

This representation, that President Lincoln preferred the sacrifice of one hundred thousand men to the confession of previous error; that he overruled and directed Grant, just made lieutenant-general for the purpose of taking command and directing all the armies and military movements, is an after-thought to cast from the shoulders of General Grant the responsibility of the "bloody march" and place it upon the kind-hearted president. The whole statement is ungenerous and unjust, and in conflict with the character of both the president and the lieutenant-general.

All the facts and details of current events of the period evince the mistake of General Taylor's statement. General Grant returned from Nashville about the first of April, visited Hampton Roads, arranged for the army of the James to ascend that river, and then joining General Meade he placed himself at the head of the army of the Potomac. How communicative he was to the president may be seen from the following encouraging letter, written on the 30th of April, three days before the army broke camp and took up its line of march towards Richmond:—

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, }  
April 30, 1864. }

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL GRANT,—  
Not expecting to see you before the spring campaign opens, I wish to express

in this way my entire satisfaction with what you have done up to this time, so far as I understand it. The particulars of your plans I neither know nor seek to know. You are vigilant and self-reliant, and, pleased with this, I wish not to obtrude any restraints or constraints upon you. While I am very anxious that any great disaster or capture of our men in great numbers shall be avoided, I know that these points are less likely to escape your attention than they would mine. If there be anything wanting which is within my power to give, do not fail to let me know it. And now, with a brave army and a just cause, may God sustain you.  
Yours very truly,

A. LINCOLN.

There is nothing dictatorial in this letter: "The particulars of your plans I neither know nor seek to know," "I wish not to obtrude any restraints or constraints upon you," "I am very anxious that any great disaster or capture of our men in great numbers shall be avoided," etc.

Can any one believe for a moment that the author of that letter would consent to the additional loss of one hundred thousand men "sooner than the adoption of a plan that would be taken by the public as a confession of previous error"? The whole is a calumny on the humane, self-sacrificing, and lion-hearted Lincoln.

*Gideon Welles.*

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## THE STAFF OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY.

As the staff of our army is that portion by which the annual appropriations for the support of the army are expended, a description of its duties, with some discussion of the manner in which these duties should be performed, would seem to be a matter not only of grave political importance, at this time especially,

but of much personal interest to any one who pays taxes, or who, as a voter, has a voice in the selection of the different members of the government. Each voter or taxpayer in the country has an interest in requiring the efficiency of the staff to be raised to the highest degree, for by such efficiency only can the duties of the

army be performed in the most economical manner.

By such efficiency on the part of the staff, it is believed that our army might, if necessity should require it, be largely increased without additional cost to the country.

The annual estimates for the support of the army are prepared solely by the staff, presumed to be experts, under the direction of the secretary of war, and the appropriations are, under his supervision, expended by it. If the officers composing it are ignorant of their duties, or negligent in the discharge of them, not only will the country be forced to pay excessive prices for the supplies required by the army, but the army itself will be crippled in its action by the indifferent material furnished it. As the proficiency of the staff is increased, so will the annual estimates for the support of the army approach accuracy; and the greater this proficiency, the more judiciously and economically will the annual appropriations be expended. The employment of inefficient staff officers is precisely similar to that of ignorant agents for the conduct of any large business interest in private life. In such business, if an agent is unskillful or from any cause incompetent, he is immediately discharged. If, on the other hand, he is attentive and skillful in the transaction of the business intrusted to him, his promotion is assured. His business tact and enterprise, combined with his good character as a man, alone determine his position, and if he is wanting in either of these, few opportunities for advancement are left him. Unfortunately, this is not the case in the army. However ignorant of his duties an officer may be, or incompetent in their discharge, his position and promotion are assured so long as he is guilty of no serious violation of law; and should his longevity be sufficient, he is promoted to the higher grades with the same certainty as are those who are most skillful and competent. By law he holds his commission during good behavior, and he is entitled to his promotion in the same manner and upon the same terms as the best. If he

is gifted with a good constitution, and can by avoidance of exposure prolong his life so as to outlive those who are above him in rank, he reaches the higher and more important grades with equal certainty.

