

was executed. I believe some good men have been honestly misled, but that the plot existed and will cost the city dear there can be no question."

An Anecdote of Jefferson Davis.

JEFFERSON DAVIS was not by any means a general universal favorite among the Confederates, either soldiers or civilians. While many considered him arbitrary and self-willed, it is doubtful if any one man in the entire Confederacy for one moment doubted his honesty of purpose.

A year before the close of the war army orders brought me to Columbus, Georgia. At that place the Confederate Government had located a large ordnance establishment. An ordnance officer, Colonel Oladowski,—not unknown, I believe, in the old service,—one day handed me a heavy black object some six inches in diameter, saying, "What is that?" I answered, "A lump of coal." "Examine it closely," said he.

Taking a knife and cutting it, I found it to be a hollow iron casting roughly shaped to resemble coal, and covered with asphaltum or some such substance in which was baked coal dust and small lumps of coal, giving the whole the exact appearance of ordinary coal.

A number of similar pieces were exhibited, of various sizes and shapes. The officer explained that he had had them made, had carried some of them to Richmond and had exhibited them to President Davis, with a carefully prepared plan by which he proposed to have them sent by suitable men to various points on the Mississippi River where the Federal gun-boats coaled, and, after being filled with a most powerful explosive, deposited among the coal designed for the gun-boats, or even introduced into their bunkers. He had also perfected a plan to have them introduced into the Northern navy yards and in various foreign coaling stations of the United States navy. That it could have been done by shrewd and desperate men is beyond a doubt.

As the explosive with which they were to be filled was one of the most powerful, and only exploded by heat, they would not have been detected, and exploding in the furnace of a gun-boat would have sent all on board to the bottom.

The officer told me that when he exhibited them to Jefferson Davis the President was horrified, and furiously declared himself insulted that any man should have dared to suppose that he would be a party to any such unjustifiable mode of warfare; "and," said the officer, "the President's eye fairly blazed while he gave me such a blessing that I would have been glad to crawl into a rat-hole to get away from him. When he had exhausted his fury he said abruptly, 'Return to your station, sir, this very day.' I firmly believe he would have put me in arrest and preferred charges, but that he did not want the matter to become public."¹

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¹ In a letter written after this article was accepted, Dr. Terry says, "I have since heard, though I do not know if true, that the torpedoes spoken of were used on the Mississippi River." There does not appear to be official confirmation of this.—EDITOR.

Comments on "Abraham Lincoln: A History."

I.—MCLELLAN AND THE PEACE PARTY.

I HAVE read with deep interest Nicolay and Hay's history of Lincoln from its opening chapter to the present. While I believe that as a history of the lamented martyr President it is an excellent and in the main a correct work, I have found much in it, especially wherein it refers to General McClellan's conduct while in command of our armies, which seems to me to be unjust to a loyal and brave soldier whose lips are sealed in death. In the August CENTURY, at page 548, the writers use the following language:

The Democratic convention was finally called to meet in Chicago on the 29th of August. Much was expected from the strength and the audacity which the peace party in the Northwest had recently displayed, and the day of the meeting of the convention was *actually chosen by rebel emissaries in Canada* and their agents in the Western States for an outbreak which should effect that revolution in the Northwest which was the vague and chimerical dream that had been so long cherished and caressed in Richmond and Toronto.

I can see no motive in this paragraph other than that of throwing discredit upon the Democratic leaders of that day, and an attempt to throw around its standard-bearer, General McClellan, and his thousands of loyal friends, both in and out of the army, at least a filmy cloud of disloyalty.

All know that at that time, 1864, there was among all classes great and general dissatisfaction regarding the Administration in its conduct of the war. None doubted the loyalty, the integrity, or the honesty of the great war President, but our general want of success in the field, the numerous and rapid changes of our commanding generals, and above and beyond all the management of the War Department by Stanton and Halleck, apparently regardless of the wishes of the Executive, had begotten a feeling of unrest in the minds of all loyal people, both in and out of the army, and very largely the belief that Mr. Stanton especially had no desire to bring hostilities to a speedy determination by capturing Richmond and thus ending the war.

The overwhelming defeat of Vandaligham for governor of Ohio the fall previous, by an opponent without personal magnetism or individual strength, other than that he represented the spirit of national loyalty in the people after the great Democratic victories in New York and other Northern States in 1862, and without any considerable victories in the field meanwhile, had amply demonstrated that the "peace element" was to be despised rather than cultivated and made the controlling element in the party.

I personally had full means of knowing, and know that in the early months of 1864 it was the earnest desire of the "peace party" to possess themselves of the Democratic party machinery; that their great aim was to nominate Mr. Seymour of Connecticut for President and Mr. Vandaligham for Vice-President, and make the presidential struggle on that issue. To that end they endeavored to induce members of the National Committee to call an early convention, place the ticket in the field, and thus avail themselves of the nascent feeling of antagonism against the Administration. I was present at the house of George Greer in 28th street at one of these conferences, in the early part of 1864, at which I met Mr. Vandaligham and