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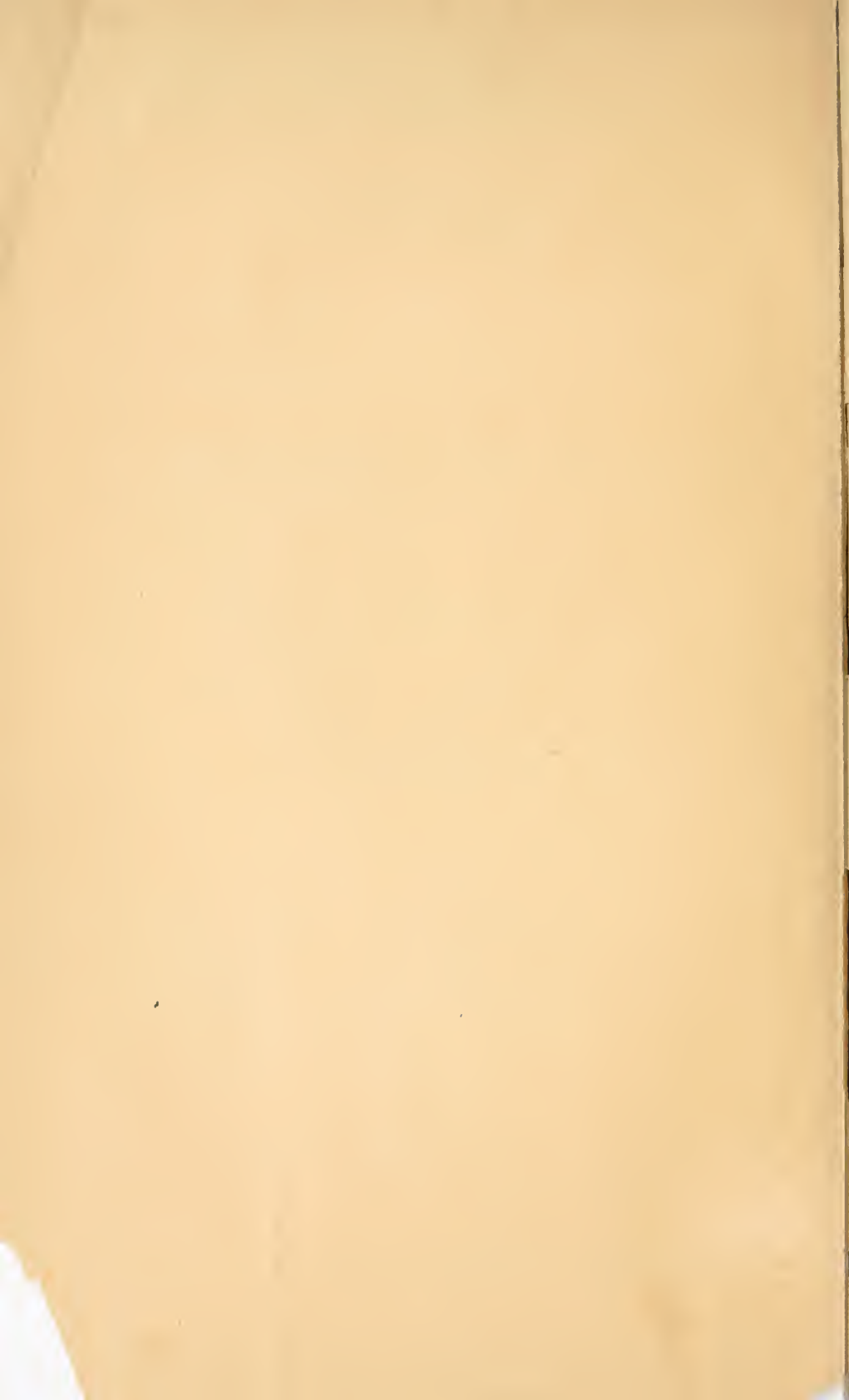
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MCCLELLAN'S CAMPAIGNS,

AS COMMANDER OF

THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC.

BOSTON:
PRESS OF THE DAILY COURIER.
1863.



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REVIEW.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BOSTON COURIER :

The dismissal of Major-General George B. McClellan from the command of the Army of the Potomac, on the seventh day of November, 1862, closed a very important chapter in the history of the present war.

The future historian, only, will be enabled to gather up all the facts of this remarkable period ; but the logic of events — the brief, yet impressive lessons from experience — the testimony of General McClellan, recently given before the McDowell Court-Martial — the letters and orders made public in the investigation — the statement of Prince de Joinville, and evidences from various other sources, carefully examined and compared, will throw much light upon matters which have not been fully understood by the people, and relieve many mistakes of judgment regarding the character, acts, and military ability of the late Commander of the Army of the Potomac. The first period in this history is the season of inactivity, as it has been called, covering

THE FALL AND WINTER OF 1861 AND 1862.

General McClellan, upon the recommendation of General Scott, was called by the President to the command of the Army of the Department of Washington, July 25th, 1861, four days after the battle of Bull Run ; and, upon the withdrawal of General Scott from active service on the first day of November, he was appointed Commander of the Armies of the United States. From the time he took command of the Army of the Department of Washington until March, no important movement was made by that portion of the army, which after his appointment, was designated the Army of the Potomac. During this period a movement was inaugurated by the radical men of the country, sustained by lead

ing papers, having for its object the diversion of the management of the army to party purposes, and in pursuance of it bills of emancipation and confiscation were pressed upon and passed by Congress, which were with hesitation afterwards signed by the President. General McClellan was known to be a man who would have no sympathy with such a movement, and it was determined by them that he should be displaced, if it could be effected without the real object of the movement being known to the loyal masses and the army.

