

ments' perfect stillness. It seems as if in this pulsing pause the gypsy playwright must turn that graceful, dreaming, periwigged head of his, and smile acknowledgment down the long years; instead, however, the French audience breaks through its habitual reserve, there is a steady clatter of applause, and the curtain falls on the 'two hundred and eighty-eighth anniversary of the birthday of Molière.'

The Privileged rise. Speechlessly they fold their wraps around them and follow the Gracious Lady. Once more they pass the statue of Voltaire and blink at it with childish, sleepy eyes; once more, on the staircase and in the foyer, they see the tall young dragoons. Then comes the soft damp night air, the drifting gayety of the streets. Moving cabs, lights and music from the cafés, streak the midnight, and the

Privileged brush wings with that cloud of human moths that flutter all night along the boulevards. As they sleepily climb into a taxi and are spun down the avenues of fairy light, it is with a pensiveness new and important.

For—*figurez vous!*—one may go to the theatre at home and come away chattering blithely, secure in one's ability to criticise. But, somehow, it has come to Maud with her mantle of silver-green, and Bell with her bonnet of satin sheen, and Kate with the scarlet feather, that after their first play at the Comédie Française on the evening of Molière's Birthday there can be no more fitting tribute than the old, old tribute of silence. And because the Privileged know enough to offer it, they look solemnly upon the mystery of midnight Paris and feel that this is Life, and that they are at last 'grown up.'

LEE AND DAVIS

BY GAMALIEL BRADFORD, JR.

It will hardly be disputed that Davis and Lee are by far the most prominent figures in the history of the Confederacy. Stephens and Benjamin, Johnston and Beauregard, are not to be named with them. Jackson might have been a conspicuous third, but his premature death left him only a peculiar and separate glory.

Material, of a sort, for the study of Davis's character is more than abundant.* His own work, *The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government*, is one of the numerous books that carefully avoid telling us what we wish to know. Half of it is ingenious argument on the

abstract dead questions at issue; the other half is a history of military matters which others have told often, and told better. Of administrative complications and difficulties, of the internal working of the Confederate government, of personalities at Richmond and the Richmond atmosphere, of the inner life and struggles of the man himself, hardly a word. Happily we have Mrs. Davis's life of her husband, which shows him complete, if not exactly as Mrs. Davis saw him. We have other biographies of less value, innumerable references in letters and memoirs of friends and enemies, and the constant

comments of the public press. And we have the immense mass of correspondence in that national portrait gallery, the *Official Records*, where the great — and little — men of a generation have drawn their own likenesses with an art as perfect as it is unconscious.

Davis, then, was a scholar and a thinker, and to some extent he took the bookish view of life, that it can be made what we wish it to be. Compromise with men and things was to be avoided if possible. He was an orator, a considerable orator, after the fashion of the mid-nineteenth century, which bores us now, at any rate in the reading. The orator in politics, though a naturally recurring figure in a democratic society, is too apt to be a dangerous or unsatisfactory one: witness Cicero. Davis never laid aside his robes of rhetoric in public. I doubt if he did in private. I think he wore them in his soul. His passion was rhetoric, his patriotism was rhetoric, his wit was rhetoric; perfectly genuine, there is no doubt of that, but always falling into a form that would impress others — and himself. He told Dr. Craven that he could not 'conceive how a man so oppressed with care as Mr. Lincoln could have any relish for such pleasantries.' There you have the difference between the two.

Doubtless Davis had many excellent practical qualities. For one thing, he had pluck, splendid pluck, moral and physical. To be sure, it was of the high-strung, nervous order, liable to break, as when he put on his wife's garments to escape. 'Any man might have done it,' says Mr. Dodd. You might have done it, I might, Dodd might; Grant or Lee never. There again is the difference in types. Nevertheless, Davis's pluck is beyond question.

