

sends back an express to Heath to advertise them, offering a reward for their recovery.

From Pompton, on the 7th, he writes again to Governor Cooke of Rhode Island, to whom he gives the benefit of his views on the qualifications of general officers:—"Theory joined to practice, or a heaven-born genius, can alone constitute a general. As to the latter, God Almighty indulges the modern world very rarely with the spectacle; and I do not know, from what I have seen, that he has been more profuse of this ethereal spirit to the Americans than to other nations."

General Washington had, in the meantime, attempted to return to Princeton from Trenton, but was obliged to recede, and was now on the other side of the Delaware, still without any certain intelligence of General Lee, and utterly unable to account for the slowness of his march.

From Morristown, on the 8th of December, Lee writes to Congress and to Washington, stating his force at four thousand; and that if he was not assured that Washington was considerably reinforced and very strong, he would immediately join him! As it was, he intended to take post at Chatham, and so hang on the enemy's rear.

Well might General Greene think at this juncture, that General Lee must be confined within the lines of some general plan, or else his operations would be independent of those of the Commander-in-chief!

On the 9th, he is at Chatham, "in hopes," as he writes to Heath, "to re-conquer the Jerseys, which were really in the hands of the enemy, before my arrival." At this time, too, he continues his letters to the New England Governors, and impresses upon them that unless they renew their exertions with redoubled vigor, all is lost; suggesting also, the propriety of a convention of the New England States, to consult on the great affairs of their safety, and of counteracting the enemy in their future operations.

On the 10th and 11th, Washington renewed his en-

treaties, reminding Lee of the fatal consequences that must attend the loss of Philadelphia, and that the force with him was weak and entirely incompetent to save that city. These letters did not reach Lee, but were received by his successor in the command. His disgraceful neglect of duty and disobedience of orders, were at last to have an end; and in the series of Providential interpositions, which we cannot fail to recognize with devout gratitude, for the preservation of American liberty, none is more striking than that which terminated at this time the power of Lee to do mischief to the cause.

Lee's last communication to Washington was dated at Morristown, December 11th, and is in his handwriting, although he speaks of himself in the third person. The original is endorsed: "From General Lee," and was read in Congress on the 10th February following:

GENERAL LEE TO GENERAL WASHINGTON.

"MORRISTOWN, December y^e 11th, 1776.

"We have three thousand men here at present; but they are so ill-shod that we have been obliged to halt these two days for want of shoes. Seven regiments of Gates's corps are on their march, but where they actually are, is not certain. General Lee has sent two officers this day; one to inform him where the Delaware can be crossed above Trenton; the other to examine the road towards Burlington, as General Lee thinks he can, without great risk, cross the great Brunswick post road, and by a forced night's march, make his way to the ferry below Burlington. Boats should be sent up from Philadelphia to receive him. But this scheme he only proposes, if the head of the enemy's column actually pass the river. The militia in this part of the Province seem sanguine. If they could be sure of an army remaining amongst 'em, I believe they would raise a very considerable number."

This letter shows no intention to comply with the orders of Washington. He could have reached the Delaware by a forced march in a few hours, by the way of Vealtown, Germantown, Potterstown, Pitstown, and Alexandria, near which latter place he had been instructed to cross, and suitable preparations had been made to enable him to do so, by order of Washington. Under all the disadvantages of their condition, which were very great, the troops actually crossed, after being relieved of his command, at Easton, further up the river, on the 16th of December, and joined Washington on the 20th. Sullivan had changed the route to avoid a considerable body of the enemy, who were pushing forward on his left to intercept him, before he reached the river. He had received Washington's earnest letters of the 10th and 11th, addressed to Lee, and pressed on to join the main army as soon as possible. Having encamped at Germantown, on the night of the 13th, he marched the next day at 11 o'clock, and, diverging at Pitstown, reached Bethlehem township that night. On the 15th, he marched at daybreak and all day, reaching Phillipsburg, at 10 o'clock at night. Some of the troops crossed the Delaware to Easton the same night, but they were not all safe with their baggage beyond the river until the next day.

