

Recalling "Little Phil"



SHERIDAN AND HIS STAFF



PHILIP HENRY "LITTLE PHIL" SHERIDAN



SHERIDAN'S STATUE IN WASHINGTON



SHERIDAN'S GRAVE IN ARLINGTON

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

IT WAS just 100 years ago, March 6, 1831, that there was born to an Irish immigrant couple in Albany, N. Y., a boy who was destined for lasting fame as an American soldier and as one of the great cavalry leaders of all time. Philip Henry Sheridan was his name but American tradition has preserved his memory in two nicknames which his devoted followers gave him—"Fighting Phil" and "Little Phil." And like another horseman of an earlier war, Paul Revere of the Revolution, Phil Sheridan, the dashing cavalryman of the Civil war, owes some of the perpetuation of his name and fame to a poem—Thomas Buchanan Read's "Sheridan's Ride."

While Sheridan was still a child his parents moved to Ohio and settled near Somerset in Perry county. There his boyhood and youth were spent under frontier conditions with its necessity for hard work by all members of the family and its limited opportunities for education. There the characteristics of his later life became evident early. Young Sheridan worked for a country storekeeper for the sum of 50 cents a week, and although his employer testified to the fact that he was a faithful worker, he also commented upon the fact that what time the boy wasn't working he was "talkin' soldier or playin' soldier."

At the age of seventeen Sheridan had the good fortune to secure an appointment to West Point, and although his limited education made the work there unusually difficult for him, he made a fairly good record at the academy. However, he lived up to his "scrappy" reputation by having such a fight with a fellow cadet that he was suspended for a year, and instead of being graduated in the class of 1852, as he should have been, he was not graduated until 1853 and then he stood No. 34 in a class of 52.

Following his graduation and appointment as a second lieutenant in the Infantry, Sheridan spent the next eight years in comparative obscurity. He was detailed to service on the frontier and in various parts of the West saw service against the Indians, which not only afforded him good training with the dragoons for his future career as a cavalryman but also gave him an insight into the Indian character which was to be particularly valuable during the Plains wars after the conflict of 1861-65.

The outbreak of the Civil war, however, gave Sheridan his chance to display the genius which was to give him his place among the great cavalry leaders of the world. Detailed first on the staff of General Halleck at St. Louis, he soon attracted attention by his capacity for detail, his energy and his unflinching devotion to duty, and these qualities resulted in his appointment as colonel of the Second Michigan Cavalry. Only a few weeks later he was elevated to the grade of brigadier general of the United States Volunteers. That was in 1862, and by the end of the year he had been placed in command of a division and given his commission of major general. And all of this had happened when he was but thirty-two years of age.

Sheridan's record during the first

SHERIDAN'S RIDE

Up from the south at break of day,
Bringing to Winchester fresh dismay,
The affrighted air with a shudder bore,
Like a herald in haste, to the chieftain's door.

The terrible grumble, and rumble, and roar,
Telling the battle was on once more,
And Sheridan twenty miles away.

And wider still those billows of war
Thundered along the horizon's bar;
And leader yet into Winchester rolled
The roar of that red sea uncontrolled,
Making the blood of the listener cold,
As he thought of the stake in that fiery fray.

And Sheridan twenty miles away.

But there is a road from Winchester town,
A good, broad highway leading down;
And there, through the flush of the morning light,
A steed as black as the steeds of night
Was seen to pass, as with eagle flight;
As if he knew the terrible need,
He stretched away with his utmost speed;

Hills rose and fell, but his heart was gay,
With Sheridan fifteen miles away.

Still sprang from those swift hoofs,
Thundering south,
The dust, like smoke from the cannons' mouth,
Or the trail of a comet, sweeping faster and faster,
Foreboding to traitors the doom of disaster.

The heart of the steed and the heart of the master
Were beating like prisoners assailing their walls,
Impatient to be where the battlefield calls;

Every nerve of the charger was strained to full play,
With Sheridan only ten miles away.

Under his spurning feet, the road
Like an arrowy Alpine river flowed,
And the landscape sped away behind
Like an ocean flying before the wind;
And the steed, like a bark fed with furnace fire,
Swept on, with his wild eye full of fire;
But, lo! he is nearing his heart's desire;
He is snuffing the smoke of the roaring fray,
With Sheridan only five miles away.

The first that the general saw were the groups
Of stragglers, and then the retreating troops;
What was done? What to do? A glance told him both,
Then, striking his spurs, with a terrible oath,
He dashed down the line, 'mid a storm of hurrahs,
And the wave of retreat checked its course there, because
The sight of the master compelled it to pause.

