

ATLANTIC MONTHLY

SEPTEMBER, 1911

GENERAL SHERMAN ON HIS OWN RECORD

SOME UNPUBLISHED COMMENTS
EDITED BY JARED W. YOUNG

IN 1865 Colonel Samuel M. Bowman, assisted by Lieutenant-Colonel R. B. Irwin, wrote *Sherman and his Campaigns*, a book of some five hundred pages, published in the same year by Charles B. Richardson, New York. It was one of the earliest contributions to the history of the War, and the first devoted to General Sherman, who wrote to the publisher, under date of July 31, 1865, —

‘Colonel Bowman . . . has had access to my Order and Letter Books, embracing copies of all letters written and orders made by me since the Winter 1861–62 with a view to publish a Memoir of my life and services, and no other person has had such an opportunity to read my secret thoughts and acts.’

The preparation of the volume, however, in the tumult and confusion of the closing days of the War, was necessarily somewhat hurried, and it was intended that the work should be revised and enlarged in a subsequent edition, pursuant to which purpose a copy, interleaved with blank pages, was sent to General Sherman in 1868, for his corrections and further suggestions.

General Sherman returned the book with copious notes and data, including copies of a number of his letters; but before any further action was taken toward revision he began the preparation of his own *Memoirs*, though they were not published until nine years later. The volume remained in Colonel Bowman’s hands until his death in 1885, and thence passed into the library of the writer, a relative.

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us, I regarded its capture as a necessity at any cost. When at last it was accomplished, in spite of all the efforts of the enemy, it was absolutely conclusive as to the War being nothing but a question of time. Too great importance can never be given to the capture of Vicksburg and in the progress of time its capture will stand out as the great event of the War. From that moment the efforts of the Rebels were merely spasmodic, delaying, but never changing the certainty of the event.

'What I wrote to Grant in the letter on page 167, written in March, 1864, proved absolutely true. When we had the Mississippi "dead auro," we made "short work of Charleston, Richmond, and the impoverished coast of the Atlantic."'

It will be recalled that our Civil War gave the first illustration of the use of railroads in extensive military operations. Howman says, following his account of the Atlanta campaign, 'I desire a paragraph or two from you on the subject of the rail in War,' which Sherman thus summarizes: —

'Of course Railroads are of vast importance. I could not have maintained my army in the Atlanta Campaign without them.

'Locomotives don't eat corn and hay like mules, but a single locomotive will haul 160,000 pounds. A man eats 8 pounds a day, and therefore one train will feed 50,000 men. Animals need about 15 pounds. I estimated 65 cars a day necessary to maintain an army of 100,000 men and 30,000 animals, but for accidents and accumulation I laid my figures at 120 cars a day. To do this work from Nashville I aimed to get 100 locomotives and 1000 cars, expecting to lose two trains a week by accident and the enemy. We attained nearly that standard before I got possession of Atlanta.

'Mule wagons could not have done that work because the teams and guard will eat up the contents of a wagon in about 25 days, or 12½ days out and in, so that in old times it was an axiom that armies could not operate more than 100 miles from their base. Rosecrans nearly starved an army at Chat-

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Chattanooga, with a haul of some 60 or 70 miles from Bridgeport and Stevenson by way of Waldrons Ridge.

'Railroads are, however, very delicate — easily damaged in their bridges, culverts, and rails — therefore require large guards and repair parties and material.

'I think we attained the maximum work out of a single line from Nashville to Atlanta.'

After the capture of Atlanta, General Hood wrote to Sherman suggesting an exchange of prisoners, to which the latter agreed but stipulated that, as the exchanged Confederates would immediately return to Hood's army, he would only accept Union prisoners from his own army, whose terms of service had not expired, and not those theretofore confined in Rebel prisons belonging to other armies, and in consequence not available for duty with him. He also stated that he had captured a number of soldiers who had been 'detailed for duty' in the Atlanta shops, and that for these he would accept any prisoners.

To this Hood took exception, writing to him, 'The new principle which you seek to interpolate on the cartel of our respective governments, as well as upon the laws and customs of War, will not be sanctioned by me.'

On this point, and on the order providing for the removal of all civilians from Atlanta, a caustic correspondence ensued, most of which was reproduced either in this book or Sherman's own *Memoirs*, but the following letter was not used in either: —

ATLANTA, Sept. 12, 1864.

