While one group from the membership of the double entry school of American historians are engaged in undermining the romances of the Revolutionary War, another group from the same school are giving fresh impetus to the legends of the Civil War. Viewed as a whole this has the appearance of playing at cross purposes.

A psychological biography of Sam Adams, boiled down, showed conclusively that Sam Adams failed to amount to much until opportunity came to him. General Grant's career may be cited as another conspicuous example of non-performance previous to the coming of opportunity and subsequent to its disappearance.

The publication of the sixth volume of Edward Channing's *History of the United States*, this volume being given over to the Civil War period, brought to the fore a somewhat complicated problem. Was Stonewall Jackson the greatest military genius of the Southern Confederacy, as Mr. Channing declared? That, it will be remembered, outdoes the claim made for "Stonewall" by Colonel Henderson in his two volume Life, which set the military pundits of the British Army to studying General Jackson's deeds in the Shenandoah Valley and at Chancellorsville. If Mr. Channing were correct, the South had at least two military leaders greater than the Duke of Wellington, for we learned on the authority of the British General, Maurice, that Robert E. Lee as a military leader surpassed the Iron Duke. Other panegyrists have held that General N. B. Forrest was the greatest military
genius of the Southern Confederacy, and we thus have three chieftains in line for a higher place on the roll of military fame than that held by the British soldier for whom Blücher made possible the victory at Waterloo. General Maurice's reference to Waterloo seemed a little careless since the one American battle which resembled Waterloo most closely was Gettysburg, with the notable exception that Meade, the victor, had no Blücher to help him. General Maurice, however, entitled his chapter on the Gettysburg campaign "The Second Invasion of Maryland," a side tracking of Gettysburg, which there are reasons to think would have met the approbation of General Grant.

General Maurice was not content with ranking Robert E. Lee above Wellington; he put him on a plane with Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar and Frederick the Great; that Alexander who conquered Asia, that Hannibal who overran Italy, that Cæsar who made the world Roman and that Frederick, who with inferior forces but more brains than his opponents, played such an astonishing game of successful warfare. If, as Mr. Channing held Stonewall Jackson was greater than Lee, and as Forrest's admirers have asserted General Forrest was a greater military genius than Lee or Jackson, we are brought to the hyperbolic conclusion that the South produced in the Civil War three of the greatest military leaders of all time. But still another American is to be added to this galaxy of the world's supermen, for Mr. Channing after ranking Jackson above Lee declared that Grant was the greatest of all America's military leaders, a claim which throws his readers back to the Northern verdict of 1865, while General James H. Wilson's contention that the Mexican War campaign of Winfield Scott was without a flaw, whereas General Lee's campaigns were marked by many mistakes, reverts to a still earlier period for comparison and illustration.
No one of the American soldiers heretofore named ever made such large claims in his own behalf. That was reserved for General Philip H. Sheridan to do. In a magazine article a son of General Grant quoted Sheridan as saying that with either Lee’s army or the Army of the Potomac, in the year 1870, he could have driven the Germans back to Berlin or the French to Paris, a military performance of such magnitude that it can hardly have failed to confirm General Grant when President in the justice and wisdom of having advanced Sheridan to the rank of Lieutenant-General over the heads of Meade and Thomas.

The making of sweeping claims was a confirmed practice with Sheridan. Early in his Civil War career he had found a newspaper press, the public and sometimes superior officers willing, even anxious, to give credit to his claims. With one such claim he took his first leap toward fame. In the summer of 1862, Washington L. Elliott, afterwards General George H. Thomas’s chief of cavalry, in command of a brigade of cavalry, including Colonel Sheridan’s regiment, at Booneville, Mississippi, raided a Confederate post, destroyed 10,000 stand of small arms, 3 pieces of artillery and great quantities of ammunition and clothing, and captured 2000 Confederate soldiers. A month later while Sheridan with two regiments of cavalry was posted at the same place, it happened that the Confederate General Chalmers was ordered by Bragg to take some 1200 or 1500 cavalry and make a feint to distract attention from an infantry movement. In carrying out this deceptive purpose Chalmers had an unimportant brush with Sheridan at Booneville. Chalmers was probably not aware that he had encountered an early adept in the art of writing military dispatches for consumption by an eager public. Sheridan’s account of the Booneville affair said that with 728 men and a loss of only one man killed and 24 men
wounded he had defeated a force of 4700 Confederates. This dispatch sent to Sheridan’s immediate commander and thence to the corps and army commander and so on until it reached Rosecrans, Halleck and President Lincoln, brought forth from officers hearty praise and recommendation for recognition of deeds of such prodigious valor by promotion. The promotion speedily followed.

