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INTERESTING STORY
OF APPOMATTOX

Some Interesting Details of the Letters Exchanged by Lee and Grant at the Time of the Surrender. A Story of Interest to Every One.

The story, taken from The Sunny South, given below is furnished The News by Mrs. J. F. Davis, nee Miss Lela Walkup, of Montgomery, Texas. Mrs. Davis, who is a daughter of the late Col. W. W. Walkup, of Union county, is now visiting at the home of Dr. C. E. Walker, on North Broadway street. The story follows:

I have frequently noticed that when old soldiers and sailors meet for a talk about the civil war they sometimes forget the reverence due the Goddness of Truth. For my part, I have heard events that occurred under my own eyes described in such a way that I failed to recognize them.

We do not yet know with certainty the facts of the battle of Waterloo, and as to Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, although I witnessed both, I sometimes think, in view of the absolutely irreconcilable accounts we have of these two engagements, a Bishop Whately might readily create historic doubts as to whether either was in fact fought.

With the full knowledge of this tendency to error, I will give you as accurately as I can an exact narrative of the circumstances attending the surrender of General Lee's army at Appomattox, as they fell under my direct observation. I will exclude everything not immediately connected with the great event, as I am convinced that it possesses sufficient interest in itself to render comment unnecessary, if not inappropriate.

Why Lee Met Grant.

There is one very important matter I wish settled at the outset, however. It is this: General Lee did not meet General Grant in the McLean house on the morning of April 9, 1865, for the purpose of then and there effecting a surrender of his army. On the contrary it was simply for the purpose of hearing Grant's terms. As a matter of fact, if they had not suited General Lee he would not have accepted them; but Grant's offer was so liberal, so magnanimous and so chivalrous that it was accepted forthwith.

I wish to have another matter understood before beginning a consecutive narrative of the surrender. This is in regard to General Horace Porter's statement, made repeatedly, orally and in writing, that General Lee offered his sword to General Grant. I take exception to this statement. Lee never offered his sword to Grant and the latter never refused it. I was with the great Southern chieftain from the time he greeted Grant in the McLean house until he rode away, and the only time the mention of a sword was made was when Grant apologized to Lee for his dress, explaining that it was not possible for him to get access to his baggage and at the same time keep the appointment. The terms of capitulation expressly excepted side arms, and in view of that fact it would have been a most unusual procedure for General Lee to have offered his sword to Grant. These matters are unimportant in themselves, but it is well for the sake of history to have them cleared up.

After the disaster of Sailor's Creek, in April, 1865, the army, reduced to a few stragglers, was ordered by General Longstreet and General Gordon, moved through Farmville, where rations were issued to some of the starving troops. A close pursuit by the overwhelming army of General Grant made it necessary to remove the wagon-trains before all the men could be supplied, and the remnant of the great army of Northern Virginia, exhausted by flight and starvation, moved in the road to Appomattox Courthouse.

Grant Writes to Lee.

On the afternoon of the 7th of April, 1865, General Grant wrote to General Lee stating that the hopelessness of further resistance was apparent, and asking a surrender of the army of Northern Virginia.

When this letter was received there was some difference of opinion among the general officers as to the nature of the reply to be made to General Grant's letter, some thinking it was yet possible to save the remnant of the army. Finally, however, General Lee decided to meet Grant, and I was directed to draw up a communication to that effect. This is the letter General Lee signed:

April 7, 1865.—General: I have received your note of this date. Though not entertaining the opinion you express of the hopelessness of further resistance on the part of the army of Northern Virginia, I reciprocate your desire to avoid useless effusion of blood, and therefore, before considering your proposition, ask the terms you will offer on condition of surrender. Very respectfully, your obedient servant, R. E. LEE, General.

It was not until the next day that a reply was received to this letter. Grant states that he would insist upon but one condition. This was that the men and officers surrendered should be disqualified to take up arms against the United States until properly exchanged.

Even after this correspondence, Grant did not abandon hopes of successfully extricating himself from the dilemma. The army had been in straits almost as deplorable. The march was continued during April 8, with little interruption from the enemy. In the evening we halted near Appomattox Courthouse, General Lee intending to march by way of Campbell Courthouse, through Pittsylvania county, toward Dan-

ville, with a view of opening communications with the army of General Joseph E. Johnston, then retreating before General Sherman through North Carolina. General Lee's purpose was to unite with General Johnston to his aid in resisting Grant, whichever might be found best. The exhausted troops were halted for rest near Appomattox Courthouse, and the march was resumed at 1 o'clock A. M. I can convey a good idea of the condition of affairs by telling my own experience.

