GENERAL SHERMAN.

Probably no general in the Union army has been more honored and appreciated, at least in the Northern States, than General Sherman. His achievements in the war were perhaps, on the whole, more striking and brilliant than those performed by any other officer, Federal or Confederate. They were of a kind calculated powerfully to excite the imagination, and they were crowned by complete and dazzling success. Then he was a man of most marked and individual traits of character. He was bold in action and in speech. He possessed all the peculiarly American characteristics. He was not only enterprising, full of resources, aggressive, but he was all this in a way distinctively his own; he was the type of the American general in these respects. More than this, he took the public into his confidence to a degree that no other general ever thought of doing. Not that he sought popularity by any unfair methods, but that he could not help stating to the world his views and conclusions, proclaiming his likes and his dislikes, as he went along. And although he was always a very plain-spoken man, and his opinions frequently ran counter to the popular notions, his evident honesty and sincerity took wonderfully with the people. There has been nobody in our time like General Sherman.

It may be too soon properly to estimate his military abilities. We are perhaps too near to the war, too familiar with the actors themselves, and with the local and temporary tradition about their doings; we are perhaps too much interested in them to be able to be thoroughly impartial. Yet the contemporary generation possesses certain manifest advantages for coming to a correct judgment of the men and affairs of its day which cannot, in the nature of things, be possessed by the generations that come after. The men of the time cannot easily be grossly deceived or greatly mistaken. They have not gained all their knowledge from books. When they do read about the events through which they have passed, they know something about the writers of the books and their qualifications, and something about the events themselves from sources independent of the books. Eye-witnesses and direct testimony count, and ought to count, for a good deal. Let us then try to state in a very brief way what we, in this generation, know and think of the great soldier who has so recently left us.

General Sherman was appointed to the Military Academy at West Point from the State of Ohio in 1836, and graduated in 1840, sixth in his class. Although, during the Mexican war, he was employed in the expedition to California, and therefore missed the opportunities for distinction in the field which the campaigns of Scott and Taylor so liberally afforded, and although he subsequently left the service, his appointment in the regular army as colonel of one of the new regiments of infantry, and also as brigadier-general of volunteers in May, 1861, shows how highly his abilities were rated by his contemporaries and superiors. After the first battle of Bull Run, where he commanded a brigade, he was sent to Kentucky to serve under General Robert Anderson. The latter's health, however, soon failing him, Sherman assumed command of the department of the Cumberland.

General Sherman's connection with the Army of the Cumberland did not long continue, for, superseded at his own request by General Buell, he was transferred to General Halleck's department of the Mississippi. Here began his connection with the troops which were afterwards organized into the Army of the Tennessee. The history of these two famous commands is virtually the history of the war in the Mississippi Valley. Grant, Sherman, and McPherson are the heroes of the Army of the Tennessee; Buell, Rosecrans, and Thomas of the Army of the Cumberland.

Halleck's forces opened the campaign of 1862 with a brilliant stroke. The capture of Forts Henry and Donelson by the troops under Grant and the fleet under Foote in February caused the immediate fall of Nashville and the evacuation by the enemy of the greater part of the States of Kentucky and Tennessee. It was determined to push forward on the line of the Tennessee River as large a force as could be collected. Grant, with the confidence born of his recent victory, established his army at Pittsburg Landing, or Shiloh, on the western side of the river, having his headquarters at Savannah, some eight miles further down the river, — that is, to the northward, — and on the opposite or eastern bank. Sherman commanded a division in this army. Buell, now under Halleck's orders, had been directed to march with all his disposable forces from Nashville to Savannah, thence to be transferred to Pittsburg Landing, from which point the whole command was to advance southwestwardly to Corinth, a town on the great railroad which, running from west to east, connected Memphis with Chattanooga, intersecting the railroad from Mobile to the Ohio River, and constituted one of the most important avenues of communication for the enemy in that region. It was supposed at the time that the Confederate troops had been thoroughly discouraged by their recent heavy losses in men, material, and territory, and that we should have no serious difficulty in attaining our objective point, and thus opening the way for further operations.

Everybody knows what happened: how Albert Sidney Johnston and Beauregard saw their opportunity in the exposed situation of Grant's army; how they rapidly and secretly gathered their forces together; how they were delayed by bad weather and frightful roads, but how, on Sunday morning, the 6th of April, they struck the unsuspecting army of Grant a terrible blow; how stubbornly and bravely Grant and his lieutenants resisted and held out, fighting to the last, Sherman especially distinguishing himself not only for gallantry, but for readiness and skill in making his dispositions; how, nevertheless, they were pressed back in disorder; how at the close of the day the advance guard of Buell's army arrived just in time to check the last assaults of the exhausted Confederates; and how the battle was renewed the next day, and resulted in a great success for the Union arms.

