

**Excerpts from *Recollections and Letters of General Robert E. Lee*
by Captain Robert E. Lee, His Son (1904)**

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Chapter I

Services in the United States Army

Captain Lee, of the Engineers, a hero to his child--The family pets--Home from the Mexican War--Three years in Baltimore--Superintendent of the West Point Military Academy--Lieutenant-Colonel of Second Cavalry--Suppresses "John Brown Raid" at Harper's Ferry--Commands the Department of Taxes

The first vivid recollection I have of my father is his arrival at Arlington, after his return from the Mexican War. I can remember some events of which he seemed a part, when we lived at Fort Hamilton, New York, about 1846, but they are more like dreams, very indistinct and disconnected--naturally so, for I was at that time about three years old. But the day of his return to Arlington, after an absence of more than two years, I have always remembered. I had a frock or blouse of some light wash material, probably cotton, a blue ground dotted over with white diamond figures. Of this I was very proud,

and wanted to wear it on this important occasion. Eliza, my “mammy,” objecting, we had a contest and I won. Clothed in this, my very best, and with my hair freshly curled in long golden ringlets, I went down into the larger hall where the whole household was assembled, eagerly greeting my father, who had just arrived on horseback from Washington, having missed in some way the carriage which had been sent for him.

There was visiting us at this time Mrs. Lippitt, a friend of my mother’s, with her little boy, Armistead, about my age and size, also with long curls. Whether he wore as handsome a suit as mine I cannot remember, but he and I were left together in the background, feeling rather frightened and awed. After a moment’s greeting to those surrounding him, my father pushed through the crowd, exclaiming:

“Where is my little boy?”

He then took up in his arms and kissed--not me, his own child in his best frock with clean face and well-arranged curls--but my little playmate, Armistead! I remember nothing more of any circumstances connected with that time, save that I was shocked and humiliated. I have no doubt that he was at once informed of his mistake and made ample amends to me.

A letter from my father to his brother Captain S. S. Lee, United States Navy, dated “Arlington, June 30, 1848,” tells of his coming home:

“Here I am once again, my dear Smith, perfectly surrounded by Mary and her precious children, who seem to devote themselves to staring at the furrows in my face and the white hairs in my head. It is not surprising that I am hardly recognizable to some of the young eyes around me and perfectly unknown to the youngest. But some of the older ones gaze with astonishment and wonder at me, and seem at a loss to reconcile what they see and what was pictured in their imaginations. I find them, too, much grown, and all well, and I have much cause for thankfulness, and gratitude to that good God who has once more united us.”

My next recollection of my father is in Baltimore, while we were on a visit to his sister, Mrs. Marshall, the wife of Judge Marshall. I remember being down on the wharves, where my father had taken me to see the landing of a mustang pony which he had gotten for me in Mexico, and which had been shipped from Vera Cruz to Baltimore in a sailing vessel. I was all eyes for the pony, and a very miserable, sad-looking object he was. From his long voyage, cramped quarters and unavoidable lack of grooming, he was rather a disappointment to

me, but I soon got over all that. As I grew older, and was able to ride and appreciate him, he became the joy and pride of my life. I was taught to ride on him by Jim Connally, the faithful Irish servant of my father, who had been with him in Mexico. Jim used to tell me, in his quizzical way, that he and “Santa Anna” (the pony’s name) were the first men on the walls of Chapultepec. This pony was pure white, five years old and about fourteen hands high. For his inches, he was as good a horse as I ever have seen. While we lived in Baltimore, he and “Grace Darling,” my father’s favourite mare, were members of our family.

Grace Darling was a chestnut of fine size and of great power, which he had bought in Texas on his way out to Mexico, her owner having died on the march out. She was with him during the entire campaign, and was shot seven times; at least, as a little fellow I used to brag about that number of bullets being in her, and since I could point out the scars of each one, I presume it was so. My father was very much attached to her and proud of her, always petting her and talking to her in a loving way, when he rode her or went to see her in her stall. Of her he wrote on his return home:

“I only arrived yesterday, after a long journey up the Mississippi, which route I was induced to take, for the better accommodation of my horse, as I wished to spare her as much annoyance and fatigue as possible, she already having undergone so much suffering in my service. I landed her at Wheeling and left her to come over with Jim.”

Santa Anna was found lying cold and dead in the park at Arlington one morning in the winter of ‘60-’61. Grace Darling was taken in the spring of ‘62 from the White House [My brother’s place on the Pamunkey River, where the mare had been sent for safe keeping.”] by some Federal quartermaster, when McClellan occupied that place as his base of supplies during his attack on Richmond. When we lived in Baltimore, I was greatly struck one day by hearing two ladies who were visiting us saying:

“Everybody and everything--his family, his friends, his horse, and his dog--loves Colonel Lee.”

The dog referred to was a black-and-tan terrier named “Spec,” very bright and intelligent and really a member of the family, respected and beloved by ourselves and well known to all who knew us. My father picked up his mother in the “Narrows” while crossing from Fort Hamilton to the fortifications opposite on Staten Island. She had doubtless fallen overboard from some passing vessel and had drifted out of sight before her absence had been discovered. He rescued her and

took her home, where she was welcomed by his children and made much of. She was a handsome little thing, with cropped ears and a short tail. My father named her "Dart." She was a fine rat-ter, and with the assistance of a Maltese cat, also a member of the family, the many rats which infested the house and stables were driven away or destroyed. She and the cat were fed out of the same plate, but Dart was not allowed to begin the meal until the cat had finished.

Spec was born at Fort Hamilton and was the joy of us children, our pet and companion. My father would not allow his tail and ears to be cropped. When he grew up, he accompanied us everywhere and was in the habit of going into church with the family. As some of the little ones allowed their devotions to be disturbed by Spec's presence, my father determined to leave him at home on those occasions. So the next Sunday morning, he was sent up to the front room of the second story. After the family had left for church he contented himself for awhile looking out of the window, which was open, it being summer time. Presently impatience overcame his judgement and he jumped to the ground, landed safely notwithstanding the distance, joined the family just as they reached the church, and went in with them as usual, much to the joy of the children. After that he was allowed to go to church whenever he wished. My father was very fond of him, and loved to talk to him and about him as if he were really one of us. In a letter to my mother, dated Fort Hamilton, January 18, 1846, when she and her children were on a visit to Arlington, he thus speaks of him:

"...I am very solitary, and my only company is my dogs and cats. But 'Spec' has become so jealous now that he will hardly let me look at the cats. He seems to be afraid that I am going off from him, and never lets me stir without him. Lies down in the office from eight to four without moving, and turns himself before the fire as the side from it becomes cold. I catch him sometimes sitting up looking at me so intently that I am for a moment startled..."

In a letter from Mexico written a year later--December 25, '46, to my mother, he says:

"...Can't you cure poor 'Spec.' Cheer him up--take him to walk with you and tell the children to cheer him up..."

In another letter from Mexico to his eldest boy, just after the capture of Vera Cruz, he sends this message to Spec....

"Tell him I wish he was here with me. He would have been of great service in telling me when I was coming upon the Mexicans. When I was reconnoitering around Vera Cruz, their dogs frequently told me by

barking when I was approaching them too nearly....”

When he returned to Arlington from Mexico, Spec was the first to recognise him, and the extravagance of his demonstrations of delight left no doubt that he knew at once his kind master and loving friend, though he had been absent three years. Sometime during our residence in Baltimore, Spec disappeared, and we never knew his fate.

From that early time I began to be impressed with my father's character, as compared with other men. Every member of the household respected, revered and loved him as a matter of course, but it began to dawn on me that every one else with whom I was thrown held him high in their regard. At forty-five years of age he was active, strong, and as handsome as he had ever been. I never remember his being ill. I presume he was indisposed at times; but no impressions of that kind remain. He was always bright and gay with us little folk, romping, playing, and joking with us. With the older children, he was just as companionable, and we have seen him join my elder brothers and their friends when they would try their powers at a high jump put up in our yard. The two younger children he petted a great deal, and our greatest treat was to get into his bed in the morning and lie close to him, listening while he talked to us in his bright, entertaining way. This custom we kept up until I was ten years old and over. Although he was so joyous and familiar with us, he was very firm on all proper occasions, never indulged us in anything that was not good for us, and exacted the most implicit obedience. I always knew that it was impossible to disobey my father. I felt it in me, I never thought why, but was perfectly sure when he gave an order that it had to be obeyed. My mother I could sometimes circumvent, and at times took liberties with her orders, construing them to suit myself; but exact obedience to every mandate of my father was part of my life and being at that time. He was very fond of having his hands tickled, and, what was still more curious, it pleased and delighted him to take off his slippers and place his feet in our laps in order to have them tickled. Often, as little things, after romping all day, the enforced sitting would be too much for us, and our drowsiness would soon show itself in continued nods. Then, to arouse us, he had a way of stirring us up with his foot--laughing heartily at and with us. He would often tell us the most delightful stories, and then there was no nodding. Sometimes, however, our interest in his wonderful tales became so engrossing that we would forget to do our duty--when he would declare, “No tickling, no story!” When we were a little older, our elder sister told us one winter the ever-delightful “Lady of the Lake.” Of course, she told it in prose and arranged it to suit our mental capacity. Our father was generally in his corner by the fire, most probably with a foot in either the lap of myself or

youngest sister--the tickling going on briskly--and would come in at different points of the tale and repeat line after line of the poem--much to our disapproval--but to his great enjoyment.

In January, 1849, Captain Lee was one of a board of army officers appointed to examine the coasts of Florida and its defenses and to recommend locations for new fortifications. In April he was assigned to the duty of the construction of Fort Carroll, in the Patapsco River below Baltimore. He was there, I think, for three years, and lived in a house on Madison Street, three doors above Biddle. I used to go down with him to the Fort quite often. We went to the wharf in a "bus," and there we were met by a boat with two oarsmen, who rowed us down to Sollers Point, where I was generally left under the care of the people who lived there, while my father went over to the Fort, a short distance out in the river. These days were happy ones for me. The wharves, the shipping, the river, the boat and oarsmen, and the country dinner we had at the house at Sollers Point, all made a strong impression on me; but above all I remember my father, his gentle, loving care of me, his bright talk, his stories, his maxims and teachings. I was very proud of him and of the evident respect for and trust in him every one showed. These impressions, obtained at that time, have never left me. He was a great favourite in Baltimore, as he was everywhere, especially with ladies and little children. When he and my mother went out in the evening to some entertainment, we were often allowed to sit up and see them off; my father, as I remember, always in full uniform, always ready and waiting for my mother, who was generally late. He would chide her gently, in a playful way and with a bright smile. He would then bid us good-bye, and I would go to sleep with this beautiful picture in my mind, the golden epaulets and all--chiefly the epaulets.

In Baltimore, I went to my first school, that of a Mr. Rollins on Mulberry Street, and I remember how interested my father was in my studies, my failures, and my little triumphs. Indeed, he was so always, as long as I was at school and college, and I only wish that all of the kind, sensible, useful letters he wrote me had been preserved.

My memory as to the move from Baltimore, which occurred in 1852, is very dim. I think the family went to Arlington to remain until my father had arranged for our removal to the new home at West Point.

My recollection of my father as Superintendent of the West Point Military Academy is much more distinct. He lived in the house which is still occupied by the Superintendent. It was built of stone, large and roomy, with gardens, stables, and pasture lots. We, the

two youngest children, enjoyed it all. “Grace Darling” and “Santa Anna” were there with us, and many a fine ride did I have with my father in the afternoons, when, released from his office, he would mount his old mare and, with Santa Anna carrying me by his side, take a five or ten-mile trot. Though the pony cantered delightfully, he would make me keep him in a trot, saying playfully that the hammering sustained was good for me. We rode the dragoon-seat, no posting, and until I became accustomed to it I used to be very tired by the time I got back.

My father was the most punctual man I ever knew. He was always ready for family prayers, for meals, and met every engagement, social or business, at the moment. He expected all of us to be the same, and taught us the use and necessity of forming such habits for the convenience of all concerned. I never knew him late for Sunday service at the Post Chapel. He used to appear some minutes before the rest of us, in uniform, jokingly rallying my mother for being late, and for forgetting something at the last moment. When he could wait no longer for her, he would say that he was off and would march along to church by himself, or with any of the children who were ready. There he sat very straight--well up the middle aisle--and, as I remember, always became very sleepy, and sometimes even took a little nap during the sermon. At that time, this drowsiness of my father's was something awful to me, inexplicable. I know it was very hard for me to keep awake, and frequently I did not; but why he, who to my mind could do everything right, without any effort, should sometimes be overcome, I could not understand, and did not try to do so.

It was against the rules that the cadets should go beyond certain limits without permission. Of course they did go sometimes, and when caught were given quite a number of “demerits.” My father was riding out one afternoon with me, and, while rounding a turn in the mountain road with a deep woody ravine on one side, we came suddenly upon three cadets far beyond the limits. They immediately leaped over a low wall on the side of the road and disappeared from our view.

We rode on for a minute in silence; then my father said: “Did you know those young men? But no; if you did, don't say so. I wish boys would do what was right, it would be so much easier for all parties!”

He knew he would have to report them, but, not being sure of who they were, I presume he wished to give them the benefit of the doubt. At any rate, I never heard any more about it. One of the three asked me the next day if my father had recognised them, and I told him what had occurred.

By this time I had become old enough to have a room to myself, and,

to encourage me in being useful and practical, my father made me attend to it, just as the cadets had to do with their quarters in barracks and in camp. He at first even went through the form of inspecting it, to see if I had performed my duty properly, and I think I enjoyed this until the novelty wore off. However, I was kept at it, becoming in time very proficient, and the knowledge so acquired has been of great use to me all through life.

My father always encouraged me in every healthy outdoor exercise and sport. He taught me to ride, constantly giving me minute instructions, with the reasons for them. He gave me my first sled, and sometimes used to come out where we boys were coasting to look on. He gave me my first pair of skates, and placed me in the care of a trustworthy person, inquiring regularly how I progressed. It was the same with swimming, which he was very anxious I should learn in a proper manner. Professor Bailey had a son about my age, now himself a professor at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, who became my great chum. I took my first lesson in the water with him, under the direction and supervision of his father. My father inquired constantly how I was getting along, and made me describe exactly my method and stroke, explaining to me what he considered the best way to swim, and the reasons therefor.

I went to day-school at West Point, and had always a sympathetic helper in my father. often he would come into the room where I studied at night, and, sitting down by me, would show me how to overcome a hard sentence in my Latin reader or a difficult sum in arithmetic, not by giving me the translation of the troublesome sentence or the answer to the sum, but by showing me, step by step, the way to the right solutions. He was very patient, very loving, very good to me, and I remember trying my best to please him in my studies. When I was able to bring home a good report from my teacher, he was greatly pleased, and showed it in his eye and voice, but he always insisted that I should get the "maximum," that he would never be perfectly satisfied with less. That I did sometimes win it, deservedly, I know was due to his judicious and wise method of exciting my ambition and perseverance. I have endeavoured to show how fond my father was of his children, and as the best picture I can offer of his loving, tender devotion to us all, I give here a letter from him written about this time to one of his daughters who was staying with our grandmother, Mrs. Custis, at Arlington:

"West Point, February 25, 1853

"My Precious Annie: I take advantage of your gracious permission to write to you, and there is no telling how far my feelings might carry

men were I not limited by the conveyance furnished by the Mim's [His pet name for my mother] letter, which lies before me, and which must, the Mim says so, go in this morning's mail. But my limited time does not diminish my affection for you, Annie, nor prevent my thinking of you and wishing for you. I long to see you through the dilatory nights. At dawn when I rise, and all day, my thoughts revert to you in expressions that you cannot hear or I repeat. I hope you will always appear to me as you are now painted on my heart, and that you will endeavor to improve and so conduct yourself as to make you happy and me joyful all our lives. Diligent and earnest attention to ALL your duties can only accomplish this. I am told you are growing very tall, and I hope very straight. I do not know what the Cadets will say if the Superintendent's CHILDREN do not practice what he demands of them. They will naturally say he had better attend to his own before he corrects other people's children, and as he permits his to stoop it is hard he will not allow them. You and Agnes [His third daughter] must not, therefore, bring me into discredit with my young friends, or give them reason to think that I require more of them than of my own. I presume your mother has told all about us, our neighbors, and our affairs. And indeed she may have done that and not said much either, so far as I know. But we are all well and have much to be grateful for. To-morrow we anticipate the pleasure of your brother's [His son, Custis] company, which is always a source of pleasure to us. It is the only time we see him, except when the Corps come under my view at some of their exercises, when my eye is sure to distinguish him among his comrades and follow him over the plain. Give much love to your dear grandmother, grandfather, Agnes, Miss Sue, Lucretia, and all friends, including the servants. Write sometimes, and think always of your

Affectionate father,
R. E. Lee."

In a letter to my mother written many years previous to this time, he says:

"I pray God to watch over and direct our efforts in guarding our dear little son....Oh, what pleasure I lose in being separated from my children! Nothing can compensate me for that...."

In another letter of about the same time:

"You do not know how much I have missed you and the children, my dear Mary. To be alone in a crowd is very solitary. In the woods, I feel sympathy with the trees and birds, in whose company I take delight, but experience no pleasure in a strange crowd. I hope you are all well and will continue so, and, therefore, must again urge you to be

very prudent and careful of those dear children. If I could only get a squeeze at that little fellow, turning up his sweet mouth to ‘keese baba!’ You must not let him run wild in my absence, and will have to exercise firm authority over all of them. This will not require severity or even strictness, but constant attention and an unwavering course. Mildness and forbearance will strengthen their affection for you, while it will maintain your control over them.”

In a letter to one of his sons he writes as follows:

“I cannot go to bed, my dear son, without writing you a few lines, to thank you for your letter, which gave me great pleasure.... You and Custis must take great care of your kind mother and dear sisters when your father is dead. To do that you must learn to be good. Be true, kind and generous, and pray earnestly to God to enable you to keep His Commandments ‘and walk in the same all the days of your life.’ I hope to come on soon to see that little baby you have got to show me. You must give her a kiss for me, and one to all the children, to your mother, and grandmother”

The expression of such sentiments as these was common to my father all through his life, and to show that it was all children, and not his own little folk alone that charmed and fascinated him, I quote from a letter to my mother:

“...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 the youngest.’

“Upon further inquiry, however, I found that they were only temporarily his, and that they were invited to a party at his house. He said, however, 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....”

As Superintendent of the Military Academy at West Point my father had to entertain a good deal, and I remember well how handsome and grand

he looked in uniform, how genial and bright, how considerate of everybody's comfort of mind and body. He was always a great favourite with the ladies, especially the young ones. His fine presence, his gentle, courteous manners and kindly smile put them at once at ease with him.

Among the cadets at this time were my eldest brother, Custis, who graduated first in his class in 1854, and my father's nephew, Fitz. Lee, a third classman, besides other relatives and friends. Saturday being a half-holiday for the cadets, it was the custom for all social events in which they were to take part to be placed on that afternoon or evening. Nearly every Saturday a number of these young men were invited to our house to tea, or supper, for it was a good, substantial meal. The misery of some of these lads, owing to embarrassment, possibly from awe of the Superintendent, was pitiable and evident even to me, a boy of ten or eleven years old. But as soon as my father got command, as it were, of the situation, one could see how quickly most of them were put at their ease. He would address himself to the task of making them feel comfortable and at home, and his genial manner and pleasant ways at once succeeded.

In the spring of '53 my grandmother, Mrs. Custis, died. This was the first death in our immediate family. She was very dear to us, and was admired, esteemed and loved by all who had ever known her. Bishop Meade, of Virginia, writes of her:

"Mrs. Mary Custis, of Arlington, the wife of Mr. Washington Custis, grandson of Mrs. General Washington was the daughter of Mr. William Fitzhugh, of Chatham. Scarcely is there a Christian lady in our land more honoured than she was, and none more loved and esteemed. For good sense, prudence, sincerity, benevolence, unaffected piety, disinterested zeal in every good work, deep humility and retiring modesty--for all the virtues which adorn the wife, the mother, and the friend--I never knew her superior."

In a letter written to my mother soon after this sad event my father says:

"May God give you strength to enable you to bear and say, 'His will be done.' She has gone from all trouble, care and sorrow to a holy immortality, there to rejoice and praise forever the God and Saviour she so long and truly served. Let that be our comfort and that our consolation. May our death be like hers, and may we meet in happiness in Heaven."

In another letter about the same time he writes:

“She was to me all that a mother could be, and I yield to none in admiration for her character, love for her virtues, and veneration for her memory.”

At this time, my father’s family and friends persuaded him to allow R. S. Weir, Professor of Painting and Drawing at the Academy, to paint his portrait. As far as I remember, there was only one sitting, and the artist had to finish it from memory or from the glimpses he obtained as his subject in the regular course of their daily lives at “The Point.” This picture shows my father in the undress uniform of a Colonel of Engineers [His appointment of Superintendent of the Military Academy carried with it the temporary rank of Colonel of Engineers], and many think it a very good likeness. To me, the expression of strength peculiar to his face is wanting, and the mouth fails to portray that sweetness of disposition so characteristic of his countenance. Still, it was like him at that time. My father never could bear to have his picture taken, and there are no likenesses of him that really give his sweet expression. Sitting for a picture was such a serious business with him that he never could “look pleasant.”

In 1855 my father was appointed to the lieutenant-colonelcy of the Second Cavalry, one of the two regiments just raised. He left West Point to enter upon his new duties, and his family went to Arlington to live. During the fall and winter of 1855 and ‘56, the Second Cavalry was recruited and organised at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, under the direction of Colonel Lee, and in the following spring was marched to western Texas, where it was assigned the duty of protecting the settlers in that wild country.

I did not see my father again until he came to my mother at Arlington after the death of her father, G. W. P. Custis, in October 1857. He took charge of my mother’s estate after her father’s death, and commenced at once to put it in order--not an easy task, as it consisted of several plantations and many negroes. I was at a boarding-school, after the family returned to Arlington, and saw my father only during the holidays, if he happened to be at home. He was always fond of farming, and took great interest in the improvements he immediately began at Arlington relating to the cultivation of the farm, to the buildings, roads, fences, fields, and stock, so that in a very short time the appearance of everything on the estate was improved. He often said that he longed for the time when he could have a farm of his own, where he could end his days in quiet and peace, interested in the care and improvement of his own land. This idea was always with him. In a letter to his son, written in July, ‘65, referring to some proposed indictments of prominent Confederates, he says:

“...As soon as I can ascertain their intention toward me, if not prevented, I shall endeavour to procure some humble, but quiet abode for your mother and sisters, where I hope they can be happy. As I before said, I want to get in some grass country where the natural product of the land will do much for my subsistence....”

Again in a letter to his son, dated October, 1865, after he had accepted the presidency of Washington College, Lexington, Virginia:

“I should have selected a more quiet life and a more retired abode than Lexington. I should have preferred a small farm, where I could have earned my daily bread.”

About this time I was given a gun of my own and was allowed to go shooting by myself. My father, to give me an incentive, offered a reward for every crow-scalp I could bring him, and, in order that I might get to work at once, advanced a small sum with which to buy powder and shot, this sum to be returned to him out of the first scalps obtained. My industry and zeal were great, my hopes high, and by good luck I did succeed in bagging two crows about the second time I went out. I showed them with great pride to my father, intimating that I should shortly be able to return him his loan, and that he must be prepared to hand over to me very soon further rewards for my skill. His eyes twinkled, and his smile showed that he had strong doubts of my making an income by killing crows, and he was right, for I never killed another, though I tried hard and long.

I saw but little of my father after we left West Point. He went to Texas, as I have stated, in '55 and remained until the fall of '57, the time of my grandfather's death. He was then at Arlington about a year. Returning to his regiment, he remained in Texas until the autumn of '59, when he came again to Arlington, having applied for leave in order to finish the settling of my grandfather's estate. During this visit he was selected by the Secretary of War to suppress the famous “John Brown Raid,” and was sent to Harper's Ferry in command of the United States troops.

From his memorandum book the following entries were taken:

“October 17, 1859. Received orders from the Secretary of War in person, to repair in evening train to Harper's Ferry.

“Reached Harper's Ferry at 11 P.M.... Posted marines in the United States Armory. Waited until daylight, as a number of citizens were held as hostages, whose lives were threatened. Tuesday about sunrise,

with twelve marines, under Lieutenant Green, broke in the door of the engine-house, secured the insurgents, and relieved the prisoners unhurt. All the insurgents killed or mortally wounded, but four, John Brown, Stevens, Coppie, and Shields.”

Brown was tried and convicted and sentenced to be hanged on December 2, 1859. Colonel Lee writes as follows to his wife:

“Harper’s Ferry, December 1, 1859.

“I arrived here, dearest Mary, yesterday about noon, with four companies from Fort Monroe, and was busy all the evening and night getting accommodation for the men, etc., and posting sentinels and piquets to insure timely notice of the approach of the enemy. The night has passed off quietly. The feelings of the community seem to be calmed down, and I have been received with every kindness. Mr. Fry is among the officers from Old Point. There are several young men, former acquaintances of ours, as cadets, Mr. Bingham of Custis’s class, Sam Cooper, etc., but the senior officers I never met before, except Captain Howe, the friend of our Cousin Harriet R---.

“I presume we are fixed here till after the 16th. To-morrow will probably be the last of Captain Brown. There will be less interest for the others, but still I think the troops will not be withdrawn till they are similarly disposed of.

“Custis will have informed you that I had to go to Baltimore the evening I left you, to make arrangements for the transportation of the troops.... This morning I was introduced to Mrs. Brown, who, with a Mrs. Tyndall and a Mr. and Mrs. McKim, all from Philadelphia, had come on to have a last interview with her husband. As it is a matter over which I have no control I referred them to General Taliaferro [General William B. Taliaferro, commanding Virginia troops at Harper’s Ferry].

