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Speech of  
Flagg, Hon. Wm. J.  
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Class 8928

Book 57









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S P E E C H

OF

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HON. WILLIAM J. FLAGG,

OF HAMILTON COUNTY,

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DELIVERED IN THE

OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

ON THE RESOLUTION OF

MR. WEST TO EXPEL HON. OTTO DRESEL,

MARCH 25, 1863.



BOSTON:  
PRESS OF THE DAILY COURIER.

1863.

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# S P E E C H .

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MR. SPEAKER: Now I have obtained the floor, I hardly know why I rose. I have really no right in a debate like this. I belong neither with those who voted for the resolutions offered by Mr. Dresel, nor with those who would expel him or inflict on him the formal censure of this body for offering them. I am of neither house, being merely a poor friend of the Union, who tries to do his duty, in a quiet way, to the State and to the cause, with no taste for party bickerings in times like these.

Mr. Dresel's proposed resolutions were bad, bitter bad; not so much so in their statements (which contain, with a good deal that is erroneous, a good deal that is true), as in the serpent-like element of evil which lurks in them, and the connection in which they were offered. But there is a right of free debate sacred to freemen in all conditions of life (and which invests with special sanctity the person of a representative of freemen), that we may not rashly tamper with. It is guaranteed by and overshadowed with that great principle of our Constitution which declares that error, falsehood, and malice, even treasonable error, falsehood, and malice, so long as they take no more solid shape than the breath of man, shall be protected in their airy utterance; the consequence of which great principle has been, that, until about these days all treasonable ideas hatched by discontent in the minds of our people have blown themselves harmlessly away. And in tolerating evil propositions uttered in free debate, we are but asserting our faith in the power of our free system to bear assaults which the boasted strength of thrones dare not encounter.

Is factious opposition to the Government so rare now, that we should specially single out Mr. Otto Dresel to make an example of? Has the national House of Representatives censured

Representative Conway for standing on its floor and proposing submission to the rebels and a dissolution of the Union? Has it disciplined Stevens, who in his place declared against a restoration of *the* Union, though at the same time avowing his willingness to accept *a* Union—*another* Union—but not *THE* Union which was, and is, and, by God's help, is to be? Or were the portals of the national Senate closed against Trumbull, who dared to give thanks for the defeat of our arms?

Why, sir, most of the opposition to the Government in its conduct of the war, and by far the most clamorous and factious, as well as most effective and disastrous opposition, has come, *not* from that party whose province it in some sort was to oppose and criticise, but has come from the bosom of the Republican party itself, whose duty it was to aid, defend and encourage. I must say of the Democrats, that, on the whole, and especially until within eight months past, and until after a policy was adopted and things were done which might provoke a very saint to be factious, they have dealt far more gently with the Government than it had a right to expect. And even now, this very day, and here in this city, their chief men in council have resolved to retrace some of their hasty steps, and render as hearty a support to the war as they did at first. Is not this a cause of rejoicing? Is not their aid valuable to the cause? Is this a moment for an acrimonious measure like the one before us to be adopted—initiated, too, by the gentleman from Logan, Mr. West, who but the other day actually implored Democratic leaders to abate their opposition, and not forsake the country, for, said he, “if they do forsake it, we are lost?”

Sir, I believe that the rebellion would have been suppressed before the last fourth of July,

but for a factious opposition to the war policy of the Government, made by the radical element of the party which raised that Government to power. Sustained as the President was by the people at large, with their whole wealth and strength, there was no problem in the business of conquering the armies of the traitors, capturing their holds, and sweeping with our free battalions over every acre of disloyal soil, which military skill of a very moderate kind might not easily have solved. It was simply a question of numbers, equipment, and time. The numbers were given; the means of equipment were given; the time was at our disposal. At once the true instincts of the masses realized this to be a massive war, and tendered in one month half a million of men. In Ohio alone, the offerings of the first three weeks were eighty-one thousand. But they were refused, and only seventy-five thousand reluctantly, doubtingly accepted. The seventy-five thousand failed to conquer the rebellion; they only encouraged and inflamed it.