The suspension of movements during this period, with the prudent and studiously maintained silence of the Commanding General, gave them an opportunity to make considerable progress in their designs. The cry was started by them that he was "too slow" — that he was an excellent engineer, a good organizer, but not the man to lead the army or direct its movements in the field. This cry was responded to by a considerable portion of the people, who were impatient for success, and who, wanting in experience, then believed that it was only necessary that our men should be led against the enemy to insure victory and to put down the rebellion.

The people are now able to see the error into which they were led, and to judge more correctly upon the conduct of the Commander-in-Chief during this period.

When General McClellan assumed command of the Federal forces, the enemy were flushed with victory, and had a large and comparatively well disciplined army. The Federal army consisted mostly of three months' men, whose term of service was about to expire. The remainder were two and three years' troops, which had been in the field but a very short period. Massachusetts had at the time but three three years' regiments in the field, and they had been in the service but a few weeks.

The exigencies of the time were such that, during the months of August and September, fears were very generally entertained for the safety of the National Capital. By October, a sufficient number of troops had been furnished to relieve this apprehension, and by the first of December nearly all of the three years' troops had arrived at the seat of war.

Up to this period, December 1st, no reasonable man deemed it prudent that any offensive movement should be attempted. About this time, unmindful of past experience, the radical cry for an advance upon

Richmond was renewed with redoubled vigor. To this General McClellan did not respond. He placed the army in winter quarters, and made no advance movement for the three winter months. For this he was blamed. Partizans and party presses commenced upon him, and kept up a terrible fire. He was accused of slowness and incapacity, and even of cowardice and disloyalty. But he made no reply, and waited until in his judgment the time for active operations should arrive.

Was this delay, during the three months of winter, necessary? History and our own experience, particularly at the Battle of Bull Run, prove the necessity of discipline in the troops to insure success. Instances are frequent of regiments who have fought well, with but little discipline. But the general fact will be everywhere admitted that a large body of undisciplined men cannot be relied upon to properly co-operate, through the contingencies of a severe battle. They have not learned that subordination which is indispensable to be observed, that they may be trusted in the changes of circumstances and position which are liable to occur. Hence the danger of confusion and panic, and consequent defeat and disaster.

The sad result of the previous summer left us in such a position that no offensive movement, without very strong probability of success, could be justified. General McClellan could not have been justified in incurring the risk incident to the advance of a large and undisciplined army against the enemy. Even if the enemy were under no better discipline, the uncertainty of the result would have been much too great. This General McClellan knew and felt, and he also knew that three months was the shortest time in which any troops could be drilled, to be made reliable.

The winter also largely increased the difficulties and dangers of an advance movement. Beside the sickness and loss of men from exposure upon the march, without tents or other shelter, the roads are liable at any time to be in such a condition from rain and thaw as to be entirely impassable to artillery and supplies. No winter campaign can be carried on in such a climate as that of Virginia, without immense sufferings and danger.

There were other and weightier reasons for delay. Having been so long on a peace footing, we were sadly deficient in artillery and other supplies for a large army, and it was also of the greatest importance

that the defences about Washington be perfected before an advance movement should be made.

General McClellan proceeded to the performance of the stupendous labor before him with a zeal and energy which knew no limit. He organized and disciplined his army. Every available foundry in the country was employed in casting ordnance, and he prepared and collected a vast supply of the best artillery and material for his army. The heights about Washington were covered with fortifications, that the National Capital could be defended with a comparatively small force, in the absence of the main portion of the army. He had quietly matured his plans. The time for their execution was approaching. The preliminary movements on the sea-coast and at the West had been made with triumphant success, and he was now prepared to strike the death-blow to armed rebellion, by a movement which the enemy little anticipated. Much depended upon concealing his plans from the rebels. It was important for him that they should continue to occupy Manassas and Centreville in force, until he was ready to move. He knew their position and numbers, even of their "Quaker guns," long before the evacuation.

But the conspiracy that had been organized against him began to be felt. Its object was to strike him before victory in the field should place him beyond their reach. The prejudice created by his apparent inactivity, without explanation, favored the conspirators. In the graphic language of the Prince de Joinville, —

"The moment at length came, when, in spite of the loyal support which the President gave him, he could no longer stand up against the storm precipitated upon his head. A council of war of all the generals of divisions was held, and a plan of the campaign, which was not that of the Commander-in-Chief, was proposed and discussed. General McClellan had then to explain his projects, and the next day they were known to the enemy — informed, without doubt, by one of those thousands of female agents who did the work of espionage for him even in the most intimate places. The chief of the rebel army evacuated Manassas. His manœuvre was skilful. Unable to assume the defensive; menaced with attack either at Centreville, where his defence would serve for nothing, or at Richmond, the loss of which would be a great check; unable besides to cover both of these positions at once, he

could do nothing better than fall back, with all his forces, upon Richmond. For the Army of the Potomac this evacuation was unfortunate. Its movement was unmasked before it was ready; the transport vessels were not collected; even a part of them were still ice-bound in the Hudson. In that situation, should he persevere in executing as rapidly as possible the movement by water towards the Virginia peninsula, or should he rather march by land to Richmond? Such was the grave decision which the young General of the Army of the Potomac, laid up sick in a miserable chamber of a deserted house in Fairfax, had to make within twenty-four hours."

In addition to this General McClellan was deprived of his authority as Commander-in-Chief of the armies, and the Army of the Potomac was divided into four grand corps, each under the command of separate Generals, taken according to rank. General McClellan did not complain. He proceeded to the performance of his duty to his country under the new order of things. The condition of the roads at this season of the year, and the fact that all the bridges on the route had been destroyed by the rebel army in their retreat from Manassas, rendered a march by land difficult if not impossible, and a plan for a

PENINSULA CAMPAIGN

was determined upon. General McClellan immediately commenced upon the labors necessary for the movement. The proceedings of the authorities at Washington embarrassed him in his operations. His plans were fully divulged to the enemy, and they were making preparations to meet him on his proposed field of operations. In addition to this, there was an unexpected delay of some weeks in collecting and getting ready the transports. Thus delayed, he commenced the embarkation of his troops March 17th.

