

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### GENERAL SHERIDAN'S LIFE AND CAREER—A REVIEW.

SHERIDAN'S SERVICES—OPINIONS OF CONTEMPORARIES—CHARACTER AND POSITION AS A SOLDIER—AS A CITIZEN AND MAN—A WONDERFUL STORY OF GREAT DEEDS—A ROMANCE OF WAR—AN HONORABLE AND UPRIGHT PERSONALITY—HIS GRAPHIC POWERS AS A WRITER—BADEAU'S TESTIMONY—BRIEF SPEECHES AT ARMY REUNIONS.

IN closing this volume, it will not be out of place to briefly review the career of the great soldier and honored citizen, as well as to give some of the contemporaneous opinions of his character, which, following his death, have been given to the world.

To write of his career is to speak of national forces. To discuss it personally involves the growth of a great people. Could such a career have occurred anywhere else than in this democratic country? The child of Irish immigrant parents, born in 1831\* in Ohio, his father a railroad laborer or sub-contractor, his brothers printers and country storekeepers, he is enabled to become a cadet at the National Military Academy. Again it may be said, what a career! At seventeen a cadet; at twenty-two a brevet second lieutenant; two years later receiving his grade; at thirty commissioned a captain in the Thirteenth Infantry, United States Army; fourteen months later a colonel of volunteer cavalry; thirty-seven days passed, of which thirty-four were under fire, and he fought and won a battle with 1,200 men against 7,000, — a battle which makes him a brigadier at thirty-two; four months later a division commander and tenaciously holding in a great battle the key

\* Colonel Burr was informed when in Somerset, Ohio, and by the venerable mother of the general that her son Philip was born at Albany, New York, March 6, 1831. There was a difference of opinion in the town as to this, and it is known also that Mrs. Sheridan has given at other times Somerset as the birthplace of her famous son. But it was decided to let the last statement stand. These inquiries were made for this volume, and before it was known to the publishers that the general was preparing his memoirs. Since then General Sheridan himself settled the question by correcting, shortly before his death, the proofs of a biographical article to be published in Appleton's *Cyclopaedia*. Albany was named by him as his birthplace.

R. J. H.

of the Union position; three months later still, leading and fighting in one of the greatest battles of the Civil War—that of Stone River, for his service and ability in which he was made, and before he quite reached his thirty-third birthday, a major-general of volunteers. In the next twelve months he was a foremost participant in a vast forward movement, that of the Tullahoma campaign, ending in the occupation of Chattanooga, followed by the terrible battle of Chickamauga; and still later winning the plaudits of commanders, soldiery, and nation by his masterly capture of Orchard Knob and the audacious and victorious assault on Mission Ridge, in the three-days fighting and victory known to Union annals as the battle of Chattanooga. A winter of hard work and some fighting, and then ordered East to the command of the finest cavalry army that has been organized, equipped, and handled in modern days. And what a record of service! The constant fights and as constant victories are to be reckoned by the hundred. Around Richmond, between May and August, 1864, Sheridan's troopers were ubiquitous. They were a flame of destruction; a tornado of defeat to the rebels; a very cyclone of victory to the Union cause. In eleven months seventy-six battles were fought and won by that cavalry, and Sheridan personally participated in sixty-two of them.

Then came that campaign of massive fighting and magnificent triumphs, which swept the Shenandoah Valley within three months clear of the enemy that had held it almost unbrokenly for three years—a campaign of five great battles, fought with all arms, and won, too, against a foe always having a decided advantage in chosen positions. It was a campaign of constant struggle, skirmish, sortie, infantry charges, and fiercest cavalry encounters. One, too, that was so dramatic in character, so heroic in mould, that its commander's name has passed into the world's history—become renowned in poesy and painting, and accepted finally as that of one of the greatest soldiers of the century. Sheridan was not more than half way over his thirty-third year, when he received the thanks of Congress and was made a major-general in our regular army. It is a record of honors won grandly, only equaled, as to the age of him who received them, by that other great soldier, to whom Sheridan has sometimes been not inaptly compared—Napoleon Bonaparte. Our soldier was at the very front of his career when, within a month after his thirty-fourth birthday, he planned, fought, and won the splendid tactical campaign, fierce battle, and complete victory of Five Forks. That wonderful "barn door" of devoted human lives he so skillfully swung with such terrible and unerring precision

against Lee's army on that April day of 1865, has made Sheridan renowned as the most famous tactician of the Union Army. Then came that unerring and relentless pursuit, in whose grip the slave-holders' rebellion was at last strangled to death on Saylor's Creek and at Appomattox.

