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ABSTRACT

CHARLES ANDERSON DANA HIS EARLY LIFE AND CIVIL WAR CAREER

by Charles Vincent Spaniolo

Although the later period of Charles Anderson Dana's life, from 1867-1898, has been the subject of scholarly investigation, there exists no critical evaluation of his early life and his service in the American Civil War. Allan Nevins, in his sketch of Dana for the Dictionary of American Biography, suggests the need for such a study. This dissertation attempts to provide an appraisal of Dana's life from 1819-1865, with particular emphasis on the years 1861-1865.

The two major secondary works which detail Dana's formative years and his Civil War experience provide some useful information, but neither is completely satisfactory. Dana's Recollections of the Civil War was actually written by Ida M. Tarbell, who interviewed Dana in the last year of his life. Tarbell minimized some of the controversies in which Dana figured, and because of her role as a

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ghostwriter, she could not properly evaluate his role as Assistant Secretary of War. James Harrison Wilson, a close friend of Dana, wrote The Life of Charles A. Dana. This is the only full-length study, and although useful in some respects, it is hardly objective.

In conducting the research for this work, major reliance was placed on the following primary sources. The War of the Rebellion; A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, the personal papers of Charles A. Dana, Edwin M. Stanton, Horace Greeley, and James H. Wilson, in the Library of Congress; the James Shepherd Pike Papers in the Calais Free Library, Calais, Maine; and the Ida M. Tarbell Papers, Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania.

The major conclusions reached in this dissertation are: (1) Dana's early life, quite unlike his later years, demonstrated strong humanitarian sympathies. His association with Brook Farm, his observations in Europe during the revolutions of 1848, and his interest in socialist theory provide examples of these sympathies.

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(2) Dana exerted great influence during his years on the New York Tribune, 1847-1862. As managing editor he presided over the daily task of making up the paper, and supervised the activities of a sizable staff. During Greeley's frequent absences from New York, Dana was completely in charge. These two men often differed on editorial policy, and more than anything else, their disagreement on this basic issue caused Dana's forced resignation in 1862. (3) The Cairo Claims Commission, on which Dana served in the summer of 1862, somehow overlooked evidence of fraudulent transactions by the Quartermaster at Cairo, Illinois. The Commission's report is missing from the files of the War Department, a fact made all the more strange by Abraham Lincoln's involvement in the case. (4) As a War Department observer, Dana influenced both Lincoln and Edwin M. Stanton in their estimates of Union officers. The men that Dana praised emerged from the war with outstanding reputations; the men that he criticized were usually less fortunate. In several instances his

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reports were responsible for causing the removal of a leading officer, the best-known case involving William S. Rosecrans. Furthermore, Dana played an important role in Ulysses S. Grant's rise to prominence, and performed various services for him. On at least one occasion, Dana withheld information that might have damaged Grant's standing with Stanton and Lincoln. (5) Finally, Dana's role in evaluating military events and leaders was controversial. He was a civilian without any substantial experience in military affairs, yet his battlefield dispatches kept Stanton and Lincoln well-informed throughout the Vicksburg, Chickamauga, and Chattanooga campaigns, and during the first months of Grant's Richmond campaign. Though there were times when Dana's thoughts and actions were obviously influenced by camp gossip or by personal friendships, on the whole he used good judgment and performed his duties ably and faithfully.



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by
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FOR DICK AND DIANE

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But bless ye, Mr. Dana! may you live a thousan' years,
To sort o' keep things lively in this vale of human tears;
An' may I live a thousan' too,--a thousan' less a day,
For I shouldn't like to be on earth to hear you'd passed away.
And when it comes your time to go you'll need no Latin chaff
Nor biographic data put in your epitaph;
But one straight line of English and of truth will let folks know
The homage 'nd the gratitude 'nd reverence they owe;
You'll need no epitaph but this: 'Here sleeps the man who run
That best 'nd brightest paper, the Noo York Sun.

Quoted from "Mr. Dana, of the New York Sun," in The Poems
of Eugene Field (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911),
pp. 33-39.

CHAPTER I

THE YOUTHFUL IDEALIST:

DANA AT BROOK FARM

Charles Anderson Dana represented one of the great figures in American Journalism in the late 19th century. His name, virtually synonymous with the New York Sun, had also been deeply woven into the history of Brook Farm, the New York Tribune, and the American Civil War. But, eclipsed by his years as editor and publisher of the Sun, Dana's early life and wartime role in the Lincoln Administration have gone unnoticed. In some measure Dana himself encouraged this neglect. Too busy to reminisce much about the past, he often threw away letters and other documents of historical value. He could not even find the time to write his own memoirs of the Civil War. Instead, they were written by Ida M. Tarbell who admitted later that Dana, interviewed in the last

year of his life, seemed neither cooperative nor enthusiastic.¹

Much of Dana's life was enlivened by controversy; this was perhaps especially true of his services in the War Department, where his unique role earned him a reputation as the "eyes" of the government. At Vicksburg and Chickamauga his daily battlefield dispatches kept Lincoln and Stanton informed of activities at the front and influenced them in their estimates of many Union officers. Derisively regarded by his enemies as Stanton's spy, Dana was not always correct or fair in his judgements. But the judgements were eagerly read and accepted. Virtually every Union officer of whom Dana approved emerged from the war with a strong reputation; virtually every Union officer of whom he disapproved was either removed or relegated to a post of minor importance. His activities become even more interesting when one considers the judgement of a contemporary who believed that Dana was governed by personal

¹Undated memorandum, Ida M. Tarbell Papers, The Reis Library, Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania. Also Ida M. Tarbell, All in the Day's Work: An Autobiography (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1939), p. 177.

feeling "in attacking or defending any case or any man."²

Charles Anderson Dana's many-faceted life began on August 8, 1819, in the small New Hampshire town of Hinsdale, not far from Horace Greeley's birthplace. Dana's childhood was unsettled; it caused him to move three times before he reached the age of thirteen. The first came when his father, after a business reversal, moved the family to western New York to take up farming. When the family split up after the death of his mother in 1828, young Charles went to live with a maternal uncle on a Connecticut River Valley farm in Vermont. During the next three years he was given his first chance at formal schooling. From the beginning his ability and industry caused him to excel, especially in Latin, the first of many languages he studied and enjoyed. The third move for Dana came at the age of twelve when he was sent to Buffalo to live with another uncle, William Dana.

The eight years spent in Buffalo afforded the enterprising youth his first chance to sample the delights of city life. Clerking in his uncle's store left him some

²Undated and unsigned memorandum, James H. Wilson Papers, Library of Congress.

time in which to broaden his intellectual horizons. Besides joining a literary discussion club, he entertained himself with the study of Greek grammar and literature, and composed numerous poems and essays.³ Dana's fondness for scholarly pursuits caused an acquaintance to regard him as "a quiet, studious boy who loved nature and books, and although a good salesman, rather prone to spend too much time in the adjoining book-store looking over volumes he could not buy."⁴ Dana tempered his scholarship with long hikes in the woods, fishing excursions, and ice-skating in the winter. But his career as a merchant's clerk ended abruptly with the business panic of 1837, which closed the doors of his uncle's firm. Working at a variety of jobs, Dana began to prepare himself for college. In June 1838, having saved some money, Dana left Buffalo and traveled to Cambridge, where in September he entered Harvard as a freshman.⁵

³James H. Wilson, The Life of Charles A. Dana (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1907), pp. 2-11. This is the only full-length biography of Dana. It provides the only detailed source for Dana's early years, and has been used extensively in this chapter.

⁴Quoted in Wilson, Life of Dana, p. 6.

Only the first term went smoothly, with Dana ranking seventh in a class of seventy-four despite his lack of formal schooling. But Dana found the second term more difficult. His talents and interests, which served him so well in the study of language and literature, proved unequal to the mysteries of mathematics; after being placed on probation, he finally received permission to substitute other courses. Financial problems added to Dana's troubles. During the winter of 1840-1841, his money having run out, Dana obtained a leave of absence in order to teach school at nearby Scituate. The job provided him with \$25 per month and his board. While teaching at Scituate, Dana received a letter of encouragement from C. C. Felton, his Greek professor at Cambridge. Felton, who later became president of Harvard, advised Dana "by all means to return to college, for with your abilities and honorable purposes, it is impossible you should fail of success" ⁶ The letter also promised financial help, so Dana returned to Harvard in the spring of 1841.

⁶Quoted in Wilson, Life of Dana, p. 14.

He kept Felton's letter throughout his life, prizing it highly, but his connection with Harvard was soon officially ended. On June 2, 1841, he was granted another leave of absence, this time for ill-health. According to Dana's rather dramatic story, his eyesight failed during a candlelight reading of a poorly-printed copy of Oliver Twist.⁷ Whether or not this was really the problem, Dana always contended, throughout a busy life filled with paperwork, that his eyes troubled him and that he could not read by artificial light. Eventually, however, Dana received his diploma from Harvard. In 1861, the college recognized him with an honorary bachelor of arts degree conferred as of the Class of 1843.⁸

Although his family belonged to the Congregational Church, Dana's years in Buffalo and Cambridge led him along more liberal religious paths. While in Buffalo, he received a letter from his father chiding him for attending Unitarian meetings, and warning him of the

⁷Charles A. Dana in address on Brook Farm, delivered at the University of Michigan, January 21, 1893. For a copy of this speech see the appendix in Wilson's Life of Dana.

⁸Wilson, Life of Dana, p. 13.

"smooth sophistry" of false doctrines. "My fears are greatly increased by the suggestion that you expect shortly to go to Cambridge University," his father wrote. "When there, if you should finally take that course, hope must be at an end."⁹ Dana found the Cambridge atmosphere thick with the misty vapors of transcendentalism, and he inhaled deeply by attending the lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Three months after leaving Harvard, Dana wrote his sister a letter from West Roxbury, Massachusetts, informing her of his participation in a new experiment in communal living based on transcendental thought--Brook Farm. With his eyes somewhat improved, Dana happily reported: "I am living with some friends who have associated themselves together for the purposes of living purely and justly and of acting from higher principles than the world recognizes I pay for my board by labor upon the farm and by giving instructions in whatever lies within my capacity."¹⁰

⁹Quoted in Wilson, Life of Dana, pp. 16-17.

¹⁰Quoted in Wilson, Life of Dana, p. 31.

Dana's motives for joining Brook Farm have puzzled some people; even his own biographer finds it difficult to conclude that Dana really embraced the higher objectives of the West Roxbury community. Undoubtedly the difficulty lies in reconciling the cynical, caustic editor of the Sun with the youthful romantic of Brook Farm. But, as for most cynics, Dana's youth had more than its share of optimistic hopes and dreams, and he had seen and experienced little to cause him to lose his idealism. Dana's commitment to social reform has been questioned, but between 1841 and 1846, he often wrote and spoke with fervor and eloquence in behalf of improving society through such experiments as Brook Farm. And it is noteworthy that he never ridiculed his experiences or associates in the transcendental adventure.

On the contrary, Dana offered a nostalgic tribute to the ideals of the small community in an address delivered at the University of Michigan in 1894. Even after leaving Brook Farm, he continued to display a fondness for socialistic theories until the 1850's, when material interests finally outstripped youthful idealism. Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that Dana found the

experiment's humanitarian objectives attractive, while at the same time he welcomed the opportunity to enjoy a scholarly life amidst stimulating companions and a healthy rural atmosphere. These motives were considerably higher than those of such fellow Brook Farmers as Nathaniel Hawthorne. The latter joined the association shortly after its founding in the hope that he would have more time for writing, and would be able to save enough to marry Sophia Peabody, to whom he had been engaged for two years.¹¹

Despite his youth Dana at once won the respect and confidence of his fellow Brook Farmers. The earliest articles of association for the community are in Dana's handwriting. Dated Sept. 29, 1841, they indicate that the joint-stock venture was capitalized at \$12,000, consisting of 24 shares of stock at \$500 per share. Dana was one of the nine original subscribers with three shares; but as only one-third of the stock was actually paid for, it is doubtful that he surrendered the full

¹¹Edith R. Curtis, A Season in Utopia (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1960), p. 16.

\$1,500 for his holdings.¹² As a member of Brook Farm Association, every stockholder was allowed one vote on any matter relating to the disposition of funds. The non-assessable stock guaranteed an excessively optimistic annual interest of 5%. Certainly the most unnecessary article was the one stipulating that no member of the Association had any claim on profits accruing in excess of 5%. Only one dividend was ever actually paid, and that occurred because Dana, as chairman of the Committee on finance, felt it would bolster the morale of the stockholders.

Although plagued from its inception by financial problems, Brook Farm could boast of an outstanding educational program. Proving considerably more fertile than the rocky New England soil, the school system provided the only appreciable source of income. The Brook Farm Department of Education operated on three levels: there was an infant school for children under 6, a primary

¹²Lindsay Swift, Brook Farm: Its Members, Scholars, and Visitors (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1900), p. 18. For a copy of the articles of association see Henry W. Sams, ed., Autobiography of Brook Farm (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1958), pp. 44-48.

school for those under 10, and a college preparatory school. The latter offered a sound and rigorous six-year course in mathematics, philosophy, the classics, and modern languages. The Harvard faculty regarded the program highly, and recommended it to aspiring students.¹³ George Ripley, first in the Harvard Class of 1823, taught courses in philosophy and mathematics, while Dana, aptly nicknamed "Professor", offered instruction in Greek and German. The total enrollment was never very large, but the Brook Farm schools managed to attract students from such unlikely places as the Philippine Islands, Cuba, and Florida. From the beginning the educational program was a success, "and for three years . . . [it] stabilized the finances and enhanced the reputation of Brook Farm."¹⁴

As described by Lindsay Swift, "Professor" Dana was slender, strong, and handsome. "He had a firm, expressive face, regular and clear cut, a scholar's

¹³Swift, Brook Farm, pp. 70-72.

¹⁴Curtis, A Season in Utopia, pp. 69-73.

forehead, auburn hair, and a full beard."¹⁵ A popular teacher with his forceful manner and deep voice, Dana attracted members of the opposite sex. Another instructor, George Bradford, confessed that if Dana were in immediate danger of losing his life, he would do nothing to save him. Bradford was jealous of Dana's ability to get certain girls to enroll in his classes--girls that Bradford evidently longed to instruct himself in the intricacies of German syntax.¹⁶ In spite of his popularity, Dana's classes were not conducted in the usual easy-going atmosphere which permeated Brook Farm classrooms. The unprepared student who entered one of the "Professor's" classes could expect to be grilled thoroughly. Dana's work on the Farm extended beyond teaching; he labored at a variety of jobs, including waiting on table during meals in the common dining room. There were no complaints about Dana's efficiency as a waiter, but sometimes between courses he could be seen keeping company with Thucydides or Herodotus. Next to George Ripley,

¹⁵Swift, Brook Farm, pp. 151-152.

¹⁶Swift, Brook Farm, p. 192.

Dana probably possessed the largest library at Brook Farm, and occasionally the girls who cleaned his room complained about the scholarly clutter.¹⁷ Dana's manner and his zest for work of all kinds generally created a pleasant impression among his associates.

One member of the community considered Dana the best all-around man at the Farm, but said that he was not "quite so zealous or unselfish for the faith as were some of the others."¹⁸ George Ripley, the founder and guiding spirit of Brook Farm, regarded Dana as his right hand man, often entrusting him with important writing and lecture assignments. Ripley, as much as any man, prepared Dana for his career in journalism, and their friendship survived Brook Farm's failure. Both men were key members of the New York Tribune staff during the 1850's, and together they shared the responsibility of editing an encyclopedia.

Perhaps Dana's most interesting association at Brook Farm was with a religious mystic named Isaac Hecker.

¹⁷Curtis, A Season in Utopia, pp. 68-69.

¹⁸Quoted in Swift, Brook Farm, p. 147.

Orestes Brownson sent Hecker to the farm at West Roxbury in January 1843, when the latter was in the throes of religious conflict. Hecker remained until the summer of that year, when he went to New York and, like Brownson, eventually converted to Roman Catholicism. Later Hecker was ordained a priest and founded the Paulist religious order in 1858. Dana wrote Hecker several interesting letters, seven of which are preserved in the archives of the Paulist Fathers in New York.¹⁹

Written during the period when Brook Farm was being reorganized along the social principles of Charles Fourier, these letters reveal the discussion which preceded the change. The impetus for this reorganization came from Horace Greeley's Tribune, where Albert Brisbane, a zealous visionary from the "burned over" district of New York, found ample space to propound the radical ideas of the French utopian socialist.²⁰ At first Dana opposed the attempts to convert Brook Farm into a Fourier phalanx,

¹⁹For portions of the letters see Curtis, A Season in Utopia, pp. 147 ff. Also see Rev. Vincent F. Holden, C.S.P., The Early Years of Isaac Thomas Hecker (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1939)

²⁰Swift, Brook Farm, pp. 270-281.

but as 1843 drew to a close the "Professor" finally accepted Fourierism as elaborated by Brisbane. Having sought his support for more than a year, Greeley congratulated Dana on his change of mind. Brook Farm was in dire need of new capital, and Dana hoped that it might be attracted by espousing the popular ideas of Fourier.²¹

As a step in this direction delegates from Brook Farm assembled at a Fourierist convention held in Boston, December 26-29, 1843. They resolved to promote the French socialist's ideas by setting up a showcase phalanx at Brook Farm. Dana served as the secretary of this convention. "I have been," Dana wrote Hecker early in January, "for the last two weeks so turned out of my course that I almost doubt my own identity." After telling Hecker about the meeting in Boston, Dana cautioned that it was better to let Fourier "interpret himself than to take him at second hand. Especially I have learned to distrust Brisbane's exposition. He is not a man of sufficient spirituality or sufficient depth of intellect to interpret the profound things of the great Frenchman

²¹Address delivered at the University of Michigan, Jan. 21, 1895.