Our army presents the only known example of a business or profession, either public or private, in which incompetency and want of zeal bring the same substantial rewards as energy, capacity, and active attention to duty. Such a system of promotion is in violation of all the rules of common sense by which men are governed, as well as of those by which they are incited to strive for superior excellence, and the condition of our army at the outbreak of the rebellion affords an excellent example of its inevitable result. At that time the superior grades of the army were filled by old men, who, having outlived all above them, had been regularly promoted, in accordance with this system, to the positions which they occupied, regardless of the well-known fact that in the majority of instances they were unfitted, both by age and infirmity, to perform any military duty whatever. The spectacle was so pitiable, and the lesson it taught so apparent, that it might be supposed the government would have profited by such crushing experience, and been led by it to the adoption of wiser measures. Such, however, was not the case. Our system of army promotion is the same to-day as before the rebellion, and we are slowly, but surely, approaching the same result, from which the same experience, disastrous as it was to the country, must necessarily follow. At the close of the rebellion, and with the sad experience it had taught still before us, some effort at a change was made. The army was reorganized, and many young officers who had acquired experience, both of the regular and volunteer force, and who had especially distinguished themselves, were deservedly placed in high positions; but this spasmodic effort at reform was deemed sufficient, and we have again fallen back into the system of promotion by seniority, which, unless some dire necessity forces a change, must render the

condition of our army equally as deplorable as when the rebellion commenced, by filling its superior grades by worn-out and superannuated old men. It seems needless to describe the effect which this system must produce upon the subordinate and junior officers of the army. In most instances it is deadening to all effort at improvement or professional skill, and suggests the natural conclusion: that, as superior rank is obtained only by longevity, each should strive to avoid all exposure, hardships, or dangers by which health may be impaired or life risked. But few years in our service are necessary to teach the young officer that the glowing enthusiasm for his profession with which he entered it is wasted, and that the only reward he can hope to obtain is the satisfaction a sense of having faithfully performed his duty brings him. This feeling, by which the large majority of our officers is governed, certainly leads to a kind of efficiency, but it is not sufficient to cause men to undergo with alacrity and cheerfulness the hardships and dangers incident to a military life, and which in a campaign, if not met with enthusiasm, usually result in disaster or partial success only.

Ruinous as the system is to the efficiency of the line, it is even more so to the staff of the army. Under ordinary circumstances the individual responsibility of the line officer is by no means so great as that of the staff officer, nor are his duties so complicated. The duties of the line are generally performed by bodies of troops of greater or less size, and in accordance with specific orders or well-known custom and regulations. Its officers are usually under direct military supervision; so that not only can prompt and efficient discharge of duty be exacted, but, if necessary, the punishment required by law for any neglect can be inflicted. Besides, serving as the line officer ordinarily does, under the eye of a military superior and in the presence of his brother officers, he is naturally led to increased exertion. On the other hand, the officers of the staff are frequently posted at places remote from superior authority, where their duties are special,

and necessarily left largely to their own discretion. If at head-quarters, the commanding general can do little more than exercise a general supervision over them; for their duties are such as can be properly performed only by men who have had previous training therein, and it is rarely the case that the general either is or can be familiar with the details of such duties, or that he has the time to study them.

In other armies a certain number of vacancies as they occur are filled by selection, and this should be done in ours. The reason usually assigned in opposition to this is, that in the United States the officers thus chosen would not be always the most deserving, and that political influence rather than personal merit would determine the selection. Granted that this is true, and that such a system would work evil to the service, yet it is contended that the evil would be temporary, for no reason is known why the deserving officer should not stand upon the same ground with such influence as the undeserving; and certainly that course which forces officers to familiarize themselves with the politics of the country, which brings them into closer contact with its representative men than is now the case, cannot fail to be of benefit, not only to each individual officer, but to the public service.

The staff of our army may properly be divided into two classes, namely: the general staff, which is the adjutant-general's department, and the special staff, comprising the quartermaster's, the commissary, the medical, and the ordnance departments, ordinarily called the supply departments, the inspector-general's and the engineer departments, the signal bureau, and the bureau of military justice. The classification is based upon the nature of the duties, whether general or special, to be performed by the officers of each branch. This division of staff labor, with the rank and number of officers composing the various branches, is the result of long experience and many experiments; and though the trial to which it was subjected by the war of the rebellion was

