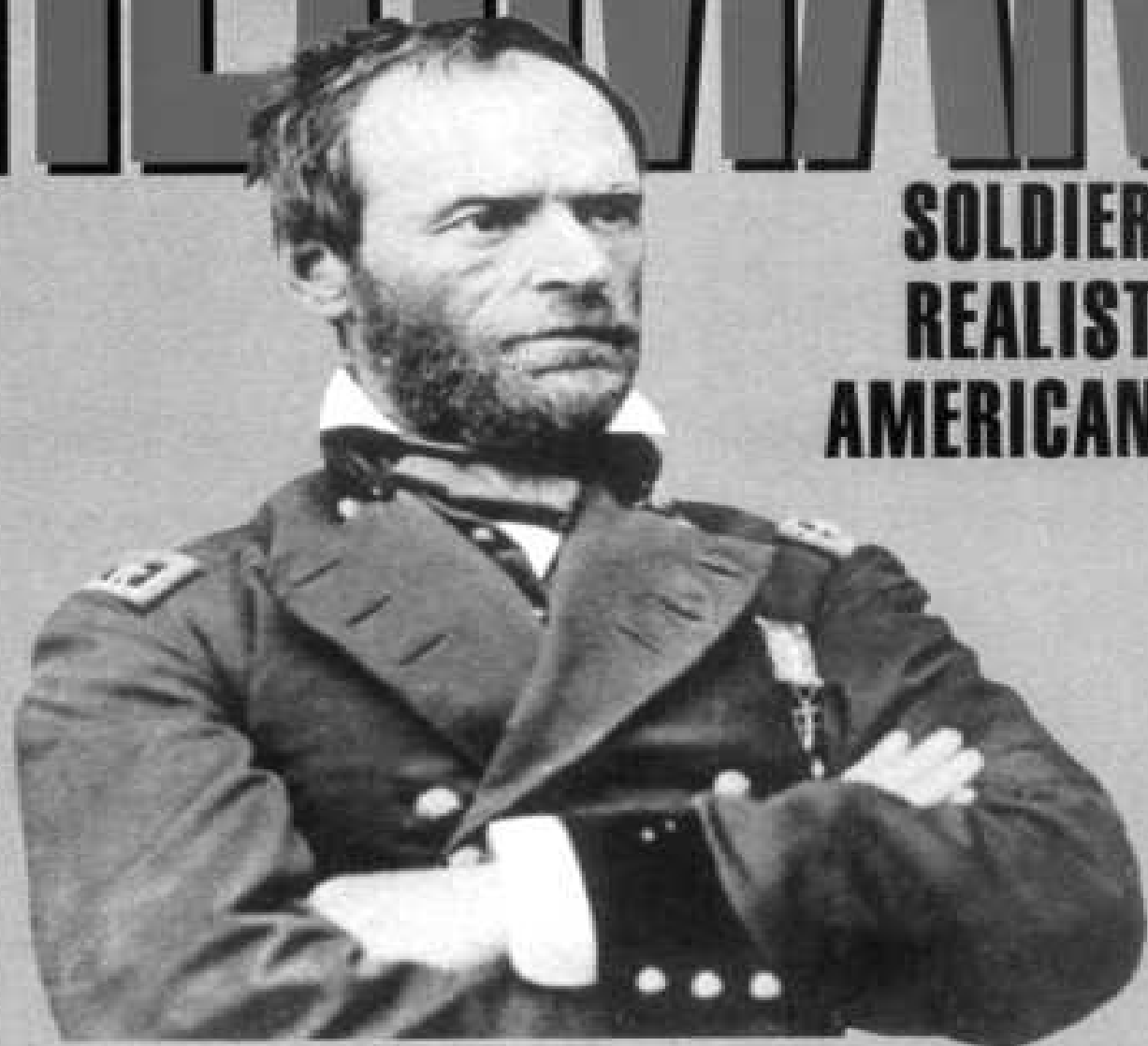


# SHERMAN



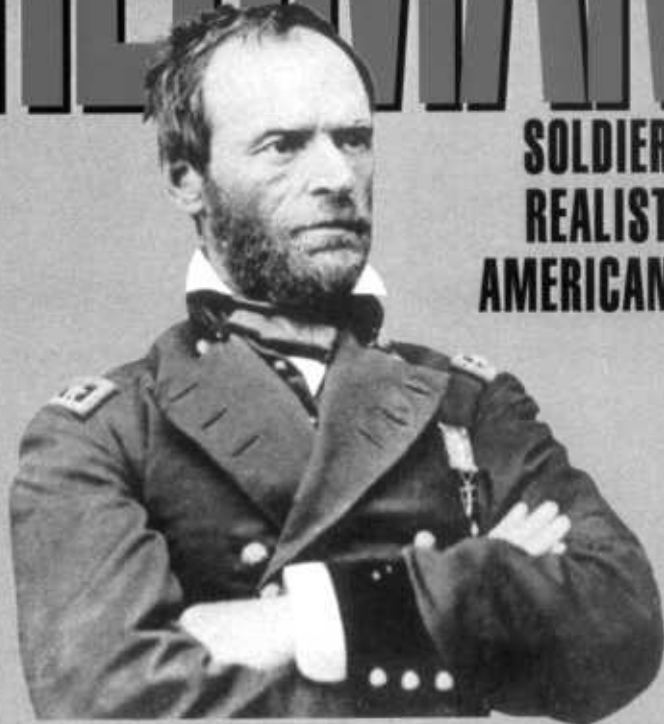
**SOLDIER  
REALIST  
AMERICAN**

**B.H. LIDDELL HART**

NEW INTRODUCTION BY JAY LUVAAS

# SHERMAN

**SOLDIER  
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# SHERMAN

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Soldier



# Realist

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American



GENERAL WILLIAM T. SHERMAN

# SHERMAN

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Soldier

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# Realist

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**American**

By B. H. LIDDELL HART

New introduction by Jay Luvaas



**DA CAPO PRESS**

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To MY FATHER-AND FRIEND

# INTRODUCTION

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## Sherman and the "Indirect Approach"

In 1928 Captain B. H. Liddell Hart, an English military journalist, theorist, and reformer already well known for his provocative writings on military tactics, training, and mechanization, was asked by an American publisher to write on one of the great figures of the American Civil War, "preferably Lee.". Two years previously he had published his first book of an historical nature, *A Greater than Napoleon - Scipio Africanus*, soon after followed by *Great Captains Unveiled*, a compilation of articles about Jenghiz Khan, Saxe, Gustavus Adolphus, Wallenstein, and Wolfe. Both books reveal a careful reading of the primary sources and an acquired skill in making the past speak to the present on questions of tactics, strategy, and organization.

He chose instead to focus on William Tecumseh Sherman, in his judgment "the most original and versatile" of the Civil War commanders and an ideal vehicle for conveying his own emerging theory of mobile warfare and the strategy of "Indirect Approach." Determined to avoid repetition of the trench deadlock of 1914-18, where massive assaults had resulted only in massive casualties, Liddell Hart had already turned to mechanization as the way to restore mobility to warfare. Now he hoped that Sherman, whose campaigns in 1864 had overcome "a somewhat similar deadlock," might provide clues that could be applied to the present. For his purposes Lee's campaigns were less relevant and Lee himself, however skilled in the operational art, was no innovator.

By 1927 Liddell Hart had begun to realize that a direct approach to the objective along the line of natural expectation usually yielded negative results, and when he began research for the Sherman biography the following year all the ingredients for his "Strategy of Indirect Approach" fell into place: the concept of "deep strategic penetration," the importance of simultaneously threatening "alternative objectives," and the "baited gambit," which combined offensive strategy with defensive tactics. Had Liddell Hart already formulated his "Strategy of Indirect Approach," Sherman