This was the commencement of the movement of the Peninsula, upon the success of which so much depended to the country. For a proper understanding of the merits of this campaign, and the responsibility which attaches to General McClellan, it is necessary that his plans of the proposed movement should be considered. What his plans were there seems to be, upon the evidence, no contradiction.

General McClellan was to have under his control and disposal certain troops, including those under Generals Blenker, McDowell, and Wool, with the condition that he should leave sufficient force for the protection

of Washington, in the event of any attack being made upon it in the absence of the main portion of the Army of the Potomac. The force necessary for this purpose was variously estimated by different Generals. The highest estimate was that of General McDowell, 50,000. General McClellan made his plans for the campaign, which were at the time fully known to the authorities at Washington, leaving some 70,000 men and one hundred and nine pieces of light artillery for the defence of Washington and its approaches. These numbers are not disputed. It is only claimed that a certain portion of these troops were so located as not to be immediately available in the event of a sudden attack upon Washington. Of this, more hereafter. It is only necessary for the present to state the facts as affecting General McClellan in determining upon his plans for the campaign. He deemed he had amply complied with the conditions relating to the protection of Washington; and having done that, his plan was to embark with his entire remaining force, except that of General McDowell, for Fortress Monroe, and from thence proceed in the direction of Yorktown, as he subsequently did. His plan, further, was for the transports to return and take the corps of General McDowell, as a unit, to Fortress Monroe. From thence, General McDowell was to proceed up the Severn and take Gloucester. This being accomplished, the gunboats could pass up York River, and then he was to advance beyond in the direction of West Point. This was proposed to obviate the delays of a siege. For, with the forces of General McDowell in the rear of the enemy, they would have been compelled to at once evacuate or run the risk of capture, their position being turned. No one now has reasonable doubts but that, if these plans had not been interfered with at Washington, they would have resulted successfully, and Richmond, probably, have been soon taken.

But General McClellan was not permitted to carry out his plan. He was obliged, at the moment of embarkation, to consent to the retention of Blenker's command at Washington, which, as the President states, he did "reluctantly." Further, after he had arrived on the Peninsula, and whilst the army was under fire before Yorktown, he was informed for the first time that General McDowell and corps, 35,000 strong, had been detained at Washington for another destination. The effect of this intelligence is stated by the Prince de Joinville:

"The news was received by the army with astonishment, although the majority could not then foresee the deplorable consequences of an act

performed it must be supposed, with no evil intention, but with inconceivable recklessness. Fifteen days earlier this measure, although it would always have been injurious, would not have had so bad an effect; for new arrangements might have been made. Now, it was the main-spring removed from a great work already begun. It deranged everything."

About the same time he was notified that the forces at Fortress Monroe, under General Wool, were detached from his command.

He afterwards received Franklin's Division, 11,000 men, but it was not a sufficient force with which to carry out his original plan. Notwithstanding these extraordinary proceedings, General McClellan determined to do the best he could under the circumstances, and commenced, which was the only thing to be done, the siege of Yorktown.

The main body of his forces arrived at Fortress Monroe, April 6th. The landing and placing of the batteries commenced April 11th, and by May 3d, in the short space of twenty-two days, the batteries, consisting of seventy-one heavy guns and mortars, were placed in position to open upon the enemy's works. In the night of May 3d and 4th, Yorktown was evacuated by the enemy. As soon as known, gunboats and a considerable force in transports were sent to West Point, with a view to intercept the enemy on their retreat, and the remainder of the army was pushed forward in pursuit of the enemy, who were overtaken at Williamsburg, and the battle of that place was fought May 5th. Our forces were not sufficient to render the movement to West Point successful. From these points the army moved forward toward Richmond, and arrived at White House May 16th.

Thus were concluded the events connected with the siege of Yorktown; and, as a different state of facts influenced the subsequent movements on the Peninsula, it may be well to pause and examine into the reasons given by the President for his disastrous interference with the plans formed by General McClellan at Washington.

The reason given by the President for his course, in which he was sustained by two Generals at Washington, one of whom, General Hitchcock, has since shown the most unfriendly disposition toward General McClellan, was the fear that Washington was not left sufficiently protected. That the President may have been prevailed upon by determined and artful conspirators against General McClellan to commit a grave error, the fatal effect of which he could not foresee, upon an honest

but exaggerated apprehension for the safety of the National Capital, is probable. But that his action in thus summarily and recklessly interfering with important plans, upon which so much depended, can be upon the facts justified, seems hardly possible.

The President knew, or had the means of knowing and ought to have known, before General McClellan embarked, the exact number and position of the troops to be left for the protection of the Capital. If he had any doubts about their sufficiency then was the time for him to have expressed them, and to have heard the explanations of the Commanding General, and, if necessary, to have modified the plans of the campaign. There was no excuse afterwards, except upon an unanticipated exigency, and none such is pretended to have arisen. There is nothing to indicate that the President at that time had any doubts. He extorted from General McClellan at the last moment the division of General Blenker, as he says under a "pressure," which General McClellan knew, not with any view that it was necessary for the protection of Washington, but that with it and troops from another department he might organize the Mountain Department, to be commanded by Major-General Fremont. What the object or mission of that department was, or what was the object of the "pressure," no one outside of Washington and the reticent General McClellan, as yet understands. One thing is certain, — that it was located with no view to the immediate protection of the Capital.

