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## TOWANDA:

Thursday Morning, November 20, 1862.

### Selected Poetry.

#### NOVEMBER.

The year grows splendid! On the mountains steep  
Now lingers long the warm and gorgeous light,  
Dying by slow degrees into the deep,  
Delicious night.

The final triumph of the perfect year,  
Rises the woods, magnificent array;  
Beyond, the purple mountain-heights appear,  
And slope away.

But where the painted leaves are falling fast,  
Among the vales beyond the farthest hill,  
There sits a shadow—dim, and sad, and vast—  
And lingers still.

And still we hear a voice among the hills—  
A voice that mourns among the haunted woods,  
And with the mystery of its sorrow fills  
The solitudes.

For while gay Autumn gilds the fruit and leaf,  
And doth her fairest festal garments wear,  
Lo! Time, all noiseless, in his mighty sheaf  
Binds up the year.

The mighty sheaf which never is unbound!  
The Reaper whom our souls beseech in vain!  
The loveless years that never may be found,  
Or loved again.

### Miscellaneous.

#### The Surrender of Harper's Ferry.

##### Report of the Investigating Commission.

The Commission, consisting of Major Gen. D. Hunter, U. S. A. of Vols.; Pres.; Major Gen. G. Cadwalader, U. S. A. of Vols.; Brig. Gen. C. C. Augur, U. S. A. of Vols.; Major Donu Platt, A. G. of Vols.; Capt. F. Ball, A. D. C. of Vols.; Col. J. H. H. Judge Advocate General, called by the Government to investigate the conduct of certain officers connected with, and the circumstances attending the abandonment of Maryland Heights and the surrender of Harper's Ferry, have the honor to report the following:

On the 31 of September, Gen. White entered Harper's Ferry with his force from Winchester. The next day he was ordered to Martinsburg, to take command of the forces there. On the 12th of September he again returned to Harper's Ferry, where he remained until the surrender without assuming the command.

On the 7th of September, General McClellan, the most of his forces having preceded him, left Washington under orders issued some days previously, to drive the enemy from Maryland. That night he established his headquarters at Rockville, from which place, on the 11th of September, he telegraphed to Gen. Halleck to have Col. Miles ordered to join him at once.

On the 5th of September, Col. Thomas H. Ford, 32d Ohio, took command of the forces on Maryland Heights. Forces were placed at Solomon's Gap and at Sandy Hook. Those at Sandy Hook, under Col. Mausby, retired, by Col. Miles' order, to the eastern slope of Maryland Heights, two or three days previous to their evacuation by Col. Ford. On the 11th of September the force at Solomon's Gap were driven in by the enemy. Colonel Ford called upon Colonel Miles for reinforcements. The 126th New York and the 39th New York (Gerrhardt's Guards) were sent him on Friday, the 12th of September, and on the morning of the 13th he was further reinforced by the 115th New York and a portion of a Maryland regiment under Lieutenant Colonel Downing.

Colonel Ford made requisition for axes and spades to enable him to construct defenses on the Heights, but obtained none. With ten axes, belonging to some Maryland troops, hiring all that could be obtained, a slight breastwork of trees was constructed on the 12th, near the crest of the Heights, and a slashing of timber made for a short distance in front of the breastwork. The forces under Colonel Ford were stationed at various points on Maryland Heights, the principal force being on the crest of the hill near the breastwork and look out. Skirmishing commenced on Friday, the 12th, on the crest of the hill.

Early on the morning of the 13th, the enemy made an attack on the crest of the hill, and, after some time, the troops retired in some confusion to the breastwork, where they were rallied. About nine o'clock, a second attack was made, which the troops behind the breastwork resisted for a short time, and until Colonel Serrill, of the 126th New York, was wounded, and carried off the field, when the entire 126th Regiment, as some witnesses testify, all but two companies, Major Hewitt states, broke and fled in utter confusion. Men and most of the officers all fled together, no effort being made to rally the regiment, except by Colonel Ford, Lieutenant Barras, acting adjutant, and some officers of other regiments, directed by Colonel Miles, then on the Heights. Soon after the remaining forces at the breastwork fell back, under a supposed order from Major Hewitt, who himself says that he gave no such order, merely sent instructions to the captains of his own regiment, that, if they were compelled to retire, to do so in good order. Orders were given by Colonel Ford for the troops to return to their position. They advanced some distance up the Heights, but did not regain the breastwork.