could have provided convincing examples, but in fact it was the other way around. Only by entering Sherman's thought process could Liddell Hart develop his theory in detail, and in his *Memoirs* he acknowledged that reading the message traffic in the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies gave access to "the-day-to-day, and even hour-by-hour impressions and decisions" of commanders on both sides. A glance at Sherman's official letters and orders throughout the Atlanta Campaign and during the subsequent march to the sea offers convincing evidence that Sherman had indeed pondered the thoughts and alternatives attributed to him.

In 1929, the same year that Sherman was published in the United States, Liddell Hart produced another book that elevated Sherman's operational techniques into a doctrine adaptable to mechanized war, using examples from the more distant past to substantiate his theories and give them universal validity. In only six of more than 280 campaigns, he asserted, had decisive results followed a strategy of direct approach.

History shows that rather than resign himself to a direct approach, a Great Captain will take even the most hazardous indirect approach-if necessary, over mountains, deserts, or



swamps, with only a fraction of his force, even cutting himself loose from his communications. Facing, in fact, every unfavourable condition rather than accept the risk of stalemate.'

The Decisive Wars of History was followed a decade later by a second edition entitled The Strategy of Indirect Approach, which included the most recent campaigns in World War II. Subsequent editions dealt with the "Indirect Approach" as it had been applied in the Arab-Israeli War of 1948, and had Liddell Hart been alive at the time of the recent Gulf War he most assuredly would have compared the so-called "Hail Mary" maneuver in Desert Storm to Sherman's plan to pry the Confederates out of their mountain fortifications around Dalton in May, 1864-pointing out of course that General Schwarzkopf was reputed to have had a copy of Sherman's Memoirs on his night stand. Certainly Liddell Hart would have made much of the fact that FM 100-5, the current U.S. doctrinal manual supporting the AirLand Battle, asserts that "successful tactical maneuver depends on skillful movement along indirect approaches supported by direct and indirect fires," that the ideal campaign plan "embodies an indirect approach that preserves the strength of the force for decisive battles," that "the ideal attack should resemble what Liddell Hart called the 'expanding torrent,' " and that

surprise and indirect approach are desirable characteristics of any scheme of maneuver. When a geographically indirect approach is not available, the commander can achieve a similar effect by doing the unexpected - striking earlier, in greater force, with unexpected weapons, or at an unlikely place.<sup>2</sup>

On this point, Sherman and Liddell Hart would have agreed.