In Stephen Crane’s “Red Badge of Courage” a private soldier exclaims: “I met one of the 148th Maine boys an’ he ses his brigade fit th’ hull rebel army fer four hours over on th’ turnpike road an’ killed about 5000 of ‘em. He ses one more sech fight as that an’ th’ war’ll be over.” Crane’s realism failed when he neglected to promote the whole regiment. General McClellan has been criticized for magnifying the enemy’s force, but he never multiplied it by three or four as was done by Sheridan with his feinting opponent at Booneville.

How far the American Colkitto could have pursued Von Moltke’s army towards Berlin may be indicated by a Sheridan performance recorded in detail in the Official War Records after he had been given command of a division. This was in 1864, after three years of ex-

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1 Of Colkitto the sobriquet of Alister McDonnell, Sir Walter Scott wrote in “A Legend of Montrose”: “This last leader, who to the great embarrassment of Milton’s Commentators, is commemorated in one of the great poet’s sonnets, was brave to intrepidity and almost to insensibility; very strong and active in person and always ready to show the example in the extremity of danger. To counterbalance these good qualities it must be recorded that he was inexperienced in military tactics and of a jealous and presumptuous disposition, which often lost to Montrose the fruits of Colkitto’s gallantry. Yet such is the predominance of outward personal qualities in the eyes of a wild people that the feats of strength and courage shown by the champion seem to have made a stronger impression upon the minds of the Highlanders than the military skill and chivalrous spirit of the great Marquis of Montrose. Numerous traditions are still preserved in the Highland glens concerning Alister McDonnell though the name of Montrose is rarely mentioned among them.”
experience in the practice of warfare. Burnside had been shut up in Knoxville. For twenty miles around the country was eaten bare. The artillery horses were so weak from lack of forage and grain that they could not pull the cannon over the rough or muddy roads. General Foster, Burnside’s successor, sent an order down the line that two army corps should cross to the south side of French Broad River into a region where it was supposed forage could be found. From General Parke at the front the order went down to Sheridan to build a bridge of wagons across the river. Sheridan built his bridge and reported its completion. The troops started to march across it, and then too late, it was discovered that the far end of the bridge was on an island and that it would take six hours more to bridge the remaining channel. Before this could be done the Confederates made a firm assault, causing severe losses to the Northern troops. Rain threatened; General Parke knew that the weakened horses would be unable to draw the cannon over soft roads; the troops had to be withdrawn to Knoxville and thence by a less direct route approach the forage ground.

The taking for granted that an island was the farther shore of a river was a characteristic of our home-bred Colkitto, and serves to explain why responsible officers of a higher intellectual plane thought Sheridan’s mentality to be of a comparatively low order. General Jacob D. Cox, a corps commander, a Master of Arts and Doctor of Laws, subsequently Governor of Ohio, wrote that the Sheridan of the earlier period was not considered competent for a large command. General James H. Wilson, also a corps commander, a division commander under Sheridan, whose mental vigor was also proved in many fields of activity in civil life, wrote that General Gordon Granger had far more brains than Sheridan. During Sheridan’s Valley Campaign of 1864, his chief achievement, General Ruther-
ford B. Hayes, afterwards President of the United States, wrote that General Crook was the brains of Sheridan's army with which Hayes was serving.

