

ARTICLE.

Unpublished.

No. 14, Vol. 9.

SUBJECT.

Not Confessions; But Admitted Errors.

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not confessions; but
admitted errors.

A prominent gentleman who was educated at the Military Academy met me the other day in the suburbs of New York. We naturally had abundant reminiscences in common. He had left the army and had had a most successful public life. The detail of a series of achievements filled me with interest and a sort of inspiration.

We boarded the train, he and I, and were conversing. I was a little disposed to set before him some of my objects in life, some things that I counted as successful which I had dreamed were to enter into the structure, if I may call it so, of my own life-work, *things* attempted in the period of three score years and ten, when to my surprise, he turned to me and said: "General Howard, I wish you would give an account of some of the mistakes in your career, which you yourself recognize as mistakes." My ^{friend} ~~xxx~~ then illustrated his request by referring to the accounts, recently published ~~of~~ of Napoleon Bonaparte. "How refreshing is the frank acknowledgement on his part of his errors of judgment, ~~he~~ ^{friend} remarked, and then cited instances of the acknowledged weaknesses of other men who had had in the main a fairly successful career.

It was this latter remark of his which determined me

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of investigation.

of a series of conversations filled me with interest and a sense

the story and had had a most successful public life. The details

materially had abundant reminiscences in common. He had told

you had met me the other day in the suburbs of New York. He

A prominent Congressman who was educated at the University

Handwritten signature
Very respectfully

to make an attempt at such a record, though I can see at once the evident egotism of such an effort on my part, because it is by contrasts ^{good & evil} that a life is portrayed. King David's great sins would have condemned him to ignominy by the faithful clearness of Divine record, had he not accomplished so much for the benefit of his people and been set down in Divine judgment as a man after God's own heart.

My friend used one further argument in favor of my giving for publication a chapter of mistakes, to wit: "Such a production faithfully given is always a benefit to our young men and uniformly read with intense interest."

The Maine Academy.

On the ground then of honest record, as tablets of warning with no little hesitation for the benefit of my fellows, I have set down the following:

At North Yarmouth Classical Academy, about twelve miles north of Portland, Maine, I closed my preparatory studies for Bowdoin College. A fellow student in the class before me whose name was Spencer Wells accomplished his course in one-half the ordinary time set forth in the curriculum. He did it by dieting and using a standing desk. He seldom ^{indulged in} ~~took~~ out-door exercise but devoted himself to his studies incessantly, hardly taking the proper time for sleep. During part of the winter months he taught a district school and earned money enough to support himself and a younger brother; but during the school months he never intermitted the assiduity of his application. To the students at Yarmouth Spencer, though never popular, was a marvel and his example was praised by his instructors and used to excite among us a spirit of emulation. Not having much of this world's goods and knowing that I must help my parents somehow in the defraying of the expence of my education I too undertook to shorten my term of

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preparation and to a degree imitated him who though a year in advance had become a friend that I greatly admired. At times I would give myself but four or five hours of sleep. I scarcely ever played round-ball which in those days was the favorite exercise of the students and I never went to a gymnasium or bowling alley as several of my classmates were wont to do, classmates who were older and had had greater advantages before entering the academy. I did succeed in passing the entrance examination at the college with a few conditions, such as the scanning of Latin and Greek poetry, and other designated portions of both the Latin and the Greek grammar. ^{completing} ~~other~~ ^{at Bowdoin College.} I was fifteen years old at the time of my matriculation. What then, one may ask, ^{were} ~~xxx~~ the mistakes. First, my extraordinary efforts caused what is known as "cramming". I was not the master and never became so of the studies through which I had hurried. In fact all through my college course I was conscious of weakness in the classics that ought not to have existed. Again though my health was not seriously impaired, being a tough lad, yet the reaction from overwork came on, and ~~so~~ there was a lack of thoroughness in all my studies during the first year of my college course, except perhaps in mathematics for which I had at all times a natural liking. The summation of the consequences of overwork and under exercise in outdoor sports while at the academy were a want of thoroughness and completeness and high standing in the college. I graduated with my class aiding my parents by winter school teaching, staying out parts of each term and during one entire ^{session} ~~session~~. This course also was a mistake. I lost lectures in astronomy and in natural philosophy and chemistry, which my companions enjoyed and mastered. I have always regarded this loss of knowledge a great detriment to my subsequent life. Fortunately for me, the deficiencies were in a measure remedied at the Military Academy; yet I could not help feeling that

