

ARTICLE.

Fifth Monograph.

Published by the Sunday Magazine, 1907.

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No. 23, Vol. 10.

SUBJECT.

Campaigning with Sherman,  
From Atlanta to the Sea.

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(From Atlanta to the Sea.)

Campaigning with Sherman.

After more than a month's able and interesting correspondence between Grant and Sherman the plan of the "March to the Sea" began its execution. Hood, the Confederate Commander, became about that time unwittingly and unintentionally an ally of Sherman. He suddenly determined to leave Sherman's front and cross the Tennessee, of course with the expectation that Sherman would turn back on him as before. Without fathoming what Sherman had already done in sending Thomas and sixty thousand men to run together speedily in his front at Nashville, Hood rushed on stubbornly to meet his fate in the State of Tennessee.

Thus Hood removed every objection from Sherman's mind which Grant had urged, and Sherman proceeded to carry out his projected march. My introductory part was very simple; I was to gather in the garrisons belonging to me all the way from Dalton and Rome to Atlanta, Georgia; I was to strip my army of all surplus wagons and stores; yes, and as far as possible to send away army followers and the sick men so much to be pitied.

Osterhaus took Logan's place as Logan was away on leave in Illinois. His Corps, the 15th, had four good Divisions. Blair was now with the 17th Corps. He had three fine veteran divisions. This, with a good cavalry escort, a company of scouts, a small body of engineers, a reasonably small headquarter's train of supply wagons and a good staff, made up my army and was called "Sherman's right wing". My first move, beginning at sunrise Nov. 14th, 1864, was a day's march which took us across the Chattahoochee to Atlanta. Arriving just before dark we bivouaced for the night just south and outside of the City.

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after Hood's evacuation, so it fell to his lot while occupying the city to carry out Sherman's most troublesome and unpopular instructions. The most aggravating were to send away the inhabitants, both those who were for the Union and those who were against it. And the next almost equally trying were to destroy the public buildings of every description which had been in any way contributing to the support of the Confederacy. To burn up the cotton was equally vexacious and to consume with fire all the goodly supplies which could not be sent back to Nashville appeared to lookers-on an extravagant waste. What a co-mingling of horrors from such causes Atlanta afforded for a few days. As early as the 11th of November by carelessness or design <sup>many buildings, in fact</sup> an entire square of shops and houses on Decatur Street were consumed. Nobody except <sup>gangs</sup> malignant and plunders could have intended that. Slocum in anger increased his guards and did his best to keep back the hungry flames. "He offered a reward of \$500 for the apprehension of any soldier caught in <sup>the</sup> ~~this~~ act of incendiarism." As a rule Slocum and his brave officers did their best to depopulate a handsome city, break up all railway connections and make Atlanta a waste for military purposes, just as they were ordered to do, causing as little personal grief and suffering to the people <sup>x</sup> involved as possible; <sup>naturally</sup> the thousand upon thousands of acts of kindness are not recorded in the books or reports. On the other hand sensational stories of bitter suffering and uncalled for hardship are in print. A New York Herald correspondent from his points of observation wrote this sentence: "A ~~stone~~-warehouse was blown up by a mine; Quartermasters ran away, leaving large supplies behind. The men plunged into the (store) houses broke windows and doors with their muskets, <sup>and were</sup> dragging out armfuls of clothes, tobacco, and whiskey which was more welcome than all the rest. The men dressed themselves in new clothes then flung the rest into the fire." Misconduct like that was not general. It must have been confined to a very



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few men.

As soon as I reached the City the evening of November 14th I went directly to Sherman's headquarters. He was cheery as ever and spoke to me in his lively off-hand style.

"Glad to see you, Howard,- Dayton says your army is here already."

"I answer, "You know, General, the Army of the Tennessee obeys orders!"

Sherman was in considerable pain, suffering from a severe rheumatic attack of his left arm and shoulder. He had his coat off and shirt sleeves rolled up, while an orderly was steadily rubbing his arm.

After a few moments of conversation with me I said substantially: "General, if anything should happen to you, to disable you, I ought to know your plans in sufficient detail to carry them out."

"All right, Howard, hand me that large map."