The fragments of the Sheridan legend, repeated by the historian Channing, and its acceptance as a whole for a period of sixty years have for explanation the failure of our general historians to follow the broad Colkitto like trail in the official war records for themselves and their ignoring of such authoritative narratives as that of General Andrew A. Humphreys, Chief of Staff of the Army of the Potomac, and such unanswerable analyses of military operations as were made by Colonel Carswell McClellan. No bloodhound scent was needed to pick up this trail, for it left broad blazes in the underbrush of the Civil War records.

Previous to his island bridge fiasco while Gordon Granger, "orders or no orders," as he said, had led his troops to the sound of the guns, and hastened to help General Thomas stay the tide of Rosecrans' defeat at the battle of Chickamanga, Sheridan had turned his back on the enemy and ridden from the field. When Thomas sent an officer to ask him to return he refused, and kept on his way to Rossville, carrying General Negley with him. The retreat of Sheridan was made conspicuous by the more soldierly conduct of General Jeff C. Davis, who at once at the messenger's request ordered a "right about" and marched back to the battlefield. Soon after the battle General Rosecrans was relieved of the command of the army. Generals McCook, Crittenden and Negley, who like Rosecrans and Sheridan had ridden away from the roar of guns, leaving General Thomas to repel Bragg's attacks, were also relieved of their commands. The cause of Sheridan's escape from the punishment accorded the others can

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2 The Virginia Campaign of 1864 and 1865 (New York, 1883).
3 Grant Versus The Record. (Boston, 1887); Notes on Sheridan's Memoirs (St. Paul, 1889).
only be accounted for by the favor of General Grant, who to the end of the war advanced Sheridan’s fortune, accepted his claims as if they possessed military exactness, overlooked his errors, lost no opportunity to give him chance for winning a separate renown; and towards the end to promote this purpose, disrupted the organization of the Army of the Potomac by which army his own side-stepping from the Wilderness to Petersburg had been accomplished.

The earliest record of Sheridan after Grant brought him East, in the spring of 1864, and placed him in command of the cavalry corps of the Army of the Potomac shows a combination of the boastfulness of the Booneville dispatch, the timidity disclosed at Chickamauga and a degree of military intelligence similar to that manifested at French Broad River together with an additional element of insubordination, the last a reversion to the temper of his cadet life at West Point. There he had attacked with his fists a cadet officer, who, as duty required, had reported him for being late. In that instance Sheridan was worsted at fisticuffs and later received official punishment by being suspended for a year. When insubordination was shown towards himself General Grant found opportunity, and properly so, to get rid of offending officers, as in the case of General McClernand in the West. In his Memoirs he condemned General Hooker for conduct which in 1864 and 1865, he encouraged in General Sheridan, in whose behalf he made personal liking the basis for military advancement as in peace he made it sufficient ground for the distribution of important governmental offices.

Rosecrans’ defeat at Chickamauga dashed to the ground the high hopes of the North based on Gettysburg and Vicksburg. Rosecrans’ beaten army shut in at Chattanooga was short of supplies of all kinds and was in danger of capture, and Northern efforts were then centered upon the prevention of such a disaster.
In Virginia, Meade in command of the Army of the Potomac, was practically directed from Washington to stand still while two corps of his army were taken from him and sent to Tennessee. The defeat of Bragg at Missionary Ridge followed, and Grant was made Lieutenant-General in command of all the Northern armies.

Contrasted with the battles in the East against Lee’s army of northern Virginia, the comparative ease with which were won those victories in the Southwest that made the fame of Grant, Sherman and, through Grant’s dominating guardianship, of Sheridan, is shown by the statistics of losses in battle, the irrefutable measure of opposition and difficulty. From May 14 to November 27, in the year 1863, a period of over six months, Grant’s total losses, including the battle of Champion’s Hill, the various assaults at Vicksburg, the engagement at Wauhatchie, the defeat of Bragg’s army in front of Chattanooga and the subsequent affair at Ringgold were only 13,848. Well might General Grant say as he did after the first day’s battle in the Wilderness in Virginia that he had never seen such fighting and that if the Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston had been in Lee’s place he would have retreated. That it was a new and unexpected experience for Grant was shown by his earlier remark to Meade that he did not want the Army of the Potomac maneuvered for position and by General James H. Wilson’s record that after the first fierce contest with its doubtful issue, General Grant threw himself upon his couch and gave way to his emotions.