“You must write to me at this place. I hope you are all well. Give love to everybody. Tell Smith [Sydney Smith Lee, of the United States Navy, his brother] that no charming women have insisted on taking care of me as they are always doing of him--I am left to my own resources. I will write you again soon, and will always be truly and affectionately yours,

“Mrs. M. C. Lee.

R. E. Lee”

In February, 1860, he was ordered to take command of the Department of Texas. There he remained a year. The first months after his arrival were spent in the vain pursuit of the famous brigand, Cortinez, who was continually stealing across the Rio Grande, burning the homes,

driving off the stock of the ranchmen, and then retreating into Mexico. The summer months he spent in San Antonio, and while there interested himself with the good people of that town in building an Episcopal church, to which he contributed largely.

Chapter II

The Confederate General

Resigns from Colonelcy of First United States Cavalry--Motives for this step--Chosen to command Virginia forces--Anxiety about his wife, family, and possessions--Chief advisor to President Davis--Battle of Manassas--Military operations in West Virginia--Letter to State Governor

In February, 1861, after the secession of Texas, my father was ordered to report to General Scott, the Commander-in-Chief of the United States Army. He immediately relinquished the command of his regiment, and departed from Fort Mason, Texas, for Washington. He reached Arlington March 1st. April 17th, Virginia seceded. On the 18th Colonel Lee had a long interview with General Scott. On April 20th he tendered his resignation of his commission in the United States Army. The same day he wrote to General Scott the following letter:

“Arlington, Virginia, April 20, 1861.

“General: Since my interview with you on the 18th inst. I have felt that I ought no longer to retain my commission in the Army. I therefore tender my resignation, which I request you will recommend for acceptance. It would have been presented at once but for the struggle it has cost me to separate myself 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 a most cordial friendship from my comrades. To no one, General, have I been as 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 kind consideration, and your name and fame shall always be dear to me.

“Save in the defense of my native State, I never desire again to draw my sword.

“Be pleased to accept my most earnest wishes for the continuance of your happiness and prosperity, and believe me most truly yours,

“(Signed)

“R. E. Lee”

His resignation was written the same day.

“Arlington, Washington City P.O., April 20, 1861.

“Honourable Simon Cameron, Secretary of War.

“Sir: I have the honour to tender the resignation of my command as Colonel of the First Regiment of Cavalry.

“Very respectfully your obedient servant,

“R. E. Lee,

“Colonel First Cavalry.”

To show further his great feeling in thus having to leave the army with which he had been associated for so long, I give two more letters, one to his sister, Mrs. Anne Marshall, of Baltimore, the other to his brother, Captain Sydney Smith Lee, of the United States Navy:

“Arlington, Virginia, April 20, 1861.

“My Dear Sister: I am grieved at my inability to see you.... I have been waiting for a ‘more convenient season,’ which has brought to many before me deep and lasting regret. Now we are in a state of war which will yield to nothing. The whole South is in a state of revolution, into which Virginia, after a long struggle, has been drawn; and though I recognise no necessity for this state of things, and would have forborne and pleaded to the end for redress of grievances, real or supposed, yet in my own person I had to meet the question whether I should take part against my native State.

“With all my devotion to the Union and the feeling of loyalty and duty of an American citizen, I have not been able to make up my mind to raise my hand against my relatives, my children, my home. I have therefore resigned my commission in the Army, and save in defense of

my native State, with the sincere hope that my poor services may never be needed, I hope I may never be called on to draw my sword. I know you will blame me; but you must think as kindly of me as you can, and believe that I have endeavoured to do what I thought right.

“To show you the feeling and struggle it has cost me, I send you a copy of my letter of resignation. I have no time for more. May God guard and protect you and yours, and shower upon you everlasting blessings, is the prayer of your devoted brother, R. E. Lee.”

“Arlington, Virginia, April 20, 1860.

“My Dear Brother Smith: The question which was the subject of my earnest consultation with you on the 18th inst. has in my own mind been decided. After the most anxious inquiry as to the correct course for me to pursue, I concluded to resign, and sent in my resignation this morning. I wished to wait till the Ordinance of secession should be acted on by the people of Virginia; but war seems to have commenced, and I am liable at any time to be ordered on duty which I could not conscientiously perform. To save me from such a position, and to prevent the necessity of resigning under orders, I had to act at once, and before I could see you again on the subject, as I had wished. I am now a private citizen, and have no other ambition than to remain at home. Save in defense of my native State, I have no desire ever again to draw my sword. I send you my warmest love.

“Your affectionate brother,

“R. E. Lee.”

I will give here one of my father’s letters, written after the war, in which is his account of his resignation from the United States Army:

“Lexington, Virginia, February 25, 1868.

“Honourable Reverdy Johnson,

“United States Senate, Washington, D. C.

“My Dear Sir: My attention has been called to the official report of the debate in the Senate of the United States, on the 19th instant, in which you did me the kindness to doubt the correctness of the statement made by the Honourable Simon Cameron, in regard to myself. I desire that you may feel certain of my conduct on the occasion referred to, so far as my individual statement can make you. I never

intimated to any one that I desired the command of the United States Army; nor did I ever have a conversation with but one gentleman, Mr. Francis Preston Blair, on the subject, which was at his invitation, and, as I understood, at the instance of President Lincoln. After listening to his remarks, I declined the offer that he made me, to take command of the army that was to be brought into the field; stating, as candidly and courteously as I could, that, though opposed to secession and deprecating war, I could take no part in an invasion of the Southern States. I went directly from the interview with Mr. Blair to the office of General Scott; told him of the proposition that had been made to me, and my decision. Upon reflection after returning to my home, I concluded that I ought no longer to retain the commission I held in the United States Army, and on the second morning thereafter I forwarded my resignation to General Scott. At the time, I hoped that peace would have been preserved; that some way would have been found to save the country from the calamities of war; and I then had no other intention than to pass the remainder of my life as a private citizen. Two days afterward, upon the invitation of the Governor of Virginia, I repaired to Richmond; found that the Convention then in session had passed the ordinance withdrawing the State from the Union; and accepted the commission of commander of its forces, which was tendered me.

“These are the ample facts of the case, and they show that Mr. Cameron has been misinformed.

“I am with great respect,

“Your obedient servant,

“R. E. Lee.”

My father reached Richmond April 22, 1861. The next day he was introduced to the Virginia Convention, and offered by them the command of the military forces of his State. In his reply to Mr. John Janney, the President, who spoke for the Convention, he said:

“Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Convention: Deeply impressed with the solemnity of the occasion on which I appear before you, and profoundly grateful for the honour conferred upon me, I accept the position your partiality has assigned me, though I would greatly have preferred your choice should have fallen on one more capable.

“Trusting to Almighty God, an approving conscience, and the aid of my fellow citizens, I will devote myself to the defense and service of my native State, in whose behalf alone would I have ever drawn my

sword.”

On April 26th, from Richmond, he wrote to his wife:

“...I am very anxious about you. You have to move and make arrangements to go to some point of safety, which you must select. The Mount Vernon plate and pictures ought to be secured. Keep quiet while you remain and in your preparation. War is inevitable, and there is no telling when it will burst around you. Virginia, yesterday, I understand, joined the Confederate States. What policy they may adopt I cannot conjecture. May God bless and preserve you, and have mercy upon all our people, is the constant prayer of your affectionate husband,

“R. E. Lee.”

On April 30th:

“On going to my room last night I found my trunk and sword there, and opening them this morning discovered the package of letters and was very glad to learn you were all well and as yet peaceful. I fear the latter state will not continue long.... I think therefore you had better prepare all things for removal, that is, the plate, pictures, etc., and be prepared at any moment. Where to go is the difficulty. When the war commences no place will be exempt, in my opinion, and indeed all the avenues into the State will be the scenes of military operations.

“There is no prospect or intention of the Government to propose a truce. Do not be deceived by it.... May God preserve you all and bring peace to our distracted country.”

Again to my mother at Arlington:

“Richmond, May 2, 1861.

“My dear Mary: I received last night your letter of the 1st, with contents. It gave me great pleasure to learn that you are all well and in peace. You know how pleased I should be to have you and my dear daughters with me. That I fear can not be. There is no place that I can expect to be but in the field, and there is no rest for me to look to. but I want you to be in a place of safety.... We have only to be resigned to God’s will and pleasure, and do all we can for our protection.... I have just received Custis’s letter of the 30th, inclosing the acceptance of my resignation. It is stated that it will take effect April 25th. I resigned on the 20th, and wished it to take effect that day. I cannot consent to its running

on further, and he must receive no pay, if they tender it, beyond that day, but return the whole, if need be....”

From another letter to my mother, dated May 8th:

“...I grieve at the necessity that drives you from your home. I can appreciate your feelings on the occasion, and pray that you may receive comfort and strength in the difficulties that surround you. When I reflect upon the calamity impending over the country, my own sorrows sink into insignificance.... Be content and resigned to God’s will. I shall be able to write seldom. Write to me, as you letters will be my greatest comfort. I send a check for \$500; it is all I have in bank. Pay the children’s school expenses....”

To my mother, still at Arlington:

“Richmond, May 11, 1861.

“I have received your letter of the 9th from Arlington. I had supposed you were at Ravensworth.... I am glad to hear that you are at peace, and enjoying the sweet weather and beautiful flowers. You had better complete your arrangements and retire further from the scene of war. It may burst upon you at any time. It is sad to think of the devastation, if not ruin, it may bring upon a spot so endeared to us. But God’s will be done. We must be resigned. May He guard and keep you all, is my constant prayer.”

All this time my father was very hard at work organising and equipping the volunteers who were pouring into Richmond from the Southern States, but he was in constant correspondence with my mother, helping her all he could in her arrangements for leaving her home. His letters show that he thought of everything, even the least, and he gave the most particular directions about his family, their effects, the servants, the horses, the farm, pictures, plate, and furniture. Being called to Norfolk suddenly, before going he wrote to my mother:

“Richmond, May 16, 1861.

“My Dear Mary: I am called down to Norfolk and leave this afternoon. I expect to return Friday, but may be delayed. I write to advise you of my absence, in case you should not receive answers to any letters that may arrive. I have not heard from you since I last wrote; nor have I anything to relate. I heard from my dear little Rob, who had an attack of chills and fever. He hoped to escape the next paroxysm.... I witnessed the opening of the convention [The Episcopal Convention of the Diocese of Virginia] yesterday, and

heard the good Bishop's [Bishop Meade, of Virginia] sermon, being the 50th anniversary of his ministry. It was a most impressive scene, and more than once I felt the tears coming down my cheek. It was from the text, 'and Pharoh said unto Jacob, how old art thou?' It was full of humility and self-reproach. I saw Mr. Walker, Bishop Johns, Bishop Atkinson, etc. I have not been able to attend any other services, and presume the session will not be prolonged. I suppose it may be considered a small attendance. Should Custis arrive during my absence, I will leave word for him to take my room at the Spotswood till my return. Smith [His brother, S. S. Lee, C. S. N.] is well and enjoys a ride in the afternoon with Mrs. Stannard. The charming women, you know, always find him out. Give much love to Cousin Anna, Nannie, and dear daughters. When Rob leaves the University take him with you.

"Truly and affectionately, R. E. Lee."

By this time my mother and all the family had left Arlington. My brother, Custis, had joined my father in Richmond, the girls had gone to Fauquier county, to visit relatives, and my mother to Ravensworth, about ten miles from Arlington towards Fairfax Court House, where her aunt, Mrs. A. M. Fitzhugh, lived. Always considerate of the happiness and comfort of others, my father feared that his wife's presence at Ravensworth might possibly bring annoyance to "Cousin Anna," as he called our aunt, and he wrote to my mother, urging her not to remain there. He sympathised with her in having to leave her home, which she never saw again.

"Richmond, May 25, 1861.

"I have been trying, dearest Mary, ever since the receipt of your letter by Custis, to write to you. I sympathise deeply in your feelings at leaving your dear home. I have experienced them myself, and they are constantly revived. I fear we have not been grateful enough for the happiness there within our reach, and our Heavenly Father has found it necessary to deprive us of what He has given us. I acknowledge my ingratitude, my transgressions, and my unworthiness, and submit with resignation to what he thinks proper to inflict upon me. We must trust all then to him, and I do not think it prudent or right for you to return there, while the United States troops occupy that country. I have gone over all this ground before, and have just written Cousin Anna on the subject.

"While writing, I received a telegram from Cousin John Goldsborough [a cousin of Mrs. Fitzhugh], urging your departure 'South.' I suppose he is impressed with the risk of your present position, and in addition

to the possibility, or probability, of personal annoyance to yourself, I fear your presence may provoke annoyance in Cousin Anna. But unless Cousin Anna goes with you, I shall be distressed about her being there alone. If the girls went to 'Kinloch' or 'Eastern View,' you and Cousin Anna might take care of yourselves, because you could get in the carriage and go off in an emergency. But I really am afraid that you may prove more harm than comfort to her. Mr. Wm. C. Rives has just been in to say that if you and Cousin Anna will go to his house, he will be very glad for you to stay as long as you please. That his son has a commodious house just opposite his, unoccupied, partially furnished; that you could, if you prefer, take that, bring up servants and what you desire, and remain there as independent as at home.... I must now leave the matter to you, and pray that God may guard you. I have no time for more. I know and feel the discomfort of your position, but it cannot be helped, and we must bear our trials like Christians.... If you and Cousin Anna choose to come here, you know how happy we shall be to see you. I shall take the field as soon now as I can....

"Ever yours truly and devotedly,
"R. E. Lee"

Three days later he was at Manassas, only a short distance from Ravensworth, and he sent her this short note:

"Manassas, May 28, 1861.

"I reached here, dearest Mary, this afternoon. I am very much occupied in examining matters, and have to go out to look over the ground. Cousin John tempts me strongly to go down, but I never visit for many reasons. If for no other, to prevent compromising the house, for my visit would certainly be known.

"I have written to you fully and to Cousin Anna. I am decidedly of the opinion that it would be better for you to leave, on your account and Cousin Anna's. My only objection is the leaving of Cousin Anna alone, if she will not go with you. If you prefer Richmond, go with Nannie. Otherwise, go to the upper country, as John indicates. I fear I cannot be with you anywhere. I do not think Richmond will be permanent.

"Truly, R."

I may as well say here, that "Cousin Anna" never did leave "Ravensworth" during the war. She remained there, with only a few faithful servants, and managed to escape any serious molestation. "Nannie" was Mrs.

S. S. Lee, who shortly after this time went to Richmond.

On May 25th, my father was transferred, with all the Virginia troops, to the Confederate States Army. He ceased to be a Major-General, and became a Brigadier. No higher rank having been created as yet in the Confederate service. Later, when the rank was created, he was made a full general.

By the end of May, to quote from General Long,

“Lee had organised, equipped, and sent to the field more than thirty thousand men, and various regiments were in a forward state of preparation.”

When the Confederate government moved from Montgomery to Richmond, and President Davis took charge of all military movements, my father was kept near him as his constant and trusted adviser. His experience as an engineer was of great service to the young Confederacy, and he was called upon often for advice for the location of batteries and troops on our different defensive lines. In a letter to my mother he speaks of one of these trips to the waters east of Richmond.

“Richmond, June 9, 1861.

“...I have just returned from a visit to the batteries and troops on James and York rivers, etc., where I was some days. I called a few hours at the White House. Saw Charlotte and Annie. Fitzhugh was away, but got out of the cars as I got in. Our little boy looked very sweet and seemed glad to kiss me good-bye. Charlotte said she was going to prepare to leave for the summer, but had not determined where to go. I could only see some of the servants about the house and the stables. They were all well.... You may be aware that the Confederate Government is established here. Yesterday I turned over to it the command of the military and naval forces of the State, in accordance with the proclamation of the Government and the agreement between the State and the Confederate States. I do not know what my position will be. I should like to retire to private life, if I could be with you and the children, but if I can be of any service to the State or her cause I must continue. Mr. Davis and all his Cabinet are here.... Good-bye. Give much love to kind friends. May God guard and bless you, them, and our suffering country, and enable me to perform my duty. I think of you constantly. Write me what you will do. Direct here.

“Always yours,

“R. E. Lee.”

To my mother, who was now in Fauquier County, staying at “Kinloch,” Mr. Edward Turner’s home, he writes on June 24th, from Richmond:

“...Your future arrangements are the source of much anxiety to me. No one can say what is in the future, nor is it wise to anticipate evil. But it is well to prepare for what may reasonably happen and be provided for the worst. There is no saying when you can return to your home or what may be its condition when you do return. What, then, can you do in the meantime? To remain with friends may be incumbent, and where can you go?... My movements are very uncertain, and I wish to take the field as soon as certain arrangements can be made. I may go at any moment, and to any point where it may be necessary.... Many of our old friends are dropping in. E. P. Alexander is here, Jimmy Hill, Alston, Jenifer, etc., and I hear that my old colonel, A. S. Johnston, is crossing the plains from California....

“As ever, R. E. Lee.”

I again quote from a letter to my mother, dated Richmond, July 12, 1861:

“...I am very anxious to get into the field, but am detained by matters beyond my control. I have never heard of the appointment, to which you allude, of Commander-in-Chief of the Confederate States Army, nor have I any expectation or wish for it. President Davis holds that position. Since the transfer of the military operations in Virginia to the authorities of the Confederate States, I have only occupied the position of a general in that service, with the duties devolved on me by the President. I have been labouring to prepare and get into the field the Virginia troops, and to strengthen, by those from the other States, the threatened commands of Johnston, Beauregard, Huger, Garnett, etc. Where I shall go I do not know, as that will depend upon President Davis. As usual in getting through with a thing, I have broken down a little and had to take my bed last evening, but am at my office this morning and hope will soon be right again.... My young friend Mr. Vest has just returned from a search in the city for ‘Dixie,’ and says he has visited every place in Richmond without finding it. I suppose it is exhausted. Always yours,

“R. E. Lee.”

“The booksellers say ‘Dixie’ is not to be had in Virginia. R. E. L.”

On July 21st occurred the battle of Manassas. In a letter to my mother written on the 27th, my father says:

“...That indeed was a glorious victory and has lightened the pressure upon our front amazingly. Do not grieve for the brave dead. Sorrow for those they left behind--friends, relatives, and families. The former are at rest. The latter must suffer. The battle will be repeated there in greater force. I hope God will again smile on us and strengthen our hearts and arms. I wished to partake in the former struggle, and am mortified at my absence, but the President thought it more important I should be here. I could not have done as well as has been done, but I could have helped, and taken part in the struggle for my home and neighbourhood. So the work is done I care not by whom it is done. I leave to-morrow for the Northwest Army. I wished to go before, as I wrote you, and was all prepared, but the indications were so evident of the coming battle, and in the uncertainty of the result, the President forbade my departure. Now it is necessary and he consents. I cannot say for how long, but will write you.... I inclose you a letter from Markie [Miss Martha Custis Williams--second cousin of my mother, afterward Mrs. Admiral Carter, U.S.N.]. Write to her if you can and thank her for her letter to me. I have not time. My whole time is occupied, and all my thoughts and strength are given to the cause to which my life, be it long or short, will be devoted. Tell her not to mind the reports she sees in the papers. They are made to injure and occasion distrust. Those that know me will not believe them. Those that do not will not care for them. I laugh at them. Give love to all, and for yourself accept the constant prayers and love of truly yours,

“R. E. Lee.”

It was thought best at this time to send General Lee to take command of military operations in West Virginia. The ordinary difficulties of a campaign in this country of mountains and bad roads were greatly increased by incessant rains, sickness of all kinds amongst the new troops, and the hostility of many of the inhabitants of the Southern cause. My father's letters, which I will give here, tell of his trials and troubles, and describe at the same time the beauty of the scenery and some of the military movements.

About August 1st he started for his new command, and he writes to my mother on his arrival at Huntersville, Pocahontas County, now West Virginia:

“Huntersville, August 4, 1861.

“I reached here yesterday, dearest Mary, to visit this portion of the army. The day after my arrival at Staunton, I set off for Monterey, where the army of General Garnett's command is stationed. Two regiments

and a field-battery occupy the Alleghany Mountains in advance, about thirty miles, and this division guards the road to Staunton. The division here guards the road leading to the Warm Springs to Milboro and Covington. Two regiments are advanced about twenty-eight miles to Middle Mountain. Fitzhugh [Major W. H. F. Lee--General Lee's second son] with his squadron is between that point and this. I have not seen him. I understand he is well. South of here again is another column of our enemies, making their way up the Kanawha Valley, and, from General Wise's report, are not far from Lewisburgh. Their object seems to be to get possession of the Virginia Central Railroad and the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad. By the first they can approach Richmond; by the last interrupt our reinforcements from the South. The points from which we can be attacked are numerous, and their means are unlimited. So we must always be on the alert. My uneasiness on these points brought me out here. It is so difficult to get our people, unaccustomed to the necessities of war, to comprehend and promptly execute the measures required for the occasion. General Jackson of Georgia commands on the Monterey line, General Loring on this line, and General Wise, supported by General Floyd, on the Kanawha line. The soldiers everywhere are sick. The measles are prevalent throughout the whole army, and you know that disease leaves unpleasant results, attacks on the lungs, typhoid, etc., especially in camp, where accommodations for the sick are poor. I travelled from Staunton on horseback. A part of the road, as far as Buffalo Gap, I passed over in the summer of 1840, on my return to St. Louis, after bringing you home. If any one had then told me that the next time I travelled that road would have been on my present errand, I should have supposed him insane. I enjoyed the mountains, as I rode along. The views are magnificent--the valleys so beautiful, the scenery so peaceful. What a glorious world Almighty God has given us. How thankless and ungrateful we are, and how we labour to mar his gifts. I hope you received my letters from Richmond. Give love to daughter and Mildred. I did not see Rob as I passed through Charlottesville. He was at the University and I could not stop."

A few days later there is another letter:

"Camp at Valley Mountain, August 9, 1861.

"I have been here, dear Mary, three days, coming from Monterey to Huntersville and thence here. We are on the dividing ridge looking north down the Tygart's river valley, whose waters flow into the Monongahela and South towards the Elk River and Greenbriar, flowing into the Kanawha. In the valley north of us lie Huttonsville and Beverly, occupied by our invaders, and the Rich Mountains west, the scene of our former disaster, and the Cheat Mountains east, their present stronghold, are in full view.

“The mountains are beautiful, fertile to the tops, covered with the richest sward of bluegrass and white clover, the enclosed fields waving with the natural growth of timothy. The inhabitants are few and population sparse. This is a magnificent grazing country, and all it needs is labour to clear the mountain-sides of its great growth of timber. There surely is no lack of moisture at this time. It has rained, I believe, some portion of every day since I left Staunton. Now it is pouring, and the wind, having veered around to every point of the compass, has settled down to the northeast. What that portends in these regions I do not know. Colonel Washington [John Augustin Washington, great-nephew of General Washington, and Mt. Vernon’s last owner bearing that name], Captain Taylor, and myself are in one tent, which as yet protects us. I have enjoyed the company of Fitzhugh since I have been here. He is very well and very active, and as yet the war has not reduced him much. He dined with me yesterday and preserves his fine appetite. To-day he is out reconnoitering and has the full benefit of this rain. I fear he is without his overcoat, as I do not recollect seeing it on his saddle. I told you he had been promoted to a major in cavalry, and is the commanding cavalry officer on this line at present. He is as sanguine, cheerful, and hearty as ever. I sent him some corn-meal this morning and he sent me some butter--a mutual interchange of good things. There are but few of your acquaintances in this army. I find here in the ranks of one company Henry Tiffany. The company is composed principally of Baltimoreans--George Lemmon and Douglas Mercer are in it. It is a very fine company, well drilled and well instructed. I find that our friend, J. J. Reynolds, of West Point memory, is in command of the troops immediately in front of us. He is a brigadier-general. You may recollect him as the Assistant Professor of Philosophy, and lived in the cottage beyond the west gate, with his little, pale-faced wife, a great friend of Lawrence and Markie. He resigned on being relieved from West Point, and was made professor of some college in the West. Fitzhugh was the bearer of a flag the other day, and he recognised him. He was very polite and made inquiries of us all. I am told they feel very safe and are very confident of success. Their numbers are said to be large, ranging from 12,000 to 30,000, but it is impossible for me to get correct information either as to their strength or position. Our citizens beyond this are all on their side. Our movements seem to be rapidly communicated to them, while theirs come to us slowly and indistinctly. I have two regiments here, with others coming up. I think we shall shut up this road to the Central Railroad which they strongly threaten. Our supplies come up slowly. We have plenty of beef and can get some bread. I hope you are well and are content. I have heard nothing of you or the children since I left Richmond. You must write there.... The men are suffering from the measles, etc.,

as elsewhere, but are cheerful and light-hearted. The atmosphere, when it is not raining, is delightful. You must give much love to daughter and 'Life' [Pet names for his two daughters, Mary and Mildred]. I want to see you all very much, but I know not when that can be. May God guard and protect you all. In Him alone is our hope. Remember me to Ned [M. Edward Carter Turner, of Kinloch, my father's cousin] and all at 'Kinloch' and Avenel [The house of the Berbeleys, in Fauquier County]. Send word to Miss Lou Washington [Eldest daughter of John Augustin Washington] that her father is sitting on his blanket sewing the strap on his haversack. I think she out to be here to do it.

Always yours,

"R. E. Lee."

In a letter to his two daughters who were in Richmond, he writes:

"Valley Mountain, August 29, 1861.

"My Precious Daughters: I have just received your letters of the 24th and am rejoiced to hear that you are well and enjoying the company of your friends.... It rains here all the time, literally. There has not been sunshine enough since my arrival to dry my clothes. Perry [his servant--had been in the dining-room at Arlington] is my washerman, and socks and towels suffer. But the worst of the rain is that the ground has become so saturated with water that the constant travel on the roads has made them almost impassable, so that I cannot get up sufficient supplies for the troops to move. It is raining now. Has been all day, last night, day before, and day before that, etc., etc. But we must be patient. It is quite cool, too. I have on all my winter clothes and am writing in my overcoat. All the clouds seem to concentrate over this ridge of mountains, and by whatever wind they are driven, give us rain. The mountains are magnificent. The sugar-maples are beginning to turn already, and the grass is luxuriant.

