

The causes which led to his removal from the chief command have already been dwelt upon at some length. The excited condition of people's minds was such that caution and slowness in a commander were calculated to produce extreme dissatisfaction. But Meade continued to render faithful service to the close of the war, and his name will never fail to be honored, nor that of the heroic corps which he commanded.

In person, an English war correspondent thus describes him:

"He is a very remarkable-looking man, tall, spare, of commanding figure and presence, his manner easy and pleasant, but yet with much dignity. . . . He has a decidedly patrician and distinguished appearance. Of his own achievements he spoke in a very modest way. He said he had been 'very fortunate,' but was most especially anxious not to arrogate to himself any credit which he did not deserve. He said that the triumph of the Federal arms was due to the splendid courage of the Union troops, and also to the bad strategy and rash attacks made by the enemy. He said that his health was remarkably good, and that he could bear almost any amount of physical fatigue. What he complained of was the intense mental anxiety occasioned by the great responsibility of his position."

General Meade was presented with a house in Philadelphia by his fellow-citizens, and this was his residence from the close of the war until his death, which occurred on the 6th of November, 1872.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

ROBERT EDMUND LEE.

Lee's Family in Virginia—Early Life—Cadetship at West Point—Services in Mexican War—Commanded by Scott—Colonel Lee and the Outlaws—Hesitation at the Commencement of the Great Rebellion—Casts his Fortune with Virginia and the Confederacy—Failure of his First Campaign—Scoff of the Richmond *Examiner*—Lee as Commander—His Official Survey of the Seven Days' Battle—Peculiarities of his Campaign—The Master-Piece of his Military Life—Address to his Starving Men—Anecdote of Lee and his Cook—Last Retreat—Surrender—Indicted for Treason—Proceedings stayed on Protest of General Grant—President of Washington College—Death.

THE family of Robert E. Lee claims a long descent. It is even said that one of his ancestors fought in the third crusade under Richard Cœur de Lion. However that may be, we find that Richard Lee, from whom the subject of our sketch descended directly, came to Virginia as secretary of the colony in the reign of Charles I. His grandson, Thomas Lee, was governor of Virginia, and president of the Colonial Council. General Henry Lee, father of Robert E., was the grand-nephew of President Lee. Several other members of the family rendered distinguished services in the war for independence. Thus the famous Southern general, coming of a long line of soldiers and statesmen, might well claim a front rank in what may be called the Southern nobility.

respect, although there was none of the bowing and flourishing of caps which occurs in the presence of European generals, and while all honor him and place implicit faith in his courage and ability, those with whom he is intimate feel for him the affection of sons to a father. . . . In speaking of the Northerners he neither evinced any bitterness of feeling, nor gave utterance to a single violent expression, but alluded to former friends and companions among them in the kindest terms."

As an example of the affection which his soldiers entertained for him, we may mention the following: Overcome by fatigue, one day, he had fallen asleep at the foot of a tree on the side of a road over which fifteen thousand troops were defiling. On learning that their beloved chief was taking a badly-needed repose, the most absolute silence was established in the ranks, and the men softened their tread, so that the whole detachment marched past without awaking him.

The four terrible years passed in almost incessant struggle were not without their effect on General Lee. He aged rapidly; his emaciated features and whitening hair showed how the responsibilities of his position, and, above all, the suffering he witnessed, told on him. When the third year of the war had arrived, the privations endured by the Army of Virginia were excessive. During the winter of 1863-4, the ration served out to the soldiers consisted of a very small quantity of maize bread and a quarter pound of pork, so fat that the men melted it and spread it like butter on their bread. Lee, determined to share the hardships of his soldiers, eat meat but twice a week himself; usually his dinner consisted of maize and cabbage. Besides being half

starved, the men were in rags. Sickness and desertion thinned their ranks. Under these disheartening circumstances the brave commander was still forced to recognize that the whole fate of the Confederacy rested on his enfeebled and lessened forces.

The campaign of 1863 had closed with the disastrous battle of Gettysburg. The winter was one of gloom and discontent in both armies. General Grant had taken command of the Federal forces, and Lee did not ignore the fact that he had now to encounter an adversary as brave, as skillful, and as patient as himself. Grant, in his official report, had stated that his plan was "To hammer continuously against the armed force of the enemy and his resources, until by mere attrition, if by nothing else, there should be nothing left to him but an equal submission to the constitution and the laws of our common country."