The fault was the fault, not of the brave, willing people, but of a party. Our arms failed, and our cause failed, that a partisan dogma might stand. And what was that dogma? With the radical or abolitionist element of the Republican organization it was from the first an article of faith, to doubt which was to be excommunicated, that the Southern people were cowardly and weak, just as with the fire-eaters of the cotton States it was an article of faith that the Northern people were but a contemptible race, any ten of whom a Mississippi or Georgia ruffian might hack to pieces with his steel toothpick. And this silly notion, that radical element was actually able, so far to infuse into the minds of the whole Republican party, that the President and Cabinet adopted it; and acted on it. It so obeluded the judgment of the Congress which assembled on the 4th of July, 1861, that they could see in the well-equipped and disciplined army, which then held a naturally strong and strongly intrenched position at Manassas Junction, only a pusillanimous rebel rout, which the advance of our own armed mob of raw recruits, which General Scott was doing his best to organize—and that he might do it, was imploring for time—would be sure to scatter like sheep. They proved this their faith by their works; for on the eve of the battle Congress adjourned and went out to view the sport

with the placid dignity of grave Spaniards going to see a bull-fight—they saw a bull-run!

Strange to say, the lesson thus taken lasted only a few months, and has had to be frequently repeated, as we shall see. The stern teachings of disaster have, however, at length availed to bring our rulers to realize the need which the instincts of the people realized from the first, and which I, but an humble member of the Ohio Legislature, realized as early as April, 1861, when, just where I now stand, I declared for accepting half a million volunteers while the spirit of volunteering was up, drilling and equipping them during summer and fall, and then marching them southward with the march of the frosts of early winter, trampling out the rebellion as they went. But the wise Cabinet council could not see this until the guns of Manassas blew open their eyelids, nor until the enthusiasm for enlisting had so subsided that midwinter found our forces in the field still far below the desired number, and they, in large part, badly armed.

It was not long afterwards, and soon after our successes in the Southwest had turned the heads of the Congressional "Committee on the Conduct of the War," that the baleful fallacy I have named—

The "habit very blamable, which is  
That of despising those we combat with,"

again resumed its sway. Well knowing how quickly large armies will waste away, and well knowing, too, that a united people is stronger than a divided one, yet, deluding themselves with the notion that the rebellion was over, and the need of Democratic assistance had passed by, the placard was everywhere set up—

"NO MORE RECRUITS RECEIVED, AND NO DEMOCRATS WANTED."

But I must keep myself in order, and speak to the question. I said factious opposition to the war policy of the Government had of late been too common for us to select the case of Otto Dresel as so peculiarly bad, that we must deal with it in the extraordinary mode proposed.

The war policy of the Executive was clearly announced in the Crittenden resolution. That policy was a good one. It united the North, and divided the South. It saved three great States to the Union. It headed the muster-roll of seven hundred thousand men. More than this, it was a compact, to which our rulers were pledged and bound in faith and honor, as by oath and bond. A few in the Republican party

—a few, but a fiery-hearted, positive, restless, propagandizing few—resolved to break up this beneficent policy, come what might. They did not scruple to choose a time of national trial and trouble to do this. A constituent portion of the Republican organization took upon itself to play the part of an opposition. A party was organized within a party. A conspiracy was formed within the Capitol and the War Office.

At this time the Commander-in-Chief was one George B. McClellan, a quiet, reticent man, with no politics to speak of, save devotion to the Union, and a desire to be useful in restoring it by conquering the armies of its assailants. But, unfortunately, he had in Western Virginia proclaimed that servile insurrection within his department would be “put down with an iron hand.” He must be removed, by fair means or foul. By fair means or foul the war policy must be changed, and the Commander-in-Chief displaced.

The game began. Congress laid by war measures and revenue measures, and organized itself into an Abolition debating society. The rebels were building Merrimacs, but a bill for constructing iron-clads was delayed two or three months, that Representatives from the loyal slave States might be baited and goaded, even as bulls were baited in a circus. The credit of the treasury was failing, because Republican papers reiterated the falsehood that our expenditures were four millions a day, and yet necessary revenue bills lay unnoticed on the table. Generals were laboring to make the new recruits submit to drill and discipline; the press, the Senate, and even the War Office, derided their efforts, and told the recruits that nothing was needed to make them invincible but a policy, no tactics of any value but the art of robbing rebel hen-roosts, and no “*esprit du corps*” but the Spirit of God. Our victories were belittled, and our reverses magnified. The popular impatience was played upon till it was worked into a furor. It was “Forward to Richmond!” “Forward to Manassas!” “Forward to the Shenandoah!” “Forward anywhere and everywhere!” They would see no impediment in trench, abattis, or parapet, nor any guns but Quaker guns, nor any enemies but cowards, few, ill fed and clad and poorly armed.