General Sherman’s total losses in his Atlanta Campaign from May 5th to September 1st, 1864, a period of nearly four months, were 31,687. To win his victory over General Hood in the battles of Franklin and Nashville, in 1864, cost General George H. Thomas a loss of only 5326 men.
The difference in the character of the fighting, East and West, is shown by Meade's loss of 23,000 men in three days at Gettysburg and McClellan's loss of 12,410 men in one day at Antietam.

It was Lee's practice in the Wilderness to keep Stuart, his Chief of Cavalry, near himself in order that cavalry movements should conform to those of the main army. Meade had the same idea. Sheridan's aim was different, and Grant missed no chance to give his favorite opportunity to win "a separate renown." Sheridan had 12,000 cavalrymen, at least 3000 more than the number of Stuart's horsemen.

Meade's orders for the initial movement of the Cavalry Corps on May 5th, 1864, were based on misinformation supplied by Sheridan, and as was habitual with him he ignored this and complained of these orders after it was found that Lee's cavalry were not where Sheridan had said they were. Of the movement towards Spottsylvania Court House two days later, Badeau, Grant's panegyrist, Grant himself and Sheridan all asserted that Meade changed Sheridan's orders for the cavalry, and thus lost control of the roads leading to the court house toward which place both armies were headed. The assertion of course originated with Sheridan, and like his fisticuffs at West Point was made in an attempt to force upon another officer responsibility for his own fault. The facts of the matter are well known to all Americans interested in Civil War history who do not accept the book by Badeau, on which Grant's Memoirs were based, and the Memoirs of Grant and Sheridan with the same implicit confidence that the late Mr. Bryan gave to the mythological account given in the Old Testament of the origin of the species.

The actual occurrence was that Meade arriving at midnight of May 7th, found two of Sheridan's divisions held back on the avenues of approach to Spottsylvania.
by stoutly contending confederates and that these northern cavalrmen were without any orders whatever from Sheridan. Meade therefore at one o'clock in the morning ordered one division to push ahead towards the court house and the other to hold another road of approach. Lee’s troops were already on both roads as they would not have been but for Sheridan’s previous abandonment of them. When Sheridan’s orders subsequently arrived, if it had been possible to execute them, they would have placed the backs of his troops toward the enemy and their front towards the Northern soldiers. With his superiority of force over Stuart here Sheridan had had every opportunity to justify his claim that if given a free hand with his cavalry he would defeat Stuart. Instead of doing so he had abandoned the approaches to Spottsylvania, had left the infantry in the dark as to what Lee was doing on their flank, and had failed to render such service as would have come from a competent cavalry commander.

A little later on the movement from the North Anna to Cold Harbor Sheridan was ordered to cover the flank of General Warren’s infantry. Warren reported that Sheridan was far to the rear and that infantry had to be used to discover what cavalry properly directed would have made known. Meade’s chief of staff had to repeat the orders to Sheridan. Here undoubtedly was the origin of Sheridan’s animosity towards Warren, and later by Grant’s authority he relieved Warren of the command of the Fifth Corps on the battlefield of Five Forks after the battle had been won in considerable measure by Warren’s activity, and where in the Warren Court of Inquiry it was testified that Sheridan had made no reconnaissance of the enemy’s earth works and did not know that they had a return.