He had consistency, too, knew his ideas and stuck to them, had persistence. 'He was an absolutely frank,

direct, and positive man,' said General Breckenridge. And he was sincere in his purposes, as well as consistent. 'As God is my judge, I never spoke from any other motive [than conviction],' he told Seward. Beyond question he told the truth. He was unselfish, too, thoughtful of others and ready to make sacrifices for them. 'He displayed more self-abnegation than any other human being I have ever known,' says one of his aides. He shrank from the sight of every form of suffering, even in imagination. When *The Babes in the Wood* was first read to him, a grown man, in time of illness, he would not endure the horror of it. His sympathy with the oppressed was also almost abnormal, 'so that,' says Mrs. Davis, 'it was a difficult matter to keep order with children and servants.'

All this shows that he was a nervous sensitive, which is a terrible handicap to a leader of men. He suffered always from nervous dyspepsia and neuralgias; and 'came home from his office fasting, a mere mass of throbbing nerves and perfectly exhausted.' He was keenly susceptible to the atmosphere about him, especially to the moods of people, 'abnormally sensitive to disapproval. Even a child's disapproval discomposed him.' And Mrs. Davis admits that this sensitiveness and acute feeling of being misjudged made him reserved and unapproachable. It made him touchy as to his dignity, also, and there are stories of his cherishing a grudge for some insignificant or imagined slight, and punishing its author.

The same sensitive temperament appears in Davis's spiritual life. That he should seek and find the hand of Providence in temporal affairs is surely not to his discredit. But I feel that his religion occasionally intruded at the wrong time and in the wrong way. When his enemies represented him as 'standing in a corner telling his beads

and relying on a miracle to save the country,' I know they exaggerated, but I understand what they meant.

Altogether, one of those subtle, fine, high-wrought, nervous organizations, which America breeds, — a trifle too fine, consuming in superb self-control too much of what ought to be active, practical, beneficent energy.

It will easily be imagined that such a temper would not always get along comfortably with rough, practical, imperious military men, accustomed to regard civil authority with contempt. That Davis had had military experience himself, both in the field and as Secretary of War, did not help matters much, since it greatly increased his own self-confidence. Subordinate officers, such as Stuart, Longstreet, and Jackson, during the latter part of his career, did not have many direct dealings with the President; but the independent commanders fall generally into two classes: those like Bragg, Pemberton, and Hood, who were more or less unfit for their positions and retained them through Davis's personal favor; and those who were able and popular, but whom Davis could not endure, like Joseph E. Johnston and Beauregard. Albert Sidney Johnston seems to have been both a favorite and a great soldier, but untimely death blighted Davis's choice in that instance.

The quarrel with Joseph E. Johnston shook the whole fabric of the Confederacy, since the omnipotent editors took part in it. Johnston was a good general and an honest man; but he was surly with a superior, and snaps and snarls all through his correspondence and his book. Davis never snarls, and his references to Johnston are always dignified. Mrs. Davis assures us that 'in the whole period of his official relation to General Johnston I never heard him utter a word in derogation.' She tells us also, however, that 'every

shade of feeling that crossed the minds of those about him was noticed, and he could not bear any one to be inimical to him.' Persons of this temper always exaggerate enmity where it exists, and imagine it where it does not. Another of Mrs. Davis's priceless observations is as to 'the talent for governing men without humiliating them, which Mr. Davis had in an eminent degree.' Samples of this were doubtless the indorsement 'insubordinate' on one of Johnston's grumbling letters and the reply to another: 'The language of your letter is, as you say, unusual; its arguments and statements utterly one-sided, and its insinuations as unfounded as they are unbecoming.' Compare also the indorsement on a letter in which Beauregard, a gentleman, an excellent soldier, and a true patriot, who had long held independent command, wrote that he was perfectly ready to serve under Lee: 'I did not doubt the willingness of General Beauregard to serve under any general who ranked him. The right of General Lee to command would be derived from his superior rank.'

