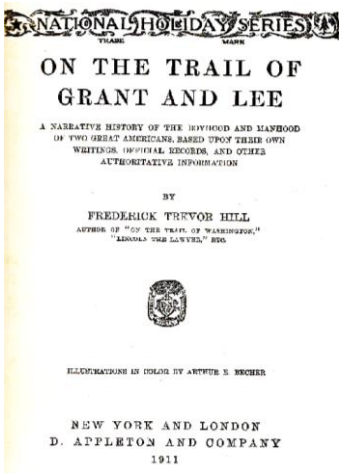


On the Trail of Grant and Lee

By Frederick Trevor Hill

Three Civil Wars

England was an uncomfortable place to live in during the reign of Charles the First. Almost from the moment that that ill-fated monarch ascended the throne he began quarreling with Parliament; and when he decided to dismiss its members and make himself the supreme ruler of the land, he practically forced his subjects into a revolution. Twelve feverish years followed—years of discontent, indignation and passion—which arrayed the Cavaliers, who supported the King, against the Roundheads, who upheld Parliament, and finally flung them at each other's throats to drench the soil of England with their blood.

Meanwhile, the gathering storm of civil war caused many a resident of the British Isles to seek peace and security across the seas, and among those who turned toward America were Mathew Grant and Richard Lee. It is not probable that either of these men had ever heard of the other, for they came from widely separated parts of the kingdom and were even more effectually divided by the walls of caste. There is no positive proof that Mathew Grant (whose people probably came from Scotland) was a Roundhead, but he was a man of humble origin who would naturally have favored the Parliamentary or popular party, while Richard Lee, whose ancestors had fought at Hastings and in the Crusades, is known to have been an ardent Cavalier, devoted to the King. But whether their opinions on politics differed or agreed, it was apparently the conflict between the King and Parliament that drove them from England. In any event they arrived in America at almost the same moment; Grant reaching Massachusetts in 1630, the year after King Charles dismissed his Parliament, and Lee visiting Virginia about this time to prepare for his permanent residence in the Dominion which began when actual hostilities opened in the mother land.

The trails of Grant and Lee, therefore, first approach each other from out of the smoke of a civil war. This is a strangely significant fact, but it might be regarded merely as a curious coincidence were it not for other and stranger events which seem to suggest that the hand of Fate was guiding the destinies of these two men.

Mathew Grant originally settled in Massachusetts but he soon moved to Connecticut, where he became clerk of the town of Windsor and official surveyor of the whole colony—a position which he held for many years. Meanwhile Richard Lee became the Colonial Secretary and a member of the King's Privy Council in Virginia, and thenceforward the name of his family is closely associated with the history of that colony.

Lee bore the title of colonel, but it was to statesmanship and not to military achievements that he and his early descendants owed their fame; while the family of Grant, the surveyor, sought glory at the cannon's mouth, two of its members fighting and dying for their country as officers in the French and Indian war of 1756. In that very year, however, a military genius was born to the Virginia family in the person of Harry Lee, whose brilliant cavalry exploits were to make him known to history as "Light Horse Harry." But before his great career began, the house of Grant was represented in the Revolution, for Captain Noah Grant of Connecticut drew his sword in defense of the colonies at the outbreak of hostilities, taking part in the battle of Bunker Hill; and from that time forward he and "Light Horse Harry" served in the Continental army under Washington until Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown.

Here the trails of the two families, *again drawn together by a civil strife*, merge for an historic moment and then cross; that of the Grants turning toward the West, and that of the Lees keeping within the confines of Virginia.

It was in 1799 that Captain Noah Grant migrated to Ohio, and during the same year Henry Lee delivered the memorial address upon the death of Washington, coining the immortal phrase "first in war, first in peace and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

Ulysses Grant, the Commander of the Union forces in the Civil War, was the grandson of Captain Grant, who served with "Light Horse Harry" Lee during the Revolution; and Robert Lee, the Confederate General, was "Light Horse Harry's" son.

Thus, for the THIRD time in two and a half centuries, a civil conflict between men of the English-speaking race blazed the trails of Grant and Lee.

Washington and Lee

Wakefield, Westmoreland County, Virginia, was the birthplace of Washington, and at Stratford in the same county and state, only a few miles from Wakefield, Robert Edward Lee was born on January 19, 1807. Seventy-five years had intervened between those events but, except in the matter of population, Westmoreland County remained much the same as it had been during Washington's youth. Indians, it is true, no longer lurked in he surrounding forests or paddled the broad Potomac in their frail canoes, but the life had much of the same freedom and charm which had endeared it to Washington. All the streams and woods and haunts which he had known and loved were known and loved by Lee, not only for their own sake, but because they were associated with the memory of the great Commander-in-Chief who had been his father's dearest friend.