Sheridan was a captain on the 14th of March, 1861. On the 4th of April, 1865, he was the youngest of our renowned soldiers, and in fame surpassed only by two others—Grant and Sherman; in rank only by Grant.

As Grant so often said, "Sheridan never failed." That is why the general sent him to the Rio Grande, with the expectation of having to lead the way into Mexico in order to destroy the usurping defiance of the Monroe doctrine, insolently executed while we were struggling in the throes of civil war, created by a similar and sinister sympathy of despotism.

Then his career since the clash of arms, was one both notable and characteristic. The administration of the turbulent Fifth Military (reconstruction) District, is now acknowledged by friend and foe to have been remarkably able, and now his bitterest antagonists recognize that he sought within his orders only the maintenance of peace and civil liberty. The splendid policy by which, during Grant's terms as President, the entire Central and trans-Missouri West was cleared of its Indian difficulty, so that the vast material development thereof made by railroad, mine, ranch, and prairie farm, could go forward unmolested, owes very much of its success to the military skill and administrative sagacity with which Sheridan conducted all the field operations, as well as the tribal negotiations. Made a lieutenant-general as the first act of Grant's presidential term, his commission being, like Sherman's, dated March 4, 1869, Sheridan received the news of his promotion to the grade of lieutenant-general while returning from an Indian campaign in Kansas. And then came his last promotion—that of general. Given by a grateful country while its valiant and worthy soldier lay in the darkest recesses of the Valley of Death, it was indeed a tribute worthy of a nation and of the services of the public servant by whom it was then received.

The estimation in which Sheridan was held while living, and now that he is dead, by those competent to pass judgment on him as a soldier and man, is such as to accord to him a lofty place among his contemporaries. Interviews had with famous German soldiers illustrate this:

Count von Moltke is reported as saying: "General Sheridan struck me as the type of a thoroughly American general, with all the wonderful energy and fertility of resource that characterize the Nation, and probably no better cavalry commander has ever taken the field. All the armies of Europe have adopted many of the lessons taught by him in the tactical use of cavalry."

General von der Goltz: "I consider General Sheridan one of the ablest cavalry commanders in the world."

General von Pape, who commands the entire Prussian corps of guards says that Sheridan's campaign in Western Virginia is a model of the way to handle large masses of cavalry in the warfare of the future.

Prince Frederick of Hohenzollern says: "The late emperor often spoke of him as the man who knew best how to make cavalry horses do more work than any other commander ever got out of them."

General Boulanger, the French soldier of whom Von Moltke is said to have allowed that there is something in him, pays, as reported, this tribute to Sheridan: "The judgment I personally formed of him was that he was a most intellectual man and a most competent soldier."

The London editorial writers, among other foreign critics, have not been chary of discriminating praise of the dead soldier. The writers are still biased by their overstrained admiration of the Confederate commanders, but some of their expressions in regard to Sheridan will bear preservation:

"General Sheridan," said the *Times*, "had an eagle eye for piercing through the designs of the enemy and for detecting at a glance all their weak points."

"Sheridan," remarked the *Morning Post*, "was a man whom his enemies admired even while his genius was overcoming their stubborn courage."

The *Daily News*, the day after the intelligence of Sheridan's death was received, wrote of him that he was "not only the most brilliant cavalry officer," of our Civil War, but he was also "both a tactician and a strategist, capable of the most extensive combinations, and able to carry out far-reaching plans, and he had the nerve, resource, and decision for emergencies that were wanting to some of the greatest strategists, notably the Archduke Charles."