And so we come to the case of Lee, who, during the last years of the war, was universally recognized as the greatest general and most popular man in the Confederacy, and who held Davis's confidence and intimate affection from the beginning to the end. 'General R. E. Lee was the only man who was permitted to enter the Cabinet [meetings] unannounced,' says the official who secured the privacy of those august assemblies.

How did Lee manage to retain his hold on the President? Pollard, who admired Lee, but detested Davis more, says plainly that the general employed 'compliment and flattery.' This is an abuse of words. One can no more associate flattery with Lee than with Washington. Lee respected and admired

Davis in many ways. With that fine insight into character which was one of his strongest points, the general appreciated the President's peculiarities, and adapted himself to them for the sake of the cause to which he had devoted his life. Davis required deference, respect, subordination. Lee felt that these were military duties, and he was ready to accord them. He defends Davis to others: 'The President, from his position being able to survey all the scenes of action, can better decide than any one else.' He defers again and again to Davis's opinion: 'Should you think proper to concentrate the troops near Richmond, I should be glad if you would advise me.' On many occasions he expresses a desire for Davis's presence in the field: 'I need not say how glad I should be if your convenience would permit you to visit the army that I might have the benefit of your advice and direction.' Those know but little of Lee who see in such passages anything but the frank, simple modesty of the man's nature, or who read a double meaning into expressions like the following: 'While I should feel the greatest satisfaction in having an interview with you and consultation upon all subjects of interest, I cannot but feel great uneasiness for your safety, should you undertake to reach me.' The solicitude was perfectly genuine, as we see from many charming manifestations of it elsewhere. 'I cannot express the concern I felt at leaving you in such feeble health, with so many anxious thoughts for the welfare of the whole Confederacy weighing upon your mind.' And there is no doubt that such sympathetic affection held the President more even than the most exaggerated military deference.

At the same time, it is certain that Davis liked to be consulted. He had a considerable opinion of his own military gifts, and would probably have prefer-

red the command of the armies in the field to the presidency, although Ropes, the best of judges, tells us that he did not 'show himself the possessor of military ability to any notable extent.' His jealousy of independent command sometimes appears even with regard to Lee. 'I have never comprehended your views and purposes until the receipt of your letter yesterday, and now have to regret that I did not earlier know all that you have now communicated to others.' Perhaps the most delightful instance of Davis's confidence in his own talents as a general is the little indiscretion of Mrs. Davis. 'Again and again he said [before Gettysburg], "If I could take one wing and Lee the other, I think we could between us wrest a victory from those people."' One says these things to one's wife; but I doubt if Davis would have wished that repeated — yet perhaps he would.

With all this in mind, it is easy to understand Lee's procedure, and to see the necessity as well as the wisdom of it. He was never free. In the early days he writes almost as Davis's clerk. To the end his most important communications are occasionally inspired by his superior, to the very wording. This subordination is trying at times to Lee's greatest admirers. Captain Battine says, 'It was the commander-in-chief who had constantly to stir up the energy of the President.' Colonel Henderson, whose admirable judgment is always to be respected, thinks Davis's policy was the cause of the failure to fight on the North Anna instead of at Fredericksburg; and he adds more generally, 'A true estimate of Lee's genius is impossible, for it can never be known to what extent his designs were thwarted by the Confederate government. Lee served Davis; Jackson served Lee, wisest and most helpful of masters.' It seems to me, however, that Lee's genius showed itself in over-

coming Davis as well as in overcoming the enemy.