He then, while the orderly continued his <sup>a</sup> massage, opened with his right hand the map and laid it on the table and said; "I shall try to go from here to Savannah, striking the sea and connecting with our supply ships in that neighborhood or perhaps <sup>a</sup> farther south; but I hope to reach before long that important point (putting his finger on it) Goldsboro, N.C." Sherman then, raising his head with his peculiar quizzical look, added, "We may get to Richmond!"

He said that evening that he should go <sup>towards Augusta</sup> with Slocum, keeping with the Army of Georgia certainly as far as Millidgeville,- and that I should endeavor as soon as I could to reach Gordon, going by the Southern route, guiding my march for the present mainly by the Atlanta, Macon and Savannah railways. There was everywhere in <sup>the</sup> cavalry, artillery and infantry the utmost confidence in Sherman. I did not hear a word of murmuring; but I myself had a feeling of dread lest something worse than Rheumatism might impede him and interrupt his bright plans. ~~The next morning, however,~~



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*short* 14<sup>th</sup> of November

~~The~~ night of the ~~14th~~ <sup>14<sup>th</sup></sup> Atlanta presented a scene similar I doubt not, on a small scale, to the burning of Moscow. It appeared to a few of us from our camp on the high ground as if the entire city ~~were~~ <sup>were</sup> on fire. Colonel Poe, an officer of engineers on the staff of General Sherman, had committed to him the destruction of the machine-shops which had been converted by the Confederates into arsenals of construction. Here shells and other missiles of war had been cast and cannon forged. Besides the shops there were immense ware-houses where had been kept supplies of ammunition and other material for Army use. Col. Poe was to destroy these including all store-houses, depot buildings, armories ~~and~~ <sup>with locomotives & cars yet left</sup> round-houses and shops of the different railroads. Col. Poe with a large force had taken time to level ~~some~~ <sup>most</sup> of the buildings with the ground, and as Sherman says, "Had applied fire to the wreck." When the fire reached those ~~buildings~~ <sup>structures</sup> used as arsenals explosions occurred which shook the ground for miles around; the roar was like that in a heavy thunder-storm only <sup>deafening, pitiful, &</sup> more continuous; ~~it~~ <sup>or</sup> it is wonderful that there was not great loss of life from fragments of exploding shells.

Sherman in his memoirs remarks, "The fire also reached the block of stores near the depot and the whole heart of the city was in flames all night, but the flames did not reach the part of the city where the court-house was, or the great mass of dwelling-houses." After a time the terrific and angry explosions grew less and less. Just before we turned away to our camps the spectacle of that burning city was simply magnificent. I only saw one <sup>other</sup> appearance <sup>was at Columbia S.C. which</sup> that would exceed it, in the pictures made by fire and smoke and wind ~~and~~ painted on the vast expanse.



(H)

14-15 November

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I doubt not, on a small scale, to the burning of Moscow. It appeared to a few of us from our camp on the high ground as if the entire city <sup>was</sup> on fire. Colonel Poe, an officer of engineers on the staff of General Sherman, had committed to him the destruction of the machine-shops which had been converted by the Confederates into arsenals of construction. Here shells and other missiles of war had been cast and cannon forged. Besides the shops there were numerous ware-houses where had been kept supplies of ammunition and other material for Army use. Col. Poe was to destroy these including all store-houses, depot buildings, armories and round-houses and shops of the different railroads. Col. Poe with a large force had taken time to level some of the buildings with the ground and as Sherman says, "Had applied fire to the wreck." When the fire reached those buildings used as arsenals explosions occurred which shook the ground for miles around; the roar was like that in a heavy thunder-storm only more continuous; it is wonderful that there was not great loss of life from fragments of exploding shells.

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panse.



The next morning before our Armies separated I saw Sherman again for a few minutes. He was all right now,- his rheumatic pain had entirely disappeared. We shook hands and parted. As a last word he said: "Remember, Howard, you are to have Kilpatrick's Cavalry with you at least until our two wings form a junction. Kilpatrick is ordered to report to you and be under your command till we meet."

It was more than a week of active marching and real campaigning before we saw each other again.

After bidding General Sherman good-bye I set out by way of a railroad station called "Rough and Ready" intending to bring my command as near McDonough as possible. That small town is some five miles from Jonesboro where I had fought General Hardee in the previous campaign. We had three columns of march; General Blair taking the left, Kilpatrick the right, in fact covering our right and front with the Cavalry; and Osterhaus the middle.