Grant and Sherman have always persistently maintained that they were not surprised at Shiloh; but the world has never been able to take their statements seriously. Grant wrote to Halleck, the day before the battle, that he had scarcely the faintest idea of a general attack being made upon him. Sherman, the same day, wrote from Pittsburg Landing to Grant at Savannah that he did not apprehend anything like an attack upon his position. They unquestionably said what they thought at the time. The battle began at half past five o'clock in the morning. Grant did not reach the field till after nine. It stands to reason that such tardiness on the part of an army commander to arrive on the field of battle is susceptible of no more natural, and assuredly of no more honorable explanation than that he was expecting no battle to occur. Surprised, however, as was the Federal commander, he was not thrown off his balance. Never did Grant display to better advantage the firmness and steadfast courage which he possessed in so unusual a degree. Sherman's conduct, too, after the fighting began, was above all praise. His division was made up of troops perfectly new, who had never been under fire; but he handled them with such skill and ability that he made a reputation on that disastrous field.

As a subordinate commander, Sherman had the rare good fortune of serving under a man whom he greatly admired and in whom he fully trusted; and General Grant returned the confidence which his lieutenant reposed in him. The perfect understanding between these two eminent men was not only one of the most interesting facts of the war, but it was productive of great good to the public service. It showed in many ways how wise it is for the superior, whenever it is possible to do so, to rely confidently on the subordinate; to refrain from undertaking to regulate his decisions as to matters under his own eye; not to attempt to prescribe the details of his action or to criticise his dispositions in the spirit of a taskmaster. Cordial coöperation in their work was the fruit of this unique relation between Sherman and Grant.

While it cannot be said that this part of Sherman's life was marked by any brilliant successes in the field, his reputation with the army, with Grant, his immediate superior, and with Halleck, the general-in-chief at Washington, steadily increased. He was seen to be a careful, energetic, and trustworthy corps commander. But that was all. The army that reduced Vicksburg had no great battles to fight like those of Stone River and Chickamauga. The Vicksburg campaign was won by superior strategy. Therefore Sherman, when summoned by Grant to join him at Chattanooga, in October, 1863, after the latter had been assigned to the command of all the forces in the West, brought with him no such reputation as a brilliant fighter as Longstreet bore when he came to add his veteran Virginians to the army of Bragg.

On the other hand, Thomas, who had succeeded Rosecrans in command of the Army of the Cumberland, had just won great distinction by his extremely able and courageous conduct on the bloody field of Chickamauga, where he stopped the rout, rallied the fugitives, and maintained his position with entire and splendid success against the desperate assaults of the Confederates, flushed with their victory over the right of the line led by Rosecrans in person. There was no denying that Thomas had proved himself not only equal to the situation, but superior to it. It would have been only just to have entrusted to him the supreme conduct of affairs in that region, and to have reinforced him with all the troops that were available. But General Grant's great success at Vicksburg induced the government to give to him the chief command in the Mississippi Valley; and he at once ordered Sherman to march at the head of the Army of the Tennessee to the assistance of the Army of the Cumberland. Moreover, Grant determined to give to Sherman the principal part in the forthcoming battle, by which he expected to raise the siege of Chattanooga. Sherman, with five divisions, was to attack the enemy's right and completely turn his position; when this should have been done, Thomas was to attack the centre; Hooker, meanwhile, was to operate against his extreme left. Owing, however, to the unexpectedly difficult nature of the ground, Sherman failed to make any impression. To create a diversion for him, Grant ordered Thomas's command, consisting of four divisions, to carry the rifle-pits at the foot of the enemy's position. In an incredibly short time his troops had executed this task. But they could not stay in the works they had won. Yet they had no orders to go forward. They took the matter into their own hands. Without orders, and to the amazement of the commanding general, they clambered up the slopes of Missionary Ridge, and after a brief and brilliant fight they stood victorious on its summit.

It must be confessed that in their accounts of this great battle, as of Shiloh, Grant and Sherman have allowed their personal feelings to color, if not to distort, the narrative. Sherman has stated that the object of the attacks made upon the flanks of Bragg's position by General Hooker and himself "was to disturb him [Bragg] to such an extent that he would naturally detach from his centre as against us, so that Thomas's army could break through his centre." And Grant, in his Memoirs, obviously intends to convey the impression that this was his plan of battle, and that the battle was fought and won as he had planned it. Yet the dispatches and reports prove conclusively that the movement which Grant ordered was intended merely to relieve Sherman by distracting the enemy's attention; and that it was limited to the capture of the rifle-pits at the foot of the Ridge. General Grant's original orders to both Sherman and Thomas show that he intended a joint attack to be made by their united commands, when Sherman should have carried the north end of the Ridge. Instead of this, Sherman failed, owing to unforeseen difficulties, to accomplish his part of the programme. Grant, thinking him hard pressed, ordered an advance to carry the rifle-pits at the foot of the Ridge, in order to relieve the pressure on him; this diversion was all that was intended by this move. But the gallantry of the troops and the fortune of war turned this incidental operation into a brilliant success, which resembled in its execution and consequences the famous assault on the heights of Pratzen which decided the battle of Austerlitz. The glory of this unexpected victory belongs mainly to the troops themselves, and specially to the men of Sheridan's and Wood's divisions, and cannot properly be claimed by either Grant or his lieutenants.