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many of my mates at West Point were, by their thoroughness of previous school attainments, far better prepared to compete for the highest^{est} position than I. I should say then to the young man who is striving for an education and must look more or less to self support, first, be sure to take sufficient time for thoroughness of preparation; second, manage in some way to give yourself a full term in each session of your school or college. Spencer Wells suffered more from the excess of his zeal and his mistaken ambition than I did, for he had not been long graduated before his health broke down altogether, and ~~at last~~^{soon} he became hopelessly insane.

The Military Academy at West Point.

At the end of the first year at the June examination, I came out at the head of my class in general standing; but soon I was conscious of losing ground relatively with G. W. Custis Lee, Henry L. Abbott and Thomas H. Ruger, ^{my classmates} whose names are now familiar to the Nation. It was in English studies that I began to weaken. We recited in them very soon after the noon-day meal. Sometimes I could scarcely keep awake or put my mind upon the work in hand when called to the floor to be questioned or sent to the blackboard for statement and elaboration. My mind appeared dull and when not under the instructor's fire I was inclined to sleep. These conditions affected me more than any of my class-mates with whom I was competing. The reasons I did not then know nor even suspect; the truth however came to me at a later day. I had impaired my digestion before going to the Military Academy and the noon-day meal required for me ^{longer} a period of rest and quiet, than could be had before the early hour of afternoon recitation. My remedy would have been in never taking at that time more than just enough food for lunch to prevent faintness and headache. The student

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of to-day is probably not very liable to my ^{instilled} mistakes, ^{because} ~~for~~ parents as a rule and teachers have constantly before them better rules of hygiene than we had at the Military Academy forty years ago.

Again, athletic exercises have been introduced so that the cadet is more thoroughly hardened and strengthened in body than we could be. The remedy, however, to any young man who suffers as I did will be found in immediately consulting the hospital surgeon or the family physician with regard to a student's proper diet and other habits of daily life. *H... A hasty temper.*

Just before my furlough year, in 1852, I had a desperate quarrel with Cadet Levi Brown. I became very angry with him for some bitter things which he said to me in the presence of our comrades. I threw a loaf of bread, which was not very soft, ^{such as came to} ~~at~~ the mess table in former times at Brown's head. He became furious of course and returned the compliment by hurling a tumbler which struck me on the forehead, severed an artery and drenched me with blood. In my blindness I caught a tumbler and delivered another shot, but ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ luckily missed my mark. One of my class-mates who was present and near at hand was so agitated by the fight and so overcome by the sight of flowing blood that he fainted away and rolled on the floor. The mess hall authorities were quickly on hand and had Brown and myself properly arrested and sent off - Brown to confinement in his room, and Howard to the hospital to have his wounds dressed. We were both tried by court martial and severely punished. The penalties were a period of confinement for each and the walking back and forth in the area of barracks every Saturday afternoon till the allotted findings of the court were fulfilled.

I cared little for the punishment - I deserved it richly

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enough for thus infracting the laws of the mess-hall and the Military Academy; but for weeks I underwent a singular heart-torture for fear that I should lose my furlough. Having ~~been two~~ ^{come to the second} years at the Academy the cadet looks forward to the two months' furlough with intense longing. The home attractions are probably better appreciated from the long period of his privation at that time of his life than ever in subsequent years. Certainly it was a great relief ^{to my mind and} - a joy ^{in time} to my heart when at last I became relieved of that apprehension, as the authorities stopped my walking at the furlough line. ^{Wh}

What, pray, was the mistake? some friends would ask. My mistake was in indulging in anger. I could have controlled myself and should have done so. I could have met the insult offered me by my fellow cadet in another manner, in fact, in such a manner as would have won his heart and made him a life-friend. Brown's whole subsequent life was marred by that episode. I wish it were otherwise.

