SHERMAN'S MARCH TO THE SEA

by

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PREFACE

This thesis is a study, from the chronological and historical standpoint, of the military campaign better known as "Sherman's March to the Sea". It does not attempt to go into military technicalities; but it attempts to show the origin and necessities of the various stages of the campaign.

The destruction wrought and the military orders given have been dealt with more from a sociological than a military standpoint. The chronology of the march has been consistently followed; and opinions from both sides regarding the necessity, effects, and influence of the march on the ending of the Civil War have been given.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is said of Napoleon that "he overran Europe with the bivouac". It was the bivouac that sapped the spirit and strength of the Confederacy. Almost no other war in history presents marches so striking as those of the Federal Army during the Civil War. It is worth while, first of all, to note the motivating personality of this, perhaps the most destructive of all, the March to the Sea.

William Sherman was born in Lancaster, Ohio, February 8, 1820, and was named Tecumseh after the famous Indian chief who died at the battle of Tippecanoe.[1]

When William was four years old, the father was appointed judge of the supreme court of Ohio, but died suddenly in Lebanon while on the bench after he had held the position for five years. Because of poverty, the young mother was soon forced to send her young children away from home to be cared for. Tecumseh was sent to the home of the Honorable Thomas Ewing, a prominent U. S. Senator from Ohio. When William reached the age of sixteen through the influence of Mr. Ewing, he entered the Military Academy at West Point. He was not at that time especially interested in becoming a soldier, but planning to go to the far West as a civil engineer.

However, soon after graduation, young Sherman, tall and slender, with auburn hair, and hazel eyes, and a second lieutenant in the Third Artillery, was sent to Florida to help in checking the Seminole

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[1]Sarah Knowles Bolton, Famous Ladies Among Men, p. 288.

Indians.[2] After spending two winters there, he was transferred to Fort Moultrie, near Charleston, South Carolina, as first lieutenant, where he remained for four years. Here he learned the character of the people and the topography of the country, as well as in Georgia. This knowledge was very useful when, more than twenty years later, he fought his battle in Atlanta and made his march to the sea.

In 1846 Sherman was sent to New York, and soon thereafter to Ohio as a recruiting officer. Before long, he was ordered to California.

He returned to the East in 1850 on a six months' leave of absence. During this time he married Miss Ellen Boyle Ewing, daughter of the man who had adopted him in his childhood. In September, 1853, he resigned from the Army and entered the banking business in San Francisco.

In 1859 he accepted the position as superintendent of a new Military academy in Louisiana and on the following January first opened the institution, throwing himself into the work with intelligence and energy. At the time of the election of Lincoln and the secession of South Carolina he was living in the South, and was a close observer of passing events. Foreseeing the withdrawal of Louisiana from the Union he decided to maintain his allegiance to the Constitution and resigned his position.

He afterward practiced law in Leavenworth, Kansas, and, at the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, he was president of a street rail-

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[2]Ibid.

[3]James Ford Rhodes, History of the United States, V, 3.

way company in St. Louis. In May, 1861, he entered the Army as colonel of the 13th infantry, and in a few years was appointed Brigadier General. So, we find the events of his life leading up to the time that he made the Great March.

Sherman was never fond of display, and had no relish for much care in dress or drill. His uniform coat was usually wide open at the throat, and displayed a not very military looking black cravat and linen collar. He generally wore low shoes and one spur.[4] In speaking of the characteristics of General Sherman, Bradley, in his Union Portraits, says,

> Sherman was never quiet, physically or mentally, with a clear idea of what he wanted and an unyielding determination to have it. He made everybody around him uncomfortable, till his demands were gratified.[5]

An observer said that Sherman, in giving his instructions and orders, would take a person by the shoulders and push him off as he talked, following him to the door all the time talking and urging him away.[6] His quick, restless manner almost invariably resulted in the confusion of the person whom he thus instructed. Sherman himself never seemed to become confused, but at the same time, he never seemed composed.

No difficulties were recognized and no excuses would serve. To a hesitating quartermaster he said, "If you can't have my army supplied and keep it supplied, we'll eat your mules, Sir."[7] He was a

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[4]Daniel Oakley, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, p. 671.

[5]Major W. R. White, "Marching Through Georgia," Quartermaster Rev., X (May, June, 1931), 42.

[6]Ibid., p. 42.

great talker and liked nothing better than to express his mind upon the news as it came. One of his officers, who was with him on the great march, gives his interesting description of his love of conversation:

> There he sat, smoking a cigar (I hardly ever saw him without one), leaning back in a chair, with his thumbs in the armholes of his vest. As he was pacing up and down the room, puffing away, with his head forward and his arms behind his back, every piece of military intelligence drew some comment from him, and it was easy to lead him into a long talk if the subject interested him.[8]

Sherman expressed himself without any reserve about men and matters. He often said more than was wise and proper.

Because of a misunderstanding of a remark made by Sherman when he was made Chief Commander of the Department of Volunteers of Kentucky in October, 1861, the statement was given out to the newspapers that he was insane. He openly confessed after he had been assigned to the command of the department that he had not wished it and was afraid of his new responsibilities. With a vivid imagination he clearly saw how formidable were the difficulties of the part he was expected to play in the suppression of the Rebellion. They simply appalled him. This dread took such hold of him, that he brooded over it day and night. He was said to lapse into long silent moods even outside his headquarters. He would pace by the hour up and down the corridor outside his rooms, smoking and obviously absorbed in oppressive thoughts. He did this to such an extent that it was noticed and remarked upon by guests and employees of the hotel. His strange ways led to gossip and it was soon whispered about that he was suffering

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Henry Villard, Memoirs, II, 209.

from mental depression.[9]

Such were the conditions when Secretary Cameron arrived in Louisville for a conference with him. He had with him Samuel Wilkerson, the Washington correspondent of the New York Tribune, whom he allowed to listen to his official and confidential conversations without telling Sherman that Wilkerson was a journalist. When, in the course of the conversation, he was asked by the Secretary how many men he needed, he replied, "Sixty thousand to drive the enemy out of Kentucky and two hundred thousand to finish the war in the South."[10]

This contention was so in advance of the then prevailing ideas of the limited power of resistance of the Confederacy and the means necessary to overcome it, that it startled the Secretary and excited doubts as to the state of the General's mind.

Wilkerson told Henry Villard immediately after the conference that Cameron thought that the General was unbalanced by exaggerated fears as to the Rebel strength, and that it would not do to have him in command.[11] Villard immediately wrote to his friend, Marat Halstead, editor of the Cincinnatti Commercial, who was a very good friend of the Sherman family, what had been said. Halstead could not resist the temptation of utilizing the sensational information for his paper. A statement to this effect appeared in the paper: "...the country would learn with surprise and regret that Brigadier General Sherman had become insane."[12] Thus says Villard, "....I was the innocent

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[9]Charles Morris, Heroes of the Army in America, p. 179.

[10]Charles Morris, loc. cit.

[11]Villard, op. cit., I, 211.

cause of this cruel misstatement which resulted in so much distress to the General and his friends."[13]

Sherman was removed from the command as an unsafe if not mentally deficient man and was put in a subordinate position under General Halleck. However, the war had not progressed far before the opinion of Sherman was discovered to be of much more value than had been given credit for at the outset. He was one of the few men in the Army who saw from the start that the Government had a great war, not a temporary rebellion, on its hands.

In December, 1861, he went to his home in Lancaster, Ohio, for a brief rest but malicious reports followed him. He, having had in various ways offended the press, the report that Sherman was crazy was now widely spread by the newspapers. This report was pretty generally believed by the officers, soldiers, and the general public as well. He remained under this cloud until the battle of Shiloh in April, 1862.[14]

A man of nervous temperament and intense energy, with a genius for war, Sherman rarely struck without something giving way.[15]

It was at the battle of Shiloh that Sherman was able to prove his ability. Rousseau said of him, "He fights by the week".

The "Union Sympathizers" said that to serve under Sherman when you shared his views, or trusted him wholly would surely have been a

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Morris, op. cit., p. 179.

[15] Rhodes, op. cit., p. 6.

joy; but it would have been purgatory if you disliked him and he disliked you. If he were once convinced that you were on the wrong side, nothing too savage could be done to set you right. In other words, as an officer of the Spanish inquisition, he would have been unsurpassed in ingenuity or in severity.[16]

Sherman's men, as a whole, had great confidence in him and familiarly called him "Uncle Billy".

When Sherman was on a march with his troops, he rode with each column in turn and often with no larger escort than a single staff officer and an orderly. In passing his soldiers and officers on the march, he acknowledged the salutations of each as if he himself knew each one personally but didn't have time to stop. His acquaintance among his officers was commented upon as being remarkable. Thus, he could detail officers to special duties with a comprehending knowledge of those who could best fill the vacancies.[17]

War, to Sherman, was a cold-blooded business proposition and he sums up his theory in one statement:

> Of necessity, in war the commander on the spot is the judge, and may take your house, your fields, your everything and turn you all out helpless to starve. It may be wrong but that doesn't alter the case. Our duty is not to build up but to destroy both the rebel army and whatever of wealth or property it has founded its boasted strength upon.[18]

Sherman's doctrine or creed as expressed above is brought out in his instructions to General Sheridan in November, 1864, when he said,

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[16] White, op. cit., p. 42.

[17] Daniels Oakley, Marching Through Georgia and the Carolinas, II, 672.

[18] White, op. cit., p. 42.

I am satisfied and have been all the time that the problem of this war consists in the awful fact that the present class of men who rule the South must be killed outright rather than in the conquest of territory; therefore I shall expect you on any and all occasions to make bloody results.[19]

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[19] Ibid.

CHAPTER II

PRELIMINARIES TO THE MARCH

No military operation of the war has been so commonly misunderstood as the campaign on which Sherman was now entering. The brilliancy of its design and the immense results which followed have captivated the popular imagination and deeply impressed students of military history everwhere. But there has been a tendency to treat the conception of a march from Atlanta to the ocean as if that were an invention or a discovery. People have disputed the priority of idea as if it were a patent right.

In the early spring of 1864, General U. S. Grant ordered Sherman to make immediate preparations for a campaign through Georgia, with the object of destroying the immense manufacturing plants of the materials of war, and its grain, powder, and ornamental depots.

By the first of May, Sherman had collected a force numbering about one hundred thousand men, seventeen thousand cavalry and two hundred fifty-four guns. This force was composed of three armies and at this time was located as follows:

(1) The Army of the Cumberland under Major General Thomas, composed of 60,000 men at Catoosa Springs, Ringgold and Woods Stations;

(2) The Army of the Tennessee, composed of 24,000 men, under Major General McPherson, at Gordon's Mill.

(3) The Army of the Ohio, under Major General Schofield, composed of 16,000 men and 17,000 cavalry at Red Clay.[1]

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[1] Major White, op. cit., p. 43.

Now, opposed to General Sherman were three divisions of a Confederate Army numbering about 60,000 men and 10,000 cavalry, commanded by Major Generals Hardee, Hood and Polk and under the command of General Joseph E. Johnston. The Confederate troops had taken part in the battle of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge in November, 1863 and had fallen back and were firmly entrenched in and around Dalton.

Immediately in front of Dalton and in the line of General Sherman's march was a ridge of hills about 500 feet high called Rocky Face. A little to the left and west of Rocky Face was a hill called Tunnel Hill. Between Rocky Face and Tunnel Hill was a gap called Buzzard Roost Gap; and through this gap ran a railroad and the highway to Dalton. The Confederates had strongly fortified both of these positions so that their guns could sweep the gap. The Northern route from Red Clay was equally well fortified.

Knowing this, General Thomas advised Sherman to march his whole force around Dalton through Snake Creek Gap, capture Resaca, which would force General Johnston to evacuate Dalton and bring on a decisive engagement, with an excellent opportunity of defeating the Confederate Army. General Sherman failed to heed this advice and instead ordered the fourth corps of the Army of the Cumberland, which was at Catoosa Springs, to march south and capture Tunnel Hill, followed by the Army of the Ohio under General Schofield, which was at Red Clay. The remainder of the Army of the Cumberland, namely, the Fourteenth and Twentieth Corps, was ordered to advance on Dalton through Buzzard Roost Gap, drive in the Confederate cavalry, and attack Dalton from the west, while Schofield and the fourth corps attacked from the north

after the capture of Tunnel Hill. Johnston, on the night of May 12th, evacuated Dalton and moved south to Resaca.

On May 12th, Sherman moved to the attack of Resaca and after four days of severe fighting, entered the city on May 16th. Johnston had evacuated Resaca on May 15th.

The battle of Adairville, Kingston, Cassville, Alatoona, Dallas and Acworth followed, Johnston resisting at every point but withdrawing without being drawn into a decisive engagement.

Marietta was now Sherman's objective, and the Confederate Army was entrenched along the line of pine mountains. But Marietta was soon evacuated by Johnston and immediately occupied by Sherman. By July 9th, Johnston had withdrawn to the east bank of the Chattahoochee River and McPherson, marching north, had succeeded in putting a small force across the Chattahoochee River and establishing a bridge on the east bank. During the period of July 9 to July 18th, Sherman succeeded in getting his entire force across the Chattahoochee river. From this time on, Sherman was engaged in severe fighting around Peach Tree creek and Decatur; finally, he forced General Hood, who superseded General Johnston as commander of the Confederate forces, to evacuate Atlanta. Sherman entered and occupied Atlanta on Sept. 1, 1864. Thus, in the month of September, the Army of the Cumberland, Major General Thomas commanding, held the city of Atlanta. Major General Howard's army was grouped about East Point and Major General Schofield, commanding the Army of the Ohio, held Decatur.[2]

In Georgia, the corn in the fields had ripened. The Governor of

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[2]Official Records, War of the Rebellion, XXXIX (Part I, Series I) 580.

the State, after the fall of Atlanta, disbanded the troops called out by him, sending them home so that they might gather the sorghum. Upon the plantations the rude mills were pressing out the sweet juices of the plant, which the housewives and negroes were boiling into syrup. Most of the State of Georgia had not felt the ravages of the war, as far as the material crops and supplies were concerned.[3]

With the capture of Atlanta, Sherman drove out the inhabitants, setting them adrift, homeless and penniless, to find such refuge as they might among their friends in the South.[4] This was in accordance with his theory of war, previously mentioned. In defence of this, he says,

> I was resolved to make Atlanta a pure military garrison or depot, with no civil population to influence military measures. If the people raise a howl against my barbarity and cruelty, I will answer that war is war and not popularity seeking. If they want peace, they and their relations must stop the war.[5]

The Mayor and Councilmen of Atlanta wrote to Sherman begging him to let the people remain in their homes.

> We petition you to reconsider the order requiring the citizens to leave Atlanta. It will involve in the aggregate consequences appalling and heartrending. Many poor women are very ill, many have very young children, whose husbands are either in the army, prisoners, or dead. Some say, "I have such and such a one sick at my house; who will wait upon them when I am gone?" Others say, "What are we to do; we have no house to go to and no friends!" This being so, how will it be possible for the people still here, mostly women and children, to find shelter and how can they live through the winter in the woods?[6]

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[3]Charles C. Coffin, Freedom Triumphant, p. 84.

[4]James M. Neilly, D. D., "A Great Game of Strategy," Confederate Veteran, XXXIV (October, 1919), 384.

[5]Sherman's Memoirs, op. cit., II, 111.