To Sherman, however, as Grant's favorite officer, was given the chief command in the West, when, in the spring of 1864, the new lieutenant-general was placed in control of all the armies of the United States. In May of that year a new career opened for General Sherman, that of commander of a large army, and the famous Atlanta campaign began. At the same time, General Grant, accompanying the Army of the Potomac, under General Meade, crossed the Rapidan and advanced against General Lee.

The objects of both commanders were similar. They were laid down clearly by Grant himself. On the 4th of April he wrote to Sherman: "You I propose to move against Johnston's army, to break it up, and to get into the interior of the enemy's country as far as you can, inflicting all the damage you can against their war resources." To the same effect, substantially, he wrote to Meade on the 9th: "Lee's army will be your objective point. Wherever Lee goes, there you will go also." That Sherman clearly understood his chief's intention is certain. He says in his Memoirs: "Neither Atlanta, nor Augusta, nor Savannah was the objective, but the 'army of Jos. Johnston' [*sic*], go where it might."

There can be no doubt as to the soundness of General Grant's view. If the two armies of Lee and Johnston could be destroyed, there would be an end of the war. If these armies should not be destroyed, the occupation of the Southern cities would avail little. New York and Philadelphia, Charleston and Savannah, were held by the British in the war of the Revolution; but so long as Washington and Greene were at the head of armies in New Jersey and the Carolinas the rebellion was not put down. Grant's idea of the true objects to be accomplished by himself and Sherman was unquestionably sound and clearly stated. It is, therefore, rather remarkable that neither he nor Sherman succeeded, in the campaigns which they began in May, 1864, in accomplishing these objects. At the close of that year the main army of Lee lay in its lines in front of Petersburg and Richmond; only that part of Lee's army which he had sent into the Shenandoah Valley had been destroyed. This certainly had been effected by Sheridan. Sherman, also, reached, occupied, demolished, and left Atlanta without destroying the army of Johnston and Hood. That task he finally abandoned to Thomas, who executed it in the memorable and decisive victory of Nashville. Let us briefly examine Sherman's movements.

Sherman undoubtedly started out with the intention of fighting, and if possible overwhelming, Johnston's army. He had with him about a hundred thousand men, under Thomas, McPherson, and Schofield, three very able commanders. His opponent, General Joseph E. Johnston, was, next to Lee, the best general in the Southern army. His army was probably about sixty thousand strong. It was well intrenched at Dalton.

We cannot, of course, follow this most interesting campaign in detail. Sherman lost, at the very outset, the best and perhaps the only chance he had during the whole summer of inflicting a decisive defeat upon his antagonist. Had he followed Thomas's advice, had he marched immediately, with the great bulk of his army, through Snake Creek Gap and seized the railroad in Johnston's rear at Resaca, instead of sending McPherson through the Gap with a comparatively small force, he might have ended the campaign with a sudden and brilliant victory. But he missed this opportunity, and his wary and skillful opponent presented him with no other. Sherman was compelled to turn his adversary's positions and force him to fall back without ever being able to bring him to bay in a situation where the superior numbers of the Union army would tell. Sometimes, in his endeavor to find the weak places in the enemy's positions, Sherman lost more men than he need have lost; and it must be said that his assaults at Kenesaw Mountain did not do credit to his tactical judgment. In his desire to bring matters to a crisis, he failed to recognize that his orders could not be carried out, and that his losses would not only be severe, but fruitless. Nevertheless, on the whole, he husbanded his army. He cannot be charged with having adopted the wasteful policy of "attrition," which Grant tried during May and June, 1864, and which cost the Army of the Potomac so many thousands of valuable lives, with such meagre results. And in point of caring for stores, supplies, ammunition, and subsistence, Sherman was a marvelous provider. No one could march a large army through an unproductive country more successfully than he. But so long as Johnston remained in command of the Confederate army Sherman could not get at it. When Johnston was superseded by Hood, Sherman had indeed to repel the latter's fierce attacks upon him, but, from one cause or another, he could not or did not force Hood to a general battle; and when he had, by another turning movement, caused the evacuation of Atlanta, the Confederate army was still intact and still formidable.

General Sherman thus found himself in a very difficult position. He had, it is true, possession of Atlanta, which the public undoubtedly considered to have been the objective point of his campaign; certainly its capture effected a great change in the minds of the Northern people in respect to their expectation of final success in the war. But Sherman knew that the capture of Atlanta of itself signified little. He knew perfectly well that he had not set out from Dalton with the object of getting possession of Atlanta, but with the object of destroying the main Confederate army in the West; and he knew also that he had done practically nothing towards carrying out his intention. He recognized, in fact, that he was in most respects far less favorably situated for destroying that army than he had been on the 1st of May; for, difficult as he had found it to be to obtain supplies in his march to Atlanta, — drawing them, as he was obliged to do, from Nashville and Chattanooga, — he had yet successfully accomplished this task; he had carried his army as far south as Atlanta, and he had had a chance to strike the Confederate army in his front all the time. But now he knew he must stop. His line of communication was already dangerously long. He could not follow up Hood's army into the interior of the country, relying on his existing arrangements, and transport with him all the stores, equipment, and ammunition that, in a serious pursuit of such a powerful force as the Confederate army was, are necessarily required. Moreover, he had by no means as large an army as that with which he had moved upon Dalton at the outset of the campaign. Nearly one third of his men and many of his best officers had to be employed in guarding the railroad, and in garrisoning the subsidiary depots of subsistence and ammunition. Diminished, then, as his active army was to two thirds its original size, and arrived as he was at the end of his line of supply, what was there for him to do?

