

SHANKS

WILLIAM GORE

PERSONAL
RECOLLECTIONS OF
DISTINGUISHED
GENERALS

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PREFACE

The purpose of this volume is to make more familiar to the general public the actual characters of some of our great military leaders during the late war. I have attempted to portray them not as on parade, but in undress uniform, and to illustrate not only their great military qualities, but more particularly their mental peculiarities and characteristics. These pages will be found to contain many facts about some of the great battles which official reports have left untold, with such recollections of our generals as history proper will not perhaps condescend to record, and to embrace singular facts about great campaigns and strange stories of great men. The portraits are freely drawn. They are made from actual studies, if not special sittings, and while taking care to give every beauty, I have omitted none of the deformities or blemishes of my subjects, though I have told in full detail their virtues, and have touched on their faults and vices lightly. I have avoided alike

extreme extravagance in praise or censure. Still there is enough shadow to the pictures to give the necessary, if not agreeable contrast to the lights. The reader must not, however, mistake the stand-point from which I have written. Distance, unfortunately for truth, lends enchantment not only to objects, but to men. The atmosphere of Olympus produces many phantasmagoria, and the great at a distance exist to our eyes in a sort of mirage. The philosophy of perspective as applied to natural objects is reversed when applied to mankind, and there are very few men who do not grow smaller as one approaches them. Most men are pyramidal in shape only, not proportions. "No man is a hero to his valet." Even Jupiter was ridiculous at times to Homer. Very few generals have appeared great to the war correspondents; and though very few of the latter can claim to be descendants of Diogenes, they can assert, with equal positiveness, that very few of the generals have been Alexanders, and that "the very sun shines through them." I have written under the disadvantage of being too near the objects drawn; and those who do not know the subjects as well may imagine I have made them undeservedly Liliputian in dimensions.

Writing contemporaneous history is the most thankless of tasks, and I discover also one of the least independent of labors. Still I have not written with a goose-quill, and there has been some gall in my ink, yet I do not think I have any thing in the ensuing chapters to blot. I do not think I have done any man injustice. I have written many sentences and made many

assertions which will doubtless be termed strong, but in writing these I am only the amanuensis of truth; and I write with the firm belief that "historical truth should be only less sacred than religious truth."

I have no doubt, however, that others will think differently after perusing the book. When publishing in Harper's Magazine I was told that the language of some of these sketches offended the subjects, but I have been unable to find any fact that ought to be stated otherwise. I think it best to say, for the benefit of all who may choose to object or condemn the volume as now published, that I have written nothing that I do not believe to be true – I trust not one sentence that, dying, I would wish to blot, and certainly not one word that, living, I intend to retract.

New York, *Sept.*, 1866.

CHAPTER I.

SHERMAN AS A STRATEGIST

Of the few really great men who have been developed by the late war in this country, and who will leave a lasting impression on the minds of the people, William Tecumseh Sherman may be regarded as the most original. His name has been made more widely prominent, and his character more universally popular, than that of any other of our heroes; but it has been less in consequence of his brilliant success as a leader than by reason of his strongly-marked characteristics of person and mind. He is, without doubt, the most original and eccentric, though not the most powerful – the most interesting, though not the most impressive character developed by the rebellion. He is by far our most brilliant general, but not by any means the most reliable; the most fascinating, but not the most elegant; the quickest, but not the safest; the first to resolve, but not the most resolute. As a man he is always generous, but not uniformly just; affectionate by nature, but not at all times kind in demonstration; confiding, and yet suspicious; obstinate, yet vacillating; decided, but not tenacious – a mass of contradictions so loosely and yet so happily thrown together as to produce the most interesting combination imaginable. General Sherman's character has many beauties and virtues, but also many glaring defects and faults. His picture, as

I have seen and studied it, possesses what the artists call "great breadth of light and shade," and is full of contrasts alternately pleasing and offensive, and which, in order to properly analyze the character, should be portrayed and described with equal force and impartiality. He is a character without a parallel among his contemporaries, though not without a contrast; and it is for the latter reason that I have chosen his character as the one upon which to base, as it were, the following estimates of the characters of his fellow-officers of the United States army, and not because I think, as may be supposed, that he deserves the first place in the rank of our great captains. The war lasted long enough to give the leaders, if not their proper places in popular estimation, at least their true linear rank in the army. General Sherman may be considered as first among the strategists of the war; General George H. Thomas as first among the tacticians; but Grant, combining the qualities of both tactician and strategist, must always be ranked as greatly the superior of both Thomas and Sherman.

General Sherman may be described as a bundle of nerves all strung to their greatest tension. No woman was ever more painfully nervous; but there is nothing of the woman's weakness in Sherman's restlessness. It is not, as with others, a defect of the organization; it is really Sherman's greatest strength, for from it results the brilliancy of conception and design which has characterized his strategic movements, the originality which has appeared in his views on political economy and the policy

of war, and the overwhelming energy which is "his all in all," the secret and cause of his great success. From his extreme nervousness results the most striking feature of his character – a peculiar nervous energy which knows no cessation, and is resistless. It is not merely that energy and quickness of movement which naturally belongs to nervous organizations, but intensified a hundred fold. At the same time, it is energy without system, and oftentimes without judgment, but nevertheless always effective. General Sherman is the engine, but he is not always the engineer. He furnishes the motive power, but he frequently requires some person or thing to keep him to the track; in fact, he requires to be controlled and directed. He is untiring in his efforts; you can never dismay him with the amount or frighten him with the dangers of a task; and he hesitates at nothing, matters great and small receiving his attention. He is no believer in that too common fallacy that labor is a wearisome waste of the physical and vital powers; a punishment, not a privilege; and degrading, not elevating. Work is necessary to his existence, and hard, earnest work at that. Always a hard, earnest worker, he devoted, during the continuance of the war, but little time to sleep, and that little sleep was never sound. His active mind, I once heard him say to a fellow-officer, delights in preposterous dreams and impossible fancies, and, waking or sleeping, continues ever active in planning and executing.

A few anecdotes will perhaps better illustrate the nature of this nervous energy. The most remarkable instance of this

characteristic which I can now recall occurred at Nashville, Tennessee. When Sherman assumed command there in March, 1864, the great difficulty in the way of an advance from Chattanooga upon the enemy, then covering Atlanta and the Georgia railroads, was the lack of provisions at Chattanooga and Knoxville. The military agent of the railroads from Nashville to Chattanooga was running through to the army at the latter point about ninety car-loads of rations per day. This merely served to feed the army then gathered there; nothing was accumulating for the spring campaign. General Sherman demanded the cause of this insufficient supply of rations. The agent reported that he needed both cars and locomotives, and added it was impossible to obtain them. General Sherman answered that nothing was impossible, and immediately began to devise means by which to remedy the evil. After a short deliberation, he decided to seize a sufficiency of cars and locomotives in Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois, and at once went to work to do so. In an incredibly short space of time he extended the northern terminus of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad through the former city, a distance of three miles, to the Ohio River. On the levee, or wharf, he built an inclined plane to the water's edge. One of the ferry-boats which plied between Louisville and Jeffersonville was seized, and especially prepared by the laying of rails across its bow and stern to carry cars and locomotives. On the Indiana side of the river he extended the Jeffersonville Railroad through that town to the Ohio River, and built another inclined plane

from the bluff on which the town is situated down the steep wharf to the water's edge. At the same time he ordered the impressment of the necessary cars and locomotives from the various northwestern railroads, taking them off routes as far north as Chicago, and rushed them off to Nashville, crossing the Ohio by the means he had provided. The effect was soon visible. In a month after this movement began the railroad agents reported that they were running two hundred and seventy cars per day through to Chattanooga. By the 20th of April, the day Sherman left Nashville to begin his Atlanta campaign, he had accumulated at Knoxville eighteen, and at Chattanooga thirteen days' rations for his whole army of 120,000 men. The energy which inspired the railroad agents was communicated to the quarter-masters located at Nashville, and the result was the increase of the laboring force of this department from four or five thousand to nearly sixteen thousand men. During the progress of this work General Sherman required the railroad agents and quarter-masters to report progress daily. I happened to be in his office one morning when assistant quarter-master General James L. Donnalson reported a small increase in the number of cars forwarded on that day over the supply of the day before. General Sherman received the announcement with more evidences of gratification than he would have shown on hearing of a heavy reinforcement of his numbers, for at this time he had more men than he well knew what to do with. "That's good!" he exclaimed – "that's good, Donnalson; we'll be ready for the start;" and

then he hastily resumed his seat, and made a rapid calculation of some sort, which he showed with much apparent delight to Generals Donnaldson and Webster, the latter his chief of staff. He could not have been more delighted if he had heard the news of a great victory. A moment afterward he turned to me to deny, in a very gruff way – he was always gruff to newspaper correspondents – my application for a pass over the military railroad to Chattanooga. "You see," he said, "I have as much as I can do to feed my *soldiers*," with a very ungracious emphasis on the word soldiers. As I had Lieutenant General Grant's pass to any point and by any route in my pocket, and had only submitted the question to General Sherman through deference to him as the immediate commander of the department, I could afford to smile at the slur conveyed in his emphasis, and turned away enriched with a reminiscence, and with increased admiration of the man.

Some former experience with, or, rather, observation of the general, had given me somewhat of the same opinion of his energy and earnestness. When he first assumed command at Louisville, Kentucky, in 1861, the agents of the New York Associated Press throughout the country were employed by the government in transmitting its cipher or secret messages, and correspondence between the various military commanders, by telegraph. In consequence of this arrangement, General Sherman frequented the office of the Louisville agency, in which I was at the time employed. He was always at this office during the evening, often remaining until three o'clock in the morning, when

the closing of the office would force him to retire to his rooms at the hotel. During these hours he would pace the floor of the room apparently absorbed in thought, and heedless of all that was going on around him. He would occasionally sit at the table to jot down a memorandum or compose a telegram. He would sometimes stop to listen to any remark addressed to him by other occupants of the room, but would seldom reply, even though the remark had been a direct question, and would appear and act as if the interruption had but momentarily disturbed his train of thought.

