day before.

The general plan of attack was unchanged, except that one division and two brigades of Hill's Corps were ordered to support Longstreet.

The enemy in the meantime had strengthened his line with earthworks. The morning was occupied in necessary preparations, and the battle recommenced in the afternoon of the 3d and raged with great violence until sunset. Our troops succeeded in entering the advanced works of the enemy and getting possession of some of his batteries; but our artillery having nearly expended its ammunition, the attacking columns became exposed to the heavy fire of

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the numerous batteries near the summit of the ridge, and, after a most determined and gallant struggle, were compelled to relinquish their advantage and fall back to their original positions with severe loss.

The conduct of the troops was all that I could desire or expect, and they deserved success so far as it can be deserved by heroic valor and fortitude. More may have been required of them than they were able to perform, but my admiration of their noble qualities and confidence in their ability to cope successfully with the enemy have suffered no abatement from the issue of this protracted and sanguinary conflict.

Owing to the strength of the enemy's position and the reduction of our ammunition, a renewal of the engagement could not be hazarded, and the difficulty of procuring supplies rendered it impossible to continue longer where we were. Such of the wounded as were in condition to be removed and part of the arms collected on the field were ordered to Williamsport. The army remained at Gettysburg during the 4th and at night began to retire by the road to Fairfield, carrying with it about 4,000 prisoners. Nearly 2,000 had previously been paroled, but the enemy's numerous wounded that had fallen into our hands after the first and second days' engagements were left behind.

Little progress was made that night, owing to a severe storm which greatly embarrassed our movements. The rear of the column did not leave its position near Gettysburg until after daylight on the 5th.

The march was continued during that day without interruption by the enemy, except an unimportant demon-

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stration upon our rear in the afternoon when near Fairfield, which was easily checked. Part of our train moved by the road through Fairfield, and the rest by the way of Cashtown, guarded by General Imboden. In passing through the mountains in advance of the column, the great length of the trains exposed them to attack by the enemy's cavalry, which captured a number of wagons and ambulances, but they succeeded in reaching Williamsport without serious loss.

They were attacked at that place on the 6th by the enemy's cavalry, which was gallantly repulsed by General Imboden. The attacking force was subsequently encountered and driven off by General Stuart, and pursued for several miles in the direction of Boonsboro. The army, after an arduous march, rendered more difficult by the rains, reached Hagerstown on the afternoon of the 6th and morning of the 7th of July.

The Potomac was found to be so much swollen by the rains that had fallen almost incessantly since our entrance into Maryland as to be unfordable. Our communications with the south side were thus interrupted, and it was difficult to procure either ammunition or subsistence, the latter difficulty being enhanced by the high waters impeding the working of the neighboring mills. The trains with the wounded and prisoners were compelled to await at Williamsport the subsiding of the river and the construction of boats, as the pontoon bridge left at Falling Waters had been partially destroyed. The enemy had not yet made his appearance; but as he was in condition to obtain large reinforcements, and our situation, for the reasons above mentioned, was becoming daily

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more embarrassing, it was deemed advisable to recross the river. Part of the pontoon bridge was recovered and new boats built, so that by the 13th a good bridge was thrown over the river at Falling Waters.

The enemy in force reached our front on the 12th. A position had been previously selected to cover the Potomac from Williamsport to Falling Waters, and an attack was awaited during that and the succeeding day. This did not take place, though the two armies were in close proximity, the enemy being occupied in fortifying his own lines. Our preparations being completed, and the river, though still deep, being pronounced fordable, the army commenced to withdraw to the south side on the night of the 13th.

Ewell's Corps forded the river at Williamsport, those of Longstreet and Hill crossed upon the bridge. Owing to the condition of the roads, the troops did not reach the bridge until after daylight on the 14th, and the crossing was not completed until 1 P. M., when the bridge was removed. The enemy offered no serious interruption, and the movement was attended with no loss of material except a few disabled wagons and two pieces of artillery which the horses were unable to move through the deep mud. Before fresh horses could be sent back for them, the rear of the column had passed.

During the slow and tedious march to the bridge, in the midst of a violent storm of rain, some of the men lay down by the way to rest. Officers sent back for them failed to find many in the obscurity of the night, and these, with some stragglers, fell into the hands of the enemy.

Brigadier-General Pettigrew was mortally wounded in

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an attack made by a small body of cavalry, which was unfortunately mistaken for our own and permitted to enter our lines. He was brought to Bunker Hill, where he expired a few days afterward. He was a brave and accomplished officer and gentleman, and his loss will be deeply felt by the country and the army.

The following day the army marched to Bunker Hill, in the vicinity of which it encamped for several days. The day after its arrival, a large force of the enemy's cavalry, which had crossed the Potomac at Harper's Ferry, advanced toward Martinsburg. It was attacked by General Fitz Lee near Kearneysville, and defeated with heavy loss, leaving its dead and many of its wounded on the field.