Usually I enjoyed starting <sup>early</sup> in the morning so as not to pass the soldiers en route. Horsemen passing soldiers on the road always annoys them. Our men that morning appeared to me unusually cheerful. They swung along at what we call "roust-step", each man carrying his gun as he pleased-, sometimes on one shoulder and sometimes on the other, and sometimes by his side. They were chatting with each other and telling stories and had marched so long together that they naturally kept the step, four abreast. Our men could make fifteen miles in a day on a good road with ease, scarcely any man falling out. As we passed <sup>along</sup> the column of the 15th Corps we had a glimpse of our own headquarters train well guarded. We had taken with us only what we call small rations say thirty days supply of hard bread, coffee and sugar. I was glad to see that our herd of cattle <sup>driven on the fields</sup> already numbered at least 200 head. Late in the afternoon of the 15th the men were com-



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fortably encamped, Kilpatrick near Jonesboro. and the heads of our two infantry columns near Stockbridge. My own camp was near Stockbridge. As soon as he was settled for the night Kilpatrick rode over five or six miles to see me. He told me that he had met some Confederate Cavalry Skirmishers near East Point and had driven them before him for many miles to the crossing of the Flint River, <sup>having had an exciting chase &</sup> capturing some prisoners. We of the center column had also run upon a small Confederate Brigade commanded by General Lewis. They were about 900 strong. Our meeting resulted only in a slight skirmish with little or no loss on either side. Of course we expected increasing opposition as we went on. We were ordered to forage freely on the country. To this end details of men were made from each brigade and sent out to the right and left as far as it was practicable to gather in supplies. They were placed under proper officers and were <sup>told</sup> ~~instructed~~ in no case to take from a house all the food that a family had. They were <sup>also</sup> instructed to leave there at least five days rations. The horses and mules and the cattle were gathered in to our moving caravan. Nobody appeared very weary at the end of this <sup>novel</sup> first day's march.

I may add a few words concerning the next day, November 16th. Spreading out and covering a considerable section of country in five columns, three of infantry and two of cavalry, we came together at the end of the day in the neighborhood of McDonough. We managed to keep our columns only two or three miles apart in this march. Osterhaus, with whom I spent most of the day, encountered some opposition from Lewis' Cavalry. He handled them, however, with a few companies of mounted infantry with which he was accustomed to clear his front. The bridge over the Cotton River was set on fire. By a rush the mounted infantry got near enough to fire <sup>a hundred yards across</sup> upon the bridge burners and drive them off so as to save everything of the bridge except ~~the~~ the planking. The bridge was immediately repaired and the break



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detained us just forty minutes. Kilpatrick with one of his columns ran in some hostile troops to Jonesboro and thence <sup>on</sup> to Lovejoy Station where he was stopped by two Confederate Brigades of Cavalry and two pieces of artillery holding some Confederate works and firing sharply into the face of his men as he deployed them. Kilpatrick promptly dismounted his men, carried the works by storm ~~and~~ driving the enemy back. His other column succeeded in capturing the escaping artillery. He brought in to his encampment that night between 50 and 60 prisoners. These two days of marching thus sketched will give some idea of how we marched through Georgia.

After this I so arranged my procedure as to send my cavalry ahead toward Macon where I understood there was a force of militia interspersed with a few veteran regiments of from eight to ten thousand men. We were on the right bank of the Ocmulgee River and apparently moving directly ~~from~~ <sup>to</sup> Macon. Very few of the people in this section left their houses vacant. From time to time we met many civilians coming to us with some excuse. At times I would have them detained but as we approached Macon I did not do so, but simply asked every man I encountered how far it was to Macon and to tell me all about the roads to that City. These civilians usually reached the Confederate Commander in an incredibly short space of time and he, said to have been Gen. G.W. Smith who had once instructed me at West Point in engineering, was fully possessed of the thought that I was intending to attack Macon from the North. This was not, however, my intention. When Kilpatrick's train<sup>s</sup> joined us, if we had extended them, ours and his together, along one road they would have covered over thirty miles. I desired to get these trains as promptly as possible across the Ocmulgee and park them at Gordon, the place where I hoped to form substantial junction with Slocum and Sherman, so that while Kilpatrick was driving in the Confederate outposts and moving strongly toward~~y~~ Macon, I had two bridges built