That evening Colonel Miles was on Maryland Heights for some hours, consulting with Colonel Ford. He left between 11 and 12 o'clock, without directly ordering Colonel Ford to evacuate the Heights, but instructing him, in case he was compelled to do so, to spike his guns, and throw the heavy siege guns down the mountain. About 2 o'clock, perhaps a little later, by the order of Colonel Ford, the Heights were abandoned, the guns being spiked according to instructions.

On Sunday, Colonel D'Ussy sent over to the Maryland Heights four companies, under

Major Wood, who brought off, without opposition, four brass 12 pounders, two of which were imperfectly spiked, and a wagon-load of ammunition.

Gen. White, on his return to Harper's Ferry on the 12th of September, suggested to Col. Miles the propriety of contracting his lines on Bolivar Heights so as to make a better defence, but Col. Miles adhered to his original line of defence, stating that he was determined to make his stand on Bolivar Heights. Gen. White also urged the importance of holding Maryland Heights, even should it require the taking the entire force over there from Harper's Ferry. Col. Miles, under his orders to hold Harper's Ferry to the last extremity, while admitting the importance of Maryland Heights, seemed to regard them as applying to the town of Harper's Ferry, and held that to leave Harper's Ferry, even to go on Maryland Heights, would be disobeying his instructions.

Gen. McClellan established his headquarters at Frederick City on the morning of the 13th of September. On the night of the 13th, after the evacuation of Maryland Heights, Col. Miles directed Captain (now Major) Russell, of the Maryland Cavalry, to take with him a few men and endeavor to get through the enemy's line and reach some of our forces. Gen. McClellan, if possible—and to report the condition of Harper's Ferry, that it could not hold out more than 48 hours, unless reinforced, and to urge the sending of reinforcements. Capt. Russell reached Gen. McClellan's headquarters at Frederick, at 9 A. M. on the 14th of September, and reported as directed by Col. Miles. Immediately on his arrival General McClellan sent off a messenger, as Captain Russell understood, to General Franklin. At 10 A. M. Captain Russell left for General Franklin's command, with a communication to General Franklin from General McClellan. He reached General Franklin about 3 o'clock that afternoon, and found him engaged with the enemy at Crampton's Gap. The enemy were driven from the Gap, and the next morning, the 15th, General Franklin passed through the Gap, advancing about a mile, and finding the enemy drawn up in line of battle in his front, drew his own forces up in line of battle. While thus situated, the cannonading in the direction of Harper's Ferry, which had been heard very distinctly all the morning—Harper's Ferry being about seven miles distant—suddenly ceased, whereupon General Franklin sent word to General McClellan of the probable surrender of Harper's Ferry by Colonel Miles, and did not deem it necessary to proceed further in that direction.

The battle of South Mountain was fought on Sunday, the 14th. On the same day, Sunday, during the afternoon, the enemy at Harper's Ferry attacked the extreme left of the line on Bolivar Heights, but, after some time, were repulsed by the troops under command of General White. Sunday night the cavalry at Harper's Ferry made their escape, under Colonel Davis, of the 12th Illinois Cavalry, by permission of Colonel Miles, and reached Greencastle, Pa., the next morning, capturing an ammunition train belonging to General Longstreet, consisting of some fifty or sixty wagons, &c. Several of the infantry officers desired permission to cut their way out, at the same time the cavalry made their escape, but Colonel Miles refused upon the ground that he had been ordered to hold Harper's Ferry to the last extremity.

On the morning of the 15th the enemy opened their batteries from several points—seven to nine, as estimated by different witnesses—directing their attack principally upon our batteries on the left of Bolivar Heights. The attack commenced at daybreak. About 7 o'clock Col. Miles represented to Gen. White that it would be necessary to surrender.

