

Article
written for
The Century

No 4.

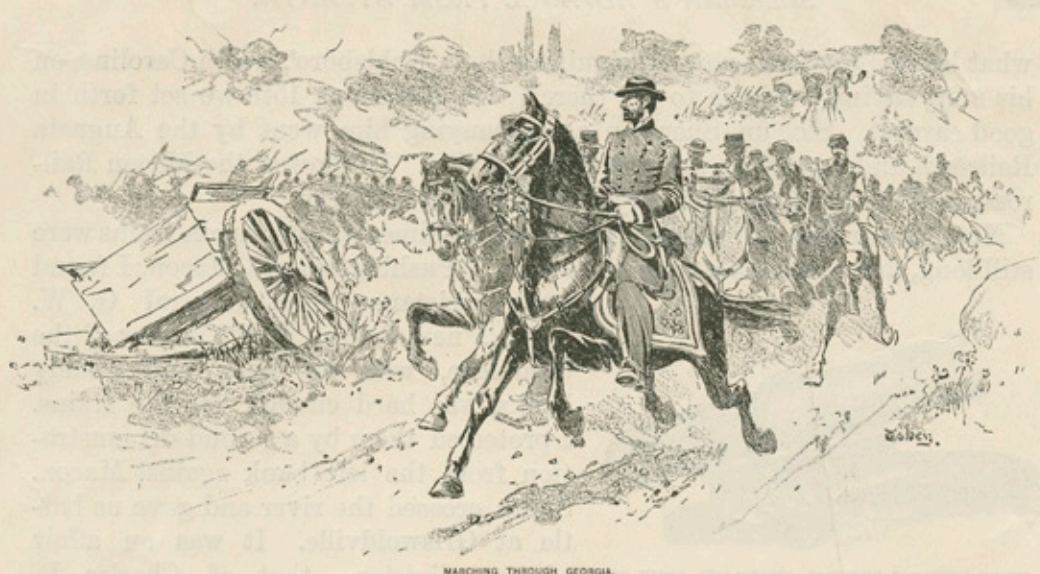
Subject -

"Sherman's advances from Atlanta"

Office
of the
Secretary

No. 11.

James A. McHenry
Director



SHERMAN'S ADVANCE FROM ATLANTA.

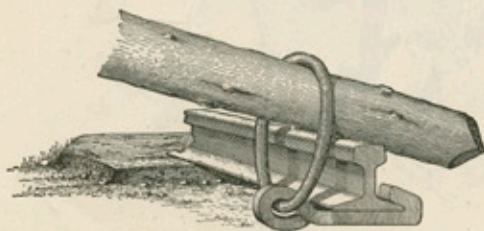
BY OLIVER O. HOWARD, MAJOR-GENERAL, U. S. A.

WHEN Sherman decided to march south from Atlanta, he ordered to Thomas at Nashville Schofield with the Twenty-third Corps, Stanley with the Fourth Corps, all the cavalry, except Kilpatrick's division, all the detachments drawn back from the railway line, and such other troops, including A. J. Smith's, as Sherman's military division could furnish. Sherman reserved for his right wing my two corps, the Fifteenth and Seventeenth; and for his left wing the Fourteenth and Twentieth under Slocum. Mine, the Army of the Tennessee, numbered 33,000; Slocum's, the "Army of Georgia," 30,000; Kilpatrick's division of cavalry, 5000; so that the aggregate of all arms was 68,000 men. All surplus stores and trains were sent back to Tennessee. The railway south of the Etowah was next completely demolished. Under the efficient management of Colonel O. M. Poe, Sherman's chief engineer, all that was of a public nature in Atlanta which could aid the enemy was destroyed. Wrecked engines, bent and twisted iron rails, blackened ruins and lonesome chimneys saddened the hearts of the few peaceful citizens who remained there.

