CHARLES LEE,

MAJOR-GENERAL IN THE AMERICAN ARMY.

GENERAL LEE was an original genius, possessing the most brilliant talents, great military prowess, and extensive intelligence and knowledge of the world. He was born in Wales, his family springing from the same parent stock with the Earl of Leicester.

He may be properly called a child of Mars, for he was an officer when but eleven years old. His favourite study was the science of war, and his warmest wish was to become distinguished in it; but though possessed of a military spirit, he was ardent in the pursuit of general knowledge. He acquired a competent skill in Greek and Latin, while his fondness for travelling made him acquainted with the Italian, Spanish, German, and French languages.

In 1756, he came to America, captain of a company of grenadiers, and was present at the defeat of General Abercombie at Ticonderoga, where he received a severe wound. In 1762, he bore a colonel's commission, and served under Burgoyne in Portugal, where he greatly

distinguished himself, and received the strongest recommendations for his gallantry; but his early attachment to the American colonies, evinced in his writings against the oppressive acts of parliament, lost him the favour of the ministry. Despairing of promotion, and despising a life of inactivity, he left his native soil, and entered into the service of his Polish majesty, as one of his aids, with the rank of major-general.

His rambling disposition led him to travel all over Europe, during the years of 1771, 1772, and part of 1773, and his warmth of temper drew him into several rencounters, among which was an affair of honour with an officer in Italy. The contest was begun with swords, when the general lost two of his fingers. Recourse was then had to pistols. His adversary was slain, and he was obliged to flee from the country, in order that he might avoid the unpleasant circumstances which might result from this unhappy circumstance.

General Lee appeared to be influenced by an innate principle of republicanism; an attachment to these principles was implanted in the constitution of his mind, and he espoused

he cause of America as a champion of her emancipation from oppression.

Glowing with these sentiments, he embarked for this country, and arrived at New York on the 10th of November, 1773. On his arrival he became daily more enthusiastic in the cause of liberty, and travelled rapidly through the colonies, animating, both by conversation and his eloquent pen, to a determined and persevering resistance to British tyranny.

His enthusiasm in favour of the rights of the colonies was such, that, after the battle of Lexington, he accepted a major-general's commission in the American army; though his ambition had pointed out to him the post of commander-in-chief as the object of his wishes. Previous to this, however, he resigned his commission in the British service, and relinquished his half-pay. This he did in a letter to the British secretary at war, in which he expressed his disapprobation of the oppressive measures of parliament, declaring them to be absolutely subversive of the rights and liberties of every individual subject, so destructive to the whole empire at large, and ultimately so ruinous to his majesty's own person, dignity, and family that he thought himself obliged in conscience,

as a citizen, Englishman, and soldier of a free state, to exert his utmost to defeat them.

Immediately upon receiving his appointment, he accompanied General Washington to the camp at Cambridge, where he arrived July 2d, 1775, and was received with every mark of respect.

As soon as it was discovered at Cambridge that the British General Clinton had left Boston, General Lee was ordered to set forward, to observe his manœuvres, and prepare to meet him in any part of the continent he might visit. No man was better qualified, at this early stage of the war, to penetrate the designs of the enemy, than Lee. Nursed in the camp, and well versed in European tactics, the soldiers believed him, of all other officers, the best abl to face in the field an experienced British veteran, and lead them on to victory.

New York was supposed to be the object of the enemy, and hither he hastened with all possible expedition. Immediately on his arrival, Lee took the most active and prompt measures to put it in a state of defence. He disarmed all suspected persons within the reach of his command, and proceeded with such rigour against the tories, as to give alarm at his

assumption of military powers. From the tories he exacted a strong oath, and his bold measures carried terror wherever he appeared.

