

# The Alleghenian.

A. A. BARKER, Editor and Proprietor.  
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I WOULD RATHER BE RIGHT THAN PRESIDENT.—HENRY CLAY.

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## Review of Gen. Burnside's Campaign—The Late Movement and the Causes of Failure.

WASHINGTON, January 24, 1863.  
I had occasion last week to visit the Army of the Potomac, and as I found it on the eve of a movement against the rebel forces in its front, I remained to watch its progress and results. You will have received from our regular correspondents full reports of both before this can reach you. Concerning the causes of the failure of this movement, they may not have said as much as the good of the service and the welfare of the country require. I write this letter mainly to supply that defect.  
The sudden change in the weather on the night of Tuesday, the 13th, was the immediate cause of the failure. The movement was intended to be a surprise. The whole army was put in motion during the day on Tuesday, and each portion of it was to have been by midnight, in the position designated by the commanding general, for the commencement of operations at 6 o'clock below, and 7 o'clock above Fredericksburg, on Wednesday morning. At 8 o'clock on Tuesday evening it began to rain, and throughout the night the rain continued, with a tempest of wind. Owing to other causes, of which I shall speak hereafter, those portions of the army designated to lead the movement had not moved with the vigor and energy which the nature of the service required. They were arrested, therefore, some miles short of their appointed positions by the condition of the roads, suddenly softened by the heavy rain, and through which, by morning, it had become impossible to move either pontoons or artillery with the celerity demanded. The enemy meantime discovered the movement, and instantly rallied to meet it. The moment for the surprise had passed, and therefore the movement was abandoned.  
This is the *surface* view of the matter. As things stood, the weather afforded sufficient excuse for abandoning the enterprise—indeed, made it necessary to do so. But if everything else had been right, this obstacle would have been overcome, or rather, would not have arisen in time to offer any difficulty. But the Army of the Potomac is like the soil of Virginia; the upper crust is hard, but thin; a little rain soaks it, and underneath lies a treacherous quagmire. Break through the crust, and you sink instantly to a depth which makes movement impossible. A good deal has been said of the demoralization of the army. The word is too strong. It does not apply to the mass of the army at all. But it does apply to a good many of the officers. They are demoralized, in every sense of the word, and they are a source of discouragement—or disquiet—of disheartenment (if there is such a word) to their subordinates and to the ranks. I do not hesitate to say that the failure of this latest movement was due, primarily and mainly to the *insubordination*—the word is not too strong—of some of the generals in command under Burnside. I ask no better evidence of this than the language openly held by them, in presence of their subordinates, of newspaper reporters, and of all who chose to listen, before the movement, while it was in progress, and after it had been abandoned. Unless common report, which receives the countenance, if not the distinct confirmation, of the officers most concerned, is entirely at fault, the commanding general was overwhelmed with protests from his subordinates against his movements, after they had been decided upon, and with exaggerated and untrue reports of the obstacles in his way. So far as I know, no one of them went so far as to refuse obedience to his orders; but everything short of that which officers could do to embarrass and thwart his plans was done, and done, too, on some previous occasions, with effect and success. As every one knows, there is a kind of obedience worse in its results than a flat refusal, for it leaves the commanding officer without a remedy. While it answers in form all the requirements of the service, it insures, by its halting, half-hearted, and possibly premeditated inefficiency, the failure of the plan which it pretends to second.

One general, for example, was expected to have pontoons enough for four bridges—44 in all, I believe—at the appointed spot by daylight on Wednesday morning. He had but eight or nine miles to go, and there was no reason why he should not have had them there before the rain. He spent a good deal of his time on Tuesday in demonstrating that the chances of failure were 19 out of 20; on Wednesday morning he had fifteen pontoons placed in open view of the enemy, and the rest were stuck in the mud from two to five miles back. He certainly had done nothing to disturb his own calculation of chances, and

now can refer to it as proof of his own sagacity. Another general was unreserved in the expression of his opinion against the movement, and did everything in his power, even after the march of his troops had begun, to have it arrested.

It may seem a severe judgment, but I cannot help believing, from what I saw and heard, that each of the generals alluded to, and several of their subordinates, who naturally take their cue from them, rejoiced in the failure of the movement. They had committed themselves openly and publicly to the opinion that it would fail; perhaps it would be unreasonable to expect that they should work with any excess of vigor to secure the failure of their own predictions. Some of them, unless I have been misinformed, sought to throw the blame upon their men, and alleged that the result of recent political demonstrations at the North had disinclined their men to fight; and the election of Wall to the United States Senate from New Jersey was cited as one thing which had so far affected the troops from that State as to render them unreliable on the field of battle. I do not believe that this is true, but, even if it were, it would much better become a general of a division to try to overcome it than to cite it as a reason for inactivity.