One of the most curious instances of Lee's sensitive deference to the President as his military superior has, so far as I have discovered, remained unnoticed by all the historians and biographers. On August 8, 1863, a month after Gettysburg, Lee wrote the beautiful letter in which he urged that some one more capable should be put in his place (the italics are mine):—

'I know how prone we are to censure and how ready to blame others for the non-fulfillment of our expectations. This is unbecoming in a generous people, and I grieve to see its expression. *The general remedy for the want of success in a military commander is his removal.* . . . I have been prompted by these reflections more than once since my return from Pennsylvania to propose to Your Excellency the propriety of selecting another commander for this army. I have seen and heard of expression of discontent in the public journals at the result of the expedition. I do not know how far this feeling extends in the army. My brother officers have been too kind to report it, and so far the troops have been too generous to exhibit it. It is fair, however, to suppose that it does exist, and success is so necessary to us that nothing should be risked to secure it. I, therefore, in all sincerity, request Your Excellency to take measures to supply my place. I do this with the more earnestness because no one is more aware than myself of my inability for the duties of my position. I cannot even accomplish what I myself desire. How can I fulfill the expectations of others?'

It has been, I believe, universally assumed by Lee's biographers that this proposal of resignation was the result of his devoted patriotism, and of temporary discouragement caused by press and other criticism of the Gettysburg

failure. Such criticism there doubtless was; but it was so tempered by the deep-rooted confidence in Lee's character and ability that it appears mild in comparison with the attacks on Davis himself and on other generals. Without any reflection on Lee's patriotism, which needs no defense, I think a more important key to his action is to be found in the first sentence of his letter: 'Your letters of July 28 and August 2 have been received and I have waited for a leisure hour to reply.' The letter of July 28 apparently was not printed till 1897, in the supplementary volumes of the *Official Records*. In it Davis writes (italics still mine):—

'Misfortune often develops secret foes and still oftener makes men complain. It is comfortable to hold some one responsible for one's discomfort. In various quarters there are mutterings of discontent, and threats of alienation are said to exist, with preparation for organised opposition. *There are others who, faithful but dissatisfied, find an appropriate remedy in the removal of officers who have not succeeded.* They have not counted the cost of following their advice. Their remedy, to be good, should furnish substitutes who would be better than the officers displaced. If a victim would secure the success of our cause, I would freely offer myself.'

It seems of course absurd to suppose that Davis intended any hint here, especially in view of the instant, cordial, and affectionate negative which he returned to Lee's suggestion. Yet I think it quite in the character of the man to feel that it would be a graceful and respectful thing for a beaten commander to take such a step and receive presidential clemency. At any rate, if Davis's remarks were not intended as a hint, they show a gross lack of tact as addressed to a man in Lee's situation; and certainly no one can doubt that Lee's letter was in the main the

response of his sore and fretted humility to what seemed the implied suggestion of his superior.

It must not, however, for a moment be supposed that Lee's attitude toward Davis or any one else was unduly subservient. Dignity, not pompous or self-conscious, but natural, was his unflinching characteristic. 'He was one with whom nobody ever wished or ventured to take a liberty.' Even little slights he could resent in his quiet way. Davis himself records with much amusement that he once made some slur at a mistake of the engineers, and Lee, who had been trained in that service, replied that he 'did not know that engineer officers were more likely than others to make such mistakes.'

Furthermore, Lee never hesitated to urge upon the President the wants of the army. Over and over again he writes, pointing out the terrible need of reinforcements. 'I beg that you will take every practicable means to reinforce our ranks, which are much reduced, and which will require to be strengthened to their full extent to be able to compete with the invigorated force of the enemy.' His tone is roundly decided and energetic when he represents the importance of government action to repress straggling and disorder. 'I have the honor to enclose to you a copy of a letter written on the 7th instant, which may not have reached you, containing suggestions as to the means of preventing these and punishing the perpetrators. I again respectfully invite your attention to what I have said in that letter. Some effective means of repressing these outrages should be adopted, as they are disgraceful to the army and injurious to our cause.' As the difficulty of obtaining supplies became greater toward the end, although it was notorious that they were to be had in various parts of the country, Lee did not hesitate to side with the

public at large, and urge the removal of Davis's favorite, the commissary-general, Northrop; and I think it probable that this is referred to in Davis's remark to Dr. Craven. 'Even Gen. —, otherwise so moderate and conservative, was finally induced to join this injurious clamor.'