§. After Graduating. Old Fort Brooke.

In 1857 during the spring months I was stationed at Tampa, Florida and though having always practiced temperance principles I yielded to the influences about me and to what we may call the habits of service of those days and kept at my quarters wines and other stronger liquors for the entertainment of brother officers and friends who came to visit me. This was no part of table entertainment as the officers who were at old Fort Brooke who were without their families boarded at the only city ^{public house} ~~house~~ then existing, which we called "Duke's Hotel". One day an officer, still a young man, but older than myself came in with one or two others to pay me a visit. At first he was inclined to abstain from the refreshment I offered him, including the

glass of liquor; but upon my urging him he took a drink. He went away from my quarters to go elsewhere where drink was to be found and did not cease to indulge in liquor of different kinds till he was in a dreadful state of intoxication. The young man continued his senseless spree till delirium set in. His was the first case of delirium tremens that I ~~ever~~^{ever} had witnessed. Some of us got him home where his distressed wife and myself took care of him till the awful insanity from drink was over. It was not long after this before I became a ~~Christian~~^{confessing} and united with the church in that vicinity. The course that I had pursued with the officer named ~~above~~^{above} affected me deeply. It soon appeared that he ~~was~~^{was} on a pledge against all alcoholic beverages on account of his having ~~had~~^{previously} a confirmed habit of drinking. (at the time when he came to my quarters); ~~and~~ it was my urging that had overcome his resolution and caused him to break his pledge. Some fruit of this incident has been good. It caused me not only to refrain from alcohol altogether as the rule of my life but it purified our ~~home~~^{house altogether} from the presence and influence of strong drink. My wife was only too glad to agree with me with regard to this thing, and as we have brought up a large family we shall never regret the course at that time entered upon and never intermitted in our own ~~household~~^{home}.

The mistake in this instance is plain enough. It broke ~~down~~^{weakly armed against a bad habit,} a soul and brought misery to a household; and who shall be able, short of eternity, to follow up the consequences of the evil?

My standard of successful achievement about this time in 1857 was changed not only in morals and spiritual life but in ~~my~~^{the} profession which I was following and in another which was at that time perspective. My old standard had been somewhat dim to my sight or insight, but was rather to seek a reputation^{given} in the main with more or

of interest, but was rather to seek a reputation in the main with more of
time beneficial. My old standard had been somewhat dim to my eyes.

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<p>upon and never admitted in our own possession. It was a large family we shall never forget the counsel at that time entered into to agree with me with regard to this thing, and as we were protected from the presence and influence of strong drink. My wife was only too anxious to agree, as the wife of my life but it resulted only in the loss of this incident has been good. It caused me not only to refrain from some of my resolutions and caused him to break his pledge. Some time when he came to my quarters, and it was my feeling that had over-ruled of his health had a continued habit of drinking. At the time he was on a pledge against all alcoholic beverages on had business with the officer named affected me deeply. It soon was and united with the church in that vicinity. The counsel that I was given. It was not long after this before I became a Christian. My wife and myself took care of him till the early morning from which I never had witnessed. Some of us got him home where the doctor placed him in bed. His was the first case of delirium tremens I ever saw of intoxication. The young man continued his senseless and not cease to indulge in liquor of different kinds till he was in a way from my quarters to the elsewhere where drink was to be found and</p>						

less ambition for prominence. The new standard consisted in an intense desire to please God, whose loving kindness and fatherly care was made plain to me in the person of his Son, our Exemplar and leader. Whenever in subsequent life I ^{have} lost sight of this new standard, as I did at odd times, I made a mistake; but by the help of an ever present Spirit and a conscience, the true standard as I regard it, ^{again & again} came back to my vision. Bearing this sentiment in mind ^{any} ~~one~~ will see how my first mistake after taking command of a regiment of volunteers affected me. ^{It was in the Civil War.} A man half intoxicated became unruly and exasperating in my presence. I tried to restrain him and cause him to obey my instructions, but he defied me and I became angry and struck him with my sword, but providentially the man was not much hurt and no other evil consequences came from it than the essence of distrust which ^{at the time} permeated the soldiers ^{of the regiment} whom I loved and bore in my heart. The reaction was, however, such a shock that no such instance occurred again during my long war experience.