It appears to have been Lee's purpose to seize a favorable opportunity, when the British army had extended their line towards the Delaware by Brunswick and Princeton, to make an independent demonstration in their rear, and cut their line of communication. It was obvious that the British chain was too extensive, and invited such a movement. There could be no doubt of the advantages to accrue in the event of its success; and the presence of so considerable a force in his rear was a source of no little anxiety to General Howe, especially as the volunteers in the country were very active and enterprising. About one thousand militia were at this time collected under the command of Colonel Jacob Ford, jun., at Springfield, seven miles

west of Elizabethtown, to watch the motions of the enemy, their own subsequent motions to be directed according to circumstances. Lee's force was also continually increasing; three regiments from Ticonderoga, which he had intercepted with orders to join him, were daily expected; and he promised the principal men that a detachment should remain for the protection of the State.

He lingered about Morristown several days, and ordered Sullivan to march for Germantown, early in the morning of the 12th of December. These were the last orders received by Sullivan from Lee. The troops encamped in the woods near Vealtown, a village in Bernard township, on the night of the 12th, and renewed their march on the morning of the 13th, towards Germantown.

Lee himself was at Baskingridge on the morning of the 12th, from which place he wrote to the Rev. James Caldwell, an active and influential patriot, at or near Chatham, with whom and Colonel Ford, at or near Springfield, he seems to have kept up at this time a very constant communication. Caldwell's reply shows his zeal to gratify Lee's anxiety to be constantly advised of the motions of the enemy, and assured him that their army had very generally marched forward; indeed, all except guards of the different posts. He also states that it was considered advisable to move the militia back to Chatham, as for various reasons assigned, it was thought they could better serve the cause by lying at that place "till the expected army approaches for their support."

The tenor of Lee's entire correspondence indicates his purpose to act separately, not only with his own troops, but with those coming from the Northern army, although Washington had given him no such instructions; but on the contrary, expected those troops to march forward and join him as soon as possible. In this connection, Mr. Caldwell's "expected army" is significant.

Whether any other motives than those connected with his wish to obtain the intelligence just mentioned influenced his movements, I am unable to state. General Greene, in a letter written after receiving news of his capture, spoke of his "strange infatuation," and General Sullivan of the "fatality" by which he was induced to expose himself; but it is certain that neither entertained for a moment the suspicion that he designedly threw himself into the hands of the enemy, and such a design is incredible in view of all the circumstances of the case.

Still there may have been other motives of convenience or personal gratification, but certainly none could be less creditable than his insatiable ambition and ungovernable selfishness. His conduct did not admit of excuse, much less of justification; and it is unnecessary to speculate upon the probable consequences, had he been successful. "Under the sole guidance of his own judgment and self-will, he was presumptuously driving on, and the misfortunes which followed were the result of his own obstinacy and misconduct, not of necessity."

About noon, on Friday, the 13th of December, 1776, General Lee, with several aids, and a small guard, were at White's tavern, near Baskingridge, seven miles from Morristown—twenty-one miles from the nearest post of the enemy, and four miles from the encampment, which his division had left in the morning.

The British had, at this time, pushed forward to the Delaware, with the hope of getting to Philadelphia. Their first division reached Trenton soon after the rear-guard of the American main army had crossed. Their rear division, which was commanded by Lord Cornwallis, halted at Maidenhead, six miles from Trenton, and at one o'clock on the morning of the 9th December, marched to Coryell's Ferry, thirteen miles higher up the Delaware, expecting to find boats there and in the neighborhood, sufficient to pass the river; but in this they were disappointed, as the Americans had taken the precaution to destroy or secure on the south side, all the

boats which could possibly be employed for that purpose.

The passage of the Delaware being thus rendered impracticable, Lord Cornwallis returned and took post at Pennington, where his division remained till the 14th of December, the first still continuing at Trenton, when "the weather having become too severe to keep the field, and the winter cantonments having been arranged, the troops marched from both places to their respective stations." I cannot help remarking, as I quote this complacent statement of General Howe, how soon Washington at Trenton and Princeton was to disturb his "arrangements," point out "the necessity of an alteration in the cantonments," and compel him to "find it impossible to hold posts of seventy or eighty miles in extent with only ten thousand men."