Behold now this veteran army thus reorganized and equipped, with moderate baggage and a few days' supply of small rations, but with plenty of ammunition, ready to march anywhere Sherman might lead. Just before starting, Sherman had a muscular lameness in one arm that gave him great trouble. On a visit to him I found his servant bathing and continuously rubbing the arm. As I understood the general's ruling, I would command next to him, because I had from the President an assignment to an army and a department. I was therefore especially anxious to know fully his plans, and plainly told him so. While the rubbing went on he explained in detail

what he proposed and pointed significantly to Goldsboro', North Carolina, on his map, saying, "I hope to get there." On November 15th we set forth in good earnest. Slocum, Sherman accompanying him, went by the Augusta Railroad, and passed on through Milledgeville. I followed the Macon Railroad, and for the first seven days had Kilpatrick with me.

Notwithstanding our reduction of the impedimenta, our wagon trains were still long, and always a source of anxiety. Pushing toward Macon, I found



HOOK USED BY GENERAL SHERMAN'S ARMY FOR TWISTING AND DESTROYING RAILROAD IRON.

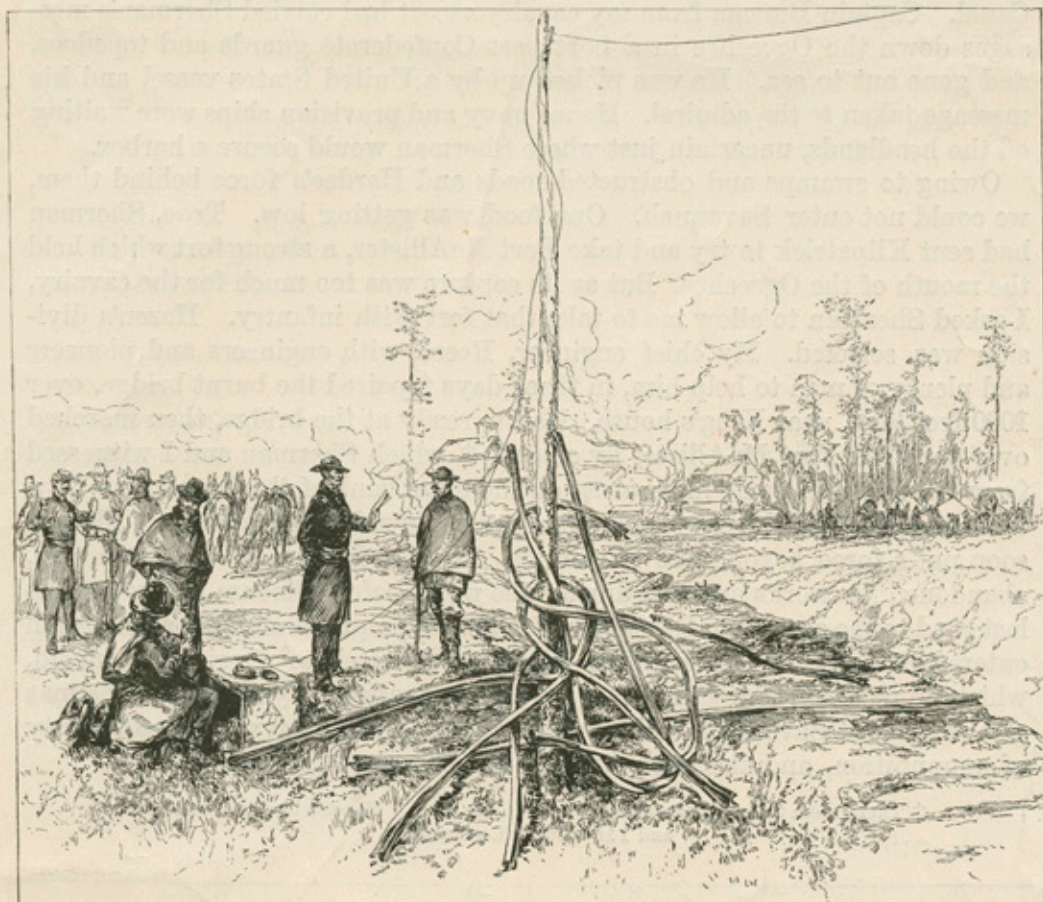
some resistance from General G. W. Smith's new levies. The crossing of the Ocmulgee, with its steep and muddy banks, was hard enough for the trains. I protected them by a second demonstration from the left bank against Macon. Smith crossed the river and gave us battle at Griswoldville. It was an affair of one division,—that of Charles R. Woods,—using mainly Walcutt's brigade. Smith was badly defeated, and during the *mêlée* our trains were hurried off to Gordon and parked there in safety. Here, at Gordon, Sherman, from Milledgeville, came across to me. Slocum had enjoyed a fine march, having had but little resistance. The stories of the mock Legislature at the State capital, of the luxurious supplies enjoyed all along, and of the constant fun and pranks of "Sherman's bummers," rather belonged to that route than ours. Possibly we had more of the throngs of escaping slaves, from the baby in arms to the old negro hobbling painfully along the line of march — negroes of all sizes, in all sorts of patched costumes, with carts and broken-down horses and mules to match.

