

"So care for him who has borne the battle, and for his widow and orphans."

ESTABLISHED 1877—NEW SERIES.

WASHINGTON, D. C., THURSDAY, JANUARY 21, 1897.

VOL. XVI—NO. 15—WHOLE NO. 806.



## MEMOIRS of General William T. Sherman

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

### VETERANIZING THE VOLUNTEERS.

### PREPARING FOR THE RED RIVER EXPEDITION.

Gen. Grant Promoted to Lieutenant-General.

### GEN. SHERMAN PROMOTED TO COMMAND OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE MISSISSIPPI.

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#### CHAPTER XV—(continued).

#### MERIDIAN CAMPAIGN—JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, 1864.



THE OBJECT OF THE Meridian expedition was to strike the roads inland, so to paralyze the rebel forces that we could take from the defense of the Mississippi River the equivalent of a corps of 20,000 men, to be used in the next Georgia campaign; and this was actually done. At the same time, I wanted to destroy Gen. Forrest, who, with an irregular force of cavalry, was constantly threatening Memphis and the river above, as well as our routes of supply in Middle Tennessee. In this we failed utterly, because Gen. W. S. Smith did not fulfill his orders, which were clear and specific, as contained in my letter of instructions to him of Jan. 27, at Memphis, and my personal explanations to him at the same time. Instead of starting at the date ordered, Feb. 1, he did not leave Memphis till the 11th, waiting for Waring's Brigade, that was ice-bound near Columbus, Ky.; and then, when he did start, he allowed Gen. Forrest to head him off and to defeat him with an inferior force, near West Point, below Okalona, on the Mobile & Ohio Railroad.

We waited at Meridian till the 20th to hear from Gen. Smith, but hearing nothing whatever, and having utterly destroyed the railroads in and around that junction, I ordered Gen. McPherson to move back slowly toward Canton. With Winslow's cavalry and Hurlbut's infantry I turned north to Marion, and thence to a place called "Union," whence I dispatched the cavalry farther north, to Philadelphia and Louisville, to feel as it were for Gen. Smith, and then turned all the infantry columns toward Canton, Miss. On the 26th we all reached Canton, but we had not heard a word of Gen. Smith, nor was it until some time after (at Vicksburg) that I learned the whole truth of Gen. Smith's movement and of his failure. Of course I did not and could not approve of his conduct, and I know that he yet chafes under the censure. I had set so much store on his part of the project that I was disappointed, and so reported officially to Gen. Grant. Gen. Smith never regained my confidence as a soldier, though I still regard him as a most accomplished gentleman and a skillful engineer. Since the close of the war he has appealed to me to relieve him of that censure, but I could not do it, because it would falsify history.

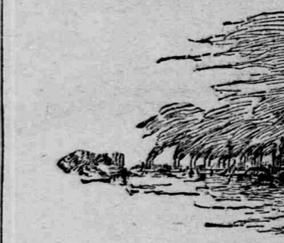
Having assembled all my troops in and about Canton, on the 27th of February I left them under the command of the senior Major-General, Hurlbut, with orders to remain till about the 3d of March, and then to come into Vicksburg leisurely; and, escorted by Winslow's cavalry, I rode into Vicksburg on the last day of February. There I found letters from Gen. Grant, at Nashville, and Gen. Banks, at New Orleans, concerning his (Gen. Banks's) projected movement up Red River. I was authorized by the former to contribute aid to Gen. Banks for a limited time; but Gen. Grant insisted on my returning in person to my own command about Huntsville, Ala., as soon as possible, to prepare for the Spring campaign.

#### VETERANIZING THE REGIMENTS.

About this time we were much embarrassed by a General Order of the War Department, promising a 30-days' furlough to all soldiers who would volunteer; viz, re-enlist for the rest of the war. This was a judicious and wise measure, because it doubtless secured the services of a very large portion of the men who had almost completed a three-years' enlistment, and were therefore veteran soldiers in feeling and in habit. But to furlough so many of our men at that

instant of time was like disbanding an army in the very midst of battle.