A committee on the conduct of the war was organized, whose special function it was to find fault with, hamper and impede—not the enemy, but the Government of their country! In the

sound of their clamor the voice of Vallandigham sunk out of hearing.

Republican Congressmen and Republican journals *should* have sustained the Government—*should* have encouraged the people—*should* have taught patience under delays and cheerfulness under reverses—*should* have excused faults, hidden weaknesses, and promised victory—*should* have acted like the Whigs in the Revolution, Democrats in the war of 1812, and Democrats in the Mexican war; instead of which they acted more like Tories in the Revolution, Federalists in the war of 1812, and infinitely worse than Whigs in the Mexican war.

What right had such a faction to hope for success before the people? They ruled their party in the end, but they ruined it too. They invaded the War Office and White House; but a Congress of men, quite other than they, stands at the gates of the Capitol. But, worse than this, they robbed our armies of victory—they brought defeat and disgrace on our flag—and the blood of an hundred thousand brave, true men is red upon their foreheads.

I will now prove this: I will prove that the ascendancy of the radicals, under Wade and Chandler, has alone saved the rebels from ruin, while it has well nigh ruined us.

To begin earlier than the appearance of McClellan at the head of the army. In the outbreak of the rebellion, Missouri was more loyal than Kentucky, more easily held than Kentucky, if disloyal, and more easily managed, by policy, if neutral. General Harney, in command there, had already quieted the feverish pulse of his fellow Missourians. There was good ground to believe he would have saved all the blood afterwards shed west of the Mississippi, had he continued in that command. But, on the pretence of disloyalty, he was displaced, and to this day remains without a command. Able and veteran General as he is—driven into oblivion, while others are reaping fame—disgraced, so far as it is possible for injustice to disgrace a true man—robbed of the right to prove his loyalty by meeting death in the field, he has been forced to prove it by his life; living down the calumny in retirement and obscurity. Who believes to-day that Harney is a traitor? Who but knows he was robbed of a soldier's right because he was a slaveholder, and loved the Union without amendment or alteration?

Fremont, the idol of a party, was, ere long, put in Harney's place, that he might gain suc-



cesses which would justify the transferring him to the command of the Army of the Potomac. He found things in a bad condition, and soon made them worse. He so energetically complicated, overset and bewildered things—so dashing, headlessly and heedlessly bejumbled and perplexed the campaign, that history can never unravel its order and sequence, nor all the Auditors of the Treasury ever untangle his accounts. He was recalled. A crowd of swindlers were prosecuted for imposing upon his innocent and unsuspecting nature, and a special commission sent out to jump at his accounts.

McClellan now comes up. I am here called to order because I name him. I know you cannot bear to hear his name. But it will haunt you till you die, and his fame, filling the air around you, will be inhaled with your latest breath. His name is history; it is power; it is worth to the cause an army complete in artillery, infantry, and cavalry. Hurrah for McClellan! In persistent refusal to accept volunteers who by tens and hundreds of thousands everywhere offered themselves—in the Congressional folly of Bull Run—in the subsequent effort to obtain reluctant recruits—the spring, summer, and most of the fall passed away. In making an army the winter was improved. From November 1st till March 11th McClellan held absolute command, except in Fremont's department. During that four months and eleven days we had victory everywhere and disaster nowhere, save only Fremont's blunder of Belmont, which was in a department where McClellan had no control. Disaster nowhere and victory everywhere during the whole term of his chief command! Is the statement plain, simple, and easy to remember?

And the victories of that four months and eleven days, with the victories of the entire spring of 1862, were won because we were everywhere found strong enough to cope with the enemy. They were as legitimately the fruits of preparation as the apple is the fruit of the tree. And the tide turned against us only after that preparation had measurably worn out, in consequence of the wasteful use and foolish dispersion of the army, and the refusal to recruit its ranks.