severe, it was clearly demonstrated that, with all its imperfections, the system was a good one, and afforded every facility required by the sudden calling into service of so many men to meet the emergency. The supply departments especially gave the best evidence that their organization and methods of work were good, as modern history affords no example in which the difficulties of supplying such large bodies of troops, over so wide a field of operations and at such distances from the centres of supply, were so great; or in which an army, either large or small, has been better fed, better clothed, received better medical attendance, or been better armed than ours during the war of the rebellion. Indeed, the successful manner in which it was equipped and cared for at that time, notwithstanding the almost insurmountable obstacles to be overcome, has challenged the admiration of the world, and furnished examples which the military nations of Europe have not been slow to adopt, with such modifications as are readily suggested by good judgment and economy. Necessity developed originality of both thought and action, and ingenuity accomplished success; but this success was at an extravagant cost, which could have been avoided had the government, previous to the war, taken measures to educate its staff officers in all the duties pertaining to their profession. It may be said that the portion of the staff which had charge of the organization and mustering into service, as well as of the disbandment of our volunteer army, was equally fortunate in its work. The accurate enrollment of so many men, their prompt transportation to the distant places where their services were required, their successful muster out when the war closed, at their places of residence, without confusion, and in such manner that each man was enabled to receive without delay all due him from the government, may certainly challenge criticism, and is without a parallel. But the same extravagance attended this as did the supply of our armies, and as with the latter this unnecessary cost was the result of the short-

sighted policy previously pursued towards the staff of our army. Whatever success attended the efforts of our staff during the rebellion was due solely to the lavish and wasteful use of the public credit, combined with the energetic and natural, but by no means educated, ingenuity of the younger staff officers.

In the absence of experience and practical understanding of the enlarged duties forced upon these officers by the war, an expenditure far beyond what was really required for the support of the army was a necessity. Without this expenditure, extravagant as it was, we should have been unable to keep in the field armies of sufficient size to overcome the rebellion; but it is claimed, and is susceptible of proof, that this extravagance could have been avoided had the administration of army affairs been conducted by the government in accordance with the rules by which any private business is carried on. It was not the fault of the officers that business qualification and knowledge had not previously been required of them, and that they had in reality been to a great extent deprived of any opportunity of acquiring such knowledge. With what justice, for example, could an officer who had for years been solely engaged in the staff duties of a frontier post, garrisoned rarely by more than a hundred men, be expected to assume similar duties pertaining to an army, without some mismanagement and wasteful extravagance? To hope for any other result was simply to expect an impossibility; and yet, singular as it may appear, both our government and people were of opinion that staff officers, who as boys had received theoretically a military education at West Point, and who as officers had been trained in the experience of small frontier posts, and in no other, were capable, in every sense, of conducting staff duty on the largest scale.

A thorough knowledge of the general rules of business is as necessary for the proper administration of army affairs as it is in any civil pursuit. No staff officer can perform his duties advantageously for the government who does not

apply these rules in every transaction. Besides possessing this general business capacity, he should, if belonging to a supply department, understand and be familiar with the rules by which special trade in each of the articles he is required to supply is governed. The duties of the officers of the commissary department, for example, are to purchase and distribute in bulk the various articles of subsistence required by the different portions of the army. It is impossible that the officers of this department can judiciously purchase, or even distribute, the various articles, some of domestic, others of foreign growth or manufacture, which they are called on to furnish, if they do not well understand and apply the rules which govern trade in such articles. Or, to cite another and even stronger example: the quartermaster's department is charged with supplying the army its clothing, quarters, transportation, cavalry horses and mules, forage, fuel, stationery, tentage, horse medicines, and all authorized articles not furnished by any other portion of the staff. It is evident that for the performance of this duty there is required on the part of its officers a good business knowledge of the lumber and building trades, the grain trade, the trade in horses and mules, of the railroad and shipping business, of freighting over the Western prairies, of the prices of skilled and unskilled labor, as well as of the trades pertaining to many other branches of industry. If these officers do not possess this information, or, in other words, if they are not practical business men, it is not possible that they can properly estimate for the amount required to supply the army with these articles, or that they can judiciously expend the appropriations made by Congress for their purchase, and, as is easily understood, they will be more than liable to purchase poor material at an extravagant cost. It was the want of this business knowledge on the part of some of our staff officers which caused portions of our army to be supplied with shoddy clothing, indifferent arms, worthless ammunition, etc., at the beginning of

the rebellion, and which even now, in spite of the experience it gave us, causes in some instances such discharge of staff duty as would, if applied to the transaction of any private business, lead to its bankruptcy in a few months.

