

CORRESPONDENCE.

OLD HOME OF ROBERT E. LEE.

Down the Potomac but a few miles from our nation's capital are Arlington heights, the former home of Gen. Robert E. Lee. It is a place not only of great beauty, but of interest to every American, because here rests 16,000 soldiers who gave their lives that this nation might live. Then, too, it was here that the famous military hero, Robert E. Lee, lived; and who would not be happy to enter the old home of this once famous man, whose memory we all cherish?

Robert E. Lee was one of those simple, true and honest Americans, and at the breaking out of the war, was recognized as one of our greatest soldiers. It is a known fact that General Scott did all he could to retain Lee in the army of the North, but in vain. Lee loved his old commander-in-chief dearly, he loved his flag, he loved his country; but when it came to the question of giving his allegiance to the Union or his state he, as a man and a Virginian, determined to share the destiny of his state, which had solemnly pronounced for independence. His resignation was a noble one. Having decided his course, he wrote the following letter to General Scott:

"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 all the best years of my life, and all the ability I possess. During the whole of that time—more than a quarter of a century—I have experienced nothing but kindness from my superiors, and the most cordial friendship from my comrades. To no one, general, have I been as much indebted as to yourself for uniform kindness and consideration, and it has always been my ardent desire to merit your approbation.

"I shall carry to the grave the most grateful recollections of your kind consideration, and your name and fame will always be dear to me. Save in defense of my native state, I never desire again to draw my sword. Be pleased to accept my most earnest wishes for the continuance of your happiness and prosperity, and believe me, most truly yours,

"R. E. LEE."

"Lieutenant-General Winfield Scott, Commanding United States army."

In this letter, full of dignity and courtesy, Lee vainly attempted to hide the acute pain he felt at parting from his friend, and withdrawing his services from his country. The following letter to his sister was written the same day:

"Arlington, Virginia, April 20, 1861.

"My Dear Sister: I am grieved at my inability to see you. I have been waiting 'for a more convenient season,' which has brought, to many before me, deep and lasting regret. Now we are in a state of war which will yield to nothing. The whole South is in a state of revolution, into which Virginia, after a long struggle, has been drawn, and, though I recognize no necessity for this state of things, and would have forborne, and pleaded to the end for redress of grievances, real or supposed, yet in my own person I had to meet the question, whether I should take part against my native state, with all my devotion to the Union, and the feeling of loyalty and duty of an American citizen, I

have not been able to make up my mind to raise my hand against my relatives, my children, my home. I have, therefore, resigned my commission in the army, and save in defense of my native state, with the sincere hope that my poor services may never be needed, I hope I may never be called on to draw my sword.

"I know you will blame me, but you must think as kindly of me as you can, and believe that I have endeavored to do what I thought right. To show you the feeling and struggle at has cost me, I send a copy of my letter to General Scott, which accompanied my letter of resignation. I have no time for more.

May God guard and protect you and yours, and shower upon you every blessing, is the prayer of your devoted brother,

"R. E. LEE."

These very letters show that he in his every day deeds conformed to his own ennobling words, "Duty is the sublimest word in our language. Human virtue should be equal to human calamity." As one stands on the portico of the old house, he partly realizes what private fortunes and future hopes Lee sacrificed when he resigned from the United States army.

But we had quite forgotten Arlington. On the Virginian hills across the Potomac from Washington is the old home. Entrance is made through the Sheridan gate, and pretty winding paths among the trees bring us to the house, and antique looking structure, with large Doric columns, it resembles some ancient Athenian temple. The builder was George Washington Parke Curtis, whose grandmother became Mrs. Martha Washington. Mary Curtis married Robert E. Lee in 1831, and at Arlington their happiest days were spent. When the war broke out, Lee bade adieu to this beautiful spot, and it soon fell into the hands of Federal troops, the mansion becoming the headquarters of General Mergs, and the grounds a military camp and cemetery.

