

A SURGEON IN ARMS

so the attempt is made to choose the most conspicuous examples. And in this choosing it is inevitable that fallible human nature must often err, but the erring rarely goes to the extent of recommending someone who is wholly unworthy.

Someone has sneeringly remarked that the surest way to a decoration is to court the favor of one's commanding officer who usually puts in the recommendations for award; but there must be few officers commanding units who would be so unwise as to alienate the loyalty of their men by picking favorites in this manner. And men are not so depraved that there are many who would desire the recognition of the multitude without at least fair grounds for that recognition and praise. You might suppose that at the base or at home, where recognition is given rather for general good work than for special acts of honor, favoritism is more common. But it may safely be stated that decorations in all fields are usually honestly earned.

The saddest mistake is when a man has performed some lofty, noble, self-sacrificing act,