If this were the first instance in which the willingness of certain officers to behold with entire equanimity the defeat of Gen. Burnside's plans could be traced in their language and conduct, I should hesitate in attributing the failure of this movement to that cause. But it is not. This is the fourth active movement which Gen. Burnside has made against the enemy during the short time that has elapsed since he superseded Gen. McClellan. Let us see what has happened in each:  
1. His plan was to throw his army rapidly upon Falmouth, cross over instantly, take possession of the heights of Fredericksburg, and thus compel the enemy to either fight him in that strong position, or fall back rapidly upon Richmond. The one thing absolutely essential to its success was the prompt arrival of the pontoon train. This was under the direction of Gen. Woodbury, and no satisfactory explanation of his delay has ever yet been made. But that delay defeated the execution of the plan.

2. Next came the crossing and the battle at Fredericksburg, which was certainly a failure, and which the country generally brands as a blunder. I think it was in General Burnside's power to have corrected that opinion in his testimony before the Congressional Committee. He did not avail himself of that opportunity, but said that the country would never know how near the movement came to being a success. I see no reason why the country should not know it; and I cannot help believing that when the official reports of that battle are permitted to see the light, the grounds of Gen. Burnside's opinion will be evident to all. It is generally assumed that the main attack on that occasion was against the rebel front, posted and entrenched on the crests in rear of Fredericksburg. This is a mistake which was corrected by the General in his testimony. The main attack was designed to be upon the rebel right, and the object of it was to break their line there, where it was weakest, turn them, and then—with the co-operation of Sumner attacking in front—to complete the victory, and convert it into a rout. Gen. Franklin led the main attack with his own grand division, and two small corps from Hooker's. His orders were to attack with at least one corps vigorously, and then to follow up the attack with prompt and heavy supports. He sent Gen. Meade to the attack, commanding the smallest corps of all. Gen. Meade attacked with great vigor, broke the rebel line, and actually pushed his advance into the midst of the ammunition wagons and baggage-train in their rear. He had completely succeeded in the appointed work; the forces opposed to him were utterly routed, and all he needed was prompt and effective support. This he did not receive. Gen. Franklin sent another small corps to his aid, but it arrived too late. The enemy, seeing Meade come to a stand, had rallied; reinforcements were pushed forward, and before Meade's supports came up his force was driven back, and it became impossible to re-establish the line. Gen. Franklin gave as a reason for not sending forward heavier and prompt supports, that he was afraid the enemy would seize his bridges and cut off his means of retreat. Gen. Sumner, meantime, had opened the fight to retain as much of the rebel force in front as possible, for the relief of Franklin; and as he never does anything but with the utmost impetuosity, he had pushed the movement till it had assumed the proportions of a terrible engagement. This shows "how near" the battle came to being a success.

3. The affair at Fredericksburg, and the investigations that followed it, were no sooner over than General Burnside prepared for another aggressive movement. It embraced an attack in front, at a point selected with care, and a formidable raid of cavalry and artillery, which was to threaten the enemy's communication, and divert his attention from the main attack. It was a bold plan, but, if vigorously executed, was reasonably certain of success. Every preparation had been made for it. A picked force of cavalry and artillery was got ready, under the command of that dashing and most competent officer, General Averill, and the execution of the movement was fixed for the 31st of December. The column destined to make the raid was actually in motion, when a telegram from President Lincoln announced to General Burnside that he must make no movement without first consulting him. The General at once arrested the march of his troops, and repaired to Washington. The President informed him that the reason of his dispatch was that some of General Burnside's subordinate officers had protested vehemently against the movement. Thus failed the third attempt, through the interference and insubordination of officers of the army.

4. The fourth and latest of these attempts was the one of last Wednesday. Gen. Burnside had prepared it with care. He had examined personally, and repeatedly the ground on which it was to be executed. He had fixed the position which each division was to occupy on crossing the river. He had ascertained by spies the movements of the enemy, whom he had completely deceived by feints as to the point of crossing, and counted, with the utmost confidence, on taking him by surprise. How this movement came to fail, I have already endeavored to show.