Gen. White suggested that the brigade commanders be called together, which was done. Col. Miles stated that the ammunition for the batteries was exhausted, and he had about made up his mind to surrender. That was agreed to by all present, and Gen. White was sent by Col. Miles to arrange terms. The white flag was raised by order of Col. Miles, for the enemy did not cease fire for some half or three quarters of an hour after. Col. Miles was mortally wounded after the white flag was raised. The surrender was agreed upon about 8 A. M. on Monday, the 15th of September.

The following was the testimony respectively of the officers commanding batteries: At the time of the surrender Capt. Von Schlen had some ammunition, could not tell what amount, but mostly shrapnel; had lost about 100 rounds on Saturday, the 13th, by the explosion of a limber caused by one of the enemy's shells. Capt. Rigby had expended, during the siege of Harper's Ferry, about 600 rounds, with the exception of canister; had nothing but canister left. Capt. Potts had expended about 1,000 rounds, with the exception of canister; had only canister left. Capt. Graham had but two guns of his battery under his immediate command on the morning of the surrender; had probably 100 rounds of all kinds, but no long time fuses. Captain Phillips had expended all his ammunition, except some forty rounds of canister and some long range shells too large for his guns. Capt. M. Grath's battery had been spiked and left on Maryland Heights on Saturday.

It appears that during the siege and shortly previous, Col. Miles paroled several Confederate prisoners, permitting them to pass through our lines. During the week previous to the evacuation of Maryland Heights, a Lieutenant Rouse, of the 12th Virginia Cavalry, who had been engaged in a raid upon a train from Harper's Ferry to Winchester a short time before, was captured and brought into Harper's Ferry. He escaped while on the way to the hospital to have his wounds dressed, but was retaken. He was paroled, but returned in command of some rebel cavalry on the morning of the surrender.

The attention of Gen. A. P. Hill was called to the fact that Lieutenant Rouse was a paroled prisoner, but no attention was paid to it. Lieutenant Rouse himself, on being spoken to about it, laughed at the idea of ob-

serving his parole. On Saturday, the day of the attack upon and evacuation of Maryland Heights, Colonel Miles directed that sixteen Confederate prisoners be permitted to pass through our lines to rejoin the rebel army at Winchester. Other cases are testified to, but those are the most important.

Of the subordinate officers referred to in this case, the Commission finds, with the exception of Colonel Thomas H. Ford, nothing in their conduct that calls for censure. Gen. Julius White merits its approbation. He appears, from the evidence, to have acted with decided ability and courage.

In this connection the Commission calls attention to the disgraceful behavior of the 126th New York regiment of infantry, and recommends that Major Baird should, for his bad conduct, as shown by this evidence, be dismissed from the service. Some of the officers, after the wounding of the gallant colonel, such as Lieut. Barras, and others not known to the Commission, behaved with gallantry, and should be commended.

In the case of Colonel Ford, charged with improper conduct in abandoning the Maryland Heights, the Commission, after a careful hearing of the evidence produced by the Government and that relied on by the defence, and a due consideration of the arguments offered by counsel, find:

That on the 5th of September, Colonel Ford was placed in command of Maryland Heights by Colonel Miles. That Colonel Ford, finding the position unprepared for fortifications, earnestly urged Colonel Miles to furnish him means by which the Heights could be made tenable for the small force under his command, should a heavy one be brought against him. These reasonable demands were, from some cause unknown to the Commission, not responded to by the officer in command at Harper's Ferry. That subsequently, when the enemy appeared in heavy force, Col. Ford frequently and earnestly called upon Col. Miles for more troops, representing that he could not hold the Heights unless reinforced. That these demands were feebly or not at all complied with. That as late as the morning of the 13th, Col. Ford sent two written demands to Col. Miles for reinforcements, and saying that with the troops then under his command he could not hold the Heights, and unless relieved or otherwise ordered, he would have to abandon them. That as late as 11 o'clock A. M. of the 13th, a few hours previous to the abandonment of this position, Col. Miles said to Col. Ford that he (Col. Ford) could not have another man, and must do the best he could, and if unable to defend the place, he must spike the guns, throw them down the hill, and withdraw to Harper's Ferry in good order.