[6]Richard Taylor, Destruction and Reconstruction, p. 194.

To this Sherman replied,

> I have read your letter carefully to give full credit to your statements of the distress that will be occasioned, and yet shall not revoke my orders, because they were not intended to meet the humanities of the case. You might as well appeal against the thunderstorm as against the terrible hardships of war. They are unavoidable; and the only way the people of Atlanta can hope once more to live in peace and quiet is to stop the war, which can only be done by admitting that it began in error and it is perpetuated in pride.[7]

Miss Mary Gay set out from her home in Decatur to Atlanta on an errand of mercy. She arrived at Atlanta after Sherman had entered, and saw the despoiling of the houses not already destroyed. Having obtained a pass she went from Atlanta to Jonesboro, taking with her carefully secreted and much needed clothing for the Confederate soldiers.

On the way, she saw for many miles around the population of Atlanta decamped upon the ground without shelter. In her description of the scene through which she passed she wrote:

> An autumnal mist or drizzle was slowly but surely saturating every article of clothing upon them. Aged grandmothers upon the verge of the grave, tender girls in the bloom of their young womanhood, and little babes not three days old in the arms of sick mothers, were driven from their homes and thrown upon the cold charity of the world.[8]

For a week or two after the capture of Atlanta a reaction set in from the intense exertion of the summer. After the fatigue and strain rest was necessary. The terms of regiments were expiring; new troops were arriving, and must be placed and drilled.

But soon came the question of "What next?" He must go somewhere,

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[7]Sherman's Memoirs, op. cit., II, 124.

[8]Matthew Page Andrews, Women of the South in War Times, p. 303.

strike another blow--- one that could go no farther and rely on the present line of communications for supplies. The whole army of 100,000 men was now dependent upon a single line of railroad running from Nashville to Atlanta, a distance of 290 miles, and all the way through the enemy country. Every foot of the railroad must therefore be protected by troops whose numbers, of course, were deducted from Sherman's offensive force.

Hood was located with his army not far off at Lovejoy's Station, and by the middle of September was planning for new action. Hood decided to make the move to pass around Atlanta and start in to break up Sherman's lines of communication.

In the Shenandoah Valley the war had begun to assume a serious aspect. Grant had given orders to Sheridan to carry out a new policy of devastation.[9] Thus, while Sherman was meditating on his plans in Atlanta, the Confederacy, in spite of the armed force which it had, was beginning to lose its power. It had already been divided by the loss of practically all of Mississippi. Its ports were gradually passing back into Federal posession. Kentucky, Tennessee, and the Shenandoah Valley as well as West Virginia had to a great extent been lost. However, the agricultural resources of the lower South for supporting the army was still untouched. Lee now could no longer count on supplies from the Shenandoah Valley; the chief reliance, then, was on the beautiful and fertile State of Georgia. Sherman was at the chief rail center of that State. To retreat and follow Reed's army toward Tennessee would look as though Sherman was giving up the

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[9]Hosmer, American History, XVI, 201.

conquered territory. On the other hand, it was impossible to advance with the ever lengthening line of communication.[10]

On Sept. 12th Sherman wrote Halleck that there was a large amount of forage in Alabama and Georgia and that independent columns might operate by a circuit from one army to another and destroy the enemy's cavalry. Then he said:

> Our railroad is repaired and bringing forward supplies but I doubt its capacity to do much more than feed our trains and artillery horses.[11]

Sherman's reply covered the whole ground; discussed the capture of Wilmington and the topography of its waters; considered the value of Mobile and the possibility of Southern independence; proposed reinforcements for Meade and campaigns of Price and Rosecrans, treated of Hood's army and the Appalachicola River; but narrowed itself down to a definite answer to Grant's inquiry and a positive plan for his own army which did not differ materially from that suggested by Grant. Thus, in his letter of September 20, Sherman says:

> Now that Mobile is about out to the commerce of our enemy, it calls for no further effort on our part, unless the capture of the city can be followed by the occupation of the Alabama river and the railroad to Columbus, when that place would be a magnificent auxiliary to my further progress in Georgia....But, Savannah once in our possession, and the river open to use, I would not hesitate to cross the State of Georgia with 60,000 men, hauling some stores and depending upon the country for the balance. Where a million people find subsistence, my army won't starve.....If you will secure Wilmington and the city of Savannah from your center....I will send a force to the Alabama and Appalachicola... and if you will fix a day to be in Savannah, I will insure our possession of Macon and a point on the river below Augusta. They may stand the fall of Richmond but not of all Georgia.[12]

On the same day he wrote,

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[10]James Truslow Adams, America's Tragedy, p. 138.

[11]Adam Badeau, Military History of U. S. Grant, p. 46.

> If you can whip Lee and I can march to the Atlantic I think Uncle Abe will give us a 20 day leave of absence to see the young folks.[13]

Colonel Porter was the bearer of a letter to Sherman in which he proceeded to develop the suggestion he had already made by telegraph of a movement toward the Atlantic.

> What you are to do with the forces at your command I do not exactly see. The difficulties of supplying your army, except when you are constantly moving beyond where you are I do not exactly see.[14]

He continued further to say that if it had not been for Price's movement Conley could have sent 12,000 men to Mobile. Sherman then could also have taken an equal number from his army and sent them to Savannah. Quoting further from his letter:

> You could then move as proposed in your telegram or as to threaten Macon and Augusta equally. Whichever was abandoned by the enemy you could take and open up a new base of supplies.[15]

He said the main object in sending a messenger to Sherman was not so much to tell him what to do but to get Sherman's suggestions as to further plans.

But at this moment the whole situation changed. On September 21st, Hood moved his army. On the 22nd he announced to Bragg that, unless Sherman moved, and as soon as he could collect supplies, he would cross the Chattahoochee river and form a line of battle near Powder Springs. He would thus prevent Sherman from using the Dalton

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[12] Senate Report No. 66, Supplement, 1st. Sess., 39 Cong., I, 200.

[13] Official Records, War of the Rebellion, XXXIX (Part II, Series I), 413.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

railroad and force him to drive off Hood, or so move that Hood would fall upon the rear.[16]

It is interesting to note that the same movement which Grant and Sherman were discussing had been considered nearly as soon by the Confederate general. He even appeared to desire the National advance, and purposely left the way open for Sherman into central Georgia, anticipating the probabilities of the campaign.

Hood continued to Bragg in his letter that perhaps it would be well to move a part of the important machinery to Macon, to the east of the Oconee and do the same at Augusta to the east side of the Savannah.[17]

When Hood succeeded to the command of the Army of the Tennessee in September, the effective force of his army had been reduced to about 30,000 men, while Sherman's force was fully three times that number and much better supplied.[18]

Sherman waited to see what Hood would do next. However, Hood could not have taken a course of action more acceptable to the Union commander than that of moving northward to gain Sherman's rear, as later events proved.

Jefferson Davis started the next day from Richmond to the camp of Hood, and all along the road proclaimed the new campaign, which the newspapers published and in a few hours Sherman was reading. In these

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[16]Charles Coffin, op. cit., p. 79.

[17]Badeau, op. cit., p. 50.

[18]Capt. James Dinkins, N. A. La., "How Forrest Destroyed Sherman's Line of Communication," Confederate Veteran, XXXIX (April, 1926), 135.

public speeches, he announced the fact that Atlanta was to be recovered; that Forrest was already on the National roads in middle Tennessee, and Sherman would meet the fate of Napoleon in the retreat from Moscow. Finally, addressing the army, he turned to a division of the Tennessee troops, saying, "Our cause is not lost. Sherman cannot keep his long line of communications and retreat sooner or later, he must."[19] They were told to be of good cheer as in a short while they would turn their faces homeward and their feet would press Tennessee soil.

Sherman thus was forewarned; this speech caused him to be more determined to make the march to the sea and not to be lured out of Georgia by Hood to fight him. Two days later, Davis gave more definite substance to this speech, when he said, in substance, that the Confederate army must march into Tennessee, and there draw from 20,000 to 30,000 to the army, then push the Union army back to the banks of the Ohio. Thus, they would give the peace party of the North a thorough defeat.[20]

Every preparation was now made to resist the double attack. Armies larger than Sherman's had been forced back or failed after making a very brilliant beginning. On October first Sherman reported the advance of Hood and added the growth of his plans. In the message to Grant he stated that Hood was on the west side of the Chattahoochee, below Sweetwater. If he tried to cross over Sherman would attack him, but if he went on to the Selma and Talladega road,

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[19] Official Records, War of the Rebellion, XXXIX, 483.

[20] Ibid.

> Why would it not do for me to leave Tennessee to the forces which Thomas has and the reserves soon to come to Nashville, and for me to destroy Atlanta and Charleston, breaking roads, and doing irreparable damage? We cannot remain on the defensive.[21]

On the same day, he wrote to two of his generals, telling them that if Hood tried to get into Tennessee that he might send back to Chattanooga all of General Thomas's men as far down as Kingston, and draw forward all else, and send back all cars and locomotives. Then he would destroy Atlanta and make for Savannah or Charleston via Milledgeville and Milton.[22]

But the rebels at once attacked the railroad south of the Etowah and Sherman was obliged to follow with his army. His whole attention for awhile was concentrated upon the rear, and the new suggestion remained for a week unanswered.

Sherman's idea was that if he were to start for Savannah Hood would be compelled to turn back and follow him. However, he proposed to prepare for the contingency of the latter moving the other way while he was moving south, by making Thomas strong enough to hold Tennessee and Kentucky.

On the 4th of October, Grant wrote to Halleck the plans which he had in mind when the campaign first began. These were, that Sherman, after capturing Atlanta, should connect with Canby at Mobile. However, the drawing of the 19th Corps from Canby and the movements of Kirby Smith, making it necessary for all of Canby's surplus forces to be needed elsewhere, has made it impossible to carry out the plan as early as was contemplated. Grant then questioned the advisability of

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[21] Senate Report No. 66, op. cit., I, 212.

[22] Ibid.

whether Savannah would not be a better line than Selma, Montgomery, and Mobile. Next came the reasons that recommended the movement. Either line would cut off the supplies from the rich districts of Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi equally well. Whichever way Sherman moved he would surely encounter Hood's army and in crossing to the sea coast would sever the connection between Lee's army and his district of county. Grant felt that Hood's army should be destroyed before the proposed march was made. This was the principal reason in his mind for not giving his immediate consent to it. With him it was not a question of whether the march should be made, but whether Hood's army should not first be destroyed.[23]

Grant's suggestion was that Savannah might be taken by surprise with one Corps from where he was and such other troops as Foster could spare from the Department of the South. On October 6th Grant went to Washington to ascertain definitely upon what reinforcements he could rely and to shape his plans accordingly.

October 9th Sherman telegraphed to Grant, saying that his army had plenty of bread and meat, but forage was scarce.

> It will be a physical impossibility to protect the roads now that Hood, Forrest, Wheeler, and the whole batch of devils are turned loose without home or habitation.....I propose that we break up the railroad from Chattanooga and strike out with wagons for Milledgeville, Millen, and Savannah. Until we can repopulate Georgia, it is useless to occupy it, but the utter destruction of its roads and people will cripple their military resources. By attempting to hold the roads we will lose one thousand men monthly and will gain no result. I can make the march and make Georgia howl.[24]

The army was reported to have as supplies over eight thousand

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[23] Badeau, op. cit., p. 55.

[24] Senate Reports, No. 66, op.cit., I, 221.

cattle and three million rations of bread, but no corn; Sherman planned they could forage the corn from the interior of the State.

Grant, however, with his usual desire to make armies his objective, at first was unwilling for Sherman to turn his back on the enemy. A movement to the sea had all along entered into his plans, but then Grant had expected that Hood would be in front and that Sherman would be obliged to fight him. By attacking Sherman's communications Hood had compelled Sherman to retrace his steps nearly to Chattanooga. If Sherman turned now to the southwest he would leave Tennessee open to Hood with nothing to withstand him but the forces that could be got together under Thomas. Grant believed that only the destruction of the rebel armies could win the war. Grant's reply to Sherman, dated October 11, revealed this. He wanted to know if it didn't look as though Hood was going to attempt the invasion of Middle Tennessee, leaving the Mobile, Ohio, Memphis, and Charleston roads to supply his base on the Tennessee river near Florence and Decatur.[25] His thought was that if this took place Hood should be met and prevented from getting north of the Tennessee river. Then he made the statement that if there was any possible way of getting at Hood's army, that that was the thing which he preferred. But he left it to Sherman's judgment to determine the possibility. Grant as yet had not given his permission for the march to be made, for he says,

> If you were to cut loose, I do not believe you would meet Hood's army, but would be bushwhacked by all the old men, little boys, and such railroad guards as are left at home.[26]

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

Sherman declared that Hood would follow him, certain that the rebel army would go north. On the same day that Grant wrote the above letter Sherman wrote to Grant declaring that Hood would follow him; he said:

> We cannot remain here on the defensive. With the 25,000 men and the bold cavalry he has, he can constantly break my roads. I would infinitely prefer to make a wreck of the roads of the country from Chattanooga to Atlanta, including the latter city, send back all my wounded and worthless and with my effective army move into Georgia, smashing things to the sea.....Instead of my being on the defensive, I would be on the offensive; instead of guessing at what he means to do, he would have to guess at my plans. The difference in war is a full twenty-five per cent.[27]

His plans were to make either Savannah or Charleston on the mouth of the Chattahoochee. He asked for an immediate answer, saying he knew they should not have the telegraph long.

Sherman's proposed attempt was in some respects like, and in other features, unlike Grant's Vicksburg campaign. It was like it, because it was abandoning one base and seeking another, plunging into an enemy's country without many supplies and relying on a hostile region for his resources. However, Sherman did not expect an enemy in his front, while Grant penetrated between two hostile forces. Sherman was not sure where he would strike while Grant knew where he intended to go.[28]

At midnight, October 11th, the telegraph operator at City Point, on the banks of the James, was sending the message to Atlanta which granted Sherman the permission to make the march.

> If you are satisfied the trip to the sea coast can be made, holding the line of the Tennessee firmly, you may make it, des-

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[27] Badeau, op. cit., p. 65.

[28] Ibid.

troying all the railroads south of Dalton, or Chattanooga, as you think best.[29]

On the 13th of October, Grant announced his decision to the government. He said, "I believe Sherman's proposition is the best that can be adopted".[30] On the same day he issued full and detailed instructions to Halleck to provide for his arrival at the sea coast. He gave directions for the cooperation of Canby and Foster and ordered the information to be got to Sherman of all the preparations made to meet him when he arrived at the sea coast.

So unfolded the plan for the next movement, on the part of Sherman. He now contemplated marching much farther than Grant had marched. He did it, however, with the full concurrence of Grant and was aware that every preparation had been made to await him at the coast. As to the original idea of the march, the germ of the idea was perhaps Grant's, but Sherman's march, as the plans finally developed, was a different one from that which Grant had contemplated. The most daring movement on Sherman's part and one of his own conception was that he was willing to move to the sea, even though he knew that Grant could not send any forces to meet him.

He proposed to send General Thomas to Nashville with a portion of the troops, and then with the remaining 60,000 men march through Georgia from the mountains to the sea coast, then turning north to the sea and receiving supplies from the fleet, when he should reach the coast. Then he planned to turn north, through South and North Carolina. Then, acting in conjunction with the Army of the Potomac,

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[29] Ibid.