It would have been surprising, under such circumstances, if Washington had not been Lee's hero, but he was more than a hero to the boy. From his father's lips he had learned to know

him, not merely as a famous personage of history, but as a man and a leader of men. Indeed, his influence and example were those of a living presence in the household of "Light Horse Harry;" and thus to young Lee he early became the ideal of manhood upon which, consciously or unconsciously, he molded his own character and life. But quite apart from this, the careers of these two great Virginians were astonishingly alike.

Washington's father had been married twice, and so had Lee's; each was a son of the second marriage, and each had a number of brothers and sisters. Washington lost his father when he was only eleven years old, and Lee was exactly the same age when his father died. Mrs. Washington had almost the entire care of her son during his early years, and Lee was under the sole guidance of his mother until he had almost grown to manhood. Washington repaid his mother's devotion by caring for her and her affairs with notable fidelity, and Lee's tenderness and consideration for his mother were such that she was accustomed to remark that he was both a son and a daughter to her.

Washington's ancestors were notable, if not distinguished, people in England; while Lee could trace his descent, through his father, to Lancelot Lee, who fought at the battle of Hastings, and through his mother to Robert the Bruce of Scotland. Neither man, however, prided himself in the least on his ancestry. Indeed, neither of them knew anything of his family history until his own achievements brought the facts to light.

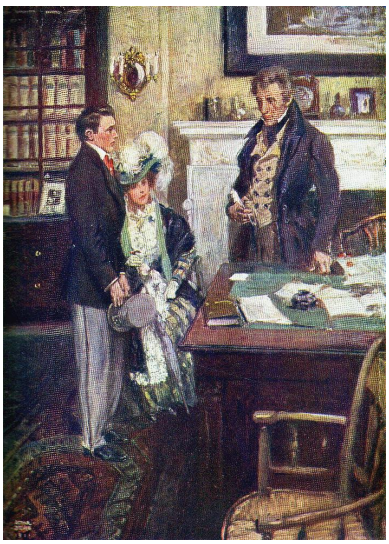
Washington was a born and bred country boy and so was Lee. Both delighted in outdoor life, loving horses and animals of all kinds and each was noted for his skillful riding in a region which was famous for its horsemanship. There was, however, a vast difference between Washington's education and that of Lee. The Virginian schools were very rudimentary in Washington's day; but Lee attended two excellent institutions of learning, where he had every opportunity, and of this he availed himself, displaying much the same thoroughness that characterized Washington's work, and the same manly modesty about any success that he achieved.

By reason of his father's death and other circumstances Washington was burdened with responsibility long before he arrived at manhood, making him far more reserved and serious-minded than most school boys. This was precisely the case with Lee, for his father's death, the ill health of his mother and the care of younger children virtually made him the head of the family, so that he became unusually mature and self-contained at an early age. Neither boy, however, held aloof from the sports and pastimes of his schoolmates and both were regarded as quiet, manly fellows, with no nonsense about them, and with those qualities of leadership that made each in turn the great military leader of his age.

Never has history recorded a stranger similarity in the circumstances surrounding the youth of two famous men, but the facts which linked their careers in later years are even stranger still.

LEE AT WEST POINT

As his school days drew to a close, it became necessary for Lee to determine his future calling. But the choice of a career, often so perplexing to young men, presented no difficulty to "Light Horse Harry's" son. He had apparently always intended to become a soldier and no other thought had seemingly ever occurred to any member of his family. Appointments to the United States Military Academy were far more a matter of favor than they are to-day, and young Lee, accompanied by Mrs. Lewis (better known as Nellie Custis, the belle of Mount Vernon and Washington's favorite grandchild), sought the assistance of General Andrew Jackson. Rough "Old Hickory" was not the easiest sort of person to approach with a request of any kind and, doubtless, his young visitor had grave misgivings as to the manner in which his application would be received. But Jackson, the hero of the battle of New Orleans in the War of 1812, only needed to be told that his caller was "Light Horse Harry's" son to proffer assistance; and in his nineteenth year, the boy left home for the first time in his life to enroll himself as a cadet at West Point.



LEE WITH MRS. LEWIS APPLYING TO GENERAL JACKSON TO AID IN SECURING HIS CADETSHIP AT WEST POINT, 1825

Very few young men enter that institution so well prepared for military life as was Lee, for he had been accustomed to responsibility and had thoroughly mastered the art of self-control many years before he stepped within its walls. He was neither a prig nor a "grind," but he regarded his cadetship as part of the life work which he had voluntarily chosen, and he had no inclination to let pleasure interfere with it. With his comrades he was companionable, entering into all their pastimes with zest and spirit, but he let it be understood, without much talk, that attention to duty was a principle with him and his serious purpose soon won respect.