In July, 1864, while besieging the enemy's position at Kenesaw Mountain, an incident occurred which may be given as illustrative of Sherman's energy. When the campaign opened he had published an order informing the army, in terms which were laughed at at the time as rather bombastic and slightly egotistical, that "the commanding general intended making the campaign without a tent," and during the greater part of the march his headquarters actually consisted of nothing more than a tent-fly for the use of his adjutant general. He generally slept under a tree during dry weather, and in very wet weather in any convenient house. When the army was concentrated in the gorge of Snake Creek Gap, in which there was not a house of any character, General Logan "raised the laugh" on Sherman by sending him a tent to protect him from the rain, and which, owing to the terrible state of the weather, Sherman was compelled to use. But the greater part of the campaign was actually passed by Sherman without

any other quarters than I have described as for the convenience of his adjutant general. Early one morning a regiment of troops passed his bivouac near Kenesaw Mountain, Georgia, and saw him lying under a tree near the roadside. One of the men, not knowing the general, and supposing him, from his jaded, weary, and generally dilapidated appearance, to be drunk, remarked aloud, "That is the way we are commanded, officered by drunken generals." Sherman heard the remark and instantly arose. "Not drunk, my boy," he said good-humoredly, "but I was up all night looking after your rations, and am very tired and sleepy." He soon after broke up head-quarters, and, passing the same regiment on the march, was received with loud and hearty cheers.

He makes his subordinates work, too, with the same zeal. When the rebels, in evacuating Resaca, succeeded in burning the railroad bridge over the Oostenaula River, he turned to Colonel Wright, his engineer in charge of railroads, and asked him how long it would take him to replace that bridge. Colonel Wright replied after a short calculation, during which Sherman showed his impatience at the delay in the answer, that he could rebuild it in four days.

"Sir," exclaimed the general, hastily, "I give you forty-eight hours, or a position in the front ranks."

The bridge was forthcoming at the proper time.

This nervousness of Sherman's organization has naturally produced a peculiar restlessness of manner and admirable vigor of expression. He talks with great rapidity, often in his

haste mingling his sentences in a most surprising manner, and accompanying his conversation by strange, quick, and ungraceful gestures, the most common of which is the knocking of the ashes from his cigar with the little finger of his left hand, frequently knocking at it until ashes and light too are gone.

In a conversation of importance, and particularly on a battle-field, he seldom gives a person time to finish his remarks or reports. He replies as soon as he has heard enough to convey the idea, never waiting its elaboration. In giving his instructions and orders, he will take a person by the shoulder and push him off as he talks, following him to the door, all the time talking and urging him away. His quick, restless manner almost invariably results in the confusion of the person whom he is thus instructing, but Sherman himself never gets confused. At the same time, he never gets composed. Under all circumstances, he is thus restlessly, never timidly nervous. In danger the restlessness is not so visible, and hence it is apparent that there is nothing of timidity in it. On the battle-field where he commands Sherman's nervous manner is toned down. He grates his teeth, and his lips are closed more firmly, giving an expression of greater determination to his countenance. His eyes are somewhat closed, as if endeavoring to see the furthest limits of the battle-field, and, as it were, peer into the future and see the result. His cigar is always kept firmly between his lips, but he suffers its fire occasionally to die out. He is less restless of body; his arms are more confined to their proper limits; and he is content to stay in one spot. He talks

less at such moments than at calmer ones. On light occasions, however, he is invariably ill at ease. His fingers nervously twitch his red whiskers – his coat buttons – play a tattoo on his table or chair, or run through his hair. One moment his legs are crossed, and the next both are on the floor. He sits a moment, and then rises and paces the floor. He *must* talk, quick, sharp, and yet not harshly, all the time making his odd gestures, which, no less than the intonation of his voice, serve to emphasize his language. He can not bear a clog upon his thoughts nor an interruption to his language. He admits of no opposition. He overrides every thing. He never hesitates at interrupting any one, but can not bear to be interrupted himself. He is very well aware, and candidly admits that his temper is uncommonly bad, and, what is worse, he makes no attempt to control or correct it. In speaking of the late General McPherson, of the Army of Tennessee, he once remarked, "He is as good an officer as I am – is younger, and has a better temper." Grant, once speaking of Sherman's peevishness, said, "Sherman is impetuous and faulty, but he sees his faults as soon as any man." The fact is, if Sherman's faults alone could be given to another, they would serve to distinguish him from the common herd.

The idea generally prevails that commanding generals are very didactic on the battle-field, and give their orders in precise language and stentorian voice. A little familiarity with actual war will soon dispel this false impression, particularly if you meet Sherman on the battle-field, for there is less of dignity, display,

and grandiloquence in him than any other general whom I have met during the war. At the battle of Chattanooga he gave his orders for the advance of his troops against the enemy's strongly fortified position to his brother in law, General Hugh Ewing, in the words uttered between two puffs at a bad cigar: "I guess, Ewing, if you are ready, you may as well go ahead." Ewing asked a few questions in regard to retaining the *échelon* formation of his command as then marshaled for the advance. Sherman replied, "I want you to keep the left well toward the river (the Chickamauga), and keep up the formation four hundred yards distance, until you get to the foot of the hill."

"And shall we keep it after that?" asked Ewing.

"Oh, you may go up the hill as you like," said Sherman; and then he added, *sotto voce*, with a smile and a wink to his aid, and General Ewing's brother, Charley Ewing, who stood near by, "if you can." As General Ewing was mounting his horse and about to leave, Sherman called out to him,

"I say, Ewing, don't call for help until you actually need it." General Frank Blair, and others of the Army of the Tennessee who were standing near Sherman, laughed at this in such a manner as left the impression on the minds of others, as well as myself, that on some former occasion General Ewing had called for help before General Sherman thought that he really needed it.

It is recorded of Sherman that, on witnessing from the top of a rice-mill on the Ogeechee River the capture of Fort McAllister by General Hazen's forces, and the successful termination by that

capture of the "march to the sea," he exclaimed, imitating the voice of a negro, "Dis chile don't sleep dis night," and hurried off to meet General Foster and complete the junction of the two armies.

His nervousness is not less perceptible in his writings than in his conversation and manners. His writings lack in elegance, but not in force. Some of his letters, remarkable for absence of grace and presence of vigor, are already accepted as among the model documents of the war, not only as to style, but as to argument. His speeches, letters, and orders are seldom more than skeletons, framed of sharp, pointed, but disjointed sentences, from which the ideas to be conveyed protrude so prominently as to be comprehensible when the sentence is but half conveyed. His ideas are never elaborated in his letters, though given more fully than in his conversations, but you never have to finish the sentence to discover its meaning. There are several specimens which every reader will naturally think of in this connection. His letter to the rebel General Hood on the proposed depopulation of Atlanta is a curious document, an impromptu reply, thrown off-hand from his pen, and it reads as if it were Sherman talking. He begins this letter by acknowledging the receipt of a communication at the hands of "Messrs. Bull and crew." The bearers, who were designated by this undignified title, were members of the Common Council of Atlanta, for whom Sherman does not appear to have entertained the most profound respect. The letter ends by advising Hood to tell his

tale of oppression "to the marines," as he (Sherman) is not to be imposed upon. In the same correspondence he indicates his action in depopulating Atlanta, and gives his peculiar "theory of suppression." Sherman's whole theory, in which, by the way, he has been consistent from the first, is embraced in the proposition to "fight the devil with fire." He was for vigorous war all the time – hard blows at the organized armies, frequent and oft repeated. He has none of the elements of Fabian in him. He writes in defense of the action at Atlanta alluded to: "We must have peace, not only in Atlanta, but in all America. To secure this, we must stop the war that now desolates our once happy and favored country. To stop war, we must *defeat the rebel armies* that are arrayed against the laws and Constitution, which all must respect and obey. To defeat these armies, we must prepare the way to reach them in their recesses provided with the arms and instruments which enable us to accomplish our purpose." His expression in the same letter, "War is cruelty – you can not refine it," is a sharp, terse rendition of an undisputed truth, to the illustration of which whole chapters have been less successfully devoted by more distinguished writers.

While endeavoring to fill up his dépôts at Chattanooga and Knoxville preparatory to the campaign against Atlanta, Sherman was asked by members of the United States Christian Commission for transportation for their delegates, books, tracts, etc., for the army. His reply is very characteristic of the man: "Certainly not," he wrote; "crackers and oats are more necessary

to my army than any moral or religious agency." As this incident shows, Sherman is not a very firm believer in the utility of Christian or Sanitary Commissions, or aid societies generally. He thinks female nurses about a hospital or an army a great nuisance. He once alluded contemptuously to the efforts of a large number of ladies at Louisville, Kentucky, to send clothing, lint, sweetmeats, etc., to his troops, but was induced, in lieu of discouraging their efforts, to take steps to properly direct them. He met the ladies by agreement in one of the public halls at Louisville, now known as Wood's Theatre, and made an address to them. He went among the lambs with all the boldness and dignity of a lion; but the rough, uncouth manner of him who had frowned on thousands of men melted in the presence of a few hundred ladies. They found that, though "he was no orator as Brutus is," he could talk very tenderly of the soldier's wants, very graphically of the soldier's life and sufferings, and very gallantly of woman and her divine mission of soothing and comforting.

During the campaign of Atlanta communication with the rear was very much obstructed, the news correspondents found many difficulties in forwarding information, and telegrams to the press seldom reached New York. During the movement around Atlanta Sherman was applied to directly by the news agent at Louisville for the details of the movement. In reply the general telegraphed, "Atlanta is ours, and fairly won;" following up the expression, which has already passed into song, with a brief and graphic report of the flank movement around Atlanta and the

battle of Jonesborough. This report is one of the most admirable narratives I remember to have ever read, and at the time of its publication I wrote for the Herald, of which I was then a correspondent, a long criticism of it. The letter never appeared, however, for the reason that I endeavored to show that, successful as he had been, Sherman had mistaken his vocation as a general, and ought to have been a war correspondent. I suppose Sherman would have been mortally offended at such language, particularly as he affected to hold correspondents and editors in contempt; but undoubtedly he would have been invaluable to the New York Herald or London Times in such a capacity, and could have made more money, if not more reputation, in that capacity than as a major general. He has lately declared that he does not believe he will ever have occasion to lead men again, and I advise him by all means to go into the newspaper business. Any of the principal papers of New York will be glad to give him double the pay of a major general to act in the capacity of war correspondent.