During Lord Cornwallis's stay at Pennington, a patrol of thirty dragoons from the Sixteenth Regiment (Burgoyne's Regiment of Queen's Light Dragoons), was sent out to gain further intelligence of Lee's division, whose progress they watched with great jealousy. Lieutenant-Colonel Harcourt (afterwards Earl Harcourt, F. M.), who is said to have expressed hopes before he left England, that he should take Lee, desired and obtained the direction of this detachment. Banastre Tarleton, afterwards so well known in the southern campaigns, at that time a cornet in the King's Dragoon Guards, and a volunteer with the forces in America, had the direction of the advanced guard of the party.

While scouring the country, they obtained intelligence of Lee's position, succeeded in surprising the guard, and surrounded the house before he was aware of his danger. Major William Bradford, one of his aids, who was present and escaped, stated that the party were conducted by a tory who was with General Lee the evening before, complaining of the loss of a horse taken by the army. He found where the General was to lodge and breakfast, and that he was to be at White's tavern about noon. He left them, rode eighteen miles

in the night to Brunswick, and returned with the party of Light Horse. Most of the American accounts of the affair agree in charging the tories with having betrayed him. On the other hand, the English accounts state that Harcourt's party fell in with a messenger, bearing a letter from Lee, who was induced by threats or promises to return as their guide. One states that "the wafer of the letter was still wet, which showed the writer was not far off." The accounts are not inconsistent—information may have been given by the tories, and as the Light Horse approached they may have seized the messenger, who had recently left the General.

Harcourt's disposition was made with great skill, and executed "with infinite address and gallantry." As he came in sight of the house, he detached Tarleton, who dashed forward with six men to secure the doors, followed by the remainder of the party at a distance of about one hundred paces. Harcourt immediately summoned the house, with threats to set fire to it, and put every man in it to the sword, if the General did not surrender.

The surprise was so complete that great consternation prevailed among the General's party. The Light Horse, however, were fired upon from the house, and two or three were killed (one of whom was a cornet), and others wounded. There were several French officers with Lee, and one of them took aim at Colonel Harcourt with his fusil, which the Colonel observing, bent his head, and the shot took away the ribbon of his hair. He was immediately disposed of by the dragoons, and the fire from the house was very smartly returned. The General's guard had been carelessly disposed at an out-building, and the sentry at the door of the house, when he saw the dragoons coming, at first mistook them for his own people, but soon perceived his mistake by their swords, which were different from those used by the Americans. The guard rallied as the alarm was given, and attempted to join in the defence, but they were immediately overpowered with merciless severity.

Some of them were wounded, two were killed while attempting to escape, and the remainder probably owed their safety to Harcourt's haste and anxiety to make sure of his prize.

The only person who seems to have retained his presence of mind and behaved with suitable courage on the occasion, was M. Jean Louis de Virnejoux, a French gentleman, who had been appointed to the rank and pay of Captain by brevet, and commissioned accordingly on the 19th September, 1776. He had already in his few weeks of service, won the best opinions of his qualities as a gentleman and soldier; and, on this occasion, he acted with the greatest bravery and resolution in defending the General. Had his advice been taken, or all who were there evinced the same spirit, probably Lee would have escaped. It is a real pleasure to speak of such a man, and to brighten this page with the record of his virtues.

The resistance, however, was short. Harcourt again summoned the house, renewing his threats with a solemn oath. Finding concealment impossible, and further resistance useless, Lee made his appearance at the door, and in the most submissive manner, surrendered his sword to Colonel Harcourt, begging him to spare his life. Several of the English accounts state that he fell upon his knees to Harcourt, and all agree that he behaved in a most cowardly manner, apparently frantic with terror and disappointment. One writer says, after describing his humiliation to Harcourt, "suddenly recovering his panic, he flew into a violent rant of his having for a moment obtained the supreme command—giving many signs of wildness and of a mind not perfectly right."

Captain Thomas Harris, afterwards Lord Harris, states, in his journal, that "Lee behaved as cowardly in this transaction as he had dishonorably in every other. After firing one or two shots from the house, he came out and entreated our troops to spare his life." Harris continues, "Had he behaved with proper spirit,

I should have pitied him, and wished that his energies had been exerted in a better cause. I could hardly refrain from tears when I first saw him, and thought of the miserable fate in which his obstinacy has involved him. He says he has been mistaken in three things:

“1st. That the New England men would fight.

“2d. That America was unanimous, and

“3d. That she could afford two men for our one.”