For nearly a month after the fall of Atlanta, which took place on the 2d of September, 1864, the situation in Georgia was substantially as described above. But it would be a great mistake to suppose that General Sherman felt himself to be at the end of his resources. He applied to the problem before him a mind exceptionally active and ingenious, and full of enterprise and industry. He was constantly devising new plans by which the prestige which the Federal army had won in capturing Atlanta could be utilized, and by which, in some way, by combinations with other commands which were to operate either from the Gulf of Mexico or from the Atlantic Ocean, the initiative, with all its inestimable advantages, could be maintained. To read his correspondence at this period with Grant and Halleck is most interesting, albeit at times rather puzzling. He proposes plan after plan; and some of his suggestions strike the reader as wild enough. But they were merely suggestions; they did not in any way commit him to action. It is true that no man was ever more fertile in expedients than General Sherman; but then no man was ever more particular than he in arranging the details of a military operation. No general ever lived who realized more fully than General Sherman the importance of knowing just where every pound of beef and every ounce of ammunition was to come from; and it is quite safe to say that he had not the slightest intention of changing his base until he had settled all these and all other important details to his own complete satisfaction. Therefore, when we find him speaking of a movement to be made from Mobile, utilizing the Alabama and Chattahoochee rivers as lines of supply, or the capture of Savannah by troops to be sent by Grant from Virginia, and then the establishment of a new base on the upper part of the Savannah River, we may admire the fertility of the mind which could find such ways of escape from an enforced inaction, and at the same time feel entire confidence that, before any important step should be taken, matters would be arranged with the utmost care and precaution, so far, at any rate, as General Sherman's own movements were concerned.

Nothing, however, came of these suggestions, for the very good reason that, considerably to Sherman's surprise, General Hood was the one to take the initiative. His cavalry, under two able leaders, Forrest and Wheeler, had during

September been threatening the railroad from Atlanta to Chattanooga, and also the railroads running south from Nashville, and in some places cutting the line for a time; but in the last week of September Hood's main army broke camp and marched north. The most famous episode of this movement of Hood's was the resolute and successful defense made on October 5th by General Corse of our post at Allatoona Pass, — one of the most memorable occurrences in the whole war. But we cannot go into details here. Suffice it to say that Hood struck the railroad in several places, broke up the communication for a time, but finally drew off his army, towards the end of October, to Gadsden, in the northern part of Alabama, without a serious engagement. Sherman then reëstablished the railroad service to Atlanta, and, concentrating the greater part of his army at Gaylesville, Alabama, waited to see what his adversary, whose army was lying not many miles to the southwest, would do next.

Sherman had been convinced by this raid of Hood's that Atlanta was not permanently tenable, so long, at least, as the Confederate army of the West remained substantially intact, nor was it worth the cost of holding it. What was the good of remaining at such an advanced post as Atlanta, where every mile of the only railway by which the army could be supplied offered a temptation to an enemy's army substantially in good order and condition? For, unless he should cut loose from his base at Chattanooga and march south, giving up his hold on the railroad, or else should retreat to Tennessee, Sherman must remain at Atlanta, since the railroad communication could be extended no further. A large Federal army stalemated at Atlanta, if we may use an expression borrowed from the chessboard, and whose long line of communications temptingly invited attack, was certainly a lame and impotent conclusion of the campaign so bravely and hopefully begun on the 4th of May. Some issue must be found from this unsatisfactory state of affairs.

The natural thing to do, and the thing which at this time General Sherman undoubtedly wanted to do, was to resume the original plan; that is, to make the destruction of the Confederate army the sole object of the campaign. There is abundant evidence that when Hood's movements against the railroad forced Sherman not only to send Thomas to Chattanooga, but to go north himself with the bulk of the army, leaving only one corps at Atlanta, he greatly desired to bring Hood to battle. But Hood was too wary to accommodate him. He saw perfectly the great advantage to the Confederates in prolonging the existing state of things; to his mind, nothing could well be more gratifying than to see the main Federal army of the West flying from point to point on the Chattanooga and Atlanta railroad, — here repairing a burnt trestle, there rebuilding a blockhouse, here, again, relaying a few miles of railroad track; and all this time suffering occasional panics whenever Forrest's cavalry approached dangerously near the railroads south of Nashville. Hood kept well to the west of the Chattanooga and Atlanta railroad; and he knew that he could, in case Sherman should move against him, lead him a chase through a difficult country, across considerable rivers, and put him to great trouble to obtain his subsistence and forage. For, in moving against Hood's army with the intention of engaging and in the hope of destroying it, Sherman could not afford to use the light equipment which sufficed for the unopposed march to the sea; nor would it do to scatter his army in order to obtain provisions, as he then so freely did. If he was to make Hood's army his objective, he must arrange his dispositions accordingly; he must carry with him abundance of artillery, of ammunition, of supplies of all sorts, and be prepared to fight battles. This Hood calculated Sherman did not wish to do, situated as he then was.