GEN. J. B. HOOD,

Comd. Army of the Tenn.,
Confederate Army.

I have yours of to-day. You asked to exchange prisoners and I consented as far as those which remained in my hands here and this side of Chattanooga. These I will exchange in the manner I have stated, and not otherwise.

As you could not know those of our men whose terms had expired I author-

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ized Col. Warner to say that I would retain any number taken of this army between certain dates, say the two thousand last captured, or in any other single period, but as a matter of business I offered terms that could not be misunderstood.

You have not answered my proposition as to the men captured in Atlanta who are soldiers of the Confederate Army detailed on 'Extra Duty' in the shops.

I think I understand the laws of civilized nations and the customs of War, but if at a loss at any time I know where to seek for information to refresh my memory.

If you will give our prisoners at Andersonville a little more elbow-room, and liberty to make out of the abundant timber shelter for themselves, and also a fair allowance of food to enable them to live in health, they will ask nothing more until such time as we will provide for them.

I am with respect,
Your Obedient Servant,
W. T. SHERMAN, Maj. Gen.

The month of March, 1865, witnessed the successful culmination of Sherman's greatest military achievement of the War, — the march of his army from Savannah to Goldsboro; and by contrast in the following month he encountered the most severe ordeal of his military career, — the Johnston Truce imbroglio.

On the 9th of April, Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox, and four days later General Johnston, seeing that the end had come, and hard pushed by Sherman's armies, opened negotiations with him looking to a termination of hostilities. As a result of this the two generals met on the eighteenth and drew up an agreement for submission to their respective principals, the confirmation of which both thought was assured.

There is no question that in some of the terms granted in this agreement Sherman exceeded his authority. But, on the other hand, he believed he was acting in accordance with his under-

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standing of Lincoln's views and intentions; and in any event the agreement, when disapproved, should never have passed beyond official circles.

But Lincoln had just been assassinated, and Secretary Stanton, losing his head completely, gave out the terms to the press accompanied with reasons for refusing confirmation thereof, and adverse comment couched in such language as practically to stamp Sherman as a traitor. Not content with this, Stanton instructed Grant immediately to proceed to Sherman's headquarters and direct the operations against Johnston in person, while General Halleck issued orders direct to Meade, Sheridan, and Wright, Sherman's generals, to disregard the truce and pay no attention to Sherman's orders. The press and public, already inflamed by Lincoln's death, seized on this as a vent for their feelings, and Sherman was made the victim of severe and undeserved criticism that wounded him deeply.

Grant, however, carried out Stanton's orders only to the extent of going to Sherman, permitting him to continue in active command and to arrange in a second interview with Johnston the final terms of surrender.

Bowman goes into this whole matter in considerable detail, and only asks for additional information on two points as follows: —

‘Describe the house where this interview was had and who were present, or, if not immediately in your conference, with you; also who were with Johnston? — BOWMAN.’

‘The point fixed on was between Durham's Station and the Rebel cavalry picket toward Hillsboro. I went up to Durham in a car and rode out on the Hillsboro road with Kilpatrick, Barry, Audenried, Dayton, and others, with a cavalry escort, and met Johnston about five miles out. Wade Hampton was with him. We met, shook hands on horseback, and after some commonplace remarks I looked around to see if there was any handy place for us to be private. Johnston remarked he had passed a short way back a nice farm and we rode back to it, he and I riding side by side till we approached

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the farmhouse, which was a neat frame building. We dismounted at the gate, walked into the yard, when an old man and woman met us, and I explained what we wanted, viz: the use of the house. They left it to us and went to a small out-house. Johnston and I went in; Wade Hampton, and two or three Confederate officers with him, with Barry, Kilpatrick, etc., stayed out in the yard, grouped about an old carpenter's bench.

'Our first interview lasted a couple of hours. It was during it I told Johnston of Lincoln's assassination, of which I had heard by telegraph just as I was starting from Raleigh. In passing Logan's camp, I told him, — but no one else till after my interview with Johnston. I was sure from his manner and language that he and the Confederate officers generally were as innocent of Mr. Lincoln's assassination as I was, and therefore resolved to act as though the event had not occurred; besides, I had seen so many officers of rank killed that Mr. Lincoln's assassination did not paralyze my mind as it seems to have done in Washington.