The court is then satisfied that Col. Ford was given a discretionary power to abandon the Heights, as his better judgment might dictate; and it believes from the evidence, circumstantial and direct, that the result did not, to any great extent, surprise him in any way, displace the officer in command at Harper's Ferry.

But this conclusion, so much relied upon by the defence, forces the Commission to a consideration of the fact—did Colonel Ford, under the discretionary power thus vested in him, make a proper defence of the Heights, and hold them, as he should have done, until driven off by the enemy?

The evidence shows conclusively that the force upon the Heights was not well managed; that the point most pressed was weakly defended as to numbers, and after the wounding of the Colonel of the 126th Regiment New York Infantry, it was left without a competent officer in command, Col. Ford himself not appearing, nor designating any one who might have restored order and encouraged the men; that the abandonment of the Heights was premature, is clearly proved. Our forces were not driven from the hill, as full time was given to spike the guns and throw the heavier ones down the cliff, and retreat in good order to Harper's Ferry. The next day a force returning to the Heights found them unoccupied, and brought away unmolested four abandoned guns and a quantity of ammunition.

In so grave a case as this, with such disgraceful consequences, the court cannot permit an officer to shield himself behind the fact that he did as well as he could, if in so doing he exhibits a lack of military capacity. It is clear to the Commission that Col. Ford should not have been placed in command on Maryland Heights; and that he conducted the defence without ability, and has shown through such a lack of military capacity as to disqualify him, in the opinion of the Commission, for a command in the service.

The commission has approached a consideration of this officer's conduct in connection with the surrender of Harper's Ferry with extreme reluctance. An officer who cannot appear before any earthly tribunal to answer or explain charges gravely affecting his character; who has met his death at the hands of the enemy, even upon the spot he disgracefully surrenders, is entitled to the tenderest care and most careful investigation. This the Commission has accorded Colonel Miles, and in giving a decision only repeats what runs through 800 pages of testimony, strangely unimportant upon the fact, that Colonel Miles' incapacity, amounting to almost imbecility, led to the shameful surrender of this important post.

Early as the 15th of August he disobeys the order of Major General Wool to fortify Maryland Heights. When it is surrounded and attacked by the enemy, its naturally strong positions are unimproved, and from his criminal neglect, to use the mildest term, the large force of the enemy is almost upon an equality with the small force under his command.

He seems to have understood, and admitted to his officers, that Maryland Heights is the key to the position, and yet he places Colonel Ford in command, with a feeble force; makes no effort to strengthen them by fortifications, although between the 5th and 14th of September there was ample time to do so; and to Colonel Ford's repeated demands for means

to entrench, and additional reinforcements, he makes either an inadequate return, or no response at all. He gives Colonel Ford a discretionary power as to when he shall abandon the Heights—the fact of abandonment having it seems, been concluded on his own mind.—For, when this unhappy event really occurs, his only exclamation was to the effect that he feared Col. Ford had given up too soon; although he must have known that the abandonment of Maryland Heights was the surrender of Harper's Ferry. This leaving the key of the position to the keeping of Colonel Ford, with discretionary power, after the arrival of that capable and courageous officer, who had waived his rank to serve wherever ordered, is one of the more striking facts illustrating the incapability of Colonel Miles.

Immediately previous to, and pending the siege of Harper's Ferry, he paroled rebel prisoners, and permits, indeed sends, them to the enemy's headquarters; this, too, when he should have known that the lack of ammunition, the bad conduct of some of our troops, the entire absence of fortifications, and the abandonment of Maryland Heights, were important facts they could, and undoubtedly did, communicate to the enemy. Sixteen of these prisoners were paroled on the 13th, and a pass given them in the handwriting of Colonel Miles, while a rebel officer, by the name of Rouse, after an escape, is retaken, and subsequently has a private interview with Colonel Miles, is paroled and after the surrender appears at the head of his men among the first to enter Harper's Ferry.

It is not necessary to accumulate evidence from the mass that throughout scarcely affords one fact in connection to what each one establishes, that Colonel Miles was incapable of conducting a defence so important as was this of Harper's Ferry. The Commission would not have dwelt upon this painful subject were it not for the fact that the officer who placed this incapable in command should share in the responsibility, and in the opinion of the Commission Major General Wool is guilty to this extent of a grave disaster, and should be censured for his conduct.