In a military point of view, there are some things that are neither mistakes nor errors, but rather the essential weaknesses of ^{tactical & strategic} agnostics. For example, the instant a man commands a brigade he must have a staff of such intelligence as to replace himself in inspections, in discipline, and in drill, and especially in simulative operations. I had excellent young men around me - young men who proved brave and efficient, ^{it was so} at Bull Run and in subsequent actions as far as the Rappahannock and on the Peninsula, but ^{none} ~~neither~~ of them had sufficient preliminary instruction for the best performance of staff duty. Again, a general officer cannot begin too early to study and practice the habit of keeping himself thoroughly informed of his adversary's intentions and movements. Sheridan discovered

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this necessity earlier than I did. He hired special scouts and paid them out of his own pocket, even when he was only a division commander. I will say that my own methods of probing for information were never completely satisfactory to myself. It is a delicate and difficult work, and had better be given exclusively to a ^{quick-witted} staff officer, most carefully chosen. *# Antietam.*

At Antietam I commanded in the outset of the battle a brigade, and went into action in Sumner's Corps under General John Sedgwick as the division commander. On the field, in thick woods, and under the sharpest sort of fire, Sedgwick was wounded and retired. *Taking the division* I remained in command. There was a gap between our division ^{leftward} and Richardson's into which the Confederates penetrated and caused us to retreat. On serious reflection I am inclined to think that I erred in not sending ^{at once} my ablest officer to ^{my} ~~that~~ left flank to manage as I would have done if present, that is to say, to make the necessary changes of front to meet and withstand the new opposition. This I did not do, but trusted to the brigade and regimental commanders concerned. General Sumner, ^{Gallant} the Corps Commander ^{learning the situation} came up to our rear and was understood by our officers to command in rather an excited manner an instantaneous retreat. ^{He wanted only a change of front} Had he sent his orders ^{through me} quietly all confusion might even then have been avoided. The result of my error and Sumner's haste and impatience made our retirement from the ground we had won hazardous enough and disappointing. No great harm resulted, for we were re-organized at the edge of the next grove within plain sight of the position we had lost, and our artillery supported by infantry caused the Confederates to stop and turn back so that our ^{general} line was not badly broken.

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<p> I was born in the year 1845, and was educated in the common schools of my native State. I was a member of the Union Army, and served in the 1st Iowa Cavalry, 1st Iowa Infantry, and 1st Iowa Artillery. I was promoted to the rank of Captain in the 1st Iowa Cavalry, and served in the Battle of Gettysburg. I was wounded in the Battle of Gettysburg, and was taken prisoner. I was held in captivity for a period of six months, and was then released. I returned to my native State, and resumed my former occupation. I was a member of the Union Army, and served in the 1st Iowa Cavalry, 1st Iowa Infantry, and 1st Iowa Artillery. I was promoted to the rank of Captain in the 1st Iowa Cavalry, and served in the Battle of Gettysburg. I was wounded in the Battle of Gettysburg, and was taken prisoner. I was held in captivity for a period of six months, and was then released. I returned to my native State, and resumed my former occupation. </p>						

Ph. Fredericksburg.

At Fredericksburgh I was still commanding a division under Darius N. Couch as Corps Commander. The preliminary work of my division in taking the town and clearing the whole right front for subsequent operation was satisfactory. Had the 7th Michigan of our division offered itself a few hours earlier to speed over the Rappahannock in the batteaux and root out the Confederate skirmishers from the opposite bank, as they finally did ~~do~~, it would have saved many lives. No error is alleged, but simply there was a lack of experience.

Later in the war such prompt and intelligent action became a matter of course.

After the bloody battle of the second day had strewn the ground where French, Hancock and Howard had undertaken to advance against the ~~Mar~~ Heights, ^{The soldiers of} my division held a line along a ridge in rear of this ground with the old canal behind them. I had gone to the steeple of a church with General ^{Couch} to take observation by the use of strong field glasses and a telescope. While looking toward the front I saw a portion of my right giving back. Instantly ^{under excitement} I descended to the street and with my staff galloped as rapidly as possible to the front. Before my arrival, however, the line had been restored and was all right.