'Johnston did not ask that his men should retain all their arms, but I conceded them in a spirit of (it may be termed) "boasting or brag." I said, "You may have them all so far as I am concerned." And it was absurd to suppose that, with our army intact and theirs dispersed, we should fear danger. The confidence in our strength and power did impress Johnston and the whole Confederate army far more than the timid inferences of modern counsellors. A whole year of botch-work has followed by Congress, and this day the power of the United States is not respected and feared as much as on that day when I told Johnston to disperse his armies to their homes and get to work, and that I did not fear to trust them with the arms till they reached their States.

'I know well how to produce an effect on the minds of men, and I believe the effect was salutary, in addition to being what I knew in the end would obtain.'

'Describe this second meeting. I can

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imagines Johnston was sad and you were mad! — BOWMAN.'

'General Johnston was very sad; the perspiration on his face and his manner evinced great concern. I felt more concern for him than angry at the action of the Government. I did not get mad until afterwards, when I saw in the newspapers the publicity and tone of Stanton's dispatches to General Dix.

'When I got back to General Grant at Raleigh and handed him the paper signed by myself and Johnston, I asked him half jestingly to countersign it, to share with me, if necessary, any further disapproval of the War Department if it should be attempted.'

In the back of the book, Sherman comments on the biography in general and the Johnston incident in particular, taking occasion also to outline his estimation of his own fitness for high command, and giving some extremely frank reasons for his preferring a subordinate position during the opening of the War. As illustrating this latter point it may be recalled that, in his *Memoirs*, Sherman mentions an interview with Lincoln in August, 1861, in which he says, 'I explained to him my extreme desire to serve in a subordinate capacity, and in no event to be left in superior command.' The comments follow:

St. Louis, Mo., April 24, 1866.

Having been invited by Col. S. M. Bowman, one of the authors of the book, to revise it and to make any suggestions bearing on his intention to a republication, I have read over the text and made marginal corrections and notes bearing on special points, and now will conclude by such general ideas as seem to be pertinent to the occasion.

The volume is too heavy and large; if it cannot be condensed to one light enough to be held in one hand, then two small volumes seem indispensable.

The text should all be by one mind and one hand, in the nature of a simple plain narrative, careful as to dates and facts, with only such original matter

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interwoven as facilitates description.

Letters and papers made by the subject of the biography to illustrate his style and general opinion might very properly form an appendix, in smaller type, which the general reader could refer to if inclined.

The biography should not attempt to be a history of events except in such parts as the subject controlled or chiefly influenced events; as for example, Bull Run might be ignored and Shiloh barely touched on, giving more attention to Vicksburg, Atlanta, and the Great March.

The reader should be supposed possessed of the general history of the time, and the biographies of other leading generals still living merely touched upon, leaving their own friends to record their deeds and merits. Therefore the sketches of Thomas, Howard, Slocum, and Logan might be lessened, and those of McPherson, Ransom, and Dan McCook enlarged.

The earlier life of the subject of the biography should be unfolded and developed, showing the growth and formation of ideas and character. Thus I would attach more value to the demonstration of the truth that, long before the War was forced on us, I had been true and faithful to all trusts; that I possessed the respect and affection of old West Point comrades and the old officers of the army; that I had the unqualified respect of Generals Mason and Persifer Smith with whom I served in confidential capacity [as adjutant general in California]; that in the Vigilance Committee times of San Francisco, in opposition to self-interest, I took open and positive ground against Mob Law and violence in favor of the Law, however defective or badly administered; and that in banking I made the real and permanent interest of my partners superior to my own; that I insisted on their withdrawing from the business of banking though it left me without means or employment, and forced me to seek a livelihood among strangers; that I retained the confidence of all my associates in all matters

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of business, especially of Mr. Lucas and Maj. Turner, to whom I am mostly indebted for my present house,—almost the only substantial reward yet received for the past.