He was somewhat roughly handled on being seized, and his captors, if they did not treat him with great indignity, certainly displayed very little regard for his comfort or appearance. He had presented himself without his hat or outside coat, and although he earnestly requested permission to get them, was very peremptorily refused.

He was mounted on the guide's horse, tied on both legs and arms, and with one of his aids who was mounted behind a dragoon, was hurried away at a furious speed towards Brunswick, where upon his arrival, “about three hours afterwards, the cannon in the British camp played furiously, rejoicing on the occasion;” which was also signalized with much less dignified demonstrations of delight by the soldiery. He entertained some hope of a rescue at first, and told Harcourt he was “not sure of his prey;” but as his expectation diminished, and finally all hope of it vanished, he became sullen and very much dispirited. He said to his captors—admitting the weakness of the American army, and his own confidence in British strength and zeal, when roused,—“The game is nearly at an end.”

Afterwards, on being brought in at Brunswick, he is said to have claimed the benefit of Howe's proclamation, and demanded to be received under it; but, on being refused, as being found in arms and not entitled to it, and told that he would be tried as a deserter, he flew into the most unbounded rage, and exclaimed against the repeated acts of false faith and treachery which had reduced him to his present situation. He also desired an interview with General Howe,

which was not granted at that time ; and I have reason to believe that General Howe refused to see him for a long time after his capture. This must have been a severe trial to Lee, for he had before publicly professed "the highest love and reverence" for General Howe, stating that he had "courted his acquaintance and friendship, not only as a pleasure, but as an ornament," and "flattered himself that he had obtained it."

Soon after his capture, he addressed the following letter to his old friend and associate, Captain Primrose Kennedy, of the 44th Regiment :

GENERAL LEE TO CAPTAIN KENNEDY.

"SIR :

"The fortune of war, the activity of Colonel Harcourt, and the rascality of my own troops, have made me your prisoner. I submit to my fate, and I hope that whatever may be my destiny, I shall meet it with becoming fortitude ; but I have the consolation of thinking, amidst all my distresses, that I was engaged in the noblest cause that ever interested mankind. It would seem that Providence had determined that not one freeman should be left upon earth ; and the success of your arms more than foretell one universal system of slavery. Imagine not, however, that I lament my fortune, or mean to deprecate the malice of my enemies ; if any sorrow can at present affect me, it is that of a great continent apparently destined for empire, frustrated in the honest ambition of being free, and enslaved by men, whom unfortunately I call my countrymen.

"To Colonel Harcourt's activity every commendation is due ; had I commanded such men, I had this day been free ; but my ill-fortune has prevailed, and you behold me no longer hostile to England, but contemptible and a prisoner !

"I have not time to add more, but let me assure you, that no vicissitudes have been able to alter my sentiments ; and that as I have long supported those senti-

ments in all difficulties and dangers, I will never depart from them but with life.

“C. LEE.”

The aid, who was taken with Lee, was M. de Gaiault. This gentleman, a Lieutenant-Colonel in the French service, had recently arrived at Boston with powder and arms, in the Hancock and Adams, Captain Smith, from Nantes. On his way to tender his services to General Washington, he had joined General Lee, who made him his aid-de-camp, only two days before he was taken. When he heard the firing of the Light Dragoons, he ran out hastily, and was immediately made prisoner. He shared their rude treatment with Lee, in respect to which he afterwards presented a remonstrance to General Howe. At Brunswick, M. Gaiault was fortunate enough to meet an old acquaintance, a British officer, who provided him with quarters where he was taken good care of, and supplied him with necessaries. He was also under much less restraint than his fellow-prisoner.

The intelligence of Lee's capture reached his troops as they were on the march. The statement of a private soldier in one of the Rhode Island Regiments, preserves for us the account of an eye-witness. He saw Major Bradford, who had escaped, as he rode up to the line. General Sullivan met him and received the news, which immediately spread through the whole division. They halted some time in the road, and Sullivan “rode through the line giving orders, to show that they still had a commander left, and did not appear to regret the loss of Lee.” The writer adds, “I confess it was not a subject of any grief to me, as I had known him before he was appointed in our army, and thought we could manufacture as good generals out of American stuff as he was.” The prevailing impression, however, must have been one of discouragement; and others mention the “dejected spirits” with which they renewed their march and pursued their route to the Delaware.