I hope soon to get at it in the original. The glimpse I have already had inclined me to reckon him, with Swedenborg, the profoundest thinker of these modern times."²² Dana may well have alienated Hecker in this letter by his sarcastic references to Orestes Brownson's conversion to Catholicism. Brownson was Hecker's friend, and the latter was also leaning strongly toward the Catholic faith.

In a subsequent letter to Hecker, Dana reported Brook Farm's successful conversion to Fourier's principles. Elated about the prospects for the future, Dana summarized his religious views for Hecker:

I do not believe in the Christian Dispensation, but in the New Church--the Universal Church. Not Roman or Anglican or Presbyterian but the Church of God. About this we shall not differ--but about the means by which Unity shall be restored to the Church, we may. As far as I can see this is to be effected not by material means. The Unity of the Church which is the Unity of Man with God, will fully appear only when Man is at Unity with Nature and with man--and finally let me say--can appear only in association.²³

²²Dana to Hecker, Jan. 2, 1844, Isaac Thomas Hecker Papers, Archives of the Paulist Fathers, New York.

²³Dana to Hecker, March 1844, Hecker Papers, Archives of the Paulist Fathers, New York.

If Dana had any hope of converting his friend to this brand of transcendental Fourierism, it was destroyed in August 1844, when Hecker was baptised a Catholic. Indeed, the friendship itself came to an end.

But despite Dana's optimism, Brook Farm was not rejuvenated by Fourierism; if anything the change hastened the demise of the community. The essence of Fourier's plan for association was organization. All labor at the Farm was divided into three primary series: Agricultural, Mechanical, and Domestic. Each of these series was in turn subdivided into groups. For example, in the Agricultural series there were groups charged with planting, weeding, hoeing, and milking. Each series and each group had a chief who directed the labor, and these were re-elected every two months and every week respectively. Fourier's strictures regarding numbers added a touch of mysticism to his social program. Groups might be composed of three, five, or seven people, but not four, six, or eight.²⁴ Emerson once remarked of

²⁴Swift, Brook Farm, pp. 44-46.

Fourier that he had overlooked nothing except "the faculty of life which spawns and scorns system and system makers; which eludes all conditions; which makes or supplants a thousand phalanxes . . . with each pulsation."²⁵

Furthermore, the Brook Farm schools, always the best and brightest part of the experiment, were damaged by their association with Fourier. Like several other reformers of the age, the Frenchman held ideas on sex and marriage which were somewhat unconventional. They attracted sharp criticism from the pulpit and in the newspapers, and the criticism, although unfounded, tarnished the reputation of Brook Farm's educational program.

In November 1845, a smallpox epidemic struck the community, causing some residents to take flight. Of those who stayed, more than a third became sick. As none of those infected died, it was probably not a severe form of the disease. But the loss of manpower

²⁵Stephen E. Whicher, ed., Selections From Ralph Ralph Waldo Emerson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1957), p. 211.

it entailed only served to increase Brook Farm's indebtedness.²⁶ Dana was so discouraged about this time that he prepared to give up the enterprise. Ripley, probably disappointed in Dana's attitude, nevertheless determined to go on. The final disaster took place on March 3, 1846, while Dana was away in New York. That evening, amidst dancing and good fellowship in one of the community's buildings, someone suddenly spotted flames coming from the unfinished phalanstery. This large structure, which had absorbed several thousand Brook Farm dollars, was uninsured. Because of a defective chimney, a small fire in a basement stove ignited the building. Despite some valiant fire-fighting efforts, the phalanstery was a total loss.²⁷ Viewing the spectacle through transcendental eyes evoked a curious response from Marianne Dwight:

²⁶ Curtis, A Season in Utopia, pp. 258-261, provides details of the smallpox epidemic.

²⁷ Ripley and Dana told conflicting stories about the lack of insurance. In the March 14, 1846, issue of the Harbinger, Ripley said there had never been any insurance on the phalanstery. But Dana in his address at the University of Michigan, Jan. 21, 1895, said the insurance had expired the day before the fire and had not been renewed.

How grand when the immense heavy column of smoke first rose up to heaven! There was no wind and it ascended most perpendicularly . . . then it was spangled with fiery sparks, and tinged with glowing colors, ever rolling and wreathing, solemnly and gracefully up--up. An immense clear blue flame mingled for a while with the others and rose high in the air--like liquid turquoise and topaz. It came from the melting glass. Rockets, too, rose in the sky, and fell in glittering gems of every rainbow hue--much like our Fourth of July fireworks. I looked upon it from our house till the whole front was on fire--that was beautiful indeed-- the whole colonnade was wreathed spirally with fire and every window glowing.

All in all, Marianne Dwight thought it "glorious beyond description." For a while there was brave talk of continuing the association, but the fire that destroyed the phalanstery also consumed the bright hopes on which Brook Farm was founded.

Dana's willingness to give up the grand principles of Fourier in 1845-1846 may have stemmed from his desire for association of another kind. While at the Farm, Dana had met an attractive girl from Maryland named Eunice Macdaniel. For a time in 1845, it seemed that the two would be married. But Eunice aspired to become an

²⁸Quoted in Curtis, A Season in Utopia, p. 276.

actress, and during the winter of 1845-1846, she went to visit her brother in New York. Dana, fearful of losing Eunice to the stage, pursued her and on March 2, 1846--one day before the fatal fire at Brook Farm--they were married in a secret ceremony which even Dana later explained was totally unexpected. When news of the marriage reached Brook Farm, it caused considerable dismay. Ripley confessed himself "very much put out at the way Dana had handled his marriage," and displeased over the secrecy surrounding the event. A second ceremony was held at the Farm, but not everyone attended. Evidently the residents of the community resented the fact that the wedding had taken place away from West Roxbury, and that they had not been invited. The indefatigable Marianne Dwight indicated in a letter that she had learned the whole story about the wedding from Eunice's sister, but she did not recount the tale in the letter.²⁹ For a brief period Dana and his bride lived at the Farm, but by July they had moved to Boston.

²⁹ Curtis, A Season in Utopia, p. 284.

With Brook Farm and Fourier behind him, Dana prepared to make his mark in the workaday world of journalism. It was the beginning of his climb to fame and considerable wealth--but the ascent, according to one respected and able historian, would cause Dana to depart farther from Brook Farm's ideals and aspirations than any other member.³⁰

³⁰ Swift, Brook Farm, pp. 150-151. Swift's characterization of Dana constitutes heavy criticism coming from an otherwise gentle pen.

CHAPTER II

WHEN GREELEY AND DANA WERE THE TRIBUNE

In the summer of 1846, the debts and ashes of Brook Farm behind him, Dana began his career as a newspaperman-- a career which absorbed the rest of his life, with the sole exception of his service during the Civil War. For several months he worked for Elizur Wright, owner of the Boston Chronotype, a paper affiliated with the Congregational Church in Massachusetts. Once during Wright's absence, Dana came out in the Chronotype "mighty strong against hell." The editorial astonished the Congregational ministers who received the paper, and their Calvinistic anger raged until Wright sent each of them a letter of explanation.¹ Dana, however, soon had a more liberal atmosphere in which to exercise his literary talents. Horace Greeley, founder of the young New York Tribune, was looking for a new city editor. He remembered the capable Brook Farmer who had originally resisted the attractions

¹Wilson, Life of Dana, p. 59.

of Fourier's program for revamping society; he also recalled Dana's literary work at Brook Farm for the Dial and the Harbinger. Convinced that the reporter in Boston would be a valuable addition to the Tribune staff, Greeley offered Dana the post. With financial and journalistic ambitions which were unlikely to be achieved on the Chronotype, Dana accepted Greeley's offer.

Moving to New York, Dana began working in February 1847, in the third floor editorial office of the handsome Tribune building at Nassau and Spruce Streets. This marked the beginning of fifteen years filled with increasing responsibilities, back-stage political maneuvers, and spats with Greeley. Financially, Dana found his new position rewarding; within a year his salary climbed to \$14 a week, only one dollar less than Greeley himself received. Even more important was Greeley's generous offer of ten \$1,000 shares of Tribune stock, payment for which might be made from annual dividends on the securities. Dana not only took advantage of this opportunity, but as early as 1851 was negotiating to purchase more stock. He estimated that Tribune profits for that year would run between \$40,000-\$60,000. "As you see," he wrote a friend, "it is not bad

property. Besides it is growing damnably."² As there were only 100 shares of Tribune stock, Dana initially was entitled to 10% of the paper's profits. By the time he left the Tribune in 1862, Dana owned twenty shares--five more than Greeley himself possessed--and it was worth \$3,000 a share.³ Throughout the 1850's the ex-Brook Farmer received annual dividends ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000. All this was more than enough to change Dana's style of living: he staffed his household with servants and sent his children to expensive private schools.

The enterprise which Dana joined in 1847 was less than six years old. Founded as an organ of the Whig party, the Tribune first appeared in April 1841. Although the paper was originally published as a daily, within eighteen

²Dana to James Shepherd Pike, April 8, 1851, Calais Free Library, Calais, Maine. Although Dana-Pike correspondence covers the period 1850-1881, it consists largely of letters written in the 1850's and during Dana's War Department service, 1862-1865. Some of the letters appear in James S. Pike, First Blows of the Civil War (New York: The American News Company, 1879), but they have been edited and in places the language has been softened. Microfilm of these letters is in the Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia. All correspondence hereinafter cited between Dana and Pike is in the Pike Papers.

³Dana to Pike, April 9, 1862.

months there were two other editions, the Weekly Tribune and the Semi-Weekly Tribune. Editorials were usually printed first in the daily paper; then they were transferred to the other editions, although problems of space necessitated some selectivity. The most widely read edition was the Weekly, which accounted for approximately two-thirds of the total circulation in the decade before the Civil War. In 1860 the Weekly's subscription of some 200,000 was about four times that of the Daily. Greeley believed that, because the Weekly often passed from hand to hand, about 1,500,000 people read the Tribune on the eve of the Civil War. The Semi-Weekly had relatively few subscribers, but it assumed importance during presidential contests when it was converted into a campaign sheet and sold at reduced prices. During the Frémont-Buchanan race in 1856, the Semi-Weekly's circulation ballooned from less than 20,000 to more than 60,000.⁴

⁴Jeter Allen Isely, Horace Greeley and the Republican Party, 1853-1861: A Study of the New York Tribune (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1947), vii-viii, pp. 13, 294, and Appendix B. The appendices in this excellent study provide useful information regarding Tribune circulation. Appendix A offers an estimate of circulation in the free states between 1854-1860; Appendix B utilizes a graph to indicate circulation totals for each of the paper's editions from 1853-1861.

The influence of the Tribune did not rest solely in its having more readers than any other American newspaper of the period. Of equal importance was the paper's strong appeal to readers outside New York City. Other newspapers in New York enjoyed a greater metropolitan circulation. But the widely distributed Tribune possessed an audience which consisted largely of Northern farmers. It "furnished the basis of a power national in scope, and at times enabled the editor to mold public sentiment more effectively than even the President."⁵ Emerson, aware of the paper's immense influence, wrote Thomas Carlyle in 1856 that "Greeley does the thinking for the whole West at \$2 per year for his paper."⁶

Although Greeley founded the Tribune (in the hinterlands it was sometimes called "Uncle Horace's Weekly Tribune"), he failed to govern the paper as independently as some historians have supposed. In general, Greeley con-

⁵Ralph R. Fahrney, Horace Greeley and the Tribune in the Civil War (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: The Torch Press, 1936), pp. 1-2. Fahrney claims that the circulation of the Tribune was heaviest in the critical states of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois and Indiana, but Isley's estimates do not substantiate this.

⁶Quoted in Henry Luther Stoddard, Horace Greeley, Printer, Editor, Crusader (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1946), p. 93.

trolled the editorial policy, but it often reflected the handiwork of such associates as Henry J. Raymond, Dana, James Shepherd Pike, and others. E. L. Godkin of the Nation once wrote that the Tribune's writers "were all . . . partners in a common enterprise, and Greeley, though all-powerful, was simply looked on as primus inter pares."⁷ Greeley deserved credit for giving his staff the freedom necessary for publishing a stimulating newspaper. But if Greeley was "all-powerful," he was also away from his paper much of the time. Each December between 1847-1862 Greeley left New York for his annual lecture tour; usually he was gone for two or three months. Interspersed with these absences were trips to Europe in 1851 and 1855, a four month sojourn in Washington (1855-1856) combining politics and journalism in that order, and a lengthy exploration of the American West in 1859. Added to these were innumerable absences of a lesser duration.⁸ During these frequent

⁷Quoted in William Harlan Hale, Horace Greeley: Voice of the People (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1950), p. 84.

⁸See Stoddard, Greeley, pp. 145-148, 175-176, 187-193; Isely, Greeley and the Republican Party, p. 48; Hale, Greeley: Voice of the People, pp. 88-90, 184 and 237.

abstractions, opinions which did not have Greeley's approval appeared in the Tribune. Occasionally, despite his liberalism, he felt it necessary to write editorials criticizing articles with which he strongly disagreed.

Unlike his competitor, James G. Bennett of the New York Herald, Greeley neglected to run a taut editorial ship even when he was on the job. The all-important task of assembling the paper was delegated to the managing editor, Greeley's most valuable assistant. Between 1849-1862, Dana held this position, determining not only what was printed, but also where it appeared in the Tribune. Managing editor Dana "was a real power on the Tribune, for he was first in Greeley's confidence and at all times supervised the other members of the staff."⁹ In 1851, the staff consisted of ten associate editors, fourteen staff reporters, and approximately forty regular correspondents. Some people believed that Dana, rather than Greeley, deserved credit for the growth and influence of the paper

⁹ Isely, Greeley and the Republican Party, pp.6-7. For Greeley's style of supervision, see Hale, Greeley: Voice of the People, pp. 80-84, and Glyndon G. Van Dusen, Horace Greeley: Nineteenth Century Crusader (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1953), p. 132.

during the 1850's.¹⁰

In some ways the Greeley-Dana relationship was unlikely; the contrasts between the two men were both interesting and curious. Self-educated and scornful of the value of higher learning, Greeley once remarked that "of all horned cattle the most helpless in a printing office is a college graduate."¹¹ Greeley's style of writing was simple, strong, and effective, and his letters reveal a mastery of slang and idiom. In the decades prior to the Civil War, Greeley had espoused most of the current reform movements, including prohibition, vegetarianism, utopian socialism, and even spiritualism. To many people he was an eccentric, and his looks seemed to verify such an estimate. The man with the moon-shaped, bespectacled face, the peculiar lop-sided walk, and the wide-brimmed hat which gave him the appearance of an itinerant Quaker down on his luck, was a familiar figure in New York.. Dana once remarked that "you must take men as the Lord makes 'em;

¹⁰Stoddard, Greeley, p. 272. Although Stoddard mentions it, he disagrees with the belief that Dana was more important to the Tribune than Greeley.

¹¹Quoted in Hale, Greeley: Voice of the People, p. 85.

and the Lord made Horace with a kind heart."¹²

Greeley's capabilities as a practical politician were in keeping with his physical appearance. Besides wanting to publish the very best newspaper, Greeley had political ambitions which seem to have been whetted by his one brief experience in an elective office. In 1848, he was elected as a Whig to sit for ninety days in the United States House of Representatives to fill the unexpired term of an ousted Democrat. Greeley wasted little time in making his presence felt. He introduced one bill to change the name of the United States to Columbia, and another to abolish the Navy's daily ration of grog. Both measures failed. During his brief service in the House he made many enemies among his fellow congressmen. The Tribune, for example, accused a number of legislators of collecting excess mileage allotments for travel between their homes and Washington. Even a fellow Whig from Illinois named Abraham Lincoln did not escape Greeley's censure. According to the energetic publisher of the Tribune, Lincoln had collected almost \$700 more than he had coming. "The usually traveled route for a great many members of the last Congress," wrote Greeley, "was an ex-

¹²Dana to Pike, June 4, 1858.

ceedingly crooked one, even for politicians."¹³ Senator William H. Seward informed his friend Thurlow Weed that Greeley prevented his colleagues from adjourning "until three o'clock and martyrizes himself five or six times a day by voting against the whole House."¹⁴ Such qualities, undesirable in a party politician, later frustrated Greeley's attempts to become a gubernatorial candidate in New York.

The combination of journalism, politics, and travel left Greeley with little time for his family. Perhaps that was just as well. By keeping busy and spending much time away from home it was easier for him to forget his unhappy marriage. His wife, who gave birth to seven children and saw five of them die, was extremely difficult to get along with. A member of the Tribune staff came away with unpleasant memories after visiting Greeley's home at Chappaqua. "There was little expression in her face," he remarked of Mary Greeley, "but that little

¹³Quoted in Hale, Greeley: Voice of the People, p. 130.