In the earlier part of the War I purposely kept myself in the background for several reasons. Because I saw the controlling powers underrated the measure of hostility, which I reasoned would lead to the sacrifice of the first leaders. Because I regarded the War as a Revolution, and rarely do the first beginners or leaders survive both [*“either”* written first and crossed out] in life or reputation. Washington is an exception. Because I coolly reasoned that others might conduct the experiments that must precede the development of the Real Game that was to determine the issue. Because I did not share the prejudices which for a time had to obscure the real issues. I knew that the extreme men North and South were equally blinded by the prejudices of their sections. The Pro-Slavery men of the South would have been Abolitionists North, and vice versa.

In the middle and latter part of this volume the author has possession of so much official matter that it resolves itself into a simple question of selection. In this I only suggest a less close copy of my official reports, but a use of new and original language.

In treating of the Sherman and Johnston memorandum I am willing to rest with the assertion that it was wholly my work, to which of course Johnston assented. That I believed it contained what would ultimately result if the people of the South accepted and acted in prompt and willing acquiescence; and that it would produce instantaneously a condition of reason and lawful fidelity consistent with the Constitution of the United States and Laws then in existence.

The amendment of the Constitution abolishing slavery was then a fixed fact, and although a whole year has since passed and more than 40 millions spent maintaining garrisons in the South, it is unanimously admit-

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ted that no good result has been reached not then in actual form. The only thing in April, 1865, left for us to combat was prejudice and habits of thought. This can never be controlled by force of arms, but must be left to time's influences. After a whole year President Johnson has drifted to my then conclusion, and Congress has done nothing more than to enact declaratory bills (The Civil Rights) which, to have integrity, must be supported by Courts of Law that in turn rest on juries full of the very prejudices aimed to be overcome.

Time and renewed industry, with the apprehended danger of reviving a dreaded War, will finally bring all parts of the South into general harmony of interest and consequent opinion with the rest of the country. Every effort should be made to get the people of the South once more to thinking of their selfish interests, — such as making money, improving their land, and rebuilding their towns and cities, — for men of property do not like War and only resort to it when they feel certain of success, as they surely did when the last War began. But they do not think so now, nor will be likely to think so again after the past experience, and when the North section has 24 million of people to their 8 or 10 million.

My opinion was, if the terms with Johnston had been entertained, and approved entire or modified, the Republican party would have gotten a larger proportion of the Southern votes; whereas by keeping out the Southern representatives they make it sure when they are admitted, as they surely will be, all will vote against the Republicans.

My terms specifically required a conformity to all Laws of Congress, among which was the test oath. Again, I had the right to infer that at any and all times the Laws in existence were ready for a condition of peace, the only aim of the War itself. I want no apology for those terms, or any part thereof, and I was clearly right in not saying a word about slavery as it was disposed of by all the means that Courts recognize.

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One point is not clear enough. I took strong exception to Halleck's telegram wherein he ordered my Juniors, — Meade, Sheridan, and Wright — to come to me and disregard my orders. I said he, Halleck, should have come himself, for he ranked me and his coming would have simplified the military question involved, although I did not then say, nor do I now say, that I would have permitted him to disregard my trace. Most undoubtedly I would not have allowed my Juniors in rank to disregard my orders or military compact.

Though of strong will and opinion, I hold I have always shown a most commendable spirit of subordination, because without it there can be no government on earth.

As to how far I should have submitted to Stanton's published insult, I am willing to rest on the simple truth. I fulfilled the orders of the President, of whom he was the official mouth-piece, but no further. You will find a parallel in Kinglake's when the Minister [wrote] to Lord Raglan. He obeyed the orders to proceed to the Crimea, but resented the insult; Kinglake enunciating as an old established maxim of the English Army, that an officer must defend his own personal honor, and not leave that to his superiors or his Government.

I can now recall no other point that I care about, but it does seem that this volume contains all and more than I care about weaving into my personal history. But I am not the judge in this and must of necessity leave it to others, only saying that I want nothing written that opens controversy, which I hate worse than the devil and all his machinations.

W. T. SHERMAN, Maj. Gen.

This brief glimpse into the military and political controversies of the Sixties may be aptly concluded with the following suggestive quotations.

In the book occurs this paragraph:—

'After marching and fighting for twelve months, without rest, he halted his victorious army at the capital of North Carolina, in time to witness the funeral ceremonies of the Confederacy

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In 1852 Colonel Bowman, then a lawyer in St. Louis, had crossed the plains to San Francisco at the height of the California gold excitement. Here a year later came General Sherman, to take charge of the branch banking-house of Lucas, Turner and Company. The two men had known each other in St. Louis, and their acquaintance ripened into a close personal and business friendship, Bowman becoming counsel for the banking firm, and the two families occupying adjoining houses.