Rigid discipline was then, as it is to-day, strictly enforced at West Point, and demerits were freely inflicted upon cadets for even the slightest infraction of the rules. Indeed, the regulations were so severe that it was almost impossible for a cadet to avoid making at least a few slips at some time during his career. But Lee accomplished the impossible, for not once throughout his entire four years did he incur even a single

demerit—a record that still remains practically unique in the history of West Point. This and his good scholarship won him high rank; first, as cadet officer of his class, and finally, as adjutant of the whole battalion, the most coveted honor of the Academy, from which he graduated in 1829, standing second in a class of forty-six.

Men of the highest rating at West Point may choose whatever arm of the service they prefer, and Lee, selecting the Engineer Corps, was appointed a second lieutenant and assigned to fortification work at Hampton Roads, in his twenty-second year. The work there was not hard but it was dull. There was absolutely no opportunity to distinguish oneself in any way, and time hung heavy on most of the officers' hands. But Lee was in his native state and not far from his home, where he spent most of his spare time until his mother died. Camp and garrison life had very little charm for him, but he was socially inclined and, renewing his acquaintance with his boyhood friends, he was soon in demand at all the dances and country houses at which the young people of the neighborhood assembled.

Among the many homes that welcomed him at this time was that of Mr. George Washington Parke Custis (Washington's adopted grandson), whose beautiful estate known as "Arlington" lay within a short distance of Alexandria, where Lee had lived for many years. Here he had, during his school days, met the daughter of the house and, their boy-and-girl friendship culminating in an engagement shortly after his return from West Point, he and Mary Custis were married in his twenty-fifth year. Lee thus became related by marriage to Washington, and another link was formed in the strange chain of circumstances which unite their careers.

A more ideal marriage than that of these two young people cannot be imagined. Simple in their tastes and of home-loving dispositions, they would have been well content to settle down quietly to country life in their beloved Virginia, surrounded by their family and friends. But the duties of an army officer did not admit of this, and after a few years' service as assistant to the chief engineer of the army in Washington, Lee was ordered to take charge of the improvements of the Mississippi River at St. Louis, where, in the face of violent opposition from the inhabitants, he performed such valuable service that in 1839 he was offered the position of instructor at West Point. This, however, he declined, and in 1842 he was entrusted with the task of improving the defenses of New York harbor and moved with his family to Fort Hamilton, where he remained for several years. Meanwhile, he had been successively promoted to a first lieutenancy and a captaincy, and in his thirty-eighth year he was appointed one of the visitors to West Point, whose duty it was to inspect the Academy and report at stated intervals on its condition. This appointment, insignificant in itself, is notable because it marks the point at which the trails of Grant and Lee first approach each other, for at the time that Captain Lee was serving as an official visitor, Ulysses Grant was attempting to secure an assistant professorship at West Point.

THE BOYHOOD OF GRANT

Deerfield, Ohio, was not a place of any importance when Captain Noah Grant of Bunker Hill fame arrived there from the East. Indeed, it was not then much more than a spot on the map and it has ever won any great renown. Yet in this tiny Ohio village there lived at one and the same time Owen Brown, the father of John Brown, who virtually began the Civil War, and Jesse Grant, the father of Ulysses Grant, who practically brought it to a close.

It is certainly strange that these two men should, with all the world to choose from, have chanced upon the same obscure little village, but it is still stranger that one of them should have become the employer of the other and that they should both have lived in the very same house. Such, however, is the fact, for when Jesse Grant first began to earn his living as a tanner, he worked for and boarded with Owen Brown, little dreaming that his son and his employer's son would some day shake the world.

It was not at Deerfield, however, but at Point Pleasant, Ohio, that Jesse Grant's distinguished son was born on April 27, 1822, in a cottage not much larger than the cabin in which Abraham Lincoln first saw the light. Mr. and Mrs. Grant and other members of their family differed among themselves as to what the boy should be called, but they settled the question by each writing his or her favorite name on a slip of paper and then depositing all the slips in a hat, with the understanding that the child should receive the first two names drawn from that receptacle. This resulted in the selection of Hiram and Ulysses, and the boy was accordingly called Hiram Ulysses Grant until the United States government re-christened him in a curious fashion many years later. To his immediate family, however, he was always known as Ulysses, which his playmates soon twisted into the nickname "Useless," more or less good-naturedly applied.