And in this calculation Hood was quite right. The Federal commander was indeed prepared, and in fact anxious, to move against Hood, if Hood should be so unwise as to cross the Tennessee River, on his northward march, within a short distance of Gaylesville, where Sherman's army lay. Not to operate against an army which should thus recklessly expose its communications would indeed be unpardonable. But Hood had no intention of committing such a blunder as this. He moved westward as far as Florence, Alabama, some hundred and fifty miles west of Chattanooga, and there concentrated his troops and supplies. Here he was on the 1st of November. Here he and Beauregard, who was advising with him, had fixed their base of operations for their proposed advance on Nashville. Now, for Sherman to march across the country from Gaylesville towards Florence with a large army was not only not an easy task, but it involved the abandonment — so Sherman thought — of Atlanta, and an entire rearrangement of bases and lines of supply. On the other hand, to retire the army to Tennessee, and there repel an invasion of the enemy, seemed like a confession of defeat, or at least of having entirely failed to carry out the true objects of the spring campaign, — a thing, as Sherman thought, certainly to be avoided, if possible. There remained another course, — and it was one which fascinated the Federal commander alike by its originality and its startling audacity, — and that was to reinforce Thomas so as to make him equal to the task of repelling the invasion, if one should be undertaken, while the main army, under Sherman in person, should march across the State of Georgia to Savannah and the sea.

Bearing now in mind the great attraction which this project possessed for General Sherman, as appears from his correspondence with the Washington authorities, we must not be surprised to find in Sherman's letters to Grant and Halleck evidences of an unwillingness on his part to look the matter in all its bearings squarely in the face, and of a strong desire to dwell only on the more favorable conditions of the problem, and especially to present the scheme so that only its most attractive features should be displayed. The idea of a march to the sea, which should demonstrate the hollowness of the Confederacy, which should amaze and delight the world by its novelty and its audacity, and which should yet involve no risk to the sixty thousand picked veterans who were to perform the feat, took manifest possession of General Sherman's mind. But Grant, whose imagination, if he ever had any, was not excited beyond bounds even by this brilliant proposal of his favorite lieutenant, urged, in a letter dated November 1st, upon Sherman that he had better "entirely ruin" Hood before starting on his proposed campaign; that, "with Hood's army destroyed," he could go where he pleased "with impunity." "If you can see the chance for destroying Hood's army, attend to that first, and make your other move secondary."

This was unquestionably sound advice; the destruction of Hood's army would, as Grant said, make everything possible in the West. The Confederacy had no other army but Lee's east of the Mississippi; and if Hood's army should be broken up, the Gulf and the Southern Atlantic States must fall before the forces of the Union. But Sherman was not to be dissuaded from his project. He convinced himself, and so represented to Grant and Halleck, that Thomas was not only able to "hold the line of the Tennessee" River, but would "very shortly be able to assume the offensive," — even talking about ordering him to move on Selma, Alabama, before long. How far these representations were from giving Grant a correct notion of the actual state of things appears from the fact that it was not until November 30th, the day of the battle of Franklin, that Thomas could be said to have had at Nashville a force large enough to be called an army. On that day, General A. J. Smith's corps of twelve thousand men arrived there from Missouri; and on the next day, Schofield, whose little army had been obliged to fall back from the Tennessee River to Franklin, where it had desperately and successfully defended itself against the determined onslaught of Hood, made good his retreat to the same place.

General Sherman succeeded, however, in convincing Grant, who wrote to him on November 2d: "With the force you have left with General Thomas, he must be able to take care of Hood and destroy him. . . . I say, then, go on as you propose." Sherman thus obtained the assent of his superior to his startling project of leaving to Thomas the accomplishment of the task which had originally been assigned to Sherman himself, — the destruction of the main Confederate army in the West. Grant at last yielded to Sherman's persistent representations, and consented to assume that this task, for which in the spring the whole Federal army of the West was deemed no more than adequate, might in the fall safely be entrusted to a congeries of commands then widely separated, soon, to be sure, to be brought together, but which could not be properly called an army at all until its scattered parts should be assembled. And this, too, when there was no pretense of any exigency demanding the presence of the bulk and flower of the Federal army of the West on the Atlantic seaboard. In view of such a decision as this, it is impossible not to say that those who made it trusted largely in their good luck. To transport the greater part of the Federal army of the West far from the theatre of war, while the Confederate army in that region was still a large, well-organized, well-commanded, and formidable force, was certainly a most amazing step to take. It turned out all right, indeed; but no one can read the story of Hood's invasion of Tennessee in November and December, 1864, without at times holding his breath. It seems almost as if the goddess known as the Fortune of War from time to time visibly interfered to hinder and derange the operations of Hood and his lieutenants, and to further the combinations and movements of Thomas and his subordinates. No one familiar with this campaign can honestly say that he thinks that such luck could fairly have been counted on by Grant and Sherman. It is a clear case where the maxim *Exitus acta probat* is applicable, if that maxim ever is applicable.

