

agent is an old man now, and one of his legs is shorter than the other—the one that was shot that night. The baby, having recovered from her severe tussle with colic and paregoric, is now one of the most charming women in one of our charming Western cities. The conductor of the soldier train is at this writing a

general superintendent of a well-known railway. The snows of forty winters have fallen upon his wife's hair; it is almost white; but her face is still young and handsome, and I remember that she blushed, when telling this story to me and recalling the fact that she had fainted in a stock car on that wild night at Woodriver.

STRANGER THAN FICTION.

A TRUE SHORT STORY TOLD MAINLY IN A SERIES OF UNPUBLISHED LETTERS BY GENERAL SHERMAN.

BY ELLA FRASER WELER.

NO man of high position and a multitude of affairs, it is well known, was ever more approachable than General Sherman. He had a sympathetic ear for almost any appeal that might be made to him. Especially ready was his attention and kindness if the applicant chanced to be a young person, for of young people, young men as well as young women, he was especially fond. He was endowed himself with an ever-youthful heart. "He had to the last," says one of his closest friends, "a buoyancy of spirits that usually belongs only to youth. I never saw him speak to a young person without smiling; and as to his ways toward women, he was a Bayard of the Bayards." Besides sympathy and kindness, there was in his relations with young people not a little imagination. He entered romantically into their affairs, and strove to promote for them their own kind of pleasure. It pleased him above all things to have them happy, and in order to forward what he divined to be their happiness he would give himself no end of pains. In return, they instinctively recognized him for their friend. To a very unusual degree they confided their troubles to him and sought his counsel and aid. Those, even, who did not personally know him appealed to him as to a benevolent and sympathetic relative.

The instances in illustration of this most charming side of Sherman's character must be very numerous; but they are, naturally, not easy to come at. We have a most interesting and attractive one, however, in the following series of letters, written to a young lady who, while yet a school-girl, scarcely sixteen, through circumstances that need not be recited here, had been

led into correspondence with an officer in the regular army whom she had never seen. It was merely a friendly correspondence, not a lover's correspondence; but still it was sufficiently intimate and interesting to make the end which was soon put to it by the young girl's father something of a grief to both parties. The officer wrote to the father, soliciting that approval of the correspondence which he had better have asked earlier; but the father was immovable, and all communication between the young people ceased. A year passed without either having any further word or knowledge of the other. Then, in 1876, occurred the battle with the Sioux Indians on the Little Big Horn River, in Montana, wherein General Custer lost his life; and the officer's gentle-hearted correspondent was filled with anxiety lest he might have been one of the victims of that fatal engagement. Finally her anxiety became so great that, in order if possible to learn the officer's fate, she addressed a letter of inquiry to the Commander of the Army, General Sherman. She signed her letter only with her initials, thinking General Sherman might mistake her for a man, and, in consequence, accord her a prompt answer. He was not deceived; but his answer came promptly enough, and was as follows:

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES.

WASHINGTON, D. C., May 2, 1879.

MISS ———.

My dear young lady: There are *two* "Captains" J.W. ——— in the army. First, Captain ——— of the Sixth Infantry, stationed at ———, on the upper Missouri River, was on the sixteenth of April ordered before the Retiring Board at Fort

Headquarters Army of the United States,

Washington, D. C., July 12 1879

Dear Miss

I am just back. I find
 your letter of 26. ult — glad
 you take things so philosophically —
 and that you promise since
 a "whole heart." — I am as
 anxious for you in the sea, as
 was even Cuyler — &c &c —
 I enclose the photographs
 asked for —

Engel,
 W. T. Sherman

FACSIMILE OF ONE OF GENERAL SHERMAN'S LETTERS.

Leavenworth, from which I infer he is in poor health, or made infirm from service. This Captain — was born in New York, and served in a New York regiment from 1861 to '65, when he was appointed in the regular army.