All knew it was McClellan's plan to prepare a great and overwhelming army, and move upon the rebels, East and West, as nearly as might be at the same point of time—that he intend-

ed the movement should not begin until the season should permit of immediately following up successes, and that so rapidly no time should be allowed the rebels to recover from his blows; and all knew that in the spring of 1862, the rebel forces were far inferior to ours, both East and West, particularly at the West, and that it was only in consequence of the pressure of their great reverses then received that the Southern people could be made to submit to a conscription, which brought in the fresh troops who drove us from the Peninsula; drove us across the borders of Pennsylvania; drove us up to the gates of Cincinnati.

McClellan, furthermore, being a soldier and a man of business, relying on the best modern improved arms, and not on the Sword of Gideon—a student of the Art of War, and not wholly relying on the inspiration of the Spirit of God had his own views of the time needed to make a complete soldier out of a green volunteer; not believing, as Congressional warriors do, that there is no Art of War, or at least none but what every new-born baby has when it tumbles naked and squalling into this world of strife. He had his own opinion, too, and not the Congressional or newspaper opinion, as to where and how to strike a blow at the mortal part of the rebellion.

It will surprise my friend from Ashtabula, Mr. Krum, who here asks my opinion of the campaign against Manassas and the Quaker guns, to learn that a march to Manassas was never in the General's plan, and was made sorely against his own will, to gratify Congressmen, whom those guns had frightened out of their wits.

The first serious onset upon the Commander-in-Chief was made soon after the meeting of Congress in December, 1861. At this time, and for the three months following, our army was recruiting at the rate of two thousand men a day, while its daily growth in efficiency, through drill and equipment, was fully equal to another one thousand. Every day saw, also, the addition of one gunboat to our navy. The time was *not* lost; it was *gained*. The army was *not* idle; it was *busy*. That of the Potomac was so thoroughly exercised, that at the end of six months it had reached a pitch of discipline equal to that of Wellington's after three years of practice, and, like that of Wellington, was fit and able to "go anywhere and do anything." The army of Buel, too, was being brought to

that point of efficiency which afterwards enabled them coolly to march with fixed bayonets through ten thousand of Grant's fugitives, cowering under the river bank at Pittsburg Landing, and turn the defeat of Shiloh into a victory.

Yet, during all those three months, the cabal of conspirators were filling the air with their clamor against delay. Every moment improved by the General to create his armies, they improved to destroy him, and demoralize both army and people.

He was slow, they said. He was a coward—a fool—a traitor. The ordinary exercises by which alone an army can be perfected and inspired with "*esprit du corps*," were sneered at as futile, ridiculous shows. Carping and jeering were the means where falsehoods failed. Mud was an inexhaustible material for witticisms. "Grand reviews" and "the quiet of the Potomac" were jokes some people never tired of laughing at. Telegraph and mail buzzed and groaned with their load of lies.

A year has gone by. The people have seen a General with his army, abandoned by its Government, fight their way *out* of the jaws of death, and *out* of the gates of hell. They have seen that army, after being bereft of their chief, and demoralized by defeat and ill management, receive back that chief, whom a terror-struck cabinet restored to them, and become, with a shout, the Army of the Potomac again. They have heard of South Mountain, and of the salvation at Antietam. And who is there will dare tell them now that McClellan is a fool, a coward, or a traitor? Even those who believe that Pope was a better General than he, or Burnside better than both, or Hooker better than the three, or Fremont worth them all together—or think they believe it—must own that one year ago there was a vast amount of lying of one sort or another done at Washington, and believed through the country.

Never was viler conspiracy hatched before. At its head, chosen for his peculiar qualities as a bull-dog to take the President by the throat, armed with authority on behalf of his faction to threaten any measure of opposition he pleased, was the man whom this Legislature has but lately chosen for Senator, to represent the loyalty of Ohio.

Again, who believes to-day that the rebel army of Virginia was a flock of timid sheep, afflicted mostly with the rot, and armed only

with Quaker guns? Yet to believe this, with the rest, was one short year ago the test of loyalty.

