

JUNE 30, 1896.

## THE CLOSING SCENE.

### Review of Circumstances That Attended Surrender at Appomattox C. H.

#### MEETING OF LEE AND GRANT.

**They Had a Brief Interview and  
Arranged for the War to End—  
Affecting Scene When the South's  
Idol Informed His Heroic Troops.**



**THE OLD M'LEAN HOUSE,  
AT APPOMATTOX.**

(Building in Which the Terms of Surrender  
Were Agreed Upon and Signed. The House  
Is Not Standing New.)

To those who participated in the stirring events of 1861-'65 it seems barely possible that thirty-one years have elapsed since the final scene of that tragedy was enacted. The younger generation, which has not only been born, but attained manhood, since then, scarcely realizes what that ending meant to those who for four long years battled as men never did before.

The steady reverses of the Confederates during the early spring of 1865 showed even the most loyal and sanguine southerner that the beginning of the end was at hand. Flesh and blood could not stand the constant hammering of overpowering thousands. The evacuation of Richmond and Petersburg on April 2, 1865, was followed by a retrograde movement on Lee's part. For a week the worn-out veterans fought constantly, slept little, and ate less. Lynchburg and Danville were the objective points, a junction with Johnston being the aim of the movement. Death and capture was depleting the devoted band, and April 9th found the once magnificent Army of Northern Virginia dwindled to less than 8,000 men, facing a force of 75,000 at Appomattox Courthouse.

#### SURRENDER WAS INEVITABLE.

That surrender was inevitable was apparent to all. The stores looked for at Amelia Courthouse were not forthcoming, and a day was lost in attempting to gather them from the surrounding country. Both man and horse were absolutely without means of subsistence.

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Desiring to spare General Lee all embarrassment possible under the painful circumstances, General Grant took the initiative. While at Farmville, on April 7th, the northern commander told his generals—Ord, Gibbon, and Wright—that he was thinking of sending a communication to General Lee, "to pave the way to the stopping of further bloodshed." Grant had heard that Ewell, who was a prisoner, had said "it was the duty of the authorities to negotiate for peace now, and that for every man killed somebody would be responsible; and it would be little better than murder."

Grant wrote to Lee to the effect that the events of the past week must have convinced him that further resistance was useless. He (Grant) felt that such was the case, and, wishing to shift the responsibility of further effusion of blood, asked the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia.

### THE TERMS OF SURRENDER.

General Lee replied that he did not take that view of the situation, at the same time stating that he could entertain no proposition until advised of the terms General Grant would offer.

The answer to this came the next day, the 8th. Grant stated that his one object was peace, and to that end he would require that the men and officers surrendered should not again take up arms until exchanged. He also offered to meet General Lee, or designate officers to meet other officers, to arrange the terms.

This last note did not reach General Lee until late at night. He at once replied to it, saying it was not his intention to propose a surrender; but simply to ask the terms of the proposition. He frankly admitted that he did not think the situation demanded surrender. General Lee then went on to say that he would not negotiate for surrender, but that, as peace was the desire of all, he would be glad to meet General Grant the next day at 10 A. M.

This meeting Grant declined, saying he was not authorized to treat for peace, but intimating that such an event would be hastened by the South laying down its arms; thereby saving thousands of lives and millions of property.

On the same day (the 9th), an effort to break through the northern lines having proved ineffectual, Lee wrote Grant, asking an interview, with a view to surrender. This was received by Grant about noon, and he at once pushed forward to the meeting. This correspondence between Lee and Grant would not have assumed such length, but for the fact that the former feared the latter would demand unconditional surrender, to which he asserted he would never have agreed, preferring a "thousand deaths" to such an alternative.

On the 7th a number of Lee's highest officers had consulted together, and sent him word that they were willing to share with him the responsibility of surrender. His reply to this was he could think of no such thing, as long as he had so many brave men left.

### MET AT M'LEAN'S HOUSE.

The Federal officer who delivered Grant's last note found Lee near Appomattox Courthouse, lying on a blanket spread over some rails under an apple-tree. From this arose the famous "apple-tree" story.