Sullivan attempted to regain him, but the rapidity of Harcourt's movement was such as to make all attempts fruitless. One party pursued the dragoons for several miles, but "were too late," and rejoined the army in the evening at Germantown.

One additional memorial of that eventful period remains to be noticed. The last letter of General Lee before his capture, was addressed to his friend Gates, who had been ordered to hasten on from the northern army, with all the disposable troops, and join Washington beyond the Delaware. He had left the Hudson at Esopus (Kingston), and thence proceeded through the then uncultivated country of the Minisink, nearly on the route of the present Delaware and Hudson Canal, inclining to the left to Sussex Court House, about thirty miles northwest of Morristown, in the hope of falling in with and joining the division of General Lee.

The letter is significant enough, and is an appropriate finale to Major General Charles Lee's military service in the Jerseys in 1776. I hold the original letter in my hand, from which I will read.

GENERAL LEE TO GENERAL GATES.

"BASKING RIDGE, Dec'r y^e 1stth, 1776.

"MY DR GATES :

"The ingenious manoeuvre of Fort Washington has unhing'd the goodly fabrick We had been building—there never was so damn'd a stroke—*entre nous*, a certain great man is most damnably deficient—He has thrown me into a situation where I have my choice of difficulties—if I stay in this Province I risk myself and Army and if I do not stay the Province is lost for ever—I have neither guides Cavalry Medicines Money Shoes or Stockings—I must act with the greatest circumspection—Tories are in my front rear and on my flanks—the Mass of the People is strangely contaminated—in short unless something which I do not expect turns up We are lost—our Counsels have been weak to the last degree—as to what relates to yourself if you

think you can be in time to aid the General I wou'd have you by all means go You will at least save your army—it is said that the Whigs are determin'd to set fire to Philadelphia if They strike this decisive stroke the day will be our own—but unless it is doné all chance of Liberty in any part of the Globe is forever vanish'd—Adieu, my Dr Friend—God bless you.

“CHARLES LEE.”

Upon Lee's capture, great exultation was manifested by the British. They boasted of having taken the American Palladium—that the Americans could not stand long, as Lee was their chief man. The historian Gibbon, who had taken his seat in Parliament at the beginning of the contest between Great Britain and America; and supported with many a sincere and silent vote, the measures of the administration; preserves the gossip of the day in London in one of his letters: “Lee is certainly taken . . . We are not clear whether he behaved with courage or pusillanimity when he surrendered himself; but Colonel Keene told me to-day that he had seen a letter from Lee since his confinement. He imputes his being taken to the alertness of Harcourt and cowardice of his own guard; hopes he shall meet his fate with fortitude, etc.” Gibbon adds: “It is said he was to succeed Washington;” and also, referring to the news from Trenton, “We know nothing certain of the Hessians, but there *has* been a blow.”

Among the Americans, his loss was greatly and sincerely deplored—although the circumstances attending his capture were almost equally regretted. The most generous spirit was manifested in Washington's private as well as public correspondence—full of regret for the loss which the service had sustained, and sympathy for Lee's personal sufferings—although he was obliged to regard the misfortune as the more vexatious, as it was by the captive General's own folly and imprudence, and without a view to effect any good, that he was taken prisoner.

He was still detained at Brunswick, a close prisoner under a strong guard, when Washington turned upon his pursuers, and at Trenton and Princeton justified the expectation of the Pennsylvania Council of Safety, who, in condoling with him on the loss of Lee, expressed their hope that it might be in his power to close the campaign with honor to himself, and leave General Howe in a situation which should afford him little reason to boast.

These movements threw the enemy into great consternation at Brunswick, where were the British stores and baggage, and for a time an ominous anxiety prevailed in the lines. One of the English officers who was present, says: "The captive General Lee was not without his terrors on this extraordinary and sudden turn of fortune. General Matthews not knowing well how to dispose of him in this intricacy of situation, he followed the wagons, and was marched, guarded, through the line, then under arms, in silent and momentary expectation of the enemy—a perfect stranger to every thing that had happened, or to what end he was destined; he could only judge from the hurry and apparent confusion that something uncommon must have occasioned it; for every circumstance at that juncture seemed so big with event, that no person dared speak to him as he passed by, or take upon them to explain what he eagerly wished to discover. His looks presented a picture of dread and horror; strongly expressive of his persuasion that his fate had overtaken him, at a time when he apprehended no immediate danger—he was soon relieved from his distress."