At the breaking out of the War, Bowman became Major of the Fourth Illinois Cavalry, and participated in the military operations at Pittsburg Landing, the siege of Corinth, and the battle of Shiloh, serving during a part of the time under the direct command of General Sherman. After the battle of Shiloh, he resigned his commission to accept the colonelcy of the 84th Pennsylvania Volunteers, in the Army of the Potomac, and accordingly was not a participant in Sherman's subsequent operations; but the two continued to keep in touch, and in fact Sherman, when preparing for his Atlanta campaign in 1864, and having in mind the organization of a cavalry corps, requested Bowman's promotion to brigadier general, intending to give him a division of cavalry.

As a result of this intimacy, the notes and comments are at times exceedingly frank. A portion of them are here set forth in the order in which they appear in the book, with such brief explanation as may serve to acquaint the reader with the particular military operations to which they refer.

In sending the book, Colonel Bowman wrote on one of the pages: —

"It is my purpose, for the second edition, to insert a carefully prepared introductory chapter entitled "North and South," giving a graphic view of the political situation before the War and accounting for the War, and then to introduce General Sherman to the reader as an actor in our part of it. This will tend to give the book a gen-

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and the complete triumph of our cause. And for what? To be the subject of such utterly unfounded suspicions, as to be by some even suspected for a traitor! History furnishes no example of such cruel ingratitude and injustice.'

Opposite it Sherman penciled: —

'History does furnish examples. Columbus was one. Scott another. Columbus was carried back a prisoner; and Scott was subjected in Mexico to a trial by three officers junior to him, and one of them a doctor, Surgeon-Gen. Lawson.'

And below, under date of April 28, 1874, Bowman wrote: —

'But Sherman fared better than Columbus or Scott at last. He, in his own spirit, worried; but when his Country tried him before the Jury of the Country, he was accorded the highest honors.'

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¹ This reference is apparently to the letter from the Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State for War, June 29, 1854, to Lord Raglan, instructing him to besiege Sebastopol, and his reply thereto. Sherman paraphrases Kinglake rather freely, and the case is far from being on "all fours" with his. See: *The Invasion of the Crimea*, vol. I, chap. 33, Harper's fourth edition. — THE EDITOR.

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eral interest, and will be more in harmony with what I understand to be General Sherman's wishes.'

To which General Sherman replied in part in the following letter accompanying the return of the book: —

ST. LOUIS, MO., April 27, 1866.

DEAR BOWMAN, — I expect to start next Tuesday on an extensive tour, to be absent some six weeks, and for this reason I have concluded to return to you the printed volume with my corrections and suggestions. These you will find are pretty full, and will give you at least the key to my opinions on most if not on all the points inquired about. Some are made in pencil, but plain enough for you to make out. Opposite page 488 I have summed up my general ideas of Biography, although being the subject of it am not the best judge of what the public most desires to know.

I advise chiefly that you enlarge a little more on the part antecedent to the War, to show that my opinions were pretty well matured on the chief questions before a blow was struck. I would pass over pretty rapidly the events of the War until you reach the period when I began to act as an independent commander or to influence those who did command; thence to the end and assignment to the present command, pretty free details. I would not use so much of my original matter till the close, in the shape of appendix, when you might arrange in the order of dates such of my letters or extracts as exhibit my opinions or style.

I do not wish to be painted as the apologist for the South, or for leniency of punishment, but that this being a Government of Constitution and Law, I presumed that both were adapted at any moment for the condition of peace. If Congress had failed to prepare for the end it was their laches, not mine.

I think the historical picture would have appeared better in the future had peace followed instantaneously on the close of hostilities, and the civil laws been

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allowed at once to take the place of the military. I do think then the Republican War party would have received a fair share of Southern votes, whereas, by the unnecessary agitation since the actual close of hostility, all at the South, Union as well as Secesh, are thrown into the scale of the opposition. Even such men as Rousseau, Cooper, and others who fought with us, as also —, Hunt, and many others who can take the prerequisite oath, and were as much enemies to secessionists and disorganists as Sumner and Stevens pretend to be. But I have written enough.