For his great march, however, Sherman, his mind now relieved by Grant's tardy assent from all anxiety about the situation in Tennessee, made his most careful preparations. Sixty-two thousand of the best troops in the army, well organized, well officered, every detail of equipment most carefully attended to, full of ardor, elation, enterprise, and courage, began on the 15th of November, 1864, one of the most unexpected and startling military movements on record. They met no foe until they reached the sea. The North was electrified, the South dismayed. And while Sherman's army was besieging Savannah, Hood had made his invasion; had forced back Schofield from the Tennessee to the Harpeth; had furiously assaulted him at Franklin, only to be repelled with unheard-of loss; had pursued him to Nashville; had then sat down before that city as if on purpose to give the cool and resolute commander of the Union forces all the time he needed to equip and consolidate his heterogeneous command; and had, on December 15th, succumbed utterly to the well-conceived and well-delivered blows of General Thomas. The battle of Nashville, unlike nearly all our battles, well-nigh destroyed the beaten army.

Hence, when Savannah surrendered, the country was already in a state of exultation at Thomas's glorious and decisive victory; and men's minds, as always in such cases, welcomed with almost frantic excitement the novel sight of the other great Western general now arriving on the Atlantic coast. Savannah was presented by the victor as a Christmas present to President Lincoln; and together with the destruction of the Confederate army in the West by Thomas, and the addition of this splendid Western army under Sherman to the Union forces east of the Alleghanies, it was evident to the dullest understanding that the end was rapidly drawing nigh.

And in truth the "March to the Sea," as Sherman had calculated it would do, absorbed public attention to the exclusion of everything else. Its novelty and audacity, the ease with which it had been conducted, the demonstration which it afforded of the superior power of the North, filled the public mind with exultation and hope. The imagination of the people was captivated. Sherman became the hero of the day.

Yet the propriety of the withdrawal of this army from the seat of war in the West can be defended only by the event. To have imperiled the hold of the Union government on the States of Tennessee and Kentucky; to have exposed all the posts from Chattanooga to Nashville, to say nothing of Louisville, to assault and capture by the Confederate army under Hood; in short, to have left so much to chance when everything might so easily have been made secure, was to count unwarrantably upon the favors of fortune. No margin was left for accidents. It is not easy to see why fifty thousand men would not have served Sherman's purpose as well as sixty-two thousand men; and assuredly twelve thousand good troops would have added greatly to Thomas's scanty resources, and contributed largely to insure the destruction of Hood's army, which alone could give to the strategy which sanctioned the withdrawal of so many troops to the Atlantic coast the possibility of leading to useful results. It is true that Thomas's victory practically attained this end. In the march of his army through the Carolinas, Sherman had to encounter only the remnants of Hood's defeated and discouraged troops added to the insignificant garrisons of the Atlantic cities; and with these forces he was abundantly able to cope. But Thomas's success was really unprecedented. It could not fairly have been anticipated. And it would have been an entirely different matter for Sherman if Hood's whole army, or the greater part of it, had confronted him at the marshes and rivers over which his toilsome and difficult route lay.

Sherman used his advantages with the greatest skill. His hold on his army was perfect; there was nothing that the men would not do at his bidding. The labors of the march northward from Savannah were enormous, the weather was terrible, but everything was cheerfully borne. Sherman's masterly manœuvres deceived and confused his adversaries. He aimed to reach a new base, where he should find supplies and reinforcements, at Goldsboro', North Carolina; he recalled the fate of Cornwallis, who, in the interior of North Carolina, was obliged to give battle to Greene, and, although remaining master of the field, was forced by his losses in men and ammunition to retire to Wilmington. Sherman turned off at Columbia to the northeast, though feigning with a part of his force to keep on moving north. Hence the enemy were unable to strike him until he was close upon Goldsboro'. At Averysboro' he had a brisk and successful engagement; at Bentonville the action was more severe, but we held our own at the end of the day. Once arrived at Goldsboro' the task was easy. Here Schofield, with the twenty-third corps, joined the army; and from Goldsboro' as a new base the march was resumed, until on April 13, 1865, a flag of truce was received from General Johnston, opening negotiations for the surrender of the Confederate forces.

It would not be right to close a review of General Sherman's character and services without referring to his often-announced policy of devastation. It can hardly be doubted that a desire to inflict punishment on the people of the South for their course in breaking up the Union was a strong element in favor of his project of marching across the country. Thus, on October 9, 1864, he telegraphs to General Grant: —

"Until we can repopulate Georgia it is useless for us to occupy it; but the utter destruction of its roads, houses, and people will cripple their military resources. . . . I can make this march, and can make Georgia howl!"