In general political questions, Lee was very reluctant to interfere. He did so at times, however. His ideas as to finance and as to the military employment of Negroes are not closely connected with Davis, and belong more properly to the discussion of his relations with the Confederate government. But there were points on which he appealed to the President urgently and directly. At the time of the first invasion of Maryland, he wrote an earnest letter pointing out the desirability of proposals for peace. 'The present position of affairs, in my opinion, places it in the power of the Government of the Confederate States to propose with propriety to that of the United States the recognition of our independence.' Again, just before the second invasion, he writes to the same effect with even more energy. 'Davis had said repeatedly that reunion with the North was unthinkable,' remarks his latest biographer. 'Lee wrote in effect that such assertions, which out of respect to the Executive he charged against the press, were short-sighted in the extreme.' Lee's language is in no way disrespectful, but it is very decided. 'Nor do I think we should in this connection make nice distinction between those who declare for peace unconditionally and those who advocate it as a means of restoring the Union, however much we may prefer the former. . . . When peace is proposed, it will be time enough to discuss its terms, and it is not the part of prudence to spurn the proposition in advance.'

In political matters, as affecting

military movements, there was also more or less conflict of opinion between the President and his leading general. Lee wished to fight Burnside on the North Anna instead of at Fredericksburg. Lee regretted deeply the absence of Longstreet before Chancellorsville. And if the testimony of Long, Gordon, and others is to be accepted as against that of Davis himself, Lee would have abandoned Richmond toward the close of the struggle, had it not been for the decided opposition of the President.

In all these differences, however, we must note Lee's infinite courtesy and tact in the expression of his opinion. If he had lectured his superior after the fashion in which he himself was frequently addressed by Longstreet, the Army of Northern Virginia would have been looking for another commander at a very early stage. Instead of this, however decided his opinion, however urgent his recommendations, the language, without being undignified, is such as to soothe Davis's sensitive pride and save his love of authority. 'I earnestly commend these considerations to the attention of Your Excellency and trust that you will be at liberty, in your better judgment, and with the superior means of information you possess . . . to give effect to them, either in the way I have suggested, or in such other manner as may seem to you more judicious.'

Yet, with all his tact and all his delicacy, Lee must have felt as if he were handling a shy and sensitive horse, who might kick over the traces at any moment, with little provocation or none, so touchy was the President apt to be at even the slightest suggestion. For instance, Lee advises that General Whiting should be sent South. Davis endorses, 'Let Gen. Lee order Gen. Whiting to report here, and it may then be decided whether he will be sent South or not.' Lee ob-

jects earnestly to the organization of the military courts, offering to draft a new bill in regard to them. Davis simply comments, 'I do not find in the law referred to anything which requires the commanding general to refer all charges to the military courts.' Davis hears gossip about Lee's expressed opinions and calls him to order in the sharpest manner. 'Rumors assumed to be based on your views have affected the public mind, and it is reported obstructs [*sic*] needful legislation. A little further progress will produce panic. If you can spare the time, I wish you to come here.'

But the most decided snub of all appears in connection with the punishment of deserters. Lee felt strongly about this, and had urged upon Davis and upon the War Office the ruinous effects of executive clemency. Finally Longstreet calls attention to the depletion of his command by desertion, which he asserts is encouraged by constant reprieve. Lee passes on the complaint with the comment, 'Desertion is increasing in the army, notwithstanding all my efforts to stop it. I think a rigid execution of the law is [best?] in the end. The great want in our army is firm discipline.' Seddon refers the matter to Davis, and he calmly notes, 'When deserters are arrested, they should be tried, and if the sentence is remitted, that is not a proper subject for the criticism of a military commander.' Reading these things, one is reminded of Mrs. Davis's delightful remark about 'the talent for governing men without humiliating them,' and one is almost tempted to reverse it.