General Couch afterward chided me for my action. He said that by such haste, rushing through the street with a mounted staff, I was liable to create a panic. My mistake was in not sending a single staff officer whose swiftness ^{could} ~~was~~ not often mistaken, ^{be} to carry my instructions. This of course was a good lesson ever after carefully heeded.

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<p>possible to the front before my arrival, however, the time had been I descended to the street and with my staff followed as rapidly as toward the front I saw a portion of my light blue pack. Instantly by the use of strong light glasses and a telescope. While looking to the street of a soldier with General Gough to take observation in rear of this column with the eye being perched there. I had some against the night before, my statement was a true story of a light column were there. Hancock and Howard had undertaken to advance after the bloody battle of the second day and preceded the a matter of course.</p> <p>After in the way when prompt and intelligent action was ence.</p> <p>There is no other to suggest, but simply there was a lack of exuberance the opposite bank as they finally did so. It would have saved many harmless in the process and lost not the Confederate sympathizers from qualification offered itself a few hours earlier to speed over the subse- quedent operation was satisfactory. Had the top description of our qualification in taking the town and clearing the whole light from for Bertie H. Gough as Corps Commander. The preliminary work of my</p>						

At Fredericksburg I was still commanding a division under

JP. At Chancellorsville.

Chancellorsville was the next battle. In location and disposition of the 11th Corps I obeyed specific instructions. My omissions in that action, after the scrutiny of years, I should say came from two causes. One was that I had not been with the Corps long enough to thoroughly apprehend the character and ability of each division and brigade commander. The result was that I allowed the wrong brigade to hold the right flank in the forest. The other reason ~~came from~~ insufficiency of information. Had my cavalry or any cavalry, for I had nothing but a small escort, discovered, as General Fitzhugh Lee did, that round hill in the thick woods to which he took Jackson a half mile further toward the Rapidan than he had intended to go, and from which they obtained glimpses of our extreme right, and later commenced their furious onset, I should surely have ordered General Devens, the division commander, to have ^{occupied} seized and fortified that knoll. I did have Barlow's division so intrenched as to cover the approaches from the west, ^{and} ~~but~~ it was not my fault that he was taken from me and sent to re-inforce another corps by his large brigade just before the engagement began. There was still another fault of omission. When the day before my Corps left its position and marched under Hooker's orders a mile or more to the front none of us took pains to prevent the escape from our lines of the non-combatants residing at and near Dowdall's Tavern. It is said that one or more of those inhabitants went to General Lee and gave him detailed information of our situation. Impressed by that experience, I ^{subsequently} ~~so~~ so circumstanced caused civilians to be guarded and often when found on horse-back to fall into our moving columns and remain with us till any information they might have could not do us harm.

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Gettysburg.

The first day at Gettysburgh on account of General Reynolds' death so early in the morning just as he was putting his first division into battle devolved the command an entire wing of the Army of the Potomac suddenly upon me. Many criticisms have been made and published against my management of that day, but they have come directly and indirectly from rival claimants to military credit. A conscientious review of that and the subsequent days of the great battle brings to me only one source of regret. How far I am personally responsible I will leave my readers to judge. This is the statement: Late in the afternoon of July 1st seeing the absolute necessity of retiring my force to Cemetery Ridge, if I would hold ~~it~~ ^{that point}, I ordered Buford with his cavalry and Schurz with the 11th Corps, except Steinwehr's Division already with me at the Cemetery, and Doubleday with the entire 1st Corps to retreat and form line as follows: The 11th Corps on the right, the 1st Corps next and the Cavalry to extend the line as far as possible southward. I sent a staff officer to each of these organizations with the orders, and the orders were executed. Had the 1st Corps gone obliquely to the Ridge without passing through the city, the clogging and confusion in the town would have been prevented. My staff officer sent to Doubleday should have secured this action. Had I been personally with that ^{Corps} commander I should ^{surely} have done that very plain and essential thing. My omission was to charge the staff-officer pro forma ^{beforehand} to so execute the movement.