"'Richmond' [His horse] has not been accustomed to such fare or such treatment. But he gets along tolerably, complains some, and has not much superfluous flesh. There has been much sickness among the men--measles, etc.--and the weather has been unfavourable. I hope their attacks are nearly over, and that they will come out with the sun. Our party has kept well.... Although we may be too weak to break through the lines, I feel well satisfied that the enemy cannot at present reach Richmond by either of these routes, leading to Staunton, Milborough or Covington. He must find some other way.... God Bless you, my children, and preserve you from all harm is the constant prayer of

“Your devoted father,

“R. E. Lee.”

On account of rheumatism, my mother was anxious to go to the Hot Springs in Bath County. She was now staying at “Audley,” Clarke County, Virginia, with Mrs. Lorenzo Lewis, who had just sent her six sons into the army. Bath County was not very far from the seat of war in western Virginia, and my father was asked as to the safety of the Hot Springs from occupation by the enemy. He writes as follows to my mother:

“Valley Mountain, September 1, 1861.

“I have received, dearest Mary, your letter of August 18th from Audley, and am very glad to get news of your whereabouts.... I am very glad you are enabled to see so many of your friends. I hope you have found all well in your tour, and am very glad that our cousin Esther bears the separation from all her sons so bravely. I have no doubt they will do good service in our Southern cause, and wish they could be placed according to their fancies.... I fear you have postponed your visit to the Hot too late. It must be quite cold there now, judging from the temperature here, and it has been raining in these mountains since July 24th.... I see Fitzhugh quite often, though he is encamped four miles from me. He is very well and not at all harmed by the campaign.

“We have a great deal of sickness among the soldiers, and now those on the sick-list would form an army. The measles is still among them, though I hope it is dying out. But it is a disease which though light in childhood is severe in manhood, and prepares the system for other attacks. The constant cold rains, with no shelter but tents, have aggravated it. All these drawbacks, with impassable roads, have paralysed our efforts. Still I think you will be safe at the Hot, for the present. We are right up to the enemy on three lines, and in the Kanawha he has been pushed beyond the Gauley.... My poor little Rob I never hear from scarcely. He is busy, I suppose, and knows not where to direct....

“With much affection,

“R. E. Lee.”

From the same camp, to my mother, on September 9th:

“...I hope from the tone of your letter that you feel better, and wish I could see you and be with you. I trust we may meet this fall

somewhere, if only for a little time. I have written to Robert telling him if, after considering what I have previously said to him on the subject of his joining the company he desires under Major Ross, he still thinks it best for him to do so, I will not withhold my consent. It seems he will be eighteen; I thought seventeen. I am unable to judge for him and he must decide for himself. In reply to a recent letter from him to me on the same subject, I said to him all I could. I pray God to bring him to the right conclusion.... For military news, I must refer you to the papers. You will see there more than ever occurs, and what does occur the relation must be taken with some allowance. Do not believe anything you see about me. There has been no battle, only skirmishing with the outposts, and nothing done of any moment. The weather is still unfavourable to us. The roads, or rather tracks of mud, are almost impassable and the number of sick large....

“Truly and devotedly yours,

“R. E. Lee.”

My mother was at the Hot Springs--I had taken her there and was with her. I don't now remember why, but it was decided that I should return to the University of Virginia, which opened October 1st, and continue my course there. While at the Springs my mother received this letter from my father:

“Valley Mount, September 17, 1861.

“I received, dear Mary, your letter of the 5th by Beverly Turner [A son of Mr. Edward Turner, of ‘Kinloch’], who is a nice young soldier. I am pained to see find young men like him, of education and standing, from all the old and respectable families in the State, serving in the ranks. I hope in time they will receive their reward. I met him as I was returning from an expedition to the enemy's works, which I had hoped to have surprised on the morning of the 12th, both at Cheat Mountain and on Valley River. All the attacking parties with great labour had reached their destination, over mountains considered impassable to bodies of troops, notwithstanding a heavy storm that set in the day before and raged all night, in which they had to stand up till daylight. Their arms were then unserviceable, and they in poor condition for a fierce assault against artillery and superior numbers. After waiting till 10 o'clock for the assault on Cheat Mountain, which did not take place, and which was to have been the signal for the rest, they were withdrawn, and, after waiting three days in front of the enemy, hoping he would come out of his trenches, we returned to our position at this place. I can not tell you my

regret and mortification at the untoward events that caused the failure of the plan. I had taken every precaution to ensure success and counted on it. but the Ruler of the Universe willed otherwise and sent a storm to disconcert a well-laid plan, and to destroy my hopes. We are no worse off now than before, except the disclosure of our plan, against which they will guard. We met with one heavy loss which grieves me deeply: Colonel Washington accompanied Fitzhugh on a reconnoitering expedition, and I fear they were carried away by their zeal and approached the enemy's pickets. The first they knew was a volley from a concealed party within a few yards of them. Their balls passed through the Colonel's body, then struck Fitzhugh's horse, and the horse of one of the men was killed. Fitzhugh mounted the Colonel's horse and brought him off. I am much grieved. He was always anxious to go on these expeditions. This was the first day I assented. Since I had been thrown into such intimate relations with him, I had learned to appreciate him very highly. Morning and evening have I seen him on his knees praying to his Maker.

“The righteous perisheth and no man layeth it to heart, and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.’ May God have mercy on us all! I suppose you are at the Hot Springs and will direct to you there. Our poor sick, I know, suffer much. They bring it on themselves by not doing what they are told. They are worse than children, for the latter can be forced....

“Truly yours,

“R. E. Lee.”

On the same day he wrote the Governor of Virginia:

“Valley Mountain, September 17, 1861.

“My Dear Governor: I received your very kind note of the 5th instant, just as I was about to accompany General Loring's command on an expedition to the enemy's works in front, or I would have before thanked you for the interest you take in my welfare, and your too flattering expressions of my ability. Indeed, you overrate me much, and I feel humbled when I weigh myself by your standard. I am, however, very grateful for your confidence, and I can answer for my sincerity in the earnest endeavour I make to advance the cause I have so much at heart, though conscious of the slow progress I make. I was very sanguine of taking the enemy's works on last Thursday morning. I had considered the subject well. With great effort the troops intended for the surprise had reached their destination, having traversed twenty

miles of steep, rugged mountain paths; and the last day through a terrible storm, which lasted all night, and in which they had to stand drenched to the skin in cold rain. Still, their spirits were good. When morning broke, I could see the enemy's tents on Valley River, at the point on the Huttonsville road just below me. It was a tempting sight. We waited for the attack on Cheat Mountain, which was to be the signal. Till 10 A. M. the men were cleaning their unserviceable arms. But the signal did not come. All chance for a surprise was gone. The provisions of the men had been destroyed the preceding day by the storm. They had nothing to eat that morning, could not hold out another day, and were obliged to be withdrawn. The party sent to Cheat Mountain to take that in rear had also to be withdrawn. The attack to come off the east side failed from the difficulties in the way; the opportunity was lost, and our plan discovered. It is a grievous disappointment to me, I assure you. but for the rain-storm, I have no doubt it would have succeeded. This, Governor, is for your own eye. Please do not speak of it; we must try again. Our greatest loss is the death of my dear friend, Colonel Washington. He and my son were reconnoitering the front of the enemy. They came unawares upon a concealed party, who fired upon them within twenty yards, and the Colonel fell pierced by three balls. My son's horse received three shots, but he escaped on the Colonel's horse. His zeal for the cause to which he had devoted himself carried him, I fear, too far. We took some seventy prisoners, and killed some twenty-five or thirty of the enemy. Our loss was small besides what I have mentioned. Our greatest difficulty is the roads. It has been raining in these mountains about six weeks. It is impossible to get along. It is that which has paralysed all our efforts. With sincere thanks for your good wishes,

"I am very truly yours,

"R. E. Lee.

"His Excellency, Governor John Letcher."

Chapter III

Letters to Wife and Daughters

From Camp on Sewell's Mountain--Quotation from Colonel Taylor's book--
From Professor Wm. P. Trent--From Mr. Davis's Memorial Address--Defense

of Southern ports--Christmas, 1861--The General visits his father's grave--Commands, under the President, all the armies of the Confederate States

The season being too far advanced to attempt any further movements away from our base of supplies, and the same reasons preventing any advance of the Federal forces, the campaign in this part of Virginia ended for the winter. In the Kanawha Valley, however, the enemy had been and were quite active. Large reinforcements under General Rosecrans were sent there to assist General Cox, the officer in command at that point. General Loring, leaving a sufficient force to watch the enemy at Cheat Mountain, moved the rest of his army to join the commands of Generals Floyd and Wise, who were opposing the advance of Cox. General Lee, about September 20th, reached General Floyd's camp, and immediately proceeded to arrange the lines of defense. Shortly after his arrival there he wrote to my mother at the Hot Springs:

“Camp on Sewell's Mountain,

“September 26, 1881.

“I have just received, dear Mary, your letter of the 17th and 19th instants, with one from Robert. I have but little time for writing to-night, and will, therefore, write to you.... Having now disposed of business matters, I will say how glad I am to hear from you, and to learn that you have reached the Hot in safety, with daughter and Rob. I pray that its healing waters may benefit you all. I am glad to hear of Charlotte and the girls, and hope all will go well with them. I infer you received my letter before leaving Valley Mountain, though you did not direct your letter ‘via Lewisburg, Greenbrier County,’ and hence its delay. I told you of the death of Colonel Washington. I grieve for his loss, though trust him to the mercy of our Heavenly Father. May He have mercy on us all.

“It is raining heavily. The men are all exposed on the mountain, with the enemy opposite to us. We are without tents, and for two nights I have lain buttoned up in my overcoat. To-day my tent came up and I am in it. Yet I fear I shall not sleep for thinking of the poor men. I wrote about socks for myself. I have no doubt the yarn ones you mention will be very acceptable to the men here or elsewhere. If you can send them here, I will distribute them to the most needy. Tell Rob I could not write to him for want of time. My heart is always with you and my children. May God guard and bless you all is the constant prayer of

“Your devoted husband,

“R. E. Lee.”

To my mother, still at the Hot Springs:

“Sewell’s Mountain, October 7, 1861.

“I received, dear Mary, your letter by Doctor Quintard, with the cotton socks. Both were very acceptable, though the latter I have not yet tried. At the time of their reception the enemy was threatening an attack, which was continued till Saturday night, when under cover of darkness we suddenly withdrew. Your letter of the 2d, with the yarn socks, four pairs, was handed to me when I was preparing to follow, and I could not at the time attend to either. But I have since, and as I found Perry in desperate need, I bestowed a couple of pairs on him, as a present from you. the others I have put in my trunk and suppose they will fall to the lot of Meredith [His cook--a servant from the White House], into the state of whose hose I have not yet inquired. Should any sick man require them first, he shall have them, but Meredith will have no one near to supply him but me, and will naturally expect that attention. I hope, dear Mary, you and daughter, as well as poor little Rob, have derived some benefit from the sanitary baths of the Hot. What does daughter intend to do during the winter? And, indeed, what do you? It is time you were determining. There is no prospect of your returning to Arlington. I think you had better select some comfortable place in the Carolinas or Georgia, and all board together. If Mildred goes to school at Raleigh, why not go there? It is a good opportunity to try a warmer climate for your rheumatism. If I thought our enemies would not make a vigorous move against Richmond, I would recommend to rent a house there. But under these circumstances I would not feel as if you were permanently located if there. I am ignorant where I shall be. In the field somewhere, I suspect, so I have little hope of being with you, though I hope to be able to see you.... I heard from Fitzhugh the other day. He is well, though his command is greatly reduced by sickness. I wished much to bring him with me; but there is too much cavalry on this line now, and I am dismounting them. I could not, therefore, order more. The weather is almost as bad here as in the mountains I left. There was a drenching rain yesterday, and as I had left my overcoat in camp I was thoroughly wet from head to foot. It has been raining ever since and is now coming down with a will. But I have my clothes out on the bushes and they will be well washed.

“The force of the enemy, by a few prisoners captured yesterday and civilians on the road, is put down from 17,000 to 20,000. Some went

as high as 22,000. General Floyd thinks 18,000. I do not think it exceeds 9,000 or 10,000, though it exceeds ours. I wish he had attacked us, as I believe he would have been repulsed with great loss. His plan was to attack us at all points at the same time. The rumbling of his wheels, etc., was heard by our pickets, but as that was customary at night in the moving and placing of his cannon, the officer of the day to whom it was reported paid no particular attention to it, supposing it to be a preparation for attack in the morning. When day appeared, the bird had flown, and the misfortune was that the reduced condition of our horses for want of provender, exposure to cold rains in these mountains, and want of provisions for the men prevented the vigorous pursuit and following up that was proper. We can only get up provisions from day to day--which paralyses our operations.

"I am sorry, as you say, that the movements of the armies cannot keep pace with the expectations of the editors of papers. I know they can regulate matters satisfactorily to themselves on paper. I wish they could do so in the field. No one wishes them more success than I do and would be happy to see them have full swing. I hope something will be done to please them. Give much love to the children and everybody, and believe me.

"Always yours,

"R. E. Lee."

Colonel Taylor, in his "Four Years with General Lee," says:

"We had now reached the latter days of October. The lateness of the season and the condition of the roads precluded the idea of earnest, aggressive operations, and the campaign in western Virginia was virtually concluded.

"Judged from its results, it must be confessed that this series of operations was a failure. At its conclusion, a large portion of the State was in possession of the Federals, including the rich valleys of the Ohio and Kanawha rivers, and so remained until the close of the war. For this, however, General Lee cannot reasonably be held accountable. Disaster had befallen the Confederate arms, and the worst had been accomplished before he had reached the theatre of operations; the Alleghanies there constituted the dividing line between the hostile forces, and in this network of mountains, sterile and rendered absolutely impracticable by a prolonged season of rain, Nature had provided an insurmountable barrier to operations in this transmontane country.... It was doubtless because of similar embarrassments that the Federal general retired, in the face of inferior numbers, to a

point near his base of supplies.”

Professor William P. Trent, in his “Robert E. Lee,” after describing briefly the movements of the contending armies, writes:

“There was, then, nothing to do but to acknowledge the campaign a failure. The Confederate Government withdrew its troops and sent them elsewhere. Lee, whom the press abused and even former friends began to regard as overrated, was assigned to command the Department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida; and her western counties were lost to the Old Dominion forever. It must have been a crushing blow to Lee at the time, but he bore it uncomplainingly.... And when all is said, no commander, however great, can succeed against bad roads, bad weather, sickness of troops, lack of judgement and harmony among subordinates, and a strong, alert enemy. Yet this is what Lee was expected to do.”

Mr. Davis, in an address before a memorial meeting at Richmond in 1870, speaking of General Lee in this campaign, said:

“He came back, carrying the heavy weight of defeat, and unappreciated by the people whom he served, for they could not know, as I knew, that, if his plans and orders had been carried out, the result would have been victory rather than retreat. You did not know it; for I should not have known it had he not breathed it in my ear only at my earnest request, and begging that nothing be said about it. The clamour which then arose followed him when he went to South Carolina, so that it became necessary on his departure to write a letter to the Governor of that State, telling him what manner of man he was. Yet, through all this, with a magnanimity rarely equalled, he stood in silence, without defending himself or allowing others to defend him, for he was unwilling to offend any one who was wearing a sword and striking blows for the Confederacy.”

After returning to Richmond, my father resumed his position as advisor and counsellor to Mr. Davis. From there he writes to my mother, who had left the Hot Springs and gone on to “Shirley,” on James River:

“Richmond, November 5, 1861.

“My Dear Mary: I received last night your letter of the 2d, and would have answered it at once, but was detained with the Secretary till after 11 P. M. I fear now I may miss the mail. Saturday evening I tried to get down to you to spend Sunday, but could find no government boat going down, and the passenger boats all go in the morning. I then went to the stable and got out my horse, but it was near night then and I was ignorant both of the road and distance and I gave it

up. I was obliged to be here Monday, and as it would have consumed all Sunday to go and come, I have remained for better times. The President said I could not go to-day, so I must see what can be done to-morrow. I will come, however, wherever you are, either Shirley or the White House, as soon as possible, and if not sooner, Saturday at all events.... I am, as ever, Yours,

“R. E. Lee.”

The day after this letter was written, my father was ordered to South Carolina for the purpose of directing and supervising the construction of a line of defense along the southern coast. I give here several letters to members of his family which tell of his duties and manner of life:

“Savannah, November 18, 1861.

“My Dear Mary: This is the first moment I have had to write to you, and now am waiting the call to breakfast, on my way to Brunswick, Fernandina, etc. This is my second visit to Savannah. Night before last, I returned to Coosawhatchie, South Carolina, from Charleston, where I have placed my headquarters, and last night came here, arriving after midnight. I received in Charleston your letter from Shirley. It was a grievous disappointment to me not to have seen you, but better times will come, I hope.... You probably have seen the operations of the enemy’s fleet. Since their first attack they have been quiescent apparently, confining themselves to Hilton Head, where they are apparently fortifying.

“I have no time for more. Love to all.

“Yours very affectionately and truly,

“R. E. Lee.”

“Charleston, November 15, 1861.

“My Precious Daughter: I have received your letter forwarded to Richmond by Mr. Powell, and I also got, while in the West, the letter sent by B. Turner. I can write but seldom, but your letters always give me great pleasure. I am glad you had such a pleasant visit to ‘Kinloch.’ I have passed a great many pleasant days there myself in my young days. Now you must labour at your books and gain knowledge and wisdom. Do not mind what Rob says. I have a beautiful white beard. It is much admired. At least, much remarked on. You know I have told you not to believe what the young men tell you. I was unable to see

your poor mother when in Richmond. Before I could get down I was sent off here. Another forlorn hope expedition. Worse than West Virginia.... I have much to do in this country. I have been to Savannah and have to go again. The enemy is quiet after his conquest of Port Royal Harbor and his whole fleet is lying there. May God guard and protect you, my dear child, prays your

“Affectionate father,

“R. E. Lee.”

The above letter was written to his youngest daughter Mildred, who was at school in Winchester, Virginia. Two of my sisters were in King George County, Virginia, at “Clydale,” the summer home of Dr. Richard Stuart, with whose family we had been a long time intimate. From there they had driven to “Stratford,” in Westmoreland County, about thirty miles distant, where my father was born. They had written him of this trip, and this is his reply:

“Savannah, November 22, 1861.

“My Darling Daughters: I have just received your joint letter of October 24th from ‘Clydale.’ It was very cheering to me, and the affection and sympathy you expressed were very grateful to my feelings. I wish indeed I could see you, be with you, and never again part from you. God only can give me that happiness. I pray for it night and day. But my prayers I know are not worthy to be heard. I received your former letter in western Virginia, but had no opportunity to reply to it. I enjoyed it, nevertheless. I am glad you do not wait to hear from me, as that would deprive me of the pleasure of hearing from you often. I am so pressed with business. I am much pleased at your description of Stratford and your visit. It is endeared to me by many recollections, and it has been always a great desire of my life to be able to purchase it. Now that we have no other home, and the one we so loved has been foully polluted, the desire is stronger with me than ever. The horse-chestnut you mention in the garden was planted by my mother. I am sorry the vault is so dilapidated. You did not mention the spring, one of the objects of my earliest recollections. I am very glad, my precious Agnes, that you have become so early a riser. It is a good habit, and in these times for mighty works advantage should be taken of every hour. I much regretted being obliged to come from Richmond without seeing your poor mother.... This is my second visit to Savannah. I have been down the coast to Amelia Island to examine the defenses. They are poor indeed, and I have laid off work enough to employ our people a month. I hope our enemy will be polite enough to wait for us. It is difficult to get

our people to realise their position.... Good-bye, my dear daughters.

“Your affectionate father,

“R. E. Lee.”

To his daughter Annie:

“Coosawhatchie, South Carolina, December 8, 1861.

“My Precious Annie: I have taken the only quiet time I have been able to find on this holy day to thank you for your letter of the 29th ulto. One of the miseries of war is that there is no Sabbath, and the current of work and strife has no cessation. How can we be pardoned for all our offenses! I am glad that you have joined your mamma again and that some of you are together at last. It would be a great happiness to me were you all at some quiet place, remote from the vicissitudes of war, where I could consider you safe. You must have had a pleasant time at ‘Clydale.’ I hope indeed that ‘Cedar Grove’ may be saved from the ruin and pillage that other places have received at the hands of our enemies, who are pursuing the same course here as they have practised elsewhere. Unfortunately, too, the numerous deep estuaries, all accessible to their ships, expose the multitude of islands to their predatory excursions, and what they leave is finished by the negroes whose masters have deserted their plantations, subject to visitations of the enemy. I am afraid Cousin Julia [Mrs. Richard Stuart] will not be able to defend her home if attacked by the vandals, for they have little respect for anybody, and if they catch the Doctor [Doctor Richard Stuart] they will certainly send him to Fort Warren or La Fayette. I fear, too, the Yankees will bear off their pretty daughters. I am very glad you visited ‘Chatham’ [the home of the Fitzhughs, where my grandmother Custis was born]. I was there many years ago, when it was the residence of Judge Coulter, and some of the avenues of poplar, so dear to your grandmama, still existed. I presume they have all gone now. The letter that you and Agnes wrote from ‘Clydale’ I replied to and sent to that place. You know I never have any news. I am trying to get a force to make headway on our defenses, but it comes in very slow. The people do not seem to realise that there is a war.

“It is very warm here, if that is news, and as an evidence I inclose some violets I plucked in the yard of a deserted house I occupy. I wish I could see you and give them in person.... Good-bye, my precious child. Give much love to everybody, and believe me,

“Your affectionate father,

“R. E. Lee.”

From the same place, on December 2d, he writes to my mother:

“I received last night, dear Mary, your letter of the 12th, and am delighted to learn that you are all well and so many of you are together. I am much pleased that Fitzhugh has an opportunity to be with you all and will not be so far removed from his home in his new field of action. I hope to see him at the head of a fine regiment and that he will be able to do good service in the cause of his country. If Mary and Rob get to you Christmas, you will have quite a family party, especially if Fitzhugh is not obliged to leave his home and sweet wife before that time. I shall think of you all on that holy day more intensely than usual, and shall pray to the great God of Heaven to shower His blessings upon you in this world, and to unite you all in His courts in the world to come. With a grateful heart I thank Him for His preservation thus far, and trust to His mercy and kindness for the future. Oh, that I were more worthy, more thankful for all He has done and continues to do for me! Perry and Meredith [his two coloured servants] send their respects to all....

“Truly and affectionately,

“R. E. Lee.”

From the same place, on Christmas Day, he writes to my mother:

“I cannot let this day of grateful rejoicing pass, dear Mary, without some communication with you. I am thankful for the many among the past that I have passed with you, and the remembrance of them fills me with pleasure. For those on which we have been separated we must not repine. Now we must be content with the many blessings we receive. If we can only become sensible of our transgressions, so as to be fully penitent and forgiven, that this heavy punishment under which we labour may with justice be removed from us and the whole nation, what a gracious consummation of all that we have endured it will be!

“I hope you had a pleasant visit to Richmond.... If you were to see this place, I think you would have it, too. I am here but little myself. The days I am not here I visit some point exposed to the enemy, and after our dinner at early candle-light, am engaged in writing till eleven or twelve o’clock at night.... As to our old home, if not destroyed, it will be difficult ever to be recognised. Even if the enemy had wished to preserve it, it would almost have been impossible. With the number of troops encamped around it, the change

of officers, etc., the want of fuel, shelter, etc., and all the dire necessities of war, it is vain to think of its being in a habitable condition. I fear, too, books, furniture, and the relics of Mount Vernon will be gone. It is better to make up our minds to a general loss. They cannot take away the remembrance of the spot, and the memories of those that to us rendered it sacred. That will remain to us as long as life will last, and that we can preserve. In the absence of a home, I wish I could purchase 'Stratford.' That is the only other place that I could go to, now accessible to us, that would inspire me with feelings of pleasure and local love. You and the girls could remain there in quiet. It is a poor place, but we could make enough cornbread and bacon for our support, and the girls could weave us clothes. I wonder if it is for sale and at how much. Ask Fitzhugh to try to find out, when he gets to Fredericksburg. You must not build your hopes on peace on account of the United States going into a war with England [on account of the Trent affair]. She will be very loath to do that, notwithstanding the bluster of the Northern papers. Her rulers are not entirely mad, and if they find England is in earnest, and that war or a restitution of their captives must be the consequence, they will adopt the latter. We must make up our minds to fight our battles and win our independence alone. No one will help us. We require no extraneous aid, if true to ourselves. But we must be patient. It is not a light achievement and cannot be accomplished at once.... I wrote a few days since, giving you all the news, and have now therefore nothing to relate. The enemy is still quiet and increasing in strength. We grow in size slowly but are working hard. I have had a day of labour instead of rest, and have written intervals to some of the children. I hope they are with you, and inclose my letters....

"Affectionately and truly,

"R. E. Lee."

In the next letter to my mother he describes a visit to the grave of his father at Dungeness, on Cumberland Island, Georgia. Dungeness was presented to General Nathaniel Green by the State of Georgia for services rendered her in the Revolution. General Henry Lee, returning from the West Indies, where he had been for some months on account of his health, landed there, and in a few days died, March 15, 1818. He was most kindly cared for by the daughter of his old commander, and was buried there in the garden of Dungeness. At the time of my father's visit the place belonged to a great-nephew of General Green, Mr. Nightingale.

"Coosawhatchie, South Carolina, January 18, 1862.