The same writer tells that "his warmth of nature and the peculiar character of his genius made him loved. He was one of the most soldierly soldiers of his time. He united brilliant courage, which he owed to his Irish origin, to perfect steadiness and presence of mind in emer-

gencies." There is internal evidence in the *News* article which points to Justin McCarthy as the writer thereof.

General Sherman has often and again given his opinion of his dead comrade. In the grief that filled him when his death was announced, the old soldier would only allow himself to say, in reply to a question put by a New York reporter: "My estimate of Sheridan? I have frequently given my estimate of General Sheridan — and the world knows what it is — what I thought of his great abilities as a soldier and of his character as a man. Sheridan's place in history has long been established. His deeds and achievements, with those of Grant, Logan, and other great commanders of the Civil War, are familiar household words throughout the land. But I have nothing to say now."

No tribute paid to him professionally and officially, as well from man to man, shows more discriminating insight than the words of Mr. Endicott, Secretary of War, who declared that:

"General Sheridan's death is a great loss to the army and to this department. I mean as a practical, energetic man of affairs. He had a wide experience, gathered during an active military life. He knew and understood all the conditions of army life in all parts of the country, and of the people with whom our soldiers have to deal, including the Indians, in whom he took peculiar interest. He was wise and sagacious, and his judgment was marked by readiness in decision and guided by shrewd common sense. He had so long held high command, and had been attended by such success, that he felt a confidence in his administration of affairs which was rarely at fault. I always found him most reasonable and ready to look at all sides of a question, and, for a man of such impulses, most open to conviction. As a soldier, he, of course, stands quite by himself, differing with a marked and intense individuality from all our distinguished soldiers. As a cavalry officer he was preëminent. The rapidity of his movements, the energy with which he inspired officers and men, his unerring instincts on the battle-field, led necessarily to great success, that was well deserved. He was very interesting and entertaining in social intercourse; he had a fund of anecdote, a variety of information that often was very instructive. His experiences in Europe, when he accompanied the German Army to France in 1870, were varied and very interesting."

Major-General Daniel E. Sickles said of Sheridan: "He was a great soldier. Sheridan's character impressed itself readily upon his command. He gave to his men an intrepidity, a confidence, an audacity like his own, which enabled him to get a great deal more work out of

ten thousand men than another commander would get from twenty thousand. His presence with a command fairly doubled its strength."

Senator Hawley, of Connecticut, himself a capable soldier, has said, among other tributes, that "Sheridan's judgment was as sound as if he had been the calmest of men. In private life he was one of the sweetest, tenderest, kindest of men."

Senator Frye, of Maine, declares that "he was one of the most admirable officers I ever knew. I was with him in New Orleans during those troublesome days when he was in command. Before that I had supposed that he was a somewhat rollicking and adventurous Irish leader. My experience with him there satisfied me that he was a man of wonderfully sound and cool judgment."

The New York *Sun*, in a very lucid and comprehensive review of Sheridan's career, which bears the distinct marks of Editor Charles A. Dana's supervision, at least, closes with these words: "It must be said in conclusion that he was one of the ablest and most impartial administrators the American Army ever had. In recognition of this, no less than of his conspicuous services in the field, Congress and the President reflected infinite credit upon themselves when they bestowed upon him, before his eyes were closed in death, the exalted rank of general, as had already been done in turn to his illustrious predecessors, Grant and Sherman. He has deserved well of the Republic. May his soul rest in peace!"

Major-General James M. Schofield, who was a classmate of Sheridan's, and succeeds him in command of the United States Army, is reported as saying, among many other tributes to his dead comrade, that "To me Sheridan was always the *beau idéal* of a true soldier and a really great commander. He is one of the few American officers who attained high and responsible rank through his natural force of character and his military genius. He was a marked man, even at West Point, for he displayed at that early stage of his military life the same sterling qualities which subsequently made him a prominent character in our national history. . . . Every officer I have ever met, whatever rank they might have held, who served under Sheridan in the West or the East, have shown by their language that they honored and loved him. That is something you cannot say of every man who wore the shoulder straps of a general."