^{P. Gordon of Massachusetts.}
After Gettysburgh one division - the one which I regarded as the largest and best - was removed from my corps and sent to South Carolina below Charleston to be comparatively idle till the close of the war. As near as I can ascertain this

result was brought about by the influence of General George H. Gordon, Knowing of him, that he had a distinguished career in Mexico, was a West Point graduate and had come to the front as Colonel of the Second Massachusetts Volunteers and also that he had been promoted to a Major Generalship for ability and efficiency, I corresponded with him and with the War Department, and finally secured him to command my first division. He appeared cheerful and friendly, but was not pleased with the Corps and did not cease from his arrival to do all in his power to become detached. The mistake I made was that I had not more thoroughly investigated the peculiarities of General Gordon before I solicited his coming and co-operation. The result to me was a diminished Corps and caused my being sent ^{with a small force} to re-enforce the Army of the Cumberland upon the call of General Rosecrans after the battle of Chickamauga. By this, however, I gained in operations and in promotion very soon ^{that is} subsequent to the battles about Chattanooga under Grant ^{which took place} late in 1863. ~~the Sherman's Georgia Campaign~~

I began with the 4th Corps the ensuing April, 1864.

From the time of my reporting to George H. Thomas, Rosecrans successor, my commands ^(the 11th & the 4th Army Corps) had been engaged in very active operations which included eight bloody battles when General Sherman ^{May 27th 1864} sent me with two divisions from New Hope Church ^(Georgia) through the forests to his extreme left flank - a distance of five or six miles. I had T. J. Wood's division of my Corps (the 4th) and R. W. Johnson's of the 14th Corps. Owing to the rough ground and underbrush the march was a difficult and tiresome one. From observation and reports, I judged that we had already passed the end of the Confederate line which was very nearly parallel to my march. I had Wood's division

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R.W.
to make the attack and Johnson's placed in echelon *far* to the
the left to guard his flank and to support the attacking force.
My *front* charge was met by so heavy opposition from behind strong in-
trenchments that Wood's Division was repulsed and Johnson's did not
advance. Our losses were very heavy. By fortifying, working my
men all night, I succeeded in preventing a counter *planned by* ~~from~~ my
adversary, and caused what General Sherman desired - an immediate
withdrawal of his whole *confederate* force from Sherman's front. Subsequent
testimony showed that if R. W. Johnson's division had been pressed
forward at the time of the attack he would have found little, if
any, opposition, at the most nothing but cavalry to oppose his artil-
lery and infantry. I do not blame myself in this review but I
think the same as I did concerning Doubleday's retreat, that I
should have had my ablest staff-officer *all the time* with Johnson, the Division
Commander, to order him in my name to do as Grant said to Sheridan,
"Push, push forward."

Supporting divisions require the most enterprising command-
ers to cause them to bring up help sufficiently prompt to save a
wavering attack. *§ Atlanta - Battle of Ezra Chapel.*

After McPherson's death I succeeded to his command, the
27th of July, 1864, and fought my first battle, commanding three
Corps, the 15th 16th and 17th, on the 28th of July at Ezra Chapel.
This battlefield is a few miles southwest of Atlanta. I have no
criticism in my memory against General Howard for that eventful day,
the 28th of July, except this, that I did not follow up promptly
and so reap greater fruits of a victory. My excuse is that
Sherman had promised that Morgan's division, already south of me,

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Advertising attack.						
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"Plan" plan forward."						
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the fact to cause his flank and to support the attacking force.						

would come in to re-enforce our weary fighters. Morgan was delayed by the enterprise of the Confederate cavalry and did not make his appearance. I should have taken a sufficient force from Dodge and Blair, who were but little engaged, and formed a heavy column and pressed it straight forward beyond my right flank. I might then have swept the field and possibly have entered with the Confederates the Atlanta gates and captured some important strongholds.

The lesson is : in a battle depend as far as possible on your own resources. *P. Battle of Jonesboro - (25 miles below Atlanta)*

The operations and battle of Jonesboro, Georgia, the 30th of August, 1864, gave me great satisfaction as an army commander. I advanced six miles on my own motion, captured a bridge, crossed a river and took the heights close to Jonesboro, and early the next morning repelled the attack of General Hardee who commanded upon that ~~half~~ ^{battle-} field, about half of Hood's forces.