He began the carrying out of this plan by moving on Richmond. He intended to invest the city on the north and west, while General Butler, with his thirty thousand men, coming from Fortress Monroe, was to unite with Grant's forces at City Point. Thus the city would have been blockaded on three sides.

Lee formed the counter-plan of marching his army into the region known as the Wilderness, and opposing Grant's advance. This sombre and desolate district was well known to his soldiers, and but little to the Federals. The nature of the country was such as to be unfavorable to the movements of large bodies of men. The ground is covered with stunted and tufted trees. On this battle-field the two armies met in conflict on the 5th of May. The whole day passed in furious fighting, and the armies slept on the field to

resume their terrible work with the dawn of day. The Union forces under Hancock, and the Confederates under Longstreet, bore the brunt of this day's battle. Over this broken ground, among the shrubs, thickets, marshes, guided rather by sound than by sight, blinded by cannon-smoke, two hundred thousand men in blue and gray, for the next six days, fought from dawn to dark. On the 10th the contest lasted till midnight, and the loss of life was terrible. During all the rest of the month a number of sanguinary encounters took place, besides a constant skirmishing all along the lines. On the 2d of June was fought the battle of Cold Harbor. The road to Richmond was contested inch by inch. There came a series of bloody combats around Petersburg without much apparent result; it was in fact a continuous battle day by day, night by night, month after month. The "hammering" process continued, the hopes of the Southerners failing, their resources diminishing, their armies melting away. Lee's courage never gave way, but it had become the courage of despair. Beyond doubt he foresaw the inevitable end. As the situation became more desperate, all eyes in the Confederacy turned toward Lee. A pathetic, half-superstitious faith in him was shown alike by citizens and soldiers; they believed that while he was at the head of the army the cause was safe, while he saw hourly approaching the saddest hour that can come to a soldier, that in which he sees his army broken and defeated, lay down its arms and return to ruined homes.

He had just been nominated generalissimo of the forces, a title which seemed something of a mockery, at a moment when, to him at least, it was evident that

the forces were on the eve of disbanding. His own special troops had become an army of phantoms. Their old uniforms hung in tatters on their gaunt forms. Many regiments had less than two hundred men in their ranks. Half-starved, half-clad, they called themselves in grim joke, Lee's miserales, from Hugo's novel.

With this army, for two months he made an effort to hold a line of country forty miles in length, in order to protect the railroad which was now the only source of supplies for Richmond. When Petersburg was taken, Lee withdrew his army from this line, and made an effort to march southward to North Carolina. But disaster followed disaster, and at length, on the 7th of April, Grant felt himself in a position to approach Lee on the subject of surrender. His letter was as follows:

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 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 Southern army known as the Army of Northern Virginia.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

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

On the night of the 9th, around a bivouac fire in the woods, Lee held his last military council. Longstreet, Gordon, and Fitz-Hugh Lee were present. They decided to make one more effort to reach Lynchburg, but if the forces opposed to them were too numerous for them to advance, then a flag of truce was to be sent and an interview held with General Grant, as to the terms of surrender.

At three in the morning, reconnoissances having been made, the effort to advance was entered on. But before many hours elapsed Lee saw its hopelessness, and sent the flag of truce to General Grant. The commanders met at a farm-house. They treated each other with grave politeness. The terms of surrender were offered and accepted in writing. The two generals parted, Lee riding back to his camp, while his soldiers learning what had passed crowded round him. The general, still mounted, said, "Men, we have fought through the war together. I have done the best I could for you. My heart is too full to say more."

The conquering side behaved well. They broke ranks, went among their defeated brothers, carrying food to the half-famished soldiers and caring for the wounded. Not even among the roughest of the soldiers was a semblance of insult offered to the vanquished.

On the 12th of April the Army of Virginia met for the last time. They parked their artillery, stacked their rifles, took the parole and dispersed. Lee returned to Richmond, was met at his own house there by a crowd of citizens and soldiers, but escaping from their demonstrations of affection, he hastily withdrew, and remained for several days in solitude, going out only at night.