Second, J. W. —, First Lieutenant — Infantry, stationed at Fort —, California. This Lieutenant — was born in Ohio, also served in an Ohio regiment during the Civil War, and was appointed to the regular army in 1866.

If you have a special interest, you can probably tell from the above where the officer enquired after is to be found. I have no personal acquaintance with either; but if you tell me honestly why you want

to know, what is your interest in the officer, I can always find out all about him. From the style of your letter, I infer you to be a young miss, and my mind grasps, probably erroneously, that Captain — is your sweetheart.

Truly yours,
 W. T. SHERMAN.

Availing herself of this cordial invitation, and in order to set the general right a little in his inference regarding her relations with her early correspondent, the young lady wrote him again, sending the following letter:

GENERAL W. T. SHERMAN.

Dear Sir: Your kindness in replying was really unexpected, but I assure you appreciated; the contents of your letter was what I long

wished for, but never hoped to attain. The Lieutenant of the — Infantry is he whom I desired information concerning. Your reply was all I could desire, and I do not know how to thank you. You have been so kind I will tell you "honestly" (did you infer I would fabricate?) my motive in writing to you. How did you know I was a school-girl? I flattered myself you would think me a man, or at least an old aunt; but I am a girl, an unsophisticated little country girl, if you will; but an American girl, with a warm and true interest in the welfare of the whole United States army, whether at peace or in war. No, General Sherman, Lieutenant — is not my lover; my interest in him is purely friendly; but

that friendship is deeper than friendships commonly are.

I corresponded with him about a year ago, and the care and interest an elder brother would give a little sister he gave me. His letters were always filled with interest in my school life and studies. He advised, nay even urged, me to give close attention to my lessons, curbed my desire for fun and admiration, until looking through the glass he held up for me, I saw the folly and danger of it. But I was only a child, and my father thought I had better give up the correspondence. It was very hard, but I knew he was doing it for my good. Still we tried together to overcome his objections; but in vain. Then Lieutenant — wrote, "Gipsy, we are both wrong; your father is right; keep on at school, and never let anything in the future tempt you to do contrary to your parents' wishes." I followed his advice, his influence has always been for good, and now, General Sherman, do you wonder at my interest in his welfare? You see I cannot write to him, for my father has never mentioned his name, and I fear to ask him if I may write, for he may think as you did, that my interest is deeper than friendship; and if my whole future happiness depended upon it, I would not cause my dear father one moment's anxiety. Much as I would like to hear from Lieutenant —, I must be content to know that he is well; that is the best I could know, and I have you to thank for that.

And now, General Sherman, I will trouble you no further. I fear I have already taken too much of your time. But you asked me to tell you honestly, and I have done so. You have done me a kindness I can never forget, and may you ever be as happy as your kind letter rendered me. I only hope, improbable as it may seem, that I shall one day be enabled to do something for you, that I may show you how truly I appreciate your generosity.

Yours,
_____.

In a few days General Sherman answered as follows:

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES.
WASHINGTON, D. C., May 17, 1879.
MISS ———.

My dear young lady: Your letter of the 11th convinces me that you are a good girl, with a pure heart and soul—one of the most precious beings on earth—and that

you should nurse a tender passion, unseen, unknown to its object, is not right. You may confide in me, because I am not only a father and grandfather, but stand in the relation of Father to the whole Army.

Lieutenant — is unmarried, of a good military record, excellent habits, and respected by his army associates. I do not recall him personally to memory, but one of his brother officers was here this morning, of whom I inquired, without his dreaming of my reason. He is at Fort —, California, a lonely place, where he must dream of just such a girl as I suppose you to be. He must be about — years old—a little too old for you—but still with a good long life yet before him; and if in your dreams you think of him, and are willing to renew your old acquaintance, tell me so in the purest confidence of a child, and I can let him know, without in the least compromising your maiden delicacy, that he ought—now that you are no longer a girl, but a woman, capable and qualified to judge of her own heart and interests, and that he is at liberty—to seek of your father the right to renew a correspondence which was broken off most properly by him. In my judgment this may be done, and it may release two worthy souls from a thralldom which neither can break without the mediation of a prudent friend.