October 17th, to General Schofield:

"I will . . . make the interior of Georgia feel the weight of war."

October 19th, to General Beckwith:

"I propose to abandon Atlanta and the railroad back to Chattanooga, to sally forth to ruin Georgia, and bring up on the seashore."

So, when he arrived before Savannah, he wrote to the Confederate General Hardee as follows: —

"Should I be forced to assault, or the slower and surer process of starvation, I shall then feel justified in resorting to the harshest measures, and shall make little effort to restrain my army, burning to avenge the national wrong which they attach to Savannah and other large cities which have been so prominent in dragging our country into civil war."

To General Grant, December 18th:

"With Savannah in our possession, at some future time, if not now, we can punish South Carolina as she deserves, and as thousands of the people in Georgia hoped we would do. I do sincerely believe that the whole United States, North and South, would rejoice to have this army turned loose on South Carolina, to devastate that State in the manner we have done in Georgia, and it would have a direct and immediate bearing on your campaign in Virginia."

To General Halleck, December 24th:

"I attach more importance to these deep incisions into the enemy's country because this war differs from European wars in this particular: we are not only fighting hostile armies, but a hostile people, and must make old and young, rich and poor, feel the hard hand of war, as well as their organized armies. I know that this recent movement of mine through Georgia has had a wonderful effect in this respect. . . . The truth is, the whole army is burning with an insatiable desire to wreak vengeance upon South Carolina. I almost tremble for her, but feel she deserves all that seems in store for her. . . .

"I look upon Columbia as quite as bad as Charleston, and I doubt if we shall spare the public buildings there as we did at Milledgeville."

From the above citations, — and they might easily be multiplied, — it seems clear that General Sherman conceived that he was justified in causing loss and damage to private and public property as a punishment for political conduct. It can hardly be pretended that the devastation spoken of is that which follows naturally and inevitably in the wake of an invading army. If that is all that is referred to, then the language employed is a great deal too strong to convey the meaning of the writer. It is true that the orders issued to his army for its conduct on the great march are, though by no means strict, yet not in principle objectionable. Foraging was to be confined to regular foraging parties; soldiers were not to enter houses or commit any trespass. Corps commanders only could destroy mills, houses, and like property; and then solely in districts and neighborhoods where the inhabitants had burnt bridges, obstructed roads, or otherwise manifested hostility.

It may well be believed, certainly, that there was much greater license exercised than was warranted by the terms of these orders. But granting that this was so, it was due in great measure to the unavoidable circumstance that the army had to live off the country; and acts of this nature do not tend to settle the question whether devastation for the sake of punishment was ordered or allowed by General Sherman. It seems to us that General Sherman, in the passages cited above, did enunciate in distinct terms the principle that the infliction of such punishment by a general commanding an army is within his rights; that is, that it is sanctioned by the laws of modern civilized warfare.

If we are correct in attributing this position to Sherman, we cannot lose the opportunity of pointing out that the authorities are against him. Military operations are not carried on for the purpose of inflicting punishment for political offenses. The desolation and destruction inseparable from them are not the result of acts done for the purpose of producing suffering, but are to be considered as merely incidental to the military movements; and the object of military movements is to overcome armed resistance. The amount of such suffering cannot be unnecessarily increased without a violation of the humane rules of modern war. The true principle is stated with sufficient accuracy in Sherman's orders at the commencement of his great march. If he transgressed these rules, as it would appear from his own letters and dispatches that he did, he cannot be defended. Whatever the Georgians and South Carolinians suffered by having to supply provisions, forage, fuel, horses, or military stores of any kind to Sherman's invading army, whether more or less in amount, was a mere incident of a state of war, for which neither General Sherman nor his army was to blame. But if Sherman purposely destroyed, or connived at the destruction of, property which was not needed for the supply of his army or of the enemy's army, he violated one of the fundamental canons of modern warfare; and just so far as he directed or permitted this, he conducted war on obsolete and barbarous principles. As to the facts, they are not perfectly easy to ascertain. In his official report, Sherman estimated the entire damage done to the State of Georgia at one hundred millions of dollars, of which only twenty millions "inured to our advantage," the remainder being "simple waste and destruction." Still, much of this may have been inevitable. We have no space here to review the evidence, and must content ourselves with stating the rule as we understand it.

We cannot, in this connection, avoid remarking that General Sherman was proved by the event to have been entirely mistaken in thinking that "to devastate" the State of South Carolina "would have a direct and immediate bearing on" Grant's "campaign in Virginia." This is clearly a case of seeking far afield for a reason for a thing which a man has made up his mind to do. As a matter of fact, General Lee remained in his lines at Petersburg and Richmond until the season was sufficiently advanced for Grant to commence operations; and it was not until the battle of Five Forks had been lost that Lee evacuated his works and began his disastrous retreat.

