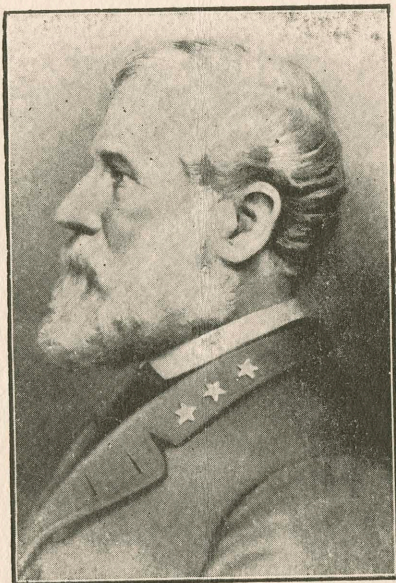


ROBERT E. LEE



Compliments of author

By Mrs. Townes Randolph Leigh
State Historian
Alabama Division U. D. C.

Montgomery, Ala.

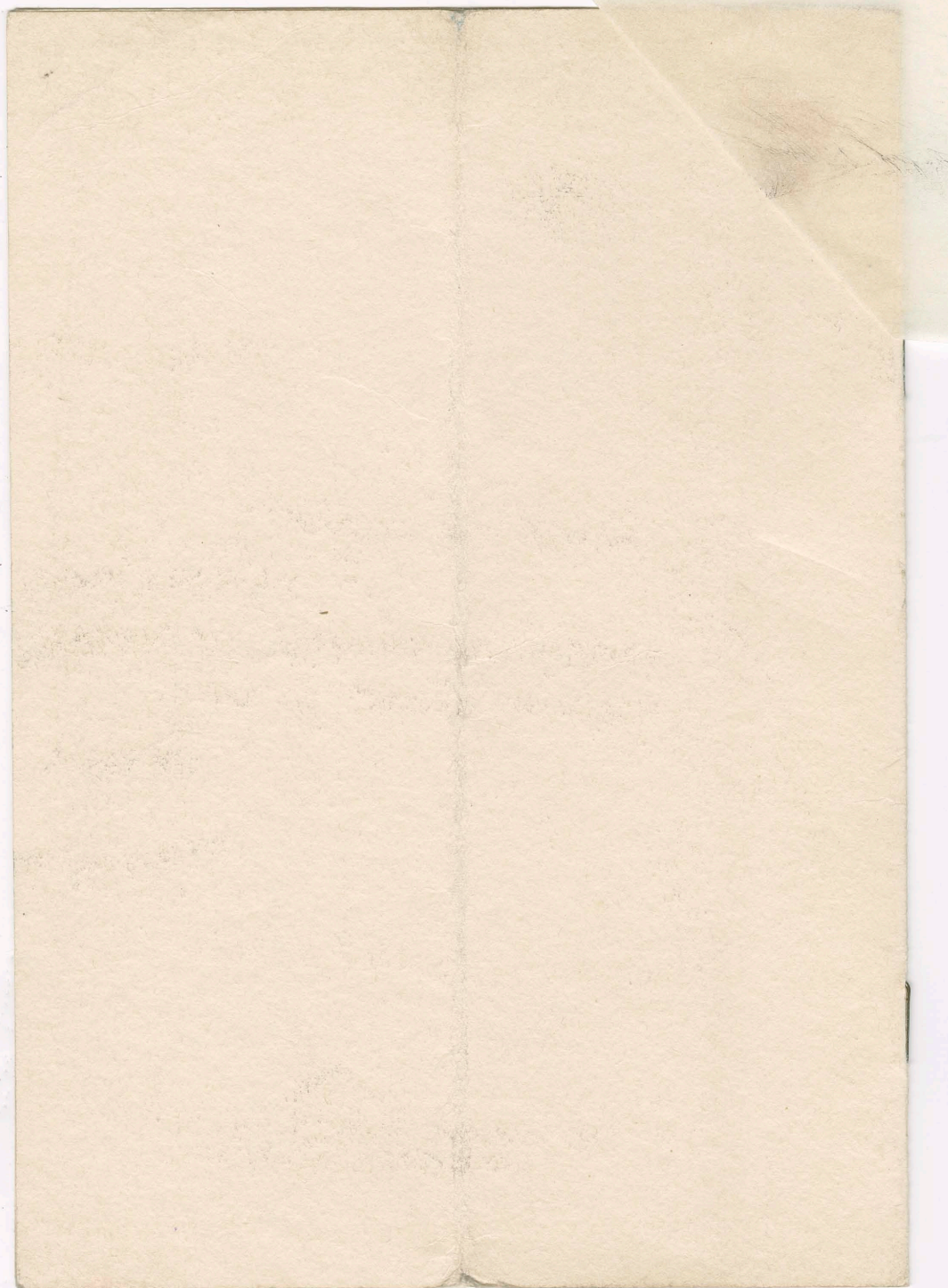
ROBERT E. LEE



I come not to speak the name of Lee in song or story
That his name and fame might shine with a more effulgent glory.
But meet it is that we on his natal day assemble
In patriotic conclave to pay to this hero our tribute.
True the sun by a candle will ne'er be illumined,
Nor to the violet can mortal endeavor add perfume.
But our love can and will like the red, red rose
Each year anew bud and blossom.
Ever honored will be the affection, endurance, conviction,
Loyalty, truth, and sincere patriotic devotion
E'er shown by Lee for our brilliant unconquerable young nation.
Our Southland! Thy story lies deep in the midst
Of our palmetto, orange and palm trees.
Thy glory is still sung by the tall pines of our forests.
Remembered are the great-hearted, warm-hearted planters,
Whose lives glided like the clear flowing river
Which watered, made fertile our valleys and woodlands.
Men whose lives were oft darkened by earth's varying shadows,
But in them always lingered the mirage of heaven.
Gone are those princely old homes of our Southland,
And mighty blasts have now scattered forever
The children of both master and slave.
Naught but memory and tears, like cypress immortal linger
To whisper of our great, storm-tossed Southern Confederacy.
Today, it is meet, we pay tribute to him who loved us so well,
To feed the cravings of our hearts by openly commending
Lee, the Champion of Liberty! Lee, the Defender of Right!
In the midst of the lowering clouds of battle, how like Achilles—
In public and private council how unto wise Nestor.
Evil men do lives after them, the good oft is interred with their bones,
But such has not been the fate of our great and good Captain,
Our Joshua, so mighty in peace and in battle,

Great in name, great in fame, Robert E. Lee.
Oft have bards, in their sweetest strains, wooed us,
All the way from Stratford's peaceful plantation to Lexington's College.
Oft have orators with Lee's precept, duty,
Stirred the living to a fresher, more fruitful life.
Recounting the illustrious deeds of that man from cradle to grave.
Indelibly, the chronicler upon History's tablet of Immortality
Has carved deep, the record and name of General Lee.
Today, you U. D. C.'s, like Vestals Virgins ever faithful,
Rekindle your patriotic lamps from the flame ever burning
Upon that sacred altar of Robert E. Lee.
His forebears lived in that proud Old Dominion;
There was he born, the babe of Virginia and Winter
There as a child romped he, and played as all children,
Idolized by his father and mother, sweet Anne Carter.
Beloved, aye, worshipped, by the slaves on the plantation
By whom he was first called dear "Marse Robert."
From Virginia, a youth, he enrolled as a West Point cadet,
Where he stood first in his class,—in his studies—
First also in all manly virtues.
Leaving his Alma Mater, he became his country's defender,