Grant's father moved to Georgetown, Ohio, soon after his son's birth, and there his boyhood days were passed. The place was not at that time much more than a frontier village and its inhabitants were mostly pioneers—not the adventurous, exploring pioneers who discover new countries, but the hardy advance-guard of civilization, who clear the forests and transform the wilderness into farming land. Naturally, there was no culture and very little education among these people. They were a sturdy, self-respecting, hard-working lot, of whom every man was the equal of every other, and to whom riches and poverty were alike unknown. In a community of this sort there was, of course, no pampering of the children, and if there had been, Grant's parents would probably have been the last to indulge in it. His father, Jesse Grant, was a stern and very busy man who had neither the time nor the inclination to coddle the boy, and his mother, absorbed in her household duties and the care of a numerous family, gave him only such attention as was necessary to keep him in good health. Young Ulysses was, therefore, left to his own devices almost as soon as he could toddle, and he quickly became self-reliant to a

degree that alarmed the neighbors. Indeed, some of them rushed into the house one morning shouting that the boy was out in the barn swinging himself on the farm horses' tails and in momentary danger of being kicked to pieces; but Mrs. Grant received the announcement with perfect calmness, feeling sure that Ulysses would not amuse himself in that way unless he knew the animals thoroughly understood what he was doing.

Certainly this confidence in the boy's judgment was entirely justified as far as horses were concerned, for they were the joy of his life and he was never so happy as when playing or working in or about the stables. Indeed, he was not nine years old when he began to handle a team in the fields. From that time forward he welcomed every duty that involved riding, driving or caring for horses, and shirked every other sort of work about the farm and tannery. Fortunately, there was plenty of employment for him in the line of carting materials or driving the hay wagons and harrows, and his father, finding that he could be trusted with such duties, allowed him, before he reached his teens, to drive a 'bus or stage between Georgetown and the neighboring villages entirely by himself. In fact, he was given such free use of the horses that when it became necessary for him to help in the tannery, he would take a team and do odd jobs for the neighbors until he earned enough, with the aid of the horses, to hire a boy to take his place in the hated tan-yard.

This and other work was, of course, only done out of school hours, for his parents sent him as early as possible to a local "subscription" school, which he attended regularly for many years. "Spare the rod and spoil the child" was one of the maxims of the school, and the first duty of the boys on assembling each morning was to gather a good-sized bundle of beech-wood switches, of which the schoolmaster made such vigorous use that before the sessions ended the supply was generally exhausted. Grant received his fair share of this discipline, but as he never resented it, he doubtless got no more of it than he deserved and it probably did him good.

Among his schoolmates he had the reputation of talking less than any of the other boys and of knowing more about horses than all of them put together. An opportunity to prove this came when he was about eleven, for a circus appeared in the village with a trick pony, and during the performance the clown offered five dollars to any boy who could ride him. Several of Ulysses' friends immediately volunteered, but he sat quietly watching the fun while one after another of the boys fell victim to the pony's powers. Finally, when the little animal's triumph seemed complete, Grant stepped into the ring and sprang upon his back. A tremendous tussle for the mastery immediately ensued, but though he reared and shied and kicked, the tricky little beast was utterly unable to throw its fearless young rider, and amid the shouts of the audience the clown at last stopped the contest and paid Ulysses the promised reward.

From that time forward his superiority as a horseman was firmly established, and as he grew older and his father allowed him to take longer and longer trips with the teams, he came to be the most widely traveled boy in the village. Indeed, he was only about fifteen when he covered nearly a hundred and fifty miles in the course of one of his journeys, taking as good care of his horses as he did of himself, and transacting the business entrusted to him with entire satisfaction to all concerned. These long, and often lonely, trips increased his independence and so encouraged his habit of silence that many of the village people began to think him a dunce.

His father, however, was unmistakably proud of the quiet boy who did what he was told to do without talking about it, and though he rarely displayed his feelings, the whole village knew that he thought "Useless" was a wonder and smiled at his parental pride. But the smile almost turned to a laugh when it became known that he proposed to send the boy to West Point, for the last cadet appointed from Georgetown had failed in his examinations before he had been a year at the Academy, and few of the neighbors believed that Ulysses would survive as long. Certainly, the boy himself had never aspired to a cadetship, and when his father suddenly remarked to him one morning that he was likely to obtain the appointment, he receive the announcement with uncomprehending surprise.

"What appointment?" he asked

"To West Point," replied his father. "I have applied for it."

"But I won't go!" gasped the astonished youth.

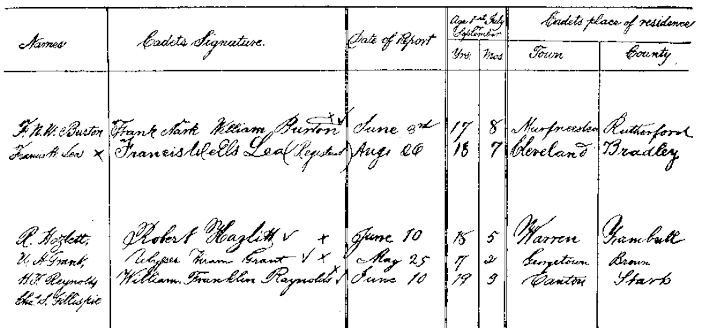
"I think you will," was the quiet but firm response, and Grant, who had been taught obedience almost from his cradle, decided that if his father thought so, he did, too.

