

many fold, and blue-stem and bunch grasses and other tall-growing vegetation have spread with marvelous rapidity. This thickened and higher growth catches and holds both snow and rain, retards evaporation, aids in the formation of dew, tempers the heat, mellows the soil, and, in fact, exerts a powerful, pervading, and always increasing influence towards redeeming the arid lands.

J. W. Gregory.

Two Interviews with Robert E. Lee.

I MET General Lee first at his residence in Franklin street, Richmond, in 1861. His face was cleanly shaven except a very full black mustache. He was tall and slender and erect, and reminded me of a French officer of the highest type. I thought him then the most imposing man I had ever seen. Before giving the interview I would like to give a little of my own history which led up to it.

I was on the college campus at Hampden Sidney, Virginia, in May, 1861, with a number of the students at play, when President Atkinson, who had just returned from Farmville, rode up and said, "Young gentlemen, Northern troops have crossed the Potomac into Virginia at Alexandria. Ellsworth's Zouaves tore down the Virginia flag on Jackson's Hotel. Jackson shot Ellsworth and the Zouaves have killed Jackson—the war has begun." The boys raised, and I heard for the first time, the "Rebel yell." It was arranged that afternoon that the students of the college and theological seminary should form a company with Dr. Atkinson as captain.

No one who was there can ever forget the fiery enthusiasm of those boys and of the girls on College Hill, for the girls were worse than the boys. Woe to the boy who did not thirst to die on the bloody field! Little chance would he have stood with one of those girls.

The company was ordered first to Richmond, and soon after, with Colonel John Pegram, to Rich Mountain in the wilds of West Virginia. At Rich Mountain we were attacked by General McClellan in front and by General Rosecrans in the rear, and after a severe engagement the Hampden Sidney boys were surrendered by Colonel Pegram to General McClellan, who treated them very kindly, paroled them, and told them to go back to college and finish their studies.

I, however, made my escape without being paroled. I was sick when the surrender took place. The next day typhoid fever set in and I was sent to a private house. Here I met a Federal sergeant who engaged for fifty dollars in gold, in advance, to take me out of the lines. Before day the next morning he was at the house, and, taking me in his arms, laid me in the bottom of his wagon and covered me with hay. He then drove to the outer picket post, where there was great excitement and anger, owing to the fact that two of their men had just been shot by "bushwhackers." As we drove up they were breathing out threatenings and slaughter against Rebels. One of them jumped up on the front seat and asked the sergeant where he was going. He said, "Foraging." What he had in his wagon. He said, "Nothing." After a few pleasant words the sergeant said he must go on. He then drove over into the woods, and, taking me in his arms, laid me down, expressing the greatest regret at leaving me there in the woods "to die." Cutting off

one of my buttons as a memento, and kissing me on the cheek, he drove away. The thought of escape and freedom was far superior to disease. I sat up—stood—walked—leaped for joy—came up with a Confederate wagon, took the cars at Staunton, and reached Manassas in time to witness the close of the first battle of Bull Run.

After I had served for some time in Mosby's independent command, known to the Federals as "guerrillas," I was offered the adjutancy of a regularly organized regiment. The question then arose whether, as my company was paroled, I had a right to go into service before it was exchanged. This question was referred to General R. E. Lee, whom I sought in Richmond. It was on Sunday morning. General Lee was alone in his parlor. When I was stating my case he interrupted me by saying that this seemed to be a matter of business: "It is my rule never to transact matters of business on the Lord's day, except in cases of necessity or mercy." I told him that I had to leave the city next morning at six o'clock, and he then allowed me to proceed. Though I had been received in a kindly and courteous manner, yet I felt all the time that General Lee was preoccupied. Now and then he seemed engaged in deep thought. When I had stated my case he directed me to repeat it, saying that he had not been listening to me. This I refused to do, expressing regret that I had intruded upon him in a matter that was largely personal, and rose to leave.

As I reached the door General Lee asked me my name, saying that he had not heard it when I was introduced. I told him, and he said he knew my family very well. He then insisted that I should dine with him, saying that he would like very much to have me. I was nothing but a boy, and declined; but I was very much ashamed of myself afterward for being annoyed at his inattention, when he told me that he had just received the intelligence that the enemy had landed in force under General McClellan on the Peninsula.

He then said that I could not be held technically—that the enemy did not have my name as a prisoner of war on parole of honor; "but they were kind to you in sending you to a private house on account of your sickness, and if I were in your place I should consider myself in honor bound to observe the parole until the company is exchanged."

The last two years of the war I spent at General Lee's headquarters as captain of a company of scouts, guides, and couriers in his body-guard, and in all that I had the privilege of seeing of him during those years the two things that impressed me most in this first interview—his high sense of honor, and his deep, though intelligent Christian sentiment—shone conspicuously.

The last time I saw General Lee was in 1865. The curtain had fallen, forever shutting out from our view, I trust, the bloody tragedy of fratricidal war. Satisfied that a surrender was inevitable, I had taken my command out and was on the James River, near Cartersville, in Cumberland County. Here was held a council of war—over which, I think, General Rosser presided.