Up to the moment when the General-in-Chief went to Harper's Ferry to see Banks, with his force of thirty thousand strong, cross the river and enter the Shenandoah Valley, as preliminary to the movement of the main body of the Army of the Potomac, by water, to attack Richmond by way of the James and York rivers and the Peninsula, the effort to shake the President's faith in his chosen commander had seemingly failed. In the three or four days' absence this trip required, the Committee on the Conduct of the War and the Secretary of War measurably succeeded in their purpose, so that on his return McClellan was coldly received, and informed that his plan of campaign, which it had been promised him he should be allowed to follow, would not do; that the handful of rebels and quaker guns at Manassas were too formidable for the large army he proposed to leave in and about the strong forts that protected Washington, and that he must march straight out to Manassas with his whole force, or a Congressional committee would surely faint. He marched on Manassas early the next morning, to find empty works and wooden guns.

It seems that although the Congressional Committee failed to appreciate the strategy of the General they chose to despise, the enemy had not. Learning from the vast fleet of transports which had since the middle of February whitened river and bay, that McClellan would decline their invitation to fight them just where they wanted him to fight them, before their strong works and in their chosen position, and would go to Richmond his own way—or else learning his plans from a leak in the Cabinet (for the rebels boast they knew it in Richmond only forty-eight hours after the Cabinet forced him to tell it)—learning this, the enemy had been for weeks quietly evacuating Manassas, and falling back on Richmond. With Banks and thirty thousand within co-operating distance, and with the larger force left in front of Washington, one would have thought that our Congressional heroes could have kept up courage while an army of a hundred and fifty thousand men or more went to keep the rebels busy in another direction.

So you see the march to Manassas was not McClellan's, but was a campaign made for the sole benefit and at the express command of the

“conductors of the war.” And now, my Ash-tabula friend, laugh at Generals Wade, Stanton and Chandler till your sides shake. Manassas was taken by strategy, without firing a gun, as Norfolk was afterwards taken, by the same skillful hand; but Manassas was not taken by that celebrated onset upon timber columbiads in empty forts.

A fortnight or more was lost in this foolery—a precious fortnight for us to lose, as for the rebels to gain. Permission was graciously given McClellan to go his own way to work. And he did. Two-thirds of the army being landed on the Peninsula, its progress began. In as short a time as the transportation could be effected, those two-thirds begin the march against Yorktown, which must be taken by siege, as such fortifications are usually taken. In conducting the siege, a delay of one month occurs, during which the conspirators develop a disgust for spades. Yorktown is taken, and the march on Richmond commences. About a hundred thousand men are on the march. But where is the corps of McDowell, part and parcel of the Army of the Potomac, that was to follow immediately on the return of the transports? It is withheld by a countermand of orders, but it is promised it shall soon advance and be in at the death. With that corps, the fall of Richmond is certain; without it, the question is getting doubtful. The Navy Department has not fulfilled its contract to look after James River, and the rebels are making the best use of their time to bring in conscripts and fortify the city. McClellan is before Richmond. Fair Oaks proves the fighting quality of our men and the desperation of the rebels. They had sent out Stonewall Jackson with instructions that “he can best serve the interests of the Confederacy by keeping reinforcements from McClellan.” The instructions fall into the hands of the Conduct of the War Committee, and they “serve those interests” better than even Jackson could, though he does pretty well with his fifteen or twenty thousand, fitting up and down the valley, keeping four times his numbers busy at hide-and-seek.

The battle of Hanover Court House was fought, and two lines of railway cut, to prepare for the reception of the rest of the Army of the Potomac. Where are they? They belong to the army as much as a limb belongs to the body. They were raised, drilled and inspired by the General they loved, to do this very business,

now ready to be done—the taking of Richmond. McClellan has hopefully reached out his right hand, and is now anxiously feeling for that of McDowell. Where is McDowell? The enemy are growing strong. We are falling sick. Delay is death and ruin. We are all across the Chickahominy—all but McDowell!

Where is McDowell? Send down him and his forty-thousand, and we will soon ring you a Yankee-doodle from Richmond steeples, now full in view. If no McDowell, then, for the Union’s sake, no Stonewall Jackson! If you cannot, O War Committee, send us McDowell, at the least let not Stonewall fall upon us!