Lee, in common with the other rebel leaders, was excluded from the amnesty of the 29th of May, and was indicted for high treason as having borne arms against the United States Government. But public feeling was strongly in his favor even at the North. It was urged in his behalf that he had never favored the policy of invasion, but that he had carefully ad-



THE LAST STROKE.

hered to his idea of protecting his own State. General Grant threw all the weight of his influence on the side of his former adversary, and the indictment was quashed. Lee afterwards transmitted a demand for pardon to the United States Government. This was a painful wound to his pride, but he felt the importance of the example he set. The step did much to reconcile some obstinate secessionists to the same course. Having by this act admitted the right of the North to demand submission, nothing could exceed the loyalty with which he accepted the situation. Congress having appointed a "Committee of Reconstruction" to inquire into the state of affairs at the South, Lee was summoned as a witness, and gave straightforward and dignified replies to a long series of interrogatories intended to develop the opinions of Southern leading men, as to the social and political future of the South. In the course of this examination he made the following statement:

"This was my view, that the act of Virginia in withdrawing herself from the United States carried me along as a citizen of Virginia, and that her laws and acts were binding on me."

Being asked whether, in case of war, he would join with a foreign government against the United States, he replied, "I have no disposition to do so, and I never had."

This examination was almost Lee's last appearance in public. During his later years he took no part in politics. Brilliant positions were offered him, both in England and in the United States, but he declined to leave his native State. The war had impoverished him, and he declined to live otherwise than by his own

exertions. The presidency of the College of Virginia was finally offered to and accepted by him.

He entered on his new duties in October, and devoted all his energies to retrieving the college from the ruin brought on it by the war, and to cultivating in the students the feeling that the war being over, the spirit of revenge should be set aside, and all their powers devoted to building up a new and prosperous country on the ruins of the old. His influence on the turbulent spirit then prevalent was very great. To a lady, whose sons were entering the college as students, and who expressed bitter hatred for the North, he said, "Do not bring up your sons to detest the United States Government. Remember we are one country now. Let us abandon these local animosities, and make your sons Americans."

General Lee was a consistent and devoted Christian. During the war, this side of his character was not displayed so strongly as in the case of "Stonewall Jackson," but in the college he threw all his influence on the side of Christian belief and conduct. He once remarked that that was his principal aim in accepting the presidency of the college. In September, 1870, on returning from a meeting of the parochial committee of his church, he complained of chill. A few minutes later he fell back in his chair paralyzed. He remained in a state of insensibility until the 12th of October, when he passed from unconsciousness to death.

The grief in the South was universal, and everywhere it was recognized that a great soldier, a truly brave and noble soul, had passed away. He lies buried in the college chapel; and friend and foe cannot but unite in admiration of his character.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### WINFIELD SCOTT HANCOCK.

Parentage—Birthplace—Boyhood—"How he became Cadet"—Career at the Academy—Graduation—First Campaign—Promoted—In Florida—First Battle for the Union—Married—Yorktown—"Gentlemen, Charge!"—Promotion at Antietam on the Battle-Field—Incident Illustrating Character—Gettysburg—Wounded—"Attend to your Command: I'll take Care of Myself"—First Public Testimonial—With Grant—Nominated for President—Subsequent Life.

THE ancestors of General Hancock on both sides belonged to families of Revolutionary fame, and were engaged in the successive wars from the French and Indian, through the Revolution, down to 1812. The subject of this sketch was born February 14, 1824, near Lansdale, Montgomery county, Penna. Nature cast him in a rare mould of comeliness. He is physically fashioned for a soldier. His height is two inches above six feet, with a corresponding breadth, which, combined with his erect military bearing, renders him a man everywhere to be noticed.

As a boy he was slender though tall, and when only twelve years old was recognized as a leader among his fellows. Gray-headed men in Montgomery county to-day tell stories of boyish disputes which were usually settled by agreeing to "leave it out to Winfield."

A little military company among the boys chose him

He was born in Stratford, Westmoreland county, in an old mansion situated on the bank of the Potomac, to which General Henry Lee had retired after the war of independence. Here the family had lived for some years the cheerful and hospitable life common in that section. Robert grew up with the tastes incident to his surroundings. He loved country life, was fond of horses, enjoyed all rural pleasures infinitely more than any afforded by the life of cities, and as a result had a constitution in vigorous health, a vigor and robustness that survived all the trials of war.

In 1811 the family removed to Alexandria, where he remained until, at the age of eighteen, he entered West Point Military College. In 1832 he married Miss Mary Parke Custis, great-granddaughter of Martha Washington, and heiress of a considerable property.