"Not long after he was appointed to the command of the southern department, and in his travels through the country, he received every testimony of high respect from the people. General Sir Henry Clinton, and Sir Peter Parker, with a powerful fleet and army, attempted the reduction of Charleston while he was in command. The fleet anchored within half musket-shot of the fort on Sullivan's Island, where Col. Moultrie, one of the bravest and most intrepid of men, commanded. A tremendous engagement ensued on the 28th of June, 1776, which lasted twelve hours without intermission. The whole British force was completely repulsed, after suffering an irreparable loss.

"General Lee and Colonel Moultrie received the thanks of Congress for their signal bravery and gallantry.

"Our hero had now reached the pinnacle of his military glory; the eclat of his name alone appeared to enchant and animate the most desponding heart. But here we pause to contemplate the humiliating reverse of human

events. He returned to the main army in October; and in marching at the head of a large detachment through the Jerseys, having, from a desire of retaining a separate command, delayed his march several days, in disobedience of express orders from the commander-in-chief, he was guilty of most culpable negligence in regard to his personal security. He took up his quarters two or three miles from the main body, and lay for the night, December 13th, 1776, in a careless, exposed situation. Information of this being communicated to Colonel Harcourt, who commanded the British light-horse, he proceeded immediately to the house, fired into it, and obliged the general to surrender himself a prisoner. They mounted him on a horse in haste, without his cloak or hat, and conveyed him in triumph to New York."

Lee was treated, while a prisoner, with great severity by the enemy, who affected to consider him as a state prisoner and deserter from the service of his Britannic majesty, and denied the privileges of an American officer. General Washington promptly retaliated the treatment received by Lee upon the British officers in his possession. This state of things

existed until the capture of Burgoyne, when a complete change of treatment was observed towards Lee; and he was shortly afterward exchanged.

The first military act of General Lee after his exchange, closed his career in the American army. Previous to the battle of Monmouth, his character in general was respectable. From the beginning of the contest, his unremitted zeal in the cause of America excited and directed the military spirit of the whole continent; and his conversation inculcated the principles of liberty among all ranks of the people.

His important services excited the warm gratitude of many of the friends of America. Hence it is said that a strong party was formed in Congress, and by some discontented officers in the army, to raise Lee to the first command: and it has been suggested by many, that General Lee's conduct at the battle of Monmouth was intended to effect this plan: for could the odium of the defeat have been at this time thrown on General Washington, there is great reason to suppose that he would have been deprived of his command.

It is now to be seen how General Lee termi

nated his military career. In the battle of Monmouth, on the 28th of June, 1778, he commanded the van of the American troops, with orders from the commander-in-chief to attack the retreating enemy. Instead of obeying this order, he conducted in an unworthy manner, and greatly disconcerted the arrangements of the day. Washington, advancing to the field of battle, met him in his disorderly retreat, and accosted him with strong expressions of disapprobation. Lee, incapable of brooking even an implied indignity, and unable to restrain the warmth of his resentment, used improper language in return, and some irritation was excited on both sides. The following letters immediately after passed between Lee and the commander-in-chief:

Camp, English-Town, 1st July, 1778.

Sir—From the knowledge that I have of your excellency's character, I must conclude that nothing but the misinformation of some very stupid, or misrepresentation of some very wicked person, could have occasioned your making use of such very singular expressions as you did, on my coming up to the ground where you had taken post: they implied that

I was guilty either of disobedience of orders, want of conduct, or want of courage. Your excellency will, therefore, infinitely oblige me by letting me know on which of these three articles you ground your charge, that I may prepare for my justification; which I have the happiness to be confident I can do to the army, to the Congress, to America, and to the world in general. Your excellency must give me leave to observe, that neither yourself, nor those about your person, could, from your situation, be in the least judges of the merits or demerits of our manœuvres; and, to speak with a becoming pride, I can assert that to these manœuvres the success of the day was entirely owing. I can boldly say, that had we remained on the first ground—or had we advanced—or had the retreat been conducted in a manner different from what it was, this whole army, and the interests of America, would have risked being sacrificed. I ever had, and I hope ever shall have, the greatest respect and veneration for General Washington; I think him endowed with many great and good qualities; but in this instance I must pronounce, that he has been guilty of an act of cruel injustice towards a man who had certainly some pretensions to the