In regard to the retention of General McDowell and his corps, the President wrote General McClellan, April 9th, that he ascertained after he left that less than 20,000 unorganized men, without a single field battery, were all that were designed to be left for the defence of Washington and Manassas Junction, &c. It is probable that the President received his information from the reports of Generals Hitchcock and Thomas of April 2d. That report shows that there were in the fortifications under General Wadsworth, 20,477 men, of whom 19,022 were effective, and that General McClellan designed that 7,780 troops should be left at Warrenton, 10,859 at Manassas, 1,350 on the Lower Potomac, and 35,467 under General Banks; but that several regiments designed for these localities had been removed. This made in all over 70,000 men. The corps commanders under General McClellan had estimated 15,000 men as a sufficient number for the fortifications about Washington, and 25,000 as a sufficient covering force in front, — in all

40,000 men. The report of the two Generals further states, that whether General Banks's force "should be regarded as a part of the force available for the protection of the immediate front of Washington, the undersigned express no opinion." They expressed no opinion, but it seems very probable if they entertained an opinion that it should not be so regarded, their modesty would not have prevented an expression of it. General Banks's force was certainly available to defend the approaches to Washington; and even without that force, there were nearly 40,000 men of whose position for "the protection of the immediate front of Washington" they intimate no doubt, and this force would be increased by the new regiments as they should arrive at Washington. In addition, there was left for the protection of Washington, as appears by the reports of Chiefs of Ordnance, 109 pieces of light artillery.

The result to which any impartial and intelligent mind must arrive, upon a consideration of the facts that have been made public, is, that the total derangement of the plans of General McClellan for operating upon the Peninsula was occasioned by the unwarranted interference of the authorities at Washington, whose orders it was his duty to obey.

The second chapter of the Peninsula Campaign embraces the time covered by his

OPERATIONS BEFORE RICHMOND.

The corps of General McDowell, after it was detached from the command of General McClellan, was sent forward in the direction of Fredericksburg to form a new department, to be designated the Department of the Rappahannock, and upon May 17th, the day after the arrival of General McClellan at White House, the Secretary of War sent letters to Generals McClellan and McDowell, with instructions in regard to their co-operating for the capture of Richmond.

The letter of instruction to General McClellan acknowledges that his dispatch to the President, asking for reinforcements, had been received and carefully considered. That in order to increase the strength of the attack upon Richmond at the earliest moment, General McDowell had been ordered to march upon that city by the shortest route, so to operate as to put his left wing in communication with General McClellan's right. He further writes: "*You (General McClellan) are instructed to co-operate so as to establish this communication as soon as possible, by extending your right wing to the north of Richmond,*" and further, that

General McDowell retains command of the Department of the Rappahannock and forces with which he moves forward.

Accordingly, General McClellan advanced to Hanover Court House, where he engaged and defeated the enemy May 26th, and immediately after took and held the place, which is north of Richmond, and on the direct line from that city to Fredericksburg.

General McDowell's advance posts at that time were near Bowling Green, fifteen miles from Hanover Court House. They were in such a position that, in the language of the Prince de Joinville, "it was only necessary that it should be desired, and the two armies might form a junction, in which case the possession of Richmond was assured."

But it was not permitted. On the 24th of May, General McDowell received a letter of instructions from the President, which, with the reply and rejoinder, is as follows: —

“WASHINGTON, May 24.

“MAJOR-GENERAL McDOWELL, *Fredericksburg* :

“General Fremont has been ordered by telegraph to move from Franklin on Harrisonburg, to relieve General Banks, and capture or destroy Jackson's and Ewell's forces.

“You are instructed, laying aside for the present the movement on Richmond, to put twenty thousand men in motion at once for the Shenandoah, moving on the line or in advance of the line of the Manassas Gap Railroad. Your object will be to capture the forces of Jackson and Ewell, either in co-operation with General Fremont, or in case a want of supplies or transportation interferes with his movement, it is believed that the force with which you move will be sufficient to accomplish the object alone. The information thus received here makes it probable that if the enemy operate actively against Banks, you will not be able to count upon much assistance from him, but may even have to release him. Reports received this moment are that Banks is fighting with Ewell eight miles from Winchester.

(Signed)

“ABRAHAM LINCOLN.”

“DEPARTMENT OF THE RAPPAHANNOCK,
“May 24, 1862.

“TO E. M. STANTON, *Secretary of War* :

“The President's order has been received, and it is in process of execution. This is a crushing blow to us.

(Signed)

“IRWIN McDOWELL, *Maj. Gen.*”

“WAR DEPARTMENT,
“WASHINGTON, *May 24, 1862.*

“TO MAJOR-GENERAL McDOWELL :

“I am highly gratified by your alacrity in obeying my orders. The change was as painful to me as it can possibly be to you or any one else. Everything now depends upon the celerity and vigor of your movement.

(Signed) “A. LINCOLN.”

“HEAD-QUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF RAPPAHANNOCK,
“*Opposite Fredericksburg, May 24, 1862.*

“TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT :

“I obey your order immediately, for it was positive and urgent; and perhaps, as a subordinate, there I ought to stop; but I trust I may be allowed to say something in relation to the subject, especially in view of your remark that everything now depends upon celerity and vigor of movement.

“I beg to say that co-operation between General Fremont and myself to cut off Jackson or Ewell is not to be counted upon, even if it is not a practical impossibility. Next, that I am entirely beyond helping distance of General Banks, and no celerity or vigor will avail so far as he is concerned. Next, that by a glance at the map will be seen that the line of retreat of the enemy's forces up the valley is shorter than mine to go against him. It will take a week or ten days for my force to get to the valley by this route, which will give it good forage, and by that time the enemy will have retreated. I shall gain nothing for you there, and shall lose much for you here. It is therefore not only on personal grounds that I have a heavy heart in the matter, but that I feel it throws us all back, and from Richmond north we shall have all our large masses paralyzed, and shall have to repeat what we have just accomplished.