“On my return, day before yesterday, from Florida, dear Mary, I received your letter of the 1st inst. I am very glad to find that you had a pleasant family meeting Christmas, and that it was so large. I am truly grateful for all the mercies we enjoy, notwithstanding the miseries of war, and join heartily in the wish that the next year may find us at peace with all the world. I am delighted to hear that our little grandson [his first grandchild--son of my brother Fitzhugh. He died in 1863] is improving so fast and is becoming such a perfect gentleman. May his path be strewn with flowers and his life with happiness. I am very glad to hear also that his dear papa is promoted. It will be gratifying to him and increase, I hope, his means of usefulness. Robert wrote me he saw him on his way through Charlottesville with his squadron, and that he was well. While at Fernandina I went over to Cumberland Island and walked up to ‘Dungeness,’ the former residence of General Green. It was my first visit to the house, and I had the gratification at length of visiting my father’s grave. He died there, you may recollect, on his way from the West Indies, and was interred in one corner of the family cemetery. The spot is marked by a plain marble slab, with his name, age, and her daughter, Mrs. Shaw, and her husband. The place is at present owned by Mr. Nightingale, nephew of Mrs. Shaw, who married a daughter of Mr. James King. The family have moved into the interior of Georgia, leaving only a few servants and a white gardener on the place. The garden was beautiful, inclosed by the finest hedge I have ever seen. It was of the wild olive, which, in Mrs. Shaw’s lifetime, during my tour of duty in Savannah in early life, was so productive, had been destroyed by an insect that has proved fatal to the orange on the coast of Georgia and Florida. There was a fine grove of olives, from which, I learn, Mr. Nightingale procures oil. The garden was filled with roses and beautiful vines, the names of which I do not know. Among them was the tomato-vine in full bearing, with the ripe fruit on it. There has yet been no frost in that region of country this winter. I went in the dining-room and parlour, in which the furniture still remained.... The house has never been finished, but is a fine, large one and beautifully located. A magnificent grove of live-oaks envelops the road from the landing to the house.... Love to everybody and God bless you all.

“Truly and faithfully yours,

“R. E. Lee.”

From the same place there is another letter to my mother:

“Coosawhatchie, South Carolina, January 28, 1862.

“I have just returned from Charleston, and received your letter of the 14th, dear Mary.... I was called to Charleston by the appearance off the bar of a fleet of vessels the true character and intent of which could not be discerned during the continuance of the storm which obscured the view. Saturday, however, all doubt was dispelled, and from the beach on Sullivan’s Island the preparations for sinking them were plainly seen. Twenty-one were visible the first day of my arrival, but at the end of the storm, Saturday, only seventeen were seen. Five of these were vessels of war: what became of the other four is not known. The twelve old merchantmen were being stripped of their spars, masts, etc., and by sunset seven were prepared apparently for sinking across the mouth of the Maffitt Channel. they were placed in a line about two hundred yards apart, about four miles from Fort Moultrie. They will do but little harm to the channel, I think, but may deter vessels from running out at night for fear of getting on them. There now seem to be indications of a movement against Savannah. The enemy’s gunboats are pushing up the creek to cut off communication between the city and Fort Pulaski on Cockspur Island. Unless I have better news, I must go there to-day. There are so many points of attack, and so little means to meet them on the water, that there is but little rest.... Perry and Meredith are well and send regards to everybody....

“Very truly and sincerely yours,

“R. E. Lee.”

It was most important that the defenses of Charleston and Savannah should be made as strong as possible. The difficulties in the way were many and great, but General Lee’s perseverance overcame most of them. The result was that neither of those cities fell till the close of the war, and a region of country was preserved to the Confederacy necessary for the feeding of its armies. Of course all of this was not accomplished by my father alone in the four months he was there; but the plans of defense he laid down were successfully followed.

While in Savannah, he writes to my mother:

“Savannah, February 8, 1862.

“I wrote to you, dear Mary, the day I left Coosawhatchie for this place. I have been here ever since, endeavouring to push forward the work for the defense of the city, which has lagged terribly and which ought to have been finished. But it is difficult to arouse ourselves from ease and comfort to labour and self-denial.

“Guns are scarce, as well as ammunition, and I shall have to break up batteries on the coast to provide, I fear, for this city. Our enemies are endeavouring to work their way through the creeks that traverse the impassable marshes stretching along the interior of the coast and communicating with the sounds and sea, through which the Savannah flows, and thus avoid the entrance of the river commanded by Fort Pulaski. Their boats require only seven feet of water to float them, and the tide rises seven feet, so that at high water they can work their way and rest on the mud at low. They are also provided with dredges and appliances for removing obstructions through the creeks in question, which cannot be guarded by batteries. I hope, however, we shall be able to stop them, and I daily pray to the Giver of all victories to enable us to do so.... I trust you are all well and doing well, and wish I could do anything to promote either. I have more here than I can do, and more, I fear, than I can well accomplish. It is so very hard to get anything done, and while all wish well and mean well, it is so different to get them to act energetically and promptly.... The news from Kentucky and Tennessee is not favourable, but we must make up our minds to meet with reverses and overcome them. I hope God will at last crown our efforts with success. But the contest must be long and severe, and the whole country has to go through much suffering. It is necessary we should be humbled and taught to be less boastful, less selfish, and more devoted to right and justice to all the world.... Always yours,

“R. E. Lee.”

To my mother:

“Savannah, February 23, 1862.

“I have been wishing, dear Mary, to write to you for more than a week, but every day and every hour seem so taken up that I have found it impossible.... The news from Tennessee and North Carolina is not all cheering, and disasters seem to be thickening around us. It calls for renewed energies and redoubled strength on our part, and, I hope, will produce it. I fear our soldiers have not realised the necessity for the endurance and labour they are called upon to undergo, and that it is better to sacrifice themselves than our cause. God, I hope, will shield us and give us success. Here the enemy is progressing slowly in his designs, and does not seem prepared, or to have determined when or where to make his attack. His gunboats are pushing up all the creeks and marshes of the Savannah, and have attained a position so near the river as to shell the steamers navigating it. None have as yet been struck. I am engaged in constructing a line of defense at

Fort Jackson which, if time permits and guns can be obtained, I hope will keep them out. They can bring such overwhelming force in all their movements that it has the effect to demoralise our new troops. The accounts given in the papers of the quantity of cotton shipped to New York are, of course, exaggerated. It is cotton in the seed and dirt, and has to be ginned and cleaned after its arrival. It is said that the negroes are employed in picking and collecting it, and are paid a certain amount. But all these things are gathered from rumour, and can only be believed as they appear probable, which this seems to be.... I went yesterday to church, being the day appointed for fasting and prayer. I wish I could have passed it more devoutly. The bishop (Elliott) gave a most beautiful prayer for the President, which I hope may be heard and answered.... Here the yellow jasmine, red-bud, orange-tree, etc., perfume the whole woods, and the japonicas and azaleas cover the garden. Perry and Meredith are well. May God bless and keep you always is the constant prayer of your husband,

“R. E. Lee.”

To his daughter Annie:

“Savannah, March 2, 1862.

“My Precious Annie: It has been a long time since I have written to you, but you have been constantly in my thoughts. I think of you all, separately and collectively, in the busy hours of the day and the silent hours of the night, and the recollection of each and every one while away the long night, in which my anxious thoughts drive away sleep. But I always feel that you and Agnes at those times are sound asleep, and that is immaterial to either where the blockaders are or what their progress is in the river. I hope you are all well, and as happy as you can be in these perilous times to our country. They look dark at present, and it is plain we have not suffered enough, laboured enough, repented enough, to deserve success. But they will brighten after awhile, and I trust that a merciful God will arouse us to a sense of our danger, bless our honest efforts, and drive back our enemies to their homes. Our people have not been earnest enough, have thought too much of themselves and their ease, and instead of turning out to a man, have been content to nurse themselves and their dimes, and leave the protection of themselves and families to others. To satisfy their consciences, they have been clamorous in criticising what others have done, and endeavoured to prove that they ought to do nothing. This is not the way to accomplish our independence. I have been doing all I can with our small means and slow workmen to defend the cities and coast here. Against ordinary numbers we are pretty strong, but against the hosts our enemies seem able to bring everywhere there is

no calculating. But if our men will stand to their work, we shall give them trouble and damage them yet. They have worked their way across the marshes, with their dredges, under cover of their gunboats, to the Savannah River, about Fort Pulaski. I presume they will endeavour to reduce the fort and thus open a way for their vessels up the river. But we have an interior line they must force before reaching the city. It is on this line we are working, slowly to my anxious mind, but as fast as I can drive them.... Good-bye, my dear child. May God bless you and our poor country.

“Your devoted father,

“R. E. Lee.”

Soon after this letter was written my father was recalled to Richmond, “and was assigned on the 13th of March, under the direction of the President, to the conduct of the military operations of all the armies of the Confederate States” [“Four Years with General Lee”]. My mother was still at the White House, my brother’s place on the Pamunkey, and there my father wrote to her:

“Richmond, March 14, 1862.

“My Dear Mary: I have been trying all the week to write to you, but have not been able. I have been placed on duty here to conduct operations under the direction of the President. It will give me great pleasure to do anything I can to relieve him and serve the country, but I do not see either advantage or pleasure in my duties. But I will not complain, but do my best. I do not see at present either that it will enable me to see much more of you. In the present condition of affairs no one can foresee what may happen, nor in my judgement is it advisable for any one to make arrangements with a view to permanency or pleasure. The presence of some one at the White House is necessary as long as practicable. How long it will be practicable for you and Charlotte to remain there I cannot say. The enemy is pushing us back in all directions, and how far he will be successful depends much upon our efforts and the mercy of Providence. I shall, in all human probability, soon have to take the field, so for the present I think things had better remain as they are. Write me your views. If you think it best for you to come to Richmond I can soon make arrangements for your comfort and shall be very glad of your company and presence. We have experienced a great affliction both in our private and public relations. Our good and noble Bishop Meade died last night. He was very anxious to see you, sent you his love and kindest remembrances, and had I known in time yesterday I should have sent expressly for you to come up. But I did not know

of his wish or condition till after the departure of the cars yesterday. Between 6 and 7 P. M. yesterday he sent for me, said he wished to bid me good-bye, and to give me his blessing, which he did in the most affecting manner. Called me Robert and reverted to the time I used to say the catechism to him. He invoked the blessing of God upon me and the country. He spoke with difficulty and pain, but was perfectly calm and clear. His hand was then cold and pulseless, yet he shook mine warmly. 'I ne'er shall look upon his like again.' He died during the night. I presume the papers of to-morrow will tell you all....

"Very truly and sincerely,

"R. E. Lee."

The next day he again writes to my mother.

"Richmond, March 15, 1861.

"My Dear Mary: I wrote you yesterday by mail. On returning to my quarters last night after 11 P. M. Custis informed me Robert had arrived and had made up his mind to go into the army. He stayed at the Spottswood, and this morning I went with him to get his overcoat, blankets, etc. There is great difficulty in procuring what is good. They all have to be made, and he has gone to the office of the adjutant-general of Virginia to engage in the service. God grant it may be for his good as He has permitted it. I must be resigned. I told him of the exemption granted by the Secretary of War to the professors and students of the university, but he expressed no desire to take advantage of it. It would be useless for him to go, if he did not improve himself, nor would I wish him to go merely for exemption. As I have done all in the matter that seems proper and right, I must now leave the rest in the hands of our merciful God. I hope our son will do his duty and make a good soldier.... I had expected yesterday to go to North Carolina this morning, but the President changed his mind. I should like to go to see you to-morrow, but in the present condition of things do not feel that I ought to be absent.... I may have to go to North Carolina or Norfolk yet. New Berne, N. C., has fallen into the hands of the enemy. In Arkansas our troops under Van Dorn have had a hard battle, but nothing decisive gained. Four generals killed--McIntosh, McCullogh, Herbert, and Slack. General Price wounded. Loss on both sides said to be heavy....

"Very truly yours,

"R. E. Lee."

Chapter IV

Army Life of Robert the Younger

Volunteer in Rockbridge Artillery--"Four Years with General Lee"
quoted--Meeting between father and son--Personal characteristics of
the General--Death of his daughter Annie--His son Robert raised from
the ranks--the horses, "Grace Darling" and "Traveller"--Fredricksburg--
Freeing slaves

Like all the students at the university, I was wild to go into the
army, and wrote my father that I was afraid the war would be over
before I had a chance to serve. His reply was that I need have no
fear of that contingency, that I must study hard and fit myself to
be useful to my country when I was old enough to be of real service
to her; so, very properly, I was not allowed to have my wish then.
In a letter to my mother written April, '61, he says:

"I wrote to Robert that I could not consent to take boys from their
schools and young men from their colleges and put them in the ranks
at the beginning of a war, when they are not wanted and when there
are men enough for that purpose. The war may last ten years. Where
are our ranks to be filled from then? I was willing for his company
to continue at their studies, to keep up its organisation, and to
perfect themselves in their military exercises, and to perform duty
at the college; but NOT to be called into the field. I therefore
wished him to remain. If the exercises at the college are suspended,
he can then come home...."

But in the spring of '62 he allowed me to volunteer, and I having
selected the company I wished to join, the Rockbridge Artillery, he
gave his approval, and wrote me to come to Richmond, where he would
give me my outfit. He was just as sweet and loving to me then as in
the old days. I had seen so little of him during the last six years
that I stood somewhat in awe of him. I soon found, however, that I
had no cause for such a feeling. He took great pains in getting what
was necessary for me. The baggage of a private in a Confederate battery
was not extensive. How little was needed my father, even at that time,
did not know, for though he was very careful in providing me with the

least amount he thought necessary, I soon found by experience that he had given me a great deal too much. It was characteristic of his consideration for others and the unselfishness of his nature, that at this time, when weighed down, harassed and burdened by the cares incident to bringing the untrained forces of the Confederacy into the field, and preparing them for a struggle the seriousness of which he knew better than any one, he should give his time and attention to the minute details of fitting out his youngest son as a private soldier. I think it worthy of note that the son of the commanding general enlisting as a private in his army was not thought to be anything remarkable or unusual. Neither my mother, my family, my friends nor myself expected any other course, and I do not suppose it ever occurred to my father to think of giving me an office, which he could easily have done. I know it never occurred to me, nor did I ever hear, at that time or afterwards, from anyone, that I might have been entitled to better rank than that of a private because of my father's prominence in Virginia and in the Confederacy. With the good advice to be obedient to all authority, to do my duty in everything, great or small, he bade me good-bye, and sent me off to the Valley of Virginia, where the command in which I was about to enlist were serving under "Stonewall Jackson."

Of my father's military duties at this time, Colonel Taylor, in his "Four Years with General Lee," says:

"Exercising a constant supervision over the condition of affairs at each important point, thoroughly informed as to the resources and necessities of the several commanders of armies in the field, as well as of the dangers which respectively threatened them, he was enabled to give them wise counsel, to offer them valuable suggestions, and to respond to their demands for assistance and support to such extent as the limited resources of the government would permit. It was in great measure due to his advice and encouragement that General Magruder so stoutly and so gallantly held his lines on the Peninsula against General McClellan until troops could be sent to his relief from General Johnston's army. I recollect a telegraphic despatch received by General Lee from General Magruder, in which he stated that a council of war which he had convened had unanimously determined that his army should retreat, in reply to which General Lee urged him to maintain his lines, and to make as bold a front as possible, and encouraged him with the prospect of being reinforced. No better illustration of the nature and importance of the duty performed by General Lee, while in this position, can be given than the following letter--one of a number of similar import--written by him to General Jackson, the 'rough' or original draft of which is still in my possession:

“‘Headquarters, Richmond, Virginia, April 29, 1862.

“‘Major-General T. J. Jackson, commanding, etc., Swift Run Gap, Virginia.

“‘General: I have had the honour to receive your letter of yesterday’s date. From the reports that reach me that are entitled to credit, the force of the enemy opposite Fredericksburg is represented as too large to admit of any diminution whatever of our army in that vicinity at present, as it might not only invite an attack on Richmond, but jeopard the safety of the army in the Peninsula. I regret, therefore, that your request to have five thousand men sent from that army to reinforce you cannot be complied with. Can you not draw enough from the command of General Edward Johnson to warrant you in attacking Banks? The last return received from that army show a present force of upward of thirty-five hundred, which, it is hoped, has since increased by recruits and returned furloughs. As he does not appear to be pressed, it is suggested that a portion of his force might be temporarily removed from its present position and made available for the movement in question. A decisive and successful blow at Banks’s column would be fraught with the happiest results, and I deeply regret my inability to send you the reinforcements you ask. If, however, you think the combined forces of Generals Ewell and Johnson, with your own, inadequate for the move, General Ewell might, with the assistance of General Anderson’s army near Fredericksburg, strike at McDowell’s army between that city and Acquia, with much promise of success; provided you feel sufficiently strong alone to hold Banks in check.

“‘Very truly yours,

“‘R. E. Lee.’

“The reader will observe that this letter bears the date ‘April 29, 1862.’ On May 5th or 6th, General Jackson formed a junction between his own command and that of General Edward Johnson; on May 8th, he defeated Milroy at McDowell. Soon thereafter, the command of General Ewell was united to that already under Jackson, and on the 25th of the same month Banks was defeated and put to flight. Other incidents might be cited to illustrate this branch of the important service rendered at this period by General Lee. The line of earthworks around the city of Richmond, and other preparations for resisting an attack, testified to the immense care and labour bestowed upon the defense of the capital, so seriously threatened by the army of General McClellan.”

On May 31st, the battle of Seven Pines was fought, and General Joseph

E. Johnston, commanding the Confederate Army, was severely wounded. The next day, by order of the President, General Lee took command of the Army of Northern Virginia.

The day after the battle of Cold Harbor, during the “Seven Days” fighting around Richmond, was the first time I met my father after I had joined General Jackson. The tremendous work Stonewall’s men had performed, including the rapid march from the Valley of Virginia, the short rations, the bad water, and the great heat, had begun to tell upon us, and I was pretty well worn out. On this particular morning, my battery had not moved from its bivouac ground of the previous night, but was parked in an open field all ready, waiting orders. Most of the men were lying down, many sleeping, myself among the latter number. To get some shade and to be out of the way, I had crawled under a caisson, and was busy making up many lost hours of rest. Suddenly I was rudely awakened by a comrade, prodding me with a sponge-staff as I had failed to be aroused by his call, and was told to get up and come out, that some one wished to see me. Half awake, I staggered out, and found myself face to face with General Lee and his staff. Their fresh uniforms, bright equipments and well-groomed horses contrasted so forcibly with the war-worn appearance of our command that I was completely dazed. It took me a moment or two to realise what it all meant, but when I saw my father’s loving eyes and smile it became clear to me that he had ridden by to see if I was safe and to ask how I was getting along. I remember well how curiously those with him gazed at me, and I am sure that it must have struck them as very odd that such a dirty, ragged, unkempt youth could have been the son of this grand-looking victorious commander.

I was introduced recently to a gentleman, now living in Washington, who, when he found out my name, said he had met me once before and that it was on this occasion. At that time he was a member of the Tenth Virginia Infantry, Jackson’s Division, and was camped near our battery. Seeing General Lee and staff approach, he, with others, drew near to have a look at them, and thus witnessed the meeting between father and son. He also said that he had often told of this incident as illustrating the peculiar composition of our army.

After McClellan’s change of base to Harrison’s Landing on James River, the army lay inactive around Richmond. I had a short furlough on account of sickness, and saw my father; also my mother and sisters, who were then living in Richmond. He was the same loving father to us all, as kind and thoughtful of my mother, who as an invalid, and of us, his children, as if our comfort and happiness were all he had to care for. His great victory did not elate him, so far as one could see. In a letter of July 9th, to my mother, he says:

“...I have returned to my old quarters and am filled with gratitude to our Heavenly Father for all the mercies He has extended to us. Our success has not been so great or complete as we could have desired, but God knows what is best for us. Our enemy met with a heavy loss, from which it must take him some time to recover, before he can recommence his operations....”

The honourable Alexander H. Stephens, Vice-President of the Confederate States, says of General Lee:

“What I had seen General Lee to be at first--child-like in simplicity and unselfish in his character--he remained, unspoiled by praise and by success.”

He was the same in victory or defeat, always calm and contained. Jackson, having had a short rest, was now moved up to Gordonsville. I rejoined my command and went with him, supplied with new clothes and a fresh stock of health. In a letter to his three daughters who were in North Carolina, dated Richmond, July 18, 1862, he writes describing my condition:

“Rob came out to see me one afternoon. He had been much worn down by his marching and fighting, and had gone to his mamma to get a little rest. He was thin but well, but, not being able to get a clean shirt, has not gone to see Miss Norvell. He has rejoined his company and gone off with General Jackson, as good as new again, I hope, inasmuch as your mother thought, by means of a bath and a profusion of soap, she had cleansed the outward man considerably, and replenished his lost wardrobe.”

From Gordonsville we were moved on to Orange County, and then commenced that series of manoeuvres by the Army of Northern Virginia, beginning with the battle of Cedar Mountain and ending with second Manassas.

When I again saw my father, he rode at the head of Longstreet's men on the field of Manassas, and we of Jackson's corps, hard pressed for two days, welcomed him and the divisions which followed him with great cheers. Two rifle-guns from our battery had been detached and sent to join Longstreet's advance artillery, under General Stephen D. Lee, moving into action on our right. I was “Number 1” at one of these guns. We advanced rapidly, from hill to hill, firing as fast as we could, trying to keep ahead of our gallant comrades, just arrived. As we were ordered to cease firing from the last position we took, and the breathless cannoneers were leaning on their guns, General Lee and staff galloped up, and from this point of vantage scanned

the movements of the enemy and of our forces. The general reined in "Traveller" close by my gun, not fifteen feet from me. I looked at them all some few minutes, and then went up and spoke to Captain Mason of the staff, who had not the slightest idea who I was. When he found me out he was greatly amused, and introduced me to several others whom I already knew. My appearance was even less prepossessing than when I had met my father at Cold Harbour, for I had been marching night and day for four days, with no opportunity to wash myself or my clothes; my face and hands were blackened with powder-sweat, and the few garments I had on were ragged and stained with the red soil of that section. When the General, after a moment or two, dropped his glass to his side, and turned to his staff, Captain Mason said:

"General, here is some one who wants to speak to you."

The General, seeing a much-begrimed artillery-man, sponge-staff in hand, said:

"Well, my many, what can I do for you?" I replied:

"Why, General, don't you know me?" and he, of course, at once recognised me, and was very much amused at my appearance and most glad to see that I was safe and well.

We, of the ranks, used to have our opinions on all subjects. The armies, their generals, and their manoeuvres were freely discussed. If there was one point on which the entire army was unanimous--I speak of the rank and file--it was that we were not in the least afraid of General Pope, but were perfectly sure of whipping him whenever we could meet him. The passages I quote here from two of General Lee's letters indicate that this feeling may possibly have extended to our officers. In a letter to my mother, from near Richmond, dated July 28, 1862, he says:

"...When you write to Rob, tell him to catch Pope for me, and also bring in his cousin, Louis Marshall, who, I am told, is on his staff. I could forgive the latter's fighting against us, but not his joining Pope."

And again:

"...Johnny Lee [his nephew] saw Louis Marshall after Jackson's last battle, who asked him kindly after his old uncle, and said his mother was well. Johnny said Louis looked wretched himself. I am sorry he is in such bad company, but I suppose he could not help it."

As one of the Army of Northern Virginia, I occasionally saw the commander-in-chief, on the march, or passed the headquarters close enough to recognise him and members of his staff, but as a private soldier in Jackson's corps did not have much time, during that campaign, for visiting, and until the battle of Sharpsburg I had no opportunity of speaking to him. On that occasion our battery had been severely handled, losing many men and horses. Having three guns disabled, we were ordered to withdraw, and while moving back we passed General Lee and several of his staff, grouped on a little knoll near the road. Having no definite orders where to go, our captain, seeing the commanding general, halted us and rode over to get some instructions. Some others and myself went along to see and hear. General Lee was dismounted with some of his staff around him, a courier holding his horse. Captain Poague, commanding our battery, the Rockbridge Artillery, saluted, reported our condition, and asked for instructions. The General, listening patiently looked at us--his eyes passing over me without any sign of recognition--and then ordered Captain Poague to take the most serviceable horses and men, man the uninjured gun, send the disabled part of his command back to refit, and report to the front for duty. As Poague turned to go, I went up to speak to my father. When he found out who I was, he congratulated me on being well and unhurt. I then said:

"General, are you going to send us in again?"

"Yes, my son," he replied, with a smile; "you all must do what you can to help drive these people back."

This meeting between General Lee and his son has been told very often and in many different ways, but the above is what I remember of the circumstances.

He was much on foot during this part of the campaign, and moved about either in an ambulance or on horseback, with a courier leading his horse. The accident which temporarily disabled him happened before he left Virginia. He had dismounted, and was sitting on a fallen log, with the bridle reins hung over his arm. Traveller, becoming frightened at something, suddenly dashed away, threw him violently to the ground, spraining both hands and breaking a small bone in one of them. A letter written some weeks afterward to my mother alludes to this meeting with his son, and to the condition of his hands:

"...I have not laid eyes on Rob since I saw him in the battle of Sharpsburg--going in with a single gun of his for the second time, after his company had been withdrawn in consequence of three of its guns having been disabled. Custis has seen him and says he is very well,

and apparently happy and content. My hands are improving slowly, and, with my left hand, I am able to dress and undress myself, which is a great comfort. My right is becoming of some assistance, too, though it is still swollen and sometimes painful. The bandages have been removed. I am now able to sign my name. It has been six weeks to-day since I was injured, and I have at last discarded the sling.”