Until Sherman had developed his practicability, this peculiarity of expression and manner were accepted as evidences of a badly-balanced mind. It will be remembered that in his early career a report was widely circulated to the effect that he was a lunatic; but the origin of this story, if properly stated, will redound to his credit, as evincing admirable foresight and sagacity. The true origin of this report is as follows: Sherman succeeded General Robert Anderson in command of the Department of the Ohio on October 13, 1861. Up to that

time about ten thousand United States troops had been pushed into Kentucky. The Western governors were under a promise to send as many more, but were slow in doing so. General A. Sidney Johnston, the rebel commander at Bowling Green, was endeavoring to create the impression that he had about seventy-five thousand men, when he really had only about twenty-eight thousand. In this he succeeded so far as to cause it to be supposed that his force largely exceeded Sherman's. Sherman urged upon the government the rapid re-enforcement of his army, but with little effect. The troops did not come, for the reason that the government did not credit the statements of the perilous condition of Sherman's army. So repeated and urgent were Sherman's demands for re-enforcements, that at last the Secretary of War, Mr. Cameron, visited Louisville in order to look into the situation of affairs. An interview took place at the Galt House at Louisville, Sherman, Cameron, and Adjutant General Thomas being present. Sherman briefly explained the situation of affairs, stated his own force and that of the enemy, and argued that re-enforcements were necessary to hold Kentucky, to say nothing of an advance. "My forces are too small for an advance," he said – "too small to hold the important positions in the state against an advance of the enemy, and altogether too large to be sacrificed in detail." On being asked how many men were required to drive the enemy out of the state, he answered, without hesitation, "Two hundred thousand." The answer was a surprise to the two officers, which they did

not attempt to conceal. They even ridiculed the idea, and laughed at the calculation. It was declared impossible to furnish the number of men named. Sherman then argued that the positions in Kentucky ought to be abandoned, and the army no longer endangered by being scattered. This was treated more seriously, and vigorously opposed by Cameron and Thomas. They declared the abandonment of Kentucky was a step to which they could not consent. Subsequently they broached a plan which had been devised for dividing the Department and Army of the Ohio into two; one column to operate under Mitchell from Cincinnati as a base against Knoxville, and the other from Louisville against Nashville. To this Sherman was strongly opposed. Satisfied by the persistence of Cameron on this point that the government was not disposed to second his views of conducting the affairs of the Department, Sherman asked to be relieved and ordered to duty in the field. Cameron gladly acquiesced in his wishes, and he was relieved by Buell, November 30, 1861.

On the same evening of the famous interview between Cameron and Sherman, the latter paid his customary visit to the Associated Press-rooms at Louisville. Here, while still in a bad humor over the result of the interview, he was approached by a man who introduced himself as an attache of a New York paper, and asked permission to pass through the lines to the South in the capacity of a correspondent. Sherman replied that he could not pass. The correspondent, with unwarrantable impertinence, replied that Secretary Cameron was in the city, and he would

get a pass from him. Sherman at once ordered him out of his department, telling him that he would give him two hours to make his escape; if found in his lines after that hour he "would hang him as a spy." The fellow left the city immediately, and on reaching Cincinnati very freely expressed his opinion that the general was crazy. A paper published in that city, on learning the story of the interview between Cameron and Sherman, which soon became public, employed the fellow to write up the report which was thus first circulated of Sherman's lunacy. His opinion that two hundred thousand men were required to clear Kentucky of rebels was quoted as proof of it by this man, and thus the story came into existence.

Subsequent events revealed the fact that Sherman did not much exaggerate the force necessary to carry on the war in the central zone of the field of military operations. Although we have never had a single army numbering two hundred thousand men in the West, much larger armies have been necessary to the accomplishment of the campaign of the Mississippi and Tennessee Rivers than any person other than Sherman thus early in the war imagined. The army of Grant at Fort Donelson and Shiloh, combined with that of Buell, was not over eighty thousand men. That of Halleck before Corinth numbered exactly one hundred and two thousand. Sherman left Chattanooga in May, 1864, with one hundred and twenty thousand men, the largest army ever gathered in one body in the West. At the same time, he had under his command at different points on

the Mississippi River and in Kentucky an additional force of about fifty thousand, while the forces operating under other commanders in the West would, if added to his, make a grand total of two hundred and fifty thousand men operating on the Mississippi River, every one of whom was necessary to the conquest and retention of the Mississippi Valley.

Sherman may have been at one time crazy, but his madness, like Hamlet's, certainly had marvelous method in it. Such lunatics as he have existed in all ages, and have, when as successful as himself, been designated by the distinctive title of "genius," in contradistinction to men of medium abilities. Not only Shakspeare, but Dryden, seems to have encountered such madness as Sherman's, and to have appreciated the truth that

"Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide."

Doubtless the same author had such a genius or madman as Sherman in his mind when he described one of his characters as

"A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay."

The peculiar formation of Sherman's head shows his great development of brain. His forehead is broad, high, and full, while the lower half of his face and head are of very diminutive proportions. In a person of less physical strength and vitality,

this great preponderance of the mental over the physical powers would have produced perhaps actual lunacy. The head of Sherman is of the shape peculiar to lunatics predisposed to fanciful conceptions. There is too much brain, and in Sherman it is balanced and regulated only by his great physical development. Sherman's brain, combined with bad health, would have produced lunacy; his brain and sinewy strength combined produced his peculiar mental and physical nervousness. Had he been a sedentary student instead of an active soldier, the last line of Dryden's poem might also have applied to him, and we should know of him only as an "o'er informed tenement of clay."¹

When this report of his lunacy was first circulated, Sherman was much chagrined at it, and often referred to it in bitter terms. Time and success have enabled him to frown it down, and justified him in laughing at it. He once laughingly referred to this report about himself, and the rumor which simultaneously prevailed regarding Grant's drunkenness during the battle of Shiloh as illustrative of the friendship existing between them. "You see," he said to a gentleman, "Grant stood by me when I was crazy, and I stood by him when he was drunk."

During the siege of Corinth he commanded the right wing of Thomas's corps, while T. W. Sherman, of Port Royal memory, commanded the left. The latter was very unpopular with his division on account of a painfully nervous manner and fretful

¹ "A fiery soul, which, working out its way, Fretted the pigmy body to decay, And o'er informed the tenement of clay."

disposition, and the officers of the command discussed him critically with great freedom, many condemning his manner as offensive. One day General W. T. Sherman was visiting General Steedman – then a brigade commander in T. W. Sherman's division – and the latter's name was brought up, Steedman giving a very ludicrous account of Sherman's conduct.

"Oh!" said William Tecumseh, "this is the crazy Sherman, is it?"

Great difficulty was found during the operations before Corinth in distinguishing the two Shermans. The soldiers solved the problem by giving each Sherman a nickname. T. W. Sherman was called "Port Royal Sherman," in allusion to his services in South Carolina, while W. T. Sherman was known by the somewhat inappropriate title of "Steady-old-nerves," in contradistinction to the other, who, as before stated, was more timidly nervous. Mr. Lincoln, with some recollection of this coincidence of names on his mind, asked General Grant, on being introduced to General Sherman, if he was W. T. or T. W., and laughed with boyish glee at the "joke on Sherman."

As another natural result of Sherman's nervous energy, he has acquired the habit of decision in the most perfect degree, and his peculiar organization has tended to make him practical as well as petulant. He never seems to reason, but decides by intuition, and, in this respect, has something of the mental as well as bodily peculiarities of the gentler sex, who are said to decide intuitively. But Sherman is by no means a woman – he would

have been a shrew had he been – and possesses not one particle of the sex's beauty or gentleness. Sherman jumps at conclusions with tremendous logical springs; and, though his decisions are not always final, they are in effect so, for, if he is forced to retire an inch, his next jump will probably carry him forward an ell. Facts are the only argument which prevail with him, and the best arguments of wise men are wasted in endeavoring to convince him without undeniable facts at hand. Obstinate, and vain, and opinionated as he is, and indisposed as he may be to listen to or heed the arguments of equals or inferiors, he never hesitates to sink all opposition before the orders of his superiors, and pay the strictest deference to their views when expressed authoritatively.

I have before said this nervousness of mental and bodily organization was the main-spring of Sherman's character. From it result not only his virtues, but his faults, and as man and commander he has many. He is as petulant as a dyspeptic; excessively gruff, and unreasonably passionate. His petulance does not, however, prevent his being pleasant when he is disposed; his gruffness does not destroy all his generosity, and his passionate moods are usually followed by penitence. His fits of passion are frequent but not persistent, and, though violent, are soon appeased.

His gruffness often amounts to positive rudeness. While in command at Louisville in 1861, the wife of the rebel commander Ingraham passed through the city *en route* to the South. The lady, who was rebelliously inclined, pleaded consumption as her

excuse for wishing to inhale the Southern air. Sherman gruffly advised her to "shut herself up in a room and keep up a good fire – it would do her just as much good." He often replies in this petulant tone to both sexes, particularly if the person addressed has no business of importance.

He once took great offense at having his manners, and particularly this habit of gruffness, compared to the manners of a Pawnee Indian, and expressed his contempt for the author of the slur in a public manner. He was much chagrined shortly after to find that the correspondent who had been guilty of the offensive comparison had heard of his contemptuous criticism, and had amended it by publicly apologizing to the whole race of Pawnees!

During the battle of Bull Run, where General Sherman commanded a brigade, he was approached by a civilian, who, seeing him make some observations without the aid of a field-glass, proffered him the use of his own. Sherman turned to the gentleman and gruffly demanded,

"Who are you, sir?"

"My name is Owen Lovejoy, and I am a member of Congress."

"What are you doing here? Get out of my lines, sir – get out of my lines."

Nothing satisfied Sherman but the immediate retreat of the member of Congress to the rear.

I have heard that Sherman's bad temper was the cause of his leaving his chosen profession of the law. After resigning his commission in the army in 1853, he became, after several

changes, a consulting lawyer in the firm of his brothers-in-law, the Ewings, at Leavenworth, Kansas. He had entered into the copartnership with the distinct understanding that he was not to be called upon to plead in the courts; for, though possessing a thorough knowledge of legal principles, a clear, logical perception of the equity involved in all cases, and though perfectly *au fait* in the authorities, he had no confidence in his oratorical powers. He was not then the orator he has latterly become, and utterly refused to take any part in legal debate or pleadings. One day a case came up in the Probate Court of Kansas requiring immediate attention. Tom and Hugh Ewing were busy; McCook was absent, and Sherman was forced, *nolens volens*, to go into court. He carefully mapped out his course until it looked like plain sailing; laid down his plan of procedure, as he used subsequently to do his plans of marches; but he was destined to be driven from his chosen route, not by a Joe Johnston or "foeman worthy of his steel," but by a contemptible, pettifogging lawyer, with more shrewdness than honesty, and more respect for the end to be attained than the means to be used. In the debate which the trial involved, Sherman lost his temper, and, consequently, his case. He returned to his office in a towering rage, dissolved the partnership with his brothers-in-law, and, without farther hesitation, accepted the presidency of the Louisiana Military Academy, the proffer of which he had received a day or two before.