[30] Sherman's Memoirs, II, 156.

he would overwhelm the army under General Lee. With that destroyed, the Confederates would have no power to prolong the contest.

On the 19th of October, Sherman set forth his plans to General Halleck at Washington, giving the information that Hood had retreated rapidly by all the roads leading south. His intention, as given, was to send the 4th corps, the garrison, and his new troops back to General Thomas to defend the lines of the Tennessee river.[31]

While Sherman was planning his campaign, Grant at City Point and Lincoln, Stanton and Halleck at Washington were thinking constantly about Sherman's project. It was a new departure in the strategy of the Civil War. "The President feels much solicitude in respect to General Sherman's proposed movement," wrote Stanton to Grant, and adds that "he hopes that it will be materially considered... a misstep by General Sherman might be fatal to his army".[32] Thus Sherman knew that he must succeed, because if he failed, the march would "be adjudged the wild adventures of a crazy fool".[33]

Grant's Chief of Staff, Rawlins, was opposed to Sherman's march and, being sent by Grant to the West on a mission, he stopped as he passed through Washington and saw the President and Secretary of War. He expressed so forcefully his apprehension as to the result of allowing Sherman to move south and leave Thomas to contend with Hood, that he actually induced the government to send a dispatch to Grant, desiring him to reconsider his decision. However, Grant never knew

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Official Records, War of the Rebellion, XXXIX, 162.

[33] Ibid., p. 378.

the origin of this dispatch until after the death of Rawlins. Thus, although the administration would not take the responsibility of countermanding Grant's order, or absolutely overruling his judgment, they did strongly urge him to reconsider both.[34]

On the same day that Grant received the dispatch, he telegraphed Sherman, saying, "Do you not think it advisable now that Hood has gone as far north, to entirely ruin him, before starting on your proposed campaign?"[35]

Sherman wrote the same day to Grant that if he thought it was possible to overhaul Hood he would turn against him with his whole force; then perhaps he would retreat to the southwest drawing him as a decoy from Georgia;[36] this, Sherman thought, was his chief object. Then he made up his mind that this would not be the best plan, because he followed up this statement by saying,

> No single army can catch Hood and I am convinced the best results will follow from our defeating Georgia by manouvering... Still, if Hood attempts to invade middle Tennessee, I will hold Decatur, and be prepared to move in that direction.[37]

On the morning of November second, Grant received this dispatch from Sherman, dated nine hours earlier than Grant's own, delaying the movement. In this dispatch, Sherman reported Hood's entire strength at less than 40,000 men, exclusive of Forrest's cavalry, while Thomas, he said, had at least 45,000 or 50,000, besides the force that was promised from Rosecrans. This statement of the relative strength of

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Senate Reports No. 66, op. cit., I, 251.

[36] Ibid., p. 252.

[37] Ibid.

the two armies at once reassured and decided Grant. At 11:30 A. M. on Nov. 2nd, having yet no response to his message of the night before, he telegraphed again to Sherman saying,

> With the force you have left Thomas, he must be able to take care of Hood and destroy him. I really do not see that you can withdraw from where you are without giving up all we have gained in territory. I say then go on as you propose.[38]

Sherman was equally prompt in reasserting his original confidence. At 6 P. M. on the second, too soon to have heard from Grant, he telegraphed a message to the effect that if he turned back, the whole effect of his campaign would be lost. His movements, he said, had thrown Beauregard to the west so Thomas would have plenty of time and sufficient troops to hold him from Missouri. He stated further, that he had plenty of supplies at Chattanooga and Atlanta to stand a month's interruption of communications. Then he said, "I am clearly of the opinion that the best results will follow me in my contemplated move through Georgia.[39]

Grant and Sherman were in harmony. Each for a moment thought it might be better to follow Hood, but before either had received the second dispatch from the other, they both came to the same conclusion favoring the bolder course. Their dispatches crossed each other on the way.

All telegrams between Grant and his subordinates at the West necessarily passed through Washington, where copies were taken off for the War Department, so that the entire correspondence was seen by the

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid., p. 253.

government as it occurred. It was the only reply made by Grant to the dispatch of Stanton, but no more was said in any quarter in opposition to Sherman's march.

November 6th, Sherman wrote at great length to Grant, confiding to him the doubts and anxieties, the plans and imaginings that crowded upon his mind. He had had occasional misgivings about his strategy even then, which, however, he quickly brushed away.

> The only question in my mind, is whether I ought not to have tagged Hood far over into the Mississippi, trusting to some happy accident to bring him to bay and to battle, but I then thought that by so doing, I would play into his hands, by being drawn or decoyed, to far away from our original line of advance.....I felt compelled therefore to do what is usually a mistake in war--divide my forces---- send a part back into Tennessee, retaining the balance here.....I admit that the first object should be the destruction of that army.[40]

Sherman's reasons for making the march are as he explained them in his Memoirs. His desire was not so much to destroy the Army of the South, as to show its vulnerability, and lower the morale of the Southern people by cutting the Confederacy in two. In his letter to Grant, referred to above, he set forth his argument, by saying that he proposed to act in such a way as to completely set at naught the threat which Davis had made, of making him retreat, and his promises of protection to the Southern people. His idea was that if a well appointed army could march right through hostile territory, it would be a demonstration to both the foreign and domestic world that the North had a power which the South could not resist. He further said, "This may not be war, but rather statesmanship".[41] He thought that the people,

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[40] Senate Reports No. 66, op. cit., I, 260.

[41] Ibid.

both abroad and in the South would reason that such a movement would be positive proof that the North would prevail in the contest. He felt that with the election of Lincoln, who was considered a War President, and this reasoning of the people, the results would be demoralizing. He said that

> even without a battle, the results operating upon the minds of the sensible people would produce fruits more than compensating us for the expense, trouble, and risk.[42]

Sherman had three different routes in mind which he could follow in making this march from Atlanta; one to the south of Atlanta, another to the east and south, the other to the southwest. All were open with no serious enemy opposition in the field at the time he made his plans.

The first would carry him across the only east and west railroad remaining to the Confederacy, which would be destroyed and thereby sever the communications between the armies of Lee and Beauregard. Incidentally, he could also destroy the depots at Macon and Augusta and reach the sea shore at Charleston or Savannah, from either of which points he could reinforce the armies in Virginia.[43]

The second and easiest route would be due south, following the valley of the Flint river, which was very fertile and well supplied; from here, he would reach the navigable waters of the Appalachicola. He could destroy en route the railroad, take up the prisoners of war at Andersonville and destroy the cotton near Albany and Fort Gannes. This, however, would leave the army in a bad position for future

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[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

movements.[44]

The third route could be taken down the Chattahoochee to Opelika and Montgomery, from there to Pensacola or Tensas Bayou, in communication with Fort Morgan. This latter route would enable him immediately to cooperate with General Canby in the reduction of Mobile and occupation of the Alabama.[45]

Sherman considered that the first route would have a material effect upon Grant's campaign in Virginia. The second would be the safest of execution, but the third would most probably fall within the sphere of his own command and have a direct bearing upon Beauregard.[46]

If he started before he heard from Grant again or before further developments turned his course, he told Grant that he could take it as certain that he had moved via Griffin to Barnsville. He planned, if he did this, to break up the road between Columbus and Macon. Then, if he feinted on Macon, Grant would know that he had shot off towards Opelika, Montgomery, Mobile, or Pensacola. Thus it is seen that the absolute route was as yet undetermined. No man could say what Hood would do when the departure of the National Army became known; whether he would persist in the invasion of Tennesse or retrace his steps in pursuit of Sherman. It could not even be called certain that a considerable force might not be collected to oppose the advance to the sea. It was therefore indispensable that Sherman

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Senate Reports No. 66, op. cit., I, 260.

[46] Ibid.

should have alternatives; if repelled or thwarted in one direction, he must be left free to turn in another. If he could not reach the Atlantic coast he must make for the Gulf of Mexico. Thus at the very moment of starting, neither he nor Grant even knew what point would be the end of the march.

The tributaries of the Savannah and Altamaha rivers have their source in the mountains of Northern Georgia. These two streams flow southeast to the Atlantic. After leaving the mountain region of Northern Georgia the topography of the country is determined by the river courses which run in radiating lines from the highlands one hundred miles northeast of Atlanta. The Savannah river which separates the State from South Carolina flows nearly southeast in a very direct general line to the sea. Augusta is on the right bank, like a half-way house, and Savannah, on the same side of the stream, is near its mouth. The Ocmulgee and Oconee rivers rise near Atlanta and flow in parallel valleys about forty miles apart in the same southeast direction, nearly two hundred miles, when they unite to form the Altamaha, which enters the ocean a little north of the Florida line. Macon is on the west bank of the Ocmulgee, about one hundred miles from Atlanta and Milledgeville, thirty miles northeast of Macon, is on the same side of the Oconee, which, however, has a direction more nearly north and south above the city. The only other stream of any importance in this party of the state is the Ogeechee, which rises midway between Milledgeville and Augusta, but gradually approaches the Savannah, so that 50 or 60 miles from the ocean, these rivers are nearly parallel, and from 15 to 20 miles apart.[47]

By marching along the highlands between these rivers, Sherman

would have no large rivers to cross. The Oconee was the largest, and he planned to cross it at Milledgeville.[48]

General Sherman, as he appeared at Gaylesville, seated upon a camp stool in front of his tent, and with a map of the United States spread upon his knees, made an impressive sight. Major Nichols gives a very interesting picture of him. General Easton and Colonel Beckwith, his chief quartermaster and commissary stood by his side, with many of the other officers grouped around him. General Sherman's finger ran swiftly down the map until it reached Atlanta. Then it followed the general direction to be taken by the right and left wings until a halt was made at Milledgeville. "From here," he said, "we have several alternatives. I am sure we can go to Savannah; then north and east to Columbia, South Carolina." Then he looked up at General Howard with the remark, "Howard, I believe we can go there without serious difficulty. If we can cross the Salkahatchee, we can capture Columbia. From Columbia....." He passed his finger over rivers and swamps and cities to Goldsboro, North Carolina....

> That point is a few days' march through a rich country. When we reach that important railroad junction---- When I once plant this army at Goldsboro--- Lee must leave Virginia or he will be defeated beyond all hope of recovery. We can make this march, for General Grant assures me that Lee cannot get away from Richmond without his knowledge nor without serious loss to his army.[49]

To those who gazed upon the map and measured the great distance to be traveled, through a strange country, and then away to the North again, over wide rivers and treacherous bogs, the whole scheme must

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[47]Jacob D. Cox, March to the Sea, X, 25.

[48]Coffin, op. cit., p. 83.

[49]G. W. Nichols, The Story of the Great March, p. 23.

have seemed weird and fantastic.

Thus plans were made and carried to fruition. Sherman began the work in preparation for the carrying out of his proposed march. Plans were made to abandon the railroad south of Dalton and for the destruction of Atlanta, which he felt was of strategic value only as long as it was a railroad center. To destroy all of the railroads leading to it as well as the foundries, machine shops, business houses, depots, and other buildings would make it of no more value than any other point in northern Georgia.

The line of the Etowah, because of its rivers and natural features, possessed an importance which would always continue. From it, all parts of Georgia and Alabama could be reached by armies marching with trains from the Coosa or Chattahoochee valleys.[50]

The sick and wounded were rapidly sent north along with all the baggage that could be spared. Commissioners came and took the votes of the soldiers for the Presidential election and departed. Paymasters came and paid off the troops, and left. Wagon trains were put in trim and loaded for the march.

With every unsound man and every useless article sent to the rear, Sherman then had an army consisting of 55,329 infantry men, 5,063 cavalry men, 65 guns, 4 teams of horses to each gun with its caisson and forge, 1,812 artillerymen, 600 ambulances, each drawn by two horses; and 2,500 wagons with six mules each.[51]

To General Thomas, Sherman delegated full powers over all the

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[50] Official Records, War of the Rebellion, op. cit., XXXIX, 584.

[51] Sherman's Memoirs, op. cit., II, 172.

troops subject to his commands except the 4th Corps, which he planned to move in Georgia. Sherman kept only one division of cavalry, under Kilpatrick, sending the rest under Wilson to Thomas. A. J. Smith was also ordered from Missouri to join him. These forces were considered sufficient to enable him to cope with Hood, whose army was estimated at 35,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry. Hood had by this time moved to Tuscumbia.[52] Sherman detached Stanley with the 4th Corps and ordered him to report to Thomas at Nashville. On the thirtieth he detached Schofield with the 23rd Corps to the same destination.

Sherman communicated full details of his march to Thomas. He ordered Corse, who was still at Rome, to burn the bridges, foundries, mills, and everything else of value at that place.

On November 7, Sherman received his last telegram from Grant in which he said

> I see no present reason for changing your plans. Should any arise you will see it, or if I do I will inform you. I think everything here is favorable now. Great good fortune attend you.[53]

On the thirteenth of November, Sherman's army stood detached and cut off from all communication with the rear. From Cartersville the last communication was sent to the north. It was a message to Thomas, "All is well".

So they were cut adrift from their base of supplies and their lines of communication, launching out with uncertainty on a campaign whose projected end only a few in the command knew.

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[52] John W. M. Draper, The Civil War in America, III, 315.

[53] Sherman's Memoirs, op. cit., II, 170.

CHAPTER III

THE ARMY ON THE MARCH

The march really began at Rome and Kingston, rather than at Atlanta.[1] On the way to Atlanta half of Marietta was burned up. Many of the dwellings were leveled to the ground.

As some of the men were marching toward the Chattahoochee River they saw in the distance pillars of smoke rising along the banks----- the bridges were in flames.

> Said one, hitching his musket on his shoulder in a free and easy way, "I say, Charley, I believe Sherman has set the river on fire". "Reckon not," replied the other with the same indifference, "if he has it is all right". And so they pass along, obeying orders, not knowing what is before them, but believing in their leaders.[2]

Acworth was burned without orders. It had been a thriving railroad center but that night it was a heap of ruins.[3] Major Connolly was the only one of the General's staff in the town when the fire began and he tried to prevent the burning, but

> while I watched one house to keep it from being fired, another somewhere else would take fire; so I concluded to give it up. I succeeded in saving a few houses occupied by war widows and their families, but all the rest of the town went up in smoke. It is evident that our soldiers are determined to burn, plunder, and destroy everything in their way on the march.... If we are to continue our devastation as we began it today, I don't want to be captured in this trip, for I expect every man of us the rebels capture will get a "stout rope and a short shrift".[4]

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[1] Nichols, Story of the Great March, p. 36.

[2] Ibid., p. 38.

[3] James Austin Connolly, "Letters from a Civil War Officer," Miss. Valley Hist. Rev., XIV, 397.

[4] Ibid., p. 397.