The Committee tied up McDowell!—they let loose Jackson! God help McClellan!—God help the grand Army of the Potomac!—God help the Union!

Sold, sold and delivered to the Ishmaelites! Our army cut in twain! Our enemy doubled!

They fall upon our flank—fall upon it like wolves sure of their prey—a week of blood—seven days and seven pitched battles! But, glory to the Army of the Potomac, not once are we beaten! At every stand we repulse the foe with at least as bloody a slaughter as he gives, and only resume the line of march after hurling him clear from us. The last attack he makes, with the last rally of rebel strength and rebel desperation, is a great and decisive Union victory!

WHO SAVED THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC?

Safety was brought out of ruin—retreat was turned into a change of base, resulting in a better position than before. Now, give him that fifty thousand men he was cheated out of—give him thirty-five thousand. Too late! The sign which refused recruits and scorned Democrats has only just been taken down. The Army of the Potomac must march back as it best can; must take ship and look after the safety of Washington. *McClellan is deposed!* But no matter. Another star is rising. We will see what Pope can do. *He despises spades. He knows how to steal chickens.* McClellan had too much respect for hen-roosts. Fall in, boys, and the cry shall be—“Pope and Pigs and Victory!”

Let us go back and see how Washington got frightened and how McDowell was withheld from the business he was thrice sent upon. No sooner did McClellan resign the chief command than somebody in the War Office cut the map of war into three departments. McClellan was



given a very limited field, with the Army of the Potomac. All west of Knoxville was given to Halleck, who had taken Corinth by forced marches of a mile a day, and the free use of spades, and whose speed was not, therefore, to be feared. The intermediate space was allotted to Fremont. You see the old fallacy was again resuming its sway, and "the speedy downfall of the rebellion" a thing absolutely decided on at the War Office—the pursuit of the flying foe and his capture being a mere question of swiftness. Presidential laurels, growing thick in Southern fields, must not be reaped by one of wrong politics. So Fremont was a second time brought out and put in training. In order to give him a command, to go, the Lord knows where, and do, the Lord knows what, the army of Banks was broken up, and Stonewall Jackson soon got back his valley again.

All know how easily the Pathfinder lost his path among the gorges of the Mountain Department, and that in a wonderfully short time he brought chaos out of order. Under his skilful hand confusion was worse confounded than ever confusion was confounded before. The rebels gave him ———, what Old Bullion never willingly gave him. Never mind it, Fremont! your politics are faultless, if your tactics are a muddle. Heed not your tumble. Up again, and take another.

It seems to me that the "Conductors of the War" have not been happy in their selection of Generals to set off against McClellan.

The consequence, then, of giving Fremont a command, was to let loose Stonewall Jackson, whom McClellan had pretty well taken care of when he sent Banks up the Valley with his thirty thousand men. Stonewall Jackson being at large, the consequence was that he occupied the attention of not only Banks, Shields, and Fremont, each with a separate command, trying to catch him, but occupied the attention of the War committee itself, and excited lively fears for the safety of Washington. To catch and destroy him was resolved on. McDowell, just on the march to join McClellan, is recalled, and sent after Jackson. McDowell begs to be allowed to go to Richmond, and do the important business of closing up the war in Virginia, and saving the Army of the Potomac; or, begs at least to be sent where he can either catch Jackson or drive him off from Richmond. If he must turn back from his advance upon the lions' den and go fox-hunting, he asks to

go to the point where he may catch the beast by the head, and not by the tail, or rather catch at the tip of the tail, as it turned out. His request was denied, and he was marched to a point where he arrived just in time to be too late. The prey had escaped. Here were Fremont, Shields and Banks, each with a separate army, with the troops garrisoning Washington and the whole line of the Potomac, besides the noble army of McDowell—in all full a hundred thousand men—scattering up and down in the exciting but bootless sport of grabbing Jackson—who escapes after all, leaving the whole hundred thousand standing at a stand-still and looking each other foolishly in the face—all this, that Fremont might win his Presidential spurs.

Here, too, we have a specimen of that strategy which was set up against the well considered plans of McClellan.

