

TOPICS OF THE TIME.

Lord Wolseley's Estimate of General Lee.

PROMPTED by the appearance of General Long's "Memoirs of Robert E. Lee," Lord Wolseley has followed in the trail of the expert reviewers who allude to a new book as an excuse for enlarging the subject with the fruits of their own study and observation. His critique is printed in "Macmillan's Magazine" for March, and is worthy of general perusal for two reasons: It affords a view (from the English standpoint) of the war of secession and the best-known Southern chieftain; and although it has little to say that is important or true with regard to General Lee, it sheds a flood of light on the military learning and mental strategy of the most conspicuous general in the British army.

No people are better acquainted with Lee's merits as a soldier than the Army of the Potomac. They admire also those traits of character which endeared him to his fellow-Confederates. So if Northerners cannot assist Lord Wolseley in placing him "on an equal pedestal with that of Washington," it is from no contempt of his abilities. The chief reason is the fact that Washington labored to create a Union of States and that Lee, with sorrow, but with greater love for a particular State, labored to divide the Union. But now that the Union he would yet have been glad to see preserved, *is* preserved, General Lee is for the whole country an American hero.*

In 1862 Lord Wolseley was a visitor at General Lee's headquarters, where he undoubtedly had opportunities of taking a studious interest in Confederate persons and affairs. He assures us frequently in the course of his paper that he has been a student of our war, and the following sentiment, alone, would point to such study as a duty for a man in his responsible position, since he says that "the influence which the result of this Confederate war is bound to exercise upon man's future history will seem very great."

Lord Wolseley's enthusiasm for Lee springs from personal knowledge, for he says that Lee "is stamped upon my memory as a being apart and superior to all others, in every way." But it is fortunate for Lee's fame that the admiration of his countrymen, North and South, rests upon solid facts, and not, as in Lord Wolseley's case, upon misconception of his character and ignorance of the leading events of his career. It is remarkable also that with all his admiration Lord Wolseley has not allowed his opinions to be influenced by those of his hero, even where Lee might be supposed to be an authority; nor consulted Lee's orders and reports for clues to his motives in strategy and battle. He would seem also to have imitated the traditional reviewer who found it bad method to read a book before criticising it, for certainly he has not leaned heavily on General Long for information.

* In his recent speech at Nashville, Senator John Sherman, referring to the losses and sacrifices of the war, said in part: "The courage, bravery, and fortitude of both sides are now the pride and heritage of us all. Think not that I come here to reproach any man for the part he took in that fight, or to revive in

For convenience let us catalogue some of the points in which Lord Wolseley differs from General Lee and other esteemed authorities:

1. At the outset he says that any "unprejudiced outsider will admit the sovereign right, both historical and legal, which each State possessed under the Constitution to leave the Union when its people thought fit to do so." But General Lee thought differently. In a letter to his son dated January 23d, 1861 (see General Long's "Memoirs," page 88), General Lee says:

"Secession is nothing but revolution. The framers of our Constitution never exhausted so much labor, wisdom, and forbearance in its formation, and surrounded it with so many guards and securities, if it was intended to be broken by every member of the Confederacy at will. It is intended for 'perpetual union,' so expressed in the preamble, and for the establishment of a government, not a compact, which can only be dissolved by revolution or the consent of all the people in convention assembled. It is idle to talk of secession."

2. "As I study the history of the secession war," says Lord Wolseley, presumably with a wink at the Muse of History, "these [Lee and Lincoln] seem to me the two men who influenced it most."

Whatever parallel might be drawn between the native integrity and manliness of Lincoln and of Lee, it has been accepted hitherto that Lincoln was the chief executive on one side, and that Lee, shrinking from the responsibilities of civil war, "save," as he writes, "in the defense of my native State," devoted his energies to the command of the Army of Northern Virginia, while other Southerners of great abilities wielded the executive power, and other Southern generals, whose services Lee was great enough to admire, worked faithfully under the executive power, like Lee himself, for the common cause. The early victories that nerved the Southern heart for great sacrifices were won by other men. Lee's first service in the field, in West Virginia, though wisely conservative in view of the difficulties, was a public disappointment. Later he fell heir to Johnston's good beginnings at Seven Pines, in which action the latter was severely wounded. Though almost a fruitless battle, it checked McClellan's aggressive policy, so that Lee had to do at the outset with an enemy whose ardor had subsided; who, in fact, was more concerned about his own safety and "a change of base" than about the capture of Richmond. Lee's daring campaign in the Seven Days' fighting was no compliment to General McClellan, though Lord Wolseley remembers that Lee expressed greater admiration for McClellan than for any other Union general. From this time on Lee was, without question, the chief prop to the military confidence of the South; but he was responsible only for the leadership of the Army of Northern Virginia, until—and now comes a fact for which Lord Wolseley should have the credit of accuracy—