regard of every servant of his country; and I think, sir, I have a right to demand some reparation for the injury committed; and unless I can obtain it, I must, in justice to myself, when the campaign is closed, which I believe will close the war, retire from a service, at the head of which is placed a man capable of offering such injuries;—but at the same time, in justice to you, I must repeat that I, from my soul, believe that it was not a motion of your own breast, but instigated by some of those dirty earwigs, who will for ever insinuate themselves near persons in high office; for I am really assured that, when General Washington acts from himself, no man in his army will have reason to complain of injustice and indecorum.

I am, sir, and I hope ever shall have reason to continue, Yours, &c.

CHARLES LEE.

His excellency General Washington.

Head-quarters, English-Town, June 28, 1778.

Sir—I received your letter, dated through mistake the 1st of July, expressed, as I conceive, in terms highly improper. I am not conscious of having made use of any singular expressions

at the time of my meeting you, as you intimate. What I recollect to have said was dictated by duty, and warranted by the occasion. As soon as circumstances will admit, you shall have an opportunity, either of justifying yourself to the army, to Congress, to America, and to the world in general, or of convincing them that you are guilty of a breach of orders, and of misbehaviour before the enemy on the 28th instant, in not attacking them as you had been directed, and in making an unnecessary, disorderly, and shameful retreat.

I am, sir, your most obedient servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

A court-martial, of which Lord Stirling was president, was ordered for his trial, and after a masterly defence by General Lee, found him guilty of all the charges, and sentenced him to be suspended from any command in the army for the term of twelve months. This sentence was shortly afterward confirmed by Congress.

When promulgated, it was like a mortal wound to the lofty, aspiring spirit of General Lee; pointing to his dog, he exclaimed—"Oh that I was that animal, that I might not call man my brother." He became outrageous, and

from that moment he was more open and virulent in his attack on the character of the commander-in-chief, and did not cease in his unwearied endeavours, both in his conversation and writings, to lessen his reputation in the estimation of the army and the public. He was an active abettor of General Conway in his calumny and abuse of General Washington, and they were believed to be in concert in their vile attempts to supersede his excellency in the supreme command. With the hope of effecting his nefarious purpose, he published a pamphlet replete with scurrilous imputations unfavourable to the military talents of the commander-in-chief, but this, with his other malignant allegations, was consigned to contempt.

At length Colonel Laurens, one of General Washington's aids, unable longer to suffer this gross abuse of his illustrious friend, demanded of Lee that satisfaction which custom has sanctioned as honourable. A rencounter accordingly ensued, and Lee received a wound in his side.

Lee now finding himself abandoned by his friends, degraded in the eye of the public, and despised by the wise and virtuous, retired to his sequestered plantation in Virginia. In this

spot, secluded from all society, he lived in a sort of hovel, without glass windows or plastering, or even a decent article of house furniture; here he amused himself with his books and dogs. On January 10th, 1780, Congress resolved that Major-General Lee be informed that they have no further occasion for his services in the army of the United States. In the autumn of 1782, wearied with his forlorn situation and broken spirit, he resorted to Philadelphia, and took lodgings in an ordinary tavern. He was soon seized with a disease of the lungs, and after a few days' confinement, he terminated his mortal course, a martyr to chagrin and disappointment, October 2d, 1782. The last words which he was heard to utter were, "stand by me, my brave grenadiers."

General Lee was rather above the middle size, "plain in his person even to ugliness, and careless in his manners even to a degree of rudeness: his nose was so remarkably aquiline, that it appeared as a real deformity. His voice was rough, his garb ordinary, his deportment morose. He was ambitious of fame, without the dignity to support it. In private life he sunk into the vulgarity of the clown." His remarkable partiality for dogs was such, that a

number of these animals constantly followed in his train, and the ladies complained that he allowed his *canine adherents* to follow him into the parlour, and not unfrequently a favourite one might be seen on a chair next his elbow at table.