¹⁴Quoted in Hale, Greeley: Voice of the People, p. 132.

was rather against her."¹⁵ Too embarrassed to bring his friends home, Greeley had the sympathy of many acquaintances who were aware of his domestic difficulties.

In marked contrast, Dana's home life was quite happy. The father of four children by 1855, Dana enjoyed his family a great deal. During the summers he joined his wife and children at Westport, Connecticut where he built castles in the sand for his three daughters, and instructed his son Paul in the art of sailing. Urging a friend to marry, Dana explained the joy of being a parent. "There's no delight," he wrote, "like that in a pack of children--of your own. Love is selfish, friendship is exacting, but this other affection gives all and asks nothing . . . there ought always to be a baby in every house. A house without a baby is inhuman."¹⁶

Dana seemed to have been far more concerned than Greeley about the paper's profits. Sometimes this resulted in differences of opinion as to how the Tribune should be published. In 1856, while serving as the

¹⁵Quoted in Hale, Greeley: Voice of the People, pp. 180-181.

¹⁶Dana to Pike, June 4, 1858, Pike Papers.

paper's Washington correspondent, Greeley confessed that "as to salary I am indifferent, and as to the Tribune discouraged. The infernal picayune spirit in which it is published has broken my heart."¹⁷ The trouble centered in Dana's reluctance to publish everything that Greeley regarded as newsworthy. Such a policy frequently required supplements for the paper's customary eight pages, but Dana considered these as unnecessary expenses which cut into Tribune profits. Thomas McElrath, the business manager, also favored keeping costs down. Greeley, less interested in economy, was prepared to print a supplement anytime he judged one necessary. Dismissing the opposition to his expensive policy, Greeley advised Dana that the Tribune could ill-afford to be governed by profits.¹⁸ On another occasion, Dana sought to augment the paper's income by raising the

¹⁷Greeley to Dana, March 8, 1856, Greeley Papers, Library of Congress. The Greeley-Dana letters of 1855-1856 also appear in Joel Benton, ed., Greeley on Lincoln: With Mr. Greeley's letters to Charles A. Dana and a Lady Friend, To Which are added Reminiscences of Horace Greeley (New York: The Baker and Taylor Co., 1893), but some of the proper names are omitted. All correspondence between Greeley and Dana hereinafter cited is in the Library of Congress.

¹⁸Greeley to Dana, June 24, 1853.

the price of the daily edition from two to three cents. He carefully calculated that the new price would increase revenues \$1,200 a week, or \$62,000 a year. Greeley reluctantly supported the move, but only on the condition that his competitors, the Herald and the Times, also boost their prices. To Dana's disappointment, the Times refused to cooperate, and the maneuver failed.¹⁹ Even without the added income, the Tribune continued to prosper and to earn excellent dividends for its stockholders.

Dana's success, like Greeley's, was based on an amalgam of ability, hard work, and ambition. Besides his heavy responsibilities as managing editor of the country's most influential newspaper, Dana found time in the busy 1850's to edit two books and to supervise the publication of The American Cyclopaedia.²⁰ His ambition and his reluctance to be second best are clearly revealed in his

¹⁹Dana to Pike, July 17, and September 1 and 25, 1854.

²⁰The books edited by Dana were Meyer's Universum (New York: Herman J. Meyer, 1852), an illustrated guide to unusual places and objects; The Household Book of Poetry (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1857), a popular collection which went through many editions; and The American Cyclopaedia, 16 Vols. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1858-1863), co-edited with George Ripley.

personal correspondence, especially in his lively exchange of letters with James Shepherd Pike, a friend from Calais, Maine. By 1851 Pike had accumulated a modest fortune in various business enterprises and was writing feature articles and editorials for the Tribune. In April 1851, while Greeley was touring Europe, Dana asked Pike to send some lively articles and help him spruce up the paper. "You see," explained the managing editor, "it must be better than when the old man is home or they'll say Dana's a failure! Which God forbid!"²¹ Despite his own ambition, Dana sometimes found it necessary to spike the vanity of others. When Pike wrote, insisting that his initials be used to identify his work, he received a reprimand. "You make a great fuss about your initials . . . I think it would be a waste of the Lord's bounty. A line is worth a dollar--and you can't desire to have an expenditure of that amount made in these times merely for three uninteresting Roman consonants."²²

Much of the time Pike served as the Washington correspondent for the Tribune, a post sometimes requiring more than the usual journalistic skills. Once Dana sent a

²¹ Dana to Pike, April 8, 1851.

²² Dana to Pike, Feb. 5, 1855.

request for a letter written by Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian statesman and patriot, to President Millard Fillmore. "That letter," the managing editor explained to Pike, "Fillmore intends to smother Now the question is if that letter cannot be got out and published. Kossuth himself has kept no copy of it as I understand. Is it possible to get it out of the White House by any sort of operation?"²³ There is no evidence indicating that Pike was able to accommodate Dana's desire to acquire the letter. In spite of this Dana formed a high opinion of Pike's talents; high enough, in fact, to try to make his friend a fellow stockholder in the Tribune.

After working in New York for a year, Dana approached Greeley in 1848, and asked for permission to observe and report the political revolutions taking place in Europe. After some discussion Greeley consented to the plan, and agreed to pay ten dollars for every letter from abroad. As this was hardly enough to cover his expenses,

²³Dana to Pike, Jan. 24, 1851. This letter is marked "Private-Private" in the upper left hand corner. A year later, when there were other papers he wanted, Dana wrote: "Can't we steal the documents by greasing somebody's pockets?" (Feb. 9, 1852).

the enterprising Dana worked out an arrangement to send letters to four other newspapers: the Philadelphia American, the Boston Chronotype, the Harbinger, and the New York Commercial Advertiser. This early version of syndicated writing provided Dana with a weekly income of \$35-\$40. "On this," he recalled in later years, "I lived in Europe nearly eight months, saw plenty of revolutions, supported myself there and my family in New York, and came home only sixty-three dollars out for the whole trip."²⁴

Most of Dana's stay in Europe was spent in Paris, where he kept a close eye on political developments and met many of the leading figures in France. When Louis Napoleon won the election for the presidency of the Second French Republic, he was tersely depicted by Dana as a man who "would rather be emperor than president." Sympathetic and only two years removed from Brook Farm, Dana devoted considerable space in his letters to an analysis of the revolution which ended the monarchy in France. He saw the upheaval primarily as an attempt by the downtrodden and oppressed elements of society to liberate themselves and to insure a just return for their labor.

²⁴Quoted in Wilson, Life of Dana, pp. 62-63.

Monopolies, that oppress whole classes, do not come off easily, but once off can never be restored, and whatever the agitation may cost us let us remember the truth, which is too generally overlooked and too easily forgotten, that it cannot be as destructive, inhuman, and fatal in its consequences as the evil that occasions it . . . The struggle for freedom may be terrible, but the agitation of oppression is more so. The French agitation has its sufferings but a return to the old quiet would be worse.²⁵

Leaving Paris early in October, Dana traveled to Berlin from where he sent letters detailing the state of affairs in Germany. Again his reports reflected humanitarian interests and youthful optimism.

The question of this age, I begin to think must be decided in Germany. It was here that was accomplished the great movement of the Reformation which gave individual liberty to the world and in so doing introduced all the evils that belong to individualism and the reign of unlimited competition as the guiding principle of society. It is here that the next and greatest step is perhaps to be taken, and with the organization of fraternity, the rights of individuals, and the full activity of freedom will be reconciled with Universal Prosperity and Justice In spite of clouds which hang upon the horizon I have an instinctive faith that the storm, if it burst at all, must soon disappear in a gloriously ending day.²⁶

Dana left Berlin in December, disappointed over being unable to travel in Austria. He returned to Paris in time to witness

²⁵ Quoted in Wilson, Life of Dana, pp. 78-79.

²⁶ Quoted in Wilson, Life of Dana, pp. 83-84.

Louis Napoleon's inauguration as President of the short-lived Second French Republic. Before sailing for home, Dana reflected on what he had seen:

Through the whole commotion and excitement I have beheld nothing to shock my faith in the Divine Providence and the sure though gradual development of society into noble and happy states. My sympathies were with the people when they were triumphant, and when their heroism and enthusiasm commanded the admiration of the world; they have been with them in their errors and misfortunes; they are with them still in a hope which outlives defeat and forgets disaster.²⁷

One result of Dana's months abroad did not become apparent until October 25, 1851. On that day a Tribune editorial, perhaps written by Dana, introduced Karl Marx to the paper's readers as "one of the clearest and most vigorous writers" produced by Germany.²⁸ As evidence of this, the New York paper printed a long article entitled "Revolution and Counter-Revolution." Marx, whom Dana had met in Cologne while the German socialist was editor of the Neue Rheinische Zeitung, became a frequent contributor to the

²⁷Quoted in Wilson, Life of Dana, p. 92.

²⁸New York Tribune, October 25, 1851. References to the Tribune are for the daily edition and refer the reader to the editorial page.

Tribune over the next decade. This was the trying period when he was living in London and working on Das Kapital. Although The Communist Manifesto had already appeared, Marx was still relatively obscure. For each article that Dana printed, Marx received five dollars. Aside from the sporadic gifts of Friedrich Engels, this constituted Marx's chief source of income. Some of the articles he sent Dana explained the revolutions of 1848, while others analyzed contemporary political developments in Europe. Dana assured Marx by letter that the articles were well-accepted and read by thousands of Americans. Engels actually wrote most of the material that carried Marx's by-line, including even the first article.²⁹

Despite the money it provided him, Marx sometimes found his relationship with Greeley's paper unsatisfactory. Several times the socialist genius wrote Dana asking for more money; and when he failed to get an increase, he would write Engels and fulminate against the Tribune and its editors. Referring to the paper as das Loschapier (that

²⁹William Harlan Hale, "When Karl Marx Worked for Horace Greeley," American Heritage, Vol. VIII (April 1957), 22.

blotter) or das Lausablatt (that lousy rag), Marx dismissed Dana as der Esel (the ass) and Greeley as dieser alte Esel (that old ass).³⁰ Marx's salary was not the only sore point; sometimes he discovered the published essays reflected opinions other than his own. In one series of articles on the European crisis which produced the Crimean War, Marx strongly criticized Russian Panslavism. When the articles appeared in the Tribune, the surprised Marx found himself sympathizing with Russian aims to unify the Slavs. Disgusted, he wrote Engels: "The devil take the Tribune. It has simply got to come out against Panslavism. If not, we may have to break with the little sheet. Yet that would be fatal."³¹ Although Marx blamed Greeley for the change, the real culprit was a Polish émigré named Adam Gurowski, an ardent advocate of Panslavism. For a long time, followers of the German socialist cited these articles as evidence of Marx's ideas on the

³⁰"When Karl Marx Worked for Horace Greeley."

³¹Quoted in Hale, "When Karl Marx Worked for Horace Greeley," American Heritage, 110.

subject of Slavic unification.³²

In 1857, Dana informed Marx that the Tribune, forced to trim expenses during a depression, required fewer articles from abroad. Aware of Marx's desperate financial problems, Dana invited him to write sketches on a variety of subjects for The American Cyclopaedia. Marx accepted and began receiving two dollars for each page of printed material; it was not much, but it helped. Finally, about the time Dana resigned his position as managing editor, Marx severed his connection with the New York paper.³³

In view of his early writing and his acquaintance with Marx and the French socialist Pierre Joseph Proudhon, it is hardly surprising that until the Civil War Dana rep-

³²LeRoy H. Fischer, Lincoln's Gadfly: Adam Gurowski (Norma, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), pp. 64-66. Gurowski, who was also responsible for suppressing other articles by Marx which failed to coincide with his own outlook, was an interesting character. Dana sometimes referred to him as "the Count." Gurowski contributed articles for The American Cyclopaedia until 1858, when he quit, saying that the public should be warned and protected from such ignorance. His remarks so infuriated Dana that he wrote Pike that "The Count I have cut off from my list. He is a d-d old brute and disagreeable in the bargain." Dana to Pike, Nov. 15, 1858, Pike Papers.

³³Franz Mehring, Karl Marx, translated by Edward Fitzgerald (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1936), p. 253.

resented the "rising hope of the stern and unbending Radicals."³⁴ Later in the nineteenth century, as editor of the Sun, he tried to forget his youthful reputation for radicalism. But during the McKinley-Bryan campaign of 1896, with the Sun bitterly attacking Bryan's liberalism, someone resurrected Dana's early fondness for socialistic theories. Embarrassed and angry, Dana denied any link with interests repugnant to prosperous businessmen in the age of rugged individualism.³⁵

When he returned to New York after his European trip of 1848-1849, Dana concentrated his attention on the problems that caused political strife in the United States. Vast territorial gains, made during the Polk Administration, had intensified the sectional conflict over slavery. The free states, already boasting an advantage in the House, now seemed ready to upset the delicate political balance in the

³⁴Rollo Ogden, ed., The Life and Letters of E. L. Godkin (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1907), Vol. I, p. 168.

³⁵Henry Cohen, ed., Proudhon's Solution of the Social Problem Including Commentary and Exposition by Charles A. Dana and William B. Greene (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1927), p. 3. Dana's essay in this book originally ran as six articles in the Tribune. They were written during his European trip in 1848-1849.

Senate. In the eyes of Southern leaders this posed a serious threat to the peculiar institution. The focal point for the controversy centered around the question of what status, if any, slavery would have in the newly acquired territories. The former guideline, the Missouri Compromise, applied only to the area of the Louisiana Purchase; now, in 1850, the situation required hammering out a new solution acceptable to North and South alike. The Compromise of 1850 provided an answer, but it proved to be temporary, and the problem of slavery in the territories became the outstanding issue in American political life, finally culminating in four costly years of civil war.

The Tribune played a leading role throughout this period of sectional agitation. With subscription lists rapidly expanding, it helped shape the thoughts and influence the attitudes of people throughout the North, especially as those thoughts and attitudes pertained to the South and slavery. Equally important was the New York paper's important role in giving life to the Republican party. In a very real sense, the Tribune represented the political bible of the North.

Loyally supporting the Compromise of 1850 in which Henry Clay figured so prominently, Greeley regarded the agreement as a Northern victory. He thought the compromise would exclude slavery from all the territory acquired in the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. California's admission as a free state pleased the editor, as did abolishing the slave trade in the District of Columbia. But Greeley tended to ignore the implications of popular sovereignty, and regarded the fugitive slave law as odious and temporary.³⁶ Southern politicians, Democrats and Whigs, saw the Compromise of 1850 in a different light. For them, the doctrine of popular sovereignty provided a touchstone, opening the way for the expansion of slavery.

The situation produced dissension in both major parties. Although Greeley considered Gen. Winfield Scott an "immeasurably conceited, aristocratic, arbitrary ass," the Tribune faithfully supported his candidacy in 1852. Pike worked on a campaign biography of Scott, while Dana made arrangements for the book to be translated into German--obviously with an eye to capturing a greater portion of the German-American population. In the interests of party unity,

³⁶Isely, Greeley and the Republican Party, pp.37-38.

Dana even admonished his Washington correspondent for "telling the truth about the Southern Whigs."³⁷ During the campaign Scott disgusted both Greeley and Dana by endorsing the Southern position on slavery. Greeley responded by publishing his own platform, which protested the fugitive slave law and called for the exclusion of slavery in the territories.³⁸

After Scott's defeat, Greeley gradually realized that the Whig party was finished as a national organization. Accordingly the Tribune announced in the summer of 1853 that in the future it would advocate measures without regard to its previous Whig affiliations. In doing this, Greeley hoped to contribute to the ultimate extinction of slavery; but he did not believe that abolition should provide the basis for a political party.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act, however, weakened this belief. Introduced in December 1853 by Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, the measure encountered stiff opposition in the North. The Tribune regarded it as a showdown,

³⁷Dana to Pike, Feb. 9, 1852.

³⁸Isley, Greeley and the Republican Party, pp. 39-40.

and predicted that it would sectionalize the American political spectrum. "It pits face to face the two opposing forces of slavery and freedom in the national legislature," declared an editorial, "and gives birth to the most embittered sectional strife the country has yet seen."³⁹

With its circulation growing rapidly, the Tribune led other Northern newspapers in opposition to the proposal. During the first six months of 1854 the Weekly gained 37,000 readers--an increase of 50%. Total circulation for all three editions jumped from 115,000 to 157,500.⁴⁰ Senator Benjamin Wade of Ohio praised the paper's performance. He even suggested that Greeley's journal omit his Senate speeches because it was performing "such executions on the enemies of the republic that it must not be diverted from its source to please any man." Then, on second thought, Wade added that he would leave the matter to the editor's judgement.⁴¹

Throughout the Kansas-Nebraska debate, Greeley assured his readers that Southern threats of secession

³⁹New York Tribune, March 17, 1854.

⁴⁰Isely, Greeley and the Republican Party, p. 53.

⁴¹Quoted in Pike, First Blows, pp. 246-247.

were calculated to frighten the North into submission. He urged the free states to remain firm in their opposition to the extension of slavery. In April and May, a series of articles attempted to refute the belief that secession would seriously damage Northern prosperity. These essays pointed out that if the South withdrew from the Union, the rebels would have no more than twelve states with approximately half the North's population. Furthermore, with inferior markets and transportation facilities, the slave states would continue to be dependent on the North for trade and commerce. "The South plainly cannot afford to dissolve the Union," wrote Greeley, " When the North shall scorn the threats of disunion from the South, and calmly allow the secessionists to go the whole length of their tether, these chronic threats of dissolution will quickly subside."⁴²

When Douglas's bill passed, Greeley solemnly removed the American flag from the Tribune building. Two days later Pike began a fiery editorial, "THE REVOLUTION IS ACCOMPLISHED AND SLAVERY IS KING!--How long shall this monarch reign?"