Before closing this long letter, I desire to correct an impression which has become quite current, that General Burnside's letter to General Halleck, avowing the entire responsibility of the battle of Fredericksburg, was written under some kind of pressure from the Government, or at least at the instance, and in some sort with connivance of some among its officers. I have taken very great pains to ascertain all the facts connected with that transaction, and I know this impression to be without the slightest foundation. The letter was wholly General Burnside's own—in the original purpose of writing it, in its actual composition, and in its final publication. After the battle, Gen. Halleck paid Gen. Burnside a brief visit; but during his stay not one syllable was said by either concerning the "responsibility" for the said battle of Fredericksburg. On the 19th of December, Dr. Church, one of Gen. Burnside's staff, went to Washington on business and returned the next day, bringing with him snuff-box newspapers. In the evening, General Burnside, being in his tent with several of the gentlemen of his staff, and reading these papers, fell upon paragraphs in them severely assailing the Secretary of War and Gen. Halleck for having ordered him to make the attack, contrary to his own judgment. He asked Dr. Church if that was the general impression at Washington, and he told that it was. He at once said he would soon put that right, and on the spot wrote a brief despatch intended for the Associated Press, and embodying the substance of his letter. Some of his staff remonstrated against his noticing the matter at all; but he answered all their objections by saying that no man should bear an ounce of responsibility that belonged to him. He did yield, however, so far as to change the form of his letter, and addressed it to Gen. Halleck instead of the Press. He came to Washington next day, re-wrote the letter in his own room, had it copied by his private secretary and sent it to the Press before he had exchanged a word with any member of the Government on the subject. These I know to be the facts of the case; and it is justice to Gen. Burnside, whose noble-hearted magnanimity is among the most conspicuous traits of his character, as well as to the members of the Government, they ought to be generally known.—*Editorial Cor. N. Y. Times.*

A small juvenile was lately at his mother's knee saying his prayers, commencing "Our Father," &c. His fond parent asked him to learn that little child's prayer, "Now lay me down to sleep." After many ineffectual attempts to learn the verse, the little man drew himself up with some dignity, and said, "Look here, ma, I ain't much on lay me down to sleep, but just put me on our Father, and I can't be beat!"  
What is the greatest curiosity in the world? A woman's!

## Co. C, 19th U. S. Infantry—The Battle of Murfreesboro.

[Extract from a private letter, dated] CAMP NEAR MURFREESBORO, TENN., January 3, 1863.

My Dear Sister:—Five of the darkest days that ever passed over my head are gone, and thousands lay 'neath the gory field off which I came unscathed. Oh! it was dreadful, was the carnage of that brief period. One-third of our company fell on the deadly field, where we fought the enemy muzzle to muzzle.  
At dawn on the morning of Dec 31st, the Rebels attacked Gen. Gill's division, commanded by Gen. Johnson, capturing eleven cannon at the first onslaught by reason that the horses were off being watered. The hurled their columns against us with irresistible impetuosity. Brigade after brigade rushing on, with bullets and steel, their cannon hurling forth showers of iron hail, caused our men to retreat in confusion. I may say, we were absolutely routed.

You can scarcely imagine what a feeling it produces upon the observer to see thousands of men, panic stricken, running hither and thither. The woods were darkened with soldiers flying from the line of battle, some wounded, others without hats or guns, and all seemingly scared almost to death.  
Rousseau viewed the crisis with tears in his eyes. He rode before his veterans and told them what was left for them to do. To rescue the army from a ruinous disaster, they must turn the tide of battle; they must resist to the last drop of precious blood, or consent to be chased across the Ohio river.

Rousseau came dashing up, cold sweat oozing from his forehead. Just here a cannon-ball took off Gareschea's (his A. A. G.) head, and the blood plashed into Rosecrans' face. He glanced at his favorite aid's mangled body a moment, then pointed down to a dark line of cedar woods as he told Rousseau something. We saw Rousseau shake his head, and then he rode up to us. The die was cast—the Regulars must hold those cedars. So we were double-quickened into position, and laid down, at orders, with our guns cocked and fingers on triggers.

But a minute more, and the "butter-nuts" came, six deep, double-quick, on us, but, ah! "the Regulars were there!" We poured such an unerring shower of bullets into their advancing columns as to stagger them. The scene that ensued beggars description. We were only about one hundred feet apart, in the "dark cedar woods." They couldn't drive us, for the volleys we poured in quick succession into their ranks was too much for flesh and blood. If it was any satisfaction to our dying to see the enemy bite the dust, they had it.

Shortly the Regulars were alone. The volunteers had fled from both ends of our line, and retreat or capture was our only alternative. We chose the former, and, after being ordered three times to retreat, we left. After leaving the cover of the woods, it was a run for life. The Rebels were on our heels, and the withering blast that straddled the ground with dead and dying was terrible! Our old commander, Stephen D. Carpenter, fell first, riddled with bullets, thus terminating his twenty-five years of service.

Just as we passed our batteries, some twenty-five or thirty cannon opened, with a roar that fairly shook the earth. Rousseau flung his hat away, and yelled: "Rally, boys, rally! rally, boys, rally!" We had done our duty—gained a few minutes, of infinite value to our army. Rosecrans telegraphed to Washington that he had "sacrificed the Regulars to save his army." We lost one-third our brigade. All this happened before noon. We lay in line of battle for two days and nights.

