



THE SWORD OF LEE.

In this year of 1922 occurs the centenary of Gen. U. S. Grant, and preparations are being made to have it widely observed in the North. Very fitting will be this tribute to the memory of the man who is credited with having won victory for the Federal forces, a man who showed no ill-feeling toward the men surrendering to him, but was ready for peace and good will to all.

There will be much said and written of General Grant which would doubtless surprise him could he hear it—many tributes paid to his prowess in arms, his magnanimity to a vanquished foe. In particular will this time be a grand opportunity to laud Grant's magnanimity *in refusing to accept General Lee's sword* as the victor at Appomattox. In his letter of greeting to the Confederate veterans in reunion at Chattanooga, Commander Lewis S. Pilcher, of the Grand Army of the Republic, wrote: "From the moment that Robert E. Lee tendered his sword to his magnanimous conqueror, Ulysses S. Grant, and Grant refused to receive it"—

And General Lee never even thought of offering his sword, and if Grant had a thought of getting it, he certainly did not express it.

This matter is brought out here for the benefit of our own people, for many have the idea that General Lee really did tender his sword as a part of the surrender at Appomattox and that Grant magnanimously refused to visit that humiliation upon him. As a matter of fact, the terms of surrender expressly stated that the Confederate officers were to retain their side arms, and it would hardly have been fitting to expect of their commander what was not required of them.

This is but one of many historical myths which perennially come forth on occasions these fifty years and more

despite the many exposures of their untruth. Some years ago Mrs. Jefferson Davis fell into the same error in an article she furnished to a Northern newspaper, thus giving a new lease of life to this story by her indorsement—and this brought out a statement from the late Col. Charles Marshall, of Baltimore, who had been a member of General Lee's staff and was present at the interview with General Grant. In responding to a request from Mr. Spottswood Bird, of Baltimore, for a statement on the subject, he wrote: "The circumstances attending the meeting between General Grant and General Lee on April 9, 1865, did not call for any demand on the part of General Grant for the surrender of General Lee's sword on that occasion, and any statement, however made and by whomsoever made, to the effect that General Lee made the tender of his sword to General Grant must be entirely in conflict with the view of either. Neither of them, I am quite sure, was influenced by any theatrical ideas of the surrender. You will observe that by the very terms of the surrender demanded by General Grant, it was expressly provided that the officers of the Confederate army should retain their side arms. To have offered to surrender his sword would have been an offer on General Lee's part to do more than had been demanded of him."

And General Grant says specifically in his "Memoirs" (Vol. II, Chapter XXV, pages 344-346): "No conversation—not one word—passed between General Lee and myself either about private property, side arms, or kindred subjects. The much talked of surrendering of General Lee's sword and my handing it back, this and much more that has been said about it, is the purest romance. The word 'sword' or 'side arms' was not mentioned by either of us until I wrote it in the terms. There was no premeditation, and it did not occur to me until the moment I wrote it down. If I had happened to omit it and General Lee had called my attention to it, I should have put it in the terms precisely as I acceded to the provision about the soldiers retaining their horses."

So now, with all this testimony to the contrary, anyone repeating the mythical story that General Lee offered his sword to General Grant at Appomattox and that the latter refused it, will be guilty of deliberate misrepresentation.

The magnificent uniform and splendid sword which General Lee wore on the occasion of his interview with General Grant at Appomattox were the gifts of Baltimore sympathizers and admirers.