We repelled Hardee's attack in the early morning and then I entrenched and waited for the Army of the Cumberland to re-enforce my left. It was done during the day so that the entire battle resulted favorably to our arms. I make the same criticism upon myself at Jonesboro. I need not have depended on the outside re-enforcement

but after Hardee had been driven back I might have followed up our work; ^{with prompt vigor} speaking in military parlance ^{with a view} to obtain a substantial and glorious victory, and thus have prevented what occurred, namely, a subsequent junction of Confederate forces, *Hood's and Hardee's.*

P. Hazen & Gort McAllister.

In subsequent operations till the taking of ~~Atlanta~~ ^{Savannah}, I do not accuse myself of any military error of importance. One thing however, I omitted to do for which I have felt a regret. I went to General Sherman when our armies, Slocum's and mine, were occupying the country between the Savannah and the Ogeechee rivers and near

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the city and said to him, General, Kilpatrick's cavalry cannot take
ft. McAllister, ^{which is situated} on the right bank of the Ogeechee, near the sea.

Let me send a division. I named Hazen's division and sent it to
assist Captain Reese, my chief Engineer, who had with him already
our engineer battalion and pioneers. ^{on the Savannah road} The broken bridge was re-
paired in three days, and Hazen's division went on under my positive
orders to capture the fort. It was done, and well done.

All this was ~~mainly~~ ^{almost} accomplished without ~~any~~ written instructions.
My omission here was to have gotten Sherman's approval in writing
and to have put my orders to Hazen in definite form. Had this been
done the credit of the capture of that fort would not have left me
out of published accounts any more than it did General Terry in
the capture of Ft. Fisher.

The facts of course can be brought
out and proven by collateral evidence, but it is always better to
make the record complete at such an important epoch on the spot.

I would, however, not diminish an iota of the praise due ^{to} and received
by General Hazen. *P. . . . An incident at the burning of Columbia S.C.*

We crossed to Beaufort, thence to the main land, fought
through the swamps of South Carolina up to Columbia. I could not
have prevented the burning of Columbia and did give no instructions
to do harm to that city after our arrival within its limits.

There is, however, one omission. The traders and negroes, with a
view to conciliate our soldiers, ran along the lines of the leading
brigade as soon as it had stacked arms in the main street, carrying
buckets of liquor. This, taken by the men on empty stomachs, made
many of them wild and hilarious. Sherman and myself, riding in
a little later than the men, were received with extraordinary en-
thusiasm. The wind was blowing a hurricane. Sherman regarded

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the demonstration as nothing more than the occasion would warrant; but I discovered from closer observation the real state of things, ~~there~~ and called the attention of a prominent commissioned officer to it. Then, we went on to secure our quarters and places of rest. My

omission was to send a staff officer immediately to have that brigade replaced by another. I did ^{so} subsequently ^{and} send in General Chas. R. Wood's entire division, but it was too late to prevent the loss of many men, stupefied by drink. Here is the instance where on

my part an ounce of prevention would have been several pounds of cure. *§. Raleigh. — A risky reconnaissance.*

As soon as the battle of Bentonville in which Slocum and myself both bore a part was finished by the retreat of the Confederates we pushed on under our instructions first to Goldsboro and thence to Raleigh. About the time of Johnston's surrender, thinking the country clear of all hostile forces, I rode out one morning accompanied by a small escort. The escort had passed a clump of trees to the right of the road, and as my staff ^{and} my orderlies and myself came out of a thinish woodland into the small open space near the clump of trees several shots were fired at us from the thicket. I believe none of us were injured but my horse became frantic, whirled about and ran with me. I thought at first I could slacken his gate gradually, but found that the bit made no impression. This conduct for which my comrades would doubtless hold me responsible, was mortifying in the extreme; but those with me were not ^{under the circumstances} unwilling to follow my example, and so gave me chase. ^{the} One of orderlies ^{was} keeping nearest to the runaway. At last a tree by the side of the road was close enough for convenience so that I jerked my horse's head and neck against it, blinding him sufficiently to break up his

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furious
pace.