In order to come to a perfect understanding with Gen. Banks, I took the steamer Diana and ran down to New Orleans to see him. Among the many letters which I found in Vicksburg on my return from Meridian was one from Capt. D. F. Boyd, of Louisiana, written from the jail in Natchez, telling me that he was a prisoner of war in our hands; had been captured in Louisiana by some of our scouts, and he bespoke my friendly assistance. Boyd was Professor of Ancient Languages at the Louisiana Seminary of Learning during my administration in 1859-'60; was an accomplished scholar, of moderate views in politics, but, being a Virginian, was drawn, like all others of his kind, into the vortex of the rebellion in the events of 1861, which broke up colleges and everything at the South. Natchez, at this time, was in my command, and was held by a strong division, commanded by Brig.-Gen. J. W. Davidson. In the Diana we stopped at Natchez, and I made a hasty inspection of the place. I sent for Boyd, who was in good health, but quite dirty, and begged me to take him out of prison and to effect his exchange. I received for him; took him along with me to New Orleans; offered him money, which he declined; allowed him to go free in the city; and obtained from Gen. Banks a promise to effect his exchange, which was afterward done. Boyd is now my legitimate successor in Louisiana, viz, President of the Louisiana University, which is the present title of what had been the Seminary of Learning. After the war was over, Boyd went back to Alexandria, reorganized the old institution, which I visited in 1866; but the building was burnt down by an accident or by an incendiary about 1868, and the institution was then removed to Baton Rouge, where it now



PORTER'S FLEET.

is, under its new title of the University of Louisiana.

We reached New Orleans on the 2d of March. I found Gen. Banks, with his wife and daughter, living in a good house, and he explained to me fully the position and strength of his troops and his plans of action for the approaching campaign. I dined with him, and, rough as I was—just out of the woods—attended that night a very pleasant party at the house of a lady, whose name I cannot recall, but who is now the wife of Capt. Arnold, 5th U. S. Art. At this party were also Mr. and Mrs. Frank Howe.

#### NEW ORLEANS MUCH CHANGED

since I had been familiar with it in 1853 and in 1860-'61. It was full of officers and soldiers. Among the former were Gen. T. W. Sherman, who had lost a leg at Port Hudson, and Gen. Charles P. Stone, whom I knew so well in California, and who is now in the Egyptian service as Chief of Staff. The bulk of Gen. Banks's army was about Opelousas, under command of Gen. Franklin, ready to move on Alexandria. Gen. Banks seemed to be all ready, but intended to delay his departure a few days to assist in the inauguration of a civil government for Louisiana, under Gov. Hahn. In Lafayette Square I saw the arrangements of scaffolding for the fireworks and benches for the audience. Gen. Banks urged me to remain over the 4th of March, to participate in the ceremonies, which he explained would include the

performance of the "Anvil Chorus" by all the bands of his army, and during the performance the church bells were to be rung, and cannons were to be fired by electricity. I regarded all such ceremonies as out of place at a time when it seemed to me every hour and every minute were due to the war. Gen. Banks's movement, however, contemplated my sending a force of 10,000 men in boats up Red River from Vicksburg, and that a junction should occur at Alexandria by March 17. I therefore had no time to wait for the grand pageant of the 4th of March, but took my departure from New Orleans in the Diana the evening of March 3.

#### THE RED RIVER CAMPAIGN.

On the next day, March 4, I wrote to Gen. Banks a letter, which was extremely minute in conveying to him how far I felt authorized to go under my orders from Gen. Grant. At that time Gen. Grant commanded the Military Division of the Mississippi, embracing my own Department of the Tennessee and that of Gen. Steele in Arkansas, but not that of Gen. Banks in Louisiana. Gen. Banks was acting on his own powers, or under the instructions of Gen. Halleck in Washington, and our assistance to him was designed as a loan of 10,000 men for a period of 30 days. The instructions of March 6 to Gen. A. J. Smith, who commanded this detachment, were full and explicit on this point. The Diana reached Vicksburg on the 6th, where I found that the expeditionary army had come in from Canton. One division of 5,000 men was made up out of Hurlbut's command, and placed under Brig.-Gen. T. Kilby Smith, and a similar division was made out of McPherson's and Hurlbut's troops, and placed under Brig.-Gen. Joseph A. Mower; the whole commanded by Brig.-Gen. A. J. Smith. Hurlbut, with the rest of his command, returned to Memphis, and Gen. McPherson remained at Vicksburg. Gen. A. J. Smith's command was in due season embarked, and proceeded to Red River, which it ascended, conveyed by Admiral Porter's fleet. Gen. Mower's Division was landed near the outlet of the Atchafalaya, marched up by land and captured the fort below Alexandria known as Fort De Russy, and the whole fleet then proceeded up to Alexandria, reaching it on the day appointed, viz, March 17, where it waited for the arrival of Gen. Banks, who, however, did not come till some days after. These two divisions participated in the whole of Gen. Banks's unfortunate Red River expedition, and were delayed so long up Red River, and subsequently on the Mississippi, that they did not share with their comrades the successes and glories of the Atlanta campaign, for which I had designed them; and, indeed, they did not join our army till just in time to assist Gen. George H. Thomas to defeat Gen. Hood before Nashville, on the 15th and 16th of December, 1864.