the heart of any one the triumph of victory or the pangs of defeat. . . . No man in the North questions the honesty of purpose or the heroism with which the Confederates maintained their cause, and you will give credit for like courage and honorable motives to Union soldiers, North and South."

he "was given the command over all the Confederate armies a month or two only before the final collapse."

3. Lord Wolseley with superfluous inaccuracy strips Mount Vernon of its historical associations and moves them up the Potomac to General Lee's home of Arlington, which he describes as "*General Washington's beautiful property*" and as "*the cherished home of the father of the United States.*"

4. With calm fatuity he mentions a Confederate "*folly*" which "*led to a serious evil, namely, the enlistment of soldiers for only ninety days*"; and he adds that "*Lee, who understood war, pleaded in favor of the engagement being for the term of the war, but he pleaded in vain.*" It is true that Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 three-months men, but at that time Virginia was disregarding the "call of Abraham"; nor is there any record that Lee made an opportunity to plead with Lincoln on the subject. Lee was soon after busy with the organization of the forces of the State of Virginia, that were required to enlist for twelve months or for the war. Most of them favored the longer term because public as well as military opinion favored it, and public opinion at the South was inexorable. Anybody who entered the Southern army was in effect enlisted for as long as he could get about and shoot.

5. Lord Wolseley recalls that in describing to him the constitution of his army General Lee most deplored the fact that the politicians insisted upon the officers being elected by their men. In this his lordship would appear still to have one leg on the Federal side of the line, for such things were done at the North. In Virginia, as General Lee's orders show, all field-officers were appointed, "in conformity to the ordinance of the convention," by the "Governor and Council." In fact, after the demand for field-officers had been met, there were no professional soldiers left in Virginia to fill the captaincies, even if it had been desired to do so by appointment.

6. He states that Lee in two months "*created a little army of 50,000 men,*" though Lee's report to Governor Letcher of June 15th—seven days after the State troops had been transferred to the Confederate authorities—estimates the Virginia forces at, surely, 35,000, and possibly 40,000. This error would be trivial but for the aberration to which it leads, for with this army of 50,000 in his mind, Lord Wolseley adds that "*in another month this army at Bull Run gained a complete victory over the Northern invaders, who were driven back across the Potomac like herds of frightened sheep.*" The Union soldiers who were there remember the precipitation. But Confederates will wonder whether his lordship, in omitting to state that Johnston and Beauregard led the Confederates to that victory, intended to imply that the credit belonged to General Lee. Lord Wolseley will surely pardon a little doubt as to the meaning of his omissions when the fog of uncertainty so completely shrouds his explicit information.

Nor was it the army that Lee had created which fought the battle of Bull Run. The State troops were scattered at points between Norfolk and West Virginia, and were blended with forces from other Southern States. Of the 50 regiments in the armies of Johnston and Beauregard, only 20 were Virginians.

7. Lord Wolseley offers a novel reason for the fail-

ure to follow up the Bull Run victory by seizing Washington. He ascribes it to "*political considerations at Richmond,*" where the politicians, as he conceives, were engaged in an "*attempt to allay the angry feelings of the North,*" while the dogs of war were being held in. Lord Wolseley evidently has not read the writings of Johnston, Beauregard, and Davis on this subject, or he would know that the political power in Richmond ascribed the failure to the dilatoriness of the generals, while they, on their part, claimed that there was a lack of resources for such an enterprise.