⁴²New York Tribune, May 13, 1854.

Answering his own question, Pike predicted the proslavery victory would be brief, and sounded the call for a sectional party to purge Northern doughfaces. Another editorial sarcastically suggested revival of the African slave trade. Slaves produced in Virginia, the Tribune suggested, were too civilized and soft for expansion into the West, having been sired by senators, bankers, and plantation owners.⁴³

Finally in late June, Greeley announced his hope for a new political party based on antislavery sentiments. He argued that the only qualification for membership in such a party should be devotion to the cause of keeping slavery out of the territories. Any man who stood firm on that point could be a member, regardless of his other principles. Greeley suggested a simple name such as "Republican" for the party.⁴⁴ On July 6, the name and the antislavery principle were adopted at a meeting of Michigan citizens in Jackson.

Clearing a path for the newly-founded Republican party was a different proposition. It required isolating the antislavery elements in the other parties, and somehow

⁴³New York Tribune, May 24 and 26, 1854.

⁴⁴New York Tribune, June 16 and 28, 1854.

inducing them to enter the Republican fold. Besides the Whigs and Democrats, there was the Know-Nothing or American party with which to contend. With lodges throughout the country, the Know-Nothings elected more than 100 Congressmen in 1854. Opposition to foreigners, and especially to Roman Catholics, served to unify this party. Among Northern party members, however, strong antislavery feeling provided a lever with which the group might be split. The Know-Nothings, like the Democrats, were doing their best to avoid a North-South division of their membership over the issue of slavery. But Dana and Greeley plotted to exploit the subject, thereby winning antislavery Know-Nothings for the Republicans.

In June 1855, while Greeley toured Europe, the Know-Nothing party's Grand National Council held an important meeting in Philadelphia. Dana arranged to have the convention covered by Samuel Bowles, editor of the Springfield (Mass.) Republican. Bowles could not attend the Council's sessions, but he found certain delegates who kept him informed of disagreements regarding the party's stand on slavery. Dana converted this information into political capital in the pages of the Tribune,

and helped divide the Know-Nothings into proslavery and antislavery factions. When Northern delegations walked out of the Philadelphia meeting, Dana praised their conduct and called them "Know-Somethings."⁴⁵ Returning to New York in August, Greeley published an editorial urging a united effort to correct the wrongs perpetrated by the Kansas-Nebraska Act. "The Republican movement judiciously conducted," he predicted "will go forward conquering and to conquer."⁴⁶

The next step forward for the Republican party came in December 1855, when the new Congress convened. The Democrats no longer enjoyed a majority in the House due to the election of a sizable number of Whigs, Know-Nothings, and Republicans. What kind of coalition would elect the Speaker and thereby control vital committee assignments? That was the all-important question.

⁴⁵New York Tribune, June 8-15, 1855. The Know-Nothings, puzzled by news leaks to the Tribune, were made more uncomfortable when Bowles concocted a story asserting that a Jesuit was in their midst Schuyler Colfax, a close friend of Greeley, may well have been one of Bowles's informants. See Isely, Greeley and the Republican Party, p. 117.

⁴⁶New York Tribune, Aug. 24, 1855.

The successful coalition would be in a strong position to determine the course of events in Kansas, where pro-slavery forces seemed ready to win out. It was a time for good men to bring their respective political banners into an effective antislavery alliance.

Greeley seized the opportunity to further Republican interests. Leaving his managing editor at the helm, he traveled to Washington to serve as the Tribune correspondent there. More important, Greeley went to the Capitol to help elect Nathaniel P. Banks, a Massachusetts "Know-Nothing," to the Speakership. For nine long weeks the balloting went on, with Greeley doing his utmost to break the deadlock. It was a trying time; besides struggling to gain support for Banks, Greeley experienced difficulties with Dana. During this period Greeley's numerous letters to his managing editor reflect dissatisfaction with Dana's performance in publishing the paper. They also reveal the effects of stress on Greeley, desperately attempting to create another bridge between Republicans and anti-slavery Know-Nothings and Whigs.

In early December, Greeley admitted that Banks's election seemed doubtful; but he considered the news from strife-torn Kansas encouraging--it would help unify anti-

slavery forces. "I hate this hole," Greeley wrote from Washington, "but am glad I have come. It does me good to see how those who hate the Tribune much, fear it yet more. There are a dozen here who will do better for my eye being on them."⁴⁷ While his boss badgered Congressmen, Dana's editorials helpfully emphasized the idea that justice in Kansas would be impossible without a Republican controlled House.⁴⁸

But when a Tribune feature article on the New York opera crowded out two of his political stories, Greeley exploded. "What would it cost to burn the Opera House?" he demanded of his managing editor. "If the price is reasonable have it done and send me the bill . . . I don't believe three hundred people who take the Tribune care one chew of tobacco over the matter."⁴⁹ This was only the beinning of Greeley's criticism.

Despite predictions of an imminent victory for Banks, the voting dragged on into January. And as the

⁴⁷Greeley to Dana, Dec. 1, 1855.

⁴⁸Isely, Greeley and the Republican Party, p. 142.

⁴⁹Greeley to Dana, Jan. 7, 1856.

deadlock continued, Greeley's dissatisfaction with Dana increased. Other dispatches from Washington were omitted, and the agitated Greeley sometimes regarded this as intentional. More often than not the trouble resulted when Dana did not receive a story in time for the particular edition that Greeley had intended it.⁵⁰ But Greeley failed to consider the possibility of copy which arrived late; instead he accused his most trusted colleague of working against him. "I must give it up and go home," he lamented in early February. "All the border ruffians from here to the lowest pit could not start me away, but you can do it. I must give it up."⁵¹

Dana's outspoken attitude toward the opposition forces further aroused Greeley's wrath. The managing editor used the Tribune to bludgeon Congressmen who voted against Banks. This made it difficult for Greeley to get information on Democratic caucuses, and prevented Banks from picking up votes that leaned in his direction.

⁵⁰Greeley to Dana, undated letter and March 20, 1856.

⁵¹Greeley to Dana, Feb. 1, 1856.

In a letter curtly addressed to "Dana," Greeley pleaded with his associate in New York:

If you were to live fifty years and do nothing but good all the time you could hardly atone for the mischief you have done Now I write once more to entreat that I may be allowed to conduct the Tribune with reference to the mile wide that stretches either way from Pennsylvania Avenue. It is but a small space and you have all the world besides If you are not willing to leave me entire control with reference to this city . . . I ask you to call the Proprietors together and have me discharged. I have to go to this and that false creature and coax him to behave as little like the devil as possible . . . yet in constant terror of seeing him guillotined in the next Tribune that arrives If you want to throw stones at somebody's crockery, aim at my head first, and in mercy be sure to aim well. Who takes the responsibility of omitting my dispatches when you are away?⁵²

Greeley's humor failed to improve despite the election of Banks; the letters from Washington continued to carp at Dana's work. In an episode similar to that involving the New York opera, Greeley discovered a divorce story where he had expected to find one of his dispatches. A speedy rebuke issued again from Washington.

. . . you failed to consider fairly what is and what is not perishable. My letter would have been middling on Saturday, while it will be sour as whey and flat as cold dishwater on Monday;

⁵²Greeley to Dana, Jan. 28, 1856.

while the Griswold business would have been rolled as a sweet morsel under the tongues of all the old maids of New York any day you might see fit to print it Oh, my friend the wisdom which teaches what should not be said, that is the hardest to acquire of all. I confess my own deficiencies therein, but you must gain more of it.⁵³

Finally, in mid-April, Greeley returned to New York. His ordeal in the Capitol had strengthened the antislavery cause and the Republican party. But it also reflected the differences between himself and his managing editor which eventually produced Dana's resignation.

The Presidential campaign of 1856 clearly revealed the shifting alliances taking place in American politics. When the Republican party, meeting in Philadelphia, nominated John Charles Frémont as its frontrunner, it effected a further consolidation of antislavery forces. Among Frémont's supporters were Democrats such as Gideon Welles and Francis P. Blair, Sr., who traced their political ancestry back to the Jacksonian period; antislavery Know-Nothings such as Banks and Schuyler Colfax; and ex-Free Soilers such as Salmon P. Chase and Charles Sumner.

Greeley correctly assessed the political climate in March when he advised Dana that the Republicans would need a

⁵³Greeley to Dana, March 2, 1856.

candidate with a slim record; he suggested Frémont or Banks.⁵⁴ Several factors favored Frémont's candidacy. Besides a minimum of political enemies, he possessed a record as a popular military figure and explorer. Furthermore his connections with the Democratic party, and his relationship to Sen. Thomas Hart Benton were politically attractive. "I tell you," Dana explained to Pike, "Frémont is the man for us to beat with and the only one . . . if he is elected, his Cabinet will be made up of our sort of men."⁵⁵ Dana was probably referring, among other things, to a Cabinet position for Greeley.⁵⁶

Optimistic of Frémont's chances against Buchanan, Dana reassured Pike in the months before the election. In July, Dana reported that "the people are much more for us than we have supposed. I have been speaking around a good deal in clubs, and am everywhere astonished at the depth and ardor of the popular sentiment It is a great canvass; for genuine inspiration 1840 couldn't hold

⁵⁴Greeley to Dana, March 20, 1856.

⁵⁵Dana to Pike, June 11, 1856. Dana's italics. Pike supported the candidacy of Supreme Court Justice John McClean in 1856. See Dana to Pike, May 21, 1856.

⁵⁶Isely, Greeley and the Republican Party, pp. 165-166. In a letter of Oct. 5, 1856, Dana also suggested that Pike might be named an ambassador.

a candle."⁵⁷ But Pike continued to have doubts despite the glowing reports from New York. By August, Dana's patience had worn thin, and he resorted to sarcasm. "If you had approved either Frémont or his life [the campaign biography published by the Tribune] I should have been alarmed. But your total condemnation quite reassures me. I notice that Garrison . . . and other disunionists hold the same language. It's alarming thus to see all the Damphools against us. Our course and our candidate need no other endorsement."⁵⁸

As he worked hard throughout the late summer and early fall, Dana remained sanguine about Republican prospects. As November approached, Frémont's chances seemed to improve steadily. Finally Dana predicted that every free state would end up in Fremont's column. "The tide is rising with a rush as it does in the Bay of Fundy," he advised his friend from Maine, "and you'll hear an awful squelching among the hogs and jackasses when they come to drown."⁵⁹ The election returns proved Dana's pre-

⁵⁷Dana to Pike, July 24, 1856.

⁵⁸Dana to Pike, Aug. 9, 1856.

⁵⁹Dana to Pike, Oct. 5, 1856.

diction a bit too optimistic. Frémont carried all of the free states except five--a good showing but not enough to keep Buchanan from the White House. Crestfallen after all his hopes and labors, Dana evidently failed to write any confession of political error to Pike. The managing editor might have taken pride in his paper's influence. Four of the free states which voted for Buchanan had fewer Tribune readers on a per capita basis than the other Northern states. Dana had not foreseen the extent to which the regular Know-Nothing candidate, Millard Fillmore, would cut into Republican strength. Some Know- Nothings had even been weaned away from Frémont by charges in Democratic papers that the "Pathfinder" was really a Roman Catholic.⁶⁰

After the defeat in 1856, Greeley began to fear that the idea of slavery restriction was insufficient to insure a Republican victory. He admitted that there did not even seem to be a majority of antislavery sentiment in the North. In order to broaden the party's appeal, Greeley pushed forward an economic program featuring a homestead act, a protective tariff, and internal improvements along

⁶⁰ Allan Nevins, Frémont: Pathfinder of the West (New York: Longmans, Green, 1955), pp. 444-447.

with increased immigration to provide an adequate labor supply. It was Henry Clay's old "American System," and with it Greeley believed he could win new members for his party, including nonslaveowning Southerners.⁶¹

Perhaps better at producing disharmony in the ranks of the opposition, Greeley recognized new possibilities in the Dred Scott decision. His anxiety to split the Democratic party caused some discontent among his fellow Republicans in Illinois. The Democrats in that state were surprised in 1858 when the Tribune announced its support of Sen. Douglas in his race for re-election against Lincoln. Greeley reasoned that Douglas would defeat the proslavery Lecompton Constitution for Kansas, and that this would increase Democratic discord. Greeley explained this to his friend Schuyler Colfax, publisher of the H. Joseph Valley Register in South Bend, Indiana. He also asked Colfax for some help.

I wish you would keep Dana advised in my absence at the West. He is shrewd, but green in politics, and don't keep his eye close enough to the field. I know how to favor the Douglas rebellion without weakening his Democratic standing, and shall continue to write during my absence, but there will be occurrences that need to be seized on the

⁶¹ Pike, First Blows, pp. 349-350.

instant, and Dana may be at Appleton's [publisher of Dana's Cyclopaedia] or the Opera when he should be studying dispatches. Keep him posted by telegraph and otherwise.⁶²

Greeley's strategy was not readily apparent to Lincoln's supporters, but Douglas's victory set the stage for "the disruption of the American Democracy." Explaining his paper's policy, Dana wrote Pike: "Of course Douglas hasn't a chance at Charleston, and we crack him up, and call him the Dictator of the Democracy in order to make it all certain for him"⁶³

Already preparing for 1860, the Tribune stepped up its efforts to convert the non-slaveholding whites in the South to Republicanism. The New York paper made efforts to spread Hinton Helper's Impending Crisis throughout the Slave Kingdom; Greeley hoped it would appeal to free whites and cause them to use political means to achieve the dissolution of slavery. As early as 1856 he had cautioned his managing editor against antagonizing the South. This happened when Dana published a militant editorial arguing that in case of war involving the slave states, the Negroes would

⁶²Quoted in Isely, Greeley and the Republican Party, p. 247.

⁶³Dana to Pike, Nov. 15, 1858.

rise against their masters and insure a Southern defeat. Tribune policy toward the South, explained Greeley, must not be "impelled by hatred . . . or a desire to humiliate that section. On the contrary, ours is the course to renovate and exalt the South, and must be so commended."⁶⁴ Dana, less enthusiastic about converting the South, nevertheless tried to promote the idea of union as opposed to disunion. But unlike Greeley he was prepared to adopt a firmer policy in case the South threatened to secede.⁶⁵

In May 1860, Greeley traveled to Chicago for the Republican convention, hoping to win the big prize for Edward Bates, an old Missouri Whig. The New York delegation, with Thurlow Weed in control, pushed hard to win the nomination for Seward. Dana had already written off the New Yorker's chances. "There remains this one hard fact against Seward's nomination," argued Dana, "and I can't believe the Convention can get over it, namely, that he can't carry Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Indiana, or Illinois. I don't see how in spite of all the fanaticism

⁶⁴Greeley to Dana, April 2, 1856.

⁶⁵Dana to Pike, Sept. 1, 1859.

which can be brought to bear he can be nominated in the face of that."⁶⁶ Once again Dana's estimate seemed to be wrong.

Weed made steady progress at the Wigwam until Greeley, on the evening of May 17, dejectedly wired his paper that Seward's nomination appeared imminent. But as Greeley prepared to toss in the towel, the backers of Lincoln rounded up the support of several crucial states, including vital Pennsylvania. Overnight the situation changed and the next day Greeley played his part in Lincoln's victory by delivering Bates's votes at the appropriate moment. Somewhat unappreciated, Greeley was characterized as a disappointed office-seeker by the Sewardites, while Lincoln's supporters tempered their gratitude with memories of the Tribune's endorsement of Douglas in 1858.⁶⁷

With four candidates in the field, "Uncle Horace's Weekly Try-Bune" informed its readers that the choice for 1860 lay between honest government and corruption; between peace and foreign wars to extend slavery; and between the ultimate extinction of human bondage and the ultimate expansion of that institution. Praising Lincoln as a

⁶⁶Dana to Pike, March 20, 1860.

⁶⁷Isely, Greeley and the Republican Party.

conservative who desired only to prevent the extension of slavery, the paper attacked the other presidential hopefuls. John Bell represented an attempt to frighten the North with the specter of disunion; Douglas was a fence-straddler--a Free Soiler in the North and a proslavery man in the South. Breckinridge came off a bit better; it was simply a matter of his being on the wrong side.⁶⁸ Reassuring his readers, Greeley forecast "that the Republican President will be inaugurated . . . by universal consent, amid an era of good feeling."⁶⁹

More aggressive than Greeley, Dana was less certain of the outcome of Lincoln's election. He doubted that the South would fight, but if war did break out, Dana promised a short one. As the paper's authority on military matters, the managing editor busied himself by studying the art of war. On a large wall map in his office, he familiarized himself with the country's major rivers and railroads. He also reviewed Napoleon's campaigns, followed new developments in artillery, and applied himself to weighty logistical

⁶⁸Isely, Greeley and the Republican Party, pp. 295-298.

⁶⁹New York Tribune, July 10, 1860.

problems.⁷⁰ It was typical of the scholarly Dana to prepare himself thoroughly for any eventuality--in this case it happened to be war.