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across the broad river and moved all of my artillery and infantry over them. The bridges were kept full all one day <sup>and night</sup> and the crossing was not completed by the rear guard until the morning of the 20th inst. Kilpatrick followed and as soon as his command was over the bridges he took the nearest roads with his cavalry and rode <sup>again</sup> towards Macon. About four miles from that place he met plenty of Confederate Cavalry which he succeeded in driving back till they came under cover of intrenchments defended by artillery and infantry. He made one lodgement inside of their works, but was not able to hold his ground. He had during that day a heavy rain <sup>To better him</sup> and the roads became worse and worse. At times our commanders detailed thousands of men to assist the wagons up the steep and muddy roads. We kept the wagons always two abreast and sometimes four, making our own roads with rails or small trees whenever it was necessary.

By the 22nd of November the troops and trains were all in good shape in the vicinity of Gordon with the exception of Gen. Chas. R. Wood's Division, <sup>which was</sup> ~~who were~~ sent out on the Irwinton Road to back up the Cavalry and make a strong demonstration towards Macon. Early in the morning of this day the Confederate Cavalry, probably under General Wheeler, captured one of Kilpatrick's Cavalry posts, taking in forty-five killed, wounded and missing. ~~The~~ severe Cavalry fight succeeded. As soon as Walcott's <sup>u</sup> Brigade of Infantry arrived the small battle was gained by us.

In the afternoon still further forward, two miles in advance of his division heading towards Macon, Walcott <sup>u</sup> with two pieces of artillery had planted his brigade between two impassable swamps. His men as soon as they ~~halted~~ had covered their fronts with rail <sup>ades</sup> barracks and Kilpatrick had covered his flanks beyond the swamps with abundant cavalry. Walcott <sup>u</sup> was hardly ready when a large Confederate force supporting four cannon made



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an assault upon his lines with tremendous force. Walcott's men were veterans ~~and~~ used to war, and mercilessly mowed down the Confederate ranks as they approached, and I hardly need say that the Confederate forces, having at least double Walcott's numbers, ~~was~~ <sup>were</sup> completely routed and driven back to Macon. <sup>15th</sup> The Corps ~~Commander~~ <sup>and</sup> Division ~~Commanders~~ <sup>she</sup> were both present during this battle and ready to reinforce with any number of men should it become necessary. I wrote that, "General Walcott than whom there is <sup>was seriously wounded</sup> ~~not~~ a braver or better officer." <sup>however</sup> His wound <sup>did</sup> not prove to be fatal.

This was our first real battle and in fact the only sizeable one that we had during the march. It is called the battle of Griswoldville. Griswoldville was the name of the hamlet nearest to the field of conflict. It was reported to me at the time that the Confederates had about 1000 of their men placed "hors de combat" by this action, and we lost less than <sup>one</sup> ~~two~~ hundred, killed, wounded and missing.

I had had the entire responsibility of the right wing and Kilpatrick's Cavalry and had so succeeded in the great march as to give abundant satisfaction to myself and to my Commander, and this was <sup>what</sup> ~~as~~ I desired.

Lieut.-Gen. Hardee, my strong friend before the war, was the Confederate Commander in Savannah, watching out on all the roads with Cavalry and Infantry against our coming. He did his utmost to meet us at river-crossings and narrow causeways. He sent to our front as far out as the <sup>River</sup> Oconee, Wayne, Wheeler, Lewis and other of his generals. After the two wings of our Army had approached each other not far from Gordon, Ga., Sherman and I had a brief interview.

"You are handling your columns all right, Howard. Next, we are obliged to cross the Oconee River. I will move along with Blair. His column will be the middle, -Kilpatrick I have just sent to Slocum's flank and front to clear the way and set free our prisoners shut up at Millen."



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Cavalry and had so succeeded in the great march as to give abundant satis-  
faction to myself and to my Commander, and this was ~~as~~ I desired.

Lieut.-Gen. Hardee, my strong friend before the war, was the Confede-  
rate Commander in Savannah, watching out on all the roads with Cavalry and  
Infantry against our coming. He did his utmost to meet us at river cross-  
ings and narrow causeways. He sent to our front as far out as the Oconee  
River, Wheeler, Lewis and other of his generals. After the two wings of  
our Army had approached each other not far from Gordon, Ga., Sherman and I  
had a brief interview.