Owing to the swollen condition of the Shenandoah River, the plan of operations which had been contemplated when we recrossed the Potomac could not be put in execution, and before the waters had subsided the movements of the enemy induced me to cross the Blue Ridge and take position south of the Rappahannock, which was accordingly done.

As soon as the reports of the commanding officers shall be received, a more detailed account of these operations will be given, and occasion will then be taken to speak more particularly of the conspicuous gallantry and good conduct of both officers and men.

It is not yet in my power to give a correct statement of our casualties, which were severe, including many brave men and an unusual proportion of distinguished and valuable officers. Among them I regret to mention the following general officers: Major-Generals Hood, Pender, and

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Trimble, severely, and Major-General Heth slightly, wounded.

General Pender has since died. This lamented officer has borne a distinguished part in every engagement of this army, and was wounded on several occasions while leading his command with conspicuous gallantry and ability. The confidence and admiration inspired by his courage and capacity as an officer were only equalled by the esteem and respect entertained by all with whom he was associated, for the noble qualities of his modest and unassuming character. Brigadier-Generals Barksdale and Garnett were killed and Brigadier-General Semmes mortally wounded while leading their troops with the courage that always distinguished them. These brave officers and patriotic gentlemen fell in the faithful discharge of duty, leaving the army to mourn their loss and emulate their noble examples.

Brigadier-Generals Kemper, Armistead, Scales, G. T. Anderson, Hampton, J. M. Jones, and Jenkins were also wounded. Brigadier-General Archer was taken prisoner. General Pettigrew, though wounded at Gettysburg, continued in command until he was mortally wounded near Falling Waters.

The loss of the enemy is unknown, but from observations on the field and his subsequent movements, it is supposed that he suffered severely.

Respectfully submitted,

R. E. LEE, *General.*

APPENDIX D

EXTRACT FROM LETTER TO AUTHOR FROM ANDREW
R. ELLERSON, ESQ., OF ELLERSON'S, HANOVER
COUNTY, VA.

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, *June* 10, 1908.

* * * * *

Before the battles around Richmond began, my regiment (4th Virginia Cavalry) was encamped on the extreme left of the army, in the neighborhood of Goodall's. The day before the battle of Mechanicsville my company (Company G) was detached from the regiment and camped that night at Emanuel Church, a few miles north of Richmond. The next morning Jack Stark and myself were ordered to report to General Longstreet—for what purpose we had no idea, but congratulated ourselves upon the fact that we should at least make a good breakfast. * * * The evening of the battle of Cold Harbor, General Longstreet got each division of his corps and placed them in position. This was just before the battle commenced. I stood in the front until the bullets were flying thick and fast, and feeling very uncomfortable, and having no business there, I thought I would retire to a hill in the rear where I could have the pleasure of looking on at a battle without being in any apparent danger. Upon this hill I found General Jackson seated entirely alone upon his horse. We had been there some time when a shell burst

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some few feet to his left, and in a few minutes a second shell burst. Even before this time I had become again very uncomfortable, and would have liked very much to change my position, but I did not like to show the white feather in the presence of General Jackson, who had not winced, but after the second shell had burst near him, he remarked in a quiet way, "When two shells burst near you it is well to change your position if you can do so," so we both rode some distance to our right and got out of range of the bullets.

That night General Lee and General Longstreet made their head-quarters in Hogan's dwelling. I was sitting on the steps of this building about ten o'clock, when General Jackson rode up with Lincoln Sydnor, who was his guide on this occasion. General Jackson gave his horse to Sydnor to hold and went into the house, as I afterward learned, for a consultation with all of the higher officials of the army. Sydnor told me that the reason General Jackson reached Cold Harbor as late as he did was due to the fact that, although he was very near his old home, and where he was perfectly familiar with the country, the Yankees had cut down so many trees and made so many new roads that he actually got lost, and that just before reaching the point to which General Jackson had directed him to guide him, he found that he was on the wrong road, and had to turn round the artillery in the woods and had to countermarch for quite a distance, which delayed them very materially. Sydnor told me that General Ewell, who was present, wanted to hang him to a tree, but General Jackson said it was all right; that we would get there in plenty of time. You know General Jackson

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has been frequently blamed for being late on this occasion, and it has often occurred to me that this simple reason may have been the cause of it, although I never heard it so stated. * * *

With best wishes and kind remembrances, I am * * *

Yours,

A. R. ELLERSON.

APPENDIX E

REPORT OF THE SURRENDER AT APPOMATTOX

NEAR APPOMATTOX COURT HOUSE, VA.,

April 12, 1865.

HIS EXCELLENCY, JEFFERSON DAVIS.