Gen. Grant's letter of instructions, which was brought me by Gen. Butterfield, who had followed me to New Orleans, enjoined on me, after concluding with Gen. Banks the details for his Red River expedition, to make all necessary arrangements for furloughing the men entitled to that privilege, and to hurry back to the army at Huntsville, Ala.



I accordingly gave the necessary orders to Gen. McPherson, at Vicksburg, and continued up the river toward Memphis. On our way we met Capt. Badeau, of Gen. Grant's staff, bearing the following letter, of March 4, which I answered on the 10th, and sent the answer by Gen. Butterfield, who had accompanied me up from New Orleans. Copies of both were also sent to Gen. McPherson, at Vicksburg.

#### GEN. GRANT PROMOTED.

(Private.)

NASHVILLE, TENN., March 4, 1864.

DEAR SHERMAN: The bill reviving the grade of Lieutenant-General in the Army has become a law, and my name has been sent to the Senate for the place.

I now receive orders to report to Washington immediately, in person, which indicates either a confirmation or a likelihood of confirmation. I start in the morning to comply with the order, but I shall say very distinctly on my arrival there that I shall accept no appointment which will require me to make that city my headquarters. This, however, is not what I started out to write about.

for McPherson also. I should write to him, and will some day, but starting in the morning I do not know that I will find time just now. Your friend,

U. S. GRANT, Major-General.  
GEN. SHERMAN'S LETTER.  
[Private and confidential.]  
NEAR MEMPHIS, March 10, 1864.

DEAR GENERAL: I have your more than kind and characteristic letter of the 4th, and will send a copy of it to Gen. McPherson at once.

You do yourself injustice and do too much honor in assigning to us so large a share of the merits which have led to your high advancement. I know you approve the friendship I have ever professed to you, and will permit me to continue as heretofore to manifest it on all proper occasions.

You are now Washington's legitimate successor, and occupy a position of almost dangerous elevation; but if you can continue as heretofore to be yourself, simple, honest, and unpretending, you will enjoy through life the respect and love of friends, and the homage of millions.



MAP OF THE RED RIVER CAMPAIGN.

of human beings who will award to you a large share for securing to them and their descendants a Government of law and stability.

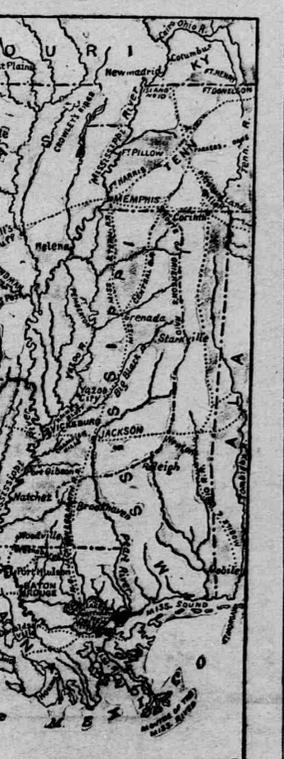
I repeat, you do Gen. McPherson and myself too much honor. At Belmont you manifested your traits, neither of us being near; at Donelson also you illustrated your whole character. I was not near, and Gen. McPherson is too subordinate a capacity to influence you.

Until you had won Donelson, I confess I was almost cowed by the terrible array of anarchical elements that presented themselves at every point; but that victory admitted the ray of light which I have followed ever since.

I believe you are as brave, patriotic, and just as the great prototype Washington; as unselfish, kind-hearted, and honest as a man should be; but the chief characteristic in your nature is the simple faith in success you have always manifested, which I can liken to nothing else than the faith a Christian has in his Savior.

This faith gave you victory at Shiloh and Vicksburg; also, when you have completed your best preparations, you go into battle without hesitation, as at Chattanooga—no doubts, no reserve; and I tell you that it was this that made us act with confidence. I knew wherever I was that you thought of me, and if I got in a tight place you would come if alive.