8. In some places Lord Wolseley's aim is more wild than in others, but he sweeps the whole horizon in the remark that "*a battle to the Confederates meant a new supply of everything an army required. It may be truthfully said that, practically, the Government at Washington had to provide and pay for the arms and equipment of its enemies.*" To be sure, there was considerable exchange of the materials of war, and in the East, Lee's army got rather more than its share; but in the West the Confederates had to make the Eastern reckoning more than good. The Federals were wasteful of clothing, and the Confederates were economical by dint of bitter want that drove them even to the dead. Union soldiers did not covet the threadbare raiment of the Confederates, or find much use for their equipments, unless the surrendered muskets and cannon had been made by Federal means or, as often happened, were of the newest English brand.

9. "*What most strikes the regular soldier,*" continues his lordship, "*in these campaigns of General Lee is the inefficient manner in which both he and his opponents were often served by their subordinate commanders.*" If General Wolseley might have had another conversation with General Lee, after the war, that magnanimous chieftain would have told him something about Stonewall Jackson, Longstreet, D. H. Hill, Ewell, A. P. Hill, "Jeb" Stuart, and scores of other able subordinates who were maimed or killed in the performance of brilliant deeds. Only one opinion, we believe, prevails either North or South with respect to Lee's army: It was a splendid body of fighters, surprisingly well officered.

10. Lord Wolseley has cultivated the belief that Lee's strategy and tactics were always "*everything that could be desired, up to the moment of victory, but there his action seemed to stop abruptly.*" True, the Confederates were not Titans. They seemed never to be wound up for more than a week or more of hard marching on scant rations, followed by two or three days of continuous battle, usually against superior numbers, which left them at the end without fresh reserves. After a terrible and exhausting victory a longing for rest seemed to overcome them. General Lee could not furnish physical strength to his men from his own sinews, but he did know how to fight them to a shadow and then how to keep them going on something that from the other side of the line looked like very thin hope. Once, as Lord Wolseley recollects, but with vagueness as to its events, there were seven days of continuous fighting near Richmond. Lee with sublime daring dashed his columns time and again upon McClellan's superior but separated forces. His losses were frightful, but the bravery and energy displayed by his troops were tremendous, and possibly might have proved fatal to his cause if McClellan had assumed the aggressive after Malvern

Hill instead of retiring six miles to a secure position at Harrison's Landing.

11. Yet Lord Wolseley exclaims: "*Was ever an army so hopelessly at the mercy of another as that of McClellan when he began his retreat to Harrison's Landing after the Seven Days' fighting round Richmond?*" For succinct ignorance, there is something unexampled in this statement. Malvern Hill was a staggering repulse to Lee's exhausted infantry, who were not able to confront McClellan at Harrison's Landing until the third day after that battle. And even then Lee withdrew, as he says, on account of "the condition of our troops." McClellan was well-nigh impregnable at Harrison's Landing. If Lee had been able to get at him there, the military situation would have improved, for the Confederates could not long stand such destructive fighting as "the Seven Days'." But Lee preferred to leave McClellan in his camp security resting at the outer gate of Richmond, while he started in the opposite direction to bowl over Pope and startle Washington.

12. Equally remarkable for visionary confidence is Lord Wolseley's next question, "*What commander could wish to have his foe in a 'tighter place' than Burnside was in after his disastrous attack upon Lee at Fredericksburg?*" Lee has explained in his reports, in effect, that he was so much pleased with the tight boot Burnside was wearing, so long as Burnside was the aggressor, that he had no thought of exchanging foot-gear with his enemy, as he surely would have done if he had attacked Burnside within range of the Union cannon on Stafford Heights, across the river. So secure was Burnside at the town that when it was proposed, on deciding to recross the river, to keep hands on Fredericksburg the council of officers believed that 10,000 men was a sufficient force for the purpose.