General Daniel Butterfield, who first met Sheridan at Chattanooga, says: "He was a great soldier, a fighting soldier. As a leader he has never had a superior, in my judgment, in any army, at any time."

Senator Jones, of Arkansas, said: "I regarded General Sheridan as a great soldier." Senator Cockerell, of Missouri, considers that "he was one of the greatest cavalry officers, I think, in either army during the war. He was, as a man, genial and pleasant, and very popular with those who knew him." Senator Morgan, of Alabama, declared that Sheridan "honored the character of the American soldier and citizen, and his memory will be cherished with great national pride." These are all ex-Confederate officers. One of the most touching tributes was paid also by Colonel Hooker, Representative in Congress from Mississippi, by whom the resolutions of sympathy and honor were introduced.

Thus alike from old-time foe, life-time friend, and the comrades of a common cause, comes the general tribute, all paying honor alike to man and hero. The list might be indefinitely lengthened. In this connection it will not be out of place to quote the opinion of the "Good Gray Poet," Walt Whitman, as a tribute to Sheridan's memory, and as an evidence of our national strength:

"In the grand constellation," the poet wrote, "of five or six names, under Lincoln's presidency, that history will bear for ages in her firmament as marking the last life throbs of secession and beaming on its dying gasps, Sheridan's will be one.

"One consideration rising out of the now dead soldier's example as it passes my mind, is worth taking notice of. If the war had continued any long time these States, in my opinion, would have shown and proved the most conclusive military talents ever evinced by any nation on earth. That they possessed a rank and file ahead of all other known, in points of quality and limitlessness of number are easily admitted. But we have, too, the eligibility of organizing, handling, and officering equal to the other.

"These two, with modern arms, transportation, and inventive American genius, would make the United States, with earnestness, not able only to stand the whole world, but conquer that world united against us."

General Sheridan himself manifested sensitiveness only on one point with regard to the character publicly given him. That was as to his having been both "rash and reckless" as a commander. The facts of his career amply disprove that judgment. At a dinner given in 1882 to the Loyal Legion, at which the general was present, he said during the evening's chat:

"People think I am rash and reckless. I say that there never was an officer more prudent than I. I encamped my men well, watched their rations and comforts, and when we fought the enemy I gave them the confidence of victory from my knowledge of the enemy and my confidence in the men."

Senator Plumb has contributed to the public *memorabilia* in relation to our dead soldier, the following capital reminiscence. The Senator, talking with Sheridan, said:

"General, you were in the West before you came East. What was your opinion of the Army of the Potomac? You remember it was criticised about that time as not doing its share of the work."

"Oh, the Army of the Potomac was all right," replied Sheridan. "The trouble was the commanders never went out to lick anybody, but always thought first of keeping from getting licked."

"Sheridan," continued the Senator, "came East when the cavalry of the Army of the Potomac was not in good condition, and Grant gave him the task of reorganizing it and raising its efficiency. He had worked away some time when Meade sent him over the Rappahannock on a reconnaissance. Sheridan came back, and in making his verbal report referred to a brush he had had with Stuart's cavalry.

"Never mind Stuart," said Meade, interrupting, "he will do about as he pleases, anyhow. Go on and tell me what you discovered about Lee's forces."

"That made Sheridan mad, and he retorted: 'D—n Stuart; I can thrash h—l out of him any day.'

"Meade repeated the remark to Grant, who queried: 'Why didn't you tell him to do it?'

"Not long after, sure enough, Sheridan got an order to cross the river, engage Stuart, and clean him out.