Mr. President: It is with pain that I announce to your Excellency the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia. The operations which preceded this result will be reported in full. I will, therefore, only now state that upon arriving at Amelia Court House on the morning of the 4th with the advance of the army on the retreat from the lines in front of Richmond and Petersburg, and not finding the supplies ordered to be placed there, nearly twenty-four hours were lost in endeavoring to collect in the country subsistence for men and horses. This delay was fatal, and could not be retrieved. The troops, wearied by continual fighting and marching for several days and nights, obtained neither rest nor refreshment, and on moving, on the 5th, on the Richmond and Danville Railroad, I found at Jetersville the enemy's cavalry, and learned the approach of his infantry and the general advance of his army toward Burkeville. This deprived us of the use of the railroad, and rendered it impracticable to procure from Danville the supplies ordered to meet us at points of our march. Nothing could be obtained from the adjacent country. Our route to the Roanoke was, therefore, changed, and the

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march directed upon Farmville, where supplies were ordered from Lynchburg. The change of route threw the troops over the roads pursued by the artillery and wagon trains west of the railroad, which impeded our advance and embarrassed our movements. On the morning of the 6th General Longstreet's Corps reached Rice's Station, on the Lynchburg Railroad. It was followed by the commands of Generals R. H. Anderson, Ewell, and Gordon, with orders to close upon it as fast as the progress of the trains would permit or as they could be directed on roads farther west. General Anderson, commanding Pickett's and B. R. Johnson's Divisions, became disconnected with Mahone's Division, forming the rear of Longstreet. The enemy's cavalry penetrated the line of march through the interval thus left and attacked the wagon train moving toward Farmville. This caused serious delay in the march of the centre and rear of the column and enabled the enemy to mass upon their flank. After successive attacks Anderson's and Ewell's Corps were captured or driven from their position. The latter general, with both of his division commanders, Kershaw and Custis Lee, and his brigadiers were taken prisoners. Gordon, who all the morning, aided by General W. H. F. Lee's Cavalry, had checked the advance of the enemy on the road from Amelia Springs and protected the trains, became exposed to his combined assaults, which he bravely resisted and twice repulsed; but the cavalry having been withdrawn to another part of the line of march, and the enemy, massing heavily on his front and both flanks, renewed the attack about 6 P. M. and drove him from the field in much confusion. The army continued its march during the night, and every

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effort was made to reorganize the divisions which had been shattered by the day's operations; but the men being depressed by fatigue and hunger, many threw away their arms, while others followed the wagon trains and embarrassed their progress. On the morning of the 7th rations were issued to the troops as they passed Farmville, but the safety of the trains requiring their removal upon the approach of the enemy, all could not be supplied. The army, reduced to two corps under Longstreet and Gordon, moved steadily on the road to Appomattox Court House; thence its march was ordered by Campbell Court House, through Pittsylvania, toward Danville. The roads were wretched and the progress slow. By great efforts the head of the column reached Appomattox Court House on the evening of the 8th and the troops were halted for rest. The march was ordered to be resumed at 1 A. M. on the 9th. Fitz Lee with the cavalry, supported by Gordon, was ordered to drive the enemy from his front, wheel to the left and cover the passage of the trains, while Longstreet, who from Rice's Station had formed the rear guard, should close up and hold the position. Two battalions of artillery and the ammunition wagons were directed to accompany the army, the rest of the artillery and wagons to move toward Lynchburg. In the early part of the night the enemy attacked Walker's artillery train near Appomattox Station, on the Lynchburg Railroad, and were repelled. Shortly afterward their cavalry dashed toward the Court House till halted by our line. During the night there were indications of a large force massing on our left and front. Fitz Lee was directed to ascertain its strength and to suspend his advance till daylight if