General Sherman's violent temper greatly endangered his

reputation toward the close of the war, and he came near sacrificing, in an evil hour of passion, all that he had won before. His passion was to him as the unarmored heel was to Achilles, and the vulnerable point of his character came near costing him even more dearly than did the vulnerable part of the Grecian warrior's body. His diplomatic feat with Joe Johnston was generally denounced as a blunder, but it was not the blunder which came near costing him so dearly. That piece of diplomacy took the shape of a blunder in consequence of the unfortunate and unforeseen circumstances and disasters which occurred simultaneously with it. Had Mr. Lincoln lived, General Sherman would to-day have borne a brilliant reputation as a diplomatist, and his agreement with Johnston would have been at once, as it was eventually, accepted as the basis for the political reconstruction of the country. That agreement was repudiated by the people and President Johnson in an hour of frenzied passion, though the latter has since modeled his plan upon it; and Sherman lost his chance for becoming a great diplomatist. But he, and he only, was to blame for the grave blunder which immediately afterward nearly cost him his fame and position as a soldier. Sullen at the repudiation of his agreement with Johnston, angry at the interference of General Halleck with the co-operative movements of himself and Sheridan, and furious at the countermanding of his orders to his subordinates by the Secretary of War, Sherman forgot himself, and marched to Washington with his army, breathing vengeance upon Halleck,

and hate and contempt for Stanton. Fortunately for Sherman, history will not record the scene. History never yet recorded – no nation ever before safely witnessed such a spectacle as that of a victorious general, at the head of eighty thousand men devoted to him and jealous of his fame as a part of their own, marching to the capital of the country with threats against his military superiors breathing from his lips and flowing from his pen. For days Sherman raved around Washington, expressing his contempt for Halleck and Stanton in his strongest terms, and denouncing them as "mere non-combatants" whom he despised. More than this, he wrote to his friends, and through them to the public, comparing Stanton and Halleck to "cowardly Falstaffs," seeking to win applause and honor for the deeds he had done; accusing the Secretary of War of suppressing his reports, and endeavoring to slander him before the American public in official bulletins. For days his army roamed the streets of the capital with the same freedom with which they had roamed through the fields of Georgia and the swamps of the Carolinas, and no man dared to raise his voice in condemnation of their leader, or approval of the superiors who had opposed him. No republic ever before survived such a condition of affairs; this republic never was in such danger before, and yet the danger was hardly suspected. The spectacle is one which Sherman will ever regret, but every true American, and every lover of republican liberty, can point to it with pride as a remarkable illustration of the stability of republican institutions. Powerful as Sherman was against Stanton

and Halleck (and a word from him would have destroyed them), he was powerless against the nation, and not one man of his mighty host would have followed him in an attempt upon its existence. It is, perhaps, a still greater proof of the power of republican principles that, in the midst of his furious rage, such a thought as the injury of the government never for a passing second entered the brain of the leader of these men. He has reason to be thankful that the nation was as generous as he was honest; and that the people made no record against him for the offense against discipline which in any other country would have cost him not merely his position, but his reputation, and in any other army his head. At the same time, the nation must and will cherish the honest man who, thus tried and tempted, never for a single second forgot his allegiance to the principles for which he had fought and the country which he had served.

General Sherman's reputation as a soldier must rest entirely on his strategic abilities. His successes were those of strategy only – not of tactics. His faults as a commander are glaring as his faults of character. As an organizer of armies for the field, and as a tactician in battle, he was an utter failure. He never commanded a well-organized army whose discipline did not become relaxed under his administration, and he was never commander-in-chief in any battle which was not a failure. Instead of being an organizer, Sherman was a disorganizer; he was always chief among the "Bummers" which he made his soldiers, and by which name they were eventually designated. His whole career shows

him to have been solely a strategist, absolutely incapacitated by mental organization for disciplining and fighting an army. His attempt to organize the army in Kentucky in 1861 was a most egregious failure. He gave it up in despair to General Buell, who, on assuming command, found it a mob without head or front, or appropriate parts. Buell, in contradistinction to Sherman, was great as an organizer and disciplinarian, and he soon made a fine army out of Sherman's unorganized mob. General Sherman shortly afterward went into the battle of Shiloh with a division of troops who were also unorganized, and only escaped annihilation by the timely appearance of Buell and the now thoroughly disciplined troops which Sherman had originally commanded. When Buell's troops on this occasion made their appearance on the small plateau which is called Pittsburg Landing, the great numbers of Sherman's demoralized new recruits who were there huddled together welcomed them as veterans. "Buell! Buell!" was their cry; "here come Buell's veterans." One can not but smile when he remembers that the men thus hailed as veterans had never been engaged in even so much as a skirmish. Their conduct in the desperate battle which followed on the day after their arrival proved them to be worthy of the name. One year's thorough discipline had made them veterans without having fought a battle.

Throughout Sherman's career his troops were noted for their lack of discipline. When he assumed command of the Army of Tennessee on the promotion of General Grant in 1863, he found

it one of the best disciplined armies in the country, though not the best provided. I doubt if there was ever a division, brigade, or even regimental drill in that army after Sherman took command. He subsequently became indirectly in command of the Army of the Cumberland, which, though directly commanded by that strict disciplinarian, General George H. Thomas, soon felt the effect of Sherman's presence and control, and became very relaxed in discipline. Subsequently, on the march to the sea and through the Carolinas under Sherman, the discipline of the formerly model armies became still more relaxed, and gradually the whole army became regular "Bummers," a term which is not generally understood in its proper sense of reproach. The people to this day only half know what a "bummer" is, from having a general idea of the character of Sherman as the chief of bummers. The veil of romance which surrounded Sherman's army has never been entirely torn away. Its pilgrimages are still romances. It has always been viewed in that dim and distant perspective which adds a charm to beauty, and hides internal troubles and blemishes, and the evils it did and the outrages it committed have never been made public. But the friends of Sherman might reasonably claim even the want of this special tact for organizing and disciplining troops as a virtue. It can not really be said to have detracted from Sherman's ability as a soldier. What was lost thereby to the army in discipline was made up in mobility. If its morale was bad, the marching was good, and that satisfied Sherman. If he did not teach his soldiers

how to fight, he gave them the mobility which the execution of his strategic designs required of them, and thus the end aimed at was gained, and the country was satisfied. He merely changed his men from heavy to light infantry. Success justifies all means, and thus Sherman became – and justly became – a great general without ever having won a battle.

It is very strong language, I admit, to say that Sherman never won a battle, but considerably so, for if the purely tactical operations of General Sherman be critically examined, it will be found that they were almost invariably failures. He was the chief in command, the central and controlling power, in the battles of Chickasaw Bayou, Resaca, Kenesaw Mountain, and Jonesboro, all of which, with the bare exception of the latter, where his overpowering force and strategic march of the night before insured victory, were tactically great failures. The failure of the co-operative movements of Grant at Chickasaw Bayou doubtless caused Sherman's defeat at that point – at least it has served to explain it away, and stands as the excuse for it; but all will remember how signal a failure it was. The battle of Resaca was a still greater failure. Doubt, delay, and inaction lost Sherman the great advantage which his strategic march through Snake Creek Gap had given him in placing him in the rear of the enemy's position, and he ought to have captured every gun and wagon of the enemy, and dispersed the army which subsequently retarded his advance in Atlanta; but the battle was begun too late and pushed too feebly. Sherman's strategy had at one time

rendered a battle unnecessary, and it was forced on him through another's indecision (I believe that General McPherson admitted before his death that that fault was his), but certainly it was the fault of Sherman that the battle, when fought, was indecisive. Every body will remember the Kenesaw Mountain battle and its useless sacrifices, and every body will remember, too, the candor with which Sherman wrote that it was a failure, and that the fault was his. All the minor engagements of his great campaign against Atlanta were either positive defeats or negative advantages, and yet that wonderful campaign was won, and all the advantages which could have under any circumstances accrued from it were gained to us without the losses which a great battle would have caused. The strategic marches executed during that campaign are now chapters in the theory and history of war, and the close student of the art will see more to admire in the passage of the Chattahoochee River, the march through the gorge of Snake Creek Gap, and across the Allatoona Mountains, and the flank movements around Kenesaw and Atlanta, than in the more dashing but less skillful marches through Georgia and the Carolinas. The campaign of Atlanta was made in the face of the enemy commanded by their most skillful general, while during the other and more famous marches no enemy was met. The campaign through Georgia was merely extensive; that against Atlanta was both grand in conception and difficult in execution. One was accomplished at a stride, the other step by step. The campaign of Atlanta gave rise not only to a new system of

warfare, but even to a new system of tactics. Never before in the history of war had an army been known to be constantly under fire for one hundred consecutive days. Men whom three years of service had made veterans learned during that campaign a system of fighting they had never heard of before. The whole army became at once from necessity pioneers and sharp-shooters. The opposing armies lay so close to each other that not only pickets, but whole corps were within musket range of each other, and every camp had to be intrenched. As a singular fact, showing the impression made on the minds of the men by the changed tactics which this campaign rendered necessary, I may mention that the soldiers called each other "gophers" and "beavers;" and "gopher holes" were more common in the armies' track than were camp-fires. It used to be laughingly said of the men that, instead of "souring onto," i.e. taking without leave each other's rations, they were in the habit, during the Atlanta campaign, of purloining each other's pick-axes and spades with which to dig their "gopher holes" or trenches for their protection from the enemy's sharp-shooters. I imagine it is on this campaign and its results, rather than on that from Atlanta to the sea, and from thence to Goldsboro', that General Sherman would prefer to rest his reputation in the future. ² We of to-day study the holiday

² A more laborious campaign than that of Atlanta was never undertaken, and it is difficult to say which soldier deserves the most credit for the movements, Sherman or Joe Johnston. The retreats of the latter were not less admirable than the flank marches of the former, and Johnston showed as clean heels as Sherman did a fully guarded front. His camps were left barren; Sherman found only Johnston's smoking camp-fires, but

marches from a very different stand-point from that which the generations which follow us will view them. When all things come to be critically examined and carefully summed up, it will be decided and adjudged that the battles which made the campaign to the sea and through the Carolinas successes were fought on the hills around Nashville by General Thomas, not by General Sherman. Yet they are not without their great merit. Undertaken with deliberation and after elaborate preparation, they were not wanting in boldness and originality of design, but they do not serve to illustrate strategy: it is only the logistics which are so admirable.