Showing always great wisdom, magnanimity and justice.
Honors came to him through courage, endurance,
But the greatest of all, he considered, the love of a woman,
Sweet Mary Custis, the beautiful heiress of Arlington—
Soon children came to bless and brighten the home of the soldier,
The man who lives today in the hearts of all people.
When justice and brotherly love were no longer the portion of Dixie,
When "States Rights" was ignored, and our South over-ridden,
Promptly Lee stepped into line with all loyal Virginians,
Refused the highest honors possible for the Federal Government to offer,
Unsheathed flashed Lee's sword for his country.
Hark to the notes of martial music resounding!
Hear the steady tramp, tramp of our intrepid Southern infantry!
The sharp, rapid hoof beats of our dashing cavalier cavalry!
See the devastating stream of fire from the guns

Of our daring and deadly artillery!
True in those days brave men fought brave men.
We know that Might is not always Right—
So for four long years nothing daunted Lee's courage,
For four years Lee's fortitude never wavered—
Then he wept as he watched his men marching on,
Enduring without murmur all discomforts and trials,
Facing like heroes greater odds than mortals could shoulder.
Ah, that half starved, ragged, foot-sore thin-lined column of heroes
Then forever was sheathed the stainless "sword of Lee."
With dignity he met defeat, and led his men in surrender.
In the midst of the days of Reconstruction
We see Lee the citizen in his plain suit of grey,
Refusing a home in the motherland, the British Isle
Over the seas, putting aside firmly yet kindly
Supremacy in colonization in Old Mexico;
Refusing to barter his name for commercial gold—
Instead, he remained with us, breathing encouragement,
Again leading the South, through those days so dark,
When our Southern Cross hung low in the sky
Arching o'er the land where only the dead were free.
To the Presidency of Washington and Lee he was called,
There to him came young men from the limpid Potomac
To the sluggishly rolling, yellow Rio Grande.
There faithfully Lee labored for you and for me.
There he showed us the grandeur in the graves of our dead!
The glory of our history; our legends; our lays;
To remember the living and dead of our great Confederate Army
Lee taught us to live, and to hope, and to pray
And plant the seeds for another day.
Men have come since then, and men have gone—unremembered
But Robert E. Lee will live forever.
For never has lived a nobler man more free from blame,
Nor a blameless man with a grander fame,
Nor will fame ever find another Robert E. Lee.



Chicago, February 3, 1914.

My dear Mrs. Leigh:-

President Judson asks me to
acknowledge the receipt of the poem on Robert E.
Lee, and to thank you for it.

Yours very truly,

Private Secretary.

Mrs. Townes Randolph Leigh,
Montgomery, Alabama.

Chicago, February 3, 1914.

My dear Mrs. Leigh:-

President Johnson asks me to
acknowledge the receipt of the poem on Robert E.
Lee, and to thank you for it.

Yours very truly,

Private Secretary.

Mrs. Townes Randolph Leigh,
Montgomery, Alabama.