"I knew I could whip him," remarked Sheridan, "if I could only get him where he could not fall back on Lee's infantry. So I thought the matter over, and to draw him on started straight for Richmond. We moved fast, and Stuart dogged us right at our heels. We kept on a second day straight for Richmond, and the next morning found Stuart in front of us, just where we wanted him. He had marched all night and got around us. Then I rode him down. I mashed his command and broke up his divisions and regiments and brigades, and the poor fellow himself was killed there. Right there, Senator, I resisted the greatest temptation of my life. There lay Richmond before us, and there was nothing to keep us from going in. It would have cost five

or six hundred lives, and I could not have held the place, of course. But I knew that the moment it was learned at the North that a Union army was in Richmond then every bell would ring, and I should have been the hero of the hour. I could have gone in and burned and killed right and left. But I had learned this thing — that our men knew what they were about. I had seen them come out of a fight in which only a handful had been killed, discontented, mad clear through, because they knew an opportunity had been lost, or a sacrifice, small as it was, had been needlessly made; and I had seen them come out good natured, enthusiastic, and spoiling for more, when they had left the ground so thickly covered with dead that you could have crossed it on the bodies alone. They realized that, notwithstanding the terrible sacrifice, the object gained had been worth it. They would have followed me, but they would have known as well as I that the sacrifice was for no permanent advantage.”

Senator Plumb added: “That exhibits the man and the commander. He aimed to win and keep the confidence of his men, and he did it. He fought for results and not for glory.”

In a recent letter to the press, General Badeau has given expression to some views of Sheridan’s characteristics which help to round out our conception of the strong but simple man, whom Badeau has known so well. He writes:

“I have seen scores of the letters of Sheridan to Grant, and he wrote not a few to me, on points connected with his own military history. They were often short, and at times almost rugged, but invariably to the point, full of meat, and sometimes extremely felicitous in expression, like his ringing dispatches from the valley: ‘We sent them whirling through Winchester!’ ‘I deemed it best to make a delay of a day to settle this new cavalry general.’ ‘They were followed by our men on the jump twenty-six miles.’ He had a large share of that power of expression which men of great executive ability often possess when they approach subjects in which they are interested. He knew what he meant and what he wanted, and he could say it, not only so that a child could understand, but often with positive eloquence.

“Whenever the correspondence between Grant and Sheridan during the reconstruction period is published it will prove all that I say. That correspondence was secret. Grant’s letters were not copied in the ordinary letter books. They were seen by none of the clerks and by few of the officers at the headquarters of the army. I retained single copies of them at the time, and when Grant became President I copied

these into a book, which, for some reason, was not turned over to the War Department; but the first drafts or rough copies he gave to me, and told me they might serve as material for a political memoir. All that were of importance I have already so used, but Sheridan’s replies have not yet been given to the world. They will demonstrate the ultimate character of the relations of Grant and Sheridan, the complete harmony in their feeling and the accord in their judgment on a subject which they had never discussed in spoken words; for one was in Washington and the other in New Orleans before the Louisiana difficulty arose, and they did not meet after this until Sheridan had been relieved.

“I consulted Sheridan frequently in the course of my historical labors, and he gave me all the assistance I asked, but desired me not to name him as authority in political matters. He did not wish to be involved in political controversies, especially while he was serving under a Democratic administration; but he promised to furnish me all the facts in his possession, and he kept his word. After the appearance of *Grant in Peace*, he assured me that he would never contradict or give cause to contradict any statement that it contained.

“When he saw the picture I tried to make of himself for my military history, he objected to my saying that he swore, and I struck out the statement; but he allowed me to describe him as rising in his stirrups and swinging his hat in the famous ride from Winchester. He was loathe, however, to go down to history as a mere Murat, and naturally so, for he was much more the cavalry leader. Still, he had all the passion and magnetism that are so irresistible with troops. I have often been told that on the great ride his face was fairly black with the rage of battle, and he cried out again and again: ‘We’ll lick ’em out of their boots, boys! we’ll lick ’em out of their boots!’ He was all the more a general because he shared and inspired the feeling of his soldiers.

“I shall never forget how he looked on the day of the surrender of Lee. His troops had outmarched the great Southern leader, and fairly surrounded him at last; but when this was discovered, Lee sent word that he was negotiating with Grant for a surrender, and asked for a suspension of hostilities. Sheridan had heard nothing of the negotiations, and feared the report might be a ruse of Lee. At this moment I happened to ride up, and Sheridan, supposing I had come from Grant, asked eagerly if the story was true. He was pacing up and down in a piece of a farm yard that looked like a pig-pen, and I

could not but think how like his action was to that of a wild beast in a cage. His face flamed, and he clinched his fist as he said to me: 'I've got 'em, d—n 'em, I've got 'em like that,' and his nails were doubled into his palm."