General Lee, Colonel Marshall, of his staff, the Federal officer, and a mounted orderly rode to the Courthouse, and, meeting Mr. Wilmer McLean, a resident of the village, told him General Lee want-

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ed the use of a room in some house. Mr. McLean took the party to his home, a comfortable, two-story brick dwelling, with a veranda across its entire front. General Lee was ushered into a room on the left of the hall, where about 1 o'clock he was joined by General Grant, his staff, and Generals Sheridan and Ord. The Federal Commander sat at a marble-top table in the centre of the room; Lee at a small oval table near the front window. The casual observer would never have grasped the true state of affairs. From the demeanor of the two men he would have seen in Lee the victor and Grant the vanquished. The latter, not yet 43 years of age, was 5 feet 8 inches tall, slightly stooping shoulders, nut-brown hair and beard. He wore a dark blue flannel blouse, unbuttoned, showing vest beneath; ordinary top boots, trousers inside. The only marks of rank was his general's shoulder-straps. He wore neither spurs nor sword, for which latter omission he apologized to General Lee. Lee was 58 years old, 6 feet in height, hair and beard of gray; he had on a handsome new uniform, buttoned to the throat, with three stars on each side of the collar; fine top boots, handsome spurs, elegant new gauntlet. He looked every inch the descendant of King Robert Bruce, that he was. After some reference to their meeting in Mexico, where both had served eighteen years before under Scott, the business in hand was taken up. Indeed, so pleasant was the conversation indulged in that General Lee had repeatedly to remind General Grant for what purpose they had met.

### THE CONDITIONS.

At General Lee's request, the terms of surrender, which were quickly agreed upon, were reduced to writing. These provided that rolls in duplicate of all the officers and men be made out—one set to be given to an officer designated by General Grant, the other to one similarly chosen by General Lee; the officers to give their individual parole, company and regimental commanders to sign for their men; arms, artillery, and public property to be parked and stacked and turned over to an officer designated to receive them. They did not embrace the side arms of the officers, private horses, nor baggage. As soon as this had been drawn up General Lee wrote a note acknowledging his acquiescence in it.

These formalities being concluded with business-like promptness, Lee alluded to the destitute condition of his men, and Grant at once made the offer, which was accepted, to issue rations to the Confederates. These were the supplies intended for Lee's army which had been captured by Federal cavalry. At General Lee's request, the men who owned horses in the cavalry and artillery were allowed to reclaim them.

The Southern Chieftain rode back to his men to tell them what he had done. With cheeks streaming with tears, they crowded around him, and in that hour of bitter grief accorded him a heartfelt and loyal devotion experienced by few commanders at the heyday of their success.

The following day General Lee issued his farewell orders, mounted Traveller, and, with his staff, slowly made his way to Richmond, where he received a welcome which exceeded even that of his devoted followers at Appomattox. But Lee's great heart was broken, and in a little more than five years he was laid to rest, as had been his "right arm," Jackson, at "Lexington, in the Valley of Virginia."

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### LAID DOWN THEIR ARMS.

Little more of the surrender remains to be told. The details were drawn up after the departure of Lee, and were signed by the Federal generals—Gibbon, Griffin, and Merritt—and on the part of the Confederates by Generals Longstreet, Gordon, and Pendleton. After this the Confederates marched to a designated point and laid down their arms. The rank and file of the northern army was about half a mile off, and there was some little complaint on their part that they were not allowed nearer to their old enemies. By order of General Grant every demonstration of joy was suppressed.

All of this happened before the majority of those who are alive to-day were born. To them it is as a tale that is told. But those whose fortune it was to follow the Stars and Bars will ever remember vividly the sad ending of the greatest struggle in history. Is it strange that the world wondered when 7,892 infantry, 63 pieces of artillery, and 2,100 cavalry was all that was left to surrender to an army of more than 75,000 men?

These events, while pleasant to speak and think of, are of the past. To-day the men of the South cheerfully accept the conditions as they find them, and would not change them if they could. Peace reigns supreme, and throughout this vast, fair Southland of ours there is not one who regrets that

"The war drum beats no longer,  
The battle-flags are furled."

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THE RICHMOND DISPATCH.