With less particularity but more discretion, Lord Wolseley concludes the subject with the remark, "*Yet in both instances the Northern commander got safely away, and other similar instances could be mentioned.*"

13. "*The critical military student of this war,*" says his lordship, with a fine compliment to himself, "*will, I think, agree that from first to last the coöperation of even one army corps of regular troops would have given complete victory to whichever side it fought on.*" There is something in this suggestive of Gilbert and Sullivan's "modern major-general." Inasmuch as this was an American war, it had to be fought in the American way. As neither side had a standing army of any importance, each side must create an army out of nearly raw material. But there are those who remember that American "raw material" once battled with "regular" troops, during the scrimmage of 1776, and again at New Orleans in 1815, and that the "regulars" did not then complain of the inferiority of their foes. McClellan's army had a splendid division of regulars, well officered, that did good service, but their deeds do not shine brighter than those of the volunteers on either side. It was not the need of "regular" troops which prolonged the war, but the equality of grit, and daring, and skill, and devotion to ideas. Lord Wolseley cannot "*blind himself to the hyperbole of writers who refer to these armies as the finest that have ever existed.*" It is true that they were not handled in the "regular" European fashion; for the rough, wooded country over which they fought would not permit; but will he deny that the two armies which

grappled for the death-struggle from the Wilderness to Appomattox were sufficiently "regular" as regards discipline, experience, and valor?

14. With Lord Wolseley's historical method, an anecdote or two is sufficient data for such a statement as this: "*The usual proportion throughout the war between the contending sides in each action ranged from about twice to three times more Federals than there were Confederates engaged.*" His lordship would appear to be unaware that there were Western battles in which almost equal numbers fought terrible battles with surprisingly equal losses. But to confine our examination, with him, to the Eastern armies, the records tell us that, save at Antietam, Lee always had on the field of battle within a fourth or a third as many men as his opponent, and that when he was the aggressor he was clever enough as a soldier to strike his blow with forces superior to the wing or detachment smitten; as witness Gaines's Mill and the blow on the Eleventh Corps at Chancellorsville. When Grant began his Wilderness "campaign of attrition," the Army of the Potomac was for once twice as large as the Army of Northern Virginia, and, considering the relative advantages of assault and defense and the steel-like temper of the Confederates, Grant's army was none too large for the job. But his lordship condenses his opinion of those veteran armies in this complaisant simile: "*A trial heat between two jockeys mounted on untrained horses may be interesting, but no one would ever quote the performance as an instance of great racing speed.*"

15. In repeating Lincoln's playful reply to the man who wanted the President's opinion of the number of Confederates in the field, which Lord Wolseley does "*with reference to the relative numbers employed on both sides,*" the drift of Lincoln's humor would have been more apparent if his lordship had stated a fact which has interested students of the "Seven Days' fighting." The day before the battle of Gaines's Mill Lincoln telegraphed to McClellan acknowledgment of three dispatches received the day before, and added, "The later one of 6.15 P. M. suggesting the probability of your being overwhelmed by 200,000, and talking of where the responsibility will belong, pains me very much." But McClellan on July 11th, when safely encamped at Harrison's Landing, returned to the subject with this: "Prisoners all state that I had 200,000 men to fight. A good deal more than two to one, and they knowing the ground." Lincoln did not need the after-testimony of the Confederate records to convince him that this was nonsense; and he must have been aiming at that unique incident when he waggishly said, "*Whenever one of our generals engages a rebel army he reports that he has encountered a force twice his strength. Now I know we have half a million of soldiers in the field, so I am bound to believe the rebels have twice that number.*"

16. But the most surprising of Lord Wolseley's conclusions on the Confederate war pertains to Lee's "faults," such as his "*softness of heart,*" his "*devotion to duty and great respect for obedience,*" [which] seem at times to have made him too subservient to those charged with the civil government of his country"; also his appearing "*to have forgotten that he was the great Revolutionary chief engaged in a great Revolutionary war*" when "*the South could only*

hope to win under the rule of a Military Dictator." In other words, his lordship is disappointed that General Lee, after obeying the commands of his native State to fight for a new constitution and government, did not prove a traitor to the trust reposed in him. After this confession of the character Lord Wolsley would have preferred to find when he visited General Lee, if his lordship's shade (when there is no longer waging or studying of war) should seek to renew the acquaintance with the calm spirit that bowed its head, in honor, at Appomattox, it is to be feared the insulted chieftain would exclaim: "Insatiate Englishman, will not one Benedict Arnold suffice?"

17. Lord Wolsley has as little sympathy with General Lee's real virtues as with his illusory "faults." Apparently he is far away from any possible comprehension of a great leader raised up to command wisely and unselfishly an army of democratic freemen. Nor can he appreciate how General Lee would feel, to know that the most famous English general of the time has written about him as though there were only one side to the civil war, and that the Confederate; and only one soldier on that side, and he Robert E. Lee.