But, though the young man yielded to his parent's wishes, he had no desire to become a soldier and entirely agreed with the opinion of the village that he had neither the ability nor the education to acquit himself with credit. In fact, the whole idea of military life was so distasteful to him that he almost hoped he would not fulfill the physical and other requirements for admission. Indeed, the only thought that reconciled him to the attempt was that it necessitated a trip from Ohio to New York, which gratified his longing to see more of the world. This was so consoling that it was almost with a gay heart that he set out of the Hudson in the middle of May, 1839.

For a boy who had lived all his life in an inland village on the outskirts of civilization the journey was absolutely adventurous, for although he was then in his eighteenth year, he had never even as much as seen a railroad and his experiences on the cars, canal boats and steamers were all delightfully surprising. Therefore, long as the journey was, it was far too short for him, and on May 25th he reached his destination. Two lonely and homesick weeks followed, and then, much to his astonishment and somewhat to his regret, he received word that he had passed the examination for admission and was a full-fledged member of the cadet corps of West Point.

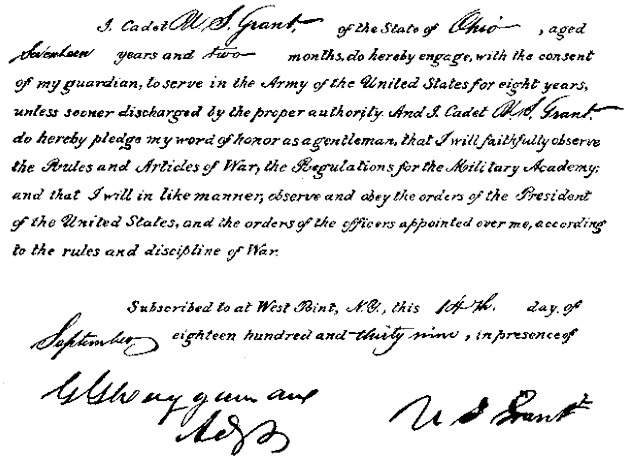
GRANT AT WEST POINT

Grant's father had obtained his son's appointment to the Academy through the intervention of a member of Congress, who, remembering that the boy was known as Ulysses and that his mother's name before her marriage was Simpson, had written to the Secretary of War at Washington, requesting a cadetship for U. S. Grant. This mistake in his initials was not discovered until the young man presented himself at West Point, but when he explained that his name was Hiram Ulysses Grant and not U. S. Grant, the officials would not correct the error. The Secretary of War had appointed U. S. Grant to the Academy and U. S. Grant was the only person they would officially recognize without further orders. They, therefore, intimated that he could either enroll himself as U. S. Grant or stay out of the Academy, making it quite plain that they cared very little which course he adopted. Confronted with this situation, he signed the enlistment paper as U. S. Grant and the document, bearing his name, which thus became his, can be seen to-day among the records at West Point. This re-christening, of course, supplied his comrades with endless suggestions for nicknames and they immediately interpreted his new initials to suit themselves. "United States," "Under Sized" and "Uncle Sam" all seemed to be appropriate, but the last was the favorite until the day arrived when a more significant meaning was found in "Unconditional Surrender" Grant.



SIGNATURE OF GRANT ON REPORTING AT WEST POINT (FROM THE ORIGINAL RECORDS OF THE U. S. MILITARY ACADEMY.)