On the 18th of March I had issued orders assuming command of the Military Division of the Mississippi, and was seated in the office, when the General came in and said they were about to present him a sword, inviting me to come and see the ceremony. I went back into what was the dining-room of the house. On the table lay a rosewood box, containing a sword, sash, spurs, etc., and round about the table were grouped Mrs. Grant, Nelly, and one or two of the boys. I was introduced to a large, corpulent gentleman, as the Mayor, and another citizen, who had come down from Galena to make this presentation of a sword to their fellow-townsmen. I think that Rawlins, Bowers, Badeau, and one or more of Gen. Grant's personal staff, were present. The Mayor rose, and in the



MAP OF THE RED RIVER CAMPAIGN.

most dignified way read a finished speech to Gen. Grant, who stood, as usual, very awkwardly; and the Mayor closed his speech by handing him the resolutions of the City Council engrossed on parchment, with a broad ribbon and large seal attached. After the Mayor had fulfilled his office so well, Gen. Grant said:

"Mr. Mayor, as I know that this ceremony was to occur, and as I am not used to speaking, I have written something in reply."

He then began to fumble in his pockets, first his breast coat-pocket, then his pants, vest, etc., and after considerable delay he pulled out a crumpled piece of common yellow cartridge-paper, which he handed to the Mayor. His whole manner was awkward in the extreme, yet perfectly characteristic and in strong contrast with the elegant parchment and speech of the Mayor. When read, however, the substance of his answer was most excellent, short, concise, and if it had been delivered by word of mouth would have been all that the occasion required.

#### I COULD NOT HELP LAUGHING

at a scene so characteristic of the man who then stood prominent before the country, and to whom all had turned as the only one qualified to guide the Nation in a war that had become painfully critical.

With copies of the few letters referred to, and which seem necessary to illustrate the subject-matter, I close this chapter.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE TENNESSEE, STEAMER DIANA (UNDER WEIGH), March 4, 1864.

## A STRONGHOLD HARD BESET.

### Story of the Confederate Defense of Fort Wagner.

### CLASH OF ARMS.

### Night of Evacuation Finally Arrives.

### SUGGESTIVE LESSON.

### Features of a Peculiar Engineering Situation.

BY JAMES H. HAROLD, LIEUTENANT, 1ST N. Y. ENG., PLAINFIELD, N. J.

(Continued from last week.)

IN THE FEDERAL side it had been arranged that the brigade of Gen. Strong was to lead. This composed Col. Shaw's 54th Mass. and Col. Chatfield's 6th Conn., with a battalion of the 7th Conn., the 3d N. H., 48th N. Y., 9th Me. and 76th Pa., supported by Col. Putnam's Brigade, which included one New Hampshire, one New York and two Ohio regiments; Brig.-Gen. Truman Seymour commanding.

The sun had almost reached the horizon when these regiments were formed on the beach to the rear of their batteries in columns of eight companies, closed at half distance, the 6th Conn. to lead and attack the southeast salient angle of the fort; the 48th N. Y. to pass along the sea front and, facing inward, to attack there; the other regiments to charge the south front, extending inward toward the marsh on the left, while the 54th Mass. colored volunteers, 1,000 strong, splendidly drilled and accoutered, was given the honor of a position in advance of all.

There seems to have been no question whatever among the Federals as to the success of the assault. They fondly fancied that the guns of Fort Wagner had been effectually silenced; that the garrison was feeble and demoralized; that all they had to do was to make one rapid advance, and the fact was accomplished. "We'll sleep in that battered earthwork to-night." And so many a poor fellow did—a ghastly and mysterious slumber in which the unbreathing warrior "dreams of battlefields no more."

As sunset faded and twilight deepened into night the Federal bombardment on land and sea suddenly and completely ceased. A great calm ensued, but it was quiet, portentous and terrible. It seemed as if the heart of Nature stood still, awed by a presence of the impending and fearful catastrophe.

Gradually the smoke of the cannonade, swathed about the fort for hours, so far lifted that the enemy was seen debouching from their first parallel and advancing over the narrow approach between it and the fort; then from bomb-proof and sand-hills the garrison quickly gathered along the ramparts. Field-pieces were ranged; the artillerymen double-shotted their guns. On rushed the Federals at a double-quick, saluted by simultaneous outbreak of hot shot, an implaceable, concentrated fire from Sumter, Gregg, and James Island.