There is evidence that Liddell Hart's Sherman had an immediate if perhaps a somewhat superficial impact on the British army. The principal exercises in 1931, stressing significant reduction in the scale of transport and the weight of the soldier's load, were known as "a Sherman march," and in 1932 the first complete armored force in the British army conducted exercises in making deep thrusts into the "enemy's rear areas." In 1932 a future German War Minister and Commander-in-Chief conveyed to Liddell Hart that he had been "greatly impressed" by his exposition of Sherman's technique and was applying it in his own training methods. As later events would show, he was not the only German General to accept the idea of deep strategic penetration by armored forces.'

Several months before the Allied landings in Normandy in 1944, Liddell Hart had an opportunity to talk with General George Patton, who claimed

that before the war he had spent a long vacation studying Sherman's campaigns on the ground in Georgia and the Carolinas, with the aid of my book. So I talked of the possibilities of applying "Sherman methods" in modern warfare-moving stripped of impedimenta to quicken the pace, cutting loose from communications if necessary, and swerving past opposition, instead of getting hung up in trying to overcome it by direct attack. It seemed to me that by the development and exploitation of such Sherman methods, on a greater scale, it would be possible to reach the enemy's rear and unhinge his position -as the Germans had already done in 1940. I think the indirect argument made some impression.... The way that, after the breakthrough, he actually carried out his plans, in superSherman style, is a matter that all the world knows.'

The reader might also bear in mind another of Liddell Hart's observations, written as he was finishing the book.

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The profoundest truth of war is that the issue of battles is usually decided in the minds of the opposing commanders, not in the bodies of their men. The best history would be register of their thoughts and emotions, with a background of events to throw them into relief.'

This, in essence, is what Sherman attempts to achieve, and the reader should remember that this is as much a work of military theory - a very influential work - as a campaign history or military biography. It is in fact the best example of how the three can be combined.

-JAY LUVAAS

Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania

November 1992

1. Liddell Hart, *Thoughts on War* (London, Faber and Faber Ltd., 1944), p. 64. This is from a note dated October 1928.
2. Headquarters, Department of the Army, FM 100-5: *Operations* (Washington: Department of the Army, 1986), pp. 12, 30, 109, 122.
3. B. H. Liddell Hart, ed. William T. Sherman, *From Atlanta to the Sea* (London: The Folio Society, 1961), pp. 14-15.
4. "Note on Two discussions with Patton, 1944." 20 February 1948. Liddell Hart Papers, States House, Medmenham.
5. *Thoughts on War*, p. 150.

# PREFACE

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Tats study of Sherman is an attempt to portray the working of a man's mind, not merely of a man's limbs and muscles encased in uniform clothing. The man is William Tecumseh Sherman who, by the general recognition of all who met him, was the most original genius of the American Civil War. And who, in the same breath, is often described as "the typical American." To reconcile the apparent contradiction, of the exceptional and the general, is a problem which in itself invites study and excites the creative imagination. It is curious that the attempt at a solution has been neglected so long. For if this man was both so original in mind and so characteristically American, that combination-which many in Europe would say was paradoxical, if not improbable-may help to illumine our understanding not only of the last seventy years but of the tendencies still in the womb of fate.

Thus the book, further, seeks to project the film of Sherman onto the screen of contemporary history. For there are vital lessons to be learnt from this man, his character and his career, his struggle with his environment and his ascendancy over it-keys to the modern world and to modern war. And, those keys had not lain so long neglected in the dusty lumber-room of history, the problem of the world war might have been better understood, and a worn world have suffered less from a peace which passeth understanding.

For it was the "War in the West," neglected by European military thought in the half century which followed, that revealed not only the essential nature of a modern war of nations but also the essential influence of economic and psychological factors upon the course of such a war. And it was the conscious exploitation of these factors by Sherman in his famous "March through Georgia" and the Carolinas which finally decided the issue, long and expensively postponed, even mortally endangered by the direct battle-lusting strategy which had governed the campaign in Virginia. Yet so far as an impression of the American Civil War penetrated the consciousness of the General Staffs of Europe was that of the battle dore and shuttlecock tournament in Virginia-which they faithfully imitated with even greater lavishness and ineffectiveness on the battlefields of France from 1914 to 1918.

This book, however, leaves the parallel to emerge by reflection from the portrayal of Sherman's mind, of the influence which moulded it and the influence it exercised on the course of the Civil War.

Those accustomed to the conventional military history and biography may complain that the account of battles is uncomfortably bare and scantily furnished with details. I shall welcome the complaint. This book is a study of life, not of still life. An exercise in human psychology, not in upholstery. To place the position and trace the action of battalions and batteries is only of value to the collector of antiques, and still more to the dealer in faked antiques. Those who believe that exactness is possible can never have known war, or must have forgotten it. And even if by supernatural means we could recreate the action in such detail, it would be historically valueless. For the issue of an operation of war is decided not by what the situation actually is, but by what the rival commanders think it is. Historically and practically, it is far more important to discover what information they had and the times at which it' reached them, than to know the actual situation of the "pieces." A battlefield is not a chessboard.

Finally, passing from the sphere of war to that of sociology, this study of Sherman may serve to give the European reader a clue to the better understanding of the American character as it has evolved from its "prototype," and to give the American reader an opportunity of testing, by the acid of Sherman, the purity of the present product and how far the reality corresponds with the ideal set up by that most realistic of idealists.