"You are handling your columns all right, Howard. Next we are obliged  
to cross the Oconee River. I will move along with Blair. His column will  
be the middle. Kilpatrick I have just sent to Sherman's flank and front to  
clear the way and set free our prisoners shut up at Milledgeville."



The next day I was moving on five miles to the right of Blair, with Osterhaus' Corps. We were approaching the broad belt of Cypress that bordered the Oconee. The narrow roadway there led across many parallel streams through timber quite thickly set. Wayne's artillery and infantry were beyond the river on a bluff and swept the roadway with their discharges clean and clear. Suddenly Osterhaus' advance was stopped by a sharp and terrible fire. Every man that passed a turn in the road was killed or maimed and off the road in the watery wood there was no safety for man or beast.

Osterhaus, much excited, rode back along the column and found me at the head of the second marching division. Stammering a little as he did when disturbed he said, "General, how can we get any further?"

I replied, "Deploy your skirmishers up and down and keep extending their line till there is no reply."

Osterhaus evidently glad of the suggestion did just that.

He soon reported, "A half mile or less up stream there are no return shots."

"I then said, "Put in your boats up there." His men in the thick wood waded through the smaller streams and <sup>placed</sup> their canvas boats, which they hastily put together, along the shore into the main river, and pushed rapidly to the other bank. As soon as a brigade began to emerge from the thickets north of the bluff, Wayne's men broke and ran in hot haste to the rear. Within an hour from that moment we had repaired all the bridges and were marching on.

General Joe Wheeler obtained quick knowledge of Kilpatrick's change from right to left of our broad swath and so headed him off by the time he reached Slocum's front. Wheeler anticipated what we wanted, so that our poor prisoners were hurried away to other and worse places of confinement.

The next river eastward leading to the sea was the Ogechee. After



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I then said, "Put in your posts up there." His men in the thick wood wedged through the smaller streams and their canvas posts, which they hastily put together, along the shore into the main river and pushed rapidly to the other bank. As soon as a brigade began to emerge from the thickets north of the bluff, Wayne's men broke and ran in hot haste to the rear. Within an hour from that moment we had repaired all the bridges and were marching on.

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The next river eastward leading to the sea was the Oconee. After



Blair had crossed it, my command kept astride passing down both banks. We had as we expected ever increasing resistance especially near the eastern shore. We had several days of halts and <sup>bloody</sup> skirmishes much alike. At the Savannah Canal we encountered Confederate entrenchments constructed with engineering skill and they were troublesome indeed; many of our men were hopeful and hastening on to see Savannah. They were suddenly stopped all along our lines and many, too many, of our brave skirmishers were made to bite the dust. But after several encounters some of ~~them riding~~ <sup>which rose</sup> almost to the grade of battles, we drove in all the outside Confederates until they were behind Hardee's main works surrounding the city of Savannah. We captured quite a number of prisoners and gathered in some engines and railway cars. We had <sup>now</sup> plenty of cattle on the hoof and rice in abundance; yet other provisions were getting low. At the Savannah Canal I made <sup>a successful</sup> effort by the help of the Ogeechee River to communicate with our provision-fleet and the navy that was convoying it.

Capt. Wm. Duncan of my Cavalry escort, a fearless scout, had been several times during this march captured by the Confederates and imprisoned, but he had always contrived to make his escape and return to me, though <sup>usually</sup> ~~always~~ despoiled of his arms and accoutrements. I chose him to make the attempt to descend the Ogeechee with a faint hope that by his sagacity, and known enterprise he would get to the sea and to the fleet. Here is a copy of the dispatch which he carried:-

"Headquarters Army of the Tennessee near  
Savannah Canal, Ga. Dec. 9th, 1864,

Commanding Officer U.S. Naval Force,

in Vicinity of Savannah, Ga.

Sir:-

We have met with perfect success thus far. Troops in fine spirits and

near by.