Landscape-Gardeners Needed for America.

THE architectural profession, we are told, is already crowded, and bids fair soon to be so overcrowded that even creative ability will find it hard to make a path for itself, and executive intelligence will be a drug in the market. Demand strictly limits supply in this art at least; whenever it comes to pass that there are not enough architectural commissions to "go round," some aspirants will be compelled to turn to other tasks. But, fortunately, the demand for the services of a sister-profession seems to be fast outgrowing existent sources of supply. Our landscape architects are very few, and we are yearly awakening to a clearer recognition of our need for them.

As yet we do not recognize it half clearly or half generally enough. But it is only a few years since the case was even worse with the architects themselves,—in their true estate as differentiated from the "builder." And ideas develop rapidly in America—wants and wishes define and extend themselves with marvelous celerity when once a first faint prompting has been felt. Therefore that young American will be wise in his generation who takes note of current signs and now begins to fit himself to answer the imperious call that will soon be made upon the art of the landscape-architect,—or, to use the older, equally dignified, and exacter term, the *landscape-gardener*.

It is interesting to remember that—far as it lags behind to-day in the number of its professors and in the degree of public interest which attends it—this art showed earlier promise of vitality in America than architecture. Downing wrote excellently of landscape almost forty years ago, when certainly no American had written well of brick and stone; did admirable landscape work when our building was at its very worst; and published helpful illustrations of schemes of planting side by side with the most helpless and hideous designs for cottages and villas. The Central Park, which was planned in the 'fifties, when Richardson was still at college, may be called—considering the difficulties of the site, and allowing for the incom-

plete way in which first intentions have been carried out—almost as great a work of art as any Richardson created. But the public, now so quick to recognize success in the one art, did not then, and does not now, really appreciate success in the other. As a consequence, a hundred aspirants are ready and eager to tread in Mr. Richardson's footsteps, while the path which the success of Messrs. Olmsted and Vaux ought to have made tempting remains almost untrodden by younger feet. If we name these artists, Mr. Parsons, and but one or two others, we name all who are known by repute, it appears, even to those architects who are seeking help,—certainly all who stand visibly before the public as professed landscape-gardeners, anxious to work, as the landscape-gardener always should work, hand in hand with the architect.

Yet how vast is our need for the ministrations of such men. How immense is the number and how various the nature of the tasks which should no more be intrusted to the gardener-artisan than should the construction of public buildings and beautiful homes to the carpenter or mason. A whole huge continent has been so touched by human hands that over a large part of its surface it has been reduced to a state of unkempt, sordid ugliness; and it can be brought back into a state of beauty only by further touches of the same hands, more intelligently applied. Public parks are yearly being laid out in our larger towns. Our customary schemes of village building call imperatively for the landscape-artist's help. And there is an ever-growing demand for country homes of a more sumptuous sort, where the best of architects can but imperfectly do his work if he must do it quite alone. Look at the *châteaux* of France, for instance; at the older country homes of England; at the villas and palaces of Italy, and we see how intimate a union of the two arts produced their magnificent charm. We find it hard to decide where the work of the architect ended, the work of the gardener began. But we find it easy enough to imagine how infinitely less would be the impressiveness of the architect's work had not the gardener's been as good,—had he not set off and emphasized constructed beauty by making nature beautiful about it, and helped to connect and unify the two by an intermediate arrangement of terraces, fountains, balustrades, and more or less formal plantings.

Let it not be supposed that because the landscape-architect works with and in deference to nature, he can trust the light of nature to teach him how to work. The training he needs is as long and as serious as that needed by the architect, and even more varied in its character. He must begin—since his work so emphatically demands *good taste*—by cultivating himself in every possible way, and especially by cultivating his powers of observation and that feeling for natural beauty which comes by effort quite as often as by birth. He must study botany,—must acquaint himself not only with the aspect but with the habits and needs and idiosyncrasies of all sorts of plants, and in particular of all sorts of trees and shrubs. He must know of soils and drains and exposures and fertilizers, and all such matters, as the practical agriculturist knows of them. He must study architecture in a general but not a superficial way. He must travel widely,—in his own land to see how nature works towards beauty, and in older lands to see how men have worked