Conspicuous in the van came the unfortunate Massachusetts men, under Col. Shaw. A portion followed him over the ditch and planted their flag on the ramparts. The Colonel was shot and instantly killed. The others could not



#### "CRIES FOR HELP AND WATER."

endure the sight of that gaping ditch or the revolting sensation of winged metal viciously near. They broke, and under the influence of panic, blundered first upon the 9th Me., and afterwards upon the 76th Pa., partially destroying the organization of both.

In startling contrast, across the narrow and fatal stretch before the fort, every inch of which was swept by a hurricane of fire, the 6th Conn., Col. John Chatfield, charged with such undaunted resolution upon the southeast salient that they succeeded in capturing it. For

three hours they were penned in, no support daring to follow them.

Grimly they held on to the salient they had taken. Retreat was next to impossible.

An eye-witness describes the scene: "A section of the Charleston Volunteers vainly endeavored to dislodge them.

THEY WERE REFUSED, and their Captain (Ryan) killed; but the enemy was at this time retreating from all parts of the field. The sharp fire of grape and musketry hissed over the faces of the salient until the 31st Ga., who had just reached the island, charged over the south scarp, and two companies of the Charleston Battalion deployed along the western face, when the 6th Conn., convinced that the game was up, sensibly surrendered.

"The history of the war, rife with desperate conflicts, can show no more terrific strife than this. It was in more than one particular a battle of the giants. Of the overwhelming character of the Federal defeat there cannot be a shadow of a doubt. Four thousand of the enemy had been dashed against our impregnable earthwork, and when reformed within their lines only about 1,000 answered to their names. Their commander, Gen. Strong, was wounded unto death; Cols. Chatfield, Putnam, and Shaw lay dead within our lines.

"Blood, mud, water, brains, and human hair matted together, men lying in every possible attitude, with every conceivable expression on their countenances, their limbs bent into unnatural shapes by the fall of 20 or 30 feet, the features rigid and stretched as if they had clutched at the earth to save themselves; pale, beseeching faces looking from

AMONG THE GHASTLY CORPSES, with moans and cries for help and water and dying gasps and death struggles."

On Sunday the wounded were removed, the dead buried; of the latter 800 mangled bodies were interred near the beach. Negotiations for the exchange of prisoners followed, and the 27th of July was appointed the day.

While the exchange of prisoners progressed, Gen. Taliaferro, holding a council with his officers, decided that the place was no longer tenable.

But there was one officer there who, knowing the fort and its tremendous capabilities far better than others, since from the first spadeful of sand thrown up he had seen it grow to completion, shared not the general feeling of uncertainty.

He manned the gig of the Gist Guard artillery, of which he was Captain, sought Gen. Ripley's Charleston Headquarters, and after an interview with that plucky commander returned to Fort Wagner with orders that the fort should be held.

Thus observes Maj. Gilchrist: "Incidentally through the personal efforts of Capt. E. C. Chichester Fort Wagner, in fact Charleston itself, was saved at that date from falling into the enemy's hands. It became evident to the Federals that Fort Wagner was not to be taken by assault; thenceforth the method of siege by regular approach and bombardment was resorted to. Every facility existed for this undermining kind of work.

"Fort Sumter had been practically annihilated, and protected by their ironclads on the ocean flank, and impenetrable marshes on the left, with only the guns on James Island, two miles away, to ineffectually oppose them, their parallels were established one after another, until the very salient of Fort Wagner had almost been reached.

#### OBSTINATE ENDURANCE.

Morning, noon and night the fort seemed the center of a perfect inferno. Sea batteries and land batteries belched their venom against it, water was scarce, and the food, often, spoiled in transit, scarcely eatable. Of sleep there was none. How, with the everlasting crash of artillery was the thing possible? Every day added to the list of killed and wounded. Explosions not infrequently occurred in the besiegers' advance ranks.

"But there was a limit to mortal endurance. The different commands had to be relieved at various intervals; and what greater proof can be had of their courage and devotion than that, with personal knowledge of the dangerous and loathsome nature of the service, the same commands returned time and time again with full ranks and a greater spirit to resist as the struggle grew more intense.

"Early in September it became apparent that the end was near. For fifty-seven days Fort Wagner had been