The same article contains the following letter:

April 11, 1885. }  
 HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE }  
 UNITED STATES, WASHINGTON, D. C. }

MY DEAR BADEAU: I am requested by the commissioners of the Soldiers' Home to forward to you the accompanying letter to be delivered in case of the death of General Grant from his present illness, and request you to fill in the proper date.

We will select the most agreeable and commanding site on the grounds of the home.

It is unnecessary for me to use words to express my attachment to General Grant and his family. I have not gone to see him, as I could only bring additional distress. Then I want to remember him as I knew him while in good health. With kind regards, yours truly,

P. H. SHERIDAN.

In action Sheridan was extraordinary. Almost insignificant in appearance when on foot, when on horse-back he became conspicuous in any body of mounted men. He could be as calm as a brazen figure, or as fluid and flashing as a stream of molten metal. He would choose, when a battle began, a rising piece of ground, from which he could survey the whole field. He sat his saddle like a centaur; there was no better horseman in the American Army;—and he knew his horse also. Sitting silent, his wonderful gray eyes — so capable of expressing every emotion, passion, power known to man — would see every phase of the conflict. They would glow, burn, flash — until at a critical moment he would dash forward, galloping direct to where he was needed. It was a sight, indeed, to see him ride swiftly along the lines just before a charge and raise the troops' enthusiasm to fever heat. Then his cheek glowed with excitement, his eye grew bright, and there was a magnetic influence about him which extended itself to every one in the ranks. At such moments he seemed transformed, and it was no wonder that his troops afterward moved with steadiness and determination into the vortex of flame that awaited them.

As a practical soldier, it is doubtful if any army ever had a better one. He readily, almost, as it were, instantaneously, mastered the topography of the region in which he was operating. He was never

surprised. In any army he always proved on consultation to be better informed than any one else. He had the best of scouts — men who were ready to dare anything at his orders or request. He provided for his troops amply and always the best there was to be had, in commissariat or country, and he proved himself to be an admirable tactician—that, too, in the most scientific sense of the term. He was equally at home in handling every arm of the service, though he delighted most in handling the cavalry, to whose capacity for real warfare he gave increased value. While a firm but not extreme disciplinarian, he never expected impossibilities, or failed to remember that he was dealing with men to whom martial service was but an episode in citizenship. Personally, Sheridan was a lovable man—irascible and hot-tempered at times—but aiming to be just, and always ready to acknowledge a wrong or harsh judgment. He was honest, wholly truthful, generous, and fearless, morally, as well as physically. In private life most devoted to his home, his wife, and his beloved children. Among his personal friends and intimates—a limited circle, perhaps—he was generally cheerful and companionable. He was always as modest as he was brave, and was not readily drawn to talk of himself or his own career and actions. He was not a great reader, but he knew well what he did read. Certainly he was not neglectful of his books, and of late years, and especially since residing in Washington, his library became more of a social companion. He was a lover of Shakespeare, and could quote aptly on occasion.

A faithful member of the chief army associations, the Loyal Legion, of which he was the commander, and the Grand Army of the Republic. General Sheridan was a faithful attendant on the reunions which make each year so worthy a feature of our reminiscent life. He has spoken several times to such bodies.

General Horatio C. King, the secretary of the Society of the Army of the Potomac, United States Army, so favorably known as a writer on military matters, as well as a soldier in the field, speaks of his former commander in terms that deserve permanent record. "I first met General Sheridan," he says, "on reporting to him for duty in October, 1864. Sheridan at that time was about thirty years of age [he was in his thirty-fourth year]; short in stature, lithe, active, straight as an arrow, and every inch a soldier. He sat in the saddle as if he were welded to the animal he rode. He had a bright, piercing eye, a firm yet elastic tread, and was alert, quick, and energetic in every movement. He was our Marshal Ney, and inspired the most complete con-

fidence. Men fight better when they know that the man who leads them has the ability to extricate them from sudden and unforeseen difficulties. We had many soldiers who were good at a dash in carrying out instructions, but miserably failed when they ran against obstacles not anticipated in the plan of procedure. Sheridan, though brave to recklessness, was never rash. He comprehended the situation before he made his dispositions. He was swift to plan and to execute, and was, in fact, the *beau ideal* of a brilliant soldier. No officer was more beloved by his troops. He often spoke at the meetings of the Society of the Army of the Potomac."