After the army recrossed the Potomac into Virginia, we were camped for some time in the vicinity of Winchester. One beautiful afternoon in October, a courier from headquarters rode up to our camp, found me out, and handed me a note from my father. It told me of the death of my sister Annie. As I have lost this letter to me, I quote from one to my mother about the same time. It was dated October 26, 1862:

“...I cannot express the anguish I feel at the death of our sweet Annie. To know that I shall never see her again on earth, that her place in our circle, which I always hoped one day to enjoy, is forever vacant, is agonising in the extreme. But God in this, as in all things, has mingled mercy with the blow, in selecting that one best prepared to leave us. May you be able to join me in saying ‘His will be done!’ ...I know how much you will grieve and how much she will be mourned. I wish I could give you any comfort, but beyond our hope in the great mercy of God, and the belief that he takes her at the time and place when it is best for her to go, there is none. May that same mercy be extended to us all, and may we be prepared for His summons.”

In a letter to my sister Mary, one month later, from “Camp near Fredericksburg”:

“...The death of my dear Annie was, indeed, to me a bitter pang, but ‘the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord.’ In the quiet hours of the night, when there is nothing to lighten the full weight of my grief, I feel as if I should be overwhelmed. I have always counted, if God should spare me a few days after this Civil War has ended, that I should have her with me, but year after year my hopes go out, and I must be resigned....”

To this daughter whose loss grieved him so he was specially devoted. She died in North Carolina, at the Warren White Sulphur Springs. At the close of the war, the citizens of the county erected over her grave a handsome monument. General Lee was invited to be present at the ceremonies of the unveiling. In his reply, he says:

“...I have always cherished the intention of visiting the tomb of her who never gave me aught but pleasure;... Though absent in person, my heart will be with you, and my sorrow and devotions will be mingled

with yours.... I inclose, according to your request, the date of my daughter's birth and the inscription proposed for the monument over her tomb. The latter are the last lines of the hymn which she asked for just before her death."

A visitor to her grave, some years after the war, thus describes it:

"In the beautiful and quiet graveyard near the Springs a plain shaft of native granite marks the grave of this beloved daughter. On one side is cut in the stone, 'Annie C. Lee, daughter of General R. E. Lee and Mary C. Lee'--and on the opposite--'Born at Arlington, June 18, 1839, and died at White Sulphur Springs, Warren County, North Carolina, Oct. 20, 1862.' On another side are the lines selected by her father,

"Perfect and true are all His ways
Whom heaven adores and earth obeys."

That autumn I was offered the position of Lt. and A. D. C. on the staff of my brother, W. H. F. Lee, just promoted from the colonelcy of the 9th Virginia Cavalry to the command of a brigade in the same arm of the service. My father had told me when I joined the army to do my whole duty faithfully, not to be rash about volunteering for any service out of my regular line, and always to accept promotion. After consulting him, it was decided that I should take the position offered, and he presented me with a horse and one of his swords. My promotion necessitated my having an honourable discharge as a private, from the ranks, and this I obtained in the proper way from General "Stonewall" Jackson, commanding the corps of which my company was a part, and was thus introduced for the first time to that remarkable man. Having served in his command since my enlistment, I had been seeing him daily. "Old Jack," at a distance, was as familiar to me as one of the battery guns, but I had never met him, and felt much awe at being ushered into his presence. This feeling, however, was groundless, for he was seemingly so much embarrassed by the interview that I really felt sorry for him before he dismissed me with my discharge papers, properly made out and signed.

I had received a letter from my father telling me to come to him as soon as I had gotten my discharge from my company, so I proceeded at once to his headquarters, which were situated near Orange Court House, on a wooded hill just east of the village. I found there the horse which he gave me. She was a daughter of his mare, "Grace Darling," and, though not so handsome as her mother, she inherited many of her good qualities and carried me well until the end of the war and for

thirteen years afterward. She was four years old, a solid bay, and never failed me a single day during three years' hard work. The General was on the point of moving his headquarters down to Fredericksburg, some of the army having already gone forward to that city. I think the camp was struck the day after I arrived, and as the General's hands were not yet entirely well, he allowed me, as a great favour, to ride his horse "Traveller." Amongst the soldiers this horse was as well known as was his master. He was a handsome iron-gray with black points--mane and tail very dark--sixteen hands high, and five years old. He was born near the White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, and attracted the notice of my father when he was in that part of the State in 1861. He was never known to tire, and, though quiet and sensible in general and afraid of nothing, yet if not regularly exercised, he fretted a good deal especially in a crowd of horses. But there can be no better description of this famous horse than the one given by his master. It was dictated to his daughter Agnes at Lexington, Virginia, after the war, in response to some artist who had asked for a description, and was corrected in his own handwriting:

"If I were an artist like you I would draw a true picture of Traveller--representing his fine proportions, muscular figure, deep chest and short back, strong haunches, flat legs, small head, broad forehead, delicate ears, quick eye, small feet, and black mane and tail. Such a picture would inspire a poet, whose genius could then depict his worth and describe his endurance of toil, hunger, thirst, heat, cold, and the dangers and sufferings through which he passed. He could dilate upon his sagacity and affection, and his invariable response to every wish of his rider. He might even imagine his thoughts, through the long night marches and days of battle through which he has passed. But I am no artist; I can only say he is a Confederate gray. I purchased him in the mountains of Virginia in the autumn of 1861, and he has been my patient follower ever since--to Georgia, the Carolinas, and back to Virginia. He carried me through the Seven Days battle around Richmond, the second Manassas, at Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, the last day at Chancellorsville, to Pennsylvania, at Gettysburg, and back to the Rappahannock. From the commencement of the campaign in 1864 at Orange, till its close around Petersburg, the saddle was scarcely off his back, as he passed through the fire of the Wilderness, Spottsylvania, Cold Harbour, and across the James River. He was almost in daily requisition in the winter of 1864-65 on the long line of defenses from Chickahominy, north of Richmond, to Hatcher's Run, south of the Appomattox. In the campaign of 1865, he bore me from Petersburg to the final days at Appomattox Court House. You must know the comfort he is to me in my present retirement. He is well supplied with equipments. Two sets have been sent to him from England, one from the ladies of Baltimore, and one was made for him in Richmond; but I

think his favourite is the American saddle from St. Louis. Of all his companions in toil, 'Richmond,' 'Brown Roan,' 'Ajax,' and quiet 'Lucy Long,' he is the only one that retained his vigour. The first two expired under their onerous burden, and the last two failed. You can, I am sure, from what I have said, paint his portrait."

The general had the strongest affection for Traveller, which he showed on all occasions, and his allowing me to ride him on this long march was a great compliment. Possibly he wanted to give me a good hammering before he turned me over to the cavalry. During my soldier life, so far, I had been on foot, having backed nothing more lively than a tired artillery horse; so I mounted with some misgivings, though I was very proud of my steed. My misgivings were fully realised, for Traveller would not walk a step. He took a short, high trot--a buck-trot, as compared with a buck-jump--and kept it up to Fredericksburg, some thirty miles. Though young, strong, and tough, I was glad when the journey ended. This was my first introduction to the cavalry service. I think I am safe in saying that I could have walked the distance with much less discomfort and fatigue. My father having thus given me a horse and presented me with one of his swords, also supplied my purse so that I could get myself an outfit suitable to my new position, and he sent me on to join my command, stationed not far away on the Rappahannock, southward from Fredericksburg.

As an officer in the cavalry on the staff, I had more frequent opportunities of seeing my father than as a private in the artillery. In the course of duty, I was sometimes sent to him to report the condition of affairs at the front, or on the flank of the army, and I also, occasionally, paid him a visit. At these times, he would take me into his tent, talk to me about my mother and sisters, about my horse and myself, or the people and the country where my command happened to be stationed. I think my presence was very grateful to him, and he seemed to brighten up when I came. I remember, he always took it as a matter of course that I must be hungry (and I was for three years), so he invariably made his mess-steward, Bryan, give me something to eat, if I did not have time to wait for the regular meal. His headquarters at this time, just before the battle of Fredericksburg and after, were at a point on the road between Fredericksburg and Hamilton's Crossing, selected on account of its accessibility. Notwithstanding there was near-by a good house vacant, he lived in his tents. His quarters were very unpretentious, consisting of three or four "wall-tents" and several more common ones. They were pitched on the edge of an old pine field, near a grove of forest trees from which he drew his supply of fire-wood, while the pines helped to shelter his tents and horses from the cold winds. Though from the outside they were rather dismal, especially through the dreary winter time,

within they were cheerful, and the surroundings as neat and comfortable as possible under the circumstances.

On November 24, 1862, in a letter to his daughter Mary, he writes:

“...General Burnside’s whole army is apparently opposite Fredericksburg and stretches from the Rappahannock to the Potomac. What his intentions are he has not yet disclosed. I am sorry he is in position to oppress our friends and citizens of the Northern Neck. He threatens to bombard Fredericksburg, and the noble spirit displayed by its citizens, particularly the women and children, has elicited my highest admiration. They have been abandoning their homes, night and day, during all this inclement weather, cheerfully and uncomplainingly, with only such assistance as our wagons and ambulances could afford, women, girls, children, trudging through the mud and bivouacking in the open fields.”

How the battle of Fredericksburg was fought and won all the world has heard, and I shall not attempt to describe it. On December 11th, the day Burnside commenced his attack, General Lee wrote to my mother:

“...The enemy, after bombarding the town of Fredericksburg, setting fire to many houses and knocking down nearly all those along the river, crossed over a large force about dark, and now occupies the town. We hold the hills commanding it, and hope we shall be able to damage him yet. His position and heavy guns command the town entirely.”

On December 16th, in another letter to my mother, he tells of the recrossing of the Federals:

“I had supposed they were just preparing for battle, and was saving our men for the conflict. Their hosts crown the hill and plain beyond the river, and their numbers to me are unknown. Still I felt the confidence we could stand the shock, and was anxious for the blow that is to fall on some point, and was prepared to meet it here. Yesterday evening I had my suspicions that they might return during the night, but could not believe they would relinquish their hopes after all their boasting and preparation, and when I say that the latter is equal to the former you will have some idea of the magnitude. This morning they were all safe on the north side of the Rappahannock. They went as they came--in the night. They suffered heavily as far as the battle went, but it did not go far enough to satisfy me. Our loss was comparatively slight, and I think will not exceed two thousand. The contest will have now to be renewed, but on what field I cannot say.”

I did not see my father at any time during the fighting. some days after it was all over, I saw him, as calm and composed as if nothing

unusual had happened, and he never referred to his great victory, except to deplore the loss of his brave officers and soldiers or the sufferings of the sick and wounded. He repeatedly referred to the hardships so bravely endured by the inhabitants of Fredericksburg, who had been obliged to flee from the town, the women and children, the old and the feeble, whose sufferings cut him to the heart. On Christmas Day he writes to his youngest daughter, Mildred, who was at school in North Carolina:

“...I cannot tell you how I long to see you when a little quiet occurs. My thoughts revert to you, your sisters, and your mother; my heart aches for our reunion. Your brothers I see occasionally. This morning Fitzhugh rode by with his young aide-de-camp (Rob) at the head of his brigade, on his way up the Rappahannock. You must study hard, gain knowledge, and learn your duty to God and your neighbour: that is the great object of life. I have no news, confined constantly to camp, and my thoughts occupied with its necessities and duties. I am, however, happy in the knowledge that General Burnside and army will not eat their promised Christmas dinner in Richmond to-day.”

On the next day he writes as follows to his daughter Agnes, who was with her mother in Richmond:

“Camp Fredericksburg, December 26, 1862.

“My Precious Little Agnes: I have not heard of you for a long time. I wish you were with me, for always solitary, I am sometimes weary, and long for the reunion of my family once again. But I will not speak of myself, but of you.... I have seen the ladies in this vicinity only when flying from the enemy, and it caused me acute grief to witness their exposure and suffering. But a more noble spirit was never displayed anywhere. The faces of old and young were wreathed with smiles, and glowed with happiness at their sacrifices for the good of their country. Many have lost EVERYTHING. What the fire and shells of the enemy spared, their pillagers destroyed. But God will shelter them, I know. So much heroism will not be unregarded. I can only hold oral communication with your sister [His daughter Mary, in King George county, within the lines of the enemy], and have forbidden the scouts to bring any writing, and have taken some back that I had given them for her. If caught, it would compromise them. They only convey messages. I learn in that way she is well.

“Your devoted father,

“R. E. Lee.”

I give another letter he wrote on Christmas Day, besides the one quoted above, to his daughter, Mildred. It was written to his wife, and is interesting as giving an insight into his private feelings and views regarding this great victory:

“...I will commence this holy day by writing to you. My heart is filled with gratitude to Almighty God for His unspeakable mercies with which He has blessed us in this day, for those He has granted us from the beginning of life, and particularly for those He has vouchsafed us during the past year. What should have become of us without His crowning help and protection? Oh, if our people would only recognise it and cease from vain self-boasting and adulation, how strong would be my belief in final success and happiness to our country! But what a cruel thing is war; to separate and destroy families and friends, and mar the purest joys and happiness God has granted us in this world; to fill our hearts with hatred instead of love for our neighbours, and to devastate the fair face of this beautiful world! I pray that, on this day when only peace and good-will are preached to mankind, better thoughts may fill the hearts of our enemies and turn them to peace. Our army was never in such good health and condition since I have been attached to it. I believe they share with me my disappointment that the enemy did not renew the combat on the 13th. I was holding back all day and husbanding our strength and ammunition for the great struggle, for which I thought I was preparing. Had I divined that was to have been his only effort, he would have had more of it. My heart bleeds at the death of every one of our gallant men.”

One marked characteristic of my father was his habit of attending to all business matters promptly. He was never idle, and what he had to do he performed with care and precision. Mr. Custis, my grandfather, had made him executor of his will, wherein it was directed that all the slaves belonging to the estate should be set free after the expiration of so many years. The time had now arrived, and notwithstanding the exacting duties of his position, the care of his suffering soldiers, and his anxiety about their future, immediate and distant, he proceeded according to the law of the land to carry out the provisions of the will, and had delivered to every one of the servants, where it was possible, their manumission papers. From his letters written at this time I give a few extracts bearing on this subject:

“...As regards the liberation of the people, I wish to progress in it as far as I can. Those hired in Richmond can still find employment there if they choose. Those in the country can do the same or remain on the farms. I hope they will all do well and behave themselves. I should like, if I could, to attend to their wants and see them placed

to the best advantage. But that is impossible. All that choose can leave the State before the war closes....

“...I executed the deed of manumission sent me by Mr. Caskie, and returned it to him. I perceived that John Sawyer and James’s names, among the Arlington people, had been omitted, and inserted them. I fear there are others among the White House lot which I did not discover. As to the attacks of the Northern papers, I do not mind them, and do not think it wise to make the publication you suggest. If all the names of the people at Arlington and on the Pamunkey are not embraced in this deed I have executed, I should like a supplementary deed to be drawn up, containing all those omitted. They are entitled to their freedom and I wish to give it to them. Those that have been carried away, I hope are free and happy; I cannot get their papers to them, and they do not require them. I will give them if they ever call for them. It will be useless to ask their restitution to manumit them....”

Chapter V

The Army of Northern Virginia

The General’s sympathy for his suffering soldiers--Chancellorsville--Death of “Stonewall” Jackson--General Fitzhugh Lee wounded and captured--Escape of his brother Robert--Gettysburg--Religious revival--Infantry review--Unsatisfactory commissariat

During this winter, which was a very severe one, the sufferings of General Lee’s soldiers on account of insufficient shelter and clothing, the scant rations for man and beast, the increasing destitution throughout the country, and his inability to better these conditions, bore heavily upon him. But he was bright and cheerful to those around him, never complaining of any one nor about anything and often indulging in his quaint humour, especially with the younger officers, as when he remarked to one of them, who complained of the tough biscuit at breakfast:

“You ought not to mind that; they will stick by you the longer!”

His headquarters continued all the winter at the same place, and with

stove and fire-places in the tents, the General and his military family managed to keep fairly comfortable. On February 6, 1863, he wrote to his daughter, Agnes from this camp:

“Camp Fredericksburg, February 6, 1863.

“...I read yesterday, my precious daughter, your letter, and grieved very much when last in Richmond at not seeing you. My movements are so uncertain that I cannot be relied on for anything. The only place I am to be found is in camp, and I am so cross now that I am not worth seeing anywhere. Here you will have to take me with the three stools--the snow, the rain, and the mud. The storm of the last twenty-four hours has added to our stock of all, and we are now in a floating condition. But the sun and the wind will carry all off in time, and then we shall appreciate our relief. Our horses and mules suffer the most. They have to bear the cold and rain, tug through the mud, and suffer all the time with hunger. The roads are wretched, almost impassable. I heard of Mag lately. One of our scouts brought me a card of Margaret Stuart's with a pair of gauntlets directed to 'Cousin Robert.'... I have no news. General Hooker is obliged to do something. I do not know what it will be. He is playing the Chinese game, trying what frightening will do. He runs out his guns, starts his wagons and troops up and down the river, and creates an excitement generally. Our men look on in wonder, give a cheer, and all again subsides in statu quo ante bellum. I wish you were here with me to-day. You would have to sit by this little stove, look out at the rain, and keep yourself dry. But here come, in all the wet, the adjutants-general with the papers. I must stop and go to work. See how kind God is; we have plenty to do in good weather and bad....”

“Your devoted father,

“R. E. Lee.”

On February 23d, he writes to Mrs. Lee:

“Camp Fredericksburg, February 23, 1863.

“The weather is now very hard upon our poor bushmen. This morning the whole country is covered with a mantle of snow fully a foot deep. It was nearly up to my knees as I stepped out this morning, and our poor horses were enveloped. We have dug them out and opened our avenues a little, but it will be terrible and the roads impassable. No cars from Richmond yesterday. I fear our short rations for man and horse will have to be curtailed. Our enemies have their troubles too. They are very strong immediately in front, but have withdrawn their troops

above and below us back toward Acquia Creek. I owe Mr. F. J. Hooker ["Fighting Joe" was Hooker's most popular sobriquet in the Federal army] no thanks for keeping me here. He ought to have made up his mind long ago about what to do to--24th. The cars have arrived and brought me a young French officer, full of vivacity, and ardent for service with me. I think the appearance of things will cool him. If they do not, the night will, for he brought no blankets.

"R. E. Lee."

The dreary winter gradually passed away. Toward the last of April, the two armies, which had been opposite each other for four months, began to move, and, about the first of May, the greatest of Lee's battles was fought. My command was on the extreme left, and, as Hooker crossed the river, we followed a raiding party of the enemy's cavalry over toward the James River above Richmond; so I did not see my father at any time during the several day's fighting. The joy of our victory at Chancellorsville was saddened by the death of "Stonewall" Jackson. His loss was the heaviest blow the Army of Northern Virginia ever sustained. To Jackson's note telling him he was wounded, my father replied:

"I cannot express my regret at the occurrence. Could I have directed events, I should have chosen for the good of the country to have been disabled in your stead. I congratulate you on the victory, which is due to your skill and energy."

Jackson said, when this was read to him,

"Better that ten Jacksons should fall than one Lee."

Afterward, when it was reported that Jackson was doing well, General Lee playfully sent him word:

"You are better off than I am, for while you have only lost your LEFT, I have lost my RIGHT arm."

Then, hearing that he was worse, he said:

"Tell him that I am praying for him as I believe I have never prayed for myself."

After his death, General Lee writes to my mother, on May 11th:

"...In addition to the deaths of officers and friends consequent upon the late battles, you will see that we have to mourn the loss of the

great and good Jackson. Any victory would be dear at such a price. His remains go to Richmond to-day. I know not how to replace him. God's will be done! I trust He will raise up some one in his place...."

Jones, in his Memoirs, says: "To one of his officers, after Jackson's death, he [General Lee] said: 'I had such implicit confidence in Jackson's skill and energy that I never troubled myself to give him detailed instructions. The most general suggestions were all that he needed.'"

To one of his aides, who came to his tent, April 29th, to inform him that the enemy had crossed the Rappahannock River in heavy force, General Lee made the playful reply:

"Well, I heard firing, and I was beginning to think it was time some of you lazy young fellows were coming to tell me what it was all about. Say to General Jackson that he knows just as well what to do with the enemy as I do."

Jackson said of Lee, when it was intimated by some, at the time he first took command, that he was slow:

"He is cautious. He ought to be. But he is NOT slow. Lee is a phenomenon. He is the only man whom I would follow blindfold."

As the story of these great men year by year is made plainer to the world, their love, trust, and respect for each other will be better understood. As commander and lieutenant they were exactly suited. When General Lee wanted a movement made and gave Jackson an outline of his plans and the object to be gained, it was performed promptly, well, and thoroughly, if it was possible for flesh and blood to do it.

At the end of May, the Army of Northern Virginia, rested and strengthened, was ready for active operations. On May 31st General Lee writes to Mrs. Lee:

"...General Hooker has been very daring this past week, and quite active. He has not said what he intends to do, but is giving out by his movements that he designs crossing the Rappahannock. I hope we may be able to frustrate his plans, in part, if not in whole.... I pray that our merciful Father in Heaven may protect and direct us! In that case, I fear no odds and no numbers."

About June 5th most of the army was gathered around Culpeper. Its efficiency, confidence, and MORALE were never better. On June 7th

the entire cavalry corps was reviewed on the plain near Brandy Station in Culpeper by General Lee. We had been preparing ourselves for this event for some days, cleaning, mending and polishing, and I remember were very proud of our appearance. In fact, it was a grand sight--about eight thousand well-mounted men riding by their beloved commander, first passing by him in a walk and then a trot. He writes to my mother next day--June 8, 1863:

“...I reviewed the cavalry in this section yesterday. It was a splendid sight. The men and horses looked well. They have recuperated since last fall. Stuart [J. E. B. Stuart, commanding cavalry corps.] was in all his glory. Your sons and nephews [two sons and three nephews] were well and flourishing. The country here looks very green and pretty, notwithstanding the ravages of war. What a beautiful world God, in His loving kindness to His creatures, has given us! What a shame that men endowed with reason and knowledge of right should mar His gifts....”

The next day, June 9th, a large force of the enemy's cavalry, supported by infantry, crossed the Rappahannock and attacked General Stuart. The conflict lasted until dark, when

“The enemy was compelled to recross the river, with heavy loss, leaving about five hundred prisoners, three pieces of artillery, and several colours in our hands.”

During the engagement, about 3 P. M., my brother, General W. H. F. Lee, my commanding officer, was severely wounded. In a letter dated the 11th of the month, my father writes to my mother:

“...My supplications continue to ascend for you, my children, and my country. When I last wrote I did not suppose that Fitzhugh would be soon sent to the rear disabled, and I hope it will be for a short time. I saw him the night after the battle--indeed, met him on the field as they were bringing him from the front. He is young and healthy, and I trust will soon be up again. He seemed to be more concerned about his brave men and officers, who had fallen in the battle, than about himself....”

It was decided, the next day, to send my brother to “Hickory Hill,” the home of Mr. W. F. Wickham, in Hanover County, about twenty miles from Richmond, and I was put in charge of him to take him there and to be with him until his wound should heal. Thus it happened that I did not meet my father again until after Gettysburg had been fought, and the army had recrossed into Virginia, almost to the same place I had left it. My father wrote my brother a note the morning after he

was wounded, before he left Culpeper. It shows his consideration and tenderness:

“My Dear Son: I send you a dispatch, received from C. last night. I hope you are comfortable this morning. I wish I could see you, but I cannot. Take care of yourself, and make haste and get well and return. Though I scarcely ever saw you, it was a great comfort to know that you were near and with me. I could think of you and hope to see you. May we yet meet in peace and happiness....”

In a letter to my brother’s wife, written on the 11th, his love and concern for both of them are plainly shown:

“I am so grieved, my dear daughter, to send Fitzhugh to you wounded. But I am so grateful that his wound is of a character to give us full hope of a speedy recovery. With his youth and strength to aid him, and your tender care to nurse him, I trust he will soon be well again. I know that you will unite with me in thanks to Almighty God, who has so often sheltered him in the hour of danger, for his recent deliverance, and lift up your whole heart in praise to Him for sparing a life so dear to us, while enabling him to do his duty in the station in which he had placed him. Ask him to join us in supplication that He may always cover him with the shadow of His almighty arm, and teach him that his only refuge is in Him, the greatness of whose mercy reacheth unto the heavens, and His truth unto the clouds. As some good is always mixed with the evil in this world, you will now have him with you for a time, and I shall look to you to cure him soon and send him back to me....”

My brother reached “Hickory Hill” quite comfortably, and his wound commenced to heal finely. His wife joined him, my mother and sisters came up from Richmond, and he had all the tender care he could wish. He occupied “the office” in the yard, while I slept in the room adjoining and became quite an expert nurse. About two weeks after our arrival, one lovely morning as we all came out from the breakfast table, stepping into the front porch with Mrs. Wickham, we were much surprised to hear to or three shots down in the direction of the outer gate, where there was a large grove of hickory trees. Mrs. Wickham said some one must be after her squirrels, as there were many in those woods and she asked me to run down and stop whoever was shooting them. I got my hat, and at once started off to do her bidding. I had not gone over a hundred yards toward the grove, when I saw, coming up at a gallop to the gate I was making for, five or six Federal cavalrymen. I knew what it meant at once, so I rushed back to the office and told my brother. He immediately understood the situation and directed me to get away--said I could do no good by staying, that the soldiers

could not and would not hurt him, and there was nothing to be gained by my falling into their hands; but that, on the contrary, I might do a great deal of good by eluding them, making my way to "North Wales," a plantation across the Pamunkey River, and saving our horses.

So I ran out, got over the fence and behind a thick hedge, just as I heard the tramp and clank of quite a body of troopers riding up. Behind this hedge I crept along until I reached a body of woods, where I was perfectly safe. From a hill near by I ascertained that there was a large raiding party of Federal cavalry in the main road, and the heavy smoke ascending from the Court House, about three miles away, told me that they were burning the railroad buildings at that place. After waiting until I thought the coast was clear, I worked my way very cautiously back to the vicinity of the house to find out what was going on. Fortunately, I took advantage of the luxuriant shrubbery in the old garden at the rear of the house, and when I looked out from the last box bush that screened me, about twenty yards from the back porch, I perceived that I was too soon, for there were standing, sitting and walking about quite a number of the bluecoats. I jumped back behind the group of box trees, and, flinging myself flat under a thick fir, crawled close up to the trunk under the low-hanging branches, and lay there for some hours.