The whole force was grouped around Atlanta on the 14th of November. The city was empty of human beings except a few soldiers here and there. It appeared as if the Union soldiers were preparing to evacuate Atlanta but the troops were taking the wrong direction for this, and thus the Confederates did not know what to think. The banks were vacant, there was no trade or traffic of any kind, and the streets were empty. Beautiful roses bloomed in the gardens of fine houses but there was a death-like stillness and solitude covering all, and depressing even Sherman's men. In the peaceful homes of the North there could be no conception of how the people suffered by being driven from their homes, many of which were then completely destroyed.[5]

All day of November 15, the commissioners had been busy loading rations and the quartermaster issuing clothing and shoes to the troops. Up to about 3 P. M., work was carried on with something like a show of regularity, but about that time fires began to break out in different parts of the city and it soon became evident that these fires were but the beginning of a general conflagration which would sweep over the entire city and blot it out of existence. Poe, chief of the engineers, had been preparing for this. He had torn and battered the walls of the buildings down, thrown down smokestacks, broken up furnace arches, knocked steam machinery to pieces, and punched all boilers full of holes. All these had been piled together to be burned. Only the 33rd Massachusetts Regiment remained in the city to guard it; all the others were grouped around it. The quartermasters and commissioners soon ceased trying to issue clothing or to load rations. The soldiers

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[5] Henry Hitchcock's Diary, Marching With Sherman, p. 38.

were told to go in and take what they wanted before it burned up. They also found many barrels of whisky which they drank to the point of intoxication.

New fires began to spring up, all sorts of discordant noises rent the air, drunken soldiers on foot or on horseback raced up and down the streets, while the buildings on either side were solid sheets of flame. They gathered in crowds before the finest buildings and sang, "Rally Round the Flag," while the flames enwrapped the costly structures; they shouted and danced and sang again, while pillars, roofs, and domes sank with the ruin.[6]

The night of November 15 presented to the beholder the grand and awful spectacle of the beautiful city of Atlanta in flames. The heavens were on expanse of lurid fire. The night for miles around was bright as midday. The air was filled with flying, burning cinders; buildings covering two hundred acres were in ruins. Every instant there was the sharp intonation or the smothered booming sound of exploding shells and powder concealed in the buildings. First bursts of smoke, dense black clouds, then tongues of flame, then huge waves of fire rolled up into the sky. Soon the skeletons of great warehouses started out in relief against and amidst sheets of roaring, blazing, furious flames---- then the angry waves rolled less high and became a deeper color, finally they sank from the bare and blackened walls.[7] All this, to the tune of the bands playing "John Brown's Body".

Not many of the dwelling houses were burned; the courthouse and

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[6]Connolly, op. cit., XIV, 400.

[7]Hitchcock's Diary, op. cit., p. 56.

most of the churches also escaped the flames. Sentries were placed in front of the churches near headquarters where Sherman was stationed, with orders not to let anyone pass by them even on the sidewalks.[8]

That evening, at the dinner table, Sherman, addressing one of his officers, had said,

> This city has contributed probably more to carry on and sustain the war than any other, save perhaps Richmond. We have been fighting Atlanta all the time, in the past. We have been capturing wagons, guns, and other articles made in Atlanta; and now, since they have been doing so much to destroy us and our Government, we have to destroy them, at least enough to prevent any more of that.[9]

By 11:30 P. M., the fires had pretty much exhausted themselves, but they still smoldered and burned.

> All the pictures and verbal descriptions of Hell could not give one-half as vivid an idea of it as did that flame-wrapped city.[10] Nothing I have ever seen but this terrible night is worthy of being compared to "The Day of Wrath----Eventful Day, When Heaven and Earth Shall Pass Away".[11]

Gateway City of the south, farewell.

The next day found the city a mass of ruins. The eventful day had come, and they were ready to turn their faces toward the sea and their backs upon the scene of their destruction. The throwing away of superfluous conveniences began at daybreak. Each group of messmates decided which hatchet, stew pan, or coffeepot should be taken. The single wagon allowed to a battalion carried scarcely more than a grip

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[8] Ibid.

[9] Hitchcock's Diary, op. cit., p. 58.

[10] Connolly, op. cit., XIV, 39.

[11] Merrill, "Letters From a Civil War Officer," (Ed. Volwiler), Miss. Valley Hist. Rev., XIV (June 29-March 28), 524.

sack and blanket and a tiny shelter tent not much larger than a large towel for each officer, and only such other material as was necessary for regimental business. Transportation was reduced to a minimum, as only fast marching was to be the order of the day.

At last came the familiar "Fall in!", all bands playing, flags flying, and men cheering, the last regiment turned its back upon Atlanta, the city of smoking ruins. The day of November 16 was extremely beautiful. Clear sunlight, with bracing air, which seemed to exhilirate the army. They were in great good spirits.[12] Even the common soldiers caught the inspiration, and many called out to Sherman as he passed them, "Uncle Billy, I guess Grant is waiting for us at Richmond."[13]

What thoughts passed through the mind of the campaigner as he paused for his last look upon the scenes of his past battles? Behind him lay Atlanta, smoldering in ruins, the black smoke rising high in the air and hanging like a pall over the ruined city. Away off in the distance, on the McDonough road, was the rear of Howard's column, the gun barrels glistening in the sun, the white topped wagons stretched away to the south. Just before him was the 14th corps, marching steadily and rapidly with a cheery look and swinging pace that made light of the many miles ahead. Some band by accident, perhaps, struck up "John Brown's Body"; the men caught the strains and the chorus of "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah" rang out with great gusto on the morning

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[12]Thomas Gray, jr., "To the Sea and Supply," U. S. Infantry Journal, II (December, 1935, 37), 647.

[13]Sherman's Memoirs, op. cit., II, 148.

air. Sherman turned his horse's head eastward toward the sea, and thus began this most notable march. In a continuous line the army would have stretched over fifty miles, and the wagon trains would have reached over thirty miles.

Every soldier carried forty rounds of ammunition, while the wagons contained an additional supply and twelve hundred thousand rations, with oats and corn enough to last five days.[14] The loads were made quite light; they were about 2,500 pounds net. Each wagon carried, in addition, the forage needed by its own team.

The wagon trains were divided between the four corps; each corps had about 800 wagons, and these, on the march, usually occupied about five miles of road. Each corps commander was to manage his own train. The artillery and wagons usually took the roads while the men, with the exception of the advance guards and rear guards, pursued paths improvised by the side of the wagons, unless forced to use a bridge or causeway in common.[15]

The army was divided into two wings. The right wing, under the command of Major General O. I. Howard, was composed of the 15th and 17th Corps. The left wing, under the command of Major General H. W. Slocum, was composed of the 14th and 20th Corps.

The habitual order of march was to be, wherever practicable, by four roads, as nearly parallel as possible, and converging at points which General Sherman was to designate. Brigadier General Kilpatrick was in command of the cavalry.

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[14] Rossiter Johnston, op. cit., p. 493.

[15] Sherman's Memoirs, op. cit., II, 176.

There was no general train of supplies; but each corps had its own ammunition train, and provision train. They were distributed so that each regiment followed one wagon and one ambulance. Behind each brigade followed the due proportion of ammunition wagons, provision wagons, and ambulances. If danger threatened each corps commander was to change the order of march by leaving his advance and rear brigades unencumbered by wheels. The separate columns were to start at 7, M., and march about fifteen miles per day.[16]

The army was ordered to forage liberally on the country. Each ide commander was to organize a good foraging party, under the mand of one or more officers who were to gather, near the route aveled, corn or forage of any kind, meat of any kind, vegetables, orn meal, or whatever was needed by the command, with the aid of keeping at least ten days' provisions for his command, and three days' forage. Soldiers were not to enter dwellings of the inhabitants, or commit any trespass. But, during a halt or camp they might gather turnips, potatoes, or other vegetables, or drive in stock in sight of their camp. The gathering of provisions and forage was to be entrusted to regular foraging parties, at any distance from the road traveled.

Only the corps commanders were to destroy mills, houses, or cotton gins. For these there was a general order laid down. In districts and neighborhoods where the army was unmolested, no destruction of property was to be permitted; but if guerrilas or bushwhackers caused any trouble on the march, or if the inhabitants should burn

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[16] Ibid., II, 174.

bridges, obstruct roads, or in any way manifest local hostility, the army commanders should then order and enforce a relentless devastation, according to the measure of hostility.

The cavalry and artillery could appropriate freely and without limit horses, mules, and wagons belonging to the inhabitants. Discriminations should be made, however, between the rich, who were usually hostile, and the poor and industrious, who were usually neutral or friendly. Foraging parties could also take mules or horses, to replace the worn out animals of their trains, or to serve as pack mules for the regiments or brigades.[17] In any kind of foraging the parties were to refrain from abusive or threatening language, and if the officer in command deemed it wise, he could give written certificates of the facts but no receipts. They were supposed to try to leave with each family a reasonable portion for their maintenance. Negroes who were able bodied and any who might be of service could be taken along.[18]

One of the first things to be attended to was the organization of a good pioneer battalion for each army corps, composed if possible of Negroes. This battalion was to follow the advance guard, and repair roads and double them if possible, so that the columns would not be delayed in bad places.

To each wing of the army was assigned a pontoon train, fully equipped and organized. The commanders were to see that they were fully equipped and properly protected at all times. These pontoon

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., II, 175.

trains were distributed in equal proportions to the four corps, each being given a section of about 900 feet. The pontoons were of a skeleton pattern, with cotton canvas covers. The boats each had their proportion of balks and chesses, constituting a load for one wagon. By uniting two sections, a bridge of about 1,800 feet length could be had. However, on the march, the leading brigade would usually improvise a bridge out of the abundant timber long before the pontoon train arrived, unless the river was quite wide.[19]

As the army left Atlanta, the left wing, under Slocum, marched along the railroad toward Augusta; the right wing, under Howard, went along the Macon road. Each was supported by cavalry on the flank.

Howard, having the 15th Corps on his right and the 17th on his left, moved along the railroad to Jonesboro.

Milledgeville was the first central meeting place. The time allowed each column for reaching Milledgeville was seven days. The right and left wing each had a separate army commander. Each of these armies was composed of two corps, which were subdivided into divisions and brigades, with their proper commanding officers. Then, in addition to these, there was the cavalry corps under the command of General Kilpatrick, who took his orders directly from General Sherman. The cavalry were the curtain behind which Sherman's machinery of marching men were working. Sherman, marching with first one column and then another, gave his orders as circumstances dictated.[20]

In long marches, when the army had to cover a vast extent of

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[19] Ibid., II, 184.

[20] Nichols, op. cit., p. 42.

territory, that type of organization was very practical. Each column marched within supporting distance of the others. Sometimes one wing had to act independently of the others, as when communication was cut off by a stream difficult to cross, or by a mountainous district which could be crossed but slowly. At such times, there was a complete organization vested in one command, ready to act as the emergency required.[21]

The general commanding issued his orders, directed toward or including certain objective points, to reach which required several days' marching. It was the office of the subordinate commander to put the army into motion. Sherman's intimate acquaintanceship with all the detail of the movement of an army and all the close attention he gave to it, day by day, was one of the notable traits of his character as a military man.[22]

General Sherman had a personal staff of five officers, none above the rank of major. Attached to his headquarters, but not technically members of his staff, were the separate departments for the military divisions. These were as follows: Brigadier General Barry, chief of artillery; Brigadier General Easton, chief quartermaster; Lieutenant Colonel Ewing, inspector general; Captain Poe, chief of engineers; Captain Bayor, chief of ordnance; Colonel Beckwith, chief of the commissary department; and the Signal Corps was represented by Captain Bochtal.

The march lay through majestic pine forests, slippery with fallen

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[21] Ibid., p. 42.

[22] Ibid., p. 43.

and faded needles that covered the ground. The bivouac in these woods was very picturesque. Groups of soldiers could be seen passing by the glaring watch fires; some were busy preparing supper, some playing cards, dancing, singing, or talking; and combined with this was the low murmur of the whole company, mingled with the moaning of the wind as it swept through the tops of the pine trees. The neighing of the horses could be heard, as well as the rustling step of the guards as they went their rounds, ever alert.[23]

Major Nichols, in his diary, gives a very interesting picture of a day's march. The day began at 3 o'clock in the morning, as the watch fires were burning dimly and, except for an occasional neighing of the horses, it was so quiet that it was almost impossible to believe that 20,000 soldiers were in the radius of a few miles. The rippling of the brook and the sighing of the wind overhead in the tall pines only served to deepen the repose of the sleeping soldiers.

But in an instant all was changed. From some nearby elevation, the clear tones of the bugle sounded out the reveille; and, one after another, the echoes responded until the whole countryside was alive with the sound. Intermingled with these was heard the beating of drums.

In a few moments, the peaceful quiet was replaced by noise and tumult. Camp fires awakened into new life and brilliancy to send forth their sparks high into the morning air. Then the flames lighted up the scene on every side so that there was no disorder or confusion.

The soldier soon began the preparation of his breakfast. The

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[23]Draper, The Civil War in America, III, 323.

potatoes were frying in the well-larded pan, and the chicken roasting delicately upon the red-hot coals. The fumes of steaming coffepots were wafted upon the air. During this time, the animals were not less busy. A large supple of corn and forage was being devoured by them and any neglect was quickly made known by the pawing of neighing horses and the braying of the mules.

Amid the busy clatter of tongues and tools, there came a babel of sound, forming a constrast to the quiet of the previous hour, as marked as that between peace and war.

Then the animals were hitched into the traces, and the droves of cattle were relieved from the night's confinement in the corral. Knapsacks were then strapped, men seized their weapons, and again as the bugle sounded the note of command the soldiers fell into line and filed out upon the road to make another stage of their journey.

A day's march varied according to the country to be traversed or the opposition encountered. The divisions having the lead moved unencumbered by wagons and in close fighting trim. The ambulances followed in the rear of the division and were close enough to be available if needed. The pack mules followed in the rear of each regiment, laden with every kind of camp baggage, including blankets, pots, pans, kettles, and all the kitchenware needed for cooking. Here, too, were found the led horses and with them the Negro servants.

As the columns started on the road a long line of muskets gleaming in the rays of the morning sunlight was seen. The advance guard drove a squad of rebel cavalry before them so fast that the line of march was not in the least impeded. The flankers spread out, on a

line parallel with the leading troops for several hundred yards. They searched through the swamps for any concealed foe and anxiously looked out for any line of works that might have been thrown up by the enemy to check progress. Here the general of the division, if a fighting man, was likely to be found, his experienced eye noting that there was no serious opposition; so, he ordered up a brigade or another regiment. A large plantation appeared by the roadside. If the "bummers" had been ahead, the chances were that it had been visited, in which event the interior was apt to show evidences of confusion. But if the barns were full of corn and fodder, parties were at once detailed to secure and convey all these to the roadside. As the wagons passed along they were not allowed to halt, but the grain or fodder was stuffed into the front or rear of the vehicles as they passed, the unhandy operation affording much amusement to the soldiers.

The soldiers worked swiftly, for, if for any reason any wagon or group of wagons dropped out of place, they had to wait for the rear of the train. This was greatly dreaded, because each brigade commander wanted his train at camp as soon as possible after his men reached it. When the treasure trove of grain, poultry, and vegetables had been secured, a man was detailed to guard it until the proper wagon came along. Numbers of these details were met, who, with proper authority, had started off early in the morning and had struck out miles away from the flank of the column. They sat at some cross road, surrounded with spoils---- chickens, turkeys, geese, ducks, pigs, hogs, sheep, and calves, all nicely dressed; hams, buckets of honey, and pots of fresh white lard.