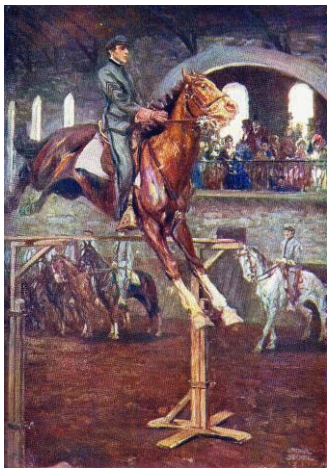
The restrictions and discipline of West Point bore much more harshly on country-bred boys in those years than they do to-day when so many schools prepare students for military duties. But to a green lad like Grant, who had been exceptionally independent all his life, the preliminary training was positive torture. It was then that his habitual silence stood him in good stead, for a talkative, argumentative boy could never have survived the breaking-in process which eventually transformed him from a slouchy bumpkin into a smart, soldier-like young fellow who made the most of his not excessive inches. Still, he hated almost every moment of his first year and ardently hoped that the bill for abolishing the Academy, which was under discussion in Congress, would become a law and enable him to return home without disgrace. But no such law was passed and more experience convinced him that West Point was a very valuable institution which should be strengthened rather than abolished. He had not reached this conclusion, however, at the time of his first furlough, and when he returned to his more and found that his father had procured a fine horse for his exclusive use during his holiday, it was hard to tear himself away and resume his duties. Nevertheless, he did so; and, considering the fact that he was not fond of studying, he made fair progress, especially in mathematics, never reaching the head of his class, but never quite sinking to the bottom. Indeed, if he had not been careless in the matter of incurring demerits from small infractions of the rules, he might have attained respectable, if not high rank in the corps, for he was a clean living, clean spoken boy, without a vicious trait of any kind. Even as it was, he became a sergeant, but inattention to details of discipline finally cost him his promotion and reduced him again to the ranks. At no time, however, did he acquire any real love for the military profession. His sole ambition was to pass the examinations and retire from the service as soon as he could obtain a professorship at some good school or college. At this, he might easily have succeeded with his unmistakable talent for mathematics, and it is even conceivable that he might have qualified as a drawing master or an architect, if not as an artist, for he was fond of sketching and some of his works in this line which have been preserved shows a surprisingly artistic touch.



FIRST SIGNATURE OF GRANT AS U. S. GRANT (FROM THE ORIGINAL RECORDS OF THE U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY.)

Graduation day at the Academy brought no distinguished honors to Grant, where he stood twenty-first in a class of thirty-nine, but it did win him one small triumph. As almost everyone knows, the West Point cadets are trained for all arms of the service, sometimes doing duty as infantry, sometimes as artillery and at other times acting as engineers or cavalry; and during the closing week of the year, they give public exhibitions of their proficiency before the official visitors. On this particular occasion the cavalry drill was held in the great riding hall, and after the whole corps had completed their evolutions and were formed in line ready to be dismissed, the commanding officer ordered an extraordinarily high hurdle to be placed in position, and while the great throng of spectators were wondering what this meant they heard the sharp command, "Cadet Grant."

A young man of slight stature, not weighing more than a hundred and twenty pounds, and mounted on a powerful chestnut horse, sprang from the ranks with a quick salute, dashed to the further end of the hall and, swinging his mount about, faced the hurdle. There was a moment's pause and then the rider, putting spurs to his steed, rushed him straight at the obstruction and, lifting him in masterly fashion, cleared the bar as though he and the animal were one. A thunder of applause followed as the horseman quietly resumed his place in the ranks, and after the corps had been dismissed Grant was sought out and congratulated on his remarkable feat. But his response was characteristic of the boy that was, and the man that was to be. "Yes, 'York' is a wonderfully good horse," was all he said.



GRANT ON HIS HORSE 'YORK," MAKING EXHIBITION JUMP IN THE RIDING ACADEMY AT WEST POINT, JUNE 1843

A lieutenancy in the engineers or cavalry was more than a man of low standing in the Academy could expect, and Grant was assigned to the Fourth Infantry, with orders to report for duty at Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, Missouri, at the end of a short leave of absence. The prospect of active service, far from his native state, was anything but pleasing to the new officer; but he had come home with a bad cough, and had he not been ordered to the South, it is highly probable that he would have fallen a victim to consumption, of which two of his uncles had already died. The air of Camp Salubrity, Louisiana, where his regiment was quartered, and the healthy, outdoor life, however, quickly checked the disease, and at the end of two years he had acquired a constitution of iron.

Meanwhile, he had met Miss Julia Dent, the sister of one of his classmates whose home was near St. Louis, and had written to the Professor of Mathematics at West Point, requesting his aid in securing an appointment there as his assistant, to which application he received a most encouraging reply. Doubtless, his courtship of Miss Dent made him doubly anxious to realize his long-cherished plan of settling down to the quiet life of a professor. But all hope of this was completely shattered by the orders of the Fourth Infantry which directed it to proceed at once to Texas. Long before the regiment marched, however, he was engaged to "the girl he left behind him" and, although his dream of an instructorship at West Point had vanished, he probably did not altogether abandon his ambition for a career at teaching. But Fate had other plans for him as he journeyed toward Mexico, where the war clouds were gathering. Lee was moving in the same direction and their trails were soon to merge at the siege of Vera Cruz.

MEXICAN WAR

In 1846, Lee got the chance he'd been waiting his whole military career for when the United States went to war with Mexico. Serving under General Winfield Scott, Lee distinguished himself as a brave battle commander and brilliant tactician. In the aftermath of the U.S. victory over its neighbor, Lee was held up as a hero. Scott showered Lee with particular praise, calling Lee "the very best soldier that I ever saw in the field." and saying that in the event the U.S. went into another war, the government should consider taking out a life insurance policy on the commander.