The medical and engineer departments and the bureau of military justice approximate most closely to the similar professions in civil life. As the improvements, discoveries, and practice in these departments are of much service to the corresponding civil professions, so their officers should be required to familiarize themselves with the progress made by these professions, and with the business rules by which they are governed, in order that the government may receive the benefit which such professional progress must work by increasing the capacity and efficiency of its officers.

To the officers of the adjutant-general's and inspector-general's departments a detailed knowledge of special business would not seem so necessary; but being frequently required to inspect the operations of the supply departments, or called on to express opinions or make recommendations relative to the work of all the departments, a general knowledge of business, as well as the various interests with which each is charged, is absolutely essential to them. How otherwise can an officer who belongs to one of these departments, and is ordered, for example, to inspect a quartermaster's depot or an ordnance arsenal, judge correctly of the manner in which duty is performed thereat, or whether the government money is expended to the best advantage? Without this information, of what value is his opinion as to whether the material necessary in the manufacture of supplies is purchased judiciously; whether the labor, both skilled and unskilled, is employed at the most reasonable rates; or whether the material and labor are used to the greatest advantage?

But vitally necessary as is this knowledge to staff officers, it is of equal importance that they understand thoroughly the principles of the military profes-

sion. To the officers of the general staff especially is this familiarity with military principles a necessity. In the various branches of the special staff, duties are performed in accordance with law, regulation, or precedent, which are sufficiently clear and explicit to prevent any disastrous result. This is the case with the general staff officer in the discharge of the ordinary routine duties intrusted to him; but the occasions are not rare, particularly in time of war, when he has neither precedent nor regulation to guide him, and when, thrown upon his own resources, he is forced to act with the full knowledge that an error of judgment on his part may, and probably will, lead to serious disaster. The routine duty required of the general staff can easily be performed by any officer of ordinary capacity; but so uncertain and varied are the duties which the general staff is at times expected to discharge that they have never been defined in our army by regulation, and can with difficulty be described. In general terms, these more important duties require that the general staff officer shall familiarize himself with everything pertaining to the army, so that he may perform satisfactorily, by the general's order or in accordance with his plans, all that which it is the general's duty to do, but which he cannot attend to in person. During emergencies, and in the absence of the general, it is the province of the general staff officer to assume all responsibility as his representative, and to give all needed orders to meet the case in his name, although the emergency may have been unforeseen, and no measures taken to meet it. It is impossible that a commanding general can be present on every important occasion arising in the constantly changing circumstances of a battle or campaign, or that he can foresee every contingency and give proper orders to meet it; and he is necessarily compelled, under such conditions, to trust to the judgment and skill of these officers. In addition to the foregoing, it is their duty to place troops in line of battle, and to superintend the march of the different columns of an army so that the plan of a

campaign may be successfully carried out. Such duties require, on their part, thorough knowledge of the relative value of each arm on the battle-field and in the general campaign; of the best manner in which the different arms should be placed, in view of the ground on which they are to fight or over which they are to march, so that the best result may be obtained by their combined efforts; of the tactics of the different arms; and, above all things, of the *personnel* of the army. A general staff officer, intrusted as he is with such responsible duties, cannot hope to perform them successfully unless he knows thoroughly the reputation for discipline, instruction, and courage which each body of troops in the army bears, and is well acquainted with the peculiar personal characteristics of the officers who command them. Many other similar duties devolve upon general staff officers, but those mentioned are the most important, and are sufficient of themselves to show, beyond a doubt, that there should be required of them a high degree of proficiency and great skill in the military profession, or, in other words, that they should be amongst the most consummate soldiers an army contains. At the outbreak of the rebellion the officers composing our general staff were only in rare instances allowed to perform the important duties which have been described. Personal preference on the part of commanding generals usually led them to select for this purpose officers who in the majority of cases were without previous experience, and who in some cases were unfitted, by want of capacity and education, for the responsible positions in which they were placed. It was due to this, probably, more than to any other cause, that our military operations during the first years of the war were conducted without proper combination, that many of our earlier battles were fought in such a manner that the efforts of our troops were scattered and spasmodic, and that whatever successes they obtained were incomplete and indecisive. So universal was the custom, during the rebellion, to select officers without expe-

rience or training for the performance of general staff duty that the necessity for a competent corps of staff officers seems no longer recognized; and the general staff corps of our army, with a few exceptions, is now, and has been for years, simply a special staff department, the duties of which are of the most ordinary routine character.