A short time before he had been driven back pell-mell to Dinwiddie Court House where Warren came
promptly to his aid. On the pursuit to Appomattox he mistook the location and direction of Lee’s army, but was as mighty as ever in his claims and dispatches which forwarded to Washington were relayed over the North so that the people believed in and histories continue to record his extraordinary preeminence in bringing about Lee’s surrender, the Sheridan’s legend being supported also by the habitual silence of dispatches as to the more substantial work done by other commanders and troops, and the total disappearance of certain dispatches relating to these commands.

In his Memoirs General Grant told how he once issued orders to Sheridan so worded as to conceal their true purport which privately he explained to Sheridan. The statement is an indication of indirection in method contrary to the popular conception of Grant’s character as that of a simple minded, straightforward soldier. By similar but more elaborate indirection Grant, in 1864, gave Sheridan command of a little army of 40,000 men in the Shenandoah Valley where after inexcusable reverses he defeated Early who had half of Sheridan’s force.

In this campaign Sheridan was saved from the consequences of his initial reverse by the presence of General Wright’s corps from the Army of the Potomac, two divisions of which hardened by years of hard fighting stood fast when the other troops broke.

Colonel Henry A. du Pont, who graduated No. 1 in his West Point class, of recent years a United States Senator from Delaware, a chief of artillery in Sheridan’s command, has lately recorded that there was nothing sensational about Sheridan’s arrival from Winchester upon that battlefield; that he had been with the army an hour before the troops were aware of it; that Sheridan’s troops had been badly posted; that with only General Sheridan, General Crook and an orderly he stood on a knoll, from which spot the fight-
The American Colkitto

The American Colkitto

ing could not be seen because of intervening woods; that it was Wright, commanding the Sixth corps, not Sheridan, who after the initial rout ordered the second line forward; that it was Upton, on his own initiative, who made the flank attack that stayed the disaster, and that it was General Crook without any such order as Sheridan in report and memoirs claimed to have given him, who turned the Confederate flank. Colonel du Pont stood close by Sheridan and listened intently to the only order he gave which was not at all in accordance with the Sheridan claim. In his Memoirs Sheridan gave no credit to Crook, taking his cue perhaps from Grant’s Memoirs which were silent or indirectly deprecatory where they might well have been cordially appreciative. At the subsequent battle of Fisher’s Hill it was Crook not Sheridan, as Sheridan claimed, who planned and executed the flanking movement along little North Mountain which routed Early. “Intellectually,” wrote General Rutherford B. Hayes, later President, “Sheridan is not Crook’s equal who is the brains of this army.”

Again at Cedar Creek Sheridan’s troops were faultily posted over General Crook’s protest. Again Early fell upon him with audacity and skill, breaking and driving back the Sheridan line, crushing two of Sheridan’s corps. Colonel du Pont says that if Early had then followed his initial success with an attack along the turnpike not a dozen Sheridans could have stopped a retreat to Winchester. As has been said Early was operating with one-half of Sheridan’s force.

Abandoning without authority and in defiance of regulations the military department created for him, Sheridan brought his troops back to the Army of the Potomac where Grant continued him in an anomalous separate command not conducive to efficiency and where he continued to manifest especially towards Meade, a much abler soldier and higher type of man,
and towards Warren, Wright and other battle-worn officers of the Army of the Potomac that same greed for notoriety and applause which had marked his relations with other officers in the West.

The psychologist could find an interesting study in the play of the psychical motives of Grant and Sheridan in their attitude towards General Meade especially both while the war lasted and when later they wrote their books. To advance Sheridan was to minimize Meade and Gettysburg, and neither Grant, Sherman, Thomas nor Sheridan had ever won a battle of the dimensions or critical importance of Gettysburg. The ultimate working of a deeply seated instinct is revealed in an assertion attributed to General Grant by his son that Gettysburg was a victory for General Lee.