> A Roman consul, returning with victorious eagles, could not wear a more triumphant air than the solitary guard, guarding the spoils until the wagons come along. The soldiers see it, and jibe him as they pass, "Say, you thar!--- where at did you steal them pigs?" "Steal?" is the indignant response----, "perhaps you would like to have one of them pigs yourself!"
>
> An officer who is riding along gazes upon the appetizing show. He has recently joined, and has never been on one of Sherman's raids. And he does not know that a soldier will not sell his chickens at any price.
>
> "Oh, a nice pair of ducks you have there, soldier; what will you take for them?"
>
> Firmly but respectfully, the forager makes answer, touching his cap the while, "They are not in the market. We never sell ours, sir----- couldn't think of it."
>
> The officer rides away through a battery of broad grins from the bystanders and never again offers to buy the spoils of a forager.[24]

In shifting these loads without stopping the wagons, the troopers exercised much ingenuity. While marching, they shifted the loads of wagons so as to have six or ten of them empty. Then, riding well ahead, they secured possession of certain stacks of fodder near the road or cribs of corn, and left some men in charge of them. Then they opened fences and roads back for a couple of miles, returned to their trains, diverted the empty wagons out of column and conducted them rapidly to their forage. There, they were rapidly loaded and returned, regaining their place in column without losing distance. Sometimes the wagons were loaded from the corn cribs while moving; these were built of logs and roofed. The wagons were driven alongside; then a guard would raise one whole side of the crib with a lever and men lying inside the crib would kick down a wagon load of corn in short

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[24]Nichols, op. cit., pp. 51-52.

order.[25]

In this forage gathering, each brigade commander had the authority to detail a company of foragers, usually about fifty men with one or two commissioned officers selected for their boldness and enterprise. This party would be dispatched before daylight with a knowledge of the intended day's march and camp, and would proceed on foot five or six miles from the route traveled by their brigade. They visited every plantation and farm within range. They usually procured a wagon or family carriage, loaded it with everything available that could be used as food or forage, and regained the main road. Their collections would often vary strangely--- mules, horses, sometimes even cattle, harnessed with old saddles and packed with a heavy load. This type of work seemed to have a special charm for the soldiers.

Daily, they returned mounted on all sorts of beasts which were at once taken from them and appropriated to the general use; but on the next day, they would start out again on foot, only to repeat the experiences of the day before. "No doubt, many acts of pillage, robbery, and violence were committed by the foragers."[26]

There was a halt in the line of march. The officer in charge of the pioneer corps, which followed the advance guard, had discovered an ugly place in the road. This must be corduroyed at once before the wagons could pass. The pioneer corps quickly tore down a fence nearby, and bridged over the bad place with corduroy matting, working at the rate of a quarter of a mile of matting in fifteen minutes. If rails

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[25]Sherman's Memoirs, op. cit., II, 184.

[26]Ibid., II, 182.

were not near, pine saplings and split logs supplied their place. Meanwhile, the bugles sounded and the columns halted. The soldiers dropped out of line on the roadside, lying upon their backs, and still supported by their yet unstrapped knapsacks.

The short halt gave the soldiers a chance for a breathing spell; and they seized the opportunity to wipe the perspiration from their brows and the dust from their eyes. Each man munched a bit of hard bread, or pulled out a book from his pocket, or lighted his pipe. The greatest luxury of a soldier was a good smoke. The passerby saw one group at a brook, bathing their faces; another group was gathered around an old songbook and was singing; and some venturesome fellow had kindled a fire and was making coffee. All were happy and jolly; but, when the bugle sounded, "Attention-- Fall in", and "Forward," in an instant every temporary occupation was dropped and they were on the road again.

But the sun had long since passed its zenith; the droves of cattle which had been driven through the swamps and fields were lowing and wandering in search of corral; the soldiers were beginning to lag a little; the teamsters were obliged to apply the whip oftener. Ten or fifteen miles had been traversed and the designated resting place for the night was near. The column must now be got into camp.

Officers rode on in advance to select the point for each brigade, giving the preference to slopes in the vicinity of food and water. Soon the troops filed out into the woods and fields, the leading division pitched its tents first and those in the rear marched on yet further, ready to take their turn in advance next day.

As soon as the arms were stacked, the boys attacked the fences

and rail piles and their little shelter tents sprang up all over the ground. The fires were quickly kindled, and the meal was soon prepared. After the meal, there was heard the music accompanying dancing or singing, the buzz of conversation, and the measured drone of soldiers reading to themselves. The wagons, meanwhile, were parked, and the animals fed and rubbed down.

After awhile, tattoo rang out on the night air. Soon afterwards, came the bugle command of "Taps". The soldiers gradually disappeared from the campfire; the animals, with dull instinct, laid down to rest. The fires, neglected by the sleeping men, gradually died down to smouldering ashes, flickered as if unwilling to die, and at last went out.[27]

Howard, on the road to Jonesboro with the 15th and 17th Corps, met with Confederate cavalry, but Kilpatrick dispersed it. From Jonesboro, Howard moved eastward through McDonough and Jackson to the Ocmulgee, crossing at Planter's Factory. From there, he went through Monticello and Hillsborough, and between Milledgeville and Clinton. On the twenty-second of November, his left struck the Georgia Central Railroad at Gordon, his right extending on to Griswold. Kilpatrick was with him, and made a feint with the cavalry through Griffin and Forsyth toward Macon to deceive the Confederates into believing that Macon was his objective. With the feint accomplished, the cavalry returned toward Griswold, after first destroying several miles of the railroad east of Walnut Creek.

As soon as Howard's two corps struck the Georgia Central Rail-

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[27]Nichols, op. cit., p. 52.

road on the twenty-second, they began destroying it. While they were doing this the extreme right of the 15th Corps was attacked by a Confederate force of about 5,000, coming from the direction of Macon. The attack, delivered in six successive assaults, was finally repelled. The Confederates lost about 300 men. They were Wolcutt's brigade of Hood's division, which was making a reconnaissance toward Macon. The encounter was on Mr. Duncan's farm, a short distance east of Griswold village. General Wolcutt quickly placed his brigade in line of battle on the crest of a hill looking across and open field, a swamp protecting his flank. The Confederate troops very greatly outnumbered the Union men and had several cannon, while the Union forces had only two guns; yet the Confederates were handily defeated. General Wolcutt did not show much wisdom in attacking the union troops alone, for in a short time General Wood could have had two corps to aid him if he had needed assistance.

General Hardee ordered General Wheeler to get in front of Sherman, so the Confederate cavalry moved rapidly eastward, avoiding Kirkpatrick. They reached to Oconee river, and swam their horses across the stream in order to be in position to retard Sherman.

During this time, Slocum, with the left wing of the army, was marching along the Augusta road in two parallel columns, the 20th Corps on the left, and the 14th Corps on the right. The first night out, Slocum's men camped by the roadside near Lithonia. Stone Mountain, a mass of granite, was in plain view, cast out in clear outline against the clear blue sky; the whole horizon was lurid with the bonfires of rail-ties and groups of men worked all night, carrying red-hot rails to the nearest tree and twisting them round and round.

Colonel Poe had provided tools for ripping up the rails and twisting them when hot; but the best and easiest way of ruining the rails consisted of heating their middles in a bonfire of crossties and then twisting them about the nearest telegraph pole or tree.

As the troops marched through Lithonia, a number of the buildings were burned.

An instance of the actions of some of the Union officers is given in the following incident. Major Connolly and Captain Acheson reached Lithonia, and, while waiting for their division to destroy four miles of railroad, outside the town, decided that they wanted entertainment themselves. Captain Acheson played the piano, so they started out to walk through the town and find a piano. Meeting a little girl on the street who told them where there was a piano, they went to the house and on knocking at the door, a grey headed, meek, ministerial looking old rebel opened the door and asked what they wanted. Says Connolly:

> I told him we wanted to destroy the railroad first and asked what he thought of it. The old gent looked wise and said nothing; I then asked him if he had a piano in the house. The old man looked worried and replied that his daughter had one. "All right," said I, "we want some music." The old man said he didn't think his daughter could play and looked incredulous when we pushed by him into the room and the Captain sat down at the piano and played.[28]

Another excerpt from the same diary describes an incident which took place that night. They were camped on a Mr. Zachry's plantation. Mr. Zachry had a son in the Confederate army. The negroes told the soldiers that the old man had secreted within his house a Confederate flag which his son had sent to him. They searched the house but were

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[28]Connolly, "Diary," Trans. Ill. St. Hist. Soc., 1928, p. 401.

unable to locate it. "If we don't get it before we leave tomorrow morning, the old fellow's house will surely be burned," the diary read.

> They did burn the old fellow's cotton gin, filled with cotton, tonight.... The next day, they frightened the old man by letting him know that his house would be burned up; he finally gave them the flag. I don't know whether or not his house was finally burned, but I know he owns about forty negroes less tonight than he did last night.[29]

All along, the soldiers foraged and every mile of railroad was torn up effectively.

The 14th Corps destroyed the road to Covington and turned from there on the nineteenth of the month to Milledgeville. As they passed through Covington, the soldiers closed up their ranks, the color bearers unfurled their flags, and the bands played patriotic airs. The white people came out of their houses to behold the sight, in spite of the deep hatred of the invaders, and the Negroes seemed to be quite joyful.

"Whenever they heard my name," said Sherman, "they clustered about my horse, shouted and prayed."[30]

It was while Sherman was located here that a soldier passed him with a ham on his musket, a jug of sorghum molasses under his arm, and a big piece of honey in his hand, from which he was eating. Catching Sherman's eye, he remarked carelessly to a comrade, "Forage liberally on the country." Quoting his general orders, Sherman reproved the man and explained that foraging must be limited to the regular parties properly detailed.[31]

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[29] Ibid., p. 402.

[30] Sherman's Memoirs, II, 180.

[31] Ibid., p. 181.

On November 21 the 14th Corps was within eighteen miles of Milledgeville. The rain had fallen all day and the roads had become morasses, so, on the twenty-first, the 14th Corps had not very promising weather to work under. However, there were very few days of bad weather for the troops to talk of, as one did that evening:

> We are all wet and covered with mud, and our horses are jaded; but our supper of coffee, fried chicken, sweet potatoes, etc., and a good sleep will bring us out all right in the morning. And if our horses give out, the stable of some wealthy Georgia citizen must furnish us with a remount. Citizens everywhere look paralyzed as if stricken dumb when we pass them.[32]

Columns of smoke by day and pillars of fire by night indicated clearly the route and location of the various columns of the army. Every gin house the soldiers passed was burned, every barn filled with grain destroyed; in fact, everything that could be of any use to the rebels was either carried off by the foragers or set on fire and destroyed.[33]

On Tuesday, November 22, the troops of the 14th Corps camped on Howell Cobb's plantation, ten miles west of Milledgeville. It had been a rather cold day. There had not been so much shooting on the flank, but soldiers were reported out all the time, straggling and foraging. Major Hitchcock said that there was much more foraging than was consistent with good discipline.[34]

The 23rd Missouri Regiment received permission to burn all the rails and buildings of the plantation that night. In the dooryard of the overseer's house stood three large iron kettles for boiling sorg-

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[32] Connolly, op. cit., p. 405.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Hitchcock, op. cit., p. 83.

hum. These were all shivered into pieces. Sherman sent back and ordered the troops forward and placed them in camp on Howell Cobb's plantation.[35] After supper, Sherman was sitting astride a chair with his back to the fire when an old darkey came to see "Master Sherman", scared to death that he would be killed. "Dis Mr. Sherman? Master (to another), please give me dat light." He took the candle and surveyed the general all over. "Well, well, and dis is Mr. Sherman. I shan't get done bein' scared all day tomorrow."[36] Sherman talked to him and told him not to be afraid. It seemed that there had been a party of Confederates who had gone around among the Negroes, disguised as Federals, and had been coaxing them to leave. When they got as many of them as they could committed, they revealed themselves and flogged the Negroes very severely.[37]

Sherman told all the Negroes and soldiers to help themselves to the supplies found there and ordered the rest burned. This plantation was of about 6,000 acres in area and worked one hundred hands. They had left the aged, decrepit, and young negroes on the plantation, around forty in all. The chief building was a big log cabin with no hall, divided by board partitions into four rooms. There was no thrift or neatness about the place.[38]

Slocum's other corps, the twentieth, continued the destruction to Madison, sixty-nine miles east of Atlanta. The northward movement

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[35]Connolly, op. cit., p. 407.

[36]Hitchcock, op. cit., p. 85.

[37]Connolly, op. cit., p. 407.

[38]Hitchcock, op. cit., p. 87.

acted as a feint on Augusta, the deception being increased by the cavalry moving out many miles in advance toward Augusta. From Madison, the 20th Corps marched through Eatonton to Milledgeville, where it arrived on November 21. The 14th Corps, having passed through Shady Dale and Eatonton, joined it the next day. On a bright, sunshiny morning one of the regiments entered the city of Milledgeville, a band playing national airs which had long been hushed in the capital. Only two or three regiments were marched through the city. These were detailed to destroy certain property designated by the commanding general.[39]

At Milledgeville, the Governor of Georgia, Joseph E. Brown, was eating his dinner when a telegram was placed in his hands informing him that the Union army was near. The legislature had been in session during the morning and had left bills and papers upon the desks; but, instead of returning to the state house, each member seized his carpet bag and made all haste to leave the city. There was alarm in every town in the interior of the state, for the Union army, like a farmer swinging his scythe in a field of grass, was cutting a swath fifty miles wide from the mountains to the sea. As soon as the information spread through the town, there was wild excitement among the citizens, and many began preparations for hasty departure. Fabulous prices were paid for conveyances of any character; and those lucky enough to get them departed hastily, taking such routes as they judged could not be interfered with by the invading army. Some took the railroad trains, others got carriages, buggies, wagons, and whatever else came their

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[39]Nichols, op. cit., p. 57.

way. This left the city almost destitute of transportation.[40]

Governor Brown had to decide upon the instant what he should do. He thought perhaps he could save the books and papers of the state and the furniture in the executive mansion, by taking the property to the asylum for the insane. He did not think that Sherman would burn such a building and the property, if there, would be safe. But so many members of the legislature had commandeered horses for their flight that teams could not be obtained to transport the property to the building. A portion was drawn to the railroad station, put upon the cars, and taken away. The convicts in the state prison had been employed in manufacturing guns for the Confederate army. Governor Brown thought that General Sherman would be likely to set the building on fire and he determined to offer pardons to the criminals if they would enlist as soldiers. The prisoners were drawn up in line before him. "If you will enlist in defense of the Confederacy, you shall be pardoned," he said. Enlist? Of course they would---- they consented unanimously, declared a Confederate historian.[41] A few who had committed murder and were sentenced for life were not included; but the others were quickly uniformed, armed, and placed under Captain Roberts, who was himself somewhat of a notorious character. Some of the convict soldiers disappeared, never to be seen again. It was midafternoon when the governor of the state, with his family, finally left Milledgeville. All the members of the legislature had fled, together with a large number of citizens. An engine and cars were at the sta-

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[40] J. W. Avery, History of Georgia, p. 307.

[41] Ibid., p. 309.

tion. The signal was given, and the engineer, having received instructions to go as fast as he could, pulled the throttle, and the train went rushing down the road toward Macon. When the engine dashed past Griswold, the Union cavalry, under Kilpatrick, were but a short distance from the track. A few minutes later, the Union soldiers were leaping from their saddles and tearing up the rails. The train reached Macon just before dark and immediately after its arrival came the telegram that the cavalry had destroyed the road. The governor and his family spent the night in the cars and the following morning went fifty miles south to Montezuma.

Only the Negroes were left in Milledgeville to welcome their liberators, which they did by lining the streets, shouting for the day of freedom.