That, in spite of these small matters of necessary discipline, Davis had the most unbounded and sincere affection for Lee is not open to a moment's doubt. In the early days, when Lee was unpopular, the President supported him loyally. When the South Carolinians

objected to his being sent to them, Davis said, 'If Lee is not a general, then I have none that I can send you.' And no jealousy of later glory or success prevented the repeated expression of a similar opinion. 'General Lee was one of the greatest soldiers of the age, if not the very greatest of this or any other country.' And the praise was as discriminating as it was enthusiastic. 'General Lee was not a man of hesitation, and they mistake his character who suppose that caution was his vice.' Admiration of the general was moreover backed up by a solid confidence, which is expressed repeatedly by Davis himself and by others. 'The President has unbounded confidence in Lee's capacity, modest as he is,' says Jones, at the very beginning of the war. 'Gen. Lee was now fast gaining the confidence of all classes; he had possessed that of the President always,' writes Mrs. Davis. 'I am alike happy in the confidence felt in your ability, and your superiority to outside clamor, when the uninformed assume to direct the movements of armies in the field,' is one among many passages which show unreserved reliance on the commander-in-chief.

Nor was Davis less keenly aware of Lee's great qualities as a man than of his military superiority. This is made abundantly apparent in both speeches and writings after Lee's death. The President extols his subordinate's uprightness, his generosity, his utter forgetfulness of self, and loyal devotion. In the noble eulogy pronounced at the Lee Memorial gathering in 1870 there are many instances of such praise, as in the account of Lee's attitude toward the attacks made upon him before his popularity was established. 'Through all this, with a unanimity rarely equaled, he stood in silence without defending himself or allowing others to defend him.' And

besides the general commendation there is a note of deep personal feeling which is extremely touching. 'He was my friend, and in that word is included all that I can say of any man.' I have not anywhere met with any expression on Davis's part of deliberate criticism or fault-finding, and if he did not say such things he did not think them; for he was a man whose thoughts found their way to the surface in some shape sooner or later.

With Lee it is different. About many things we shall never know what he really thought. Undoubtedly he esteemed and admired Davis; but the expression of these feelings does not go beyond kindly cordiality. Soon after the war he writes to Early, 'I have been much pained to see the attempts made to cast odium upon Mr. Davis, but do not think they will be successful with the reflecting or informed part of the country.' After Davis's release from captivity, Lee wrote him a letter which is very charming in its old-fashioned courtesy. 'Your release has lifted a load from my heart which I have no words to tell. . . . That the rest of your days may be triumphantly happy is the sincere and earnest wish of your most obedient and faithful friend and servant.' Lee is, of course, even less outspoken in criticism than in praise of his superior. It is only very rarely that we catch a trace of dissatisfaction, as in his reported comment on the anxiety of the authorities in regard to Richmond: 'The general had been heard to say that Richmond was the millstone that was dragging down the army.'

In the delightful memoirs of General Gordon we get perhaps the most explicit statement of what Lee's feeling about the President really was. At the time when Davis was said to have refused to abandon the capital, Lee spoke to Gordon in the highest terms of the great qualities of Davis's

character, praised 'the strength of his convictions, his devotion, his remarkable faith in the possibility of still winning our independence, his unconquerable will-power. "But," headed, "you know that the President is very tenacious in opinion and purpose."'

The study of the relations of Lee and Davis grows more interesting as the history of the Confederacy approaches its tragic close. In 1861 Davis was popular all through the country. A small faction would have preferred another President, but once the election was settled, the support was enthusiastic and general. With difficulties and reverses, however, there came — naturally — a change of feeling. In the first place, the Confederacy had seceded for state rights. Now, war powers and state rights did not go together. Davis was constantly anxious to have law behind him, so anxious that the Richmond *Whig* sneered at his desire to get a law to back up every act of usurpation. But military necessity knows no law and the states in time grew restless and almost openly rebellious.