The Commission has remarked freely on Colonel Miles, an old officer who has been killed in the service of his country, and it cannot, from any motives of delicacy, refrain from censuring those in high command; when it thinks such censure deserved. The General-in-Chief has testified that General McClellan, after having received orders to repel the enemy invading the State of Maryland, marched only six miles per day, on an average, when pursuing this invading enemy.—The General-in-Chief also testifies, that in his opinion General McClellan could and should have relieved and protected Harper's Ferry, and in this opinion the Commission fully concurs.

The evidence thus introduced confirms the Commission in the opinion that Harper's Ferry, as well as Maryland Heights, was prematurely surrendered. The garrison should have been satisfied that relief, however long delayed, would come at last, and that a thousand men killed in Harper's Ferry would have made a small loss had the post been saved, and probably saved two thousand at Antietam. How important was this defence we can now appreciate. Of the 97,000 men comprising at that time the whole of Lee's army, more than one third were attacking Harper's Ferry. And of this, the main body was in Virginia. By reference to the evidence, it will be seen that at the very moment Colonel Ford abandoned Maryland Heights his little army was in reality relieved by Gen. Franklin and Sumner's corps at Crampton's Gap, within seven miles of his position; and that after the surrender of Harper's Ferry no time was given to parole prisoners before 20,000 troops were hurled from Virginia, and the entire force went off on double quick to relieve Lee, who was being attacked at Antietam. Had the garrison been slower to surrender, or the army of the Potomac swifter to march, the enemy would have been forced to raise the siege, or would have been taken in detail, with the Potomac dividing his forces.

#### Letter from Gen. Halleck to the Secretary of War.

##### THE GROUNDS FOR McCLELLAN'S REMOVAL.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY, Washington, Oct. 28, 1862.  
Hon. E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War:—

Sir: In reply to the general interrogatories contained in your letter of yesterday, I have the honor to report:

First. That requisitions for supplies to the army under General McClellan are made by his staff officers on the Chiefs of Bureaus here—that is, the Quartermaster applies by his Chief Quartermaster on Quartermasters General; for Commissary supplies by his Chief Commissary General, &c.

No such requisitions have been, to my knowledge, made upon the Secretary of War, and none upon the General-in-Chief.

Second. On several occasions, General McClellan has telegraphed me that his army was deficient in certain supplies. All of these telegrams were immediately referred to the heads of bureaus with orders to report. It was ascertained that in every instance the requisitions have been immediately filled, except where the Quartermaster General had been obliged to send from Philadelphia certain articles of clothing, tents, &c., not having a full supply here.

There has not been, so far as I could ascertain, any neglect or delay, in any department or bureau, in issuing all the supplies asked for by Gen. McClellan, or by the officers of his staff.

Delays have occasionally occurred in forwarding supplies by railroad on account of the crowded condition of the railroad depots, or of a want of a sufficient number of cars; but, whenever notified of this fact, agents have been sent to remove the difficulty under the excellent superintendence of Gen. Haupt. I think those delays have been less frequent and of shorter duration than is usually the case with freight trains. An army of the size of

that under General McClellan will frequently be for some days without supplies it has asked for, on account of not making timely requisitions for them, and unavoidable delays in forwarding them and distributing them to the different brigades and regiments.

From all the information that I can obtain I am of the opinion that the requisitions from that army have been filled more promptly, and that the men, as a general rule, have been better supplied, than in the case of our armies operating in the West. The latter have operated at much greater distances from the sources of supplies, and have had far less facilities for transportation. In fine, I believe that no armies in the world in campaigning have been more promptly or better supplied than ours.

Third. Soon after the battle of Antietam, General McClellan was urged to give me information of his intended movements, in order that if he moved between the enemy and Washington the reinforcements could be sent from this place. On the first of October, finding he proposed to operate from Harper's Ferry, I urged him to cross the river at once and give battle to the enemy, pointing out to him the disadvantages of delaying till the autumn rains had swollen the Potomac and impaired the roads. On the 6th of October he was promptly ordered to cross the Potomac and give battle to the enemy, or drive him South. I said to him: "Your army must move now, while the roads are in good condition." It will be observed that three weeks have elapsed since that order was given.