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# CHAPTER I

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## THE MOULD

How far do heredity and environment, respectively, mould character and foreshadow a career? From three generations of judges, and earlier forebears who would not compromise with their principles was begotten a man who judged the case of the Southern Confederacy more acutely and dispassionately than almost any of his contemporaries. The man who finally executed the sentence of destiny and industry upon secession.

The first significant link in the chain of heredity is a sturdy Puritan of Dedham in Essex, named Edmond Sherman. Two of his sons sailed from England, probably in 1634, with several of the cousins to seek not only freedom of conscience but fortune in a virgin country. More mobile than the fellows they soon forsook the first settlements in Massachusetts to strike out afresh, and migrated in Connecticut. From one of the cousins was descended the Roger Sherman who signed the Declaration of Independence. From one of the sons, Samuel, was descended the William Tecumseh Sherman who almost a century later, was the decisive military agent in annulling the declaration of independence made by the Southern States. That he thereby made possible the national and economic greatness of the permanently United States is his claim to immortality. That his attitude to separation and his action were governed by calculation of the economic effects is his claim to foresight. That he was far from satisfied with the immediate moral consequences is his final claim to realism.

In the formation of his mind, environment first intervened to supplement heredity when his ancestor left the aptly named hamlet of Dedham behind. It stepped in again when his grandfather Judge Taylor Sherman, was appointed by the State of Connecticut as one of the commissioners to settle the title and boundaries of the "Fire-Lands" in the Western Reserve. In reward for his services there the judge was granted the title to two "lots" in the territory which subsequently became northern Ohio. The next factor of destiny appeared when his twenty year old son, Charles Robert, just admitted to the bar, fell in love with and married Mary Hoyt. The improvident youth, unable to support a family in "civilization," promptly migrated to seek briefs and his fortune in the new settlement of Lancaster, Ohio.

A year later, prospects were sufficiently hopeful for him to fetch his wife and first-born, carrying them both on horseback through the wilds, a long and venturesome ride. The second year of their new life at Lancaster was temporarily interrupted by the outbreak of war with England, and the Ohio militia was called on to share in General Hull's abortive invasion of Canada-launched, curiously, in Essex county. Hull was forced to retire-as a prelude to his surrender on his own soil-through the cutting of his communications by the Shawnee chief Tecumseh who, driven out of his lands by the Americans, now paid his debt to those who had given him refuge. Of rare skill even among his kind scout and guerrilla general "he was admired by the red men, because he taught them to combine and sink their old feuds, but still more by the white, because he possessed the virtues, unusual in an Indian chief, of strict adherence to his pledged word, and of a humanity that was absolutely unknown to his fellows."

Is there magic in a name? The superstition would gain credit, and almost credence, from the



historical coincidence which had its origin in the campaign, and the beginning of its fulfilment a few years later.

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For Charles Robert Sherman, like many men of peace, was acutely susceptible to the romance of war, all the more perhaps because his single brief taste of it had been in the noncombatant role of a temporary commissary. Apparently he found no adequate object for his martial hero-worship among the American leaders of the war of 1812-if the onlooker proverbially sees most of the game, he often sees too much to maintain his illusions-and so transferred his admiration to the more remote if more reputable figure of the Indian chief.

Thus when, on February 8, 1820, the third son, and sixth child, came to bless his "union" he gratified a wish hitherto deferred to his wife's desire to honour and perpetuate her brothers in the naming of her sons. The baptismal shower of fraternal names being now at last exhausted, this son received the paternally cherished name of Tecumseh.

The addition to Charles Sherman's family was soon followed by a welcome addition to his income although the latter was single, the former annual. The year after his third son's birth a vacancy arose in the Supreme Court of Ohio, and in a petition to the Governor from a number of influential citizens he was recommended in glowing terms-"From a long acquaintance with Mr. Sherman, we are happy to be able to state to your Excellency that our minds are led to the conclusion that that gentleman possesses a disposition noble and generous, a mind discriminating, comprehensive, and combining a heart pure, benevolent and humane. Manners dignified, mild and complaisant, and a firmness not to be shaken and of unquestioned integrity. But Mr. Sherman's character cannot be unknown to your Excellency and on that acquaintance without further comment we might safely rest his pretensions."

It is at least a practical proof of the sincerity of this archaically worded tribute that on his early death friends and neighbours hastened so readily to take charge of and adopt his children. For he had but a short time to enjoy the dignity of emoluments of a judge of the Supreme Court; too short to make adequate provision for a family. On a June day in 1829 the children were suddenly called out of school, to return to a home distraught by the news that their father, distant a hundred miles on the circuit, had been suddenly ill and was mortally sick. The mother left at once by coach, but while still on her harrowing and toilsome journey was stopped by word of his death.

To William Tecumseh, aged nine, it fell to be taken into the home of Thomas Ewing, a fellow citizen of Lancaster, who had worked his way up from manual labour to be a member of the United States Senate. Helped by the elder Sherman, he was now glad to repay his debt to the son, and by so doing make the country his own debtor. And rich as his political achievements, his memory is more enduringly, even more worthily preserved in Sherman's simple tribute that he "ever after treated me as his own son."