A great deal has been said and written about General Sherman's dislike for the newspapers and for that class of necessary nuisances which were with every army, the war correspondents; but it was a dislike that was in a great measure affected. All men are egotists, Grant and Sherman among the rest, and both like to be well spoken of and written about; they would hardly be human if they did not. In fact, if Sherman can not find somebody to write about him, he does it himself.

no spoils left behind him. It was looked upon by the officers of Sherman's army as the "cleanest retreat of the war," and it is very evident now that, had Johnston remained in command, and been allowed to continue his Fabian policy, Sherman could never have made his march to the sea, and the capture of Atlanta would have been a Cadmean victory to him. Johnston proved himself a very superior soldier – in fact, the superior general of the Southern armies. If it could be said of any of the rebels, it could be said of Johnston that, in fact, he was "The noblest Roman of them all: All the conspirators, save only he, Did that they did in envy of great Cæsar. He only, in a generous, honest thought, And common good to all, made one of them."

One of the instances in which he has complimented himself is destined to give every student of the art of war a knowledge of this weak point of his character. Shortly after the successful passage of the Chattahoochee River in the face of the enemy, an operation which was among the finest accomplishments of the campaign of Atlanta, Sherman published an address to his troops, in which he said, with pardonable egotism, "The crossing of the Chattahoochee and breaking of the Augusta Road was most handsomely executed by us, and will be studied as an example in the art of war." A still greater piece of egotism from his pen is not less amusing. It is that letter in which he refers to his having been a scourge to the South, and in which he adds, "Think how much better that it was I than Ben Butler or some other of that school." This, to say the least, must have been pleasant to "Ben" and "others of that school," if not modest in General Sherman.

This egotism led to an affectation of simplicity in style and carelessness in habits which produced a very pleasant incident at Nashville in 1864. Sherman was very fond of the theatre, and would go as often as he found time. When he first arrived in the "City of Rocks," the manager of the "New Nashville Theatre" waited on him with the tender of a private box. The general declined it, and instead of appearing in a private box, would be found very frequently sitting in the pit of the theatre surrounded by his "boys in blue," and laughing at the comicalities or applauding the "points" with as much gusto as any of the

audience. This affectation of the republican in manners gained him more notice than if he had sat in a private box, and every body enjoyed seeing him there except the manager, who complained that it was injuring his business. No officer dared to sit in a private box with Sherman present in the pit, and these places became, during Sherman's stay, "a beggarly account of empty boxes" indeed.

I once had a long conversation with General Sherman on the subject of the press and war correspondents, from which I learned very little more than that he was very much disposed to underrate the advantages of the one and the abilities of the other, but very willing to accept, though with an affected ill grace, the praises of either. He declared in that conversation that the government could well afford to purchase all the printing-presses in the country at the price of diamonds, and then destroy them, and that all the war correspondents should be hung as spies. Sherman, with all his affected contempt for the press, is more indebted to it than any other officer in the army.

From time immemorial – at least from the days of Suwarrow and of "Old Fritz" – Frederick the Great – troops have always given nicknames to the commanders they adored. The veteran soldier is an affectionate creature, and he evinces his lovable disposition pretty much as the women do, by the use of pet names and expressive adjectives. The veterans had a slang of their own, as expressive to the initiated and as incomprehensible to the ignorant as the more systematically arranged jargon of

the showman, gambler, or peddler. Increasing affection for a popular leader was evinced by an increase in the intensity of the adjective or pronoun applied to the person. A popular leader may have at one time been only "Colonel," but as his popularity increased and he won the affection of his men, he was called "*The* Colonel," "Our Colonel," and "Our Bully Colonel." At the height of McClellan's popularity his soldiers invariably called him "Little Mac." Sheridan was always "Little Phil," John A. Logan always "Black Jack," and Thomas has successively been known as "Old Slow Trot," "Uncle George," and "Old Pap," the latter being the superlative form of expression.

Sherman has not entirely escaped "nicknames," though he has been more fortunate in this respect than some other commanders. In 1861 the Home Guards of Louisville gave him a name which has never been used by any other body of troops. It was under the following circumstances: The Home Guard marched under Sherman's leadership from Louisville to meet the invasion of Buckner. While moving to Lebanon Junction the general spoke to the men, telling them of the necessity which had arisen for their services, and proposed to muster them into the United States service for thirty days. Few of them had blankets, none had haversacks, and no tents were at the time on hand. The men were really not prepared to remain long in the field, and some demurred at the length of time mentioned. Sherman grew very angry at this, and spoke very harshly, intimating that he considered the Home Guards a "paltry set of fellows." The men

were chagrined at this, and much embittered against him, and on the spot voted him "a gruff old cock." They soon found, however, that they had to accept him as a commander, when one of them remarked, "It was a bitter pill." Out of this grew the title of "Old Pills," which was at once fastened upon the general. The men consented to be mustered for fifteen days. This put Sherman in an excellent humor again, and he promised them tents, blankets, etc., immediately. This, in turn, put the Guards in a high glee, and one of them suggesting that "Old Pills" was sugar-coated, the nickname was modified, and he was known ever after as "Old Sugar-coated Pill."

Later in the war his troops fixed upon one title of endearment for Sherman which will doubtless stick to him to the last. It expressed no peculiarity, was not properly a nickname, but simply an expression of affection. He will always be known to his veterans as "Old Billy." His veterans of 1861 and 1862 called him "Old Sherman," and few will forget it who heard General Rousseau's brigade hail him by that title during the battle of Shiloh. On the day of that battle, while hotly engaged near the log church which gave its name to the field, Sherman met a brigade of Buell's fresh troops moving forward to his support, and hastily asked whose troops they were. General Rousseau, who commanded the brigade, rode hastily through the line to meet Sherman, who had been dismounted for the third time by the fire of the enemy, and had one wounded arm in a sling, while his face was blackened by the fire of his own artillery.

"Rousseau's brigade," said that officer – "your old troops, General Sherman."

At the mention of Sherman's name, Rousseau's men, who had made their first campaign under Sherman, recognized him. "There's old Sherman," ran along their lines, and in an instant more there broke above the din of the battle three loud ringing cheers for "Old Sherman." Sherman took no notice of the cheers at the time, but his subsequent report of the battle showed that he was not oblivious to the compliment. At the moment he simply ordered the brigade forward. It was about the time the rebels began falling back, and soon the advance thus ordered became a pursuit of the foe.

Sherman is an inveterate smoker. He smokes, as he does every thing else, with an energy which it would be supposed would deprive him of all the pleasure of smoking. He is fully as great a smoker as Grant, whose propensity in that line is well known, but he is very unlike him in his style of smoking. Grant smokes as if he enjoyed his cigar. Sherman smokes as if it were a duty to be finished in the shortest imaginable time. Grant will smoke lying back in his chair, his body and mind evidently in repose, his countenance calm and settled. He blows the smoke slowly from his mouth, and builds his plans and thoughts in the clouds which are formed by it about his head. He smokes his tobacco as the Chinese do their opium, and with that certain sort of oblivious disregard for every thing else which it is said characterizes the opium smoker. He enjoys his mild Havana

in quiet dignity, half-smoking, half-chewing it. Sherman puffs furiously, as if his cigar was of the worst character of "penny grabs" and would not "draw." He snatches it frequently, and, one might say, furiously, from his mouth, brushing the ashes off with his little finger. He continually paces the floor while smoking, generally deep in thought of important matters, doubtless; but a looker-on would imagine that he was endeavoring to solve the question of how to draw smoke through his cigar. He seldom or never finishes it, leaving at least one half of it a stump. When he used to frequent the Associated Press-rooms at Louisville in 1861, he would often accumulate and leave upon the agent's table as many as eight or ten of these stumps, which the porter of the rooms used to call "Sherman's old soldiers." Even until long after Anderson's assumption of command at Louisville the agent of the New Orleans papers continued sending his telegrams for the rebel papers to New Orleans. This man was a rabid secessionist, and disliked Sherman exceedingly. He used to say of him that he smoked as some men whistled – "for want of thought." This is undoubtedly a mistake; for close observers say that, while smoking, Sherman is deepest absorbed in thought.

He is certainly, when smoking, almost totally oblivious to what is going on around him. This peculiar absence of mind had an excellent illustration in a circumstance which occurred at Lebanon Junction, Kentucky, when first occupied by Sherman and the Home Guards. While walking up and down the railroad platform at that place, awaiting the repair of the telegraph line

to Louisville, Sherman's cigar gave out. He immediately took another from his pocket, and, approaching the orderly-sergeant of the "Marion Zouaves" – one of the Home Guard companies – asked for a light. The sergeant had only a moment before lighted his cigar, and, taking a puff or two to improve the fire, he handed it, with a bow, to the general. Sherman carefully lighted his weed, took a puff or two to assure himself, and, having again lapsed into his train of thought, abstractedly threw away the sergeant's cigar. General Rousseau and several other officers were standing by at the time, and laughed heartily at the incident; but Sherman was too deeply buried in thought to notice the laughter or mishap. Three years subsequently, at his head-quarters in Nashville, Rousseau endeavored to recall this occurrence to Sherman's mind. He could not recollect it, and replied, "I was thinking of something else. It won't do to let to-morrow take care of itself. Your good merchant don't think of the ships that are in, but those that are to come in. The evil of to-day is irreparable. Look ahead to avoid breakers. You can't when your ship is on them. All you can then do is to save yourself and retrieve disaster. I was thinking of something else when I threw the sergeant's cigar away." And then he added, laughing, "Did I do that, really?"