Fourth. In my opinion there has been no such want of supplies in the army under General McClellan as to prevent his compliance with my orders to advance upon the enemy. Had he moved his army to the south side of the Potomac, he could have received his supplies almost as readily as by remaining inactive on the north side.

Fifth. On the seventh of October, in a telegram in regard to his intended movements, Gen. McClellan stated that he would require at least three days to supply the first, fifth and sixth corps; that they needed shoes, and other indispensable articles of clothing, as well as shelter tents. No complaint was made to me that his army requisitions had not been filled, and it was inferred from his language that he was only waiting for the distribution of his supplies.

On the eleventh of October he telegraphed to me that a portion of his supplies sent by railroad had been delayed. As already stated agents were immediately sent from here to investigate this complaint, and they reported that everything had gone forward on the same date, the 11th.

General McClellan spoke of many of his horses being broken down by fatigue. On the 12th of October he complained that the rate of supply was only one hundred and fifty horses per week for his entire army there and in front of Washington.

I immediately directed the Quartermaster General to inquire into this matter, and report why a larger supply was not furnished to General McClellan.

Gen. Meigs reported to me, on the 14th of October, that the average issue of horses to General McClellan's army in the field and in front of Washington, for the previous six weeks, had been 1,459 per week, or 8,754 in all.

In addition, he reported to me that a large number of mules had been supplied, and that the number of these animals with General McClellan's army on the Upper Potomac was over 3,100.

He also reported to me that he was then sending that army all the horses he could procure. On the 18th of October, General McClellan stated, in regard to Gen. Meigs' report that he had filled every requisition for shoes and clothing: "Gen. Meigs may have ordered these articles to be forwarded; but they might as well remain in New York or Philadelphia, so far as my army is concerned." I immediately called Gen. Meigs' attention to this apparent neglect of his department.

On the 25th of October, he reported as to the result of his investigation that 4,800 pairs of boots and shoes had been received by the Quartermaster of McClellan's army at Harper's Ferry, Frederick and Hagerstown. 20,000 pairs were at Harper's Ferry Depot on 21st, and that ten thousand more were on the way, and fifteen thousand more had been ordered.

Colonel Ingalls, aid-de-camp and chief of staff to General McClellan, telegraphed on the 25th as follows: "The suffering for want of clothing has been exaggerated, I think, and certainly might have been avoided by timely requisitions by the regimental and brigade commanders." On the 24th of October he telegraphed to Quartermaster-General Meigs that the clothing was not detained in the cars at the depots. "Such complaints are groundless. The fact is the clothing arrives and is issued, but more is still wanted. I have ordered more than would seem necessary from any data furnished me, and I beg to remind you that you have always very promptly met my requisitions. As far as clothing is concerned, our department is not at fault. It provides as soon as due notice is given. I can foresee no time when an army of 100,000 men will not call for clothing and other articles."

In regard to General McClellan's means of promptly communicating the wants of his army to me, or to the proper bureaus of the War Department, I report that, in addition to the ordinary mails, he has been in hourly communication with Washington by telegraph.

It is due to Gen. Meigs that I should submit herewith a copy of a telegram received by him from General McClellan.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,  
H. W. HALLECK, General-in-Chief.

FROM McCLELLAN'S HEADQUARTERS—TO BRIGADIER GENERAL MEIGS

Your despatch of this date is received. I have never intended, in any letter or dispatch, to make any accusation against yourself or your Department for not furnishing or forwarding clothing as rapidly as it was possible for you to do so. I believe everything has been

done that could be done in this respect. The idea that I have tried to convey was that certain portions of the command were without clothing, and that the army would not move until it was supplied.

G. B. McCLELLAN, Major-General.

(From the New York Times.)  
The Removal of General McClellan.

