

ROBERT E. LEE

ator Reverdy Johnson, were more proof needed. The Hon. Montgomery Blair published the fact as stated by his father, the Hon. Francis P. Blair, that he had been sent by Mr. Lincoln to Colonel Lee with the offer of the command, and long afterward the Hon. Simon Cameron, formerly Secretary of War in Mr. Lincoln's cabinet, in a published interview, frankly admitted the fact. "It is true," he says, "that General Robert E. Lee was tendered the command of the Union army. It was the wish of Mr. Lincoln's administration that as many as possible of the Southern officers then in the regular army should remain true to the nation which had educated them. Robert E. Lee and Joseph E. Johnston were then the leading Southern soldiers. . . . In the moves and counter moves in the game of war and peace then going on, Francis P. Blair, Sr., was a prominent figure. The tender of the command of the United States forces was made to General Lee through him. Mr. Blair came to me expressing the opinion that General Lee could be held to our cause by the offer of the chief command of our forces. I authorized Mr. Blair to make the offer. . . ." *

But the matter is set at rest by a letter from

* *New York Herald*, cited in Jones's "Lee," p. 130.