During the Mexican-American War, Grant served as quartermaster, efficiently overseeing the movement of supplies. Serving under General Zachary Taylor and later under General Winfield Scott, he closely observed their military tactics and leadership skills. After getting the opportunity to lead a company into combat, Grant was credited for his bravery under fire, winning acclaim among his immediate peers for a heroic horseback ride under fire through the streets of Monterey. He also developed strong feelings that the war was wrong, and that it was being waged only to increase America's territory for the spread of slavery.

Both Lee and Grant participated in Scott's march from the coastal town of Vera Cruz to Mexico City. At Vera Cruz, Lee earned a commendation for "greatly distinguished" service. His brilliance and bravery continued to be tested in the following weeks as he endeavored to match the martial accomplishments of his father. Grant was among the leaders at the bloody assault at Molino del Rey, and both soldiers were among the forces that entered Mexico City.

AFTER THE MEXICAN WAR

After a four-year engagement, Ulysses and Julia were finally married in 1848. Over the next six years, the couple had four children, and Grant was assigned to several posts. In 1852, he was sent to Fort Vancouver, in what is now Washington State. He missed Julia and his two sons—the second of whom he had not yet seen at this time—and thusly became involved in several failed business ventures in an attempt to get his family to the coast, closer to him. He began to drink, and a reputation was forged that dogged him all through his military career.

In the summer of 1853, Grant was promoted to captain and transferred to Fort Humboldt on the Northern California coast, where he had a run-in with the fort's commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Robert C. Buchanan. On July, 31, 1854, Grant resigned from the Army amid allegations of heavy drinking and warnings of disciplinary action.

In 1854, Ulysses S. Grant moved his family back to Missouri, but the return to civilian life led him to a low point. He tried to farm land that had been given to him by his father-in-law, but this venture proved to be unsuccessful after a few years. Grant

then failed to find success with a real estate venture, and was denied employment as an engineer and clerk in St. Louis. To support his family, he was reduced to selling firewood on a St. Louis street. Finally, in 1860, he humbled himself and went to work in his father's tannery business as a clerk, supervised by his two younger brothers.

HARPERS FERRY: PRELUDE TO WAR

Colonel Robert E. Lee was at Arlington House in the fall of 1859. This allowed President James Buchanan to send him to nearby Harpers Ferry to stop an attempt by abolitionist John Brown to incite a slave uprising. Even a minor disturbance at this transportation center would have troubled many Virginians. The town was the site of a federal arsenal; the guns stored there could easily fall into hostile hands.

Rumors began to fly when Brown, already famous for his cold-blooded massacre of proslavery advocates in "Bleeding Kansas," led a band of insurgents to the area. By the time Lee arrived, which was before any slaves were freed or armed, the angry townspeople had fought a pitched battle with the intruders, forcing Brown to take refuge in a fire-engine house within the arsenal. Colonel Lee, assisted by troops that included a young Lt. J. E. B. Stuart, quickly captured Brown and his men.

Lee considered the raid "the attempt of a fanatic or madman." He mistakenly thought it would do nothing to end slavery. But Brown understood that his martyrdom would force Americans to confront the moral issues at the root of the institution. The nation's best writers quickly seized on this point. William Cullen Bryant ranked Brown as one of the "martyrs and heroes" of our country. "Brown would make the gallows as glorious as the cross," wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Herman Melville would later call Brown the "meteor of war."

Although both Lee and Grant hoped to preserve the Union, by the spring of 1861 a war between North and South was inevitable.

AMERICAN CIVIL WAR BEGINS

On April 13, 1861, Confederate troops attacked Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. This act of rebellion sparked Ulysses S. Grant's patriotism, and he volunteered his military services. Again he was initially rejected for appointments, but with the aid of an Illinois congressman, he was appointed to command an unruly 21st Illinois volunteer regiment.

LEE AT THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

While Grant was thus striving to reenter the army, Lee was having a struggle of a very different sort. Summoned from his distant post in Texas, where only an occasional rumble of the coming tempest reached his ears, he suddenly found himself in the center of the storm which threatened to wreck the Republic. In the far South seven states had already seceded; in Washington, Congressmen, Senators, and members of the Cabinet were abandoning their posts; in the army and navy his friends were daily tendering their resignations; and his own state, divided between love for the Union and sympathy with its neighbors, was hovering on the brink of secession.

