

While I look back with undiminished repugnance, to some of the Cadet Officers, who treated my early transgressions with cruel, if deserved harshness, I can never forget the kind treatment from some of the old Cadets, amongst whom, are some names that have become painfully memorable in the history of the country. Among those who were conscientiously strict and severe, on the youthful Cadet, was Leonidas Polk. From being a wild young Cadet, he became under the preaching of the Rev. Mr. McIlvaine, the post Chaplain, afterwards Bishop, a devout Episcopalian and rigid disciplinarian. On one occasion being detailed for guard duty, I unfortunately got into a fight with a larger boy, and was terribly punished and my face much disfigured. I asked to be excused from guard-mounting and offered a substitute who appeared with me on the ground, a Cadet of one of the senior classes, who generously volunteered to take my place, but Cadet Polk refused point blank, and I was obliged to attend guard-mounting parade in that forlorn condition, to the amusement and suppressed sarcasms of the spectators, who always assembled to see that ceremony on a bright day. I dare say Polk acted conscientiously, but I could never forget the act, even after he became Bishop, and still less, after he exchanged the gown for the General's spurs. When he became General and arrayed himself against us, I confess to a desire springing up to confront him and give him a good pummeling, but that opportunity never presented itself. It was the custom in those days at West Point, to appoint the first Sergeants from the 1st Class, from among the Cadets who were thought to be most scrupulous in enforcing the regulations at roll-call. Cadet Polk was at the time I speak of, one of the four 1st Sergeants of the Corps. Bishop-General Polk was, as is well known, killed in front of Gen. Sherman at Dalton by a cannon ball, and up to the time of his death, kept up the character, as I am told, of rigid adherence to what he considered his duty, as exemplified in this sketch of him as 1st Sergeant in the Corps of Cadets. He perched himself on the pinnacles of fancied right and often got in a wrong position. He had the right to accept the substitute I offered