On New-Year's morning, we were surrounded, and things never seemed more gloomy. About noon, the Rebels massed a powerful force against our right wing, but Rosecrans was wide awake, and quicker than lightning he double-quickened three lines of battle to meet them. They attacked us, but found us ready. Both armies lay on their arms all night.

Friday, the 2d January, dawned amid the booming of artillery. About noon Rosecrans succeeded in getting his army extricated from the chaos to which it had been reduced, and his columns and divisions were again brought into line. Things began to wear a brighter aspect. We run out of provisions, however, and our men had to commence eating dead horses. You must not doubt me when I say that we had to put three guards, with fixed bayonets, over a load of unhusked corn, to keep the men from stealing it until it could be divided equally! In the afternoon we gained a great victory. The Rebels made a deadly onset on our left

wing, commanded by Gens. Crittenden and Thomas, driving our men back. In thirty minutes had out twenty thousand men, in two columns, who charged bayonets on the foe. They piled the ground with dead Rebels, five of them to one of us, and captured several flags. We drove them back about a mile on the left, and advanced our lines about a quarter of a mile.

On the morning of the 3d, the battle was continued. The Regulars were ordered to the front to dig trenches. Every spadeful of dirt we threw out was stirred and made light by the buzzing of bullets. It makes one feel somewhat ticklish to have a lot of sharpshooters picking at him, but to tell the truth I felt no fear. Many were shot down, however, while working. It rained all day, too, and the water ran in and filled the trenches about as fast as they were dug. But we were satisfied—"Old Rose" wasn't going to retreat. That night we spent in the trenches; it rained all the time, and a muddy ditch with twelve to eighteen inches water in it rather added to our discomfort, yet the boys cracked jokes all night about "that foot-race out of the cedars." We didn't like to run, but knew it was death to remain.

Well, next morning we found that the enemy had evacuated Murfreesboro and fled in the night. They couldn't stand six days' hard fighting without sleep. We were not sorry. Then we got to burying the dead. We hauled nineteen hundred of our killed out of the "dark cedars" alone. The Regulars were all buried on a little knoll together. But, oh! you should have seen the piles of dead Rebels, that lay scattered around, proving what desperate determination the attack had been made. Many a little boy lay there lifeless, their faces wearing an innocent smile—they seemed not to have known the hatred that was deeply imprinted on the weather-beaten faces of the Arkansas Brigade.

We are now in camp at Murfreesboro, and straightening up again. \* \* \* Your affectionate brother, REUBEN JONES.

ROMANTIC LOVE SCENE.—'Tis past the hour of midnight. The golden god of day, who drove his emblazoned chariot through the heavens, has ceased shining upon the earth, and a black pall reigns over the lower section of our city. Nothing is heard save the distant step of melancholy bill poster as he pursues his homeward way. Suddenly a sound breaks the stillness—it is the voice of Frederick William, calling in plaintive tones upon his beloved Florence Amelia.  
"Throw open the lattice, love, and look down from the casement, for I, your dear Frederick, am here."  
"What brings thee at this time of the night, when all is still and gloomy?"  
"I come to offer thee my heart. Upon my soul I love thee—truly, wildly, passionately love thee. Dost thou reciprocate?"  
The maiden blushed as she hesitated.  
"Ah," cried he, and the face of our hero lit up with a sardonic smile, "thou lovest another!"  
"No! no! no!" cried Florence.  
"Then why not rush to this bosom that is bursting to receive thee?"  
"Because," replied the innocent, but still trembling damsel, "I am undesired!"

There will be four eclipses this year, as follows:  
1. A partial eclipse of the sun, May 18. Invisible in the United States, except in California and Oregon.  
2. A total eclipse of the moon, June 1, in the evening. Visible in part of the United States, but generally as a partial eclipse.  
3. The annual eclipse of the sun, Nov. 11, invisible in America.  
4. A partial eclipse of the moon in the morning of Nov. 25. Digits 11.49. Visible in the United States.

There is nothing purer than honesty; nothing sweeter than charity; nothing warmer than love; nothing richer than wisdom; nothing brighter than virtue; nothing more steadfast than faith; nothing surer than friendship.

A gateway in a Western cemetery bears the following notice: "I am authorized to arrest the First Person that Cuts up in this Cemetery Hereafter Swearing is Forbidden. Lewis W. Storer, Section."

In the South when the trains get within ten miles of the station where dinner is to be served up, the passengers leave the train and walk to the station so as to get through dinner by the time the cars arrive!