The book will come to your address by Adams & Co.'s Express.

All about as usual here.

Yours truly,

W. T. SHERMAN.

And further, opposite Colonel Bowman's memo, he wrote:—

St. Louis, April 6, '66.

I do not think it will be well to dwell long on the causes of the War in a mere Biography, but as my opinion may be desired in this connection, I will take advantage of the blank leaves at the very beginning of the book so as to leave those near its beginning to elaborate some events that in the original text have been passed over, it may be with commendable brevity.

W. T. S., Maj. Gen.

The 'events' thus characterized—written, as the general indicates, on the fly-leaves of the volume—covered Sherman's life subsequent to his return from California, including his appointment as Commandant of the Louisiana Military Academy, his resignation occasioned by his foresight of the gathering war clouds, and his interview with Lincoln on his return from the South in March, 1861, when, in answer to the President's question as to how they were getting along in Louisiana, he stated, —

'That they were getting ready for War; that he knew Bragg and Beauregard were enlisting men; that Governor

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Moore had sent the Baton Rouge muskets to safe points; and that everything that he saw, betokened War.'

To which Lincoln replied, 'Oh, I guess we will manage to keep house.'

His actions and statements during this period illustrate the almost prophetic insight which he alone of the men of the North seems to have had as to the certainty and length of the impending struggle. But as they are elaborated in his own *Memoirs* they may be passed over here.

The summary on 'The Cause of the War,' is written in ink, with a formal title, and with more evident care and preparation than most of the other matter, and was evidently intended for insertion in the revised volume as written; it runs as follows: —

THE CAUSE OF THE WAR

There have been diverse interests agitating people since the world began, and so it was with our early Colonists and States. Common danger, first from the Indians and afterwards the British, was the first bond of union, and those who first devised the Articles of Confederation supposed mutual interests would make us a common people, but it only took six or eight years to demonstrate its fallacy.

Then was formed the present Constitution, doubtless the very strongest bond that could then have been attempted, or if fairly administered could now be asked for. Still there is no doubt that the powers of the States and of the General Government were not clearly enough defined to prevent mischief.

The States were left with all the power to control and manage the special interests of their people, and only enough power given to the General Government to carry on foreign intercourse, war, and general matters, and hardly enough to enable the General Government to exercise and fulfill the most important function of *Umpire* in case of differences soon to arise between States, and also within the limits of

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any State. This was the most difficult and delicate task confided to those who formed the Constitution, and no one should dispute the wisdom of those men, who had of course to make mutual concessions of opinion. But there is no doubt that in the Constitution itself exist radical causes for the War. It is in the memory of all that the weight of opinion in our country was that in all doubtful cases of a conflict of interest between the National Government and the People of a State, or even of a locality, the Government always yielded.

General Washington in his first administration felt the difficulty, but acted on the doctrine that the National Government should use force promptly and put down any opposition offered to the national authority. His motives were always so high, and he was backed by so great a majority, that he could act with more confidence than afterwards existed when presidents had strong and powerful opposition parties.

General Washington's proclamations made Sept. 15, 1792, Aug. 7, 1794, and Sept. 25, 1794, are the best doctrines I know, and should have been followed in all subsequent occasions; but he better expresses the same ideas in his letters (private) to Chas. M. Thurston, from Philadelphia, Aug. 10, 1794; to Burges Ball, Sept. 25, 1794. And to Major-General Daniel Morgan from Carlisle, Oct. 8, 1794 (he writes):—

'I am in perfect sentiment with you, that the business we are drawn out upon should be effectually executed, and that the daring and factious spirit which has arisen to overturn the laws and subvert the Constitution ought to be subdued. If this is not done there is an end of, and we may bid adieu to, all government in this country except mob and club government, from which nothing but anarchy and confusion can ensue. If the minority, and a small one too, is suffered to dictate to the majority after measures have undergone the most solemn discussions by the representatives of the

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people, and their will through this medium is enacted into a Law, there can be no security for Life, Liberty and Property; nor, if the Laws are not to govern, can any man know how to conduct himself with safety. There never was a law yet made, I conceive, that hit the taste *exactly* of every man, or of every part of the community; of course if this is a reason for opposition no law can be executed at all without force, and every man or set of men will in that case cut and carve for themselves.'