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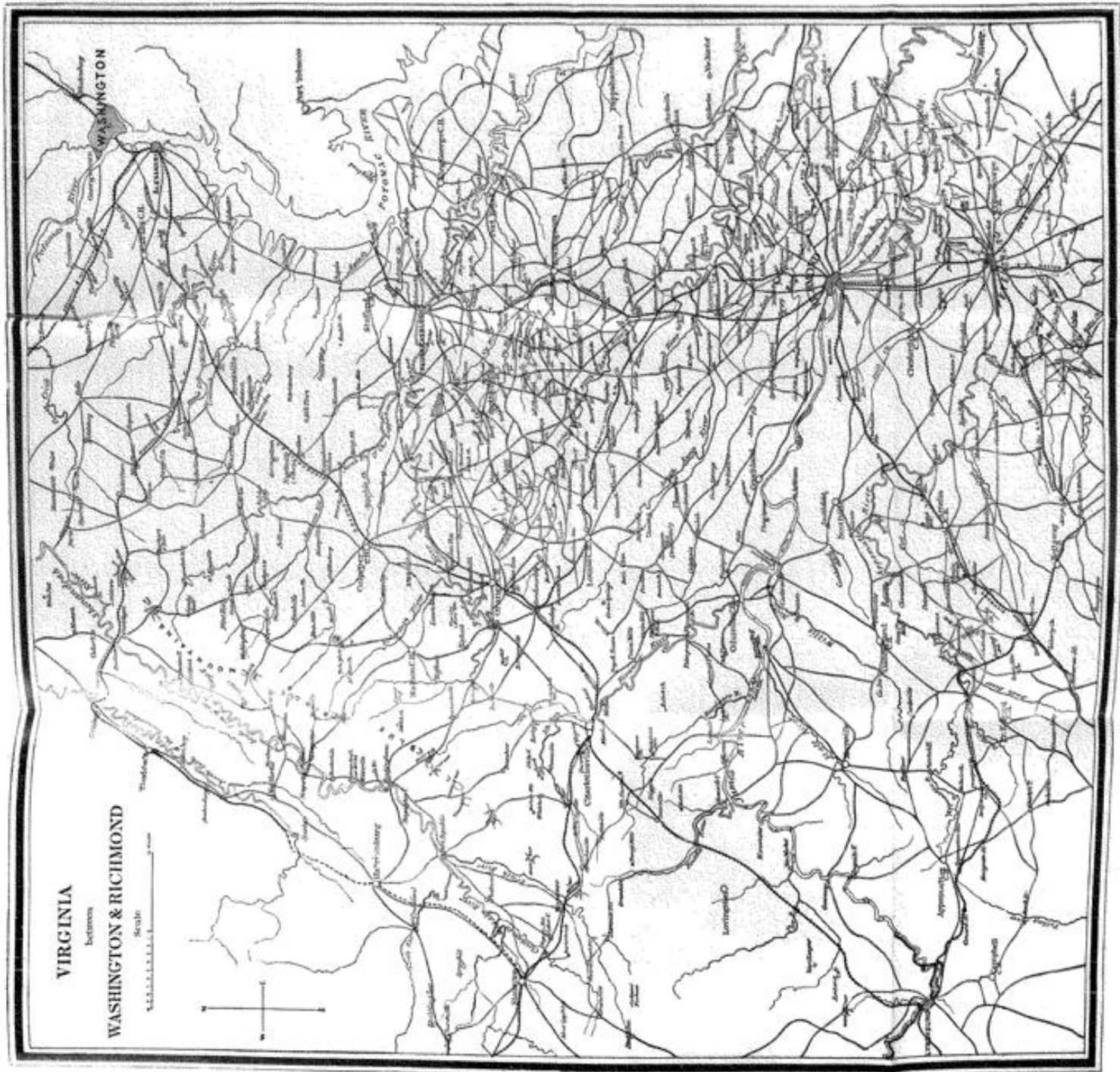
necessary. About 5 A. M. on the 9th, with Gordon on his left, he moved forward and opened the way. A heavy force of the enemy was discovered opposite Gordon's right, which, moving in the direction of Appomattox Court House, drove back the left of the cavalry and threatened to cut off Gordon from Longstreet, his cavalry at the same time threatening to envelop his left flank. Gordon withdrew across the Appomattox River, and the cavalry advanced on the Lynchburg Road and became separated from the army. Learning of the condition of affairs on the lines, where I had gone under the expectation of meeting General Grant to learn definitely the terms he proposed in a communication received from him on the 8th, in the event of the surrender of the army, I requested a suspension of hostilities until these terms could be arranged. In the interview which occurred with General Grant in compliance with my request, terms having been agreed on, I surrendered that portion of the Army of Northern Virginia which was on the field, with its arms, artillery, and wagon trains, the officers and men to be paroled, retaining their side arms and private effects. I deemed this course the best under all the circumstances by which we were surrounded. On the morning of the 9th, according to the reports of the ordnance officers, there were 7,892 organized infantry with arms, with an average of seventy-five rounds of ammunition per man. The artillery, though reduced to sixty-three pieces with ninety-three rounds of ammunition, was sufficient. These comprised all the supplies of ordnance that could be relied on in the State of Virginia. I have no accurate report of the cavalry, but believe it did not exceed 2,100 effective

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men. The enemy was more than five times our numbers. If we could have forced our way one day longer, it would have been at a great sacrifice of life, and at its end I did not see how a surrender could have been avoided. We had no subsistence for man or horse and it could not be gathered in the country. The supplies ordered to Pamplin's Station from Lynchburg could not reach us, and the men, deprived of food and sleep for many days, were worn out and exhausted.

With great respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE, *General.*



VIRGINIA

between

WASHINGTON & RICHMOND

Scale



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