It is easily seen that the turning point of our destiny was the breaking up of the army left with Banks to hold the Valley, in order to create a department for a political General, the idol of the radicals. The pledge to do this was wrung from the President, you may swear, by the same factious, noxious crew I have named.

Having displaced McClellan, the conclave made up of the Secretary, the new General-in-Chief, and the conductors of the war, were bound to match him in strategy, or stand convicted of a crime against the Union. We have seen how they prospered with Fremont. Halleck superseded him by Gen. Pope, and then Halleck, Stanton, and Pope together fought a nice little campaign of their own, "short, sharp, and decisive,"—but decisive the wrong way.

McClellan was recalled just in time to receive within the forts of Washington the worn out remnant of his late splendid army. They had borrowed it of him for a while, and now returned it badly used up.

The enemy were threatening Washington now in earnest. What was to be done? Fremont had failed and Pope had failed—both entirely unexceptionable in their politics. I have read that the President excused himself for restoring McClellan, by saying in extenuation of his error, that the soldiers would fight under McClellan, and would not fight under any other commander. I think the excuse has merit in it.

He was restored just as our cause was at its last gasp. His name, his presence, riding along the lines—the sound of his voice—were

all that was needed to make our battered forces the equals of the enemy's. McClellan has been accused of slowness in his movements. Within two days after the re-entry of the army within the Washington lines, he was in full march Northward to meet the rebels, moving a disorganized army at the rate of seven miles a day. He overtook and beat the enemy at South Mountain. He forced them to stand and fight him at Antietam, where with numbers about equal to theirs, certainly not greater, he attacked them in a very strong position, and beat them fairly in fair pitched battle. He drove the enemy out of Maryland. He crossed after them, but refused to attack them in the position they had chosen. He was requested by the Commander-in-Chief to attack them without delay. (It is easy to give such orders.) He would not do it. They were in a position from which he knew they must soon retreat, and when they began to fall back he knew that by moving in lines parallel to their march he could be in Richmond a week at least before they could. So it eventuated. As the enemy moved, he moved, keeping always ahead of them, and closing up the gaps as they went. It was while he was thus pursuing them, and at the same time heading them, moving ten miles a day, forcing them into a sterile region where they could not subsist, which would oblige them to attack him in positions of his choosing, or disappear from Virginia, leaving it and the Confederate Capital in our hands—which even without a general engagement, an army corps could at any moment have taken and held. It was in this crisis—on the eve of a great battle, with the enemy out-generaled—crowded away from the point they would defend—in short, with Lee and his army wholly in our power—it was then that a stormy night witnessed the arrival of a swift messenger from Washington, announcing that the factious radicals had again prevailed—and a victorious General, in full tide of success, is again disgraced in face of his army! And another chapter is added to the history of human ingratitude.

Nothing that has been alleged, nothing that has been concealed, nothing that it is possible to imagine, can justify such a deed. It is said that he would not fight just when, where and how his mortal foes in the War Office dictated. What was there so brilliant in the strategy of the Fremont, Pope, and Burnside campaigns to make us prefer the generalship of the War De-

partment to that of the victor of Antietam? Or had his former experience of their ability to keep his secrets from rebel ears been such as to lead him to explain his intended movements a second time?

It was a vile act! It was a foul deed!

They were impatient were they? What speed have they made since displacing him? From the fourth of November till now, well nigh the fourth of April, what progress has that Army of the Potomac made? Five months and no results, except that Burnside was sent to Fredericksburg, and came back short seven thousand men. *Spades* were in disgrace there, until ordered to the front to bury fifteen hundred and twelve new made corpses!

And so Burnside was displaced for Hooker. Fremont failed, Pope failed, Burnside failed; and yet all acted under the wise and particularly minute directions of the War Office, and the War Office was inspired by the Conduct of the War Committee, and the War Committee was inspired—by the spirit of the Devil of old.

But we are now more than twelve months from the time when the radicals told us that an immediate movement by McClellan, or his immediate removal, was rendered imperatively necessary by the immense war expenditure—four millions a day, said they. But how sweetly patient have the dear souls become since the battle of Fredericksburg, near four months ago! Do they believe *now* in Virginia mud? Do they believe *now* in the strength of the rebels? Are they waiting for the spirit of the Lord or the sword of Gideon?

