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A Belated Communication, facsimile of letter from Gen. Sherman to Gen. Howard May, 1865

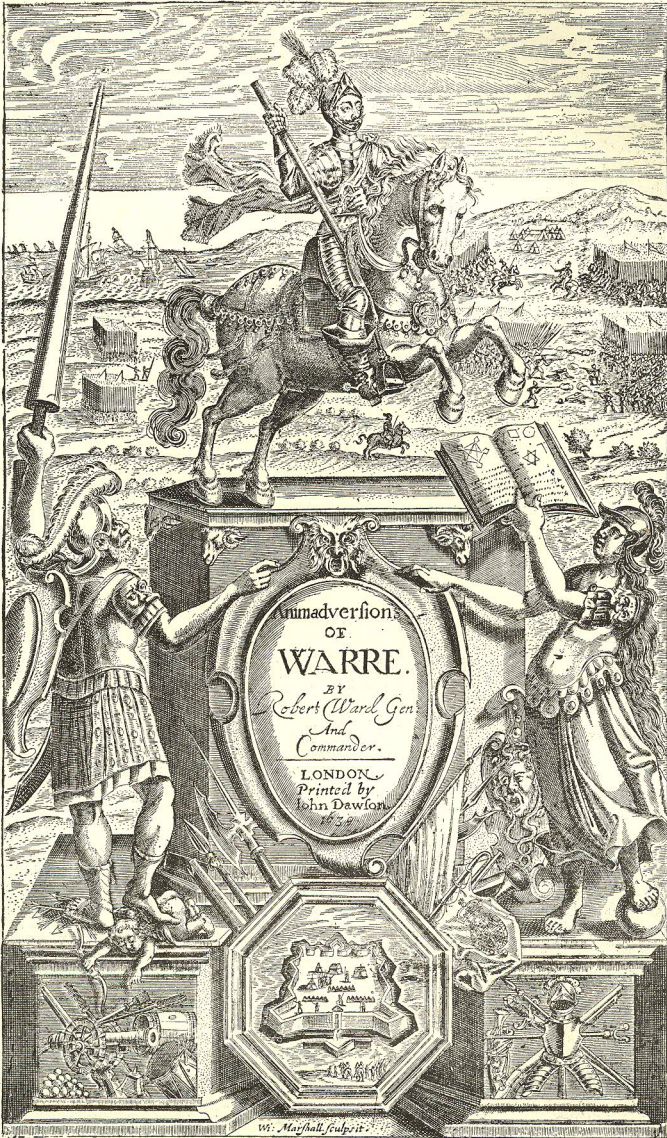
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Historical Miscellany.

A BELATED COMMUNICATION.*

Recd 2d (Mil 1863) of the *Times*
In the File May 20. 1864
Camp near Washington 9th

Major Genl O. T. Howard
Chief Bureau of Refugee &c

Dear Genl

I am this moment in receipt of
your communication of this date and I think
you for your generous act. I do think it but
just to Lyman could not withstanding his mod-
est reply to our last night. I think he will
forgive this act most lightly. I will thank it
a special favor & pleasure if you will write with
me at the Review of Wednesday next. I will be
at the head of the column at 7 A.M. of Wednes-
day near the Capitol and beg you will join
me there. Your friend
Wm Sherman

*We are indebted to the Editor of the *Hartford Courant* (at Gen. Howard's request) for the above facsimile of a letter from GEN. SHERMAN to GEN. HOWARD, which, after nearly forty years, only reached its destination Dec. 8, 1904, having fallen into the possession of a gentleman of Hartford, Conn., as a relic of the Civil War. (See next page.)

AN ECHO OF THE CIVIL WAR.

(*The Hartford Courant.*)

IN a few days Gen. O. O. Howard, who lectured at Trinity College Thursday night, will receive at his home in Burlington, Vt., a letter written to him by Gen. W. T. Sherman nearly forty years ago, and which he never saw until Friday in this city. General Howard was the guest of Prof. John J. McCook while here, and Friday morning, before the general left, Horace B. Austin, of this city, called on him and showed him the letter of the existence of which he was not previously aware. By a singular coincidence, General Howard, a few minutes previous at the breakfast table, had been telling Professor McCook about the circumstances which were directly connected with the writing of the letter. The letter is as follows: (*See facsimile.*)

“Head Qrs. Mil. Div. of the Miss.