The method ordinarily pursued, by which officers are appointed into our staff, is not such as enables the government always to obtain for the staff those whose merit best fits them for such duties; nor is the manner in which service is required of them that best calculated to develop such fitness for it as they may possess. Usually, officers are appointed into the staff departments whose friends have sufficient influence to obtain such positions for them. Occasionally, and at rare intervals, one is appointed without such influence, who has shown himself exceptionally competent, and who, in consequence of the good record he has made, is offered the staff position. The competition for these places is so great, however, that the first may be regarded as the rule of appointment, although the methods in the medical, ordnance, and engineer departments are exceptions to the rule. No valid objection can be urged against this rule, for it may generally be said that the personnel of our staff is more than ordinarily good. The error is to be found not so much in the manner of appointment as in that of the assignment of appointees to the different departments of the staff. Excepting in the departments above mentioned, no effort is made by the study of their records as officers, or by any examination of their characters or capacities, to ascertain for what particular portions of the staff they are by nature and education best fitted. Possibly the applicant may have been an excellent officer with troops, and capable of excelling in the general staff; but if the vacancy existed in the quartermaster's or commissary department, he would be assigned to it, regardless of his capacity for the management of business affairs, or of his fitness for the position. Perhaps the vacancy may occur

in the general staff, and if so the applicant would be assigned to it, although he may never have served with troops, is ignorant of their duties, and may be incapable of learning them. In other words, and strange as it may appear, except in the medical, ordnance, and engineer departments, it is an accident if an officer seeking a staff position in our army ever enters that portion of it the duties of which he is best qualified to perform.

In the first of the two departments mentioned as exceptions (the medical and ordnance), no applicant can be appointed until he has been pronounced competent in character and capacity by a board of examining officers. Nor can an officer, in either of the two, be promoted until he has passed a similar examination before a board of officers, senior to himself. The appointees of the engineer department are exclusively from the cadets who graduate highest in their classes at the military academy, and no engineer officer below the rank of field officer can be promoted to a higher grade until he shall have passed an examination before a board of three engineers, senior in rank to himself. In each of the three departments great care is exercised in the selections of the examining boards, and the examinations are rigid and thorough. In each, provision by law is made that when an officer fails to pass the examinations required for promotion, he is forced to give way to the one next in rank capable of undergoing the test, who after such examination receives the promotion. In each of these departments, officers are generally employed upon duty for which they have shown special qualification, and the natural result has been the competent education of a body of officers, who not only understand thoroughly the special duties of their own departments, but who are equally familiar with the practice of the corresponding professions in civil life. The superior officers of the medical department have supplemented this system of examinations by a wise course of action, having for its object the encouragement and

special development of each subordinate medical officer. Every inducement to study is held out to them, every opportunity for advancement presented them; and it may truly be said that our medical department is to-day the equal of any in the world.

Having been appointed to a particular staff department, whatever his capacity for the position, the officer cannot afterwards be changed; nor can he transfer to another, unless some one is willing to exchange with him, which, as such changes usually involve loss of rank to one or both, is of rare occurrence. His appointment having been granted him, his aptitude for its duties, save in the departments mentioned as exceptions, is of minor consequence. His position is fixed, and cannot be changed, and he learns his duties or not, as best suits himself. He must at least commit no overt act which may lead to his trial by court-martial; keep his property and pecuniary accountability, if he has any, correct; be careful to have his official accounts, returns, etc., prepared neatly, and promptly rendered in the manner required by the regulations of the army; and he will perhaps not only acquire a reputation for efficiency, but his chance for promotion to the higher grades will be as good as that of the best. Should he be fortunate in his assignment, or by industry and application develop a fitness for his duties, the probabilities are that he will many times be called on to perform duties which should have devolved on some one else, unfitted and incompetent by his own fault to discharge them. The penalty paid in this manner sometimes, by a good officer, contributes by no means to prolonged effort on his part to increase his efficiency. On the contrary, finding that special aptitude for his duties, or activity in their discharge, results only in personal inconvenience, with no corresponding advantage to himself, and that if he lives sufficiently long his chances of promotion are as good as those of any one else, he soon loses all ambition, and ceases to strive for excellence. It is not surprising that our staff contains many officers who have neither

taste nor talent for their duties; that there are others in it who, having aptitude, have no ambition to excel in them; and that the large majority of its officers are content to remain, without exertion, what they are, rather than strive to fit themselves for positions which prolonged life only can give them, and for which, when received, old age and infirmity may have rendered them incompetent.