With the personal appearance of General Sherman the public are but little acquainted. Very few full-length pictures of him have been made. Of the numerous engravings and photographs which have been published since he became famous very few are

good likenesses, and none convey a proper idea of his general appearance. The best picture which I have seen is the one from which the accompanying engraving is made. The outlines of the features are given with great accuracy, and any one familiar with the general's physiognomy will pronounce it a faithful likeness, though the position in which the subject sat serves to conceal the extreme Romanism of his nose. There is a scowl on the face, and yet the expression is that of Sherman in a good humor. He seldom has such a self-satisfied air. A critical observer of the picture in question would remark that Sherman has done in this case what he seldom takes time or has inclination to do, and has given the artist a special sitting. He has "made himself up" for the occasion. If the critic were one of Sherman's soldiers, he would notice the absence from his lips of the inevitable cigar. The coat, it will be observed, is buttoned across the breast, and is the chief fault of the engraving, for Sherman seldom or never buttons his coat either across his breast or around his waist. His vest is always buttoned by the lower button only, and, fitting close around his waist, adds to his appearance of leanness. It is doubtful if at this time any one can be found, except the general's tailor, who can tell when his coat was new. He appears to have an aversion to new clothes, and has never been seen in a complete new suit or heard in creaking boots. It may be said that he never conforms to the regulations in respect to the color of his suit; for the uniform he generally wears has lost its original color, and is of that dusty and rusty tinge, and with that lack of gloss

which follows constant use. One would readily imagine, judging by its appearance, that he purchased his uniform second-hand. The hat which he generally wears is of the same order of faded "regulation," with the crown invariably puffed out instead of being pushed in, in the "Burnside style." The regulation cord and tassel he does not recognize at all.

With the exception of his eyes, none of the features of Sherman's countenance are indicative of his character. Altogether he is commonplace in appearance, neither excessively handsome nor painfully repulsive. At the same time, divest him of his regulations, and in a crowd his face would attract attention and afford a study. His eyes, conforming to his general character, are as restless as his body or mind. They are rather of a dull though light color, their restlessness giving them whatever they possess of brilliancy and animation. His lips close firmly and closely, and with the deep lines running from his nostrils to either corner of his mouth, give to the lower half of his face an air of decision indicative of his character. His hands are long, slender, and tapering, like those of a woman, and are in admirable keeping with his figure. His short, crisp whiskers, which grow unshaven, and which appear to be stunted in growth, are of a dingy red, or what is commonly called "sandy" color. He takes very little care of his whiskers and hair, each having to be content, with one careless brushing a day. He has, perhaps, as great a disregard for his personal appearance as he pretends to have for what others may say or think of him.

CHAPTER II.

THOMAS AS A TACTICIAN

While General Sherman was pursuing Hood, when that gallant but not very sagacious rebel was making his ill-judged and ill-advised but bold march northward, leaving Atlanta and our armies in his rear, some exigency arose which made General Sherman regret the absence of General George H. Thomas, who had been sent to Nashville. I do not now distinctly remember what the exigency was other than that it related to some important movement – perhaps the movement to the sea – but, at any rate, so undecided and troubled was Sherman in coming to a decision, that he suddenly broke a long silence, during which he had been seriously meditative, by exclaiming to one of his aids,

"I wish old Thom was here! He's my off-wheel-horse, and knows how to pull with me, though he don't pull in the same way."

There was never a truer word uttered in jest, and describing Thomas as the "match horse" of Sherman is a comparison by no means as inaccurate as it is rude. In the chapter which precedes this I have endeavored to show that the distinctive feature of Sherman's character is a certain nervousness of thought and action, inspiring a restless and resistless energy. The best idea of General Thomas is obtained by contrasting him with Sherman,

and illustrating Sherman as a great strategist, Thomas as a great tactician. Sherman is not merely a theoretical strategist as Halleck is, as McPherson was, but one of great practicability, and an energy which has given practical solutions to his strategic problems. Thomas is not merely a theoretical tactician, with a thorough knowledge of the rules, but one who has illustrated the art on extensive battle-fields, and always with success. The two appear in every respect in contrast, and possess no similarities. One may be called a nervous man, and the other a man of nerve. Sherman derives his strength from the momentum resulting from the rapidity with which he moves; Thomas moves slowly, but with equally resistless power, and accomplishes his purposes by sheer strength. Sherman is naturally the dashing leader of light, flying battalions; Thomas the director of heavily-massed columns. He may be called heavy ordnance in contradistinction to Sherman, who may be likened to a whole battery of light rifles; or, in the language of the prize-ring, Sherman is a light-weight and quick fighter, while Thomas is a heavy, ponderous pugilist, whose every blow is deadly. Sherman's plans are odd, if not original. Though I have heard learned military critics deny that they embraced new rules of war, still it can not be denied that his campaigns have been out of the general order of military exploits. Thomas, on the other hand, originates nothing, but most skillfully directs his army on well-defined principles of the art. Sherman jumps at conclusions; Thomas's mind and body act with equal deliberation, his conclusions being arrived at

after long and mature reflection. Sherman never takes thought of unexpected contingencies or failure. There is always a remedy for any failure of a part of Thomas's plans, or for the delinquencies of subordinates. Sherman never hesitates to answer; Thomas is slow to reply. One is quick and positive; the other is slow, but equally positive. Thomas thinks twice before speaking once; and when he speaks, his sentences are arranged so compactly, and, as it were, so economically, that they convey his idea at once. It is given as advice, but men receive it as an order, and obey it implicitly.

The habits of the two men are radically different. Sherman is an innovator on the customs not only of the army, but every phase of social life, and is at least one generation ahead of the American people, fast as it imagines itself. Thomas belongs to a past generation, and his exceedingly regular habits belong to the "good old time." He has been confirmed by long service in the habits of camp, and appears never to be satisfied unless living as is customary in camps. In September, 1862, his division of Buell's army was encamped at Louisville, Kentucky, his quarters being in the outskirts of the city. While encamped here, Colonel Joe McKibbin, then a member of General Halleck's staff, arrived from Washington City and delivered to Thomas an order to relieve Buell, and assume command of the Army of the Ohio. In order to put himself in communication with the commander-in-chief, Thomas was compelled to ride into the city and take rooms at the hotel nearest the telegraph office. He employed the

day in communicating with General Halleck, urging the retention of Buell, and in declining the proposed promotion. Late at night he retired to his bed. But the change from a camp-cot to clean feathers was too much for the general. He found it impossible to sleep, and at a late hour in the night he was compelled to send Captain Jacob Brown, his provost-marshal, to his head-quarters for his camp-cot. The reorganization of the army, the murder of General Nelson by Jeff. C. Davis, and other events occurring about the same time, conspired to keep the general a guest or prisoner at the hotel for a week. During all that time he slept as usual on his cot, banished the chamber-maids from his room, and depended for such duty as they usually performed on the old colored body-servant who had attended him for many years.

System and method are absolutely necessary to Thomas's existence, and nothing ruffles or excites him so much as innovations on his habits or changes in his customs. He discards an old coat with great reluctance; and during the earlier part of the war, when his promotions came to him faster than he could wear out his uniforms, it was almost impossible to find him donning the proper dress of his rank. He wore the uniform of a colonel for several months after he had been confirmed a brigadier general, and only donned the proper uniform when going into battle at Mill Spring. He was confirmed a major general in June, 1862, but did not mount the twin stars until after the battle of Stone River, fought on the last day of the same year, and then they found their way to his shoulders only by a

trick to which his body-servant had been incited by his aids. This methodical and systematic feature of his character found an admirable illustration in an incident to which I was a witness during the battle of Chickamauga. After the rout of the principal part of the corps of McCook and Crittenden, Thomas was left to fight the entire rebel army with a single corps of less than twenty thousand men. The enemy, desirous of capturing this force, moved in heavy columns on both its flanks. His artillery opened upon Thomas's troops from front and both flanks; but still they held their ground until Steedman, of Granger's corps, reached them with re-enforcements. I was sitting on my horse near General Thomas when General Steedman came up and saluted him.

"I am very glad to see you, general," said Thomas in welcoming him. General Steedman made some inquiries as to how the battle was going, when General Thomas, in a vexed manner, replied,

"The damned scoundrels are fighting without any system."

Steedman thereupon suggested that he should pay the enemy back in his own coin. Thomas followed his suggestion. As soon as Granger came up with the rest of his corps, he assumed the offensive; and while Bragg continued to move on his flanks, he pushed forward against the rebel centre, so scattering it by a vigorous blow that, fearful of having his army severed in two, the rebel abandoned his flank movement in order to restore his centre. This delayed the resumption of the battle until

nearly sunset, and Thomas was enabled to hold his position until nightfall covered the retirement to Rossville Gap.

Thomas is not easily ruffled. It is difficult alike to provoke his anger or enlist his enthusiasm. He is by no means blind to the gallantry of his men, and never fails to notice and appreciate their deeds, but they never win from him any other than the coldest words in the coldest, but, at the same time, kindest of commendatory tones. He grows really enthusiastic over nothing, though occasionally his anger may be aroused. When it is, his rage is terrible. During the campaign in Kentucky, in pursuit of Bragg in 1862, Thomas was second in command of the army under Buell. The new recruits committed many depredations upon the loyal Kentuckians. While the army was passing a small stream near Bardstown, called "Floyd's Fork of Salt River," Thomas was approached by a farmer whom he knew to be a good Union man, and who made complaint that one of the general's staff officers had carried off the only horse left on his farm. The general turned black with anger at such an accusation against one of his staff officers, and demanded to know who and where the offender was. The farmer pointed to a mounted infantry officer, who was attached to one of the regiments and not to the general's staff. The general rode up to him and demanded to know where he had obtained the horse which he rode. The officer replied that he had "impressed" him. The general knew the man had no authority to impress horses, and, choking with rage, he poured on the devoted head of the delinquent a torrent of invective. He drew

his sword, and, putting the point under the shoulder-straps of the officer, ripped them off, and then compelled him to dismount and lead the animal to the place whence he had stolen him. He also required him to pay the farmer for his trouble and the loss of service of the animal.

When the battle of Mill Spring began it found Thomas in a bad humor, and on the first opportunity he had for "pitching into" any one he did not fail to take advantage of it. The victim was Colonel Mahlon D. Manson, a rough, excitable, but gallant old Indianian, who was acting brigadier in command of his own and two or three other regiments. Under the old organization of the volunteer army no adequate provision for aids for acting generals had been made, and Manson's only aid, his regimental adjutant, happened to be out of the way; so, when the battle opened, and he had posted his regiments to receive the attack, he hastily rode back to General Thomas to report in person the disposition he had made of his forces. It happened that in doing this Manson lost his hat, and he made his appearance before Thomas hatless, with disheveled hair, unwashed face, and incomplete toilet, and Thomas's pent-up rage vented itself on him. He had no sooner begun to state his position to Thomas than that officer interrupted him with,

"Damn you, sir, go back to your command and fight it."