The orderly and myself succeeded in turning him about and we rode on to meet the ^{larger} escort which, not seeing me near, had turned back. Whether the party that had fired upon us was simply a few guerrillas or more probably the cavalry outpost of the enemy I never ascertained. The mistake at this time for a general officer of my rank to make was two-fold: 1st, I should not have ventured so far beyond my ^{proper} command beyond our lines with a comparatively small escort. Mosby ^{in Virginia} came very near capturing me under similar conditions the year before, when I was passing from one corps to another (without adequate force); 2nd, I should not have allowed my escort to get far enough ahead of me for such an ambush to have been set or sprung. ¶ *An ambitious March [125 miles]*

From Raleigh to Richmond the corps marched at the rate of twenty-five miles per day. The officers in command of the corps, divisions, brigades and even regiments were ambitious to make these long marches and I allowed that speed of movement. Our men were so strong from their previous experience through Georgia and the Carolinas that no straggling appeared, yet there was considerable complaint from the footmen that they were put to such extreme labor without apparent necessity therefor. I agree with the complainants and think that, however desirous our officers were to make the marches, and however solicitous all were for a breath of home-life *ahead*, I should not have allowed the long marches.

There was ample time before all matters touching the war could possibly be settled and the men be mustered out of service.

Shorter marches would have left no soreness of feet or ill feeling.

The lesson is, that the commander of an army should bear in mind at

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all times the best interest of his men, and not allow any influences to cause him to depart from that consideration.

As Commissioner of Freedmen.

The subsequent nine years of my life were given to the work of a Commissioner of the War Department. My Bureau was that of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands. It was an unpopular work though ^{in my judgment} absolutely necessary in relieving the shock in passing from a state of slavery to a condition of freedom. It was like a buffer between a large ship and a solid dock which is a relief against the breakage of the ship and injury to the dock. The buffer, however, has to be bruised. One of those nine years, ¹⁸⁷² under General Grant's instructions, I employed as a peace delegate to settle Indian difficulties. ^{temporarily consigning to General Whittier my bureau work.} To claim that ^{with the negroes or Indians} there were no mistakes where criticisms were multitudinous and of the severest kind would be boasting; but I may say that in the retrospect I do not treasure any severe condemnation of my own action. At one time I received a small amount of money ^{beyond my pay} - not to exceed a hundred dollars - for a public service which I had rendered, to which I thought I was entitled; but after a little time my mind and conscience were troubled about it so that I consulted a judicious friend. He used words like the scripture: "It is better, General, to avoid the appearance of evil." I instantly gave the money to a public functionary and took his receipt.

In another case, I had a similar experience where, on consultation, with this friend and others my action was thoroughly justified; still, accusations and public charges were made against me and I was ^{for some years} worried even to persecution by designing men. The lesson, ~~from these two instances to be derived from these~~ embodied in

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these two instances, is beautifully condensed and rendered in the following: ^{divine epigram} "Happy is the man that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth."

It will be noticed that I spoke above of the military mistakes from a military point of view, ^{however} never to imply that success in campaign or battle was necessary to a clear conscience or in some cases likely to receive ^{the} Divine approval. On the contrary a mortifying defeat is often a great good to the individual, ^{Sometimes like a purifying fire} and to a nation. Abraham Lincoln very cogently enunciated the governing principle of my own life, in substance: to do the right as God gives the power to discern ^{the} right. But clearly recognizing the many instances in which by hasty action, by duty omitted, by untimely self indulgence, by the deleterious influence of books strongly written, or by able discourses wrongly biased or other unforeseen potencies of environment, I have been led into wrong or doubtful ways I have endeavored, ^{on reflection} to be faithful with myself, and to turn to the willing ear and tender compassion of a great Saviour and be put ^{everytime} by his help, once more upon the right road. The lesson is in every ^{such} mistake: Repent, and restore and return to Him who will receive and cleanse and bless, ^{the} order may be, to Him first!

Q. O. Howard

6300 words Major General U. S. Army Retired

Burlington, Vt., September 30th, 1898.

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