Affixing no reward for excellence, and ignoring, to a great extent, all struggle on the officer's part for capacity and improvement, the policy of the government is to treat all as equally good. It is true, there are some few whose sins of omission and commission not even this charity will cover; but when one of these has so far transgressed, in the opinion of the authorities, as to be useless as an officer, he is frequently placed upon what is called "awaiting orders," where he is sometimes better situated than when on duty. During an officer's service in the staff, he is at irregular intervals changed from one station to another, for the performance of the duties of his department at the place where he may be located. His fitness for the duties incident to any station is rarely considered in assigning him to such station: so that a quartermaster, for example, who has shown special capacity for active service with troops in the field may, according to the system, be transferred from that duty to a depot for the manufacturing of army clothing. Or, an officer of the adjutant-general's department, practically ignorant, perhaps, of the duties pertaining to troops in the Indian country, may be and is frequently sent to the head-quarters of a frontier military department, where in the absence of its commander he is called on to control all military affairs, and even at times give orders for the conduct of a campaign against hostile Indians.

The defects of the staff are due more to its management than to any other cause, and it is in curing these defects that every citizen of the country should interest himself. They are principally the occasion of the enormous and largely unnecessary appropriations for the sup-



port of the army, of the heavy taxation necessary to meet such appropriations, and of the wasteful but unintentional extravagance with which our army administration is conducted. If these defects were cured, there can be no doubt that our military establishment would cost us far less than at present, while its efficiency would be greatly increased; and that, with the same appropriations as are now made for the support of the army, we should be able to maintain a military force largely in excess of that we now have in service. It is claimed that the remedy for the errors of our staff system can be readily and easily found. The condition of the medical department is positive evidence that the system pursued in it is wise, and well adapted for the improvement of its officers; and this system should be made applicable, by legislation, to all the departments of the staff. Promotion by seniority, as a rule, should be done away with, and a certain number of vacancies, as they occur, filled by selection. Chiefs of staff departments should be expected, and if necessary required, to familiarize themselves more with the army and its operations than has sometimes previously been the case, when theory, on their part, has taken the place of practice, and the head of a staff department has not only never participated in any other military operations than the drills of the corps of cadets, but has perhaps rarely seen as many as a hundred soldiers in line and equipped for active service. They should be required to leave, to a great extent, the correspondence of their offices, with which their time is now principally occupied, to the care of competent subordinates, who should have charge of it under their direction, and by visits to the localities where the army is serving learn practically, instead of theoretical-

ly, as now, what the requirements and necessities of the service demand. Far more attention should be paid by them to the management and improvement of their officers than is now the case.

Each staff officer should serve sufficiently long with each arm of the line to learn so much of its appropriate duties as will enable him to perform understandingly his own staff duties; and every officer of the general staff should be required to familiarize himself, by tours of inspection and all other practicable means, with each portion of our country, as well as with the countries of our neighbors. Excepting a few of the oldest staff officers, who participated in the Mexican war, none of them, it is believed, know anything of Mexico, or speak its language, and it may safely be said that all of them are equally ignorant of Canada and Cuba. It is believed there are to-day officers in the staff departments, and perhaps even in the general staff, who are so ignorant of our own country and of military service on the frontier, who know so little of Indians and of their mode of warfare, that if ordered to proceed from one frontier post to another, through a hostile Indian country, they would be unable to conduct their marches or manage their escorts so as to insure their own safety.

If these reforms here suggested are adopted, and our army remain as at present organized, the annual appropriations now made for its support can in time of peace be largely reduced; they are now sufficient to support a more numerous army should an increase be desired. Such reforms would be instrumental in reducing the expenses of a war to the lowest limit, and would prevent the country from incurring, during its progress, a debt similar to that which now afflicts us.

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