I saw my brother brought out from the office on a mattress, and placed in the "Hickory Hill" carriage, to which was hitched Mr. Wichkam's horses, and then saw him driven away, a soldier on the box and a mounted guard surrounding him. He was carried to the "White House" in this way, and then sent by water to Fortress Monroe. This party had been sent out especially to capture him, and he was held as a hostage (for the safety of some Federal officers we had captured) for nine long, weary months.

The next day I found out that all the horses but one had been saved by the faithfulness of our servants. The one lost, my brother's favourite and best horse, was ridden straight into the column by Scott, a negro servant, who had him out for exercise. Before he knew our enemies, he and the horse were prisoners. Scott watched for his opportunity, and, not being guarded, soon got away. By crawling through a culvert, under the road, while the cavalry was passing along, he made his way into a deep ditch in the adjoining field, thence succeeded in reaching the farm where the rest of the horses were, and hurried them off to a safe place in the woods, just as the Federal cavalry rode up to get them.

In a letter dated Culpeper, July 26th, to my brother's wife, my father thus urges resignation:

“I received, last night, my darling daughter, your letter of the 18th from ‘Hickory Hill.’... You must not be sick while Fitzhugh is away, or he will be more restless under his separation. Get strong and hearty by his return, that he may the more rejoice at the sight of you.... I can appreciate your distress at Fitzhugh’s situation. I deeply sympathise with it, and in the lone hours of the night I groan in sorrow at his captivity and separation from you. But we must bear it, exercise all our patience, and do nothing to aggravate the evil. This, besides injuring ourselves, would rejoice our enemies and be sinful in the eyes of God. In His own good time He will relieve us and make all things work together for our good, if we give Him our love and place in Him our trust. I can see no harm that can result from Fitzhugh’s capture, except his detention. I feel assured that he will be well attended to. He will be in the hands of old army officers and surgeons, most of whom are men of principle and humanity. His wound, I understand, has not been injured by his removal, but is doing well. Nothing would do him more harm than for him to learn that you were sick and sad. How could he get well? So cheer up and prove your fortitude and patriotism.... You may think of Fitzhugh and love him as much as you please, but do not grieve over him or grow sad.”

From Williamsport, to my mother, he thus writes of his son’s capture:

“I have heard with great grief that Fitzhugh has been captured by the enemy. Had not expected that he would be taken from his bed and carried off, but we must bear this additional affliction with fortitude and resignation, and not repine at the will of God. It will eventuate in some good that we know not of now. We must bear our labours and hardships manfully. Our noble men are cheerful and confident. I constantly remember you in my thoughts and prayers.”

On July 12th, from near Hagerstown, he writes again about him:

“The consequences of war are horrid enough at best, surrounded by all the ameliorations of civilisation and Christianity. I am very sorry for the injuries done the family at Hickory Hill, and particularly that our dear old Uncle Williams, in his eightieth year, should be subjected to such treatment. But we cannot help it, and must endure it. You will, however, learn before this reaches you that our success at Gettysburg was not so great as reported--in fact, that we failed to drive the enemy from his position, and that our army withdrew to the Potomac. Had the river not unexpectedly risen, all would have been well with us; but God, in His all-wise providence, willed otherwise, and our communications have been interrupted and almost cut off. The waters have subsided to about four feet, and, if they continue, by

to-morrow, I hope, our communications will be open. I trust that a merciful God, our only hope and refuge, will not desert us in this hour of need, and will deliver us by His almighty hand, that the whole world may recognise His power and all hearts be lifted up in adoration and praise of His unbounded loving-kindness. We must, however, submit to His almighty will, whatever that may be. May God guide and protect us all is my constant prayer.”

In 1868, in a letter to Major Wm. M. McDonald, of Berryville, Clarke County, Virginia, who was intending to write a school history, and had written to my father, asking for information about some of his great battles, the following statement appears:

“As to the battle of Gettysburg, I must again refer you to the official accounts. Its loss was occasioned by a combination of circumstances. It was commenced in the absence of correct intelligence. It was continued in the effort to overcome the difficulties by which we were surrounded, and it would have been gained could one determined and united blow have been delivered by our whole line. As it was, victory trembled in the balance for three days, and the battle resulted in the infliction of as great an amount of injury as was received and in frustrating the Federal campaign for the season.”

After my brother’s capture I went to Richmond, taking with me his horses and servants. After remaining there a short time, I mounted my mare and started back to the army, which I found at its old camping-ground in Culpeper. I stopped at first for a few days with my father. He was very glad to see me and he could tell him all about my mother and sisters, and many other friends whom I had just left in Richmond. He appeared to be unchanged in manner and appearance. The disappointment in the Gettysburg campaign, to which he alludes in his letter to my mother, was not shown in anything he said or did. He was calm and dignified with all, at times bright and cheerful, and always had a pleasant word for those about him. The army lay inactive, along the line of the Rappahannock and the Rapidan for two months, watching the enemy, who was in our front. We were very anxious to attack or to be attacked, but each general desired to fight on ground of his own choosing.

During this period, and indeed at all times, my father was fully employed. Besides the care of his own immediate command, he advised with the President and Secretary of War as to the movements and dispositions of the other armies in the Confederacy. In looking over his correspondence one is astonished at the amount of it and at its varied character. He always answered all letters addressed to him, from whatever source, if it was possible. During this winter he

devoted himself especially to looking after the welfare of his troops, their clothing, shoes, and rations, all three of which were becoming very scarce. Often, indeed, his army had only a few days' rations in sight. Here are some letters written to the authorities, showing how he was hampered in his movements by the deficiencies existing in the quartermaster's and commissary departments. To the Quartermaster-General, at Richmond, he writes, October, 1863, after his movement around General Meade's right, to Manassas:

"...The want of supplies of shoes, clothing 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 snow probable, unless they were better provided to encounter them without suffering. I should, otherwise have endeavoured to detain General Meade near the Potomac, if I could not throw him to the north side."

In a letter of the same time to the Honourable James A. Seddon, Secretary of War:

"...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 position. Nothing prevented 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 war was the cheerfulness and alacrity exhibited by this army in the pursuit of the enemy under all the trial and privations to which it was exposed...."

Later on, in January, when the severe weather commenced, he again writes to the Quartermaster-General on the same subject:

"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 that 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, who were unable to bear the exposure of duty, being destitute of shoes and blankets.... The supply, by running the blockade, has become so precarious that I think we should turn our attention chiefly to our own resources, and I should like to be informed how far the latter can be counted upon.... I trust that no efforts will be spared to develop our own resources of supply, as a further dependence upon those from abroad can result in nothing but

increase of suffering and want. I am, with great respect,

“Your obedient servant,

“R. E. Lee, General.”

There was at this time a great revival of religion in the army. My father became much interested in it, and did what he could to promote in his camps all sacred exercises. Reverend J. W. Jones, in his “Personal Reminiscences of General R. E. Lee,” says:

“General Lee’s orders and reports always gratefully recognised ‘The Lord of Hosts’ as the ‘Giver of Victory,’ and expressed an humble dependence upon and trust in Him.’

All his correspondence shows the same devout feeling.

On August 13, 1863, he issued the following order:

“Headquarters, Army Northern Virginia, August 13, 1863.

“The President of the Confederate States has, in the name of the people, appointed August 21st as a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer. A strict observance of the day is enjoined upon the officers and soldiers of this army. All military duties, except such as are absolutely necessary, will be suspended. The commanding officers of brigades and regiments are requested to cause divine services, suitable to the occasion, to be performed in their respective commands. Soldiers! we have sinned against Almighty God. We have forgotten His signal mercies, and have cultivated a revengeful, haughty, and boastful spirit. We have not remembered that the defenders of a just cause should be pure in His eyes; that ‘our times are in His hands,’ and we have relied too much on our own arms for the achievement of our independence. God is our only refuge and our strength. Let us humble ourselves before Him. Let us confess our many sins, and beseech Him to give us a higher courage, a purer patriotism, and more determined will; that He will hasten the time when war, with its sorrows and sufferings, shall cease, and that He will give us a name and place among the nations of the earth.

“R. E. Lee, General.”

His was a practical, every-day religion, which supported him all through his life, enabled him to bear with equanimity every reverse of fortune, and to accept her gifts without undue elation. During this period of rest, so unusual to the Army of Northern Virginia, several reviews

were held before the commanding general. I remember being present when that of the Third Army Corps, General A. P. Hill commanding, took place. Some of us young cavalymen, then stationed near the Rappahannock, rode over to Orange Court House to see this grand military pageant. From all parts of the army, officers and men who could get leave came to look on, and from all the surrounding country the people, old and young, ladies and children, came in every pattern of vehicle and on horseback, to see twenty thousand of that “incomparable infantry” of the Army of Northern Virginia pass in review before their great commander.

The General was mounted on Traveller, looking very proud of his master, who had on sash and sword, which he very rarely wore, a pair of new cavalry gauntlets, and, I think, a new hat. At any rate, he looked unusually fine, and sat his horse like a perfect picture of grace and power. The infantry was drawn up in column by divisions, with their bright muskets all glittering in the sun, their battle-flags standing straight out before the breeze, and their bands playing, awaiting the inspection of the General, before they broke into column by companies and marched past him in review. When all was ready, General Hill and staff rode up to General Lee, and the two generals, with their respective staffs, galloped around front and rear of each of the three divisions standing motionless on the plain. As the cavalcade reached the head of each division, its commanding officer joined in and followed as far as the next division, so that there was a continual infusion of fresh groups into the original one all along the lines. Traveller started with a long lope, and never changed his stride. His rider sat erect and calm, not noticing anything but the gray lines of men whom he knew so well. The pace was very fast, as there were nine good miles to go, and the escort began to become less and less, dropping out one by one from different causes as Traveller raced along without check. When the General drew up, after this nine-mile gallop, under the standard at the reviewing-stand, flushed with the exercise as well as with pride in his brave men, he raised his hat and saluted. Then arose a shout of applause and admiration from the entire assemblage, the memory of which to this day moistens the eye of every old soldier. The corps was then passed in review at a quick-step, company front. It was a most imposing sight. After it was all over, my father rode up to several carriages whose occupants he knew and gladdened them by a smile, a word, or a shake of the hand. He found several of us young officers with some pretty cousins of his from Richmond, and he was very bright and cheerful, joking us young people about each other. His letters to my mother and sister this summer and fall help to give an insight into his thoughts and feelings. On July 15th, from Bunker Hill, in a letter to his wife, he says:

“...The army has returned to Virginia. Its return is rather sooner than I had originally contemplated, but having accomplished much of what I proposed on leaving the Rappahannock--namely, relieving the valley of the presence of the enemy and drawing his army north of the Potomac--I determined to recross the latter river. The enemy, after centering his forces in our front, began to fortify himself in his position and bring up his troops, militia, etc.--and those around Washington and Alexandria. This gave him enormous odds. It also circumscribed our limits for procuring subsistence for men and animals, which, with the uncertain state of the river, rendered it hazardous for us to continue on the north side. It has been raining a great deal since we first crossed the Potomac, making the roads horrid and embarrassing our operations. The night we recrossed it rained terribly, yet we got all over safe, save such vehicles as broke down on the road from the mud, rocks, etc. We are all well. I hope we will yet be able to damage our adversaries when they meet us. That it should be so, we must implore the forgiveness of God for our sins, and the continuance of His blessings. There is nothing but His almighty power that can sustain us. God bless you all....”

Later, July 26th, he writes from Camp Culpeper:

“...After crossing the Potomac, finding that the Shenandoah was six feet above the fording-stage, and, having waited for a week for it to fall, so that I might cross into Loudoun, fearing that the enemy might take advantage of our position and move upon Richmond, I determined to ascend the Valley and cross into Culpeper. Two corps are here with me. The third passed Thornton’s Gap, and I hope will be in striking distance to-morrow. The army has laboured hard, endured much, and behaved nobly. It has accomplished all that could be reasonably expected. It ought not to have been expected to perform impossibilities, or to have fulfilled the anticipations of the thoughtless and unreasonable.”

On August 2d, from the same camp, he again writes to my mother:

“...I have heard of some doctor having reached Richmond, who had seen our son at Fortress Monroe. He said that his wound is improving, and that he himself was well and walking about on crutches. The exchange of prisoners that had been going on has, for some cause, been suspended, owing to some crotchet or other, but I hope will soon be resumed, and that we shall have him back soon. The armies are in such close proximity that frequent collisions are common along the outposts. Yesterday the enemy laid down two or three pontoon bridges across the Rappahannock and crossed his cavalry, with a big force of his infantry. It looked at first as if it were the advance of his

army, and, as I had not intended to deliver battle, I directed our cavalry to retire slowly before them and to check their too rapid pursuit. Finding, later in the day, that their army was not following, I ordered out the infantry and drove them back to the river. I suppose they intended to push on to Richmond by this or some other route. I trust, however, they will never reach there....”

On August 23d, from the camp near Orange Court House, General Lee writes to Mrs. Lee:

“...My camp is near Mr. Erasmus Taylor’s house, who has been very kind in contributing to our comfort. His wife sends us every day, buttermilk, loaf bread, ice, and such vegetables as she has. I cannot get her to desist, though I have made two special visits to that effect. All the brides have come on a visit to the army: Mrs. Ewell, Mrs. Walker, Mrs. Heth, etc. General Meade’s army is north of the Rappahannock along the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. He is very quiet....”

“September 4, 1863.

“...You see I am still here. When I wrote last, the indications were that the enemy would move against us any day; but this past week he has been very quiet, and seems at present to continue so. I was out looking at him yesterday, from Clarke’s Mountain. He has spread himself over a large surface and looks immense....”

And on September 18th, from the same camp:

“...The enemy state that they have heard of a great reduction in our forces here, and are now going to drive us back to Richmond. I trust they will not succeed; but our hope and our refuge is in our merciful Father in Heaven....”

On October 9th, the Army of Northern Virginia was put in motion, and was pushed around Meade’s right. Meade was gradually forced back to a position near the old battlefield at Manassas. Although we had hard marching, much skirmishing, and several severe fights between the cavalry of both armies, nothing permanent was accomplished, and in about ten days we were back on our old lines. In a letter of October 19, 1863, to his wife, my father says:

“...I have returned to the Rappahannock. I did not pursue with the main army beyond Bristoe or Broad Run. Our advance went as far as Bull Run, where the enemy was entrenched, extending his right as far as ‘Chantilly,’ in the yard of which he was building a redoubt. I

could have thrown him farther back, but saw no chance of bringing him to battle, and it would only have served to fatigue our troops by advancing farther. I should certainly have endeavored to throw them north of the Potomac; but thousands were barefooted, thousands with fragments of shoes, and all without overcoats, blankets, or warm clothing. I could not bear to expose them to certain suffering and an uncertain issue....”

On October 25th, from “Camp Rappahannock,” he writes again to my mother:

“...I moved yesterday into a nice pine thicket, and Perry is to-day engaged in constructing a chimney in front of my tent, which will make it warm and comfortable. I have no idea when Fitzhugh [his son, Major General Fitzhugh Lee] will be exchanged. The Federal authorities still resist all exchanges, because they think it is to our interest to make them. Any desire expressed on our part for the exchange of any individual magnifies the difficulty, as they at once think some great benefit is to result to us from it. His detention is very grievous to me, and, besides, I want his services. I am glad you have some socks for the army. Send them to me. They will come safely. Tell the girls [his daughters] 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 railroad, 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....”

One can see from these letters of my father how deeply he felt for the sufferings of his soldiers, and how his plans were hindered by inadequate supplies of food and clothing. I heard him constantly allude to these troubles; indeed, they seemed never absent from his mind.

Chapter VI

The Winter of 1863-4

The Lee family in Richmond--The General's letters to them from Camps Rappahannock and Rapidan--Death of Mrs. Fitzhugh Lee--Preparations to meet General Grant--The Wilderness--Spottsylvania Court House--Death of General Stuart--General Lee's illness

My mother had quite recently rented a house on Clay Street in Richmond which, though small, gave her a roof of her own, and it also enabled her at times to entertain some of her many friends. Of this new home, and of a visit of a soldier's wife to him, the General thus writes:

“Camp Rappahannock, November 1, 1863.

“I received yesterday, dear Mary, your letter of the 29th, and am very glad to learn that you find your new abode so comfortable and so well arranged. The only fault I find in it is that it is not large enough for you all, and that Charlotte, whom I fear requires much attention, is by herself. Where is ‘Life’ to go, too, for I suppose she is a very big personage? But you have never told me where it is situated, or how I am to direct to you. Perhaps that may be the cause of delay in my letters. I am sorry you find such difficulty in procuring yarn for socks, etc. I fear my daughters have not taken to the spinning-wheel and loom, as I have recommended. I shall not be able to recommend them to the brave soldiers for wives. I had a visit from a soldier's wife to-day, who was on a visit with her husband. She was from Abbeville district, S. C. Said she had not seen her husband for more than two years, and, as he had written to her for clothes, she herself thought she would bring them on. It was the first time she had travelled by railroad, but she got along very well by herself. She brought an entire suit of her own manufacture for her husband. She spun the yarn and made the clothes herself. She clad her three young children in the same way, and had on a beautiful pair of gloves she had made for herself. Her children she had left with her sister. She said she had been here a week and must return to-morrow, and thought she could not go back without seeing me. Her husband accompanied her to my tent, in his nice gray suit. She was very pleasing in her address and modest in her manner, and was clad in a nice, new alpaca. I am certain she could not have made that. Ask Misses Agnes and Sally Warwick what they think of that. They need not ask me for permission to get married until they can do likewise. She, in fact, was an admirable woman. Said she was willing to give up everything she had in the world to attain our independence, and the only complaint she made of the conduct of our enemies was their arming our servants against us. Her greatest difficulty was to procure shoes. She made them for herself and children of cloth with leather soles. She sat with me about ten minutes and took her leave--another mark of sense--and made no request for herself or husband. I wrote you about my wants in my former letter. My rheumatism I hope is a little better, but I have had to-day, and indeed always have, much pain. I trust it will pass away.... I have just had a visit from my nephews, Fitz, John, and Henry [General “Fitz” Lee, and his two

brothers, Major John Mason Lee and Captain Henry Carter Lee]. The former is now on a little expedition. The latter accompanies him. As soon as I was left alone, I committed them in a fervent prayer to the care and guidance of our Heavenly Father.... I pray you may be made whole and happy.

“Truly and devotedly yours,

“R. E. Lee.”

Another letter from the same camp is interesting:

“Camp Rappahannock, November 5, 1863.

“I received last night, dear Mary, your letter of the 2d.... I am glad to hear that Charlotte is better. I hope that she will get strong and well, poor child. The visit of her ‘grandpa’ will cheer her up. I trust, and I know, he gave her plenty of good advice. Tell Mrs. Atkinson that her son Nelson is a very good scout and a good soldier. I wish I had some way of promoting him. I received the bucket of butter she was so kind as to send me, but have had no opportunity of returning the vessel, which I hope to be able to do. I am sorry Smith does not like your house. I have told you my only objection to it, and wish it were large enough to hold Charlotte. It must have reminded you of old times to have your brother Carter and Uncle Williams [Mr. Charles Carter Lee, the General’s brother; Mr. Williams Carter, the General’s uncle] to see you. I think my rheumatism is better to-day. I have been through a great deal with comparatively little suffering. I have been wanting to review the cavalry for some time, and appointed to-day with fear and trembling. I had not been on horseback for five days previously and feared I should not get through. The governor was here and told me Mrs. Letcher had seen you recently. I saw all my nephews looking very handsome, and Rob too. The latter says he has written to you three times since he crossed the river. Tell “Chas.” I think F’s old regiment, the 9th, made the best appearance in review.

“While on the ground, a man rode up to me and said he was just from Alexandria and had been requested to give me a box, which he handed me, but did not know who sent it. It contained a handsome pair of gilt spurs. Good-night. May a kind heavenly Father guard you all.

“Truly and affectionately,

“R. E. Lee.”

When our cavalry was reviewed the preceding summer, it happened that

we engaged the next day, June 9th, the enemy's entire force of that arm, in the famous battle of Brandy Station. Since then there had been a sort of superstition amongst us that if we wanted a fight all that was necessary was to have a review. We were now on the same ground we had occupied in June, and the enemy was in force just across the river. As it happened, the fighting did take place, though the cavalry was not alone engaged. Not the day after the review, but on November 7th, Meade advanced and crossed the Rappahannock, while our army fell back and took up our position on the line of the Rapidan.

Before the two armies settled down into winter quarters, General Meade tried once more to get at us, and on the 26th of November, with ten days' rations and in light marching order, he crossed the Rapidan and attempted to turn our right. But he was unable to do anything, being met at every point by the Army of Northern Virginia, heavily entrenched and anxious for an attack. Long says:

"Meade declared that the position could not be carried without the loss of thirty thousand men. This contingency was too terrible to be entertained--yet the rations of the men were nearly exhausted, and nothing remained but retreat. This was safely accomplished on the night of December 1st...."

Lee was more surprised at the retreat of Meade than he had been at his advance, and his men, who had been in high spirits at the prospect of obliterating the memory of Gettysburg, were sadly disappointed at the loss of the opportunity. To my mother, General Lee wrote on December 4th, from "Camp Rapidan":

"...You will probably have seen that General Meade has retired to his old position on the Rappahannock, without giving us battle. I had expected from his movements, and all that I had heard, that it was his intention to do so, and after the first day, when I thought it necessary to skirmish pretty sharply with him, on both flanks, to ascertain his views, I waited, patiently, his attack. On Tuesday, however, I thought he had changed his mind, and that night made preparations to move around his left next morning and attack him. But when day dawned he was nowhere to be seen. He had commenced to withdraw at dark Tuesday evening. We pursued to the Rapidan, but he was over. Owing to the nature of the ground, it was to our advantage to receive rather than to make the attack. I am greatly disappointed at his getting off with so little damage, but we do not know what is best for us. I believe a kind God has ordered all things for our good...."

About this time the people of the City of Richmond, to show their

esteem for my father, desired to present him with a home. General Lee, on hearing of it, thus wrote to the President of the Council:

“...I assure you, sir, that no want of appreciation of the honour conferred upon me by this resolution--or insensibility to the kind feelings which prompted it--induces me to ask, as I most respectfully do, that no further proceedings be taken with reference to the subject. The house is not necessary for the use of my family, and my own duties will prevent my residence in Richmond. I should therefore be compelled to decline the generous offer, and I trust that whatever means the City Council may have to spare for this purpose may be devoted to the relief of the families of our soldiers in the field, who are more in want of assistance, and more deserving it, than myself....”

My brother was still in prison, and his detention gave my father great concern. In a letter to my mother, written November 21st, he says:

“...I see by the papers that our son has been sent to Fort Lafayette. Any place would be better than Fort Monroe, with Butler in command. His long confinement is very grievous to me, yet it may all turn out for the best....”

To his daughter-in-law my father was devoutly attached. His love for her was like that for his own children, and when her husband was captured and thrown, wounded, into prison, his great tenderness for her was shown on all occasions. Her death about this time, though expected, was a great blow to him. When news came to Gen. W. H. F. Lee, at Fortress Monroe, that his wife Charlotte was dying in Richmond, he made application to General Butler, commanding that post, that he be allowed to go to her for 48 hours, his brother Custis Lee, of equal rank with himself, having formally volunteered in writing to take his place, as a hostage, was curtly and peremptorily refused.

In his letter to my mother, of December 27th, my father says:

“...Custis’s despatch which I received last night demolished all the hopes, in which I had been indulging during the day, of dear Charlotte’s recovery. It has pleased God to take from us one exceedingly dear to us, and we must be resigned to His holy will. She, I trust, will enjoy peace and happiness forever, while we must patiently struggle on under all the ills that may be in store for us. What a glorious thought it is that she has joined her little cherubs and our angel Annie [his second daughter] in Heaven. Thus is link by link the strong chain broken that binds us to the earth, and our passage soothed to another world. Oh, that we may be at last united in that heaven of rest, where trouble and sorrow never enter, to join in an everlasting

chorus of praise and glory to our Lord and Saviour! I grieve for our lost darling as a father only can grieve for a daughter, and my sorrow is heightened by the thought of the anguish her death will cause our dear son and the poignancy it will give to the bars of his prison. May God in His mercy enable him to bear the blow He has so suddenly dealt, and sanctify it to his everlasting happiness!”

After Meade’s last move, the weather becoming wintry, the troops fixed up for themselves winter quarters, and the cavalry and artillery were sent back along the line of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad, where forage could be more easily obtained for their horses. On January 24, 1864, the General writes to my mother:

“...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 a thousand without blankets.”

Lee was the idol of his men. Colonel Charles Marshall, who was his A. D. C. and military secretary, illustrates this well in the following incident:

“While the Army was on the Rapidan, in the winter of 1863-4, it became necessary, as was often the case, to put the men on very short rations. Their duty was hard, not only on the outposts during the winter, but in the construction of roads, to facilitate communication between the different parts of the army. One day General Lee received a letter from a private soldier, whose name I do not now remember, informing him of the work that he had to do, and stating that his rations were not sufficient to enable him to undergo the fatigue. He said, however, that if it was absolutely necessary to put him on such short allowance, he would make the best of it, but that he and his comrades wanted to know if General Lee was aware that his men were getting so little to eat, because if he was aware of it he was sure there must be some necessity for it. General Lee did not reply directly to the letter, but issued a general order in which he informed the soldiers of his efforts in their behalf, and that their privation was beyond his means of present relief, but assured them that he was making every effort to procure sufficient supplies. After that there was not a murmur in the army, and the hungry men went cheerfully to their hard work.”