“In the Field, May 20, 1865.

“Camp near Alexandria, Va.

“Maj.-Gen. O. O. Howard,

“Chief Bureau of Refugees, etc.

“DEAR GENERAL—I am at this moment in receipt of your communication of this date, and I thank you for your generous act. I do think it but just to Logan and notwithstanding his modest reply to us last night, I know he will prize this act most highly. I will deem it a special favor and pleasure if you will ride with me at the Review of Wednesday next. I will be at the head of the column at 9 A. M. of Wednesday near the Capitol, and beg you will join me there. Your personal staff can ride with mine. As ever, your friend,

“W. T. SHERMAN, Maj. Gen.”

At the time of the Grand Review at Washington, D.C., Wednesday, May 24, 1865, Gen. “Black Jack” Logan rode at the head of the Army of the Tennessee and Gen. O. O. Howard, the commander of that army, rode beside Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman, who commanded the Military Division of the Mississippi, in which the Army of the Tennessee was a subordinate command. Of course, General Howard as commander of the Army of the Tennessee was entitled to ride at the head of his troops, and many wondered why he did not, and there was considerable speculation as to why Logan superseded him in that position.

Logan was the senior corps commander in the Army of the Tennessee when there came a vacancy in the command of that army. Upon the recommendation of General Sherman, General Howard was called from the East and given command of the army. Logan and his friends felt rather “sore” over that, as they thought that he should have been appointed. Logan had a reputation as a fighting general, but he was a volunteer officer and Howard was a West Pointer, and while both were brigadiers, with Howard ranking,

the rank of major-general was conferred on Howard and he got the command of the army. This was in the spring of 1864.

A few days, possibly a week, before the grand review in which so many thousand Federal soldiers participated, Sherman sent for Howard, who was one of his subordinate commanding officers, and suggested that he should permit Logan to ride at the head of the Army of the Tennessee in the review. Howard was naturally much surprised at the suggestion and expressed himself so to General Sherman, asking if it was not a peculiar request that he should relinquish the command of that army on that great occasion. Sherman urged that Howard make the concession to Logan, who was very popular with the troops of the army, and finally appealed to Howard's well-known Christian spirit in urging him to turn over the command to Logan for the review. Howard's reply was a characteristic one: "Since you, general, my commanding officer, request it and appeal to me in that way, it shall be done," and it was.

* * * * *

It was on Saturday, May 20, five days before the Grand Review, that Sherman wrote to Howard the famous letter which is reproduced here for the first time. The letter never reached Howard, consequently he did not report to Sherman to ride beside him as requested in the letter. Instead, Howard rode with his staff on Sherman's staff. Sherman was looking for Howard and rode by the staff, but did not see him, and Howard, ignorant of the letter, was not looking for Sherman. Later on, while the column was moving, Sherman inquired of his adjutant-general, "Where's Howard?" and was told that he was riding on his staff. The general, hero of the March to the Sea, sent an orderly to Howard requesting him to ride up and take a position beside him, and Howard complied.

HOW THE LETTER CAME TO HARTFORD.

Years ago, Mr. Austin's father, the late Thomas H. Austin, of Suffield, gave the letter to his son. It came into his possession through a man named B. Oliver Raines, a Southerner who served in the Union Army, who was detailed as a clerk or in some clerical capacity at Sherman's or Grant's headquarters. How he obtained it is not known, but it is supposed that instead of being delivered to General Howard the letter was mislaid and was found in packing up after the review, and was confiscated by some servant or camp hanger-on. It has hung in a frame in Mr. Austin's house for several years. Thursday night Mr. Austin went to Alumni Hall to hear General Howard; while there thought of the letter, and decided to show it to the general. He ascertained from President Luther that General Howard was the guest of Professor McCook and called on him at the latter's house. He was as much surprised as was the general when he learned that Howard had never seen the letter before. General Howard readily identified General Sherman's handwriting and was sure of the authenticity of the letter. * * *