Gen. McClellan has been removed from the command of the Army of the Potomac and Gen. Burnside appointed in his place. The immediate cause of his removal has been Gen. McClellan's refusal to advance against the enemy, even under the most peremptory orders of the General-in-Chief. It will be seen by a letter of General Halleck to the Secretary of War, which we publish in another column, that on the 1st of October Gen. McClellan was urged by Gen. Halleck to cross the Potomac and give battle to the enemy—being at the same time reminded of the disadvantages of delaying until the Potomac should be swollen, and the roads impaired, by the autumn rains. Finding that this produced no effect, General Halleck was "promptly ordered" by General McClellan, on the 6th of October, to "cross the Potomac and give battle to the enemy or drive him South." For three weeks this order was not obeyed, and the only excuse given for not obeying it, so far as appears—the want of supplies—is shown by the letter of Gen. Halleck to have been utterly without foundation. The disclosures of that letter, concerning General McClellan's constant and reiterated complaints of lack of supplies, are very remarkable and deserve special attention.

We presume that this particular instance of disobedience of order, though the immediate occasion, is not the whole cause of General McClellan's removal. It is pretty generally understood that this is only the culmination of a systematic disregard of orders, of a steady and obstinate tardiness in the conduct of the campaign against the rebels, and of a consequent inefficiency in command, which would long ago have secured his dismissal under any Administration less timid than that which has possession of power. The fifteen months during which he has had virtual control of the war have been utterly barren of results to the cause he has professed to serve. Few commanders in history have had such splendid opportunities, and fewer still have so ostentatiously thrown them away. With an army capable of the most heroic achievements, powerful in numbers, unrivaled in discipline and equipment, eager always for active and onward movement, he has accomplished absolutely nothing but successful retreats from inferior forces, and the defence of the Capital at Washington, which he should have left no foe capable of menacing. The rebel armies have grown up in his presence and by his toleration. Through all his long career he has made but one attack and won but a single victory; and that became absolutely fruitless through his failure to follow it up.

We have no theory on which to explain this most extraordinary failure of General McClellan as a commander, or the still more extraordinary persistence of the President in committing the fortunes of war to his hands. Gen. McClellan has shown too many of the qualities of an accomplished soldier to attribute his failure to simple incapacity. That he is absolutely disloyal to the Government we have never permitted ourselves to believe. Yet we think it quite probable that his heart has never been in the war—that through it all he has had hopes of a compromise which should end it, and that he has feared the effect upon such a compromise of a stern and relentless prosecution of hostilities.

His position and possibly his feelings have been those ascribed by Macanlay to Essex, who commanded the armies of the Parliament at the outbreak of the great civil war. He was an accomplished soldier and a Parliamentarian; but he shrank from civil war—he hoped through it all for an accommodation with the King, and "next to a great defeat he dreaded a great victory." Under such a leader the war could never prosper, and it was found necessary to replace him by Hampden, who carried into the field the boldness and courage he had shown in politics, and who had the sagacity to see from the outset that "in war of his kind, moderation is imbecility." As a politician, Gen. McClellan's sympathies, previous to the rebellion, had always been with the South. He has believed them wronged by Northern sentiment and by Northern action. And beyond all question he has hoped and believed that a time would come when the war could be arrested, and when the Southern leaders, backed by a powerful party in the Northern States, would listen to terms of accommodation—and that nothing would stand in the way of such a compromise more than a victory which should wound their pride by humiliating their arms and crushing their power.

In this view of the case, Gen. McClellan has been encouraged by the political partisans who, at an early state in the war, made him their prospective candidate for the Presidency and came thus to have an interest in putting him in opposition to the Administration which he professed to serve. They defended his errors, and made themselves the special champions of his worst mistakes. They had unquestionable provocation and some excuse for much of this in the intemperate zeal with which he was assailed; but they betrayed him into an undue reliance on the support of a party, and a ruinous subservience to their wishes and views. We know not how else to account for the steady and systematic disregard he has shown of the wishes and orders of the Government, and for his adherence to a deliberate and methodical inactivity, which has brought the cause of the Union to the very verge of ruin.

Unless we have been misinformed, President Lincoln has on two occasions written to Gen. McClellan, reviewing in detail his military operations, and demonstrating his failures to respond to the wishes and just expectations of the Government. One of these papers was prepared just after McClellan had landed on the Peninsula, the other after the battle of Antietam; and we have heard both spoken