To me you can write with absolute confidence.

Truly yours,
W. T. SHERMAN.

To this the young lady replied five days later, namely, on May 22d, in a letter which is no longer preserved; and thereupon General Sherman wrote her again, as follows:

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES.
WASHINGTON, D. C., May 26, 1879.
MISS ———.

My dear young lady: Yours of the 22d is received, and I will write to —, without in the remotest degree compromising your dignity or maiden modesty. Your feelings are pure and natural, and you need have no uneasiness at all. Let me know all the facts, and I will be the friend of all. Tell me your age, and if possible send me photograph; so that on hearing from — I may advise you.

It is not fair that he should be alone away out in the mountains of California, when a pure young girl is treasuring the memory of his former kindness, if not

sighing for some response to the appeal of a loving heart. It is not right—there should be some conclusion. "That sweet hope that lies buried to human eyes" must have some realization, or be suppressed. With you it may be the love of a vision, and who knows but he too is sighing for the object of his youthful dream? I cannot bear the thought of such a girl adoring at the shrine of a photograph when the living man is within easy reach. Should his answer to my letter be what I expect, I shall insist on his applying by letter to your father for the privilege of coming to you, when you must do the rest. Of course you are passionately in love with him now. I think your father knows as much, only he cannot reveal the secret to the object. I can—and will: not as strong as I state it here, but enough to learn his feelings; and will then write you again. Remember this is all I promise, all that would be wise for you to know and realize. If he loves you, you should meet, and each be the judge of the other. If indifferent or offish, banish the thought as a school-girl's dream, and choose your partner out of the many clever fellows that must be within the reach of your acquaintance. I sometimes laugh at the *many* confidences of this sort which reach me officially.

Truly, etc.,
W. T. SHERMAN.

To this General Sherman's correspondent returned the following:

GENERAL W. T. SHERMAN.

Dear Sir: Yours of the 26th received. I scarcely know how to answer. I cannot conceive how you can write to Lieutenant — without his knowledge of my inquiries in regard to him. Another thing: I can tell you what he will answer—"Yes, somewhere in my mind I have a faint recollection of her, but that memory is, she was a silly little thing." A man like him may have dozens of such correspondents to-day, and to-morrow forget them. And do you believe I could be so devoid of practical common sense as to cherish and idolize the memory of a man who never asked my interest and whom I have never met? No, sir, my heart is my own. I beg of you not to call Lieutenant — my lover; and do not imagine I was worshipping at the shrine of a photograph, for I assure you I was only looking at it. I am sorry that my last letter should have savored so strongly of the schoolroom; but friendship with

me is one of the strongest bonds of life; so you will please pardon me, at least since it gave you cause for merriment.

I did not intend, when our correspondence began, that it should at all verge on the confidential; nor did I think that I should be classed as one of the common herd of confidential enthusiasts. I am not passionately in love with Lieutenant —. I am not holding my heart out for him to accept or refuse as he may see fit. All the respect and reverence I have expressed I feel; but did I give you cause for believing that I was wasting my life dreaming of impossibilities? And not on any account must Lieutenant — write to my father. Our city has passed no law prohibiting strangers from entering her gates; therefore Lieutenant — is privileged to visit M. at any time. It is not right, however, that Lieutenant — and I should meet or correspond now, without a proper and formal introduction. You are kind, so kind, to trouble yourself in this way. You may see things more clearly than I in regard to this, but should he ever visit M. it must be through no effort of mine. You now know all the facts, all that I have to tell you. You must not let Lieutenant — write to my father. I would have nothing done that might annoy him, nor will I do anything without his sanction. I am but a child to him. I should like to see Lieutenant —, but it will come right some time. Your letter frightened me. I will send the photograph asked for as soon as possible; but perhaps you had better never mind us any more.