With foam and with dust the black charger was gray;
By the flash of his eye, and the red nostril's play,
He seemed to the whole great army to say:
"I have brought you Sheridan all the way
From Winchester town to save the day!"

Hurrah! hurrah for Sheridan!
Hurrah! hurrah for horse and man!
And when their statues are placed on high,
Under the dome of the Union sky,
The American soldier's Temple of Fame,
There, with the glorious general's name,
Be it said, in letters bold and bright:
"Here is the steed that saved the day
By carrying Sheridan into the fight,
From Winchester—twenty miles away!"

—THOMAS BUCHANAN READ.

three years of the war was brilliant enough, with his part in the battles at Perryville, Stone River, Chickamauga and Chattanooga, but he rose to the

heights in 1864 when he was made chief of the cavalry corps of the Army of the Potomac and started upon his famous campaign in the Shenandoah valley of Virginia. There his problem was to checkmate another brilliant cavalry leader, Gen. Jubal A. Early of the Confederate army, and to devastate this rich country so that it could no longer feed the Confederate army.

It was during this campaign that the incident occurred which inspired Read's famous poem and gave rise to one of those popular legends so dear to the heart of Americans—and so filled with inaccuracies as to historical fact! That legend tells how Sheridan at Winchester, hearing heavy firing in the direction of Cedar Creek, where his army was stationed, suspected something was wrong, sprang to the back of his coal black charger, "Winchester," and made a mad dash of 20 miles to find his army being routed by Early's surprise attack. Then, according to the school book histories, "Swinging his hat, he dashed along the line of battle, shouting 'Never mind, boys, we'll whip them yet.' The boys responded by throwing up their caps and hurrahing with the wildest joy. Before night set in they drove Early out of the Valley."

A reference to Sheridan's "Personal Memoirs" and other standard authorities, however, will show that the legend can stand considerable correction. In the first place Sheridan did not ride any 20 miles, as the poet has him doing. It is only 13 miles from Winchester to Cedar Creek and he had his first view of his disorganized army at Mill Creek, less than a mile from Winchester. From there to the actual "front" it was not much more than nine or ten miles. Nor was his ride made alone nor covered at top speed all the way, as the poet would have us believe. He was accompanied by two of his aides-de-camp, Maj. George A. Forsythe and Capt. Joseph O'Keefe and at various places along the route of his progress toward the enemy he paused long enough to give orders to various officers about rallying the retreating Union troops. As for the "Turn, boys, turn! We're going back!" type of exclamation so often attributed to Sheridan, these words from his "Memoirs" speak for themselves: "I said nothing except to remark as I rode among those on the road: 'If I had been with you this morning this disaster would not have happened. We must face the other way; we will go back and recover our camp.'"

Although Sheridan is known to more Americans because of this incident than any other in his career, that career continued long after the Civil war. It included service on the Mexican border in the days when the Maximilian incident was a threat to our peaceful relations with European countries, during the Indian wars on the plains when he was in command of the operations which finally brought about the subjugation of the warlike tribes, as guest observer on the staff of King William during the Franco-Prussian war and as commander in chief of the United States army after the retirement of Sherman. Sheridan died in 1888 at the age of fifty-seven years with the rank of full general, a grade which had been restored by congress that year in his favor.

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Mud Puddle Brought Them Together

By HELEN ST. BERNARD
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AT LAST Marjorie was to meet Barton Leach, after having corresponded with him for three years. It had begun when her chum, Ann Parker, had married a naval officer and had gone to Honolulu to live. Letters had been exchanged regularly and Ann had made frequent references to her husband's brother-officer. Then there had been a jesting message from Leach to Marjorie and a regular correspondence had ensued with her reply. It had been planned that she was to spend a summer vacation with Ann and Bob, but Bob had decided to leave the navy and go into his father's business, so they had returned to the States.

And now Barton Leach was their guest! Ann had called that morning to say that Bart was in town, and that she, Marjorie, was to come out for dinner. And that Bart had talked and talked about her . . . and she must look her very prettiest. . . .

While she dressed, she kept her eyes on the photograph on her dresser, with a scribbled "To My Friend Judy" in one corner.

"I know you are as nice as I know you are," she confided to him, drawing on her best pair of sheer chiffon hose, which had been saved for a very special occasion, and then as she slipped into the trim brocaded pumps. "I just felt that when I bought these slippers and this beautiful green dress, that there was to be a very special occasion to wear them . . . and now—I am going to see you face to face . . . after these three years of wondering . . . and waiting . . . and now you are here."

She slipped a light kasha wrap over the loveliness of the green frock, and viewed herself in the mirror.