“I have ordered General Shields to commence a movement by to-morrow morning. A second division will follow in the afternoon.

“Did I understand you aright that you wished me to accompany this expedition?

“Very respectfully, IRWIN McDOWELL.”

The President again played the General, and Richmond, almost within our grasp, was lost. McDowell felt it was “a crushing blow,” but he obeyed his instructions with “a heavy heart.” If anything is needed to show the worse than folly of a man deficient in military knowledge undertaking to direct military movements, this instance affords the plainest and saddest proof. The President, with a dash of his pen, crushes the movement on Richmond, by instructions which

General McDowell, as a man of military knowledge and experience, at once knew could not be successfully carried out. He saw that with his hand on the Confederate Capital, he must turn to other and what he knew must be, and what results proved to be, entirely fruitless missions. General McDowell turned his face from Richmond, marched up into the north of Virginia, and then marched back again, reproached by his troops and by the people; but General McDowell was in no way responsible for the movement. His military reputation was under a dark cloud until the facts were shown before the court-martial. General McDowell there stated that in his opinion it was safe and proper for him to proceed to co-operate with General McClellan against Richmond, and that he only yielded his purpose so to do in obedience to higher orders. General McClellan fully concurred in this opinion. These are the facts in regard to the movement on Richmond, and no intelligent man can have a doubt where the responsibility for its failure belongs.

General McClellan was then left to struggle alone in his further attempts against the Confederate Capital. On May 31st and June 1st, he fought the Battle of Fair Oaks, and then proceeded industriously to build bridges and roads on which to make his advance. Toward the latter part of June he had finished his preparations. In the mean time General Beauregard, with a considerable force, had reached Richmond from the West; and, as General McClellan was about to recommence active operations, Jackson, defeating or eluding the different detached corps under Generals Banks, Shields, Fremont, and McDowell, in all nearly one hundred thousand men, was back again to Richmond, and his advance guards could be seen from Hanover Court House. Under these circumstances, General McClellan saw but one course for him to pursue. It was to retreat upon the James River. This he effected, saving all his guns but one, and most of his supplies.

The most hazardous and laborious portion of the labor on the retreat was performed by that gallant and patriotic soldier, Fitz-John Porter, to whom more than to any other man, excepting the Commander-in-Chief, is due the success of this movement. A grateful country will remember and appreciate his services.

Secure in his position on the James River, General McClellan asked for reinforcements, that he might renew the attempt on Richmond, but the authorities at Washington could not or would not furnish what was required, and he was ordered to evacuate the Peninsula. This he did

successfully, and upon his arrival at Alexandria, was deposed from his command, and even refused the privilege of inspiring by his presence the troops, who were falling back under General Pope.

Thus ended the campaign on the Peninsula, and the partizan conspirators were jubilant over the fact that they had, by the removal of General McClellan, paved the way to a partizan control of the army. Their rejoicing was short. The disorganized forces under General Pope, fleeing before the rebels, sought safety in the intrenchments about Washington, which General McClellan's prudence and skill had provided. The President, at the White House, trembled for the safety of the Capital, and it was evident that a portion of the rebel army contemplated the invasion of Maryland and perhaps of Pennsylvania. An emergency was upon him. The safety of the country absolutely required the most decisive and vigorous action, and that the ablest General should be placed in command of the troops. With this "pressure" upon him, the President could not, did not hesitate. He called upon General McClellan to take command of the army. Ever ready to serve his country, in any capacity in which he might be needed, he nobly responded to the call. With his staff, he visited the disheartened troops. His presence, and the announcement to the army that he was again to lead them to the field, at once aroused an enthusiasm which knew no bounds. As if by magic, confused masses of men formed into regiments and brigades, and within five days from the time he resumed command, he marched from Washington to Rockville, at the head of more than fifty thousand noble veterans, who made the air resound with plaudits for their noble chieftain. He commenced

THE CAMPAIGN IN MARYLAND.

On the fourteenth day of September, seven days after leaving Washington, he fought and nobly won the fierce battle of South Mountain, driving, after a determined fight, the enemy from their strongholds.

Three days after, on September 17th, he fought the memorable battle of Antietam, against superior forces of the enemy, and defeated them after a terrible struggle. It was emphatically the great battle of the war. Unaided by gunboats, which had played an important part in most of our important battles—opposed by an enemy elated by previous successes, and led by the most skilful rebel generals, he came out victorious. But it was a deadly struggle, and it left his army exhausted

and much broken. A council of all the Generals was called in the evening. General McClellan knowing the anxiety of the Government and the people for complete success over the enemy, and satisfied that the army of the enemy were at least as exhausted and broken as his own, favored a renewal of the conflict in the morning. But every other General in the council was opposed to it, and he wisely yielded to their unanimous judgment. The next day was occupied in burying the dead. On the second day the enemy retreated into Virginia. Ten days after, September 29th, General McClellan crossed the Potomac. He advanced in the direction of Culpepper, guarding the gaps in the mountains on his right as he proceeded. His army was not in a condition to engage the enemy. He needed important supplies, which were not forwarded, and he was pushed by the authorities at Washington to advance, and finally received "peremptory orders" to attack the enemy.

General McClellan wrote the President, giving him an exact account of the condition of the army, saying, nevertheless, that if the President should say he must go forward, he would. The reply was, that he could not be expected to effect impossibilities. Upon this he acted, until ready to move. At the earliest practicable moment he commenced his advance, and whilst the whole army was in motion against the enemy, with an expectation that within five days a decisive blow would be struck, he, on the seventh of November, received notice of his dismissal and the appointment of General Burnside in his place. This closed the connection of General McClellan with the Army of the Potomac.