The issue in Lee's mind was not the existence of slavery. He had long been in favor of emancipation, and Virginia had more than once come so close to abolishing slavery by law that its disappearance from her borders was practically assured within a very short period. All his own slaves he had long since freed and he was gradually emancipating his father-in-law's, according to the directions of Mr. Custis's will. But the right of each state to govern itself without interference from the Federal Government seemed to Lee essential to the freedom of the people. He recognized, however, that secession was revolution and, calmly and conscientiously examining the question, he concluded that, if force were used to compel any state to remain in the Union, resistance would be justifiable. Most Virginians reached this decision impulsively, light-heartedly, defiantly or vindictively, and more or less angrily, according to their temperaments and the spirit of the times, but not so Lee. He unaffectedly prayed God for guidance in the struggle between his patriotism and his devotion to a principle which he deemed essential to liberty and justice. He loved his country as only a man in close touch with its history and with a deep reverence for its great founder, Washington, could love it; he had fought for its flag; he wore its uniform; he had been educated at its expense; and General Scott, the Commander of the army, a devoted Union man, was his warm personal friend. Patriotism, personal pride, loyalty and even gratitude, therefore, urged him toward the support of the Union, and only his adherence to a principle and the claims of his kinsmen and friends forbade.

For a time Virginia resisted every effort to induce her to cast her lot with the Confederacy. Indeed she actually voted against secession when the question was first presented. But when Fort Sumter resisted attack on April 12, 1861, and the President called upon the various states to furnish troops to enforce the national authority, practically all affection for the Union disappeared and by a decisive vote Virginia determined to uphold the Southern cause.

At that crisis President Lincoln made a strong effort to induce Lee to support the Union, for he actually offered him the command of the United States Army which was about to take the field. The full force of this remarkable tribute to his professional skill was not lost upon Lee. He had devoted his whole life to the army, and to be a successor of Washington in

the command of that army meant more to him than perhaps to any other soldier in the land. Certainly, if he had consulted his own ambition or been influenced by any but the most unselfish motives, he would have accepted the call as the highest honor in the gift of the nation. But to do so he would have been obliged to surrender his private principles and desert his native state, and it is impossible to imagine that a man of his character would, even for an instant, consider such a course. Gravely and sadly he declined the mighty office, and two days later he tendered his resignation from the service he had honored for almost six and thirty years.

For this and his subsequent action Lee has been called a traitor and severely criticized for well-nigh fifty years. But, when a nation has been divided against itself upon a great issue of government, millions upon one side and millions upon the other, and half a century has intervened, it is high time that justice be given to the man who did what he thought right and honorably fought for a principle which he could have surrendered only at the expense of his conscience and his honor. Lee was a traitor to the United States in the same sense that Washington was a traitor to England. No more and no less. England takes pride to-day in having given Washington to the world. Americans deprive their country of one of her claims to greatness when they fail to honor the character and the genius of Robert Lee.

It was in a letter to his old commander, Scott, that Lee announced his momentous decision, and its tone well indicated what the parting cost him.

"Arlington, Va., April 20, 1861.

"General:

"Since my interview with you on the 18th inst., I have felt that I ought not 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. . . 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. . . . Save in the defense of my native State, I never desire again to draw my sword."

Lee was fully aware of the serious nature of the conflict in which the country was about to engage. Americans were to be pitted against Americans and he knew what that meant. Wise men, both North and South, were prophesying that the war would not last more than ninety days, and foolish ones were bragging of their own powers and questioning the courage of their opponents, quite oblivious of the adage that when Greek meets Greek there comes a tug of war. But Lee did not concern himself with such childish exhibitions of judgment and temper.

"Do not put your faith in rumors of adjustment," he wrote his wife before serious fighting had begun. "I see no prospect of it. It cannot be while passions on both sides are so infuriated. *Make your plans for several years of war*. I agree with you that the inflammatory articles in the papers do us much harm. I object particularly to those in the Southern papers, as I wish them to take a firm, dignified course, free from bravado and boasting. The times are indeed calamitous. The brightness of God's countenance seems turned from us. It may not always be so dark and He may in time pardon our sins and take us under his protection."

Up to this time his son Custis, who had graduated first in his class at West Point, was still in the service of the United States as a lieutenant in the Engineers and of him Lee wrote to his wife in the same comradely spirit that he had always shown toward his boys. "Tell Custis he must consult his own judgment, reason and conscience, as to the course he may take. The present is a momentous question which every man must settle for himself, and upon principle. I do not wish him to be guided by my wishes or example. If I have done wrong let him do better."

Virginia was not slow in recognizing that she had within her borders the soldiers whom the chief general of the United States described as the greatest military genius in America, and within three days of his resignation from the old army, Lee was tendered the command of all the Virginia troops. Convinced that the brunt of the heavy fighting would fall on his native state, to whose defense he had dedicated his sword, he accepted the offer and thus there came to the aid of the Confederacy one of the few really great commanders that the world has ever seen.