Excited as Manson was, he caught the full meaning, and the perhaps unmeant insinuation of the general's words, and returned to his command much chagrined. Thomas's anger did

not last long after finding this vent. He grew pleasanter before the day was over, was in spirits long before Zollicoffer's rout was complete, and when he came to write his report a week afterward, spoke very highly of Manson.

The self-control and coolness of Thomas under fire, and amid the excitement and dangers of battle, is absolutely surprising, and, until I had seen at Chickamauga repeated instances of his imperturbation, I did not believe that human nature was capable of it. In relating one of the episodes of the battle, an account of which I published at the time, I alluded, I thought then, and think now, very happily to the general as the "Statue Thomas." During that terrible conflict the statue warmed into life but twice. At daylight on the second day, before the battle had been resumed, General Rosecrans rode along the line of battle, examining the position which the troops of McCook and Crittenden had taken as best they could, without other guide than the sound of cannon or other director than stern necessity. He rode up to Thomas's quarters near the left centre of the field and asked him several questions regarding the battle of the day before. Thomas alluded briefly to the events of the fight, and in speaking of his brilliant charge exclaimed rather warmly, "Whenever I touched their flanks they broke, general, they broke," repeating the last words with unusual zest and evident satisfaction. I was listening with great eagerness and looking squarely at the general, when he caught my eye, and, as if ashamed of his momentary enthusiasm, the blood mounted to his cheeks and he blushed like a woman.

His eyes were bent immediately on the ground, and the rest of his remarks were confined to a few brief replies to the questions addressed to him.

The other instance to which I was a witness occurred during the afternoon of the second day's battle, and in the midst of a lull which had followed the retreat of McCook and Crittenden and the falling back of Thomas's right division. The general was sitting in the rear of the line of battle of his right as re-formed, engaged in watching a heavy cloud of dust in the distance, and in such a direction that it might be the enemy, or it might be the reserve forces of Gordon Granger, which had been posted some distance in rear of the battle-field at Rossville, and which it was hoped would march to the aid of the army. The doubt under which he labored cast a visible cloud over the general's spirits, and excited his nerves to an unusual degree. He had no disposition to resume the fight, and, fearful of the result of the next attack of the rebels, was anxious to avoid a resumption of the battle. He consequently watched the development of the cloud of dust in the distance with painful anxiety. If it dissolved to reveal friends, then they were doubly welcome, for fresh friends insured the safe retirement of that fraction of the army which still held its ground. If it disclosed the enemy, then the day and army were lost, and it became the duty of those who formed this "last square" at Chickamauga to throw into the teeth of the victorious enemy a defiance as grandly contemptuous as that of Cambronne, and die. There was no escape if the troops

advancing from the rear were, as it was feared, the cavalry of the enemy. General Tom Wood, hearing some one express himself to this effect, threw in a word of encouragement by saying that it was evident it was not cavalry, "for," said he, "don't you see the dust rising above them ascends in thick misty clouds, not in spiral columns, as it would if the force was cavalry," a remark which indicated the close observation of General Wood. The anxiety of General Thomas increased with every moment of delay in the development of the character of the advancing columns. At one time he said nervously to his staff, "Take my glass, some of you whose horse stands steady – tell me what you can see." I was standing near him at the moment looking through a field-glass, and remarked that I felt sure that I could see the United States flag.

"Do you think so? do you think so?" asked the general, nervously.

Shortly after, Captain G. M. L. Johnston, of General Negley's staff, reported to Thomas for duty, and the general requested him to venture toward the advancing force, and learn, if possible, to which army it belonged. Johnston was gone for some time, running the gauntlet of the rebel sharp-shooters, who were fast enveloping Thomas's left wing. During his absence the anxiety of Thomas increased until it grew painful to the observer, and the relaxation which followed the revelation of the fact that the coming force were friends was a positive relief to the by-standers. As Johnston returned with General Steedman the nerves of

Thomas calmed down, and his excitement was hardly visible save in the petulant tone and manner in which he cursed Bragg for fighting without any system. During the fight which ensued he remained as passive and apparently as unconcerned as if he were in the safest place imaginable.

During the morning of the second day of the same battle I was again near General Thomas when the rebels made a vigorous attack on his breast-works. He and a single staff officer were sitting a little in the rear of the centre of the line, and just in range of the shells which the enemy was throwing with great vigor and rapidity. While thus exposed, a shell passed between the general and his aid, causing them to look at each other with a quiet smile. A moment afterward another shell took the same route. The general, instead of smiling this time, turned to his aid and said,

"Major, I think we had better retire a little," and fell back a few yards to a small wood.

On the night after this battle, and when the troops had retired to Rossville, General Thomas was asked by Colonel B. F. Scribner to take a cup of coffee at his camp-fire, and did so. Scribner had been slightly wounded in the head, and the clotted blood still stood upon his face, left there in order to prevent the wound from continuing to bleed. Thomas sat down by Scribner, drank his coffee, saw the wound of Scribner, talked of commonplace matters for half an hour, but never by word or act alluded in the slightest way to the fact that he had just fought one

of the most important battles of the war, and saved the army from annihilation. No one could have known from Thomas's remarks that a battle had been raging, or that his host had been wounded.

One of the great faults of Thomas's character is due to this extreme solidity of his nervous system. Without rendering him exactly selfish or acrimonious, it has made him cold and undemonstrative in manner, and rather insensible to the emotions. He is generous without being enthusiastic, and kind without being at all demonstrative. He has been compared to Washington, but the comparison was made by General Rosecrans, who, by the way, knew nothing whatever of human nature, and could not read it even with the best spectacles of saddest experience; and the comparison holds good only thus far, that Thomas, as Washington was, is portly of person and dignified of manner. His undemonstrative manner has given to many the idea that he was incapable of strong affections, firm friendships, or noble emotions; and the only enemies whom he had were men with whom he had been on terms of friendship, and who, falling under disfavor, looked in vain to him for some demonstration of aid. There are two or three instances, not proper to relate in detail, which have given Thomas's fellow-officers the idea that he was selfishly cold; but I do not think such to be the case, for, though cold and undemonstrative, Thomas has never revealed aught of the selfish or envious in his character. His blood ran as sluggishly as oil upon water, but it was from principle, if such a thing could be, and I think it was in this

case. One of the subordinate commanders of Thomas's army, who distinguished himself at Stone River and Chickamauga, was an Indiana colonel named Ben F. Scribner, a brave officer, who, from his action at the battle of Perryville, Kentucky, went by the name of "gallant little Scrib" – a sobriquet bestowed upon him by General Lovell H. Rousseau, his immediate commander. After the battle of Chickamauga, Scribner was not treated fairly in the reorganization of the army by Rosecrans, and complained to General Thomas, his corps commander, of the injustice done him. During the conversation Colonel Scribner used the expression that he could not but feel that a serious wrong had been done him, when Thomas slowly and sadly said,

"Colonel, I have taken a great deal of pains to educate myself not to feel."

This remark gives a wonderful insight into Thomas's nature, and will explain much in his manner that is a mystery to thousands who have studied his character.

General Garfield used to relate a story which gave rather a comical turn to the general's undemonstrative style, and one which I do not remember to have ever seen in print. In fact, it has been a somewhat doubtful question with me as to whether I should be justified in relating it, and only do so with the warning, "*Honi soit qui mal y pense.*" When General Thomas relieved Rosecrans at Chattanooga in 1863, General Garfield remained with him for a time as chief of staff. One morning the two officers were riding around the town, examining the defenses

which were then being built, when they heard some one hailing with the cry,

"Hello, mister! you! I want to speak with you."

On looking around, General Thomas discovered that he was the "mister" wanted, and that the person who had hailed him was one of those East Tennessee soldiers who were always easily distinguishable from the Northern soldiers by their peculiar rough, uncouth, and backwoods appearance. He stopped, and the man approached him and began,

"Mister, I want to get a furlough."

"On what grounds do you want a furlough, my man?" asked the general.

"I want to go home and see my wife," replied the East Tennessean.

"How long since you saw your wife?" asked the general.

"Ever since I enlisted – nigh on to three months."

"Three months!" exclaimed the general, good-naturedly.

"Why, my good man, I haven't seen my wife for three years."

The East Tennessean stopped whittling the stick which he had in his hand, and stared for a moment incredulously at the general.

"Wall, you see," he said at length, with a sheepish smile, "me and my wife ain't that kind."

Shaking all over with laughter, the general put spurs to his horse and galloped away, leaving the astonished soldier unanswered.

I should have enjoyed hugely hearing Thomas laugh aloud. During the three years in which I saw him almost daily, and under all sorts of circumstances, I never saw him *smile* but once, and that was under circumstances so peculiarly ridiculous that it would have provoked laughter from Patience on a monument, or even the grief that she smiled at. A low comedian, named Alf. Burnett, from one of the Cincinnati theatres, essayed to become a war correspondent, and during the summer of 1863 made his appearance in the camp of General Rosecrans, quartering himself at Triune with Colonel James Brownlow, son of the famous Parson Brownlow, and at that time in command of an East Tennessee regiment. Burnett was very good as a mimic, and particularly excelled in his delivery of a burlesque sermon in which the sentence "He played upon a harp of a thousand strings, spirits of just men made perfect," frequently occurred as a refrain. Colonel Brownlow on one occasion invited Burnett to deliver this sermon before his regiment, and, as a joke upon the chaplain of the command, that worthy was requested to announce the occasion of its delivery, and when the time arrived to open the services with a hymn. Burnett began his burlesque sermon, and had gone through a considerable portion of it before the chaplain and the soldiers began to suspect how much they had been outraged. As soon as he perceived the nature of the performance, the chaplain approached Burnett, took him by the back of the neck, marched him to the camp limits, and with the injunction to "go and sin no more," kicked him out of the camp. The facts were

at the same time represented to Rosecrans, who expelled Burnett from the department, but, at the solicitations of some friends, the mimic was allowed to return to make his explanations. After hearing Burnett's explanations, Rosecrans insisted on hearing the "Hard-shell Baptist sermon," and Burnett gave it in his best style. Rosecrans was delighted, declared it was inimitable, and told Burnett he should remain at his quarters, should deliver it nightly, and would have put him on his staff if Burnett had asked it. The sermon became Rosecrans's hobby; he thought and talked for a time of nothing else, and one night invited General Thomas to quarters to hear it. The general and his staff came, and the performance began with songs which did not interest, and continued with the sermon, which, much to Rosecrans's surprise, did not amuse "old Thom." But, after Burnett's farce had been finished, Rosecrans called upon Colonel Horace Porter, of the Ordnance Department, for a song, and Porter gave a comic Irish song in the best brogue, accompanying himself by imitating the playing upon Scotch bagpipes. Porter was one of the most dignified, quiet, sedate, and elegant officers of the army at Rosecrans's head-quarters; and the ridiculousness of his attitude, the contrast with his usual appearance and manner, was too much for General Thomas, and he "smiled" almost audibly several times during the song. I never afterward saw the fun stirred up in Thomas.