Even before Greeley left New York in January 1861 for his annual lecture tour, Dana's pen stiffened the Tribune's position on secession. Previously Greeley had admitted that the right of secession existed; the revolutionary principle in the Declaration of Independence justified it. When the first seven slave states seceded following Lincoln's election, Greeley insisted that non-slaveowners were being tricked, that elections to secessionist conventions were hurried, and that no popular referendums were held. Dana more concerned with the effects of secession than with its legal justification, contended that the Southern action meant war. If the South attempted to confiscate federal property, the North would have to maintain authority by force of arms. He predicted that the Southern states would either rejoin

⁷⁰ See Dana's editorials in the New York Tribune, March 10 and 26, 1856, and also June 27, 1859. Further evidence in Emmet Crozier, Yankee Reporters: 1861-1865 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), p. 22; and Isely, Greeley and the Republican Party, pp. 326-334.

the Union, or there would be a short, decisive war. In case of the latter, Dana believed a blockade would bring the rebels to their knees, and create a demand for reunion.⁷¹

Unwilling to coddle the South, Dana attached a statement of his position to the Tribune masthead: "No Compromise/ No Concession To Traitors/The Constitution as it is."⁷² Greeley's return in late February did not significantly alter his paper's belligerence. Greeley's own attitude had changed; now he felt firmness necessary to prevent the South from forming its own government, something that would seriously damage Northern prestige among pro-Union Southerners. By inauguration day, Greeley found himself being classified as a leader of the Northern warhawks.⁷³

After the bombardment of Fort Sumter, Dana's role in determining Tribune policy became even more crucial. Strategy and tactics now assumed added importance, and these were among the managing editor's specialties. While Washington appeared racked by disorganization and indecision, the

⁷¹See Dana's editorials in the New York Tribune between Dec. 1860 and Feb. 1861.

⁷²New York Tribune, Feb. 18 to March 1, 1861.

⁷³Isely, Greeley and the Republican Party, p. 328.

Tribune demanded swift action in the field. The masthead of the paper offered a new slogan on June 26. "The Nation's War Cry Forward to Richmond! Forward to Richmond! The Rebel Congress must not be allowed to meet there on the 20th of July! By That Date The Place Must Be Held By The National Army!"⁷⁴

Although credited to Dana, these phrases were written by a recent addition to the paper, Fitz Henry Warren of Iowa.⁷⁵ Soon the war-cry was echoed in other papers, bringing additional pressure to bear on the administration. It helped produce a sobering Union defeat at Bull Run on July 21 which quieted talk of a short war. The arch-rival New York Herald scooped the Tribune in reporting the setback, and to make matters worse Dana published an angry editorial calling the Bull Run debacle unnecessary and requesting the appointment of a new Cabinet. It was too much for Greeley. Reeling from the barbed shafts of the Herald and the Times, he published a statement absolving himself from connection with the "Forward to Richmond" slogan and the editorial

⁷⁴ New York Tribune, June 26 - July 4, 1861.

⁷⁵ Undated memorandum, Tarbell Papers, Allegheny College.

attacking the Cabinet.⁷⁶

Eight months later, in March 1862, Greeley, supported by the majority of the paper's stockholders, forced Dana's resignation. Greeley had spent too much time away from the paper; he had delegated too much power to his managing editor. Now he realized that unless Dana left the Tribune, he would be unable to control the editorial policy. "No one man," he maintained, "can manage a newspaper for another in such a crisis as this and I am peculiarly unfortunate in this respect."⁷⁷ Samuel Sinclair, who had purchased a large block of stock, also considered the situation unfortunate. Worried about the paper's declining prestige, Sinclair helped round up the stockholders in support of Greeley. Their analysis of the problem was simple. Either Greeley or Dana had to go, and the success of the paper seemed to rest on its founder's shoulders.

On April 9, 1862, Dana wrote a long letter to Pike, now serving as Minister to the Netherlands. "My Dear Pike," it began, "I have got a strange story to tell you." Dana

⁷⁶New York Tribune, July 22, 23, and 24, 1861.

⁷⁷Quoted in Hale, Greeley: Voice of the People, p. 252.

explained that on March 27, he had learned of a movement to force him from the Tribune. His informant, Sidney Howard Gay, who succeeded to the post of managing editor, told Dana that "Mr. Greeley had come to the determination that either he or I must leave I was as much astounded at this statement as if he had told me I was about to be shot for treason." Except for George Ripley and one other person, all the stockholders supported the move. Dana could either resign or be expelled.

Advised to enter the army or to seek a job with his friend, the Secretary of War, Dana tried in vain to arrange a compromise permitting him to remain with the Tribune in a different capacity. "The difficulty," Dana learned on March 28, "was a radical incompatibility of character. As Mr. Gay expressed it, I was a positive, bold, determined man with a very strong will, while Mr. Greeley was of the opposite qualities; and my mere presence domineered over him and rendered him unable to act with freedom and cheerfulness As to the real causes of this affair you can judge as well as I"

Dana suggested that much of the trouble involved Greeley's jealousy; he resented the letters his managing

editor received from prominent officials concerning stories in the paper. Revealing offers of jobs by other newspapers, Dana added that he wanted to rest before working again.⁷⁸ Dana knew that he would not be unemployed for long. And although he thought he would remain in newspaper work of some kind, fate had something else in store for him.

⁷⁸ Dana to Pike, April 9, 1862. Although Isely suggests Dana's military editorials brought about his departure from the paper, it seems more likely that Greeley and Dana came to the parting of the way over the latter's powerful position on the paper. The editorials were merely manifestations of the underlying problem--who was running the Tribune?

CHAPTER III

THE STRANGE CASE OF CAPTAIN HATCH:

DANA AND THE CAIRO CLAIMS

Greeley's power play, which pushed Dana off the paper, surprised the managing editor as much as it disappointed him. Thanks to Dana the Tribune had outdistanced its rivals in covering the secession crisis and the first year of the war. He accomplished this by infiltrating the South with resourceful correspondents who reported their stories in an elaborate code he had devised. It was a dangerous game; receiving the Tribune in Texas was a felony, and elsewhere in the South postmasters simply stamped the paper "undeliverable." In Charleston, one of Dana's men taunted citizens of the town to determine his identity. All efforts failed, and by the day of Lincoln's inauguration there were three correspondents ferreting out news in the South Carolina capitol. Dana's performance made the paper sparkle, and it won the

admiration of other newspapermen.¹ In the showdown between him and Greeley, however, it was not enough to maintain his powerful position as managing editor.

At the same time that he was confounding Southerners with his reportorial games of hide-and-seek, Dana was also making important contacts with some of the leading figures in the federal government. Concerned that the right men receive a just share of the political profits in 1860-1861, Dana took an active interest in the formation of Lincoln's cabinet. In New York a faction of Greeley-led Republicans fought to wrest party control away from the Seward-Weed group. The conflict was sharpened by Greeley's role in frustrating Seward's bid for the nomination at the Wigwam.² After the election it became imperative to have proper representation among Lincoln's advisers.

"I do not know what to say in reply to your wish that I may go into Lincoln's cabinet," wrote Salmon F. Chase to Dana shortly after the Republican victory.

¹Louis M. Starr, Bohemian Brigade: Civil War News-men in Action (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954), pp. 15-21.

²Isely, Greeley and the Republican Party, pp. 318-323.

"Certainly I do not seek any such place." The Senator-elect from Ohio went on to say that his major goals, the overthrow of the slave power and the curtailment of slavery, were about to be realized. He indicated his preference for a legislative rather than an administrative position, but cautiously added:

Still I do not say that I would refuse the post. Indeed it would be rather superfluous to decline what has not been offered. Neither do I say I would accept, but only this: that if the offer were made without any urgency on the part of my friends and under circumstances otherwise agreeable to me, I should be bound to consider it honestly and carefully, with the help of the best adviser I could consult, and should be governed in my decision not so much by my personal inclination as by my obligation to the cause and its true and faithful friends.³

Although some preferred to call it ambition, Chase's "obligation to the cause" overcame his "personal inclination" and he accepted Lincoln's offer to head the Treasury Department. Even with Chase in the cabinet, however, the anti-Seward group in New York did not feel safe. They feared that the all-important patronage in New York would be dom-

³Salmon P. Chase to Dana, Nov. 10, 1860, Dana Papers, Library of Congress. All the Dana Papers which I have used in this study are in the Library of Congress and are hereinafter cited simply as Dana Papers.

inated by the Secretary of State and his friends. Shortly after the inauguration they arranged a meeting with Lincoln, probably with the help of Chase. Dana was among the supplicants received by the President in his working office, a large upstairs room in the east wing of the White House. The visit proved brief. After listening to his callers' fears that Sewardites would dominate New York patronage, Lincoln reassured Dana and the others that neither side would control everything. He asked them to leave a list of jobs and men they wanted, and averred that he would use it to apply the rule of "give and take."⁴

Dana failed to record his impressions of Lincoln following this interview, but after the discouraging summer of Bull Run he expressed doubts about the President's ability. "I suppose you understand from the newspaper to some extent what is the condition of the country," Dana confided to his friend at The Hague. "But what these do not represent is the general and increasing dissatisfaction of the people with the administration and the

⁴ Dana, Recollections of the Civil War, pp. 2-3. This first chapter is the only one in the Recollections that Dana actually saw and revised.

progress of the war."⁵ The government's financial difficulties, according to Dana, stemmed from the reluctance of bankers to help Secretary of the Treasury Chase arrange for loans. Furthermore, Dana related there was "a great deal of private talk against Lincoln and more especially Mrs. Lincoln." The President's wife had created a disturbance aboard a train because she insisted on getting a free pass. Dana sent Pike the newspaper account of this, and added his own indignant comment. "Think of Mrs. G. Washington begging her railroad fare and raising hell to get it. Pike, I advise you to cultivate this lady. She must be worthy of careful study." On the whole the situation was bad, and he advised his friend that prospects were unlikely to improve.

Much of Dana's bleak outlook probably stemmed from financial difficulties. As the Tribune's revenues diminished in 1861, so did Dana's income as a stockholder. He considered the matter serious enough to cut down his personal expenditures. As part of this retrenchment program, Dana decided to get along with two servants rather than four, and his children began attending public school.

⁵ Dana to Pike, Nov. 8, 1861.

Although obviously still living in comfort, Dana and his family found it difficult to lower their standard of living.

In any case, Dana's pessimism had abated somewhat by January 1862. Again writing to Pike, he admitted that "on the whole there is as much progress as any reasonable man ought to expect. The faith is that the administration is quite up with the majority of the people and that today those who would oppose arming the negroes are more numerous than the friends of that measure . . . the danger of an English war has done much to ripen the public mind."⁶

Although there had been no important military victories, Dana hoped that General George B. McClellan might remedy the situation. He admitted, however, that McClellan was disliked in Washington, with Benjamin Wade and Thaddeus Stevens leading the opposition. "They say he does nothing and can't manage so big an army," wrote Dana. "It may be so but I am not sure that he isn't smarter than they are."

Shortly after this letter was written, something else happened to reinforce Dana's confidence in an ultimate Northern victory. On January 20, 1862, Lincoln re-

⁶Dana to Pike, Jan. 4, 1862.

placed Simon P. Cameron as Secretary of War by naming Edwin M. Stanton to the post. Cameron, a shrewd Pennsylvanian, had received the original appointment for throwing his state's support to Lincoln during the 1860 convention. His slipshod administration of the War Department had hurt the Union cause, and Lincoln was pleased to send him off on a diplomatic mission to Russia. Dana endorsed the change and praised Stanton in a Tribune editorial, which predicted Union success as soon as Washington was cleared of rebel spies and contract-jobbers.⁷ Stanton responded with a letter of thanks. "You cannot tell how much obligation I feel myself under for your kindness," he wrote. "As soon as I can get the machinery of the office working, the rats cleaned out, and the ratholes stopped we shall move. The army has got to fight or run away, and while men are striving nobly in the West, the champagne and oysters on the Potomac must be stopped. But patience for a short while only is all I ask, if you and others like you will rally around me."⁸

⁷ New York Tribune, Jan. 21, 1862.

⁸ Edwin M. Stanton to Dana, Jan. 24, 1862, Dana Papers.

During the first month of his service in the War Department, Stanton exchanged several letters with Dana. In late January, perhaps emboldened by Stanton's expression of gratitude, Dana wrote the Secretary requesting a fair chance for General John C. Frémont. The Pathfinder, Dana's hero in 1856, had been removed from his command of the Western Department in November 1861. There had been numerous charges of fraud against his quartermasters, and Frémont himself had angered Lincoln by attempting military emancipation in Missouri. But Dana believed that the removal had been caused by political enemies, especially Francis P. Blair, Jr., who wanted revenge because Frémont had supposedly refused a juicy contract with one of his friends.⁹ Stanton's reply was firm and to the point. "If Gen. Frémont has any fight in him he shall so far as I am concerned, have a chance to show it and I have told him so. The times require the help of every man according to his gifts, and having neither partialities nor grudges to indulge, it will be my aim to practice on the maxim 'the tools to him that can handle them'."¹⁰

⁹Dana to Pike, Jan. 4, 1862.

¹⁰Stanton to Dana, Feb. 1, 1862, Dana Papers.

Two days after this forthright reply, Dana received a confidential letter from Ben Wade. The Ohio Senator, a leading member of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War which was examining Frémont, also numbered himself among the general's supporters. "No public man since Admiral Byng . . . has suffered so unjustly as Gen. Frémont," Wade wrote. "His persecution will prove the darkest page in our history."¹¹ If there was any persecution neither Wade nor Dana was able to do anything about it. Before long Frémont had a new command--a military department consisting of mountainous areas in Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

In February, Dana and the Tribune exulted over the news of Union victories in the West. General Ulysses S. Grant had scored twin successes on the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers. The Fort Donelson victory on February 16 forced the Confederates to retreat from Kentucky and also to evacuate Nashville. An editorial by Dana attributed credit for the triumphs to the Secretary of War. Stanton read

¹¹Benjamin F. Wade to Dana, Feb. 3, 1862, Dana Papers. Wade warned Dana against saying anything about the information contained in this letter because the investigation was still in progress.

Dana's generous praise, and then sat down and addressed a letter to "The Editor of the New York Tribune."

I cannot suffer undue merit to be ascribed to my official action. The glory of our recent victories belongs to the gallant officers and soldiers that fought the battles, no share of it belongs to me. Much has recently been said of military combinations and organizing victory. I hear such phrases with apprehension. They commenced in infidel France with the Italian campaign and resulted in Waterloo. Who can organize victory? Who can combine the elements of success on the battlefield? What under the blessing of Providence I conceive to be the true organization of victory and military combination to end this war was declared in few words by General Grant's message to General Buckner: 'I propose to move immediately on your works'.¹²

Stung by what he considered a rebuke, the thin-skinned Dana wired his Washington correspondent to inquire whether or not Stanton intended to repudiate the Tribune's support. Stanton, who also took offense quickly on occasion, framed a soothing reply. He only wanted the credit to go where it properly belonged. Otherwise he feared antagonism between the armies and the War Department.

To avoid that misconstruction was the object of my dispatch . . . [yet] from the tenor of your dispatch it seemed to me that your judgment did not approve the publication [of Stanton's wire disclaiming credit] or you would not speak

¹²Stanton to Dana, Feb. 19, 1862, Dana Papers.

of me as 'repudiating' anything the Tribune says. On reflection I am convinced the communication should not be published, as it might imply an antagonism between myself and the Tribune. In this as on any future occasion I defer to your judgement. We have one heart and mind in this great cause, and upon many essential points you have a wider range of observation and clearer sight than myself; I am therefore willing to be guided by your wisdom.¹³

Satisfied, Dana not only published Stanton's modest disclaimer, but also an editorial praising the Secretary.

Within a few days another letter from Dana arrived at the War Department. This time the managing editor of the Tribune wanted Stanton's reaction to a newspaper story which claimed the Secretary of War had credited McClellan, as General-in-Chief, with the victories in the West. Stanton dismissed the story as "a ridiculous and impudent effort to puff the General." It was, he wrote, "a funny sight to see a certain military hero in the telegraphic office at Washington last Sunday organizing victory . . . and capturing Fort Donelson six hours after Grant and Smith had taken it sword in hand and had victorious possession."¹⁴

¹³Stanton to Dana, Feb. 19, 1862, Dana Papers. This communication and the one above both carry the same date because the former was sent by telegraph.

¹⁴Stanton to Dana, Feb. 23, 1862, Dana Papers. Of course the "certain military hero" refers to McClellan.

Not long after this Dana lost his powerful position on the Tribune. By April, he was pondering what the future had in store for him. "Mr. Greeley himself resumes the active management of the paper," he wrote a friend, "and I am left to begin the world anew. What I shall do, I don't know. I have had several propositions, but none that exactly suits. First of all, I am going to have a rest till the Cyclopaedia is done Then I shall naturally gravitate back into journalism, somewhere and somehow."¹⁵

Dana's twenty shares of Tribune stock brought him \$60,000, although he wistfully advised a friend this was \$10,000 less than he might have received early in 1861.¹⁶ The trustees of the Tribune Association afforded some measure of consolation by agreeing to continue his salary for six months.