Sherman occupied the governor's mansion. He had caused misleading statements to be published in the Georgia papers concerning the Union army's intended destination, so as to keep the Confederates confused.[42]

The most frantic appeals for help had been made by the governor and legislature. General Beauregard, who was at Corinth, Mississippi, issued a proclamation to the people of Georgia asking them to arm themselves for the defense of their native soil. They were exhorted to rally around their patriotic governor and gallant soldiers, and to obstruct and destroy all the roads in Sherman's front and flank, saying that Sherman's army would soon starve in their midst. He asked them to be confident and resolute.

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[42]Senate Report No. 66, op. cit., I, 264.

It was a small matter to write a proclamation out there and telegrams had little effect upon the people of Georgia. Every planter in the line of Sherman's march was planning how to save his horses, mules, Negroes, corn, and bacon. There was no inspiring of the people, no organization for blocking roads or assailing the invader. The legislature passed an act ordering out every man able to bear arms, exhorting the people to die free men rather than live as slaves.

The newspapers said that Sherman was making a movement which would insure the destruction of his army. "Sherman's march looks more like a retreat than an advance", said the Richmond Whig of November 24, 1864.

It was asserted that his movement would strengthen the Confederate cause. "Far from carrying Georgia back into the Union, he is only making unbelieving Georgians firm in the Confederate faith," said another editor.[43]

When the Union army reached Milledgeville, they found newspapers from all the South and learned that consternation was great in the Southern mind. Some reports even said that the Federal Army was fleeing for its life and seeking the protection of their fleet on the sea coast. The demand was that they should be assailed on their front, flank, and rear, that provisions should be destroyed in advance, bridges burned, roads obstructed, and no mercy shown them.

This Southern attitude was engendered by the wanton destruction of property by the Federal Army. Foraging was carried to a strictly useless and ruthless point under the guise of official provision for

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[43]Charles C. Coffin, Freedom Triumphant, p. 88.

the army. So terrible was the destruction wrought that the women of the Georgian homes, fearing that Sherman might pass their way, sought means of hiding everything of value that was in any way portable. Many who possessed silverware, jewelry, or other portable valuables buried them under gardens, which grew up and concealed their hiding place. Union soldiers actually foraged over the hiding places of many valuables without knowing it. Many were the secret compartments contrived to keep cherished belongings from the desecration of Union hands. Some of these were successful; some availed but little, as the houses wherein they were built were burned; and others were of little value before the maurading eyes of the Union soldiers.

Foragers took everything with them that was of any value, intrinsic or actual, whether they needed it or not. One foraging party took, with other things, all the candles in a house. All that was left the family for light was one small candle which an aged maid-servant snatched from the raiders. The soldiers pillaged houses from roof-tree to cellar; they opened every drawer, chest, and closet in the house in search of valuables or edibles, and kicked in the places where they suspected things might be hid. One party even threw over the bed in which a sick woman lay and tumbled bed and all on the floor because it suspected that the woman was shamming and hiding valuables in the bed with her. Even the beautiful hand-made quilts, prized by families from generation to generation and representing many patient, eye-ruining hours of toil, were clapped rudely on the backs of dirty mules and made to serve for saddle-blankets.[44]

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[44]Andrews, Women of the South in War Times, p. 239.

Cities fared no better than plantations---- or worse, in many cases, because the plantations' lands were left to them, while whole cities were completely razed. The State Library of Georgia was plundered by officers and soldiers alike of the Union army. Some few refused to profit by such desecration of public institutions, declaring that the books they would gain would reproach them every time they referred to the stolen volumes. But those who cried shame were in the great minority, and pillaging of all houses and public buildings went on with great abandon.[45]

The capital city of Georgia was distinguished by scattered residences, set in large and tastefully appointed grounds. The casual wanderer about its winding, sandy streets was delighted with the perfume of every variety of shrub, flower, and tree. Every appearance of the city showed refinement and courtesy to be a tradition of its landowners, and impressed one with the fact that Milledgeville was an old an aristocratic town. The streets were regularly laid out, and the capital was situated on a slight elevation somewhat east of the center of the city and overlooking the Oconee River. It was built of a reddish sandstone, and was a large, square building of imposing appearance. However, very little of the city's aristocratic appearance was left to it when Sherman and his men were done with their pillaging and destruction. One of the women who observed the happenings of those times observed "a terrifying solitude" and "an immense feeling of awe" when she contemplated the scenes of destruction Sherman had wrought. Silence so absolute that the sound of a footstep or a breaking twig

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[45]Connolly, op. cit., p. 408.

startled one reigned over everything; and over this silence, the chimneys of the fire-leveled Southern homes stood like grim black sentinels.[46]

Very few of the Southern citizens dared show themselves outside their homes during the reign of terror. The Negroes were the only ones who enjoyed the show; they all appeared, dressed in their gayest attire, and greeted the Northerners effusively. They swarmed after the army, believing the long-promised day of jubilee had come. Some of them seemed to have an intelligent idea that the success of the national forces meant destruction of slavery, while most of them had only the vaguest notion of the whole affair.

One old woman with a child in her arms, walking along among the cattle and horses, was accosted by an officer, who asked her "Where are you going, Aunty?" She replied, "I'se gwine where you's gwine, Massa."[47] One party of black men who had fallen into line called to another who seemed to be asking too many questions, "Stick in dar! It's all right, we'se gwine along; we're free."

The implicit instructions of Sherman were that if the enemy burned forage or cotton on the route, houses, barns, and cotton gins should be burned to keep them company. These implicit instructions, together with the well known expression of Sherman, "forage liberally on the country," caused serious irregularities.

Howard issued orders to try to prohibit so much straggling; but,

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[46]Andrews, op. cit., p. 303.

[47]Georgia Journalism of the Civil War (compiled by George Peabody College), p. 125.

with Sherman's attitude, little could be done about it.[48] Many of the stragglers, or "bummers" as they were called, would detach themselves for days from the main army, foraging, ransacking houses, and doing much extra damage. Much of the trouble caused was done in this way.

The newspapers of the South operated perilously, if at all, during the march. The Southern Union of Milledgeville took its presses into the woods and covered them with dead pine boughs. They remained there until the advancing army had passed.[49] The old newspaper files tell that sugar, salt, and flour, which were scarce and valuable, were poured into the streets until it looked as if Milledgeville had been visited by a heavy snow.

An amusing incident was told in the Macon Telegraph to the effect that while there, Sherman had invited an old Negro named Dan to dine with him after the black had done him some service. Dan was reluctant to accept for awhile but finally decided to go. The Telegraph said that Sherman had good cause to boast of the honor done him, because it was rarely that Sherman had such an honest man at his table. The paper, incidentally, congratulated Sherman on his good fortune and sympathized with Dan.[50]

Letters exchanged between many Southern women indicate the hardships they had to endure, unprotected and alone, in order to get the barest necessities of life---- food and shelter. One woman tells of having to pick corn from the feeding ground of Federal cavalry--- from

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[48] Oliver Otis Howard, Autobiography, p. 78.

[49] Georgia Journalism of the Civil War, p. 70.

[50] Ibid., p. 125.

the cracks and crevices of the improvised feed troughs, from the ground where it had been trod by the horses---- and of washing and drying it in order to have some food. The pitifully small amount they obtained--one-half bushel from an entire camping ground, they ground in a mill which was itself so small that the Federals had either thought it too small to bother themselves about or had not noticed.[51]

The people along Sherman's line of march were often forced to go out on the battlefield and gather shot and other metal, which they would exchange in order to secure food. This wounded the proud Southerners, but, for many, it was the only way to eat.[52]

While many landowners tried to save their homes from fire and plunder, or from both, the Union soldiers were forcing their Negro "boys" from their own homes at the point of the bayonet. One Negro jumped into his cabin and declared himself sick. Another, who was lame, crawled under the floor, but they pulled him out, put him on a horse and drove him off.[53] One lady's manservant came to her with tears in his eyes, protesting that he didn't want to go; but a Union soldier followed, cursing him and threatening to shoot him if he did not leave quickly. Few Southerners believed that the soldiers would actually turn the poor doomed Negroes from their homes, but they did. The Federals declared that, while Jeff Davis wanted the "niggers" in the Confederate Army, they would make them fight for the Union.[54]

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[51] Andrews, op. cit., p. 318.

[52] Ibid., p. 325.

[53] Burge, A Woman's War Time Journal, p. 22.

[54] Ibid., p. 30.

Confederates, instead of going to bed by lamp or candlelight, as formerly, now went to their rest on whatever blanket or quilt they had left to them by the light of the burning homes and forage stacks.

One group of women gathered up a chicken that the Union soldiers had shot the day before and cooked it with some yams. It was all the food they had; yet the soldiers detailed to guard them "complained because we gave them no supper." The soldiers relented, however, and gave them some coffee. This they had to brew in a teapot, all the coffeepots having been carried off.[55]

With as great a treasure lust as ever was manifested by pirates, the swarming destroyers searched for hidden valuables. Probing the ground, dragging wells, and exploring cellars, they harried the people. Even graves were not exempt, especially if the sod seemed to be newly turned. Anything aroused their suspicions. Private soldiers kept back everything they could keep about their persons; rings, earrings, pins, brooches, and other articles. One soldier mentioned having "over a quart of jewelry," with "some number of diamond rings" making up a good portion of it.[56] All the general officers and many besides had collections of valuables of every kind down to embroidered handkerchiefs. A favorite pastime was to ask the time of day of some unsuspecting Southern citizen, and when he pulled out his watch, to snatch it from him.[57]

With the wholesale breaking open of stores, the Negroes suddenly

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[55] Ibid., p. 32.

[56] Dinkins, op. cit., p. 179.

[57] Ibid.

found themselves the possessors of heterogenous wealth and those who had remained at home were able to indulge their well known love for trifling valuables. Rushing home, they snatched wash tubs, gunny sacks and wooden pails and returned to the scene of activity. The Federal soldiers, generous with other people's property, filled these to overflowing. The Negroes acquired a strange collection. Groceries, patent medicines, toys, tinsel, jewelry, candy, and bolts of cloth were mingled together in a hodgepodge of plunder. Molasses was poured loosely into gaudy china vases. Hoisting their wealth upon their heads, the Negroes marched homeward and, in many instances, placed their treasures at the disposal of their "w'ite folks."[58]

Hitchcock tells of a conversation which he had with Jeff. C. Davis and Slocum that day about discipline. They both condemned the straggling and burning. Davis said that the belief in the army was that Sherman actually favored and desired it, and that one man, when arrested, had told his officers so. One said,

> I am bound to say that I think Sherman lacking in the enforcement of discipline. He is brilliant and daring, fertile, rapid, and terrible. But he does not seem to me to carry out things in this respect. The staff organization is not systematic or thorough, and the officers are not as well selected as they ought to be. The general commanding a Division should have the best staff the army can afford---- he has not.[59]

Hitchcock passed a store that day which was empty, deserted, and still. Paper and empty boxes were scattered about, and some soldiers lounged in and about it. One of them was heard to ask for matches, but when Hitchcock asked him what he wanted with matches, he

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[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid., p. 86.

replied, "I asked for tobacco." He was warned that if any burning was done except by orders somebody would hang for it.[60]

> If one stopped to think over all the losses and estimated all the real anxiety and suffering caused by this single march of an army like this, it would be sad enough. But it is no use. We have met as yet no army and no opposition.[61]

Thus far, the march had met with no serious resistance except on the right wing. They had had a small battle, mentioned before, with the loss of about 100 men. The left wing had done no fighting. The march was working greatly to Sherman's satisfaction. On the twenty-fourth it was resumed. The last troops passed over the road into Milledgeville and, kindling being ready, the escort set fire to the bridge. In ten minutes, it was burned down, and the broad Oconee rolled between the soldiers and Milledgeville, with no means left of crossing it. Sherman accompanied the 20th Corps, which took the direct route to Sandersville. The 20th arrived there simultaneously with the 14th, on the twenty-sixth of November. The 14th Corps took the left position in this column, and held it during the remainder of the march.

The distance from Milledgeville to Sandersville is about 100 miles. A brigade of rebel cavalry was deployed before the latter town, but was driven through it by the skirmishing lines. The presence of rebel opposition was first noted in front of the army by the destruction of several small bridges across Buffalo Creek, on the two roads leading to Sandersville, over which the 20th and 14th Corps were ad-

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[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid., p. 89.

vancing. At this point, Wheeler, who had been ordered from Tennessee, arrived and swelled the numbers and efficiency of the troops confronting Sherman. Hardee, a native of Georgia, also came, but brought no troops with him. It was intended that he should raise as large an army as possible with which to intercept Sherman's march. He did succeed in raising some troops. With these and with those under the command of Wheeler and Wayne, there was an army sufficient to cause some annoyance but no great detention.[62] They were only delayed a few hours. Wheeler's cavalry fought Sherman all the way into the streets of Sandersville. The 20th Corps had the advance guard deploying a regiment as skirmishers and forming the remainder of a brigade in line of battle on either side of the road. The loss was not serious, about twenty killed and wounded.[63]

The 14th Corps passed through a very poor piney woods section the whole day. The pine trees grew so thick along their route that a man could scarcely walk through them. The ground was covered with a thick matting of the dead pine leaves that had fallen, so that when walking through the "piney woods" one's feet felt as if they were walking upon a thick carpet well stuffed with straw underneath. They passed a few cabins of miserable appearance. Major Connolly records finding about them "2 or 3 sickly, sallow women and from five to fifteen children, all looking like persons called 'dirteaters'."[64] There was hardly a place for anything except children to grow in these woods.

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[62]Grant's Memoirs, p. 367.

[63]Nichols' Diary, p. 65.

[64]Connolly, op. cit., p. 410.

However, the foragers came into camp that night very well loaded. Connolly was surprised at their having fared so well through such poor country. Connolly said of the march,

> We are riding roughshod over Georgia, and nobody dares fire a shot at us. We burn their houses, barns, fences, cotton, and everything else, yet no one of the Southern braves show themselves to punish us for our vandalism. The whole trip has thus far been a holiday excursion, but a very expensive one to the rebels.[65]

One anecdote is told concerning the pillaging here. It was reported that a few men of Sherman's army passed a house where they discovered some chickens under the dwelling. They immediately proceeded to capture them to add to the army's supplies. The lady of the house, who happened to be at home, made piteous appeals to have them spared, saying they were a few she had put away to save by permission of other parties who had preceded them and who had taken all the others she had. The soldiers seemed moved at her appeal; but, looking at the chickens again, they were tempted and one of them replied, "The rebellion must be suppressed if it takes the last chicken in the Confederacy."[66]

The South, prior to the rebellion, kept bloodhounds to pursue the runaway slaves. On one occasion, a soldier picked up a poodle, the favorite of its mistress and was carrying it off to execution when the lady made a strong appeal to him to spare it. The soldiers replied, "Madam, our orders are to shoot every bloodhound." "But this is not a bloodhound," said the lady. "Well, madam, we cannot tell what it will grow into if we leave it behind," said the soldier as he went off

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[65]Connolly, op. cit., p. 410.