For several years the change of home made little difference to young Sherman's education, as he merely continued to attend the academy at Lancaster, where the teaching was good and the curriculum had a sound classical bias. At fourteen, however, he "was notified to prepare for West Point"-a euphemistic way of saying that he was not consulted in regard to a decision and a destination which sounded ominous to the ears of a boy brought up in the freedom and "naturalness" of Ohio in the thirties. For little as the boys of Ohio knew of West Point they knew it as a synonym for strictness

discipline and straightness of outlook. Sherman had still a couple of years before he would reach the age of entry and to develop his mathematics and French to the required standard.

But the time of grace drew to an end. And on a May morning in 1836 the stage-coach left Lancaster for Zanesville with a "tall, slim, loose-jointed lad, with red hair, fair, burned skin, and piercing black eyes."

At Zanesville he transferred to one of the coaches of the Great National Road, the main service which connected the East with the Middle West. After three days', and nights', continuous journey they reached Frederick, in Maryland, where others among his fellow-passengers took the new railroad to Baltimore, and thence to Washington. But the boy, capable enough of looking after himself recoiled distrustfully from the hazardous experiment of trying this new means of transport, and completed his journey by coach. The incident, amusing in itself, is a fresh proof that "Pauline converts are the strongest advocates. Within thirty years this rail-scared boy was to be first among great commanders to realize and demonstrate the decisive influence of railways upon modern strategy. But the light did not come on the journey to Washington.

After a stay with his fosterfather in Washington he passed on to stay with uncles in New York there to be an object of polite amusement to his cousins, who viewed him "as an untamed animal just caught in the far West." When he entered the gates of West Point the "animal" must have felt that, in truth, he was entering a cage, and its bars of custom and discipline were to be a sore restraint on body and spirit alike, overflowing with nervous energy.

In his memoirs Sherman's brief comment on his four years at West Point is the more vivid because of its brevity. "At the Academy I was not considered a good soldier, for at no time was I selected for any office, but remained a private throughout the whole four years. Then, as now, neatness in dress and form, with a strict conformity to the rules, were the qualifications for office, and I suppose I was found not to excel in any of these." Could any indictment of the orthodox system and standards of military education be more quietly damning? "In studies I always held a respectable reputation with the professors, and generally ranked among the best, especially in drawing, chemistry, mathematics and natural philosophy. My average demerits, per annum, were about one hundred and fifty, which reduced my final class standing from number four to six."

Nevertheless, it is a proof of his character, better even than his high "passing-out" place, that he had endured to the end while fifty-seven of the hundred who had entered with him had fallen out.

On that isolated cliff amid the Highlands of the Hudson, they were as cut off from the outside world as if they had been in a prison. And the course seemed peculiarly designed to suggest the prison atmosphere. There were no organized games to relieve the monotony of the long hours in class and the still more trying confinement of their scanty leisure hours. Not even a riding-school existed during Sherman's first years. Awakened by the reveille at dawn they hurriedly dressed themselves in their uncomfortable uniform, relic of Georgian fashion, with its short-tailed grey coatee, tight trousers of white drill, clumping shoes and that "little-ease," the high black stock. Then out onto the bleak parade ground to answer roll-call and back to sweep out their bare and chilly rooms before settling down to long grinding hours of study, in and out of class. Hours broken only by the brief release from quarters between 4 P.M. and the sunset gun, and by the grotesque practice, which soldiers share with convicts

gangs, of being marched to meals-meals here dreary almost as prison fare. Frequent and harassing inspections of quarters, person, and presence heightened the similitude. The cadets were swaddled in regulations every infraction of which meant a black mark-a "demerit" in West Point language.

Save for the long-dreamt-of furlough once in two years, the only escape was to the annual two weeks camp in the summer. A change of scene but not a change of spirit. Merely from drilling facts to drilling muscles. And while the mechanical educational process of the times was, at West Point enlivened by certain gifted teachers, the cadets' training in camp aimed at little more than the production of automata in the style and tradition of Frederick the Great, ably maintained, in a far less suitable medium, by the regime of "Old Fuss and Feathers"-that redoubtable soldier General Winfield Scott.

You think, perchance, rugged reader, that the picture is too blackly shaded? You would argue that this Spartan training makes men and that the system of an institution which produced so many great leaders is above criticism? But much depends upon where one puts the emphasis. Makes men, only so far as it instills manly virtues, but every check to initiative, selfreliance, and the growth of personal judgment detracts proportionately from their manhood. Makes men, unhappily too often, by giving them the conventional what is euphemistically called "a useful start" in their profession, all the more useful in a profession whose real test, war, comes so rarely. By its aid, provided that their individuality remains dormant, they may hope to keep the lead from their fellows who are handicapped by a uncomfortably progressive mind-which "makes trouble"-or by an excess of moral courage-which betokens a "lack of discipline." For smooth answers smooth the path to promotion.

As for the argument that this system of "education" has produced many great leaders, its validity depends on the complementary question whether they have become great because or in spite of the system. The criterion "by their fruits ye shall know them" is fallacious if there is only one tree which grows fruit, one way by which a profession can be entered. The real question, then, is why a blight was felt by so many blossoms, and whether even the best fruits would not have been better if they had escaped the blight as blossoms.

On this question the comment of Sherman on his own experience is significant. More significant because it was uttered by one who was the commanding general of the national army. And still more significant because it was confirmed by U. S. Grant, a fellow-statesman from Ohio, and a "plebe"-first year man when Sherman was in his fourth year.