The contrast between Thomas and Sherman may be extended even to their personal appearance and habits; and in these, as

in character, the difference is most marked. Thomas's figure is very striking. Something of his height is lost to the eye by the heaviness of his figure. If he were as thin as Sherman, he would look the six feet two or three inches which have been ignorantly attributed to him. He is really about five feet ten or eleven inches in height, but so much does his heaviness detract from the appearance of height that he does not appear so tall. Thick-set, robust, and healthy, he moves heavily and slowly, but by no means feebly or unsteadily. His beard and hair were sandy at the beginning of the late war, but they have since become silver sprinkled, and add to the great dignity of his appearance. His features are all large, with the exception of his nose – a long, thin Grecian feature which Napoleon would have admired. His lips are rather thick, rounded, and red. His chin and jaws, large and squarely cut, with his great, steady, though not bright eyes, indicate, more than any others of his features, his firmness and positiveness of character. His countenance is at all times severe and grave, but not necessarily stern. He seldom smiles; but the constant seriousness of his countenance is not repulsive. It may be said to be forbidding. It certainly forbids trifling. The simplest-minded man, seeking audience of him, will understand, on being received by the general, by a glance at his countenance, that he must be brief and to the point. His presence is no place for loungers. His visitors must have business to transact or retire, and they never require any other hint than the countenance of the general. He

is a man in earnest, and it does not take long to discover it. He is perhaps as free from display and pretension as any man in the army. He never does any thing for "effect." His manner admits of no familiarity. There is dignity in every gesture, but not necessarily either grace or love. His style of living in camp is comfortable and even elegant. His mess consists of himself and two aids. His mess ware is principally silver of elaborate finish. I breakfasted once or twice with the general during the Chickamauga campaign. On the occasion of each visit daylight and breakfast were announced simultaneously by an elderly, dignified, and cleanly-attired colored servant, who brought me an excellent punch, with "Colonel Flynt's compliments," as an appetizer. The breakfast-table was spread under the fly of the tent, which served as a kitchen, and on it smoked fresh beef, ham, and strong black coffee. At each silver plate was a napkin of the purest white, artistically folded in the latest style of the first-class hotels, a silver water-goblet, a china cup, and the usual knives and silver forks. Better beef and better coffee could not have been found in the country in which the army was campaigning, while the hot rolls and potatoes, baked in the hot ashes of a neighboring fire, would have made many a French cook blush.

When beginning the campaign of Atlanta Sherman endeavored to effect an important innovation in the habits of his army by carrying out to the very letter his instructions to "move light," *i. e.*, without extra baggage. In order to impress upon his officers the necessity of setting a good example to

the men, he published an order, in which he stated that the "general commanding intended making the campaign without tent or baggage." The hint was lost on most of the officers, and among others on Thomas, who moved in his usual heavy style, with a complete head-quarter train and the usual number of tents, adding indeed to the usual allowance a large wagon arranged with desks, which, when covered by a hospital-tent fly, made a very complete adjutant general's office. The campaign began, and Sherman made several days' march without his tent, sleeping any where that night overtook him, but before reaching Resaca he was very glad to take up his abode near Thomas's head-quarters, and make use of his tents and adjutant general's office.

No one has ever accused General Thomas of being a genius either militarily or otherwise. He neither plans campaigns with the aptitude and originality of Sherman, nor fights battles with the vigor and abandon of Sheridan. Thomas's success has been obtained by long service and patient industry, and he is an example of what may be accomplished by the unremitting toil of a practical man. He is possessed naturally of that good, clear sense which is often inappropriately called common sense, but which is of no common order at all. He has never been brilliantly educated, and is neither a brilliant thinker nor converser. He is doubtless well versed in West Point lore and the art of war. His education has been derived principally from a long and varied experience with the world, which has rendered him pre-eminently a practical man. His mind consequently takes

naturally, as has been before stated, to method, and every thing he does is completed (in the full sense of the word) in a methodical manner. There is little that is original in his plans or his mode of executing them, but all are distinguished for their practicability and completeness. His calculations leave a wide range for contingencies, delays, and accidents, and are not easily disturbed by untoward incidents and unexpected developments. He never goes into a campaign or battle without knowing exactly how to get out of it safely, in case the necessity for retreating arises. He has on more than one occasion furnished the means of getting the armies of others out of danger. At Stone River, when Rosecrans was defeated and his council of war proposed to retreat, Thomas showed that the safety of the army depended upon remaining and assuming the defensive. At Chickamauga, when the same leader left his army in the midst of a terrible battle and at the beginning of a rout of the greater part of it, Thomas again came to the rescue, and covered the retreat in a manner which saved the day and the army.

With his troops Thomas is a most popular leader. He has the deep-seated and deep-rooted affection of his men, which is not the less sincere because it is undemonstrative. He is looked upon by the army with a sort of affectionate reverence, and he possesses in the highest degree the confidence of his men. To this more than to any other feeling, person, or circumstance, the nation owed the safety of its army at Chickamauga. This feeling of confidence in its leader did more to hold his corps together on

that day – did more to keep up the *esprit de corps* of his command during the terrible attacks to which it was subjected, than did all the discipline which had otherwise been drilled into the men. The men of the two routed *corps* were just as good, just as brave, and just as tenacious fighters as were Thomas's men, but they had no faith at all in the wisdom of their leaders, McCook and Crittenden, who were not men of either inspiring presence or iron qualities. Men will not stand and fight under officers in whom they have not the most implicit faith. Such confidence is reposed in Thomas to the fullest degree, and is accompanied by an affectionate regard which adds to its strength.

Soldiers, as I have had occasion to remark elsewhere, have a very natural mode of expressing their affection by titles of endearment, indicative of the peculiarities of the subjects of their admiration. Thomas has been christened with dozens of "nicknames." When he was at West Point and in the regular army in Mexico, he was called "Old Reliable," from his recognized and proverbial fidelity to the service. During the Mill Spring and Stone River campaigns he won from his men the sobriquet of "Old Pap Safety." This was subsequently boiled down into "Pap Thomas," by which name he is called more frequently than by any other. His slow gait, and quiet, dignified style of riding, gained him the title of "Old Slow-trot." "Uncle George" and "George H." are often used by the men in facetious hours, and the titles always linger on the tongues of the soldiers like sweet morsels. And though these titles are used by the

men with an air and in a tone indicating familiarity with their leader, none of them ever knew him, in his communication with them, to sacrifice his dignity in the slightest degree. They have no difficulty in reaching his ear. They always find a patient listener and a sound adviser, and a kindly mannered and pleasant director. He never laughs and jokes with soldiers or officers, but his mild voice and quiet manner win him more of the love of his men than any momentary familiarity could do. I have known him to halt in the march and spend ten or fifteen minutes in directing stragglers to their commands.

General Thomas is the purest man I met in the army. He was the Bayard of our army – "*sans peur, sans reproche*," and I have endeavored in vain to find a flaw in his character. His character is free from every stain, and he stands forth in the army as above suspicion. He has gone through the war without apparently exciting the jealousy of a single officer. He has so regulated his advancement – so retarded, in fact, his promotion, that when, as the climax to two years' hard service, he fought a great battle and saved a great army, and was hailed and recognized by the whole country as a hero, not one jealous or defeated officer was found to utter dissent to this popular verdict.

There was at one time some ill feeling between Grant and Thomas, growing out of the anomalous position in which both were placed by Halleck when the army was besieging Corinth, but I believe that was cleared up. General Grant was made second in command under Halleck, and his army was given to Thomas,

who remained in active command in the field. Grant's position was really none at all; it was not recognized by regulations or uses, and was felt by him to be an insult put upon him (he imagined at one time) at the instigation of General Thomas. Such was not the fact, however, and General Grant so became finally convinced.

The late rebellion was the school of many of our best officers, and dearly did the country pay in its best blood the tuition of some. Bull Run was the price which the country paid for having its erroneous idea of war violently corrected. The failure of the first assault on Vicksburg and of the attack on Kenesaw Mountain were fearful prices paid to correct certain errors of judgment in Sherman's mind. We paid for McClellan's violation of a well-known rule of war in placing the Chickahominy between his battalions. Numerous similar instances might be named, showing how the country has been compelled to pay terrible penalties of blood for the ignorance of unworthy and incompetent leaders; but enough. Thomas's training in the art of war has cost the country not a single disaster or sacrifice. On the contrary, he has saved the country, on more than one occasion, the fearful penalty it was about to pay for the ignorance of other leaders. He has been prominent in three grand campaigns. Two of them he has conducted on his own plans and in person. In the other he acted as second in command. The two which he planned and conducted were complete successes; and the other, as far as he was concerned, a magnificent triumph. His first campaign in the war for the Union was that against the

fortified camp of Zollicoffer at Mill Springs, Kentucky. His plan embraced an assault upon the rebel works; but before he could get into position to do this the enemy marched out of his works and attacked him in his camp, failing in an attempt to surprise him. The rebels failed also in the battle which ensued, and were terribly defeated, with heavy loss, and at the sacrifice of the organization of their army. Night alone, under cover of which it crossed the Cumberland River, prevented the capture of the entire rebel force. Fourteen pieces of artillery, fifteen hundred horses, with all the stores of the enemy and a large number of prisoners, fell into our hands. This victory was complete, and doubly welcomed as the first positive success since the battle of Bull Run. The country hailed it as the first sign of the rejuvenation and reorganization of the army. The rebel "army of Western Kentucky" has never been heard of since that disastrous day; and George B. Crittenden, its commander, sank at once into disgrace and oblivion as a consequence of his defeat.

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