Like Grant and Wellington, Sheridan never considered himself a speaker, yet he could express, among his former comrades especially, in a terse and happy manner the fitting thoughts for the occasion. His little speeches to the Society of the Army of the Potomac are all worthy the preservation the records give.

He was present at the Boston reunion in 1873, and said happily to his comrades at that gathering:

"We must remember that at one time the country depended upon us, and was obliged to call on us as a higher court, when all other courts had failed, to decide whether the Republic should live or die. We ought to feel proud of the future we have given to the country. In the last ten months I have heard continual allusion to the state of our Republic, and in Europe they look forward to the future of this country as the future which belongs to Europe as well."

He had but recently returned from Europe, where he had witnessed the great struggle between the German and French. He had studied widely and closely also, and his words then have a significance beyond the day on which they were uttered.

The year before, at the Cleveland reunion, the general responded to the toast of "The Cavalry." General Sheridan said:

"I don't know why I should be selected to respond for the cavalry, unless it is the fact, you know, that I did belong to the cavalry at one time, but at the same time I must say I was rather cosmopolitan. I not only belonged to the cavalry, but belonged to almost everything else. I once even belonged to the engineer corps, and corduroyed more bridges about Shiloh than any man I know of. After a while I came into the cavalry and traveled from the West to the East, and I can assure you, comrades of the cavalry, that there is no event of my life that I look back to with so much pride as my connection with the cavalry."

There is in these remarks a pleasant confirmation of General

Badeau's testimony that Sheridan desired to be rated as an all-round soldier. And he was undoubtedly a man of military genius in the largest sense of the term. The fact that from the very outset of his real military activity he gave an importance to the handling of mounted masses not before achieved, shows this conclusively. His generalship is a matter of universal recognition.

There is a world of meaning in the earnest words he addressed to the Army of the Potomac at the reunion held at Philadelphia, in 1878. They embody the advice of an earnest citizen as well as the words of an honest soldier, mindful of the noble cause for which he fought, and of the high character of the Nation whose soldier he was. They are to be read, not only for what is actually said, but for the unexpressed feeling the trenchant, well-considered words convey, as well for the spirit, also, of comradeship. It was the Centennial year, also:

"I want to see the government secure, and the cause for which we fought secure. I consider that we are here as the guardians of the honor of the men who now lie sleeping on many battle-fields, and that it is our duty to maintain the cause for which they died. Now I do not want any more war. I am the last man in the world, you know, to want war. But I think the best way to keep it from coming is not to be so forgiving as we are. I do not ask for anything, I do not want to be elected to any office, but I would like to keep what I have got. There is no danger but General Sherman will live longer than I will, so I have nothing to hope for in the succession. I will tell you one thing — I never yet have heard a single address by any one in this army society that I thought embodied what the society most wanted to hear. They all want to talk about the cause which led to the war, and about emancipation, and all such things. We do not care about hearing that. It is all over. The problem is worked out. What we now want to hear is something about our old comrades and about the battles we fought, and the good times we had, and the bad times we had — and things of that kind."

At New Haven in 1878, he said at the reunion:

"I have a few earnest words to say to you, comrades. I have remarked during the day that we are thinning out. Every year some of us go; we are all going, you know — we must go sometime — and it seems to me that every succeeding year ought not to allow any troubles which may come up or which may have existed heretofore to destroy the good feeling that we ought to have for each other. If I had anything against anybody heretofore belonging to this army, I would

just like to shake hands with him now. One thing you can depend upon, there is nobody belonging to this army that can get up any quarrel with me."