"I wonder if you will find me as nice as I know you are . . . and I wonder if you are going to like me as much as I know I shall . . . as much as I like you."

There had been a light rain in the afternoon and to save the silver slippers, Marjorie called a cab. And then, expectantly, she took her place on the curb and waited for it, thrilled with anticipation of the evening before her; the evening she had wondered about for three years since he had started to call her "Marge" in his letters, and to speak about that "leave" when they would finally meet.

It all happened very quickly. A car sped by—bright in its nickel trimmings and shining maroon finish. There was a sharp swish of water, as it struck a mud puddle near the curb, and Marjorie looked down with a cry of despair; the front of her beautiful chiffon dress was one big dark shadow of muddy, oily water, and it was dripping on her lovely brocaded slippers that had twinkled under the street lamp a moment before. The maroon roadster was caught in traffic less than a half-block away, and through tear-dimmed eyes she read in large letters on the drum-type tire carrier, the words "Senator S." The license number stood out glaringly and seemed to defy her as she stood bedraggled, furious, on the curb. 188-745! The driver, sitting low behind the wheel, a tweed cap pulled down over his eyes, was blissfully unconscious of the disaster he had left in his wake. She was about to present herself to the offender when:

"You called a taxi ma'am?" and then she was in the depths of a cab rowing vengeance on the driver of the maroon roadster. The license—188-745—was firmly impressed in her mind. She would report the outrage!

If a citizen couldn't stand on a curb without being made a victim of ruthless careless drivers—she would sue him! And then her cab had stopped in front of Ann's home. And Ann would loan her a frock, but . . . she stopped short! In the driveway stood a bright new roadster—the drum-type carrier loudly proclaimed it was a "Senator S" and the license was—188-745.

"And this is Marge, Bart," Ann was saying. "Some beast of a driver drove through a mud puddle and just ruined her lovely dress."

"I think that people who drive like some of these fools in this town should be prosecuted," said Barton Leach indignantly as he held her hand tight in his. "Did you get the license number—Marge?"

Marjorie smiled up at him. "It was just an accident, you know, and it all happened so quickly. I shouldn't have been standing so near the curb, anyway . . . and the dress will clean."

Late that night the maroon roadster, the "Senator S," stopped in front of Marjorie's apartment, but Bart's arm held her tight.

"Life is more or less of a mud-puddle unless you know how to step over or around them, and with you to show me how to smile when I get splattered like you did tonight. You do love me, don't you, Marge? And you will go back to Honolulu with me, won't you? And we'll take the new car—and we'll clear the muddle puddles all right, you and I."

Wife at Bargain Rate
An English newspaper of 1796 reported the sale of a wife at Sheffield for sixpence, and commented upon the poor price accepted because wives at that time were fetching as much as 10s 6d to three and a half guineas at Smithfield market, London.

How to Escape FLU

- 1** Avoid so far as possible the places where flu germs are most likely to be spread; overcrowded cars and public meeting places; overheated, stuffy rooms.
- 2** Be careful of close contact with others and beware of all coughs and sneezers; breathe through the nose, get fresh air, but avoid drafts or chilling.
- 3** Get lots of rest. Eat plenty of citrus fruits. Keep the bowels open. Take extra precaution to keep in good physical condition, so your system will have high resistance against germs.
- 4** Above all, avoid catching colds. They lower your resistance to the flu germ. Ward them off. At the first sign of any cold, take Bayer Aspirin and remain indoors if possible until your cold is gone. If you have a sore throat, dissolve some Bayer Aspirin tablets in water and gargle; this will relieve the soreness and reduce the inflammation.
- 5** If you have any reason to suspect even a touch of flu, call your doctor at once.

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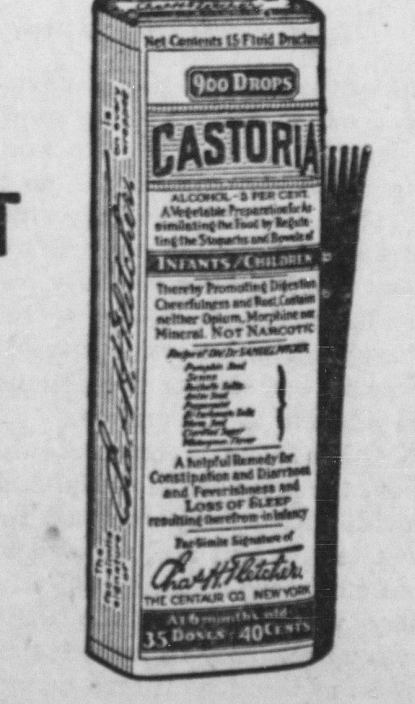
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