

ROBERT EDWARD LEE

Lee at the same time was compelled to create an army and fight the enemy. His military status was ambiguous. To the end he was merely in command of the Northern Army of Virginia. President Davis assumed the virtual office of commander-in-chief, and superseded Lee at First Manassas. So Bull Run is known in the South; Antietam, Sharpsburg; and Shiloh, Pittsburg Landing. At a more famous battle Davis was rash enough to issue direct orders. Lee observed under heavy fire a cavalcade composed of President Davis, his excited staff-officers, cabinet members and politicians. "Who is all this army, and what is it doing here?" Lee asked, and warned them away. There is always the eternal problem, not yet solved, of the line between civil and military authority. A similar rumour persists that some such dubiety existed in the minds of Douglas Haig and Lloyd George.

Let it be repeated, Lee was too gentle and generous. After the failure at Gettysburg of Pickett's disastrous charge with fifteen regiments of 15,000 men, Lee rode up to him and said, "Come, Pickett, this has been my fight and upon me rests the blame. Your men have done all that men could do; the fault is entirely my own." To Wilcox he said, "Never mind; all this has been my fault, and you must help me out of it the best way you can." In a sense he was correct. This book solves many problems in that light. It makes painful reading but Dr. Freeman does not wince: "Longstreet remained listless and despairing . . . in black dismay . . . gloom on his countenance . . . did not believe that success was possible . . . obstinacy, tardiness, and irresolution. For the supreme effort of all his warring Lee had to act through a sullen, despairing lieutenant." During his delay the Federals were heavily reinforced and deeply entrenched. Lanrezac on the Marne displayed a similar behaviour, but Joffre promptly sent him to Limoges, and replaced him with Franchet d'Esperey. Even Foch himself had been *Limogé*, and Nivelle, and Joffre too. Yet Pickett