He was brought to New York from Brunswick, on Monday, the 13th of January, 1777, still very strictly guarded. Rooms were fitted up for his reception in the City Hall, where he was treated with consideration and humanity. He was allowed to converse freely with the officers in whose custody he was placed, except "on the subject of the dispute with the colonies." The two officers on guard always dined with him, and he had leave

to invite any other person he pleased. He was from the first regarded in the light of a traitor to his king, amenable to British military law as a deserter; and he unquestionably owed his life to the firmness of Washington and the Congress. Exaggerated accounts of the severity of his confinement produced remonstrance and threats of retaliation, and Howe's reply to the remonstrance being unsatisfactory, Congress directed some harsh measures with reference to five Hessian field officers and Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, then prisoners, who were made special hostages for Lee's safety; but these were mitigated by the earnest interference of Washington. Still the exchange of prisoners was interrupted, until the demand should be complied with that General Lee be recognized as a prisoner of war.

General Howe was much embarrassed in respect to the law of the case, and wrote home for instructions. With characteristic professional caution, being "afraid of falling into a law scrape," he desired to have the opinion of the law officers of the Crown, in case he should be instructed to bring his prisoner to trial. There had been some recent decisions in England, which had an awkward look, in respect to damages, in case Lee should escape conviction and bring an action for false imprisonment. The case of certain Bengal officers was referred to, and Lee's was still stronger. Being only on half-pay when he wrote his letter of resignation to Lord Barrington, he would undoubtedly plead: first, that a half-pay officer was not amenable to military law, and secondly, if he was, he had a right to resign. The reply of Lord George Germaine was—"As you have difficulties about bringing General Lee to trial in America, it is His Majesty's pleasure that you send him to Great Britain by the first ship of war." One of the London newspapers of the time states, that he was actually "placed on board a vessel at New York three several times in order to be brought to England; and the ship was absolutely on sail when Washington's

letter to General Howe arrived at New York, the consequence of which was that the ship was stopped and the General relanded."

Sir William Howe being unable to make any impression upon Washington, and being apprehensive that a close confinement of the Hessian officers would be the consequence of sending Lee to Great Britain, and that this would occasion much discontent among the foreign troops, retained Lee for further instructions. In a subsequent letter from the minister, he informs General Howe, that his "motives for postponing General Lee's departure for Great Britain are approved by the king."

Congress had approved the course pursued by Washington, but expressed a new and "determined resolution to carry into execution the law of retaliation; that if any persons belonging to, or employed in, the service of the United States or any of them who now are, or hereafter may be, prisoners to Lord or General Howe, or any other commander of his Britannic Majesty's forces by sea or land, shall be sent to the realm of Great Britain, or any part of the dominion of the said king, to be there confined in common gaols of Great Britain, or any other place or places of confinement in pursuance of any act or acts of the British Parliament, or any other pretence whatever; it is the resolution of this Congress, to treat the prisoners now in our power, and such as hereafter may fall into our hands, in a manner as nearly similar as our circumstances will admit."

On the same day on which this resolution was adopted by Congress, June 10th, 1777, General Washington had very frankly, but firmly, indicated the same policy, in a letter to General Howe, in which he said, distinctly referring to the case of General Lee, "I think it necessary to add, that your conduct towards prisoners will govern mine."

Satisfied that no arguments would induce "Mr. Washington" to recede from his determination, and that it was "necessary to put an end to a fruitless negotiation,"

the king at last reluctantly consented to instruct Howe, "that Lee, having been struck off the half-pay list, shall, though deserving the most exemplary punishment, be deemed a prisoner of war, and he may be exchanged as such when you may think proper."

This despatch was received by General Howe on the 12th of December, 1777. General Lee had been kept a close prisoner during the whole year that had elapsed since his capture. During most of the time he remained in the City Hall; but while General Howe was pursuing his brief campaign in New Jersey, and secretly maturing the plan for the southern expedition, he was removed, June 7th, 1777, for a time on board the *Centurion* man-of-war, where he was permitted to walk the quarterdeck.