For several weeks Dana traveled, visited friends, and mulled over offers of various sorts. He journeyed to

¹⁵Dana to William Henry Huntington, April 11, 1862, Quoted in Wilson, Life of Dana, pp. 175-176. Huntington, a college friend of Dana, worked as a Paris correspondent for the Tribune. Evidently he received numerous letters from Dana over a period of years, but they have not been found.

¹⁶Dana to Pike, April 9, 1862.

Washington in April, and arranged to tour the Bull Run battlefield "with a small escort and one or two generals."¹⁷ There was some talk of a diplomatic post, but Dana did not encourage it because he was reluctant to leave the country. Various proposals to re-enter the field of journalism failed to excite his interest. But in June, he decided to accept a War Department appointment to serve on a fact-finding commission.

By direction of the President, a commission has been appointed consisting of Messrs. George S. Boutell, Stephen T. Logan and yourself, to examine and report upon all unsettled claims against the War Department at Cairo, Illinois, that may have originated prior to the first day of April, 1862.¹⁸

For his services Dana was to receive eight dollars per day,

¹⁷ Dana to Robert Carter, April 18, 1862, quoted in Wilson, Life of Dana, p. 172. Carter, another Tribune correspondent, had contributed articles for Dana's Cyclopaedia. Dana's letters to Carter are also missing. Wilson mentions having them in his biography of Dana (p.173), but in all probability they were returned with the rest of Wilson's materials to Dana's son, Paul. A letter from Wilson to Paul Dana dated June 4, 1907, in the James H. Wilson Papers, Library of Congress, indicates that all personal papers were returned to the Dana family. In 1922, Paul Dana presented the Library of Congress with some of his father's letters, but these did not include many of the ones cited by Wilson.

¹⁸ Stanton to Dana, June 16, 1862, Dana Papers.

along with a travel allotment. And despite the temporary nature of the appointment, there was reason to hope that it might lead to something more permanent in the War Department.

For the most part, Dana and his fellow commissioners were being asked to untangle some very complicated transactions growing out of the operations of the quartermaster's department, under Capt. Reuben B. Hatch, at the Cairo post. In the first year of the war logistical headaches troubled most military camps in the North. Within five months of Fort Sumter's bombardment, the Union armies increased some twenty-seven times--from less than 17,000 men to nearly 500,000 men. Staggering problems accompanied such rapid growth, and complications arose as a result of Cameron's inept performance as head of the War Department. Pressure and lax supervision produced contracts for goods that ignored established rules and regulations. Naturally this lack of system resulted in graft, fraudulent transactions, and unnecessary purchases. The worst violations took place in Frémont's Western Department, the boundaries of which

encompassed the Cairo installation.¹⁹

By the summer of 1861, Congress was calling for an investigation of War Department contracts. The House named a committee to inquire "into all the facts and circumstances of all contracts and agreements already made and such contracts and agreements hereafter to be made prior to the final report of the committee" ²⁰ This committee's report, published after Secretary of War Cameron's departure, condemned the Secretary's administration of the War Department.

After taking over, Stanton faced the task of instituting sound and orderly procedures for the purchase of war materials. In order to acquire an accurate picture of affairs at the major camps, Stanton relied on a system he later used extensively with Dana. Thomas A. Scott, Assistant Secretary of War, was sent to examine the

¹⁹A. Howard Meneely, The War Department, 1861: A Study in Mobilization and Administration, Columbia University Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law, No. 300 (New York: Columbus University Press, 1928), p. 258 and 269. See also Russell F. Weigley, Quartermaster General of the Union Army: A Biography of M. C. Meigs (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), pp. 181-214.

²⁰House Reports 2, 37th Congress, 2nd Session (Serial 1143), pp. 137-138.

Western posts and report back in detail by telegraph. On February 12, 1862, he sent Stanton a long dispatch regarding conditions at Cairo.

I spent the whole of this day in examination of matters connected with the Quartermaster's Department at Cairo--the condition of affairs under W. M. Hatch [sic] was about as bad as could well be imagined. From the evidence we have been able to procure . . . you will perceive that a regular system of fraud appears to have been adopted. Many transactions, large and small, have been used by Qr. Mast. and perhaps others under him, to promote his private interests. Hatch was placed under arrest in January and confined to the limits of Cairo, but he is now absent on parole of honor on a visit to his family in Illinois A few days after his arrest two of his ledgers were found at the lower point of Cairo, in the water at a point where the Ohio and Mississippi meet. They were washed on shore, the intention evidently being to destroy them. One of these books is an Invoice Ledger of property purchases and prices to be paid; it is said that the vouchers for this property . . . will show increased amounts for the Govt. to pay--the original amount of course to be paid the seller, and the difference, it is supposed, was to belong to the Quarter Master's Department as perquisites. The other book is a property ledger showing distribution.²¹

Scott recommended a thorough housecleaning at Cairo, and urged the prompt settlement of Hatch's accounts under the guidance of a reliable officer. This officer, he

²¹ Thomas A. Scott to Stanton, Feb. 12, 1862, Edwin M. Stanton Papers, Library of Congress (Hereinafter LC).

advised, should be careful to adjust all claims to fair prices. Scott also told Stanton that he believed observation of the major camps and officers could have beneficial effects. "If the Secretary of War and Commanding General could pass around quietly every few months it would do great good."

The problems pinpointed by Scott dated back to the late summer of 1861, when Reuben B. Hatch was appointed Assistant Quartermaster of Volunteers with the rank of Captain. Lincoln himself requested the appointment, and asked Cameron to assign Hatch to the brigade of General Benjamin M. Prentiss in Illinois.²² Captain Hatch happened to be the younger brother of Ozias M. Hatch, a well-known Illinois politician who had helped secure Lincoln's nomination at the Wigwam. Lincoln evidently was performing a small favor for an old friend.

But Captain Hatch soon came under fire. In December 1861, some irregular purchases of lumber were discovered, and before long other suspicious practices came

²²Roy P. Basler, ed., The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953), Vol. IV, p. 461.

to light. At the very least it seemed that the Cairo Quartermaster conducted his business in a peculiar, erratic fashion. Twice he sent one of his clerks, Henry W. Wilcox, to Chicago for lumber to be used in the construction of barracks at Cairo. Ostensibly the task fell to Wilcox because of his previous experience in the lumber business. But on neither occasion did the clerk himself purchase the lumber.

Instead Wilcox contacted his brother-in-law, Benjamin W. Thomas, and contracted with him to buy the lumber for the government at \$10.50 per thousand board feet. Wilcox then rode around Chicago with Thomas while the latter visited various dealers, and made the necessary purchases at prices which averaged about \$9.50 per thousand board feet. Thomas asked each dealer who sold him lumber to make out the bill for \$10.50 per thousand, and convinced them that the difference in the price they charged and the amount paid by the government constituted his commission.²³ Both Wilcox and Thomas later

²³Office of the Quartermaster General, Consolidated Correspondence File, 1794-1915, National Archives, material filed under "Lumber Frauds" and "Cairo Claims Commission." See also House Rep. 37:2, Serial 1143, lii, pp. 1090-1137.

testified before the House Committee on Contracts that the major portion of the "commission" on the first purchase went to Hatch.²⁴

Somehow an enterprising reporter uncovered the basic facts of the lumber deals, and the Chicago Tribune printed a story alleging that fraud had occurred. When the story broke, Grant, who was the commander at Cairo, sent his personal aide, Captain William S. Hillyer, to Chicago to gather evidence. The newspaper exposure also galvanized Captain Hatch into action, and he accompanied Hillyer to Chicago.

Meeting alone with the lumbermen at the Tremont House, Hatch repudiated Thomas' contracts and denied any knowledge of dishonest dealings. Hatch knew that \$9.50 per thousand board feet was a fair price for the second consignment of lumber which had already been delivered at Cairo. Yet instead of offering this amount to the merchants, Hatch asked them to settle on a fair price among themselves--and obligingly left the room while they

²⁴Testimony of Benjamin W. Thomas and Henry W. Wilcox, House Rep. 37:2, Serial 1143, pp. 1125-1137.

deliberated. Needless to say, this was a poor way to conduct government business. After some debate, the lumbermen settled on a price of \$10 per thousand. Hatch paid all the money to one man, the spokesman for the dealers, who divided it among his colleagues.

The spokesman, Robert H. Foss, was a former schoolmate of Hatch. He proposed that the lumbermen pool their extra fifty cents per thousand and give it to the Cairo Quartermaster. Foss claimed this would increase the possibility of future business. Hatch refused this offer, and there is no evidence that he solicited the money. But he and Foss had dined together, and had been seen together on several other occasions.²⁵ The offered gift and its refusal may have been pre-arranged to establish Hatch's incorruptibility. Whatever the purpose, it failed to make Hatch's role in the proceedings look any better. And shortly after the Tremont House meeting, Wilcox left Cairo at Hatch's suggestion and stayed with one of the latter's

²⁵Office of the Quartermaster General, Consolidated Correspondence File, 1794-1915, National Archives. Also see testimony of the various lumber merchants in House Rep. 37:2, Serial 1143, pp. 1090-1118.

brothers at Griggsville, Illinois. Obviously Hatch wanted his clerk away from Cairo so that he could not be questioned about the lumber transactions.²⁶

While Wilcox secluded himself in Griggsville, Grant informed the Quartermaster General of the Army that Hatch had been placed under arrest and that his accounts were being examined.²⁷ The investigation turned up other deals of a peculiar nature, including a shoe salesman's allegation that he had paid Hatch a 5% premium in order to get a government contract. Later in a private conversation, however, the salesman supposedly admitted that the shoe contract had been made without any payoff to Hatch. Jackson Grimshaw, the man who claimed to have heard this confession, was an attorney employed by Hatch. While collecting this evidence

²⁶ Testimony of Henry W. Wilcox, House Rep. 37:2, Serial 1143, pp. 1132-1137. Although Wilcox and Thomas probably lied to the House Committee about their respective roles in the lumber purchases, there is no reason to doubt their statement that Hatch received money.

²⁷ Grant to Gen. M. C. Meigs, Jan. 22, 1862, Office of the Quartermaster General, Consolidated Correspondence File, 1794-1915, National Archives.

in behalf of his client, Grimshaw wrote Lincoln asking that a court of inquiry be appointed.²⁸

Probably this was the genesis of the Cairo Claims Commission, but before this group convened, the House Committee on Contracts scrutinized the lumber deals. They concluded that Hatch had engaged in fraudulent and corrupt practices, and that as quartermaster "he combined with other parties to defraud the government and put money into his own pocket. The fraud was practiced by purchasing the lumber at one price and having the bill for it made out to the government at another and a higher price; a part of the difference, in one instance at least, going directly into the hands of Hatch."²⁹ They warned that none of Hatch's vouchers should be paid without a thorough investigation, and they confidently predicted that the Cairo Claims Commission would accomplish this. "From the high character of the

²⁸ Jackson Grimshaw to Lincoln, Jan. 31, 1862, Collected Works of Lincoln, Vol. V, p. 116 fn.

²⁹ House Rep. 37:2, Serial 1143, li-lii.

gentlemen composing it there is no doubt a proper examination will be made, and all fraudulent and extravagant claims rejected."³⁰

Somehow the Cairo Claims Commission not only failed to uncover any evidence of fraud, but also ruled that Hatch was innocent of willful wrongdoing in any of his transactions. Even more strange, however, is the Commission's report--the exact nature of which remains undetermined³¹ because it is missing from War Department files.

³⁰ House Rep. 37:2, Serial 1143, li-iii.

³¹ The report of the Cairo Claims Commission is mentioned in the Register of Letters Received, Office of the Quartermaster General, August 6, 1862, and was filed accordingly. However, in the appropriate book of letters received for the above date, the report is missing. Some materials relating to the commission can be found in the Consolidated Correspondence File, 1794-1915, Office of the Quartermaster General. These are filed under "Cairo Claims Commission, and also under "Lumber Frauds," and consist largely of affidavits from the principals involved in the second lumber transactions. Also pertaining to the commission in the Quartermaster General's records are the following: a journal with very brief entries describing the commission's meetings, an alphabetical file of some of the claims giving the name of the claimant, the name of the approving officer, the nature of the article or claim, the amount of the claim preferred, and the amount allowed. Finally there is a complete register of 1712 claims drawn up by the commission with the same information as above. In July 1868, Reuben B. Hatch wrote to the War Department requesting a copy of the commission's report, but there is no evidence that the request was granted. Unless the report was already missing, however, it is reasonable to assume that he obtained a copy.

In essence Dana and his fellow commissioners seem to have concluded that the charges against Hatch were unfounded. They failed to find any evidence that Hatch received any "kickback" on the lumber purchases, or in any other transaction for that matter. Wilcox, who had testified differently before the House Committee, was not interrogated by the commissioners. Furthermore, Hatch was also exonerated of the charge that he tried to frustrate an investigation by destroying certain of his ledgers.

One of his books was found on the shore of the Ohio River, but this book was an attempt made at the beginning of his service as Assist. Quartermaster to keep his accounts by the usual mercantile system of double entry, and there was nothing in this book to indicate any dishonesty or fraud on his part With regard to the honesty of Capt. Hatch, it was the unanimous conclusion of the commission that there was no evidence before it to prove him other than an honest man.³²

Assistant Secretary of War Scott, who saw the ledgers after they were fished out of the river, had described the books somewhat differently in his report to Stanton. There can

³² Dana to J. G. Nicolay, Feb. 6, 1864, Office of the Quartermaster General, Consolidated Correspondence File, 1794-1915, National Archives. Lincoln's private secretary discussed Hatch's case with Dana on the morning of Feb. 6, 1864, and evidently asked Dana to write the letter setting forth the commission's belief that Hatch was innocent.

be little doubt of Hatch's guilt, at least in the first lumber deal. Quite obviously, the commission never saw the necessary evidence to convict him. Why that was remains a mystery.

Dana's service at Cairo lasted from June 18 to early August, and only a portion of that time was given over to the investigation of Hatch. All told, 1696 claims amounting to \$599,219.36 were examined, and the value of the allowed claims totaled \$451,105.80. The commission accepted most of these at face value, although a small number were rejected as fraudulent.³³ When the commission adjourned sine die on August 1, Dana went to Washington to deliver its report to the Secretary of War. Stanton received the report, and sent it on to the Office of the Quartermaster General. Subsequently it disappeared without ever having been published. Two weeks after the commission ended its hearings, Lincoln received another letter from Ozias M. Hatch requesting that his brother be released from arrest and remanded to duty. "Mr. Lincoln," pleaded the elder Hatch, "I hope you will do this for your friend."

³³ Dana, Recollections, pp. 13-14.

Lincoln sent the letter to the War Department with his recommendation that Captain Hatch be freed and reassigned to duty.³⁴

At Cairo, Dana found himself working with able, select colleagues. Stephen T. Logan, a former law partner of Lincoln, was appointed to the commission at the President's recommendation to Stanton.³⁵ Logan served only a few days before ill-health forced him to resign, and he was replaced with Shelby

³⁴ Ozias M. Hatch to Lincoln, August 15, 1862, Office of the Quartermaster General, Consolidated Correspondence File, National Archives, Lincoln's endorsement of the request is on the back of the letter. Captain Hatch was reassigned to duty and by 1864 had been promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and Chief Quartermaster of the XIII Army Corps. Although commended for his performance during the ill-fated Red River campaign in 1863-1864, Hatch ended his Civil War service under a cloud. In April 1865 he arranged to transport over 1800 paroled Union prisoners aboard the steamship Sultana. When the ship's boilers exploded, 1,100 lives were lost, and in the subsequent investigation Hatch refused to testify although subpoenaed three times. Hatch was officially exonerated, but there was a strong suspicion that he had made a deal with the Sultana's owner to deliver all the paroled prisoners to him for transportation. Such assignments were lucrative and agents of other vessels sometimes resorted to bribery in order to obtain them. See The War of the Rebellion; A compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1881-1901), Series I, xxxviii, pt. 1, pp. 215-220; for yet another irregularity in which Hatch figured see Series I, xxxiv, pt. 3, p. 215. (Hereinafter cited as O.R.)

³⁵ Lincoln to Stanton, April 2, 1862, Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln, Vol. V, p. 177, fn. This letter is missing from War Department files.