RECAPITULATION AND CONCLUSION.

No one can read the history of the campaigns of General McClellan, without being satisfied that the charges against him for slowness, hesitation, and want of energy in his operations, are all untrue.

His enemies admit that he is prudent, a superior engineer, and an excellent organizer of troops. These are three great qualifications for a Commanding General. He exhibited these qualities in a most remarkable manner in his labors during the three winter months of 1861 and 1862. He decided upon all the plans for the varied operations of our different armies. He exhibited the greatest engineering skill in the location and erection of the splendid fortifications about Washington. In that brief period he organized and disciplined the noble army of the Potomac, so

that in the spring it was prepared to take the field with the effectiveness of veteran troops. He prepared an ample supply of the best artillery, which in more than one instance was the salvation of the army. He prepared and collected vast amounts of munitions and supplies, and in the mean time, by his intercourse with his army and the exhibition to them of his great qualities he gained their confidence, which is of the utmost importance for success, particularly with an American army.

When the hour for active movements in the field had come, he exhibited an energy and decision never surpassed. Although his plans were thwarted, and he was obliged to change his entire system of operations, he, in the short space of *twenty-two days*, perfected his works, and placed his heavy guns in position for the siege of Yorktown. Upon its evacuation he pursued the enemy with the utmost vigor, defeating them at Williamsburg and West Point. The same month he fought the battles of Hanover Court House and Fair Oaks.

Upon receiving intelligence that he was not to be supported by General McDowell, as before promised, he proceeded to make most laborious preparations for an advance on the Confederate Capital with the troops under his immediate command. Before he had finished the necessary preparations the forces of the enemy were so greatly increased that it was necessary for him to fall back on the James River. He undertook this movement in the face of the enemy, who were vastly superior in numbers, and exhibited in the memorable seven days' fights the most consummate energy and military skill. In every battle on the Peninsula he showed all the qualities of a great and prudent General. The great object of his mission was not accomplished, but the blame does not rest on him.

If his original plan had not been interfered with Richmond would inevitably have fallen, and if McDowell had afterwards been permitted to co-operate with him from Fredericksburg, as promised, no one now doubts what would have been the result. When again he was called to the command of the army, after its defeat under General Pope, he proved, in the most wonderful degree, his transcendent abilities. He took command of a discomfited and demoralized army. Within fifteen days from the date of his appointment he led that army against the rebel host, before which they had so recently fled, and fought and won two great battles. It would seem that this should forever after have silenced the enemy in his rear. But this was not the result. Radical-

ism was triumphant. During the past few months it had made gigantic strides to power. It had at last taken the President an unwilling captive. Its batteries were no longer masked. It reared its hydra head at noonday. General McClellan was in the way of its progress, and he must be struck down, no matter what the cost. The standard of party was raised above the banner of the country. The Administration, which could not, to insure the capture of Richmond, furnish General McClellan thirty-five thousand additional troops, could raise a new army of six hundred thousand men for the new order of things. The object of the conspirators was being accomplished. The war had been protracted, and they had obtained their proclamation for emancipation. Secresy was no longer necessary. Senator Chandler and others struck the key-note in Congress, and Senator Trumbull, of Illinois, expressed their purposes in a speech in Michigan, in October, in which he said to the people :

“ I thank God that the Federal arms were defeated at Bull Run, and on the Peninsula, and under Pope, for without such defeats we should not have had the emancipation proclamation. Had we won at Bull Run, or taken Richmond, the backbone of the rebellion would have been broken, and the Union would have been restored with slavery remaining in it.”

GENERAL McCLELLAN'S ORDER OF AUGUST NINTH.

There are few productions of the last two years which exhibit a more thorough knowledge of the principle which should govern not only the army but the government and the people in the conduct of the present war, than the subjoined order of Gen. McClellan of August 9. It is equally worthy the pen of a profound statesman and of a commander of armies.

“ General Orders — No. 154.

“ HEAD-QUARTERS OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,

“ *Camp near Harrison's Landing, Va., August 9, 1862.*

“ The Major-General Commanding directs the attention of the officers and soldiers of the Army of the Potomac to the following executive order of the President, which has been officially published : —

‘ WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, *July 22, 1862.*

‘ First. *Ordered* : That military commanders within the States of Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas,

and Arkansas, in an orderly manner seize and use any property, real and personal, which may be necessary or convenient for their several commands for supplies, or for other military purposes; and that, while property may be destroyed for proper military objects, none shall be destroyed in wantonness and malice.

‘Second. That military and naval commanders shall employ as laborers, within and from said States, so many persons of African descent as can be advantageously used for military or naval purposes, giving them reasonable wages for their labor.

‘Third. That as to both property and persons of African descent, accounts shall be kept sufficiently accurate and in detail, to show quantities and amounts, and from whom both property and such persons shall have come, as a basis upon which compensation shall be made in proper cases; and the several departments of this government shall attend to and perform their appropriate parts towards the execution of these orders.

‘By order of the President.

‘EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War.*’

“No official copy of this order has been received at these headquarters, and the General Commanding has, for this reason, delayed the issuing of a general order to carry into effect the views and directions of the President. Some recent occurrences in this army have, however, shown that it has become necessary to do so, to prevent this executive order being made a pretext for military license.

“The order of the President accords so substantially with the course uniformly pursued by this army on this peninsula, under the orders and instructions of the General Commanding, that no material change in any respect is required thereby in its conduct and government.

“Personal property necessary or convenient for supplies or other military purposes of this army will be, as heretofore, seized and used by the proper quarter-master or subsistence officers, upon the orders of commanders of army corps; or, in case of troops employed on detached service, where army corps commanders are not accessible, by order of the officer in command of such detached force.