Two days afterwards he wrote a letter to General Washington on the subject of Lord Drummond's parole. This individual, whose attempts at negotiation form a curious though unimportant episode in the history of the war, had given his parole of honor, that he would hold no correspondence directly or indirectly with those who were in arms against the colonies, nor go into any port or harbor occupied by the enemy, nor on board their ships. He had most flagrantly and openly violated his parole, and the most favorable construction of his intentions could only show "that an overweening vanity had betrayed him into a criminal breach of honor." General Washington had occasion to administer to him a well-merited reproof "in terms that could not be flattering" to his Lordship, who attempted to vindicate himself, but without success. "The facts in the case were too obvious and indisputable to be extenuated by any testimony he produced, or by the mere assertion of honorable motives."

General Lee, however, professed to have really thought Lord Drummond an injured man, and offered himself as a volunteer instrument to obtain some reparation from General Washington. Nothing could be more characteristic than his letter, which follows :

GENERAL LEE TO GENERAL WASHINGTON.

"CENTURION, June 9th, 1777.

"MY DEAR SIR :

"Multiplicity of business, the miscarriage of letters, or some accident has prevented you from doing what really is in my opinion an act of justice—I mean clearing up to the world the charge brought against Lord Drummond for a breach of Parole; after having read all the Papers relative to this subject, his letters to you, yours to him, Capt. Vanderput's, and the Parole, I declare solemnly that it does not appear to me that there is any one thing in his Lordship's conduct which merited even the shadow of censure. The intention of the Parole in restraining him from going on board any of the King's ships was certainly to prevent intelligence being given of the state of the Continent. As this was manifestly the intention I could almost say that if even he had gone on board the *Asia* voluntarily altho' the terms of the Parole would not have been literally adhered to, the spirit would not have been violated, as it cannot possibly be supposed that he could give any intelligence which would have been new to Capt. Vanderput, to and from whose ship people were passing and repassing every day—but Capt. Vanderput's evidence puts it beyond all doubt that his Lordship did not go voluntarily but was compelled on board.

"A public charge from persons we esteem sinks deep in the mind of a man of sentiment and feeling. I really believe Lord Drummond to be such, and have reason to think that he has an esteem for you, at least from all I can learn he has ever spoken of you in the handsomest terms. Now, as it appears to me that there can be no doubt from the concurrence of every testimony of his having adhered as scrupulously as possible to the spirit of the Parole, as the affair is of so delicate a nature, as I am acquainted with your way of thinking, I repeat that I must ascribe it rather to a miscarriage of his letters than to any other cause that you have not

done him that justice which, had you received them, I am persuaded you must have thought his due. I can perceive he is very much hurt at the charge, and his sensibility, I confess, increases the good opinion I before had of him—Not only therefore justice to him but let me add, my Dear General, a regard for you obliges me to wish that this affair may be cleared up in some manner satisfactory to the party I think injured; it is a duty which I know if omitted cannot fail of giving much uneasiness hereafter to a man of your rectitude and humanity.

“I must observe in addition that I cannot imagine his Lordship’s return after an absence of three months could administer any reasons for suspicion, for he must either have remained in the West Indies or have returned to some port in North America, as he was prevented by the spirit of the Parole from going to England,—indeed the terms of the Parole implied an obligation to return to New York. His long absence likewise from the Continent rendered it impossible for him to furnish any intelligence of the situation of affairs. Should it be asked why a man in my present situation should interest myself so warmly in this business with which I myself had no concern? I must answer that not only my love of justice, my duty as a Gentleman, and my regard for you enjoin the task, but that I really feel myself personally obliged to Lord Drummond, for since my confinement he has shown a most generous, humane and disinterested attention to me. In the course of conversation this business was accidentally brought on the carpet. As I was a stranger to the circumstances, I was anxious to be made acquainted with them. He submitted the papers to my perusal—I really thought him injured; assured him that it must have proceeded from mistake or the miscarriage of his letters, and offered myself as a volunteer instrument to obtain some reparation. Let me hear from you, My Dear General, as soon as possible, and on this subject.

“God preserve and bless you and send you every

possible felicity, is the prayer of one who is most truly and affectionately yours,

“CHARLES LEE.”

“As I would not unnecessarily swell the packet I have been contented with sending the letters to and from Capt. Vanderput—which I think sufficient—This I do on the supposition that those sent have miscarried.”