M. Cullom, later a United States Senator from Illinois.

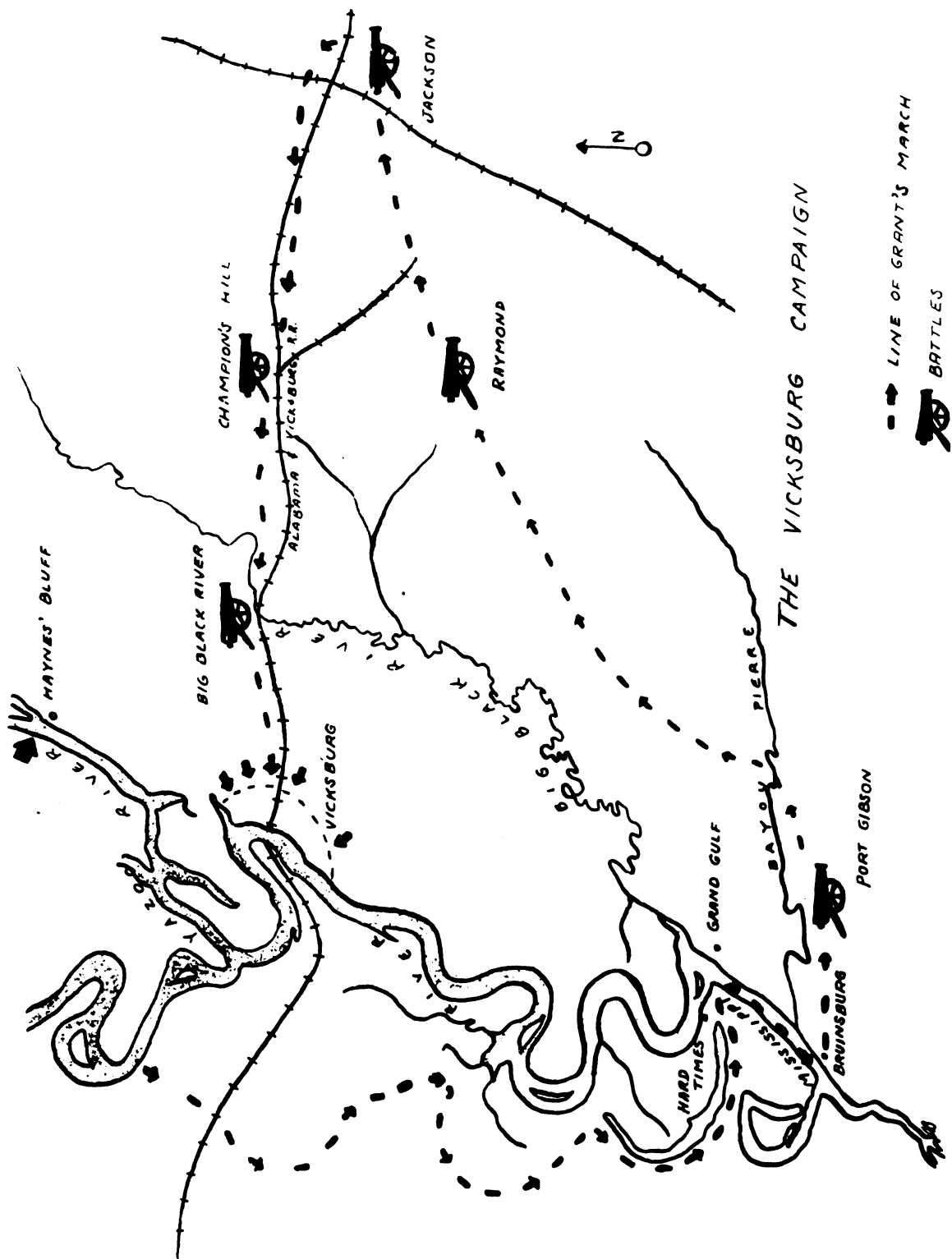
The other member of the group, George S. Boutwell of Massachusetts, eventually served as Governor of his state, United States Senator, and Secretary of the Treasury under President Grant. After Logan's resignation, Boutwell and Dana each served for a time as chairman of the commission.

Despite the press of official business Dana managed to get away from Cairo a few times. An excellent horseman, he found pleasure and relaxation in riding along the river banks near Cairo, and occasionally visiting nearby military camps. One of these visits, on the 4th of July, resulted in his first meeting with Grant. The occasion was a dinner in Memphis, and Dana sat next to Grant. At the time the general was still being criticized for his performance at Shiloh. Grant's friendly and unpretending personality impressed Dana.³⁶ After the meal the program featured a speech by Dana, who praised President Lincoln's leadership. Another speaker lauded Grant and the victory at Fort Donelson. A band played "See the Conquering Hero Comes," and everyone expected Grant to make a speech. Instead he

³⁶ Dana, Recollections, p. 15.

briefly thanked those assembled, and excused himself from giving an address on the ground that his education was deficient in such things.³⁷ Although neither he nor Dana had any way of knowing it, they would also be together on July 4, 1863. And on that day the celebration would be brightened by the fall of Vicksburg.

³⁷ A brief account of this dinner appears in Albert D. Richardson, A Personal History of Ulysses S. Grant (Hartford, Connecticut: The American Publishing Company, 1902), pp. 261-262. In 1861, Richardson served in New Orleans as one of Dana's secret Southern correspondents. During the Civil War, Richardson worked in the field as a Tribune reporter, and he was with Grant during the Vicksburg campaign. In attempting to run past the Vicksburg batteries at night, Richardson was captured along with two other newspapermen. At first it was believed that the journalists had been killed, and when General William T. Sherman heard this he supposedly remarked: "Good! Now we'll have news from hell before breakfast." See Starr, Bohemian Brigade, pp. 184-192.



CHAPTER IV

INVESTIGATING THE PAYMASTERS:

DANA AT VICKSBURG

Following his Cairo Claims service, Dana returned to New York. When he failed to find an appropriate position in newspaper work, he began making plans to go into the business of buying and selling cotton. This project was interrupted in November when he received a War Department request to come to Washington. Stanton needed a new Assistant Secretary of War; obviously impressed with Dana, he offered the New Yorker the job. Despite the brighter financial opportunities in cotton, Dana readily accepted the proposal. But after leaving Stanton's office, Dana encountered an old acquaintance, Charles G. Halpine, and told him about the prospective position. Soon the story appeared in the newspapers, and Stanton, evidently offended at the disclosure, moodily recalled the appointment.¹ The Secretary of War,

¹Dana, Recollections, pp. 16-17.

struggling to impose some degree of censorship on Northern papers, preferred to operate quietly. His efforts to control news of military significance led journalists to dub him the "Quarter-Deck Brute."²

Back again in New York, the bewildered Dana turned his attention to a business partnership formed to buy cotton in areas of the Mississippi Valley held by Federal troops. His partners were Roscoe Conkling of Utica, who later became a United States Senator, and George W. Chadwick, a New York businessman with experience in the cotton trade. Dana and Conkling each invested \$10,000 in the enterprise; in lieu of cash, Chadwick contributed his skill and knowledge, and agreed to serve as buyer and manager.³ The partnership promised good profits, providing certain problems could be overcome. A cotton trader with the necessary contacts and adequate transportation could expect tremendous returns. Cotton prices were at a sixty year high. One trader in Mississippi purchased 1,500 bales of cotton for \$12,000; he anticipated selling it for \$500,000 further

² Starr, Bohemian Brigade, p. 83.

³ Dana, Recollections, p. 17.

north. But his inability to arrange the necessary transportation ruined the transaction.⁴

Hopeful of avoiding such frustrations, Dana secured a letter of introduction from Stanton. Then, accompanied by Chadwick, he traveled to Memphis. There, in January, 1863 the two men set up headquarters in the town's leading hotel, the Gayoso House. Dana soon saw enough in Memphis to convince him that the cotton trade should be regulated by the government. A visit with General Ulysses S. Grant reinforced this conviction.

Grant's knowledge of the evils emanating from the trade in cotton was both recent and personal. In December 1862 he had been confronted with a partnership of cotton merchants consisting of his father, Jesse Grant, and three Cincinnati businessmen of Jewish extraction. Jesse Grant wanted his son's assistance in buying cotton and shipping it north. The hero of Fort Donelson responded by ordering the Cincinnati merchants to leave his district. On December 17, the general gave vent to his anger by issuing

⁴Bruce Catton, Grant Moves South (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1960), p. 349.

his ill-chosen General Orders No. 11, which expelled all Jews from the department he commanded.⁵ Thus, the mania for cotton speculation caused Grant many headaches, some of which developed before Dana and Chadwick arrived in Memphis.

After discussing the situation with Grant, Dana sat down and wrote Stanton a letter outlining the need for regulating the purchase of cotton. Dana particularly objected to corruption in the army, and, like Grant, he fastened most of the guilt on Jewish traders. Military necessity, according to Dana, dictated Federal controls.

The mania for sudden fortunes made in cotton raging in a vast population of Jews and Yankees scattered throughout this whole country, and in this town almost exceeding the numbers of the regular residents, has to an alarming extent corrupted and demoralized the army. Every colonel, captain, or quartermaster is in secret partnership with some operator in cotton; every soldier dreams of adding a bale of cotton to his monthly pay. I had no conception of the extent of this evil until I came and saw for myself. Besides, the resources of the rebels are inordinately increased from this source. Plenty of cotton is brought in from beyond our lines especially by the agency of Jewish traders⁶

⁵O.R., I, xvii, pt. 2, p. 424.

⁶Dana to Stanton, January 21, 1863, Stanton Papers LC.

Dana believed the situation could be remedied by excluding private purchasers from occupied areas. Cotton would be purchased at a fixed price by army quartermasters, and then shipped north for sale at public auction. In a postscript Dana mentioned his conversation with Grant, and said that the General agreed with the entire letter except for the statement imputing corruption to every officer in the army.

Financially, Dana stood to lose if the Federal government stepped in and cut out private cotton traders. But his high sense of duty caused him to set aside his business interests. He followed up his letter with a visit to Washington where he presented his ideas to both Lincoln and Stanton. Impressed by Dana's recommendations, Lincoln issued a proclamation outlawing trade with Confederate states except when carried on according to regulations established by the Treasury Department.⁷

The patriotism Dana displayed in this matter undoubtedly caused Stanton to reconsider the possibility of taking the journalist into the War Department. The irascible Secretary needed a man of Dana's ability for a special mission in the West. Somewhat disdainful of West Point officers,

⁷Works of Abraham Lincoln, Vol. VI, p. 157.

Stanton wondered whether Grant had the ability to lead the Army of the Tennessee and capture the Confederate fortress at Vicksburg. By the spring of 1863 Lincoln also had doubts. Vicksburg seemed as impregnable in March as it had the previous December, and stories circulated in Northern newspapers which claimed that the hero of Fort Donelson was drinking heavily. In Washington, Stanton fretted over the lack of information about Grant's plans for attacking Vicksburg and the Confederate army there commanded by General John C. Pemberton.

Determined to obtain more detailed reports explaining Grant's qualities as a general and the progress he was making, Stanton hit on the idea of sending his own special commissioner. The job that the Secretary of War had in mind called for a person who combined first-rate ability with complete discretion.⁸ Again Dana received a call to Washington where Stanton explained the mission to him. The idea of working for the Lincoln administration appealed to Dana. His work on the Cyclopaedia was finished, and the opportunity

⁸ Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman, Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), pp. 266-267.

of serving as a military observer excited him. He accepted the assignment. Dana then returned to New York, settled pressing personal affairs, and in mid-March received his War Department orders and credentials along with a brief note from Stanton and a draft for \$1,000. "Having explained the purposes of your appointment to you personally," wrote Stanton, "no further instructions will be given unless specially required."⁹ Dana was on his own. Ostensibly his appointment as Special Commissioner authorized him to investigate the pay service in the Western armies, and to report any irregularities. His real purpose was to observe Grant and the Vicksburg campaign, and to keep Stanton informed with detailed dispatches.¹⁰ All military personnel were instructed to assist Dana in every possible way; the Special Commissioner was to be furnished information just as though he were the Secretary of War. Transportation and subsistence were to be provided for Dana by railroad agents, quartermasters, and commissaries. For

⁹O.R., III, iii, p. 63.

¹⁰Undated Memorandum, Tarbell Papers, Allegheny College. Subsequent reference to the Tarbell Papers will be understood to indicate the Allegheny College Collection.

compensation, Dana would receive the pay and other benefits
of a Cavalry Colonel.¹¹

On the same day that the War Department sent Dana his orders, a letter introducing the New Commissioner went out to Grant and to Generals Edwin V. Sumner and William S. Rosecrans, who also commanded armies in the West. The letter explained Dana's role in examining the pay service, and asked the generals to assist him in performing his duties. "He is specially commended to your courtesy and protection," read the brief introduction. And so, word of Dana's coming preceded him.¹²

Grant's headquarters at Milliken's Bend, 25 miles up the Mississippi River from Vicksburg, soon buzzed with news of the expected visitor. Despite the effort to mask the nature of Dana's mission, Grant and his staff somehow knew the Commissioner's real purpose. Colonel William S. Duff, Grant's chief of artillery, favored throwing Dana in the river when he arrived. But cooler heads prevailed. At a meeting of staff officers, Colonel John A. Rawlins, Grant's

¹¹O.R. III, iii, pp. 63-64.

¹²O.R. III, iii, pp. 63-64.

adjutant, urged his colleagues to receive the War Department emissary cordially. Furthermore, Rawlins discussed the importance of being open with Dana, and the necessity of keeping him informed of significant decisions and military plans. While Duff swallowed hard, Rawlins suggested that Dana occupy a tent beside Grant's, with an honored place at mess and orderlies to wait on him. Agreed that they should attempt to win Dana's sympathies by taking him into their confidence, the officers settled back into their normal routine and awaited their guest's arrival.¹³

Dana began making his way toward Grant's army as soon as he received his orders. When he arrived in Cairo, he found a telegram from Stanton awaiting him. The puzzling wire requested Dana to report fully on the condition of affairs at Vicksburg and elsewhere on the Mississippi; but it asked him to do this first from Cairo, and then from Memphis where he was instructed to await further orders.¹⁴ After spending a few days in Cairo and Columbus,

¹³Benjamin P. Thomas, ed., Three Years With Grant: As Recalled by War Correspondent Sylvanus Cadwallader, with introd. and notes (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), p. 61.

¹⁴Stanton to Dana, March 19, 1863, O.R., III, iii, p. 75.

Kentucky, Dana moved on to Memphis, where he arrived on March 23.

For the next nine days, Dana sent dispatches to the War Department, even though he had learned nothing new about Grant's strategy or movements. Serving as his own cipher clerk, Dana sent his messages in a predetermined code which he used throughout his War Department service. But despite his talks with various officers and private citizens in Memphis, little that Dana sent to Washington warranted secrecy. Champing at the bit, he finally telegraphed Stanton that he would be more useful at Grant's headquarters. The Secretary wired back his permission, adding that the information to date had been, through no fault of Dana's "meager and unsatisfactory."¹⁵ Now Dana could move at his own discretion, without any restrictions.

Before leaving Memphis, Dana passed on some important news dealing with Grant's plans for taking Vicksburg. On April 1 he reported a rumor to Stanton which predicted a direct assault by Grant at a point opposite Milliken's

¹⁵ Stanton to Dana, March 30, 1863. O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, p. 67.

Bend. The next day, however, Dana reported a more subtle approach that Grant was supposedly considering. This involved sneaking gunboats and empty transports past the Vicksburg batteries in the dark, and arranging a rendezvous with Grant's troops, who would march down the west bank of the river. From this point the army could be ferried across the river thereby threatening Vicksburg from the south or the east.¹⁶ Dana had learned of this strategy by talking with a member of Grant's staff, Col. J. D. Webster. Already Stanton's Commissioner possessed a good idea of the plans that would finally topple the Confederate citadel, cutting the South in two and providing the Union with control of the Mississippi River.

As Dana traveled downriver, the time it took for his telegrams to reach Washington increased. Cairo, where the telegraph lines ended, was more than 250 miles from Memphis, and well over 600 miles from Milliken's Bend. From these latter points all telegrams came upriver by steamboat to Cairo, and from there they were wired to the Department. The Memphis dispatches usually required two

¹⁶Dana to Stanton, April 2, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, p. 70.

or three days to reach Stanton, whereas news from Grant's headquarters took an average of four or five days.

Although the weather was cool at Milliken's Bend, the reception that Dana received upon arriving there quickly put him at ease. Rawlins' careful plans made the Commissioner feel like a trusted member of Grant's staff. The easy-going camaraderie of camp life agreed with Dana, who was unaware that at least one of his messmates had advocated less friendly treatment. Almost immediately Dana began sorting out Grant's officers, finding out the ones he could trust and who trusted him. Shrewdly he singled out Rawlins and Lieutenant Colonel James H. Wilson, the assistant inspector general, as the most able and dependable staff members.

Rawlins, a lawyer from Grant's hometown of Galena, devoted himself to keeping the General away from "demon rum," and for the most part he succeeded admirably. Dana believed that Grant owed some of his success to the guidance of Rawlins. On the other hand Dana noted the adjutant's labored style of writing and his occasional, lusty cursing. Although acknowledging the important services Rawlins rendered Grant, Dana did not consider him a first-rate adjutant. "He is too slow," remarked Dana, "and can't write the English language

correctly without a great deal of careful consideration."¹⁷ Dana, who believed you could sometimes judge the quality of a man by the English he wrote, confessed dismay over the level of literacy among the officers in Grant's army.

Wilson, a young topographical engineer only three years out of West Point, fared better in Dana's letters than any other staff officer. Besides measuring up to the former managing editor's literary standards, Wilson demonstrated conversational skills that attracted Dana. A friendship, destined to be life-long, quickly developed between the two men, each of whom threw himself wholeheartedly into the task at hand and expected others to do likewise. Both possessed superior intelligence and ability, and both lacked patience with lazy or inept subordinates. In calling Stanton's attention to Wilson's potential, Dana predicted that "he will be heard from hereafter."¹⁸ Besides serving as an important source of information, Wilson sometimes performed as a secretary for Dana in the evenings, when the latter's eyes resisted paperwork. Dana considered the rest

¹⁷Dana to Stanton, July 13, 1863, Dana Papers.

¹⁸Dana to Stanton, July 13, 1863, Dana Papers.

of Grant's staff a curious mixture of good and bad. Although he liked the General and believed in his ability to take Vicksburg, Dana noted Grant's fondness for surrounding himself with personal friends--a weakness which later stained his Presidency. Grant's aides-de-camp served no purpose which Dana could discern. One of them drank heavily, while another, a relative of Mrs. Grant, was an ex-stage driver who consistently violated the English language. The General's reluctance to remove incompetent friends from his staff resulted in considerable dead weight around headquarters.