During the Mexican war Robert Lee served at first as a captain of engineers, and through the whole campaign, but more especially at Cerro Gordo and Chapultepec, rendered such excellent service that General Scott made special mention of him in his official report, and Lee was brevetted lieutenant-colonel. In 1855 he was stationed with his regiment in Texas, and took part in the continuous struggle then being waged against the Indians of that region. Four years later, while on leave of absence and visiting his family at Arlington, near Washington, John Brown made his famous effort against slavery at Harper's Ferry. The operations in defence of the arsenal were intrusted to Colonel Lee. The brave, if misguided, insurgents being secured, Lee returned to his regiment in San Antonio, remaining there until recalled by General Scott at the first rumor of threatened war.

Scott being too infirm to take the field in person, President Lincoln offered Lee the command of the Federal army; and had Virginia remained in the Union, the whole subsequent career of this great soldier would no doubt have passed in the service of the Union. Unfortunately he took the view, so commonly held by Southerners, that his allegiance was due to his own State rather than to the whole country, and accordingly he declined the offer made to him, and soon afterwards sent in his resignation in the following letter:

"ARLINGTON, Virginia, April 20, 1861.

GENERAL:

Since my interview with you on the 18th, I have felt that I ought not to retain my commission in the army. I therefore tender my resignation, which I trust you will recommend for acceptance. It would have been presented at once, but for the struggle it has cost me to separate from a service to which I have devoted the best years of my life, and all the ability I possessed.

During the whole of that time, more than a quarter of a century, I have experienced nothing but kindness from my superiors and the most cordial friendship from my comrades. To no one, General, have I been so much indebted as to yourself, for uniform kindness and consideration; and it has always been my ardent desire to merit your approbation. I shall carry to the grave the most grateful recollections of your kindness and consideration; and your name and fame will always be dear to me.

Save in defence of my native State, I never desire again to draw my sword." \* \* \* \* \*

Immediately on the acceptance of his resignation he went to Richmond, and was soon afterwards offered the place of commander-in chief of the Virginian forces. Lee accepted the position, but with regret rather than elation. Indeed, during all this painful time, Lee showed a moderation, an absence of rancor against his adversaries, and a regret for the rupture of the ties that

had united the two sections, that showed him to have qualities, as a man, that equalled his greatness as a soldier.

It was evident that, from its position, Virginia was to be the principal scene of the impending struggles. Lee's first operations were directed to putting that State into a condition to repel invasion, and to organize and render effective the mass of men and materials which soon began to accumulate around Richmond. It was a difficult task, and was very ably performed. The men were, for the most part, ignorant, undisciplined, undrilled; Lee brought them into fair training in an incredibly short space of time. On the 1st of March, 1862, this army extended its lines along the Potomac from the valley of Virginia to the town of Fredericksburg. The rolls numbered over eighty-four thousand names, but there were actually present about seventy thousand. On this army fell by far the greatest burden of the war. A Northern military critic has said of it: "Who can forget that once looked on it, that array of tattered uniforms and bright muskets, that body of incomparable infantry, the Army of Northern Virginia, which, for four years, carried the revolt on its bayonets, opposing a constant front to the mighty concentration of power brought against it; which, receiving terrible blows, did not fail to give the like, and which, vital in all its parts, died only with its annihilation."

The long series of conflicts that took place in Virginia, in the four subsequent years, belong to history, and in this brief memoir even the barest outline of them is impossible. The inaction that followed the close of Lee's first campaign drew on him severe criti-

cism. He was blamed then, and frequently afterward, for exaggerated prudence, because he insisted on maintaining a defensive position. He was always slow to adopt the policy of invasion, partly through regard for the lives of his soldiers, and partly because, having witnessed with reluctance the separation between the States, he disliked everything that tended to add to the bitterness of animosity. And the time came when the people of the South recognized that his ability and courage equalled his prudence, and he became their idol. To his soldiers he was especially dear. He was commonly known among them as "Uncle Robert." He affected none of the pride, pomp, and circumstance of war in his equipments or surroundings. An English writer gives the following sketch of his unpretentious method of living, while acting as commander-in-chief:

"Lee's headquarters consisted of about seven or eight pole-tents, pitched with their backs to a stake-fence, on a piece of ground so rocky that it was unpleasant to ride over it, its only recommendation being a little stream of good water which flowed close to the general's tent. . . . No guard or sentries were to be seen in the vicinity; no crowd of aides-de-camp loitering about, making themselves agreeable to visitors. A large farm-house stood close by, which in any other army would have been the general's residence, *pro tem.*, but as no liberties were to be taken with private property, he was particular in setting a good example himself. His staff were crowded together, two or three in a tent; none were allowed to carry more baggage than a small box each, and his own kit was but little larger. Every one who approached him did so with marked