And General Sheridan never had a dispute with any one, in or out of the Army of the Potomac, over any event or action in which he was a participant.

In a pertinent, if brief address at the Burlington, Vermont, reunion of 1880, he gave a comforting assurance, as a military expert, which is worth while remembering. In responding to the toast of the "Army and Navy," the general said:

"There are about three millions of men in the United States belonging to the army and navy. I think it is unnecessary to count the little fraction of the regular army that exists now, or of the navy, because they would be nothing but a nucleus in case the country was required anew to engage in war. I hope no war will ever happen that will call out the entire number of men we can turn out in this country. I do not believe such a war will ever occur. We have the ocean as a fortification. It would take more than all the shipping in Europe to bring men sufficient to this country to make one campaign. I mean all the shipping of Europe, unmolested, if it were permitted to sail, couldn't carry men and material sufficient for one campaign, to meet the force we could command. It would take more than all Europe could do."

A more recent speech was made in 1886, at Creston, Iowa. The speech was wholly impromptu, and there was, fortunately, a good stenographer present. General Sheridan's manner was easy and his speech flowed unembarrassed. He said:

"Comrades, I came here to-day to see you and talk with you and shake hands with you, while Colonel Carr and others, you know, came here to make eloquent addresses for you to listen to. I think he has been too eulogistic of me in his remarks. It is true that I fought in almost everybody's army, from Pea Ridge to Appomattox, and although I fought with cavalry and infantry and on every line of operation, and always had to change and take new men on new lines, I was very successful. I went through all the grades they had in the volunteer service, and then I commenced and went through all the grades in the regular service, and the date of every commission that I have is the date of a battle. Now I want to say to you, comrades, this—that I am indebted to the private in the ranks for all this credit that has come to me. [Applause, long, and continued.]

"He was the man who did the fighting; and the man who carried the musket is the greatest hero of the war, in my opinion. I was nothing

but an agent. I knew how to take care of men. I knew what a soldier was worth, and I knew how to study the country so as to put him in right. I knew how to put him in a battle when one occurred, but I was simply the agent to take care of him, and he did the work. Now, comrades, these are common-sense things, and I can't say them in very flowery language; but they are true, nevertheless, and they are true, not of me alone, but of everybody else. It is to the common soldier that we are indebted to any credit that came to us.

"I am glad to see you here to-day, gentlemen, and I am glad to be with you on this occasion. There are many here to-day who served in the field with me, and it is a great pleasure to me to find them out, and they have been very kindly in their remarks to me. While they were with me I certainly did all I could for them. I often laid awake planning for their welfare, and I never killed a man unnecessarily. One great trouble with men who command troops is that they kill men unnecessarily. You may kill as many men as you choose if you give them an equivalent for the loss. Men do not like to be killed for nothing; they do not like to have their heads rammed against a stone wall unless for some good results. Those are the points I made during the war. Whenever I took men into a battle I gave them victory as the result of the engagement, and that was always satisfactory."

A soldier's speech that—aptly expressing the feelings of men and commanders alike. A longer, more finished, and quite a notable address was that delivered before the graduating class at West Point, in June, 1887. This dealt with the life of the graduates, their obligations, and the duties they owe to their profession and the country. General Sheridan could tell a good story, and tell it well. Among his army friends he was quite apt to do so. His dispatches, reports, and other official papers show him to have possessed a simple and direct style of writing, which became rather racy and epigrammatic on occasion.

A strong, simple man this—very human withal, and close to our common life. The genuine child of democracy, he honored it by his deeds, made it more glorious by his services, and proved that once felt in a man's blood and brains, democracy contains the civic philter which cures even the lofty if cruel ambition that history has too often identified with a soldier's successful career. In the American Democracy Sheridan's life, like Grant's and Sherman's, with all their comrades', gives us proof that the equality of man before the law is the very best guarantee that under the law the loftiest service, the bravest deeds, the most daring of intellectual activity, must all tend steadily to the common advantage—to the uplifting and glory alone of the Commonwealth.