When I returned to the army in the summer, I reported to my old brigade, which was gallantly commanded by John R. Chambliss, colonel of the

13th Virginia Cavalry, the senior officer of the brigade. Later, I had been assigned to duty with General Fitz Lee and was with him at this time. My mother was anxious that I should be with my father, thinking, I have no doubt, that my continued presence would be a comfort to him. She must have written him to that effect, for in a letter to her, dated February, 1864, he says:

“...In reference to Rob, his company would be a great pleasure and comfort to me, and he would be extremely useful in various ways, but I am opposed to officers surrounding themselves with their sons and relatives. It is wrong in principle, and in that case selections would be made from private and social relations, rather than for the public good. There is the same objection to his going with Fitz Lee. I should prefer Rob’s being in the line, in an independent position, where he could rise by his own merit and not through the recommendation of his relatives. I expect him soon, when I can better see what he himself thinks. The young men have no fondness for the society of the old general. He is too heavy and sombre for them....”

If anything was said to me on this occasion by my father, I do not remember it. I rather think that something prevented the interview, for I cannot believe that it could have entirely escaped my memory. At any rate, I remained with General Fitz Lee until my brother’s return from prison in April of that year. Fitz Lee’s brigade camped near Charlottesville, on the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad, in January, in order that forage could be more readily obtained. The officers, to amuse themselves and to return in part the courtesies and kindnesses of the ladies of the town, gave a ball. It was a grand affair for those times. Committees were appointed and printed invitations issued. As a member of the invitation committee, I sent one to the general commanding the army. Here is his opinion of it, in a letter to me:

“...I inclose a letter for you, which has been sent to my care. I hope you are well and all around you are so. Tell Fitz I grieve over the hardships and sufferings of his men, in their late expedition. I should have preferred his waiting for more favourable weather. He accomplished much under the circumstances, but would have done more in better weather. I am afraid he was anxious to get back to the ball. This is a bad time for such things. We have too grave subjects on hand to engage in such trivial amusements. I would rather his officers should entertain themselves in fattening their horses, healing their men, and recruiting their regiments. There are too many Lees on the committee. I like all to be present at the battles, but can excuse them at balls. But the saying is, ‘Children will be children.’ I think he had better move his camp farther from Charlottesville, and perhaps he will get more work and less play. He and I are too old for

such assemblies. I want him to write me how his men are, his horses, and what I can do to full up the ranks....”

In this winter and spring of 1864, every exertion possible was made by my father to increase the strength of his army and to improve its efficiency. He knew full well that the enemy was getting together an enormous force, and that his vast resources would be put forth to crush us in the spring. His letters at this time to President Davis and the Secretary of War show how well he understood the difficulties of his position.

“In none of them,” General Long says, “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 upon his shoulders the whole burden of the conduct of the war.”

In a letter to President Davis, written March, 1864, he says:

“Mr. President: Since my former letter on the subject, the indications that operations in Virginia will be vigorously prosecuted by the enemy are stronger than they then were. General Grant has returned from the army in the West. He is, at present, with the Army of the Potomac, which is being organised and recruited.... Every train brings recruits and it is stated that every available regiment at the North is added to it....

Their plans are not sufficiently developed to discover them, but I think we can assume that, if General Grant is to direct operations on this frontier, he will concentrate a large force on one or more lines, and prudence dictates that we should make such preparations as are in our power....”

On April 6th he again writes to the President:

“...All the information I receive tends to show that the great effort of the enemy in this campaign will be made in Virginia.... Reinforcements are certainly daily arriving to the Army of the Potomac.... The tone of the Northern papers, as well as the impression prevailing in their armies, go to show that Grant with a large force is to move against Richmond.... The movements and reports of the enemy may be intended to mislead us, and should therefore be carefully observed. But all the information that reaches me goes to strengthen the belief that General Grant is preparing to move against Richmond.”

The question of feeding his army was ever before him. To see his men hungry and cold, and his horses ill fed, was a great pain to him. To

Mr. Davis he thus writes on this subject:

“Headquarters, 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 to 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.

“I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,

“R. E. Lee, General.”

In a letter written to our cousin, Margaret Stuart, of whom he was very fond, dated March 29th, he says:

“...The indications at present are that we shall have a hard struggle. General Grant is with the Army of the Potomac. All the officer’s wives, sick, etc., have been sent to Washington. No ingress into or egress from the lines is now permitted and no papers are allowed to come out--they claim to be assembling a large force....”

Again, April 28th, he writes to this same young cousin:

“...I dislike to send letters within reach of the enemy, as they might serve, if captured, to bring distress on others. But you must sometimes cast your thoughts on the Army of Northern Virginia, and never forget it in your prayers. It is preparing for a great struggle, but I pray and trust that the great God, mighty to deliver, will spread over it His almighty arms, and drive its enemies before it....”

One perceives from these letters how clearly my father foresaw the storm that was so soon to burst upon him. He used every means within his power to increase and strengthen his army to meet it, and he continually urged the authorities at Richmond to make preparations in the way of supplies of ammunition, rations, and clothing.

I shall not attempt to describe any part of this campaign except in a very general way. It has been well written up by both sides, and what

was done by the Army of Northern Virginia we all know. I saw my father only once or twice, to speak to him, during the thirty odd days from the Wilderness to Petersburg, but, in common with all his soldiers, I felt that he was ever near, that he could be entirely trusted with the care of us, that he would not fail us, that it would all end well. The feeling of trust that we had in him was simply sublime. When I say “we,” I mean the men of my age and standing, officers and privates alike. Older heads may have begun to see the “beginning of the end” when they saw that slaughter and defeat did not deter our enemy, but made him the more determined in his “hammering” process; but it never occurred to me, and to thousands and thousands like me, that there was any occasion for uneasiness. We firmly believed that “Marse Robert,” as his soldiers lovingly called him, would bring us out of this trouble all right.

When Grant reached Spottsylvania Court House, he sent all of his cavalry, under Sheridan, to break our communications. They were met at Yellow Tavern, six miles from Richmond, by General Stuart, with three brigades of Confederate cavalry, and were attacked so fiercely that they were held there nearly all day, giving time for the troops around Richmond to concentrate for the defense of the city.

In this fight General Stuart fell mortally wounded, and he died the next day in Richmond. The death of our noted cavalry leader was a great blow to our cause--a loss second only to that of Jackson.

Captain W. Gordon McCabe writes me:

“I was sitting on my horse very near to General Lee, who was talking to my colonel, William Johnson Pegram, when a courier galloped up with the despatch announcing that Stuart had been mortally wounded and was dying. General Lee was evidently greatly affected, and said slowly, as he folded up the despatch, ‘General Stuart has been mortally wounded: a most valuable and able officer.’ Then, after a moment, he added in a voice of deep feeling ‘HE NEVER BROUGHT ME A PIECE OF FALSE INFORMATION’--turned and looked away. What praise dearer to a soldier’s heart could fall from the lips of the commanding general touching his Chief of Cavalry! These simple words of Lee constitute, I think, the fittest inscription for the monument that is soon to be erected to the memory of the great cavalry leader of the ‘Army of Northern Virginia.’”

In a letter from my father to my mother, dated Spottsylvania Court House, May 16th, he says:

“...As I write I am expecting the sound of the guns every moment. I

grieve over the loss of our gallant officers and men, and miss their aid and sympathy. A more zealous, ardent, brave, and devoted soldier than Stuart the Confederacy cannot have. Praise be to God for having sustained us so far. I have thought of you very often in these eventful days. God bless and preserve you.”

General Lee, in his order announcing the death of Stuart, thus speaks of him:

“...Among the gallant soldiers who have fallen in this war, General Stuart was second to none in valour, in zeal, and in unflinching devotion to his country. His achievements form a conspicuous part of the history of this army, with which his name and services will be forever associated. To military capacity of a high order and to the noble virtues of the soldier he added the brighter graces of a pure life, guided and sustained by the Christian’s faith and hope. The mysterious hand of an all-wise God has removed him from the scene of his usefulness and fame. His grateful countrymen will mourn his loss and cherish his memory. To his comrades in arms he has left the proud recollections of his deeds and the inspiring influence of his example.”

Speaking of the operations around Spottsylvania Court House, Swinton, the historian of the Army of the Potomac, says:

“Before the lines of Spottsylvania, the Army of the Potomac had for twelve days and nights engaged in a fierce wrestle in which it had done all that valour 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 labours, fatigues, and sufferings of the troops, 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 forty thousand men had already fallen in the bloody encounters of the Wilderness and Spottsylvania, and the exhausted army began to lose its spirits. It was with joy, therefore, that it at length turned its back upon the lines of Spottsylvania.”

General Long, in his “Memoirs of General Lee,” speaking of our army at this time, says:

“In no previous operations did the Army of Northern Virginia display higher soldierly qualities. Regardless of numbers, every breach was filled, and, with unparalleled stubbornness, its lines were maintained. The soldiers of that army not only gratified their countrymen, but by their gallantry and vigour won the admiration of their enemies. Whenever the men in blue appeared they were met by those in gray, and

muzzle to muzzle and point to point they measured their foeman's strength."

When we learned that General Lee was ill--confined for a day or two to his tent, at the time he was confronting General Grant on the North Anna--this terrible thought forced itself upon us: Suppose disease should disable him, even for a time, or, worse, should take him forever from the front of his men! It could not be! It was too awful to consider! And we banished any such possibility from our minds. When we saw him out again, on the lines, riding Traveller as usual, it was as if some great crushing weight had been suddenly lifted from our hearts. Colonel Walter H. Taylor, his adjutant-general, says:

"The indisposition of General Lee...was more serious than was generally supposed. Those near him were very apprehensive lest he should be compelled to give up."

General Early also writes of this circumstance:

"One of his three corps commanders [Longstreet] had been disabled by wounds at the Wilderness, and another was too unwell to command his corps [A. P. Hill], while he (General Lee) was suffering from a most annoying and weakening disease. In fact, nothing but his own determined will enabled him to keep the field at all; and it was then rendered more manifest than ever that he was the head and front, the very life and soul of the army."

Chapter VII

Fronting the Army of the Potomac

Battle of Cold Harbour--Siege of Petersburg--The General intrusts a mission to his son Robert--Battle of the Crater--Grant crosses the James River--General Long's pen-picture of Lee--Knitting socks for the soldiers--A Christmas dinner--Incidents of camp life

From the North Anna River the Federal Army moved by its left flank, seeking to find its adversary unprepared, but the Army of Northern Virginia steadily confronted it, ever ready to receive any attack. At Cold Harbour they paused, facing each other, and General Grant,

having received sixteen thousand men from Butler by way of Yorktown on June 1st, made an attack, but found our lines immovable. In his "Memoirs" he writes:

"June 2d was spent in getting troops into position for attack on the 3d. On June 3d, 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 assault was repelled along the whole line, with the most terrible slaughter yet recorded in our war. Yet in a few hours these beaten men were ordered to move up to our lines again. Swinton, the historian of the Army of the Potomac, thus describes what happened when this order was sent to the men:

"The order was issued through these officers" (the corps commanders) "To their subordinate commanders, and from them descended through the wonted channels; but no man stirred, and the immobile lines pronounced a verdict, silent, yet emphatic, against further slaughter. The loss on the Union side in this sanguinary action was more than thirteen thousand, while on the part of the Confederates it is doubtful whether it reached that many hundreds."

Colonel Walter H. Taylor, in his "Four Years with General Lee," says:

"Soon after this, he (Grant) abandoned his chosen line of operations, and moved his army to the south side of the James River. The struggle from Wilderness to this point covers a period of about one month, during which time there had been an almost daily encounter of hostile arms, and the Army of Northern Virginia had placed hors de combat of the army under General Grant a number equal to its entire numerical strength at the commencement of the campaign, and, notwithstanding its own heavy losses and the reinforcements received by the enemy, still presented an impregnable front to its opponent, and constituted and insuperable barrier to General Grant's 'On to Richmond.'"

Thus after thirty days of marching, starving, fighting, and with a loss of more than sixty thousand men, General Grant reached the James River, near Petersburg, which he could have done at any time he so desired without the loss of a single man. The baffling of our determined foe so successfully raised the spirits of our rank and file, and their confidence in their commander knew no bounds.

The two armies now commenced a contest which could end only one way. If General Lee had been permitted to evacuate Petersburg and Richmond,

to fall back upon some interior point, nearer supplies for man and beast and within supporting distance of the remaining forces of the Confederacy, the surrender would certainly have been put off--possibly never have taken place--and the result of the war changed. The Army of the Potomac placed itself on the James, through whose channel it had easy access to the wide world whence to secure for itself an unlimited supply of men and munitions of war. General Lee, with a line thirty miles long to defend and with only 35,000 men to hold it, with no chance of reinforcements, no reserves with which to fill up the ranks lessened daily by death in battle and by disease, had to sit still and see his army, on half rations or less, melt away because it was deemed advisable by his government, for political and other purposes, to hold Richmond, the Confederacy's capital.

In an article by Lord Wolseley, in "Macmillan's Magazine," he says:

"Lee was opposed to the final defense of Richmond that was urged upon him for political, not military reasons. It was a great strategic error. General Grant's large army of men was easily fed, and its daily losses easily recruited from a near base; whereas, if it had been drawn into the interior after the little army with which Lee endeavoured to protect Richmond, its fighting strength would have been largely reduced by the detachments required to guard a long line of communications through a hostile country."

During the nine months the siege of Petersburg lasted, I saw my father but seldom. His headquarters were near the town, my command was on the extreme right of the army, and during the winter, in order to get forage, we were moved still further away, close to the border of North Carolina. During this summer, I had occasion, once or twice, to report to him at his headquarters, once about July 1st by his special order. I remember how we all racked our brains to account for this order, which was for me to report "at once to the commanding general," and many wild guesses were made by my young companions as to what was to become of me. Their surmises extended from my being shot for unlawful foraging to my being sent on a mission abroad to solicit the recognition of our independence. I reported at once, and found my father expecting me, with a bed prepared. It was characteristic of him that he never said a word about what I was wanted for until he was ready with full instructions. I was fed at once, for I was still hungry, my bed was shown me, and I was told to rest and sleep well, as he wanted me in the morning, and that I would need all my strength.

The next morning he gave me a letter to General Early, who, with his command, was at that time in Maryland, threatening Washington. My mission was to carry this letter to him. As Early had cut loose from

his communications with Virginia, and as there was a chance of any messenger being caught by raiding parties, my father gave me verbally the contents of his letter, and told me that if I saw any chance of my capture to destroy it, then, if I did reach the General, I should be able to tell him what he had written. He cautioned me to keep my own counsel, and to say nothing to any one as to my destination. Orders for a relay of horses from Staunton, where the railroad terminated, to the Potomac had been telegraphed, and I was to start at once. This I did, seeing my sisters and mother in Richmond while waiting for the train to Staunton, and having very great difficulty in keeping from them my destination. But I did, and, riding night and day, came up with General Early at a point in Maryland some miles beyond the old battlefield of Sharpsburg. I delivered the letter to him, returned to Petersburg, and reported to my father. Much gratified by the evident pleasure of the General at my diligence and at the news I had brought from Early and his men, after a night's rest and two good meals I returned to my command, never telling my comrades until long afterward what had been done to me by the commanding general.

My father's relations with the citizens of Petersburg were of the kindest description. The ladies were ever trying to make him more comfortable, sending him of their scanty fare more than they could well spare. He always tried to prevent them, and when he could do so without hurting their feelings he would turn over to the hospitals the dainties sent him--much to the disgust of his mess-steward, Bryan. Bryan was an Irishman, perfectly devoted to my father, and, in his opinion, there was nothing in the eatable line which was too good for the General. He was an excellent caterer, a good forager, and, but for my father's frowning down anything approaching lavishness, the headquarter's table would have made a much better show. During this period of the war, Bryan was so handicapped by the universal scarcity of all sorts of provisions that his talents were almost entirely hidden. The ladies not only were anxious to feed the General, but also to clothe him. From Camp Petersburg he writes to my mother, June 24th:

"...The ladies of Petersburg have sent me a nice set of shirts. They were given to me by Mrs. James R. Branch and her mother, Mrs. Thomas Branch. In fact, they have given me everything, which I fear they cannot spare--vegetables, bread, milk, ice-cream. To-day one of them sent me a nice peach--the first one I think I have seen for two years. I sent it to Mrs. Shippen [an invalid lady, in the yard of whose country place ("Violet Bank") Lee's tents were pitched]. Mr. Platt had services again to-day under the trees near my camp. We had quite a large congregation of citizens, ladies and gentlemen, and our usual number of soldiers. During the services, I constantly heard the shells crashing among the houses of Petersburg. Tell 'Life' [his pet name

for my sister Mildred] I send her a song composed by a French soldier. As she is so learned in the language, I want he to send my a reply in verse.”

June 30, 1864, the anniversary of his wedding day, he thus writes to my mother:

“...I was very glad to receive your letter yesterday, and to hear that you were better. I trust that you will continue to improve and soon be as well as usual. God grant that you may be entirely restored in His own good time. Do you recollect what a happy day thirty-three years ago this was? How many hopes and pleasures it gave birth to! God has been very merciful and kind to us, and how thankless and sinful I have been. I pray that He may continue His mercies and blessings to us, and give us a little peace and rest together in this world, and finally gather us and all He has given us around His throne in the world to come. The President has just arrived, and I must bring my letter to a close.”

My mother had been quite ill that summer, and my father’s anxiety for her comfort and welfare, his desire to be with her to help her, was very great. The sick in the Confederacy at this period of universal scarcity suffered for want of the simplest medicines. All that could be had were given to hospitals. To his youngest daughter the General writes, and sends to Mrs. Lee what little he could find in the way of fruit:

“...I received this morning by your brother your note of the 3d, and am glad to hear that your mother is better. I sent out immediately to try to find some lemons, but could only procure two, sent to me by a kind lady, Mrs. Kirkland, in Petersburg. These were gathered from her own trees. There are none to be purchased. I found one in my valise, dried up, which I also send, as it may prove of some value. I also put up some early apples which you can roast for your mother, and one pear. This is all the fruit I can get. You must go to the market every morning and see if you cannot find some fruit for her. There are no lemons to be had. Tell her lemonade is not as palatable or digestible as buttermilk. Try to get some good buttermilk for her. With ice, it is delicious and very nutritious.”

My sister Mildred had a pet squirrel which ran about the house in Richmond. She had named it “Custis Morgan,” after her brother Custis, and General John Morgan, the great cavalry leader of the western army. He ventured out one day to see the city, and never returned. In a letter to Mildred, July 10th, my father alludes to his escape, and apparently considers it a blessing:

“...I was pleased on the arrival of my little courier to learn that you were better, and that ‘Custis Morgan’ was still among the missing. I think the farther he gets from you the better you will be. The shells scattered the poor inhabitants of Petersburg so that many of the churches are closed. Indeed, they have been visited by the enemy’s shells. Mr. Platt, pastor of the principal Episcopal church, had services at my headquarters to-day. The services were under the trees, and the discourse on the subject of salvation....”

About this time, the enemy, having been at work on a mine for nearly a month, exploded it, and attacked our lines with a large force. The ensuing contest was called the Battle of the Crater. General Lee, having suspected that a mine was being run under his works, was partly prepared for it, and the attack was repulsed very quickly with great loss to the enemy. In the address of Capt. W. Gordon McCabe before the Association of the Army of Northern Virginia--November 2, 1876--speaking of this event, he says:

“From the mysterious paragraphs in the Northern papers, and from reports of deserters, though those last were vague and contradictory, Lee and Beauregard suspected that the enemy was mining in front of some one of the three salients on Beauregard’s front, and the latter officer had in consequence directed counter-mines to be sunk from all three, meanwhile constructing gorge-lines in the rear upon which the troops might retire in case of surprise or disaster.... But the counter-mining on the part of the Confederates was after a time discontinued, owing to the lack of proper tools, the inexperience of the troops in such work, and the arduous nature of their service in the trenches.”

The mine was sprung July 30th. On the 31st, the General writes:

“...Yesterday morning the enemy sprung a mine under one of our batteries on the line and got possession of a portion of our intrenchments. It was the part defended by General Beauregard’s troops, I sent General Mahone with two brigades of Hill’s corps, who charged them handsomely, recapturing the intrenchments and guns, twelve stands of colours, seventy-three officers, including General Bartlett, his staff, three colonels, and eight hundred and fifty enlisted men. There were upward of five hundred of his dead and unburied in the trenches, among them many officers and blacks. He suffered severely. He has withdrawn his troops from the north side of the James. I do not know what he will attempt next. He is mining on other points along our line. I trust he will not succeed in bettering his last attempt....”

Grant, by means of a pontoon bridge, permanently established across

the James, was able to move his troops very quickly from one side to the other, and could attack either flank, while making a feint on the opposite one. This occurred several times during the summer, but General Lee seemed always to have anticipated the movement and to be able to distinguish the feint from the real attack. On August 14th, he speaks of one of these movements in a letter to my mother:

“...I have been kept from church to-day by the enemy’s crossing to the north side of the James River and the necessity of moving troops to meet him. I do not know what his intentions are. He is said to be cutting a canal across the Dutch Gap, a point in the river--but I cannot, as yet, discover it. I was up there yesterday, and saw nothing to indicate it. We shall ascertain in a day or two. I received to-day a kind letter from Reverend Mr. Cole, of Culpeper Court House. He is a most excellent man in all the relations of life. He says there is not a church standing in all that country, within the lines formerly occupied by the enemy. All are razed to the ground, and the materials used often for the vilest purposes. Two of the churches at the Court House barely escaped destruction. The pews were all taken out to make seats for the theatre. The fact was reported to the commanding officer by their own men of the Christian Commission, but he took no steps to rebuke or arrest it. We must suffer patiently to the end, when all things will be made right....”

To oppose this movement (of August 14th), which was in heavy force, our cavalry division was moved over to the north side, together with infantry and artillery, and we had a very lively time for several days. In the engagement on the 15th of August I was shot in the arm and disabled for about three weeks. The wound was a very simple one--just severe enough to give me a furlough, which I enjoyed intensely. Time heals all wounds, it is said. I remember it cured mine all too soon, for, being on a wounded leave, provided it did not keep one in bed, was the best luck a soldier could have. I got back the last of September, and in passing stopped to see my father. I take from General Long a pen-picture of him at this time, which accords with my own recollection of his appearance:

“...General Lee continued in excellent health and bore his many cares with his usual equanimity. He had aged somewhat in appearance since the beginning of the war, but had rather gained than lost in physical vigour, from the severe life he had led. His hair had grown gray, but his face had the ruddy hue of health, and his eyes were as clear and bright as ever. His dress was always a plain, gray uniform, with cavalry boots reaching to his knees, and a broad-brimmed gray felt hat. He seldom wore a weapon, and his only mark of rank was the stars on his collar. Though always abstemious in diet, he seemed able to

bear any amount of fatigue, being capable of remaining in his saddle all day and at his desk half the night.”

I cannot refrain from further quoting from the same author this beautiful description of the mutual love, respect, and esteem existing between my father and his soldiers:

“No commander was ever more careful, and never had care for the comfort of an army given rise to greater devotion. He was constantly calling the attention of the authorities to the wants of his soldiers, making every effort to provide them with food and clothing. The feeling for him was one of love, not of awe and dread. They could approach him with the assurance that they would be received with kindness and consideration, and that any just complaint would receive proper attention. There was no condescension in his manner, but he was ever simple, kind, and sympathetic, and his men, while having unbounded faith in him as a leader, almost worshipped him as a man. These relations of affection and mutual confidence between the army and its commander had much to do with the undaunted bravery displayed by the men, and bore a due share in the many victories they gained.”

Colonel Charles Marshall, in his address before the “Association of the Army of Northern Virginia,” also alludes to this “wonderful influence over the troops under his command. I can best describe that influence by saying that such was the love and veneration of the men for him that they came to look upon the cause as General Lee’s cause, and they fought for it because they loved him. To them he represented cause, country, and all.”

All persons who were ever thrown into close relations with him had somewhat these same feelings. How could they help it? Here is a letter to his youngest daughter which shows his beautiful love and tenderness for us all. Throughout the war, he constantly took the time from his arduous labours to send to his wife and daughters such evidences of his affection for them:

“Camp Petersburg, November 6, 1864.

“My Precious Life: This is the first day I have had leisure to answer your letter. I enjoyed it very much at the time of its reception, and have enjoyed it since, but I have often thought of you in the meantime, and have seen you besides. Indeed, I may say, you are never out of my thoughts. I hope you think of me often, and if you could know how earnestly I desire your true happiness, how ardently I pray you may be directed to every good and saved from every evil, you would as sincerely strive for its accomplishment. Now in your youth you must

be careful to discipline your thoughts, words, and actions. Habituate yourself to useful employment, regular improvement, and to the benefit of all those around you. You have had some opportunity of learning the rudiments of your education--not as good as I should have desired, but I am much cheered by the belief that you availed yourself of it--and I think you are now prepared by diligence and study to learn whatever you desire. Do not allow yourself to forget what you have spent so much time and labour acquiring, but increase it every day by extended application. I hope you will embrace in your studies all useful acquisitions. I was much pleased to hear that while at 'Bremo' you passed much of your time in reading and music. All accomplishments will enable you to give pleasure, and thus exert a wholesome influence. Never neglect the means of making yourself useful in the world. I think you will not have to complain of Rob again for neglecting your schoolmates. He has equipped himself with a new uniform from top to toe, and, with a new and handsome horse, is cultivating a marvellous beard and preparing for conquest. I went down on the lines to the right, Friday, beyond Rowanty Creek, and pitched my camp within six miles of Fitzhugh's last night. Rob came up and spent the night with me, and Fitzhugh appeared early in the morning. They rode with me till late that day. I visited the battlefield in that quarter, and General Hampton in describing it said there had not been during the war a more spirited charge than Fitzhugh's division made that day up the Boydton plank road, driving cavalry and infantry before him, in which he was stopped by night. I did not know before that his horse had been shot under him. Give a great deal of love to your dear mother, and kiss your sisters for me. Tell them they must keep well, not talk too much, and go to bed early.