Mr. Sparks has given us the substance of Washington's answer. “With his usual firmness, he replied that he had thoroughly investigated the subject at the time; that he had no disposition to injure Lord Drummond; that the impression left on his mind was deep and decided; and that no circumstances had since come to light, which tended to alter his opinion.”

General Howe received the king's consent in Philadelphia, but transmitted orders to New York immediately to terminate Lee's long confinement. He was released on the 25th December, on parole, to the full liberty of the city and its limits. From this time his condition was much more agreeable. Sir Henry Clinton and General Robertson placed horses at his command, and he took up his quarters with two of his oldest and warmest friends in the British service. In short, his situation was “rendered as easy, comfortable and pleasant as possible, for a man who is in any sort a prisoner.” In February, 1778, he won a prize of five hundred dollars, in the Alms House Lottery.

The embarrassment with respect to the exchanges of prisoners still continued, and his captivity was prolonged several months. It was not until late in the month of March that he was transferred to Philadelphia, with the prospect of a speedy exchange. He arrived in that city on the 25th of March. His parole was enlarged on the 5th April, when he availed himself of the privilege to visit the American camp and the Congress. On the 9th April, he arrived at Yorktown,

in Pennsylvania, where Congress was then sitting. At this time, he had the opportunity of witnessing the denouement of the intrigues which, after his own capture removed him from the scene, had elevated his old associate Gates into a rival of Washington! But the lesson was lost upon him. While he was at Yorktown, his exchange for Major General Prescott was finally arranged, 21st April, but he did not rejoin the army at Valley Forge until a month later—May 20th, 1778. The history of that month belongs to another part of this review of his career.

I have said that the accounts of his harsh treatment were exaggerated. For this there is sufficient authority besides his own statement in a letter to Robert Morris, that "the General [Howe] has indeed treated me in all respects with kindness, generosity, and tenderness."

The English had a much less favorable opinion of Lee's abilities than he had secured in America. When it was reported in Europe several months before, that he had been captured, one of the wisest servants of the Crown, Sir Joseph Yorke, then minister at the Hague, wrote to Mr. Eden—that if he had not a thorough conviction in his own mind that the "unfortunate affair" in America would be brought to a happy issue in the course of the summer, he "should really have been concerned for the taking of Lee, convinced, from what I have seen and know of him, that he was the worst present which could be made to any army." And again, after he was taken: "I was one of those who expressed a sincere concern at the taking of Lee, in which nothing gave me pleasure but the masterly partisan stroke of Colonel Harcourt: it is impossible but Lee must puzzle every thing he meddles in, and he was the worst present the Americans could receive; my opinion has been verified much sooner than I wished, as the only stroke like officers which they have struck, happened after his being made prisoner." The capture of the Hessians and the masterly manœuvres against the Brit-

ish, had enabled them to "find that he was not the only efficient officer in the American service."

The times, when Lee was taken, were gloomy enough for the Americans. They were indeed, as Thomas Paine then wrote in his stirring appeal to the patriots of '76, "the times that tried men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot would indeed, in such a crisis, shrink from the service of his country; while he that stood firm then, deserved the love and thanks of man and woman!" In the English camp, it was thought that Howe's successes had intimidated the leaders of the rebellion, and were about to induce a general submission—that further opposition was despaired of by all America, except a few desperate men in Washington's army, and that army reduced to less than thirty-five hundred men. The campaign projected by the British, too, for 1777, was portentous of evil to the United States, and expected in Europe to be decisive, where the friends of the Court were rejoicing upon the promising aspect of affairs in America; and the whole tone and spirit of the royalists in New York, was confident in the extreme.

The scattered notices which may be gleaned in the correspondence written from New York, at this time, are too vague and general, as well as uncertain, to furnish much light as to Lee's occupations; but I find one account which is particularly interesting. It states "that he has employed his leisure hours mostly in writing; and some were of opinion that he was employed in a plan of reconciliation, as he used often to say, that if the Americans had followed his advice, matters could never have gone to such a length. His tone is changed, and as he was always remarkable for his freedom of speech, he makes no scruple of condemning the Americans in very plain terms, for continuing the contest."

His tone was indeed changed:

"Hectore! Quantum mutatus ab illo