For so trying did Grant find life at West Point, so uselessly vexatious its routine and regulation that he confesses in his memoirs that the years "seemed about five times as long as Ohio years," and he fervently longed for the success of a bill which was brought forward in Congress to abolish the institution of which he was an unwilling member.

If there are flaws even in their splendid later records, how far are these to be traced to the early blight? And in assessing the final product we should remember, too, that both Sherman and Grant broke off their army career at an early date and found in a civil career of the most contrasting type a powerful counteractive to the limitations of outlook imposed on them during their cadet experience.

To discern unnatural effects of these years we need not wait until maturity, and the years of

achievement, are reached. For the atmosphere, if not the direct influence, of the system reveals itself in Sherman's early letters, which for a time become marked by a stilted, artificial style, as unnatural as if a kitchen table had been covered incongruously with a coat of polish. Making an allowance for the extreme formality then fashionable in letter-writing, this aping of fashion by a boy reared in home simplicity and sturdy independence cannot be adjudged a healthy sign. But the style is less disquieting than the artificiality of the sentiments often expressed as if a record had been put on a gramophone. We can almost hear the grating of the needle-"my whole attention should be paid to my studies"- "we all endeavour to be well prepared in our studies both for our own good and that the persons (always influential) may carry off a good opinion of the Institution."

The boy's most frequent letters were addressed to little Ellen Ewing, five years his junior, and this difference of age made him the object of her child-like admiration, the years of companionship at her home, which was also his, had forged ties of affectionate comradeship. But now for his comfortless consumption his language was artificially chilled, in such remarks as "you certainly misunderstood me with regard to your mother. Although I should feel highly honored did she condescend to notice me, still, I am fully aware how slight are my claims to her regard." The effect was due, of course, to imitation as well as to the imposition of his environment. But that seems to exert a slightly unnatural restraint even on the spirit of revolt which, burning within him, occasionally finds utterance. "We often feel disposed to break over our imposed limits, and 'go forth' but the consequences would be of too serious a nature to admit of such an idea for a moment."

Happily, the boy's nature is at bedrock too solid to be spoiled by the surface incrustation. Even when one sentence makes us fear that he is on his way to graduate as a prig, the next redresses the balance by its underlying good sense retrieves the priggish form in which it is couched.

In an early letter to his younger brother, John, just launched into an engineering job at the early age of fourteen, there is implicit pride in the process of mastering a profession by hard apprenticeship, and a certain wistfulness, as well as a profound truth early appreciated.

"I hope that you still have as favourable opinions as ever with respect to your employment, for in my opinion a man's success in his profession depends on the impressions he receives at the beginning; for if these are favourable most undoubtedly he will endeavour to succeed, and success will be the necessary consequence."

There is still sound sense underlying a letter of a year later, but it is overlaid with a trite and rather self-righteous spirit, often the product of an institutional code.

"I hear that you are engaged in speculating in salt, and are waiting for the river to rise to take a load down to Cincinnati. Are you doing this on borrowed capital or not? Or does it interfere in the least with your duties as engineer? If it does, I would advise you not to engage in it at any rate, even if you can make a fortune by it; for a reputation for a strict and rigid compliance to one's duties, whatever they may be, is far more valuable than a dozen loads of salt."

This spirit also pervades the next letter :

"I judge that your speculations did not turn out as well as expected. You must not be astonished if

say that if such be the case I am glad of it, because, had you succeeded, your attention would have been turned from your present business. . . ."

---

Early in 1889 the Maine boundary dispute caused a grave tension in the relations with Canada and Great Britain. "It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good," and this at least did the cadets at West Point a service by loosening the tension upon them. The prospect of war leads Sherman to remark rather sententiously, to his brother, "For my part, there is no nation that I would prefer being in variance with than the British, in this case more especially as our cause is plainly right and just."

A more boylike attitude and reaction, however, is disclosed in a letter wherein he says: "Sometimes it appears that war with England is inevitable ; books are thrown in the corner, and broadswords and foils supply their place. Such lunging, cutting and slashing enough to dispose of at least a thousand British a day." It is a welcome change from soda-water sentiments, and has in it a pleasant dash of sceptical humour. The last quality is still more refreshingly marked in a letter to Ellen: "All the talk of this part of the world now is about war with England. Every person seems anxious for it and not more so than the very persons who would most suffer by it, the officers of the army and the corps of cadets. But ours, I fear, arises more from selfishness than true patriotism, for should war break out we would be commissioned and sent into the 'field' at all times preferable to studying mathematics and philosophy, and it would undoubtedly prove a better school for the soldier than this."

Sherman at last reaches the fourth year of the course which embraced civil and military engineering, fortification and siegecraft, artillery and infantry tactics, as well as "Mineralogy and Geology, Rhetoric, Moral Philosophy, International and Common Law . . . which the scientific officer requires." In camp he has now a plebe allotted to him "whom I made, of course, tend to a plebe's duties such as bringing water, policing the tent, cleaning my gun and accoutrements, and the like, and repair in the usual and cheap coin advice . . . he is a good one and a fine fellow; but should he not care for himself straight, I should have him fined in January and sent off, that being the usual way in such cases, and then take his bed, table and chair to pay for the Christmas spree. . . ."