In actual warfare that instinct was abundantly revealed during the pursuit towards Appomattox of the remnants of Lee’s disintegrated army. Lee’s Petersburg line was cut, on April 2, 1865, by Wright’s infantry Corps of Meade’s army. Sheridan in an apparent state of excitement wasted much time in marching and countermarching up and down the White Oak road, thus permitting the flight of that part of Lee’s infantry which Wright had cut off from Petersburg. Meade wanted to throw his infantry across the Appomattox, a movement which would have hemmed Lee in Petersburg, and there would have been no Appomattox. Grant rejected Meade’s suggestion because the excited Sheridan said everything was coming his way, toward Five Forks. Sheridan thought so, Grant thought so, and both were mistaken for Lee marched northwardly to Chesterfield Court House and then turned west to Amelia Court House. In his Memoirs with some adroitness but entire inaccuracy, Grant said that Meade’s idea in proposing to cross the Appomattox was to pursue the enemy whereas Grant’s purpose was to head them off, a perversion requiring for its acceptance that the experienced Meade was a mere
tyro in handling an army. It was because of Lee’s appreähension of the movement urged by Meade that he impressed upon Jefferson Davis the necessity of abandoning Richmond on the night following Wright’s cutting of the Petersburg line. Owing to the error of Sheridan adopted by Grant, Lee would have escaped entirely but for his delay of twenty-four hours at Amelia Court House searching for the provisions which by some blunder had been rushed from Danville clear through to Richmond.

Sheridan continued to lose touch with and the direction of Lee’s fleeing troops. As late as April 6th, Sheridan, “the eyes of the Army,” thought Lee was moving South on Burkeville when actually Lee had turned northward toward Farmville. Lee’s direction and location were quickly located by Humphreys’ infantry and on the 9th of April, the day of Lee’s surrender, the infantry of the Second and Sixth troops at New Hope Church, three miles northeast of Appomattox, were facing Longstreet with almost all that was left of the Army of Northern Virginia. Here on the spot were Meade, Humphreys and Wright. General Lee himself was in plain sight from the Union lines. Meade’s infantry were formed for an assault which if made would have been strictly in accord with Grant’s general orders and would undoubtedly have caused the capture of Lee and his troops by Meade. Undoubtedly, too, such an opportunity to win “a separate renown” if offered to Sheridan would have been promptly seized, as the risk was negligible, the result certain. To spare the sacrifice of a few more lives Meade granted an armistice, and the surrender delayed some hours by Grant’s riding over a circuitous route away from Meade and the vicinity of Lee and his troops to Sheridan’s front, took place in Sheridan’s presence and in Meade’s absence as it is apparent Grant intended. In the game of chess when most of an opponent’s pieces have been removed from the board,
even an unskilled player may mate with a king and a rook, but his other pieces have made this possible.

Recent voting for candidates for admission to New York's Hall of Fame showed a number of ballots for General Sheridan, though he fell short of election. The Highlanders of Scotland cherished the memory of their Colkitto and forgot the far greater Marquis of Montrose. The electors of the New York Valhalla and the American public have all the Highlanders' sense of proportion for estimating military achievement. "Nature abhors unequal weights and balances, but the American public seems to love them" wrote General Henry J. Hunt long ago. It may be expected that our native Valkyries with all the solemnity of their customary rites, undisturbed by the mockery or irreverence of lookers on, will yet attend to the temple the legendary Sheridan remains.

As General Sheridan was the American Colkitto, General Meade was the American Brasidas. In the Peloponnesian War the Spartan General went up and down Greece fighting battles, turning up whenever anything went wrong. When he died Thucydidies disposed of him in the sentence, "'Brasidas lived and died in the practice of every virtue.'" With all of the brevity of Thucydidies if with little of his art, and with all the credulous Highlanders' admiration for their Colkitto and forgetfulness of the greater Montrose, our bookkeeping historians of the Civil War have disposed of the Meade of Glendale, South Mountain, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg and the gruesome route from the Wilderness to Appomattox.

His war letters were not published until 1913. The letters from his headquarters written by Colonel Theodore Lyman of Boston remained buried until 1923; only in 1925 was the Meade Memorial by Charles Grafly placed at the head of the mall in Washington.