We brought along our wounded (over 200, I believe) in ambulances, and though they were jolted over corduroy roads and were much exposed to hardship, and participated in the excitements of the march, they all reached Savannah without the loss of a life. Our system of foraging was sufficiently good for the army, but the few citizens, women and children, who remained at home,



SHERMAN'S TROOPS DESTROYING RAILROADS AT ATLANTA.
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH.

!The Union loss at Griswoldville was 13 killed, 69 wounded, and 2 missing=84. General C. C. Walcutt was among the wounded. The total Confederate loss was over 600.—EDITORS.



GENERAL SHERMAN SENDING HIS LAST TELEGRAM BEFORE CUTTING THE WIRES AND ABANDONING ALL COMMUNICATION WITH THE NORTH. FROM A SKETCH MADE AT THE TIME.

suffered greatly. We marched our divisions on parallel roads when we could find them; but sometimes, using rails or newly cut poles, made our roads through swamps and soft ground, employing thousands of men. Arriving at the Oconee, Osterhaus found a wooded valley, with lagoon bridges and a narrow causeway, on his road. A division of Hardee's, who himself had left Hood and gone to Savannah to command what Confederates he could hastily gather, had marched out to meet us and was intrenched on the east bank. Artillery and infantry fire swept our road. Osterhaus, excited by the shots, came to me shaking his head and asking how we would get any further. "Deploy your skirmishers more and more till there is no reply," I said. He did so. A half mile above he was able to send over among the cypresses a brigade in boats. The Confederate division gave way and fled. Then shortly our bridge was laid on the main road and we marched on. Blair, who had returned from his furlough before we left Atlanta, crossed and kept the left bank of the Ogeechee, and Sherman usually accompanied him. Blair's knowledge and hospitality attracted him. So the armies went on meeting an increased resistance, but were not much delayed till we got to the Savannah

Canal. Captain Duncan from my cavalry escort had carried Sherman's messages down the Ogeechee in a boat past Confederate guards and topedoes, and gone out to sea. He was picked up by a United States vessel and his message taken to the admiral. Hence navy and provision ships were waiting off the headlands, uncertain just where Sherman would secure a harbor.

Owing to swamps and obstructed roads and Hardee's force behind them, we could not enter Savannah. Our food was getting low. True, Sherman had sent Kilpatrick to try and take Fort McAllister, a strong fort which held the mouth of the Ogeechee. But as its capture was too much for the cavalry, I asked Sherman to allow me to take that fort with infantry. Hazen's division was selected. My chief engineer, Reese, with engineers and pioneers and plenty of men to help him, in three days repaired the burnt bridge, over 1000 feet long, near King's house. Hazen, ready at the bridge, then marched over and took Fort McAllister by assault, † which Sherman and I witnessed from the rice mill, some miles away on the other bank of the Ogeechee. Now we connected with the navy, and our supplies flowed in abundantly. Slocum soon put a force beyond the Savannah. Hardee, fearing to be penned up, abandoned his works and fled during the night before Slocum had seized his last road to the east. On December 23d the campaign culminated as Sherman entered Savannah. He sent the following dispatch to President Lincoln, which he received Christmas Eve: "I beg to present to you, as a Christmas gift, the city of Savannah, with one hundred and fifty heavy guns and plenty of ammunition, and also about twenty-five thousand bales of cotton."

† There seem to have been but 230 men in the work. Hazen's loss was 24 killed and 110 wounded.—EDITORS.



SHERMAN'S ARMY LEAVING ATLANTA. FROM A SKETCH MADE AT THE TIME.