The commissioned prospect was brightening as the end of cadetship approached. "Already have you given directions . . . for swords, epaulettes, hats, chapeaux and feathers. . . . Thus you see that by adding things of this nature, which will constantly keep the future before our minds, we break in upon and enliven our otherwise monotonous life."

His high place in the class entitled him to make his choice of corps. "This choice," he tells his mother, "will be, unless war breaks out with England, the Fifth Regiment of Infantry, because it is stationed on the northwest frontier, a country which I have always felt a strong inclination to see. . . . Also it is probable that the Indians will break out again, in which case I should have an opportunity of seeing some active service. Should war, however, be the consequence of this Maine difficulty, I should prefer the artillery, for the reason that it is stationed east of the mountains, which would be the seat of war, and it is an arm of the service which I would prefer in a war against a civilized people. . . . Whether I remain in the army for life or not is doubtful; but one thing is certain that I will never study for another profession. Should I resign, it would be to turn farmer. . . ."

Here the pent-up feelings find an outlet-"I will never study another profession." These four years have sickened him, even though he has successfully endured them. But his distaste is for the

meaningless customs and not for the profession itself. The germ of soldiering is now in his blood, and never will it loose its hold. All that is spiritual in the West Point tradition has been absorbed into his soul, as into his mind all that is profitable in the West Point education. So, too, he approaches the time of taking his commission with a sense of self-dedication, "confirmed in the wish of spending my life in the service of my country," and forcefully saying of a friend's decision to quit the army for the last time that "I would rather be a blacksmith."

But his Grail is real soldiering, stripped of the shams and conventions which mask its face, and enable connoisseurs of buttons to pass as soldiers. For military mannequins and mannikins alike his contempt is deep. And he ascribes these products, not without truth, to the influence of social customs and the mentality it breeds. Indeed to Ellen he had revealed the inner motive of his inclination to choose service in the infantry-in order to "be stationed in the Far West, out of the reach of what is termed civilization. . . ." That his choice finally turned to the artillery, despite the absence of a war with England, is, by inference, due to the fact that the Third Artillery, his first regiment, was stationed in Florida, a district almost as remote and as militarily active as the Far West.

Home for three months' furlough, after receiving his commission as second-lieutenant, the abrupt relapse to simplicity in his phrases reveals more vividly than any explanation the release of his spirit. With his return to duty he dons the conventional garb again, until Ellen breaks out in revolt. And then in a letter of contrite apology for this "adherence to ceremony" he discloses the cause-if he still cannot throw off the form. "No one regrets more than I the disposition of this world, to surround the sweetest and best pleasures of this life with the cold garb of formality, and if at any time I should bow to it dictates it is because I fear that a departure from them would give offence."

In October, 1841, he had sailed from New York to Savannah, and then transferred to a small steamship for Florida. His regiment occupied a chain of posts along the Atlantic coast, and he was posted to A Company at Fort Pierce, whose log-stockades crowned a steep sand bluff beside a mangrove-bordered lagoon. Sherman revelled in the open-air life. Duty was light and leisure ample. Leisure to be spent, not cooped up in quarters or in stuffy ballrooms, but in acquiring the arts of sharpshooting, of trolling for red-fish, and netting green turtles. Best of all was the joy of possessing a horse and being able to ride far afield, with the additional thrill imparted by the possibility of lurking for Indians. His letters to Ellen Ewing pulsate with a new life and leave no doubt of his preference, as a means of education, for Seminoles over seminaries.

Regarding her now, moreover, as a "playmate" in a deeper sense, he is eager to fill the delicate gap with his zest for physical self-expression-"I hope that you have opportunities and avail yourself of them to take a gallop across the country, and if ever I have the pleasure to come home again the first thing I will expect of you will be to mount the wildest horse and charge over the hills and plains. Next to drawing it is the most ladylike accomplishment in my mind." The comparison is amusingly incongruous.

Yet, despite his surplus of youth's hot blood and his adventurous delight in hunting Indian game, he is destined for forcible transplantation to the Indian territory in the West-his sense of realism was too deep-rooted to allow him to blind himself to the "other fellow's point of view," and to find hypocritical excuses for his enjoyment of this blood-sport. "You doubtless little sympathize with me in hunting and harassing a poor set of people who have had the heroism to defend their homes against

such odds for such a period of time."

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Still more exceptional is the mature insight of another letter: "As to the history of the war-the same as all our Indian wars. A treaty for the removal is formed by a few who represent themselves as the whole ; the time comes and none present themselves. The Government orders force to be used; the troops in the territory commence, but are so few that they all get massacred. The cowardly inhabitants instead of rallying, desert their homes and sound the alarm-call for assistance. An army supposed to be strong enough is sent, seeks, and encounters the enemy at a place selected by the latter, gets a few hundred killed. The Indians retreat, scatter, and are safe. This may be repeated ad infinitum. The best officer is selected to direct the affairs of the army-comes to Florida, exposes himself, does all he can, gets abused by all, more than likely breaks down his constitution, and is glad enough to get out of the scrape. Treaties, terms, and armistices have been and are still being tried, with what success is notorious. The present mode of conducting things is to dispose the troops at fixed points, and require them to scout and scour the country in their vicinity-about as good a plan as could be adopted, and one which would terminate the war if small columns . . . were to make excursions into the interior."