“In all cases the officers thus making the seizures shall take an account showing the kind and quantities of property seized, and by whose command; the amounts of its estimated value, and the names of the persons from whom the same shall have come. Whenever circumstances admit of so doing, receipts will be given to the owners or their agents, specifying simply the particulars above mentioned. Copies of all such accounts

and receipts will be transmitted in the usual manner, by the officers making them, to these head-quarters.

“ All officers and soldiers of this army are enjoined and ordered to abstain from all seizures of private property, except in the mode above prescribed; all other appropriations will be regarded and punished as pillage. The idea that private property may be plundered with impunity is, perhaps, the very worst that can pervade an army. Marauding degrades as men and demoralizes as soldiers all who engage in it, and returns them to their homes unfitted for the pursuits of honest industry. This army is composed mostly of young men, and the General Commanding, to whose care they are entrusted, owes it to the parents who have sent their sons, and to the communities who have sent the flower of their youth into the military service of their country, to warn and restrain them from an evil so pernicious.

“ The order of the President requires the application of a similar rule in the use of real property. This, however, does not apply to such uses as are inseparable from military operations— to wit, marches, camps, pasturage, hospitals, depots, quarters, and damages occasioned by active hostilities; but no use should be made or injury done to real property beyond what is actually necessary or convenient for military purposes.

“ The destruction of any species of property in wantonness or malice is expressly prohibited by the President’s order, as well as by the Articles of War and the usages of all civilized nations. All commanding officers are earnestly enjoined to exercise the utmost vigilance on this subject. Straggling and trespassing are the invariable indications of a tendency to this description of crime.

“ Inhabitants, especially women and children, remaining peaceably at their homes, must not be molested; and wherever commanding officers find families peculiarly exposed in their persons or property to marauding from this army, they will as heretofore, so far as they can do so with safety and without detriment to the service, post guards for their protection.

“ In protecting private property, no reference is intended to persons held to service or labor by reason of African descent. *Such persons will be regarded by this army as they heretofore have been, as occupying simply a peculiar legal status under state laws, which condition the military authorities of the United States are not required to regard at all in dis-*

tricts where military operations are made necessary by the rebellious action of the state governments.

“Persons subject to suspicion of hostile purposes, residing or being near our forces, will be, as heretofore, subject to arrest and detention, until the cause of necessity is removed. All such arrested parties will be sent, as usual, to the Provost Marshal General, with a statement of the facts in each case.

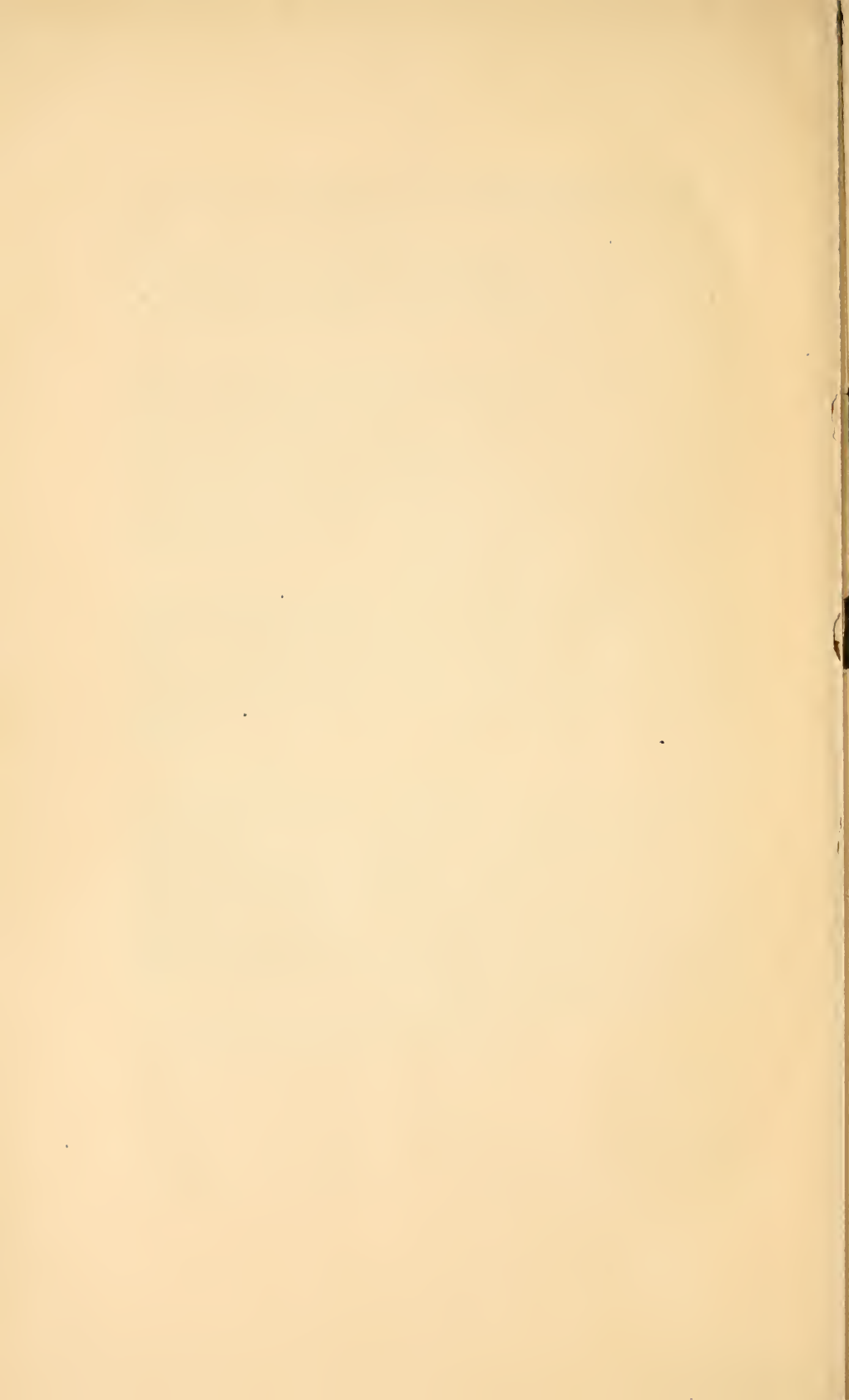
“The General Commanding takes this occasion to remind the officers and soldiers of this army that we are engaged in supporting the Constitution and Laws of the United States, and in suppressing rebellion against their authority; that we are not engaged in a war of rapine, revenge, or subjugation; that this is not a contest against populations, but against armed forces and political organizations; that it is a struggle carried on within the United States, and should be conducted by us upon the highest principles known to Christian civilization.