More than this, there came — also naturally — a bitter hostility to Davis himself. 'The people are weary of the flagrant mismanagement of the government,' is a mild specimen of the sort of thing that abounds in the Richmond *Examiner*. 'Jefferson Davis now treats all men as if they were idiotic insects,' says the Charleston *Mercury*. And Edmund Rhett, who had been disposed to hostility from the beginning, told Mrs. Chesnut that the President was 'conceited, wrong-headed, wranglesome obstinate, — a traitor.' These little amenities were of course to be expected. Lincoln had to meet them. But the Southern opposition seems to have been more widespread than the Northern, and I imagine an election in the autumn of 1864 would have defeated

Davis decisively. A moderate view of the state of things appears in a letter from Forsythe of Mobile to Bragg, January, 1865: 'Men have been taught to look upon the President as a sort of inexorably self-willed man who will see the country to the devil before giving up an opinion or a purpose. . . . We cannot win unless we keep up the popular heart. Mr. Davis should come down and grapple with that heart. He has great qualities for gaining the confidence of the people. There are many who would leap to his side to fight with and for him and for the country, if he would step into the arena and make the place for them.'

The question now arises, how far was Davis really responsible for this state of things? Could another, larger, abler man have done more than he did, if not have succeeded where he failed? For there is good evidence that the South had men and material resources to have kept up the struggle far longer. 'Our resources, fitly and vigorously employed, are ample,' said Lee himself in February, 1865. It was the people who had lost their courage, lost their interest, lost their hope — and no wonder. But could any people have behaved differently? Would that people with another leader? 'It is not the great causes, but the great men who have made history,' says one of the acutest observers of the human heart.

Such discussion would be futile except for its connection with the character of Davis. In the opinion of his detractors, the lost cause would have been won in better hands; and Pollard's clever book has spread that opinion very widely. Pollard, however, though doubtless sincere enough, was Davis's bitter personal enemy, or at any rate wrote as such. The dispassionate observer will hardly agree at once with his positive conclusions. More interesting is the comment of the diary-

keeping war-clerk, Jones, an infinitely small personage, but with an eye many-faceted as an insect's. Jones was a hearty admirer of the President at first, but fault-finding grows and, what is more important, the fault-finding is based on facts. 'Davis,' says Jones, 'is probably not equal to the rôle he is called upon to play. He has not the broad intelligence required for the gigantic measures needed in such a crisis, nor the health and physique for the labors devolving upon him.'

It is difficult, I think, not to agree with this moderate statement, unless the emphasis should be placed rather on character than on intelligence. It is probable that the Confederacy could never have been saved; but there might have been a leader who could have done more to save it than Davis. In the first place, the greatest men gather able men about them. Professor Hart writes, with justice, 'President Davis's cabinet was made up in great part of feeble and incapable men.' Mrs. Chesnut tells us that 'there is a perfect magazine of discord and disunion in the Cabinet.' Jones, who had the best opportunities for observation, says, 'Never did such little men rule a great people.' And again, 'Of one thing I am certain, that the people are capable of achieving independence, if they only had capable men in all departments of the government.' Mrs. Chesnut, an admirer of Davis in the main, lays her finger on the secret of the matter when she says, 'He (Toombs) rides too high a horse for so despotic a person as Jefferson Davis.' And we get further insight, when we learn that in 1862 Davis considered making Lee secretary of war, but thought better of it. Perhaps Lee was of more value in the field than he would have been in the cabinet; but it is difficult to believe that even he could permanently have remained Davis's secretary.