In the year 1776, when our army lay at White-Plains, Lee resided near the road which General Washington frequently passed, and he one day with his aids called and took dinner. After they had departed, Lee said to his aids, "You must look me out other quarters, or I shall have Washington and his puppies calling till they eat me up." The next day he ordered his servants to write with chalk on the door, "No victuals cooked here to-day." The company seeing the hint on the door, passed, with a smile at the oddity of the man. "The character of this person," says one who knew him well, "is full of absurdities and qualities of a most extraordinary nature."

While in Philadelphia, shortly before his death, the following ludicrous circumstance took place, which created no small diversion.

The late Judge Brackenridge, whose poignancy of satire and eccentricity of character were nearly a match for that of the general,

had dipped his pen in some gall, which greatly irritated Lee's feelings, insomuch that he challenged him to single combat, which Brackenridge declined in a very eccentric reply. Lee having furnished himself with a horsewhip, determined to chastise him ignominiously on the very first opportunity. Observing Brackenridge going down Market street a few days after, he gave him chase, and Brackenridge took refuge in a public house, and barricadoed the door of the room he entered. A number of persons collected to see the result. Lee damned him, and invited him to come out and fight him like a man. Brackenridge replied, that he did not like to be shot at, and made some other curious observations, which only increased Lee's irritation, and the mirth of the spectators. Lee, with the most bitter imprecation, ordered him to come out, when he said he would horsewhip him. Brackenridge replied, that he had no occasion for a discipline of that kind. The amusing scene lasted some time, until at length Lee, finding that he could accomplish no other object than calling forth Brackenridge's wit for the amusement of the bystanders, retired.

General Lee was master of a most genteel

address, but was rude in his manners, and excessively negligent in his appearance and behaviour. His appetite was so whimsical, that he was every where a most troublesome guest. Two or three dogs usually followed him wherever he went. As an officer, he was brave and able, and did much towards disciplining the American army. With vigorous powers of mind and a brilliant fancy, he was a correct and elegant classical scholar, and he both wrote and spoke his native language with propriety, force, and beauty. His temper was severe; the history of his life is little else than the history of disputes, quarrels, and duels, in every part of the world. He was vindictive, avaricious, immoral, impious, and profane. His principles, as would be expected from his character, were most abandoned, and he ridiculed every tenet of religion. Two virtues he possessed to an eminent degree, sincerity and veracity. It was notorious that General Lee was a man of unbounded personal ambition; and, conscious of his European education, and pre-eminent military talents and prowess, he effected a superiority over General Washington, and constantly aimed at the supreme command, little scrupu

lous as to the means employed to accomplish his own advancement.

The following is an extract from General Lee's will.

"I desire most earnestly that I may not be buried in any church or church-yard, or within a mile of any Presbyterian or Anabaptist meeting house; for since I have resided in this country, I have kept so much bad company while living, that I do not choose to continue it while dead."

JOHN SULLIVAN,

MAJOR-GENERAL IN THE AMERICAN ARMY.

GENERAL SULLIVAN was a native of New Hampshire, where he resided before the revolution, and attained to a high degree of eminence in the profession of the law. He was a member of the first Congress, in 1774; but on the commencement of hostilities, preferring a military commission, he relinquished the fairest prospects of fortune and fame, and appeared among the most ardent patriots and intrepid warriors.

"In 1775, he was appointed a brigadier general, and immediately joined the army at Cambridge, and soon after obtained the command on Winter Hill. The next year he was ordered to Canada, and, on the death of General Thomas, the command of the army devolved on him. The situation of our army in that quarter was inexpressibly distressing; destitute of clothing, dispirited by defeat and constant fatigue, and a large proportion of the troops sick with the small-pox. By his great exertions and judicious management, he meli-