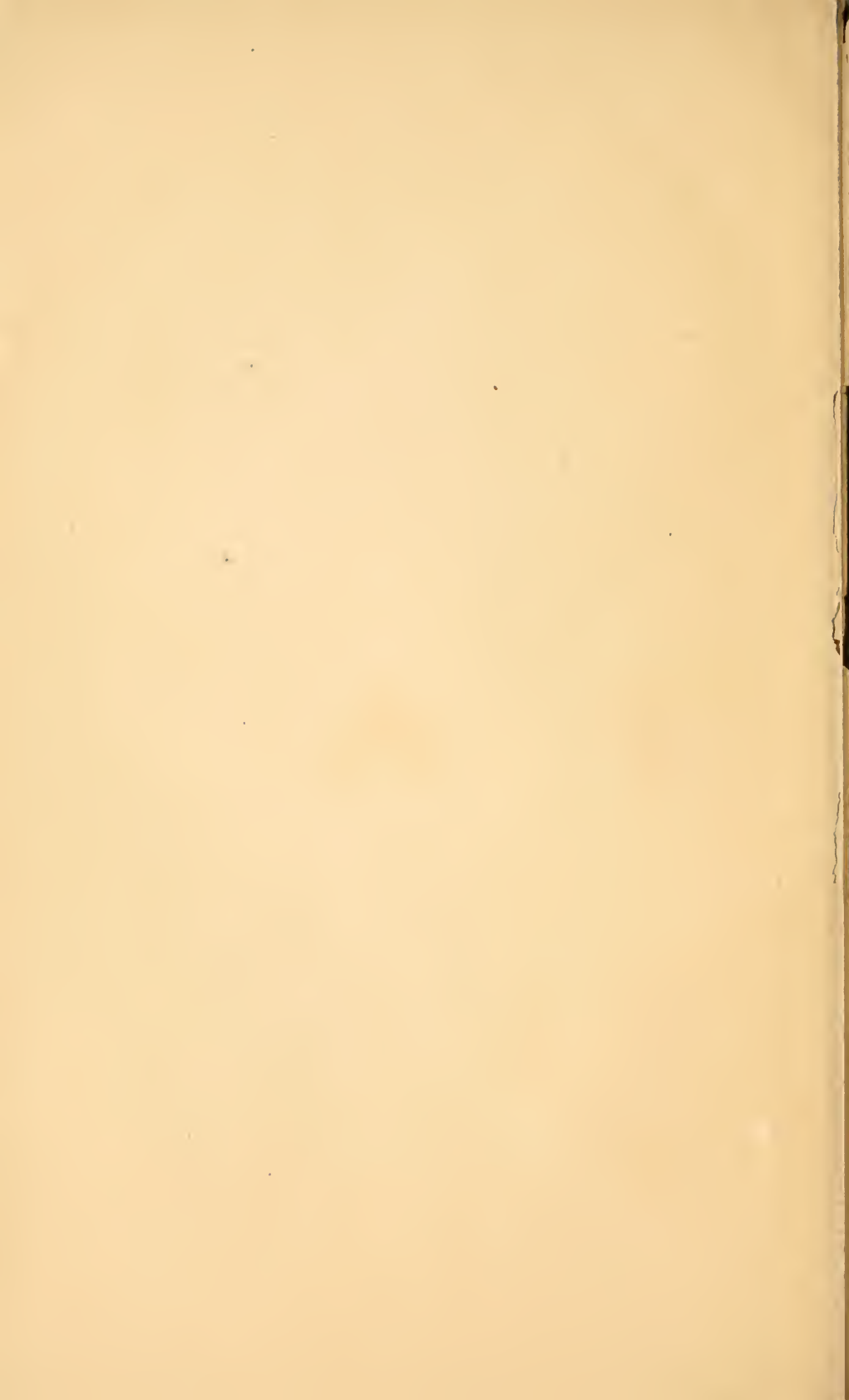
“Since this army commenced active operations, persons of African descent, including those held to service or labor under state laws, have always been received, protected, and employed as laborers, at wages. Hereafter it shall be the duty of the Provost Marshal General to cause lists to be made of all persons of African descent, employed in the army as laborers for military purposes, such lists being made sufficiently accurate and in detail, to show from whom such persons shall have come.

“Persons so subject and so employed have always understood that after being received into the military service of the United States, in any capacity, they could never be reclaimed by their former holders. Except upon such understanding on their part the order of the President, as to this class of persons, would be inoperative. The General Commanding therefore feels authorized to declare to all such employees, that they will receive permanent military protection against any compulsory return to a condition of servitude.

“By command of Major-General McClellan.

“S. WILLIAMS, *Assistant Adjutant-General.*”





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