There are plenty of other indications, besides his choice of advisers, to show that Davis, able, brilliant, noble figure as he was, was 'overparted' in the enormous rôle he had to play. He could not always handle men in a way to win them, as a great ruler must. In his earlier life we read that 'public sentiment has proclaimed that Jefferson Davis is the most arrogant man in the United States Senate'; and Mrs. Davis herself tells us, when she first meets him, that he 'has a way of taking for granted that everybody agrees with him, when he expresses an opinion, which offends me.' 'Gifted with some of the highest attributes of a statesman, he lacked the pliancy which enables a man to adapt his measures to the crisis,' says his kinsman, Reuben Davis. But the two most decisive comments on Davis's career that I know of are made again by Mrs. Davis, certainly with no intention of judging her husband, and all the more valuable on that account. 'It was because of his supersensitive temperament and the acute suffering it caused him, I had deprecated his assuming the civil administration.' And later she writes, 'In the greatest effort of his life Mr. Davis failed from the predominance of some of these noble qualities,' failed, that is, not by reason of external impossibility, but by causes within himself. Pollard could not have said more. Most of us would hardly say so much. Mrs. Davis certainly did not intend to, yet she knew the facts better than any one else in the world.

Whether another ruler than Davis could have saved the country or not, an immense number of people in the Confederacy thought that one man could—and that man was Lee. Everywhere those who most mistrusted the President looked to Lee with confidence and enthusiasm. At least as early as June, 1864, it was suggested that he should be made dictator. This idea

became more and more popular. On the nineteenth of January, 1865, the *Examiner* expressed itself editorially, as follows, 'There is but one way known to us of curing this evil: it is by Congress making a law investing Gen. Lee with absolute military power to make all appointments and direct campaigns. It may, indeed, be said that in this new position Gen. Lee would have to relieve generals and appoint others and order movements which perhaps might not satisfy the strategick acumen of the general publick; and how, it might be asked, could he satisfy everybody any more than Mr. Davis? The difference is simply that every Confederate would repose implicit confidence in Gen. Lee, both in his military skill and in his patriotic determination to employ the ablest men, whether he liked them or not.'

This sort of thing could not be very agreeable to Davis, and Mrs. Davis is said by the spiteful Pollard to have exclaimed, 'I think I am the proper person to advise Mr. Davis, and if I were he, I would die or be hung before I would submit to the humiliation.' On January 17, however, before the editorial appeared in the *Examiner*, the Legislature of Virginia addressed a respectful appeal to the President to make Lee commander-in-chief of all the Confederate armies. Davis, knowing his man well, replied on the eighteenth that nothing would suit him better, and on the same day wrote to Lee offering him the position, thus anticipating the vote of Congress on the twenty-third that a commander-in-chief should be appointed by the President, by and with the consent of the Senate.

It was, of course, the intention of Congress to take the military control entirely out of Davis's hands. It was expected and hoped that Lee would have agreed to this. What would have

happened if he had done so, or what would have happened if such a change could have been made at an earlier date, belongs more properly to a discussion of Lee's general relations to the Confederate government and the national policy as a whole. To have attempted anything of the sort would have meant revolution, for Davis would have fought it to the death. As it was, Lee did not hesitate a moment. To all suggestions of independent authority he returned a prompt and absolute No. The position of commander-in-chief he accepted, but only from the hands of Davis, and with the intention of acting in every way as his subordinate. 'I am indebted alone to the kindness of His Excellency the President for my nomination to this high and arduous office, and wish I had the ability to fill it to advantage. As I have received no instructions as to my duties, I do not know what he desires me to undertake.'

Thus we see that Lee, from personal loyalty, or from a broad view of policy, or both, was determined to remain in perfect harmony with his chief to the end. After the war the general said, 'If my opinion is worth anything, you can always say that few people could have done better than Mr. Davis. I knew of none that could have done as well.' And it is pleasant to feel that in all the conflict and agony of that wretched time these two noble figures — both lofty and patriotic, if not equally so — could work together in the full spirit of Lee's testimony before the grand jury, as reported by himself to Davis: 'He said that he had always consulted me when he had the opportunity, both on the field and elsewhere; that after discussion, if not before, we had always agreed; and that therefore he had done, with my consent and approval, what he might have done if he had not consulted me.'