How true to the experience of all colonial history and campaigns ! And in the methods which Sherman advocates there is a peculiar parallel with those ultimately adopted, on a greater scale, by the British to solve the perplexing problem of the later stages of the war against the Boers in South Africa.

No clearer picture of the geographical conditions and handicaps, under which this chase of the Seminole Indians was conducted, could be painted than in Sherman's own words, when he describes the peninsula of Florida as "one mass of sand, with few rocks of the softest consistency, and, were it not for its delightful climate, would be as barren as the deserts of Africa. It is cut up by innumerable rivers, streams, and rivulets, which, watering the soil, nourish a rank growth of weeds and grasses, which, continually decomposing, gives a rich soil, and gives rise in time to a heavy growth of live oak, palmetto, and scrub of every kind. These are the dreaded hummocks, the stronghold of the Indian, where he builds his hut, and has pumpkin and cornfields. The stream furnishes him with an abundance of fish and alligators, the palmetto its cabbage. The thick growth conceals his little fire and but, secures his escape, enables him to creep within a few yards of the deer or turkey feeding on the border, and drive his copper-headed, barbed arrow through the vital part. In a word, the deep streams, bordered by the dense hummock, have enabled the Indians thus far to elude the pursuit of our army."

Sherman bore his full share in the risks of this pursuit, which often involved perilous excursions alone or with a handful of companions, and although he says little, either in his letters or memoirs, of his own achievements, his promotion to first lieutenant after only seventeen months' service was not merely fortunate. Many officers had to wait six or eight years for this step. It meant his transfer from Company A to Company G, and a move from Fort Pierce to the independent command of a little isolated detachment at Picolata, where there was only one other house besides the men's quarters. He had already had the opportunity to observe that a Florida summer was less "beautiful" than a winter. But his health did not suffer-perhaps because he found in his love of animals a counterattraction to the customary ways of passing the enervating hours in this tropical climate. "I've got more pets now than any bachelor in the country-innumerable chickens, tame pigeons, white rabbits and a full-blood Indian pony-rather small matters for a man to deal with, you doubtless think, but it is far better to spend time in trifles such as these than drinking and gambling." His bedroom presented an amusing spectacle

hen sitting in one corner, crows roosting on bushes in another, and a third filled with a bed of rushes for a fawn.

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Thus when in June, 1842, he was ordered to Fort Moultrie, South Carolina, the headquarters of the regiment, he did not relish the change as much as did officers more dependent on human society.

"Every morning at daylight all get up at reveille, attend a drill . . . at sunrise, breakfast at seven, have a dress parade at eight, and half an hour after the new guard takes the place of the old one. . . After that each one kills time to suit himself till reveille of next morning commences the new routine. Thus it is every fair day except Sunday, when we have an extra quantity of music, parade and inspection in honor of the day and to keep our men in superfine order at church."

The ceaseless round of parties and picnics in the hospitable and pleasure-loving South began to weary him more and more, and led him to reflect in a letter to his brother, that "A life of this kind does well enough for a while, but soon surfeits with its flippancy mingling with people in whom you feel no permanent interest, smirks and smiles when you feel savage, tight boots when your fancy would prefer slippers. I want relief, and unless they can invent a new Florida war I'll come back and spend a few months with you in Ohio."

Perhaps his boredom and his slight reaction to the charms of Charleston society, and its pretentious girls, was due also to the counteraction of having a permanent interest elsewhere. For when in the autumn his Ohio leave matured, so also did his boy and girl comradeship with Ellen Ewing mature into a definite engagement. Yet it is equally characteristic of him that he curtailed his stay in Ohio in order to explore new ground, travelling back to Fort Moultrie by the longest way round.

For succinct impressionism it would be difficult to surpass his description of his journey down the Mississippi: "Imagine yourself, as I was, at the mouth of the Ohio in a heavy snowstorm, the shore clothed in ghostlike garb; the following day the snow is no longer seen, and before another day passes by the shores are clothed here and there in green corn and grass. Soon the oak appears with its green leaves, then the magnolia, orange, etc., and soon you find yourself down between the rich sugar fields of Louisiana, the stalks ungathered and waving beautifully and luxuriantly in the breeze. : .."

From New Orleans, he went on to Mobile, then up the Alabama River and through Georgia to Savannah, whence he took the steamship to Charleston. Twenty years later the knowledge then gained was to bear fruit a hundred-fold. Not, however, in that trip alone, for he had hardly returned to duty before he was appointed, perhaps partly in consequence, as a member of a board which travelled for three months through Georgia and Alabama, investigating the excessive claims made by the State militias for the loss of horses in the Florida war of 1837-38. Their report and its exposures of fraudulent claims saved the United States treasury large sums, but nothing to what it ultimately gained through the study of topography, economic geography and psychology of the districts by the youngest member of that horse-board.

But these years in the South were a formative period in other ways. Here and there in Sherman's letters we get glimpses which are significant. Ellen as a devout Catholic was concerned with his spiritual welfare, and her concern produced one of Sherman's rare allusions to the subject of religion.



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