The view from the portico of the house is extremely fascinating. Below at the foot of the slope is the Potomac, flowing calmly on to the great Chesapeake Bay. To the south is Alexandria and across the river the National Capital, with its beautiful suburbs of hills and dales. Beyond are the hills of Maryland gradually receding to the horizon's rim. The grounds at Arlington are beautiful. It seems that mother Nature has been molding for years the spot which should protect the remains of so many of our nation's heroes. There are flower beds and lawns, and beautiful trees that have been growing for many, many years, and it was the beauty of these that caused Lafayette to say, when visiting here, "Remember how much easier it is to cut down a tree than to make one grow." All day the Stars and Stripes float in front of the house, until the sunset gun of Fort Myer reverberates among the hills. The most impressive sights are the soldiers' graves. Stretching away in almost "endless vision" one sees the little tomb stones set in rows, and uniform in distance. On each is the name of a soldier, and the number by which he is enrolled in the Roll of Honor which is kept in the war department at Washington. Dispersed here and there about the grounds are bronze tablets, on which are stanzas taken from O'Hara's "Bivouac of the Dead," a poem doubly impressive, when read among the graves:

The muffled drum's sad roll has beat
The soldier's last tattoo;

No more on life's parade shall meet
That brave and fallen few.

On fame's eternal camping ground,
Their silent tents are spread,
And glory guards with solemn round,
The bivouac of the dead.

Rest on, embalmed and sainted dead!
Dear as the blood ye gave!
No impious footsteps here shall tread
The herbage of your grave,

Nor shall your glory be forgot
While fame her record keeps,
Or honor points the hallowed spot
Where valor proudly sleeps.

Under some oaks is the tomb of the unknown dead. Over two thousand soldiers who were never identified were buried together, and they sleep as brothers, awaiting the call of the resurrection morn. The inscription on the monument tells this simple story:

"Beneath this stone repose the bones of two thousand one hundred and eleven unknown soldiers, gathered after the war from the fields of Bull Run and the route of the Rappahannock. Their remains could not be identified, but their names and deaths are recorded in the archives of their country, and its grateful citizens honor them as of their noble army of martyrs.

"May they rest in peace.

"September, A. D. 1866."

To the east of the house where the lawns slope gradually to the banks of the river, are the tombs of Phillip Sheridan, Admiral David Porter, and General George Crook. In another section are the graves of other noted generals who fought in the late war, and stones still stand to mark the last resting place of eleven Revolutionary fathers.

All cemeteries are sacred spots, and this one at Arlington seems especially so, because of the beauty, and the quiet atmosphere. The graves are all covered in grass and flowers, and each seems to have been especially made pretty in honor of its dead. The sight is pleasing, and with Irving we say: "The grave should be surrounded by everything that might inspire tenderness and veneration for the dead; or that might win the living to virtue." The blue and the gray lie side by side, and in that world where they have been rewarded long ere this, they are held together in that bond of ideal brotherhood, which only Heaven knows. LEVI EDGAR YOUNG.

FAMILY REUNION.

The family re-union of William M. Allred was held in the school house in Fairview, Uintah county, Wyoming, on his 78th birthday, Dec. 24th, 1897. The house was called to order by the chairman of the committee. Immediately two sons, one daughter, one daughter-in-law and two grandsons came in from Bear Lake and greatly surprised him. They had come into town the night before, but this was not known to him. The exercises then commenced. After singing and prayer, his oldest son in behalf of the family presented his father with an arm chair and some other presents. He also gave some presents to Aunt Mary, his wife. Then a splendid program was carried out in good style by the family. In his closing speech William M. Allred blessed his family and bore a strong testimony to them of the truth of the Gospel and the divine mission of Joseph Smith, the Prophet. He advised them to be true and faithful. After the closing prayer, the tables were spread and the family was seated according to their age, and all partook to their hearts' content.

Number of children present: Five sons, two daughters, six sons and daughters-in-law; five grandsons, and daughters-in-law; thirty-eight grand-