[66]Grant's Memoirs, II, 364.

with it.[67]

Sherman said he saw the rebel cavalry apply fire to stacks of fodder standing in the fields at Sandersville. On entering the town, he told different ones that unless this was stopped nothing would be spared in the devastation.[68] With the exception of one or two minor cases near Savannah, the people did not destroy food, because they saw that it would ruin them.[69]

At Sandersville, the left wing was halted at Irwin's Crossroads, a few miles south of the railroad, until the right wing was located. It was abreast of them and on the line of the railroad. A Negro described the scene of the right wing reaching there, saying,

> First, there come along some cavalry men, and they burned the depot; then come along some infantry men, and they tore up the track and burned it; and then they set fire to the well![70]

The attitude of the Northern army seemed to be this:

> If citizens raise their hands against us, to retard our march, neither youth, age, nor sex will be respected. Everything must be destroyed. Let them do it if they dare. We'll burn every house, barn, church, and everything else we come to; we'll leave their families homeless and without food; their towns will all be destroyed and nothing but complete desolation will be found in our path. This is the feeling that has settled down over our bivouac tonight. We have gone so far now in our triumphal march that we will not be balked.[71]

Many of the regiments were accompanied by goats, cats, and dogs. Cock fighting became one of the pastimes. Many fine birds were brought

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[67] Ibid.

[68] Sherman's Memoirs, II, 141.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Connolly, op. cit., p. 412.

in by the foragers. Each one was given the name of some general, such as Beauregard, Johnson, and Sherman. These birds were forced to fight for the entertainment of the soldiers. Those found deficient in courage and skill were named Jeff Davis, Bowyer and Bragg, and quickly went into the stew pan. It was an interesting sight to see these victorious cocks riding along with their soldier owners, seated on the soldier's shoulder or some other convenient place.[72]

After the demonstration toward Macon, ending in the action at Griswold, Kirkpatrick shifted his cavalry to the left wing. On the twenty-fifth of November, he left Milledgeville, taking the direction of Waynesboro for the purpose of covering the passage of the main body of the army across the Ogeechee, and partly for conducting a feint toward Augusta. A detachment of his force burned the railroad bridge over Brier Creek and then fell back to the main body in the neighborhood of Louisville. One of his main objects was to release the prisoners at Millen, but they had already been removed.

As the Ogeechee was neared, the country grew better. More land was in cultivation and the soil was more productive and plantations were larger. Slocum, with the 14th Corps, reached the Ogeechee at Fenn's Bridge, crossed on pontoons, marching on the left bank of the river, and reached Louisville on the twenty-ninth. The road that day had been filled all the way as far as the Ogeechee with cavalry tracks going eastward, but about 100 rods west of the river they turned off on side roads, to the right and left. Fenn's Bridge was crossed without any disturbance. The 20th Corps moved at the same time along the

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[72] Johnson, op. cit., p. 497.

railroad, which, for about twenty miles from Davisborough is parallel to the Ogeechee. The 17th and 55th Corps moved south of the railroad, the latter covering the right flank of the army. On Kirkpatrick's movement to the left flank of the whole army and the occupation of Louisville by the 14th Corps, the Confederates concluded that Augusta was the point aimed at, and their cavalry, under Wheeler, at once moved north to obstruct the supposed advance. Then Sherman was able to cross the Ogeechee with his main body, the 20th Corps near the railroad bridge, the 17th Corps near Barton's Station. They had been engaged in destroying the railroad between Tenille Station and the river. The destruction of the railroad was most thorough. Two ingenious instruments were made for the purpose and used. There was a clasp, which locked under the rail. It had a ring in the top into which was inserted a long lever; and thus the rail was torn from the sleepers on which it lay. The sleepers were piled in a heap and set on fire, the rails resting in the flames until they bent by their own weight. When sufficiently heated, each rail was taken off by wrenches fitting closely over the ends, and twisted by being turned in opposite directions. They were so deformed that even a rolling machine could not have brought them back into shape. In this manner, the railroad was very thoroughly demolished.[73]

An anecdote will illustrate this tendency to destruction. An Irishman, while engaged in the useful occupation of twisting rails, remarked that General Sherman, when the war was over, would buy a coal mine in Pennsylvania and occupy his spare time with smoking cigars and

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[73]Nichols' Diary, p. 65.

destroying and rebuilding railroads.[74]

Such a large amount of cotton was destroyed by the Northern army in this campaign that one thing was certain--- neither the West nor the East would draw any supplies from the counties in Georgia traversed by the Federals for a long time from that day. Their work was the next thing to annihilation.[75]

Nichols gives a graphic description of the march and the scenery here. The pines, being destitute of branches, rose bare against the sky to a height of eighty or ninety feet. Their tops were covered with pine green. They were spaced wide apart so that frequently two wagon trains or troops in double columns marched abreast. In the distance could be seen a troop of horsemen, some General and his staff--- turning about here and there, with their gay uniforms and red and white flags contrasting harmoniously with the bright yellow leaves underneath and the bright evergreen overhead.[76]

Some very pathetic scenes occurred on the line of march. Thousands of Negro women joined the column, some carrying household goods and many of them carrying children in their arms, while older boys and girls plodded by their sides. All the women and children were ordered back.[77] One commander took a rather cruel means of ridding his regiment of these Negroes when they came to a river where they had to place a pontoon bridge. As soon as the soldiers had marched over it,

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[74] Ibid., p. 81.

[75] Nichols, op. cit., p. 81

[76] Ibid., p. 71.

[77] Ibid.

it was removed, leaving the Negroes on the other side of the river. Many became frantic, and jumped into the river attempting to cross, and were drowned.

The 15th Corps marched in a parallel line with the other columns, but on the right bank of the river. This passage of the Ogeechee without loss is regarded by military critics as one of the most brilliant pieces of strategy witnessed during the campaign.

Demonstrations against Augusta were again renewed for the purpose of expediting Wheeler's movement to the North. General Kirkpatrick's fighting and movements about Waynesboro and Briar Creek were spirited and produced a good effect by relieving the infantry column and the wagon trains from all molestation during their march to Millen. During the first, second, and third of December, skirmishing took place with rebel cavalry, which was gradually forced beyond Waynesboro. The cavalry commenced skirmishing with the enemy before they had gone one mile on the march of December second. The cavalry in advance came in sight of Rocky Creek at 10:00 A. M. Word came back to Baird's division that the enemy was backing the east bank of the creek in force. The division was immediately formed in the line of battle, one regiment deployed in front as skirmishers, and the cavalry disposed so as to cover the flank of the infantry and protect the four wagons. When everything was ready, the bugle sounded the "Forward" for the skirmishing regiment. The line of blue moved steadily forward, out of the woods into the open fields that lay along the west bank of the creek, the bright sun glittering on their burnished arms. A Sabbath-like stillness pervaded the scene. No shot was fired except one rifle shot which came from behind the neat white church on the left of the road

and just on the bank of the creek. The skirmishers didn't stop to reply, but with a yell like an Indian warwhoop, they all dashed forward regardless of orders, each one anxious to be the first one there.[78]

Baird's division of the 14th Corps formed the infantry support. The remaining divison of that corps, on reaching Buckhead Creek, turned east to Lumpkin's Station on the Augusta and Milledgeville Railroad, ten miles south of Waynesborough, where, on the third and fourth they destroyed a considerable portion of the track. They then marched for Jacksonborough, where Kilpatrick and Baird rejoined them.

The 20th and 17th Corps, meanwhile, advanced along the railroad, and on December 2, the latter reached Millen. The 20th Corps had marched to the north of Millen through Bairdsville and then southeast. The 15th Corps, moving in two columns to the west of the Ogeechee river, were a day's march in advance of the main body. The whole army, now pointing on Millen, deflected from its eastern course to a southward course. All, with the exception of the 15th Corps, marched down the peninsula between the Ogeechee and Savannah Rivers. The 17th Corps followed the railroad, destroying it from Millen downward.

The railroad station houses were usually built of brick and made in the most substantial manner. They were placed at distances of between fifteen and twenty miles apart. They were destroyed by the army all the way from Macon. The extensive depot at Millen was a wooden structure of exceedingly graceful proportions. It was ignited in three places simultaneously. Its destruction was a brilliant spectacle. The building burned slowly, although there was sufficient wind to lift the

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[78]Connolly, op. cit., p. 418.

vast volume of smoke and exhibit exquisite architectural designs traced in fire. The scene was so striking that everyone observed and made comments upon it among themselves. This was a circumstance which may be considered unusual because the taste of conflagration had been very thoroughly cultivated.[79] The prison at Millen was also destroyed.

Thus, on the third of December, General Howard was south of the Ogeechee River with the 15th Corps, opposite Scottsboro. General Slocum was at Buckhead Creek, four miles north of Millen, with the 20th Corps. The 14th Corps (General Davis) was at Lumpkin's Station, on the Augusta road, about ten miles north of Millen, and the cavalry division was in easy support of this wing. Thus, the whole army was in good position and good condition.[80]

Sherman sums up the march thus far, saying that they had largely subsisted on the country; their wagons were full of forage and provisions; but that as they approached the sea coast, the country became more sandy and barren, and food became more scarce. There had been scarcely any loss, while two-thirds of the way had been traveled. So he decided to push on immediately to the sea, and to Savannah.[81]

In the course of the march of the 15th Corps on December 2, they came on a nicely built mansion, situated in the midst of a pleasant region and surrounded by beautiful grounds. On entering the house, there was to be found the reverse of a beautiful picture. It was a scene of confusion. Articles of furniture, soiled and broken, were

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[79] Nichols, op. cit., p. 78.

[80] Sherman's Memoirs, p. 193.

[81] Ibid.

strewn about the floors; household utensils lay in ill assorted heaps; dishes cracked into pieces lay about them. This was attributed to Wheeler's cavalry, and it is only one illustration of the destruction done by the Confederates themselves.

The success of the deceptive movement on Augusta was complete. The march was then resumed toward Savannah, by the main roads. The 17th Corps followed the railroad and on December 5 reached the Ogeechee Church, about fifty miles from Savannah. There, fresh earthworks had been thrown up by McLaw's division to delay the advance and prevent an attack on the Savannah and Gulf railroad, which was employed to its utmost in bringing supplies to the city.

As they came down the peninsula, between the Savannah and Ogeechee, Hardee, who held Savannah with 15,000 men, decided that Savannah was Sherman's objective. All the columns pursued their ways leisurely toward Savannah. Corn and forage became more scarce, but rice fields began to occur, the grain of which proved a good substitute both for food and for forage. The weather was fine and the roads good. Everything seemed favorable. The trains were all in good order. No enemy opposed them; however, to the left, they could hear the reverberations of guns, coming from the fields where Wheeler was skirmishing with General Kirkpatrick. He had persistently followed Wheeler. The infantry columns, however, had met no opposition whatever.[82] A force was sent across the Ogeechee to check the progress of the 15th Corps. The greater part of the corps had, however, crossed to the east bank near Eden, on the seventh. The next day, December 8,

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[82] Ibid., p. 194.

Corse's division was pushed forward, between the Little and Great Ogeechee, 13 miles in advance of the main column, and to the canal connecting the Ogeechee with the Savannah. Corse, on his arrival at Jenk's Bridge, found Owen Stuart behind a line of rifle pits, exchanging shots with quite a force on the other bank. Corse sent up a battery and located it so as to clear away the rifles that would bother his boats. Then a regiment was sent across the river. As soon as the first troops got firm hold east of the Ogeechee, the Confederates fell back to a prepared work which formed a regular defense connection from the railroad to the high ground.[83] Osterhaus used some of Corse's division. He worked up against swampy places, double lines and entrenchments and carried everything before him. His men took the works, killed and wounded some, captured thirty prisoners and put the remainder of the Confederates to flight.

On the eighth of December, the 17th Corps met with some difficulties. As Sherman rode up to the column, he found that they had left the main road and were marching through the fields. Nearby, in a corner of the fence, a group of men were standing around an officer, whose foot had been blown to pieces by a torpedo planted in the road. He was waiting for a surgeon to amputate his leg. He had been riding along with the rest of the brigade staff of the 17th Corps, when a torpedo trodden upon by his horse had exploded, killing his horse and literally blowing the flesh from one of his legs. There had been no resistance at that point, and nothing to give warning of danger. The rebels had planted eight inch shells in the road, with friction matches

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[83]Howard's Autobiography, p. 82.

to explode them by being trodden on. A number of rebel prisoners were ordered to be brought from the guard, armed with picks and spades, and made to march in close order along the road, so as to explode the torpedoes, or to discover and dig them up. They begged hard to be excused, but Sherman forced them to do it. No other torpedoes were found, however, until near McAllister. That night, Pooles' Station was reached, eight miles from Savannah.

During the next two days, December 9 and 10, the several corps reached the defenses of Savannah. The 14th Corps was on the left, touching the river; the 20th next, then the 17th, and the 15th on the extreme right. Thus, the investment of Savannah was almost complete except for the communication with Charleston across the Savannah River. Tho last few days of the march, the weather was very rainy, and the march quite difficult. As the coast was reached, the character of the country became flat and swampy. Large ponds and pools were often met. The roads between the creeks and ponds, though appearing to be of sand and of a substantial character, proved to be upon a thin crust which was soon cut through by the long teams into the quicksand below. This required miles of corduroy. More obstructions were met in the shape of felled trees, where the roads crossed the creeks, swamps, or narrow causeways.

On the ninth, after the last combat and near the Savannah canal, Howard drew up a despatch to the commander of the naval forces to the effect that the army had met with perfect success thus far. He selected Captain William Duncan who had escaped from capture and had returned, and told him to proceed with two others down the Ogeechee, passing Confederate stations, the King's Bridge, Fort McAllister, and all

obstructions, and go out to sea to communicate with the fleet. He secured a long dugout, rather narrow and somewhat weatherbeaten; then, putting in rations, he took the despatch and set out. He went along very well by night, having passed the bridge and carefully worked through the torpedo obstructions. In the morning of the tenth, he found some Negroes, who befriended him and his men. They kept under cover until evening. During the night, some progress was made, but Fort McAllister was not reached. The men went ashore to get a Negro guide and some provisions, making their was on foot until they came to a Negro home. The Negroes treated them well and gave them the desired provisions. The day of the eleventh was spent in hiding. When night came, they reembarked on the river. To avoid one danger, they crossed the wide river; but, hearing voices, quickly pushed away from the bank, avoiding a boat passing over the Ogeechee from a Confederate gunboat at anchor below Fort McAllister. Soon after daylight on the morning of the twelfth they drifted into the bay where they were taken on board and carried to Fort Royal Harbor to the flagship Philadelphia. They arrived about eight o'clock that same morning. Thus, communication was established between General Sherman and the fleet.[84]

On the twelfth, the army was so concentrated as to form a semicircle from the Savannah River to the Savannah and Gulf railroad, the line being about ten miles long.[85]

Sherman then decided to open communication with the fleet through Assabow Sound, which formed the mouth of the Ogeechee. This necessi-

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[84] Ibid., pp. 84-85.

[85] Coffin, Freedom Triumphant, p. 89.

tated the reduction of Fort McAllister.

On the evening of the twelfth, Hazen's division of the 15th Corps marched toward the road bridge over the Great Ogeechee. This had been destroyed by the Confederates; but, though it was 1,800 feet in length, a new one was constructed during the night by a battalion of engineer troops under the supervision of Captain Peese. At daybreak on the thirteenth, Hazen was able to march forward toward McAllister.

Fort McAllister was a strongly enclosed fort, garrisoned by 200 men, and mounting twenty-three guns in barbettes, and one mortar.

