



Personal Recollections of Distinguished Generals (Abridged, Annotated)

William F. G. Shanks

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One of the most remarkable books to come out of the immediate aftermath of the American Civil War was William F.G. Shank's book on the generals he observed up close and personal all during the war. As a correspondent for Harper's Magazine and the New York Herald, Shank followed through camp and battle, seeing the strengths but also the foibles and failings of some of our most prominent Union leaders.

Shank does not shy from including illuminating details that he was later told may have offended the subjects of his treatments. But he is admiring of the men he met and admirably creates portraits of Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Rousseau, Thomas, Hooker, and others that you will not read elsewhere.

As he states in the preface: "Very few generals have appeared great to the war correspondents; and though very few of the latter can claim to be descendants of Diogenes, they can assert, with equal positiveness, that very few of the generals have been Alexanders, and that 'the very sun shines through them.'"

An interesting note included about Rousseau (one of our least written-about generals) is that during his legal career, he successfully tried a veritable "To Kill a Mockingbird" case.

No student of the war should be without this volume.

For the first time, this long-out-of-print book is available as an affordable, well-formatted book for e-readers and smartphones.

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"Whether extolling or condemning, [Shanks] is always interesting." New York Evening Post.

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