



From the Cannon's Mouth: The Civil War Letters of General Alpheus S. Williams

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From the Cannon's Mouth: The Civil War Letters of General Alpheus S. Williams Alpheus S. Williams Fifty-one years old when the Civil War broke out, Alpheus S. Williams was commissioned brigadier general of volunteers in the Army of the Potomac. These letters to his daughters, written in the most rigorous wartime circumstances, reveal the high-ranking officer's views on events from Bull Run to Georgia and the Carolinas to Gettysburg. He characterizes McClellan, Sherman, Hooker, and Meade; scorns a system of promotion that rewards grandstanders and press-kissers; and explodes in fury at the contractors whose graft cheats the soldiers of blankets and shoes in midwinter. He pities the people and animals thrust in the path of the cannon and is acutely attuned to the weather and landscape. Every line by Williams is stamped with intelligence and sensibility, and his combatant's view of the battle at Antietam is the most stirring in Civil War literature.



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