Truly yours,

General Sherman's next letter was as follows:

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES.
WASHINGTON, D. C., June 17, 1879.

DEAR MISS—:

I received in due time the photograph, and now am able to put your soul at rest—somewhat rudely but effectually.

Lieutenant — will soon marry a lady of long acquaintance and more suitable in years to his somewhat advanced age. Therefore think of him as an old friend who watched with interest the most captivating object possible, a young school-girl just budding into womanhood, probably not dreaming that that girl had her own secret thoughts. I am glad that your last confirms this same fact, and that Lieutenant — never by word or look gave you

to believe that he might become a lover. He will soon marry, and you will do the same, and then laugh at me, the old fool who thought he might bring together two happy souls. I don't regret the effort, however, as it gives you a positive knowledge which you could not have obtained otherwise. Wishing you a long and happy life, I am,

Truly, etc.,
W. T. SHERMAN.

Again the young lady's answering letter has disappeared; but she wrote one, and it drew from General Sherman the following reply:

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES,
WASHINGTON, D. C., July 12, 1879.

DEAR MISS ———:

I am just back. I find your letter of the 26th *ult.* Glad you take things so philosophically, and that you possess still

a "whole heart." There are as many fish in the sea as were ever caught, etc. I enclose the photographs asked for.

Truly yours,
W. T. SHERMAN.

This closed the correspondence until the marriage of the young lady, when General Sherman sent a letter full of good wishes and bright hopes for her, but through which there whispered a minor note, a pathos felt rather than expressed, due to a change then impending in his own life. "I am retiring from active life just as you are entering it," the letter ran. "It is morning with you, evening with me; my footsteps are nearing the last slope, where the sun of life goes down, yours are buoyantly bounding up towards the first hilltops, with the dawn of a glorious morning for your background. May the sun shine on your young head through a long, bright life."

THE RETIRING OF DOMSIE.

BY IAN MACLAREN,

Author of "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush," etc.

IT was an ancient custom that Domsie and Drumsheugh should dine with Dr. Davidson in the manse after the distribution of prizes at the school, and his companions both agreed afterwards that the dominie was never more cheerful than on those days. There was always a review of stories when the doctor and Domsie brought out their favorites, with Drumsheugh for an impartial and appreciative audience, and every little addition or improvement was noted in a spirit of appreciative criticism.

During the active operations of dinner, talk was disjointed and educational, hinging on the prospects of the calf crop in the school, and the golden glories of the past, ever better than the present, when the end of each university session showered medals on Drumtochty. When the doctor had smacked his first glass of port, having examined it against the light, and the others had prepared their toddy in a careful silence, broken only by wise suggestions from the host, it was understood that genuine conversation might begin.

"Aye, aye," Domsie would remark, by way of intimating that they, being now in

an open and genial mind, were ready to welcome one of the doctor's best stories, and Drumsheugh became insistent.

"A'm no wantin' tae tribble ye, Docter, but a've never got ower that sermon on the turtle, Docter. Ye micht let's hear it again. A'm no sure gin the dominie ever herd it." May Drumsheugh be forgiven!

Whereupon Domsie went on the back trail, and affected to search his memory for the traces of the turtle, with no satisfaction. May he also be forgiven!

"Toots, Drumsheugh, you are trying to draw my leg. I know you well, eh? As for you, Dominie, you've heard the story twenty times. Well, well, just to please you; but mind you, this is the last time.

"It was the beginning of a sermon that old MacFee, of Glenogie, used to preach on the Monday after the sacrament, from the text, 'The voice of the turtle is heard in the land,' and this was the introduction:

"'There will be many wonders in the latter day, but this is the greatest of them all—the voice of the turtle shall be heard in the land. This marvel falls into two parts, which we shall consider briefly and in order.