A Night in the Woods.

When the army halted General Lee and staff turned out of the road into a dense wood to receive some rest. Lee had a conference with some of the principal officers, at which it was determined to force our way the next morning with the troops of Gordon, supported by the cavalry under General Fitzhugh Lee, the command of Longstreet bringing up the rear. With my comrades of the staff and staff officers of Generals Longstreet and Gordon I sought a little rest.

We lay upon the ground with our saddles for pillows, our horses picketed nearby tating the bark of trees for want of better provender, and our faces covered with the capes of our overcoats to keep out the night air. Soon after 1 o'clock A. M. I was aroused by the sound of a column of infantry, marching along the road. At first I thought they were the federal soldiers.

I raised my head and listened intently. My doubts were quickly dispelled. It was Hood's old Texas brigade, and I recognized the command by hearing one of them repeat the version of a passage of scripture with which I was familiar—I mean with the Texas version:

"The race is not to them that's got the longest legs to run; Nor the battle to that people That shoots the biggest gun."

Soon after they passed we were all astir and our bivouac was at an end. We made our simple toilet, consisting of putting on our caps and saddling our horses. Somebody had a little cornmeal and somebody had a tin can such as is used to hold water for shaving. A fire was kindled and each man in his turn, according to rank and seniority, made a can of gruel and water, and was allowed to keep the can until the gruel became cool enough to drink. General Lee, who reposed as we had done, not far from us, did not; as I remember, have even such refreshments as I have described.

Last Meal in Confederate States.

This was our last meal in the Confederate States. Our next was taken in the United States and consisted mainly of a generous portion of that noble American animal whose strained relations with the chancellor of the German empire made it necessary at last for the president of the United States to send an Ohio man to the court of Berlin.

"Tantas componere lites."

As soon as we all had our turn at the shaving, we rode toward Appomattox Courthouse, where the sound of guns announced that Gordon had already begun the attempt to open the way.

He forced his way through the cavalry of the enemy only to encounter a force of infantry far superior to his own wearied and starving command. He informed General Lee that it was impossible to advance further, and it became evident that the end was at hand.

General Lee had written Grant stating that he would meet him at 10 o'clock on the morning of April 9 on the old stage road to Richmond. Attended by myself and one orderly, Lee proceeded down this road to meet General Grant.

As we advanced through the rear guard, composed of the remnants of Longstreet's corps, the men cheered their chieftain as he passed. Their confidence and enthusiasm was not one whit abated by defeat, hunger and danger. It was lucky that this rear guard was not permitted to try its hand at increasing the pension roll with which he is now struggling. These men made no fraudulent pensioner. When they were done with a man he or his representative had an indisputable claim to a pension under any kind of pension law.

General Lee, with an orderly in front bearing a flag of truce, had proceeded but a short distance after passing through our rear guard when he became upon the advancing enemy. I rode forward to meet a federal officer, who turned out to be Lieutenant Colonel Whittier of General Humphrey's staff, and who delivered to me General Grant's reply to Lee's letter, declining to discuss terms of a general pacification. I took this letter to General Lee, who at once dictated to me a letter to Grant asking an interview for the purpose of discussing terms of surrender. Colonel Whittier took this letter to Grant.

General Lee then returned to the front, and with General Longstreet proceeded to a small orchard, and there waited for Grant's reply. As he was much fatigued a rude couch was prepared under an apple tree, upon which he reclined until the appearance of a flag of truce and Grant's affirmative reply.

Where the Meeting Was Held.

Colonel Babcock, who brought the reply, told General Lee that he had been sent to make any arrangements for the meeting with General Lee desired within the federal or Confederate lines.

General Lee directed me to accompany him with an orderly, and immediately mounting his horse rode with Colonel Babcock toward Appomattox Courthouse.

We passed through an infantry force in front of the village, and General Lee directed me to find a suitable place for the meeting. I rode forward and asked the first citizen I met to direct me to a house suitable for that purpose. I learned afterward that the citizen was Mr. McLean, who had lived on the battlefield of Bull Run, but had removed to Appomattox Courthouse to get out of the way of the war. McLean conducted me to an unoc-

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