At Cheeve's rice mill, a section of a battery was firing at the fort, partly as a diversion, and partly to attract the notice of the fleet. About noon, Fort McAllister opened fire inland from three or four guns. From the top of this mill, Sherman watched the carrying of the fort. During the greater part of the day, Sherman gazed anxiously toward the sea, watching for the fleet. About the middle of the afternoon, he saw a light column of smoke creeping lazily along over the flat marshes. Soon the spars of the steamer were visible, and then the flag of the Union floated out.

The sun was rapidly going down behind a grove of water oaks, and as the last rays gilded the earth, all eyes once more turned toward the rebel fort. Suddenly, white puffs of smoke shot out from the thick woods surrounding the line of works. Hazen was closing in for the final rush of his column directly upon the fort. A warning answer came from the enemy in the roar of heavy artillery; and so the battle opened. General Sherman paced nervously to and fro, turning quickly now and then from viewing the scene of conflict to observe the sun sinking slowly behind the treetops. No longer willing to bear the suspense,

he said, "Signal General Hazen that he must carry the fort by assault, tonight if possible." The little flag waved and fluttered in the evening air, and the answer came, "I am ready, I will assault at once." The words had hardly passed when from out the encircling woods there came a long line of blue coats and bright bayonets; and the flag was there, waving proudly in the breeze. There the fort was alive with flame; quick, thick jets of fire shot out from all its sides, while the white smoke first covered the place and then rolled away over the sea. The line of blue moved steadily on; too slowly as it seemed to the onlookers, for they exclaimed, "Why don't they dash forward?" But their measured step was unfaltering. Then the flag went down but the line did not halt. A moment longer and the banner gleamed again in the front. Sherman stood, watching with anxious air, awaiting the decisive minute. Then the enemy's fire was redoubled in rapidity and violence. The darting streams of fire alone told the positions of the fort and the invaders. The line of blue entered the surrounding folds of smoke. The flag was but dimly seen at last, and then it went out of sight altogether.

"They have been repulsed," said one of the group of watchers.

"No, by Heaven!" said another; "there is not a man in retreat---- not a straggler in all the glorious line."[86] The firing ceased, the wind lifted the smoke, and crowds of men were visible on the parapets, fiercely fighting. But the flag was planted there. There were a few scattering musket shots, and then the sounds of battle ceased. Then the bomb-proofs and parapets were alive with crowding swarms of our

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[86]Nichols, op. cit., p. 91.

men. Victory! The fort was won.

General Sherman found Hazen and found the vessel.

That evening, they had opportunity to examine Fort McAllister. It was a large enclosure, with wide parapets, a deep ditch and thickly planted palisades, which latter were broken in several places where our men passed them. The dead and wounded were lying where they fell. Groups of soldiers were gathered here and there, laughing and talking of the proud deed that had been done. The artillery of the fort did very little damage, for they lost only ninety men, both killed and wounded.

General Hazen, the hero of Fort McAllister, was a West Point graduate, and not yet thirty-five years of age. In person, he was rather squarely built, above the medium height and had a fine, manly face. It was resolute, withal. His manner was that of an accomplished and refined gentleman.[87]

Two events combined to insure the capture of Savannah without a fight. First was the capture of Fort McAllister by direct assault, a feat which seems to have impressed the rebels in a manner which can only be appreciated by talking with the deserters who constantly came into the Union lines in squads and who asserted that the soldiers in Savannah did not hesitate openly to declare that it was a useless sacrifice of life to defend the city. The second reason was a flank movement, which was in process of operation. In two days more, they would have had a division operating with Foster upon Savannah by way of Broad River, which would have made escape impossible.

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[87] Ibid., p. 95.

It was fortunate indeed that our troops followed so quickly after the evacuating of the city by the enemy, for a mob had gathered in the streets and were breaking into the stores and houses. They were with difficulty dispersed at the points of the bayonets of our soldiers. They, once more, order and confidence prevailed throughout the Confederate city.

That night, Sherman pulled down the river and went on board the fleet. Communications were now established with Admiral Dahlgren, and arrangements were made for siege ordnance to be sent from Hilton Head. On the arrival of these guns, a demand was made for the surrender of Savannah. Hardee refused this; he was in command of the city.

Savannah was then a city of about 25,000 inhabitants, located on the Georgia side of the Savannah River and had been the city of the well-to-do people who had made it one of the pleasantest towns of the South. It was built upon a sandy plateau about forty feet above the water, and though fifteen miles distant from the ocean, it was the nearest point to the harbor entrance where a city could be built. The country back of Savannah was very low and intersected with many streams and swamps. Fortunately, the weather was good but Sherman knew that if the winter soon set in, conditions would not be so good.[88]

Therefore, heavy details of men were put to work to prepare a wharf and depot at King's Bridge and the roads leading through were corduroyed in advance. The Ogeechee was also cleared out for use.

In this summons to Hardee, Sherman told him that if he was compelled to assault, or depend upon the slower process of starvation, he

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[88]Sherman's Memoirs, p. 204.

should feel justified in resorting to the harshest measures, and should make little effort to restrain his army, which was burning to avenge the great national wrong they imputed to Savannah and other large cities that had been so prominent in dragging that country into national war. He added, "I inclose you a copy of General Hood's demand for the surrender of the town of Resaca, to be used by you for what it is worth."[89] In his reply Hardee pointed out that the investment was incomplete.

> Your statement that you have, for some days, held and controlled every avenue by which the people and garrison could be supplied is incorrect. I am in free and constant communication with my department.[90]

Slocum's wing extended from the Savannah River to the canal, and Howard's wing from the canal to the extreme right along down the Little Ogeechee. The enemy occupied not only the city itself, with its long line of outer works, but many forts which had been built to guard the approaches from the sea.

Hardee did not have a garrison strong enough to take care of these many forts; therefore Sherman wanted to break his lines before he received reinforcements from Virginia or Augusta.[91] General Slocum had already captured a couple of steamboats trying to pass down the Savannah River from Augusta, and had established some of his men on Argyle and Hutchinson Islands above the city, and wanted to transfer a whole corps to the South Carolina bank; but as the enemy had ironclad gun-

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[89] Ibid., p. 210.

[90] Ibid., p. 211.

[91] Ibid., p. 204.

boats on the river, Sherman did not want to let him do it.

By December 16, many steamboats had passed up as high as King's Bridge; among them was one which General Grant had despatched with the mails for the army which had accumulated since they left Atlanta. These mails were most welcome to the soldiers who had been cut off from all news for two months.

On December 18, at Sherman's camp by the side of the plank-road eight miles back of Savannah, Sherman received General Hardee's refusal to surrender. Nothing remained to do but assault. The ground was difficult. So Sherman decided to make one more effort to surround the city on all sides. The place had already been invested on the north, west, and south, but there remained the east, the old plank road or dike leading to South Carolina, and Hardee had a pontoon bridge across the river. Sherman decided that the division of John P. Hatch, belonging to General Foster's command, might be moved from its position at Broad River, by water down to Bluffton, from which it could reach the plank road, fortify it and hold it. Sherman made the journey to see General Foster at Hilton Head.[92]

After firing heavily from his ironclads and the batteries along the river all the afternoon and late into the evening of the twentieth, Hardee evacuated the city that night on a pontoon bridge and marched toward Charleston on the Causeway Road. The night being dark, and a strong westerly wind blowing, although the sounds of movement were heard in Geary's front, it was impossible to make out its direction or object.

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[92] Ibid., p. 216.

Colonel Barnum of New York, commanding a brigade in the 20th Corps, was in command of the immediate front; and near midnight, he crept out beyond his picket lines, which were only three hundred yards from the rebel works. Not hearing the voices of the enemy and not seeing their forms passing before their campfires, he suspected that they had evacuated their lines, even though he could hear the boom of their guns, which echoed through the dark forests away off to the right. He selected ten of his best men and cautiously scaled the parapets of the outside rebel lines. He passed rapidly and silently from these to the fortifications. Although their campfires were still burning brightly, no rebels were to be seen. Sending back for reinforcements, he marched from earthwork to earthwork, and finally entered the city just as the early morning light appeared in the eastern sky.[93]

Thus, while Sherman was still away talking over the situation with General Foster, General Hardee, with his army of 9,089, after destroying two ironclads, many smaller vessels, and supplies of all kinds, left the city, carrying off his men and light artillery. However, the city was surrendered almost intact.[94]

General Slocum and Howard moved their headquarters into the city at once. Sherman has been criticized for permitting Hardee to evacuate the city. A letter from Secretary Stanton to Grant showed this attitude: "It is a sore disappointment to hear that Hardee was able to get off his 15,000 men from Sherman's 60,000. It looks like protracting

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[93]Horace Greely, The American Conflict, p. 68.

[94]Ibid.

the war while these armies continue to escape."[95]

Sherman sent the following message to Lincoln:

> I beg to present you as a Christmas gift, the city of Savannah with 150 heavy guns and plenty of ammunition, also about 35,000 bales of cotton.[96]

A vote of thanks was tendered Sherman for the work he had accomplished in making the march.[97]

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[95] Boynton, March to the Sea, p. 165.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Official Records No. 44, Series I, p. 856.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

On December 20, 1864, the great march to the sea was successfully terminated. Did it hasten the end of the war? Was this march according to the established rules of warfare? Was it just to future generations to create such desolation and destruction? These are questions which are still open for discussion.

The results of the march in the form of destruction included the marching of a well appointed army through the heart of the Confederacy, and the dividing in two of Georgia, cutting a mighty swath of some sixty miles wide along the line of march. The only remaining railroad of the Confederacy was broken up for 320 miles. The corn and fodder in the region of thirty miles on either side of a line from Atlanta to Savannah was consumed; all the food products, poultry, vegetables, cattle, horses, and sheep, were destroyed. More than 10,000 horses and mules were carried away. On the march, there were carried 1,217,527 rations of meat, 919,000 rations of bread, 483,000 pounds of coffee, 581,534 rations of sugar, 1,146,500 rations of soap, and 137,000 rations of salt. Sherman estimated the damage done to the State of Georgia and its military resources at $100,000,000, $20,000,000 of which was used. The rest was wanton waste and destruction.[1]

Sherman said in defense of his waste and desolation, that it might seem a hard species of warfare, but it brought the sad realities of war home to those who have been directly or indirectly instrumental

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[1] Official Records 44, Series I, p. 13.

in involving the people in its attendant calamities.[2]

Of the cotton and gins destroyed, the estimates varied, but at least 20,000 bales were burned, and many more destroyed.[3] The line of march was through some of the best cotton growing portions of Georgia.

The Union army lost in the march of 255 miles from Atlanta to Savannah, which was substantially a conquest of Georgia, six weeks' time and 567 men. Of these, 63 were killed, 245 wounded, and 158 missing. To offset these, 1,328 prisoners and 167 guns were captured. The ammunition expended was inconsiderable. The army of 65,000 men and 10,000 horses had lived generously off the State of Georgia. Aside from sheep, swine, fowls, and sweet potatoes and rice, the men found an abundance of other food. A total of 13,000 beeves, 160,000 bushels of corn and over 5,000 tons of fodder were gathered from the country and issued to the Union men and animals, while besides the cotton which had been burned, at least 25,000 bales more had been captured in Savannah. More than 10,000 Negroes had abjured the delights of bondage to follow the National flag; besides these, thousands more--- most of them women and children, who had been driven back by different officers, attempted to follow the army.[4]

Sherman's destruction of military supplies and railroads did undoubtedly render impossible any great prolongation of the war, if it would otherwise have been possible. It most certainly had a great in-

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[2] Ibid.

[3] Official Records 44, I, 13.

[4] W. R. White, "Supply Problems That Confronted Sherman in His Campaign Through Georgia," Quartermaster Review, X (May, June 1931), 45.

fluence in lowering the morale of the people of the Confederacy. But even though Sherman, at the end of his march, had occupied both Atlanta and Savannah, he had not destroyed Johnston's army.

There has been some comment on the fact that Sherman made a serious tactical blunder at the outset, when he had 100,000 men to Johnston's 60,000. Grant himself said that he was disappointed that Hardee had escaped with his army of 15,000 from Sherman, with his 60,000 men.

With no opposition to speak of, this was more of a march than a campaign. Had organized opposition been encountered, the story might have been quite different.

Schofield, one of Sherman's generals, was never in favor of the march being made. He said that it had never occurred to him, if the fact ever existed, that the rebellion could not be suppressed by crushing or capturing the Confederate armies, or that the vastly superior military strength of the North should necessarily be employed in crushing the Southern people, however much they might deserve crushing.[5] Hence, his objection to Sherman's plan was based on the conviction that such plans were not at that time, and never had been, necessary.

In "Critical Sketches of Commanders", Dwight says, "Grant's orders to Sherman were to move against Johnston's army, break it up, and then get into the enemy's country."[6]

On the other side of the question, Mr. Johnston says that this is the most human kind of warfare since it accomplished the purpose with the least destruction of life and limb.[7]

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[5]Schofield, op. cit., p. 313.

[6]White, op. cit., p. 45.

Another commentator says,

> Lost to the outside world, he swept like a forest fire through the heart of the South, where he met little opposition, found food in abundance, and left a trail of smoking court-houses and homes, and a country bereft of fences and of live-stock, as well as a population more bitterly intent on resistance than when his raid began. Had they possessed the resources for recuperation, the recoil would have annihilated his forces; but the south was spent.[8]

A few quotations from the Southern newspapers of that period show to a slight extent the prevalent feeling. They record the terrible misery caused by the destruction of private and public property, the plunder and burning of crops, the sacking of private dwellings and the inexplicable and atrocious insults and wrongs offered to the defenseless women of the South.[9] Another paper, writing of the march, commented on the details of cruelty, which, it said, were unparalleled in history.[10] The Charleston Courier of December 6, 1864, said that Sherman's army proved a scourge wherever it went. No attention was paid by his troops to the general orders at the outset of the expedition. Throughout the whole line of march the country was made desolate by pillage or fire.[11]

Of course, the reports found in the Southern newspapers during this period were highly biased; but an editorial appearing in the Macon Telegraph, entitled "Sherman's Place in History," is quite in-

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[7] Johnston, op. cit., p. 499.

[8] Carl Russell Fish, The American Civil War, p. 248.

[9] Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel, December 8, 1864.

[10] Ibid., December 10, 1864.

[11] Charleston Courier, December 6, 1864.

teresting. It said that to assign Sherman a proper place in the annals of history would be a perplexing task for the future historians. His generalship, it stated, would be lost in the record of his infamy, and the brilliancy of his military genius eclipsed in the darkness of his cold and heartless cruelties. It said that Sherman, as with the spirit of a thousand fiends centered in one, drove women and children from their homes, to perish or else subsist upon the charities of the world. This commentator felt that Sherman's name would descend to the future blackened with crimes which, like the curses of the damned, would be echoed by a thousand tongues of perdition.[12]

Today, however, the blue and the gray have long been reunited and never the twain shall part. This same strip of country in which Sherman's army marched, destroying all before it as the plagues of Egypt, has, through the miracle of time, again become a land of peace and plenty. Peace and contentment reign and all the signs of him have passed. Sherman's march lives only in the memory of those who survived it.

Perhaps it is not the duty of a historian to condemn or praise or blame such tactics as those which are pursued in war. But, nevertheless, the people in the end are the ones who pay for the battles---not the generals who fight them.

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[12]Georgia Journalism of the Civil War Period, compiled at George Peabody College for Teachers as Monograph 58, p. 126.

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