General Lee had surrendered, but a very large portion of General Lee's army had escaped. What course should we pursue? One proposition before the council was to reorganize as far as possible and form a

junction with Johnston in North Carolina, or, failing in this, to join E. Kirby Smith in the Trans-Mississippi department. A larger number advocated our retiring to the mountains and woods, and carrying on a guerrilla warfare all over the country until we could again bring our armies into the field. The first proposition was objected to as under the circumstances impracticable, if not impossible; the second on the ground that although it would necessitate a large standing army on the part of the North, yet it would inflict untold horrors and suffering upon the South. Still it was the favored plan of operations. The discussion was long, earnest, and stormy, and the council, failing to agree, adjourned in the hope of obtaining more light, and especially that it might get some word from General Lee, who, it was reported, had not been required to take the parole.

The next day I learned that General Lee was being escorted out of the Federal lines by about seventy-five cavalymen. I skirted them for some distance until at length the escort returned, leaving General Lee and his personal staff, with General "Rooney" Lee, his son, and several others to pursue their way to Richmond unattended. The general was riding upon his famous old war-horse "Traveler." No one would ever have known from his looks that General Lee was not returning from one of his great victories. In physique he seemed much larger than in 1861. He now wore a full beard, which, with his hair, had turned gray. Yet there was not a wrinkle in his face and his form was as erect as when I first saw him, and in every respect he still looked the superb soldier. At this time General Lee was fifty-eight years old.

As I approached him and told him of the council and the propositions, and that we were as sheep not having a shepherd, in unapproachable dignity he answered, "I am on parole of honor; but I do not believe that I would be violating the spirit of that parole if I should say, 'Go to your homes, take off your uniforms, and return to the peaceful vocations of life.'"

These words were at once taken down and reported. With many fiery and disappointed and desperate spirits they were the occasion of General Lee's being denounced as a traitor to the South. But in the sober second thought his advice became omnipotent.

Thus both his peaceful words and his example after the surrender gained as great a victory over the heart of the South as had his sword many a time over the enemy on the field of battle. And it is little known to-day at the North how much of blood and treasure was saved to the whole country, after he had laid down his arms, by the influence of General R. E. Lee.

W. W. Page.

Washington and Talleyrand.

MR. REID'S prefatory paper to the Talleyrand "Memoirs" says, "Washington refused to receive him [Talleyrand] in America," while at page 375 it is said, "Washington flatly refused to receive him, and Talleyrand never forgot or forgave it." These statements do not seem to me to carry a correct idea of the situation. Washington was then at the head of the Government; grave questions of international and constitutional law had already grown out of the effort made by Washington's administration to maintain a strict and honest neutrality, while events in Europe, awakening sym-

pathy for France and coolness at least towards other people, added to the difficulties. Talleyrand came here a French refugee, expelled from England, but then a man of importance in any view taken of his career.

The Marquis of Lansdowne gave Talleyrand a letter to Washington (see "Life of Earl Shelburne," Vol. III., p. 515). Lansdowne was at this time acting with Fox, and against the Pitt administration. It goes without saying that a President as cautious as Washington might well hesitate when requested to receive such an eminent refugee from two countries—countries with which our relations were then greatly strained.

Washington replied to Lansdowne's letter as follows:

30TH AUGUST, 1794.

MY LORD: I had the pleasure to receive the introduction from your lordship delivered to me by M. de Talleyrand-Perigord. I regret very much that considerations of a political nature, and which you will easily understand, have not permitted me as yet to testify all the esteem I entertain for his personal character and your recommendation.

I hear that the general reception he has met with is such as to console him, as far as the state of our society will permit, for what he abandoned on leaving Europe. Time will naturally be favorable to him wherever he may be, and one must believe that it will elevate a man of his talents and merit above the transitory disadvantages which result from differences as to politics in revolutionary times.

WASHINGTON.

I quote the above from the essay of Sir Henry Bulwer on Talleyrand, which Mr. Reid also refers to in his prefatory article.

As the publication of the "Memoirs" proceeds we may ascertain to what extent it is true even that Talleyrand "never forgot or forgave" in this particular instance. At least this is true, that under the circumstances then existing President Washington adopted the wise course, and I cannot think that Talleyrand—called by Bulwer (one of the greatest of diplomats) "The Politic Man"—felt that he had a right to complain, or that he could properly treasure up anything against one of the most courteous and courtly of men.

Washington declined to receive other French refugees, on the grounds suggested above, and there existed no sound reason why a distinction should be made in Talleyrand's favor.

Cephas Brainerd.

NEW YORK CITY.

Madame de Rémusat on Talleyrand and Bonaparte.

THE following passage from the memoirs of Madame de Rémusat is particularly apropos of the present instalment of the Talleyrand Memoirs: "A most fatal indifference to good and evil, right and wrong, formed the basis of M. de Talleyrand's nature; but we must do him the justice to admit that he never sought to make a principle of what was immoral. He is aware of the worth of high principle in others; he praises it, holds it in esteem, and never seeks to corrupt it. It appears to me that he even dwells on it with pleasure. He has not, like Bonaparte, the fatal idea that virtue has no existence, and that the appearance of it is only a trick or an affectation the more. I have often heard him praise actions which were a severe criticism on his own. His conversation is never immoral or irreligious; he respects good priests, and applauds them; there is in his heart both goodness and justice; but he does not apply to himself the rule by which he judges others."