Much the same criticism may be passed upon General Sherman's statement, above cited, of the importance which he attached to "these deep incisions into the enemy's country," namely, that we were not only fighting hostile armies, but a hostile people, and must make everybody "feel the hard hand of war." There is a sort of *ad captandum* semblance of logic about this remark that no doubt made it popular at the time. But surely it needs but a moment's reflection to see that nothing is gained by adding anything to the task of the soldier, which is to defeat and destroy the hostile force. To infuriate needlessly a population already known to be unfriendly assuredly cannot make the soldier's task easier; on the contrary, it must rather multiply his difficulties, and tend to render success less certain, besides making the population, when conquered, more hostile than ever before.

There is, it must be confessed, in many of these utterances of General Sherman's a good deal that will not stand the test of careful examination. They show that Sherman's mind was not occupied solely in the work which alone it was his duty to attend to, that is in the endeavor to solve the military problem before him; in other words, that he concerned himself more or less all the time with the popular and political questions connected with the war, — in this respect presenting a great contrast to Grant and Thomas. Evidences of this are to be found everywhere in his dispatches and correspondence, — notably in his letters to General Hood and to the mayor and city government of Atlanta, in September, 1864, and in the Memorandum or Basis of Agreement between him and General J. E. Johnston, in April, 1865. At the same time, Sherman never for an instant pretermitted his active attention to the welfare of his army, or his study of the military problems which his masterly manœuvres were constantly presenting for his solution.

In truth, it is far from easy to draw the portrait of General Sherman. Here is an officer of high rank, who began his service in the war at the first battle of Bull Run; who received the surrender of the last of the Confederate generals; who was at the head of one of the finest armies in the country, but who never commanded in a great, still less a decisive battle; whose most famous exploit consisted in marching a large and well-appointed force almost unopposed through the enemy's country; and whose reputation nevertheless stands as high, at least with the Northern public, as that of any of the generals of the Union. Such a sketch as the above certainly leaves much to be accounted for. Yet it is true so far as it goes. What is not stated in it contains, however, the solution of the apparent paradox. General Sherman's military abilities, though not exhibited conspicuously on the battlefield, were confessedly of a very high order. His Atlanta campaign proves this by universal admission. If we are surprised at his leaving to Thomas the task of resisting, and if possible destroying, the principal Confederate army in the West; if we fail, as we fairly may, to see in what respect Sherman gained anything in not following Grant's advice to "entirely ruin" Hood before "starting" on his "proposed campaign," we must at the same time admit that no operation in the war was more skillfully carried out than that "proposed campaign." It accomplished all that Sherman had expected or hoped from it. It won not only the assent, but the admiration, of Grant and Lincoln. It captivated the popular mind. Closing as it did with the surrender of General Joseph E. Johnston, it virtually ended the war. And as Thomas's skill, endurance, courage, and good fortune enabled him to win the great victory which was the indispensable condition of success for the whole undertaking, the world has naturally not been over-curious to search for defects in arrangements which yielded such wonderfully complete results.

It is nevertheless to be remembered that if Sherman had followed up Hood, as the Washington authorities originally intended and desired him to do, before marching to the sea, the destruction of the Confederate army could hardly have failed to be more thorough than it was. The Southwestern and South Atlantic States would have been almost absolutely without defense; and the result of the campaign could hardly have been other than decisive. A certain amount of risk, on the other hand, it cannot be denied, attended the transfer of the greater part of Sherman's command to the Atlantic coast before Hood's army had been disposed of. Grant — who was easily converted to any project of his favorite lieutenant — and Sherman have sometimes shown a disposition to minimize this risk, and hence to consider the victory of Nashville a very ordinary affair; but it must not be forgotten that when Thomas's campaign was being fought Grant was terribly anxious. He did not know at the time, nor was he afterwards quite willing to admit, the existence of the difficulties under which Thomas labored, and which induced the delay on Thomas's part which Grant thought so unnecessary and so perilous to the retention of our hold on the States of Kentucky and Tennessee. But there were real and potent causes for Grant's anxiety; and of course the action of General Sherman in carrying off sixty thousand men to the seacoast before the campaign in the West had been brought to a successful termination was the underlying cause of it all. Thomas, however, was equal to the occasion. He scored a magnificent success at Nashville. Sherman at the same time captured Savannah. Everything turned out marvelously well. Both officers showed themselves at their best. The risk having passed by, the North reaped the full advantage of the daring march. The task then before Sherman was one to which he was by nature wonderfully adapted, and which he soon brought to a triumphant end.

John C. Ropes.

HAREBELL.

A REPARATION.

"Grant him," I said, "a well-earned name,
The stage's knight, the keen essayer
Of parts whence all save greatness came,
But — not a player.

"Strange, as of fate's perverseness, this
Proud, eager soul, this fine-strung creature,
Should seem forever just to miss
That touch of nature;

"The instinct she so lightly gives
Some fellow at his rivals snarling,
Some churl who gains the boards, and lives
Transformed — her darling!"