But the time has been improved, I believe, in "moralizing" the Army of the Potomac. The Generals of that army, incorporated into its very being by the organizing genius that created it, were a galaxy of veritable heroes. They were embraced with McClellan in the affections of the soldiers. It would not suit the views of the radicals to let them continue with their men. McDowell was displaced. Porter was displaced, degraded, and, with his honors thick upon him, a hero of triumphantly established fame, was dismissed from the army of the Union. Heintzelman was transferred away. At one stroke the gallant Sumner and Franklin were cut off. Burnside, having been used as a tool, was flung by. Of those great Generals hardly one remains. Stevens, Kearney, Reno, Richardson and Mansfield were killed, leading their men. It is well for them



they fell when they did, for the revolutionary tribunal would have never permitted them to retain commands in *that* army: it loved them too well. Such disgrace as a vile faction could inflict would surely have been their fate, had they survived. Hooker remains, nominally the chief; but he knows that a Turkish pasha of the olden time, or a general-in-chief under the French revolutionary government, had as sure a hold upon his own head as he has on his.

Yet, notwithstanding all this, the Army of the Potomac to-day, with all the willful constancy of a bereaved lover, concentrates its whole affection, all its hopes, dreams, memories, and longings, on that man McClellan. Without him, that army, if properly led, is a hundred thousand strong; *with* him, it is a hundred and fifty thousand strong.

That army has a *right* to its commander. In right of its services, in right of its hardships and sufferings, in right of its killed and wounded, in right of its grief and its injuries, in right of its battles and victories, in right of its devotion and glory, it claims and demands its chosen General.

Now, you and I, at this distance from the seat of war, may fall into delusions respecting the quality of commanders; but this army that worships McClellan—this semi-popular assemblage, all soldier and all citizen, composed of our most patriotic and intelligent men—this vast jury of experts, who have summered and wintered with him, marched and fought with him, tried him by the hot ordeal of war—this army *does know* if he be a General or no General. Their testimony must seal your mouths and mine. We *must* bow to it. Within two days, two regular officers, of intelligence, fresh from the Rappahannock, have told me—the one, that the army were infatuated in the worship of their hero to the verge of folly; the other, that there was but *one* sentiment in all that army, and that was for McClellan.

Thus have I in some measure traced the chain of calamity that has befallen our cause from the machinations of that factious opposition which, as I said, has dared to choose a time of war and of the nation's sore trouble to revolutionize its own party and revolutionize the

country. And now to those of the Democratic party I would say, had you not at first too cordially supported the Government in all it did, right or wrong, and had you not afterwards based your opposition on *comparatively* unimportant issues, like arrests and so forth, or upon issues that implied an opposition to the war itself, like matters of taxation, draft, conscription, and confiscation, and had you watched *the conduct of the war*, to criticise its management and progress, your opposition would have been proper, useful, healthy, and perfectly legitimate. The result of such an opposition would have been to supersede alike the half-sympathy with the rebellion which in its absence has arisen, and, what is more important far, would have superseded also that factious opposition to the Government which the absence of a proper opposition on your part has allowed to spring up within the bosom of the other party, to rend its vitals and the vitals of the country.

You should bear in mind that anything on your part, looking like a factious opposition to the war itself, will furnish the radicals (who now rule us) with a pretext for abandoning the contest, and submitting to a dissolution of that Union which you love far more dearly than they. You are coming into power. Prepare yourselves to lift up the banner of the Union when it falls from their imbecile grasp, to hold it high aloft with the nerve only Democrats possess, and defend it against all comers, come they from the North or the South. I know, and you know, that had the rebellion found you in power, you would have fought out the issue, without armistice or truce, or attempt to conciliate traitors in arms.

Believe me, the red, white, and blue becomes your political complexion better than the butter-nut tawny. Take no position that is unnatural to you, or that you are not prepared to hold to the end. If you do otherwise, the party that will arise on the downfall of the present dominating faction, to guide the triumphant destinies of a re-established Union, whatever may be its principles, will bear upon its front some other title than the time-honored name of "DEMOCRATIC."















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