Washington was therefore clearly for coercion. Yet gradually the practice of the Government, dependent on votes, became less and less disposed to cross the feelings and opinions of the people, until at last the Democratic party was reduced to the *reductio ad absurdum* of the mathematician, that our Government could not coerce a State; or, in other words, that it was no Government at all. In the general habit of our people of setting up their local opinion as superior to the Law of Congress, at Boston, at San Francisco, in New Orleans, — everywhere — and the settled habit of our General Government standing back without manifesting its power, and finally in one president's admitting that he had no power to coerce a State, we made Revolution necessary.

The General Government is of no use at all unless it can and does coerce a State to keep within its limits, and the very moment the General Government does not restrain a State, or the people of a State, when acting in open violation of the National Law, it fails in its functions so far that the people are almost justified in seeking new forms and new means of self-protection of their lives, liberty, and property.

I do not believe that slavery was the chief or only cause of our late rebellion. It was a disturbing element, assumed by one political faction as a means of provocation, and by the other as a means to unite their people, as a means of defense and justifiable cause for a new government, which they

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could use for years for their political advantage. And in proof of this I allege that Mr. Lincoln, after election and installation, asserted repeatedly that slavery was safe in his hands, that he was sworn to enforce even the Fugitive Slave Law, and soon Congress declared it had no intention to interfere with slavery in the States. The people in the South had always seen the National Government yield to, and compromise with, local grievances; and the South did not believe that the President and Congress would enforce the Constitution and laws by the army and by physical force. Had the successive presidents from Washington down to Buchanan done as Washington did, promptly use force to maintain the Laws, the South would never have thought of secession and open resistance.

My opinion was and is that this habit of yielding to popular and local passion and resistance was the real cause and reason of the late War, and our California sample of the Vigilance Committee is as good a one as I can offer. Slavery is now extinct, but the cause remains, and we may learn yet that other pretexts may reproduce the same results.

Opposite the chapter recording the Bull Run disaster, Bowman queries: —

‘I desire to have this chapter corrected as to facts. It must be shortened also, because you were acting in a subordinate position and too much prominence is given to Bull Run. What do you think?’

To which Sherman aptly replies: —

‘The less said about Bull Run the better. The plans were good and the numbers sufficient, but the men were utterly ignorant of War or danger. It was not the officers who lost Bull Run, but the men. They simply had no coherence; no discipline. Each man acted for himself, and when they found bullets they concluded to quit; which they did in their own way (and it may be wisely), to begin to study in the dearest school of life — “Experience.”’

Sherman's Career

For a title for the next chapter, devoted to the struggle in Kentucky in the autumn of 1861, Bowman chose 'The Secession Juggle in Kentucky.'

To this Sherman added a brief note:

'A wrong title. I do not wish in connection with my name any reflection should be made on the true men of Kentucky, some as true and enthusiastic as we could ask for. General Jackson killed at ——— was an example. Kentucky as a State declaring for the Union, as she did at a critical time, was of vast use to us. That confusion should exist at the outset, and that conflict of opinion should exist at the end, were natural results and to be expected, but Kentucky is a most valuable integral part of our Country.'

In describing 'The Siege and Fall of Vicksburg,' Bowman says: —

'I hope to get in this chapter valuable military suggestions. This was the stronghold of the confederacy. It yielded to the advance wave, that swept down the Father of Waters — a wave that swept over the South at last and destroyed the rebellion. Vicksburg therefore is very suggestive. Beauregard thought to lose Corinth was to jeopardize the rebel cause — but Vicksburg was the key point. What say you?'

Sherman replies: —

'The valley of the Mississippi contains by all odds the largest amount of fertile land of any river on the whole globe. Its importance cannot be overstated. It is America. Whatever power holds it can dictate to the continent. Though railroads and artificial channels of commerce have changed somewhat natural laws, yet the lower Mississippi from Cairo to the gulf is the best channel I know of for the uses of man. If the Rebels could have held it from Columbus down, we could not have subdued them. The loss of New Orleans and Columbus and Memphis diminished its value to the Rebels, but so long as we could not use it in its whole length we could not claim it.

'Inasmuch as Vicksburg was held with such tenacity and was so vital to