"Ever your devoted father,

"R. E. Lee."

He refers in this letter to his coming down near our command, and my brother's visit and mine to him. Everything was quiet, and we greatly enjoyed seeing him and being with him. The weather, too, was fine, and he seemed to delight in our ride with him along the lines. I didn't think I saw him but once more until everything was over and we met in Richmond. Some time before this, my mother, fearing for his health under the great amount of exposure and work he had to do, wrote to him and begged him to take better care of himself. In his reply, he says:

"...But what care can a man give to himself in the time of war? It is from no desire for exposure or hazard that I live in a tent, but from necessity. I must be where I can, speedily, at all times attend to

the duties of my position, and be near or accessible to the officers with whom I have to act. I have been offered rooms in the houses of our citizens, but I could not turn the dwellings of my kind hosts into a barrack where officers, couriers, distressed women, etc., would be entering day and night....”

General Fitz Lee, in his life of my father, says of him at this time:

“Self-possessed and calm, Lee struggled to solve the huge military problem, and make the sum of smaller numbers equal to that of greater numbers.... His thoughts ever turned upon the soldiers of his army, the ragged gallant fellows around him--whose pinched cheeks told hunger was their portion, and whose shivering forms denoted the absence of proper clothing.”

His letters to my mother during the winter tell how much his men were in need. My mother was an invalid from rheumatism, confined to a rolling-chair. To help the cause with her own hands as far as she could, she was constantly occupied in knitting socks for the soldiers, and induced all around her to do the same. She sent them directly to my father, and he always acknowledged them. November 30th, he says:

“...I received yesterday your letter on the 27th and am glad to learn your supply of socks is so large. If two or three hundred would send an equal number, we should have a sufficiency. I will endeavour to have them distributed to the most needy....”

And on December 17th:

“...I received day before yesterday the box with hats, gloves, and socks; also the barrel of apples. You had better have kept the latter, as it would have been more useful to you than to me, and I should have enjoyed its consumption by you and the girls more than by me....”

His friends and admirers were constantly sending him presents; some, simple mementos of their love and affection; others, substantial and material comforts for the outer and inner man. The following letter, from its date, is evidently an acknowledgement of Christmas gifts sent him:

“December 30th.... The Lyons furs and fur robe have also arrived safely, but I can learn nothing of the saddle of mutton. Bryan, of whom I inquired as to its arrival, is greatly alarmed lest it has been sent to the soldiers’ dinner. If the soldiers get it, I shall be content. I can do very well without it. In fact, I should rather they should have it than I....”

The soldiers' "dinner" here referred to was a Christmas dinner, sent by the entire country, as far as they could, to the poor starving men in the trenches and camps along the lines. It would not be considered much now, but when the conditions were such as my father describes when he wrote the Secretary of War,

"The struggle now is to keep the army fed and clothed. Only fifty men in some regiments have shoes, and bacon is only issued once in a few days,"

anything besides the one-quarter of a pound of bacon and musty corn-bread was a treat of great service, and might be construed as "a Christmas dinner."

I have mentioned before my father's devotion to children. This sentiment pervaded his whole nature. At any time the presence of a little child would bring a brightness to his smile, a tender softness to his glance, and drive away gloom or care. Here is his account of a visit paid him, early in January, 1865, by three little women:

"...Yesterday afternoon three little girls walked into my room, each with a small basket. The eldest carried some fresh eggs, laid by her own hens; the second, some pickles made by her mother; the third, some popcorn grown in her garden. They were accompanied by a young maid with a block of soap made by her mother. They were the daughters of a Mrs. Nottingham, a refugee from Northhampton County, who lived near Eastville, not far from 'old Arlington.' The eldest of the girls, whose age did not exceed eight years, had a small wheel on which she spun for her mother, who wove all the cloth for her two brothers--boys of twelve and fourteen years. I have not had so pleasant a visit for a long time. I fortunately was able to fill their baskets with apples, which distressed poor Bryan [his mess-steward], and I begged them to bring me nothing but kisses and to keep the eggs, corn, etc., for themselves. I pray daily and almost hourly to our Heavenly Father to come to the relief of you and our afflicted country. I know He will order all things for our good, and we must be content."

Chapter VIII

The Surrender

Fort Fisher captured--Lee made Commander-in-Chief--Battle of Five Forks--The General's farewell to his men--His reception in Richmond after the surrender--President Davis hears the news--Lee's visitors--His son Robert turns farmer

The year 1865 had now commenced. The strength of that thin gray line, drawn out to less than one thousand men to the mile, which had repulsed every attempt of the enemy to break through it, was daily becoming less. The capture of Fort Fisher, our last open port, January 15th, cut off all supplies and munitions from the outside world. Sherman had reached Savannah in December, from which point he was ready to unite with Grant at any time. From General Lee's letters, official and private, one gets a clear view of the desperateness of his position. He had been made commander-in-chief of all the military forces in the Confederate States on February 6th. In his order issued on accepting this command he says:

"...Deeply impressed with the difficulties and responsibilities of the position, and humbly invoking the guidance of Almighty God, I rely for success upon the courage and fortitude of the army, sustained by the patriotism and firmness of the people, confident that their united efforts under the blessing of Heaven will secure peace and independence...."

General Beauregard, who had so ably defended Petersburg when it was first attacked, and who had assisted so materially in its subsequent defense, had been sent to gather troops to try to check Sherman's advance through the Carolinas. But Beauregard's health was now very bad, and it was feared he would have to abandon the field. In a letter to the Secretary of War, dated February 21, 1865, my father says:

"...In the event of the necessity of abandoning our position on James River, I shall endeavour to unite the corps of the army about Burkeville [junction of Southside and Danville Railroad], so as to retain communication with the North and South as long as practicable, and also with the West, I should think Lynchburg, or some point west, the most advantageous place to which to remove stores from Richmond. This, however, is a most difficult point at this time to decide, and the place may have to be changed by circumstances. It was my intention in my former letter to apply for General Joseph E. Johnston, that I

might assign him to duty, should circumstances permit. I have had no official report of the condition of General Beauregard's health. It is stated from many sources to be bad. If he should break down entirely, it might be fatal. In that event, I should have no one with whom to supply his place. I therefore respectfully request General Johnston may be ordered to report to me, and that I may be informed where he is."

In a letter to the Secretary of War, written the next day:

"...But you may expect Sheridan to move up the Valley, and Stoneman from Knoxville, as Sherman draws near Roanoke. What then will become of those sections of the country? I know of no other troops that could be given to Beauregard. Bragg will be forced back by Schofield, I fear, and, until I abandon James River, nothing can be sent from this army. Grant, I think, is now preparing to draw out by his left with the intent of enveloping me. He may wait till his other columns approach nearer, or he may be preparing to anticipate my withdrawal. I cannot tell yet.... Everything of value should be removed from Richmond. It is of the first importance to save all powder. The cavalry and artillery of the army are still scattered for want of provender, and our supply and ammunition trains, which out to be with the army in case of sudden movement, are absent collecting provisions and forage--some in western Virginia and some in North Carolina. You will see to what straits we are reduced; but I trust to work out."

On the same day, in a letter to my mother, he writes:

"...After sending my note this morning, I received from the express office a back of socks. 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, endeavour 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? You must consider the question, and make up your mind. It is a fearful condition, and we must rely for guidance and protection upon a kind Providence...."

About this time, I saw my father for the last time until after the surrender. We had been ordered up to the army from our camp nearly forty miles away, reaching the vicinity of Petersburg the morning of the attack of General Gordon on Fort Stedman, on March 25th. My brother and I had ridden ahead of the division to report its presence,

when we met the General riding Traveller, almost alone, back from that part of the lines opposite the fort. Since then I have often recalled the sadness of his face, its careworn expression. When he caught sight of his two sons, a bright smile at once lit up his countenance, and he showed very plainly his pleasure at seeing us. He thanked my brother for responding so promptly to his call upon him, and regretted that events had so shaped themselves that the division would not then be needed, as he had hoped it would be.

No good results followed Gordon's gallant attack. His supports did not come up at the proper time, and our losses were very heavy, mostly prisoners. Two days after this, Sheridan, with ten thousand mounted men, joined Grant, having marched from the Valley of Virginia via Staunton and Charlottesville. On the 28th, everything being ready, General Grant commenced to turn our right, and having more than three men to our one, he had no difficult task. On that very day my father wrote to my mother:

"...I have received your note with a bag of socks. I return the bag and receipt. The count is all right this time. I have put in the bag General Scott's autobiography, which I thought you might like to read. The General, of course, stands out prominently, and does not hide his light under a bushel, but he appears the bold, sagacious, truthful man that he is. I inclose a note from little Agnes. I shall be very glad to see her to-morrow, but cannot recommend pleasure trips now...."

On April 1st the Battle of Five Forks was fought, where about fifty thousand infantry and cavalry--more men than were in our entire army--attacked our extreme right and turned it, so that, to save our communications, we had to abandon our lines at Petersburg, giving up that city and Richmond. From that time to April 9th the Army of Northern Virginia struggled to get back to some position where it could concentrate its forces and make a stand; but the whole world knows of that six-days' retreat. I shall not attempt to describe it in detail--indeed, I could not if I would, for I was not present all the time--but will quote from those who have made it a study and who are far better fitted to record it than I am. General Early, in his address at Lexington, Virginia, January 19, 1872--General Lee's birthday--eloquently and briefly describes these six days as follows:

"...The retreat from the lines of Richmond and Petersburg began in the early days of April, and the remnant of the Army of Northern Virginia fell back, more than one hundred miles, before its overpowering antagonists, repeatedly presenting front to the latter and giving battle so as to check his progress. Finally, from mere exhaustion,

less than eight thousand men with arms in their hands, of the noblest army that ever fought 'in the tide of time,' were surrendered at Appomattox to an army of 150,000 men; the sword of Robert E. Lee, without a blemish on it, was sheathed forever; and the flag, to which he had added such luster, was furled, to be, henceforth, embalmed in the affectionate remembrance of those who remained faithful during all our trials, and will do so to the end."

Colonel Archer Anderson, in his address at the unveiling of the Lee monument in Richmond, Virginia, May 29, 1890, speaking of the siege of Petersburg and of the surrender, utters these noble words:

"...Of the siege of Petersburg, I have only time to say that in it for nine months the Confederate commander displayed every art by which genius and courage can make good the lack of numbers and resources. But the increasing misfortunes of the Confederate arms on other theatres of the war gradually cut off the supply of men and means. The Army of Northern Virginia ceased to be recruited, it ceased to be adequately fed. It lived for months on less than one-third rations. It was demoralised, not by the enemy in its front, but by the enemy in Georgia and the Carolinas. It dwindled to 35,000 men, holding a front of thirty-five miles; but over the enemy it still cast the shadow of its great name. Again and again, by a bold offensive, it arrested the Federal movement to fasten on its communications. At last, an irresistible concentration of forces broke through its long thin line of battle. Petersburg had to be abandoned. Richmond was evacuated. Trains bearing supplies were intercepted, and a starving army, harassed for seven days by incessant attacks on rear and flank, found itself completely hemmed in by overwhelming masses. Nothing remained to it but its stainless honour, its unbroken courage. In those last solemn scenes, when strong men, losing all self-control, broke down and sobbed like children, Lee stood forth as great as in the days of victory and triumph. No disaster crushed his spirit, no extremity of danger ruffled his bearing. In the agony of dissolution now invading that proud army, which for four years had wrested victory from every peril, in that blackness of utter darkness, he preserved the serene lucidity of his mind. He looked the stubborn facts calmly in the face, and when no military resource remained, when he recognised the impossibility of making another march or fighting another battle, he bowed his head in submission to that Power which makes and unmakes nations. The surrender of the fragments of the Army of Northern Virginia closed the imperishable record of his military life...."

From the London "Standard," at the time of his last illness, I quote these words relative to this retreat:

“When the Army of Northern Virginia marched out of the lines around Petersburg and Richmond, it still numbered some twenty-six thousand men. After a retreat of six days, in the face of an overwhelming enemy, with a crushing artillery--a retreat impeded by constant fighting and harassed by countless hordes of cavalry--eight thousand were given up by the capitulation at Appomattox Court House. Brilliant as were General Lee’s earlier triumphs, we believe that he gave higher proofs of genius in his last campaign, and that hardly any of his victories were so honourable to himself and his army as that of his six-days’ retreat.”

Swinton, in his “History of the Army of the Potomac,” after justly praising its deeds, thus speaks of its great opponent, the Army of Northern Virginia:

“Nor can there fail to arise the image of that other army that was the adversary of the Army of the Potomac, and--who that once looked upon it can ever forget 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.”

General Long, in speaking of its hardships and struggles during the retreat, thus describes how the army looked up to their commander and trusted him to bring them through all their troubles:

“General Lee had never appeared more grandly heroic than on this occasion. All eyes were raised to him for a deliverance which no human seemed able to give. He alone was expected to provide food for the starving army and rescue it from the attacks of a powerful and eager enemy. Under the accumulation of difficulties, his courage seemed to expand, and wherever he appeared his presence inspired the weak and weary with renewed energy to continue the toilsome march. During these trying scenes his countenance wore its habitual calm, grave expression. Those who watched his face to catch a glimpse of what was passing in his mind could gather thence no trace of his inner sentiments.”

No one can tell what he suffered. He did in all things what he considered right. Self he absolutely abandoned. As he said, so he believed, that “human virtue should equal human calamity.” A day or two before the surrender, he said to General Pendleton:

“...I have never believed we could, against the gigantic combination for our subjugation, make good in the long run our independence unless foreign powers should, directly or indirectly, assist us.... But such considerations really made with me no difference. We had, I was satisfied, sacred principles to maintain and rights to defend, for which we were in duty bound to do our best, even if we perished in the endeavour.”

After his last attempt was made with Gordon and Fitz Lee to break through the lines of the enemy in the early morning of the 9th, and Colonel Venable informed him that it was not possible, he said:

“Then there is nothing left me but to go and see General Grant.”
When some one near him, hearing this, said:

“Oh, General, what will history say of the surrender of the army in the field?” he replied:

“Yes, I know they will say hard things of us; they will not understand how 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 the responsibility.”

There had been some correspondence with Grant just before the conversation with General Pendleton. After Gordon’s attack failed, a flag of truce was sent out, and, about eleven o’clock, General Lee went to meet General Grant. The terms of surrender were agreed upon, and then General Lee called attention to the pressing needs of his men. He said:

“I have a thousand or more of your men and officers, whom we have required to march along with us for several days. I shall be glad to send them to your lines as soon as it can be arranged, for I have no provisions for them. My own men have been living for the last few days principally upon parched corn, and we are badly in need of both rations and forage.”

Grant said he would at once send him 25,000 rations. General Lee told him that amount would be ample and a great relief. He then rode back to his troops. The rations issued then to our army were the supplies destined for us but captured at Amelia Court House. Had they reached us in time, they would have given the half-starved troops that were left strength enough to make a further struggle. General Long graphically pictures the last scenes:

“It is impossible to describe the anguish of the troops when it was

known that the surrender of the army was inevitable. Of all their trials, this was the greatest and hardest to endure. There was no consciousness of shame; each heart could boast with honest pride that its duty had been done to the end, and that still unsullied remained its honour. When, after this interview with General Grant, General Lee again appeared, a shout of welcome instinctively went up from the army. But instantly recollecting the sad occasion that brought him before them, their shouts sank into silence, every hat was raised, and the bronzed faces of thousands of grim warriors were bathed in tears. As he rode slowly along the lines, hundreds of his devoted veterans pressed around the noble chief, trying to take his hand, touch his person, or even lay their hands upon his horse, thus exhibiting for him their great affection. The General then with head bare, and tears flowing freely down his manly cheeks, bade adieu to the army.”

In a few words: “Men, we have fought through the war together; I have done my best for you; my heart is too full to say more,” he bade them good-bye and told them to return to their homes and become good citizens. The next day he issued his farewell address, the last order published to the army:

“Headquarters, 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 have consented to this result from no distrust of them; but, feeling that valour 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.”

General Long says that General Meade called on General Lee on the 10th, and in the course of conversation remarked:

“Now that the war may be considered over, I hope you will not deem it improper for me to ask, for my personal information, the strength of your army during the operations around Richmond and Petersburg.” General Lee replied:

“At no time did my force exceed 35,000 men; often it was less.” With a look of surprise, Meade answered:

“General, you amaze me; we always estimated your force at about seventy thousand men.”

General de Chanal, a French officer, who was present, states that General Lee, who had been an associate of Meade’s in the engineers in the “old army,” said to him pleasantly:

“Meade, years are telling on you; your hair is getting quite gray.”

“Ah, General Lee,” was Meade’s prompt reply, “it is not the work of years; YOU are responsible for my gray hairs!”

“Three days after the surrender,” says Long, “the Army of Northern Virginia had dispersed in every direction, and three weeks later the veterans of a hundred battles had exchanged the musket and the sword for the implements of husbandry. It is worthy of remark that never before was there an army disbanded with less disorder. Thousands of soldiers were set adrift on the world without a penny in their pockets to enable them to reach their homes. Yet none of the scenes of riot that often follow the disbanding of armies marked their course.”

A day or two after the surrender, General Lee started for Richmond, riding Traveller, who had carried him so well all through the war. He was accompanied by some of his staff. On the way, he stopped at the house of his eldest brother, Charles Carter Lee, who lived on the Upper James in Powhatan County. He spent the evening in talking with his brother, but when bedtime came, though begged by his host to take the room and bed prepared for him, he insisted on going to his old tent, pitched by the roadside, and passed the night in the quarters he was accustomed to. On April 15th he arrived in Richmond. The people there soon recognised him; men, women, and children crowded around him, cheering and waving hats and handkerchiefs. It was more like the welcome to a conqueror than to a defeated prisoner on parole. He raised his hat in response to their greetings, and rode quietly to his home on Franklin Street, where my mother and sisters were anxiously awaiting him. Thus he returned to that private family life for which he had always longed, and become what he always desired to be--a

peaceful citizen in a peaceful land.

In attempting to describe these last days of the Army of Northern Virginia, I have quoted largely from Long, Jones, Taylor, and Fitz Lee, all of whom have given more or less full accounts of the movements of both armies.

It so happened that shortly after we left our lines, April 2d or 3d, in one of the innumerable contests, my horse was shot, and in getting him and myself off the field, having no choice of routes, the pursuing Federal cavalry intervened between men and the rest of our command, so I had to make my way around the head of Sheridan's advance squadrons before I could rejoin our forces. This I did not succeed in accomplishing until April 9th, the day of the surrender, for my wounded horse had to be left with a farmer, who kindly gave me one in exchange, saying I could send him back when I was able, or, if I was prevented, that I could keep him and he would replace him with mine when he got well.

As I was riding toward Appomattox on the 9th, I met a body of our cavalry with General T. H. Rosser at the head. He told me that General Lee and his army had surrendered, and that this force had made its way out, and was marching back to Lynchburg, expecting thence to reach General Johnston's army. To say that I was surprised does not express my feelings. I had never heard the word "surrender" mentioned, nor even a suggested, in connection with our general or our army. I could not believe it, and did not until I was positively assured by all my friends who were with Rosser's column that it was absolutely so. Very sadly I turned back and went to Lynchburg along with them. There I found some wagons from our headquarters which had been sent back, and with them the horses and servants of the staff. These I got together, not believing for an instant that our struggle was over, and, with several officers from our command and others, we made our way to Greensboro, North Carolina. There I found Mr. Davis and his cabinet and representatives of the Confederate departments from Richmond. There was a great diversity of opinion amongst all present as to what we should do. After waiting a couple of days, looking over the situation from every point of view, consulting with my uncle, Commodore S. S. Lee, of the Confederate Navy, and with many others, old friends of my father and staunch adherents of the Southern cause, it was determined to go back to Virginia to get our paroles, go home, and go to work.

While at Greensboro I went to see President Davis, just before he proceeded on his way further south. He was calm and dignified, and, in his conversation with several officers of rank who were there,

seemed to think, and so expressed himself, that our cause was not lost, though sorely stricken, and that we could rally our forces west of the Mississippi and make good our fight. While I was in the room, Mr. Davis received the first official communication from General Lee of his surrender. Colonel John Taylor Woods, his aide-de-camp, had taken me in to see the President, and he and I were standing by him when the despatch from General Lee was brought to him. After reading it, he handed it without comment to us; then, turning away, he silently wept bitter tears. He seemed quite broken at the moment by this tangible evidence of the loss of his army and the misfortune of its general. All of us, respecting his great grief, silently withdrew, leaving him with Colonel Wood. I never saw him again.

I started for Richmond, accompanied by several companions, with the servants and horses belonging to our headquarters. These I had brought down with me from Lynchburg, where I had found them after the surrender. After two week of marching and resting, I arrived in Richmond and found my father there, in the house on Franklin Street, now the rooms of the "Virginia Historical Society," and also my mother, brother, and sisters. They were all much relieved at my reappearance.

As well as I can recall my father at this time, he appeared to be very well physically, though he looked older, grayer, more quiet and reserved. He seemed very tired, and was always glad to talk of any other subject than that of the war or anything pertaining thereto. We all tried to cheer and help him. And the people of Richmond and of the entire South were as kind and considerate as it was possible to be. Indeed, I think their great kindness tired him. He appreciated it all, was courteous, grateful, and polite, but he had been under such a terrible strain for several years that he needed the time and quiet to get back his strength of heart and mind. All sorts and conditions of people came to see him: officers and soldiers from both armies, statesmen, politicians, ministers of the Gospel, mothers and wives to ask about husbands and sons of whom they had heard nothing. To keep him from being overtaxed by this incessant stream of visitors, we formed a sort of guard of the young men in the house, some of whom took it by turns to keep the door and, if possible, turn strangers away. My father was gentle, kind, and polite to all, and never willingly, so far as I know, refused to see any one.

Dan lee, late of the Confederate States Navy, my first cousin, and myself, one day had charge of the front door, when at it appeared a Federal soldier, accompanied by a darkey carrying a large willow basket filled to the brim with provisions of every kind. The man was Irish all over, and showed by his uniform and carriage that he was a "regular," and not a volunteer. On our asking him what he wanted, he

replied that he wanted to see General Lee, that he had heard down the street the General and his family were suffering for lack of something to eat, that he had been with "the Colonel" when he commanded the Second Cavalry, and, as long as he had a cent, his old colonel should not suffer. My father, who had stepped into another room as he heard the bell ring, hearing something of the conversation, came out into the hall. The old Irishman, as soon as he saw him, drew himself up and saluted, and repeated to the General, with tears streaming down his cheeks, what he had just said to us. My father was very much touched, thanked him heartily for his kindness and generosity, but told him that he did not need the things he had brought and could not take them. This seemed to disappoint the old soldier greatly, and he pleaded so hard to be allowed to present the supplies to his old colonel, whom he believed to be in want of them, that at last my father said that he would accept the basket and sent it to the hospital, for the sick and wounded, who were really in great need. Though he was not satisfied, he submitted to this compromise, and then to our surprise and dismay, in bidding the General good-bye, threw his arms around him and was attempting to kiss him, when "Dan" and I interfered. As he was leaving, he said:

"Good-bye, Colonel! God bless ye! If I could have got over in time I would have been with ye!"

A day or two after that, when "Dan" was doorkeeper, three Federal officers, a colonel, a major, and a doctor, called and asked to see General Lee. They were shown into the parlour, presented their cards, and said they desired to pay their respects as officers of the United States Army. When Dan went out with the three cards, he was told by some one that my father was up stairs engaged with some other visitor, so he returned and told them this and they departed. When my father came down, was shown the cards and told of the three visitors, he was quite put out at Dan's not having brought him the cards at the time and that afternoon mounted him on one of his horses and sent him over to Manchester, where they were camped, to look up the three officers and to tell them he would be glad to see them at any time they might be pleased to call. However, Dan failed to find them.

He had another visit at this time which affected him deeply. Two Confederate soldiers in very dilapidated clothing, worn and emaciated in body, came to see him. They said they had been selected from about sixty other fellows, too ragged to come themselves, to offer him a home in the mountains of Virginia. The home was a good house and farm, and near by was a defile, in some rugged hills, from which they could defy the entire Federal Army. They made this offer of a home and their protection because there was a report that he was about to be

indicted for treason. The General had to decline to go with them, but the tears came into his eyes at this hearty exhibition of loyalty.

After being in Richmond a few days, and by the advice of my father getting my parole from the United States Provost Marshal there, the question as to what I should do came up. My father told me that I could go back to college if I desired and prepare myself for some profession--that he had a little money which he would be willing and glad to devote to the completion of my education. I think he was strongly in favour of my going back to college. At the same time he told me that, if I preferred it, I could take possession of my farm land in King William County, which I had inherited from my grandfather, Mr. Custis, and make my home there. As there was little left of the farm but the land, he thought he could arrange to help me build a house and purchase stock and machinery.

My brother, General W. H. F. Lee, had already gone down to his place, "The White House" in New Kent County, with Major John Lee, our first cousin, had erected a shanty, and gone to work, breaking up land for a corn crop, putting their cavalry horses to the plow. As I thought my father had use for any means he might have in caring for my mother and sisters, and as I had this property, I determined to become a farmer. However, I did not decide positively, and in the meantime it was thought best that I should join my brother and cousin at the White House and help them make their crop of corn. In returning to Richmond, I had left at "Hickory Hill," General Wickham's place in Hanover County, our horses and servants, taken with me from Lynchburg to Greensboro and back. So bidding all my friends and family good-bye, I went by rail to "Hickory Hill" and started the next day with three servants and about eight horses for New Kent, stopping the first night at "Pamptike." The next day I reached the White House, where the reinforcements I brought with me were hailed with delight.

Though I have been a farmer from that day to this, I will say that the crop of corn which we planted that summer, with ourselves and army servants as laborers and our old cavalry horses as teams, and which we did not finish planting until the 9th of June, was the best I ever made.