Respectfully

O. O. Howard,

Major-General Commanding  
Right Wing of Army



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Respectfully

Dear Sir,



As I recall the original it said, "And Sherman near by." General J.G. Foster received the message at Hilton Head, Dec. 12th, and forwarded it to Gen. Halleck in Washington. Capt. Wm. Duncan took with him Sergeant Myron J. Amick and Private Geo. W. Quinby. He used an old dug-out which he found in the river. He and his companions paddled along in the night trusting to the negroes to conceal them by day. He quietly slipped by a Confederate picket at King's Bridge; he passed a gun-boat fully manned and anchored just above Fort McAlister; he <sup>rowed</sup> ~~was~~ along the shore opposite the Fort which was then all alive with listening sentinels, and before long ran out into the broad reaches of the Ossabaw Sound. His boat was discovered in the distance by some officers who were reconnoitring in a dispatch boat so that to their <sup>mutual</sup> joy Duncan and his companions were picked up and my dispatch sent at once to Admiral Dahlgren and Gen. Foster. They ran in to Hilton Head and telegraphed <sup>the good news</sup> ~~my dispatch~~ to the North. That was the first reliable <sup>word</sup> ~~news~~ which anybody outside of our Army had received from us since we ~~were~~ left Atlanta, and we know that <sup>these tidings</sup> ~~this news~~ gave great joy to multitudes of waiting hearts.

I soon had possession of King's Bridge, or rather of the site of it, because the bridge was gone <sup>all</sup> except a few posts. I sent Hazen's Division to aid our engineers and our staff officer, Capt. Reese, in replacing the bridge, using the sheds and out-houses in all the neighborhood for timber. The bridge was 1000 feet long, but was finished in three days. <sup>I myself</sup> ~~we~~ gave Gen. Hazen a positive order to cross the new bridge and move down rapidly and assault and take Fort McAlister. <sup>At the Rice - Mill East of the River</sup> ~~Gen.~~ Sherman and I stood together near the signal station and some long range guns of Degress' Battery which were endeavoring to aid Hazen by shelling the Fort, in advance of his approach. Sherman and <sup>not far from</sup> ~~myself~~ with a few staff officers were much excited when we saw in the distance the Confederate flag go down and our Stars and



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Stripes unfurl to the breeze.

The Fort taken and the River open, the <sup>waiting</sup> supply fleet soon connected with us and supplies flowed in rapidly.

All along our lines enveloping Savannah we had worked in close to Hardee's obstructions and were prepared in several places to make an assault. Sherman called upon Hardee and pleaded the situation asking him to surrender. This he declined to do; nevertheless just as Slocum was about to close in on <sup>Hardee's</sup> last road east of the Savannah River <sup>that was general</sup> ~~Hardee's~~ concluded not to be penned up where he could do no good, so that he marched out in the night so quietly that Slocum's watching troops were not disturbed beyond the discharge of a few rifle shots by the outer pickets.

On the 23rd of December Sherman, who had been probing every avenue to the City not only by land but by water assisted by the navy, with the hope of affecting an entrance without too heavy a loss of men, <sup>his</sup> came back to find Slocum and myself in complete possession of the City. On Xmas eve he sent to Mr. Lincoln the following dispatch:-

"I beg to present to you as a Xmas gift the City of Savannah, with 150 heavy guns and plenty of ammunition, and also about 2,500 bales of cotton."

As soon as we were a little settled Gen. Sherman at Mrs. Greene's house gave us a beautiful reception and strange to say there were many ladies there whose hearts were sufficiently with us to participate in the <sup>sole</sup> reception. Sherman was himself that night, charming in his conversation and brilliant in his dress and deportment. From that time on he always seemed to enjoy more than anything a banquet or a festival where he could have his right wing and left wing commanders together supporting him. Kilpatrick pleased him above measure in the conduct of his cavalry work but not so much in <sup>subsequent</sup> social life whose refinements the General especially enjoyed.

(over)



of both wings of his grand army

After a ~~char~~ characteristic review by Sherman  
standing by the old statue of Pulaski, followed  
next day by a ~~very~~ memorable visit of

the Secretary of war, Edwin M. Stanton &

several Washington officials, who  
gloried in our March & praise my

above measure, we began to prepare

for ~~the~~ this ~~more~~ important

campaign thro the Carolinas, as a

sequel to ~~the~~ Sherman's March

from Atlanta to the Sea.

(Sherman's march)  
Olin Otis Howard

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