If Gen. Grant had about him a staff of thoroughly competent men, disciplinarians & workers, the efficiency & fighting quality of his army would soon be much increased. As it is, things go too much by hazard & by spasms; or when the pinch comes, Grant forces through by his own energy & main strength what proper organization & proper staff officers would have done already.¹⁹

Although Dana did not consider Grant a great man or an original and brilliant thinker, he recognized other qualities which attracted him to the commanding general. First of all there was Grant's modest, unassuming nature which manifested itself in quiet determination. Secondly, Grant's poise and judgment remained as unruffled in failure as in

¹⁹Dana to Stanton, July 13, 1863, Dana Papers.

success. Dana was with Grant during most of the campaign and never once saw him lose his temper or heard him swear.²⁰ Finally, Dana found Grant an enjoyable companion with a good sense of humor and a fondness for conversation. When the General saw Dana riding an old horse of poor quality, he determined that the representative of the War Department should have a better mount. The opportunity came with the capture of some Confederate cavalrymen; one of their best horses was presented to Dana. When the Confederate owner complained, Grant answered that several of his horses were wandering somewhere in the South. Grant authorized the offended rebel to take possession of any of these horses. Everyone present, including Dana, laughed at this, and throughout the campaign Grant joked about the horse.²¹

Of the three corps commanders in the Army of the Tennessee, two won Dana's respect and admiration. He considered Major General William T. Sherman second only to Grant as a military leader. Throughout the spring and early summer of 1863 Sherman's stature and ability grew

²⁰Undated Memorandum, Tarbell Papers.

²¹Dana, Recollections, pp. 45-46.

in Dana's estimation. There was much to admire in the red-haired Ohioan. A gifted talker, Sherman often awed his audience with his great knowledge on a wide variety of subjects. Dana appreciated such a man and sought out his company from the beginning. By July he regarded Sherman's quick, incisive mind as brilliant.²² The other corps commander that Dana liked was Major General James B. McPherson, a soldier highly regarded by all of his associates. A dark-haired man of thirty-two years, McPherson was cordial and unaffected by praise, qualities which ranked very high on Dana's list. Although quieter than Sherman, McPherson also possessed a first-rate mind which had earned him the top spot in his West Point graduation class.²³ Sherman and McPherson also impressed Dana with their deep loyalty to Grant.

The third corps commander, Major General John A. McClernand, was not well-liked by anyone around Grant's headquarters, and Dana soon picked up this sentiment.²⁴

²²Updated Memorandum, Tarbell Papers.

²³Dana, Recollections, p. 58.

²⁴James H. Wilson, Under the Old Flag, (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1912) Vol. I, p. 184.

Part of McClernand's trouble stemmed from his background, and part from his ambition and personality. An Illinois Democrat with Congressional experience, McClernand had not attended West Point. Owing to the date of his commission, however, McClernand outranked everyone in the Army of the Tennessee except Grant. In early 1863 rumors indicated that McClernand would take over command of the assault on Vicksburg. Having recruited a force of volunteers for just this purpose, McClernand did not mask his disappointment at being relegated to the status of a corps commander under Grant. Disgruntled, McClernand still dreamed of winning the lion's share of credit for taking Vicksburg and opening the Mississippi. Grant and Sherman held a low estimate of McClernand's military ability, but they also knew Lincoln favored him as a War Democrat. And unless Grant made progress toward capturing Vicksburg, he realized McClernand might replace him.²⁵

Between April and July in 1863, Dana performed four important functions. First, he furnished the War Department with almost daily dispatches which kept Stanton

²⁵Catton, Grant Moves South, pp. 329-344.

and Lincoln informed of the army's past, present, and future operations. These telegrams were detailed enough to satisfy even the demanding Secretary of War; furthermore, they provided comforting assurance that the Army of the Tennessee was in capable hands. Second, Dana proved to be of considerable help to Grant. His messages to Washington relieved the general of the necessity of making daily reports. Third, Dana played a key role in McClellan's removal by detailing the latter's shortcomings, and convincing Grant that the action would be sustained by the administration. Fourth, through his favorable reports, Dana gave the government new confidence in Grant. And he maintained that confidence by failing to mention at least one incident in which the General's weakness for alcohol overcame his good judgement.

Following his arrival at Milliken's Bend in early April, Dana set about the task of informing Stanton of the new plans for taking Vicksburg. Having already cabled the broad outline of Grant's strategy, Dana now began filling in the details. Perhaps the most critical move involved sneaking gunboats and transports past the Confederate batteries at night under the direction of Admiral David Dixon Porter. Once this was accomplished there could be no turning

back, for the ironclads could not return upriver against the current without exposing themselves to almost certain destruction. Porter's navy would meet Grant's army at a point opposite Grand Gulf and transport the soldiers across the river. As Grant originally planned the operation, the next move called for a junction of his troops with a force under the command of General Nathaniel P. Banks which was coming upriver. The combined armies would hit Port Hudson first, and then move north to focus their attention on Pemberton's army at Vicksburg.²⁶

At first Sherman thought that perhaps the plan was too dangerous; he worried about maintaining lines of communication and supply after crossing the river and entering Mississippi. Shortly, however, Dana judged that Sherman's "mind is now tending to the conclusion of General Grant."²⁷ On April 12, Dana managed his first close look at the Vicksburg fortifications; Sherman invited him to go along under a flag of truce while an exchange of prisoners

²⁶Dana to Stanton, Apr. 2, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, p. 70.

²⁷Dana to Stanton, Apr. 10, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, pp. 72-73.

was arranged. The commanding position of the Confederate entrenchment impressed Dana; he noted that the enemy batteries, which Porter hoped to elude, could cover a section of river seven miles long.²⁸

While a canal was readied to facilitate the movement of troops down the west side of the river, Dana began to have doubts about one aspect of Grant's planning. In the projected river crossing at Grand Gulf, McClernand was assigned the most prominent role. His corps would lead the attack at Grand Gulf and also at Port Hudson. This disturbed Dana. During a meeting at headquarters, Dana, Wilson, Rawlins, Sherman, and others discussed the problem of McClernand. They agreed that he was trying to regain command of the expedition; they also determined to support Grant.²⁹ Evidently the fear was that McClernand might fail at Grand Gulf, and thereby cause Grant's removal. "I have remonstrated so far as I could properly do so, against entrusting so momentous an operation to McClernand," Dana wired

²⁸Dana, Recollections, p. 36.

²⁹William T. Sherman, The Memoirs of Gen. William T. Sherman by Himself (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957), p. 315.

Stanton, "and I know that Admiral Porter and prominent members of his staff have done the same, but General Grant will not be changed."³⁰

Almost immediately Dana received an answer--and one that he had probably not expected. "Your several dispatches have been duly received, and are very welcome. Allow me to suggest that you carefully avoid giving any advice in respect to commands that may be assigned, as it may lead to misunderstanding and troublesome complications."³¹ Dana replied that he would conscientiously comply with the Secretary's suggestion "even in extreme cases."³² Grant learned about the reprimand, and he continued to handle McClernand cautiously.

Porter's squadron, protected by quantities of hay, cotton, and sandbags, slipped loose from their moorings on the evening of April 16. Several ironclads led the way, followed by steamboats towing supply barges, but neither steam nor light gave their positions away as they moved

³⁰Dana to Stanton, Apr. 12, 1863, O.R., I xxiv, pt. 1, pp. 73-74.

³¹Stanton to Dana, Apr. 16, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, p. 75.

³²Dana to Stanton, Apr. 22, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, p. 78.

silently downstream with the current. Occasionally a signal light blinked astern. Dana observed the eerie procession along with General and Mrs. Grant, and their young son, Frederick. Alert Confederate sentries, spotting the ships, set fire to a group of buildings overlooking the river. This provided some light for the rebel artillery as they swung into action. For an hour and a half the heavy bombardment continued; Dana counted five hundred and twenty-five discharges in the brilliant, noisy display. Despite the intense fire which inflicted some damage on most of the ships, Porter lost only one vessel--the steamer Henry Clay, whose captain and crew panicked according to Dana.³³ Six nights later, a half dozen transport steamers also ran the Confederate gauntlet; the cannonade again claimed one ship, but now Grant could move his army across the river into Mississippi.

When Grant shifted his headquarters downriver to plan the assault on Grand Gulf, Dana went along. The commanding general wanted to move swiftly, and he chafed as

³³ Dana to Stanton, Apr. 17, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, p. 76.

McClerland, whose XIII Corps was to lead the attack, caused delays. Somewhat cautiously, Dana informed Stanton of confusion in McClerland's command which prevented the execution of Grant's plans. Part of the trouble involved the recently married McClerland's refusal to leave his bride behind; instead, defying Grant's orders, he brought bride, baggage, and servants with him.³⁴ On April 26, when a planned Union on Grand Gulf failed to materialize, Dana again furnished the War Department with disquieting facts regarding McClerland's command. Despite Grant's repeated warnings about the importance of speed, his honeymooning corps commander failed to hurry. Instead McClerland reviewed his troops and violated another of Grant's orders by firing a salute of artillery.³⁵

Although disgusted with McClerland, Grant soon changed his mind about attacking Grand Gulf. Strong Confederate batteries there could not be silenced despite heavy shelling by Porter's fleet. Aboard the gunboat Benton, which suffered considerable damage, Dana observed the largely ineffective

³⁴Dana to Stanton, Apr. 25, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, p. 80.

³⁵Dana to Stanton, Apr. 27, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, pp. 80-81.

bombardment of the well-protected Confederate gun positions. Afterwards he wired Stanton that Grant would cross his troops below Grand Gulf at a place called Bruinsburg. At the same time Dana self-consciously admitted that his real purpose in being with Grant's army would soon be apparent. "I have to report that the paymasters have finished their work and gone," he explained, "and henceforth any shrewd person can see that I am not attending to their transaction."³⁶ Evidently he did not know that most shrewd persons in the Army of the Tennessee already knew the true nature of his War Department work.

On the last day of April, Grant finally succeeded in guiding his army across the Mississippi River. The successful landing at Bruinsburg put the blue-clad Union troops about fifteen miles from Grand Gulf and some seventy miles south of Vicksburg. Dana happily reported the good news to Stanton, but also mentioned the loss of several hours caused by McClernand's slowness.³⁷ For once, Dana did not move with

³⁶Dana to Stanton, Apr. 29, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, pp. 81-83.

³⁷Dana to Stanton, Apr. 30, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, p. 83.

Grant; space aboard the transports was precious, so he remained behind until the following day. By the time Dana arrived in Bruinsburg, Grant had already moved out and was engaged with a Confederate force near Port Gibson. Hurrying to catch up, the representative from the War Department hitched a ride in a quartermaster's wagon. As the wagon neared the scene of battle, it passed a field hospital. There the ugly sights of war impressed themselves vividly in Dana's memory--a pile of amputated limbs outside a neat, white, vine-covered house with green shutters.³⁸

Arriving at Grand Gulf on May 3, the Army of the Tennessee found the Confederate positions deserted. Dana, riding with Grant, noted that the Union commander frequently inquired about food supplies in the surrounding country. Satisfied at the abundance of beef and corn, Grant informed Dana of a change in plans. Instead of moving south toward Port Hudson and joining up with Banks, as originally intended, he prepared to take much bolder action. By disregarding his supply lines and living off the country, Grant now planned to advance in a northeasterly direction and threaten Jackson, the capital of Mississippi, as well as Vicksburg.

³⁸Dana, Recollections pp. 44-45.

If successful, this strategy would prevent a Confederate army under General Joseph Johnston from moving west and reinforcing Pemberton at Vicksburg. Keeping the Big Black River on his left flank as a shield, Grant would defeat the Confederates in detail. At the same time he would gain control of the railroad which linked Vicksburg with Jackson and the rest of the Confederacy.³⁹ This plan seemed dangerous because it violated a cardinal rule of contemporary military science: lines of communications and supply should always be maintained and protected. Even Sherman opposed the plan at first; later he used it himself with devastating results in the famous "march to the sea."

Between May 8 and 20 the War Department eagerly awaited word from Dana. Communications with Washington during this period were cut off, and there was considerable anxiety over the whereabouts of Grant's army. One day during the march toward Jackson, Dana found time to send a description of army life to his son Paul.

³⁹Dana to Scanton, May 4, 5, and 8, 1863, Q.R., L, xxiv, pt. 1, pp. 83-85.

All of a sudden it is very cold here. Two days ago it was hot like summer, but now I sit in my tent in my overcoat, writing and thinking if I only were at home instead of being almost two thousand miles away.

Away yonder, in the edge of the woods, I hear the drum-beat that calls the soldiers to their supper. It is only a little after five o'clock, but they begin the day very early and end it early. Pretty soon after dark they are all asleep, lying in their blankets under the trees, for in a quick march they leave their tents behind. Their guns are all ready at their sides, so that if they are suddenly called at night they can start in a moment. It is strange in the morning before daylight to hear the bugle and drums sound reveille, which calls the army to wake up. It will begin perhaps at a distance and then run along the whole line, bugle after bugle and drum after drum taking it up, and then it goes from front to rear, farther and farther away, the sweet sounds throbbing and rolling while you lie on the grass with your saddle for a pillow, half awake, or opening your eyes to see that the stars are all bright in the sky, or that there is only a faint flush in the east, where the day is soon to break.

Living in camp is queer business. I get my meals in General Grant's mess, and pay my share of the expenses. The table is a chest with a double cover, which unfolds on the right and the left; the dishes, knives and forks, and caster are inside. Sometimes we get good things, but generally we don't. The cook is an old negro, black and grimy. The cooking is not as clean as it might be, but in war you can't be particular about such things.

The plums and peaches here are pretty nearly ripe. The strawberries have been ripe these few days, but the soldiers eat them up before we get a sight of them. The figs are as big as the end of your thumb, and the green pears are big enough

to eat. But you don't know what beautiful flower gardens there are here. I never saw such roses; and the other day I found a lily as big as a tiger lily, only it was magnificent red.⁴⁰

On May 12, a brigade of Confederate troops from Jackson engaged the right wing of Grant's army near Raymond. After a fight of several hours the outmanned Southerners fell back to Jackson. In the evening Johnston arrived in the state capital to take field command of all Confederate troops defending Vicksburg. He found 12,000 men in Jackson, and at the same time learned that the Union army was between himself and Pemberton. He had arrived too late to consolidate the Confederate forces. Two days later, after a brief skirmish just west of Jackson, the triumphant Army of the Tennessee entered the capital of Jefferson Davis's home state. Almost immediately Grant turned most of his army around and began moving toward Vicksburg; Sherman stayed behind to tear up the railroads in Jackson and destroy public property which might be of use to the South. Dana remained with Sherman and watched vast quantities of cotton burn slowly.⁴¹

⁴⁰Quoted in Dana, Recollections, pp. 63-64.

⁴¹Dana, Recollections, p. 53.

While in Jackson, Dana received an important telegram from Stanton. Alarmed by the reports about McClernand's slowness, the Secretary of War wanted to clarify Grant's position.

General Grant has full and absolute authority to enforce his own commands, and to remove any person who by ignorance in action or any cause interferes with or delays his operations. He has the full confidence of the Government, is expected to enforce his authority, and will be firmly and heartily supported, but he will be responsible for any failure to exert his powers. You may communicate this to him.⁴²

Grant had been reluctant to remove McClernand because the latter was Lincoln's appointment; this confidential message reassured him.⁴³ It also forged an even stronger bond of friendship between Grant and Dana, a friendship which continued until after Grant's election as President.

Along with other officers, Dana stayed in a Jackson hotel on the evening of May 14. When they checked out the

⁴²Stanton to Dana, May 5, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, p. 84.

⁴³Dana to Col. Adam Badeau, March 29, 1867, Dana Papers. Badeau, Grant's secretary, evidently inquired about the significance of this particular dispatch and whether or not it might be published. In his reply, Dana indicated that he considered the message confidential.

following morning, Wilson stepped forward to settle the bill. Told that the charge amounted to \$65, Wilson handed the hotel owner \$100 in Confederate currency. But the proprietor complained and indicated that the bill would have to be revised upward if Southern money was used. Wilson, plentifully supplied with rebel bills, consented and even threw in a tip for his host. Later the hotel was burned by zealous Southerners who had learned of the owner's discrimination toward Confederate money. Dana saw the incident as evidence of a weakening faith in the Southern cause.⁴⁴

The bloodiest battle of the campaign took place May 16, around a crescent-shaped ridge known as Champion's Hill. Dana rejoined Grant in time to witness the bloody Union victory. The hill changed hands three times before the Confederate force under Pemberton fell back twelve miles to the Big Black River. Union casualties numbered about 2,500; Pemberton suffered the loss of approximately 4,000 men. In addition a Confederate division, cut off from Pemberton and Vicksburg, had to seek refuge elsewhere

⁴⁴Wilson, Life of Dana, p. 222.

in the South after marching completely around the Union army. A smaller fight occurred the following day at the Big Black River. Again the Confederates were obliged to retreat, but this time they managed to slow Grant's advance by burning bridges across the river. More than 1,000 Southern soldiers were captured along with a number of artillery pieces.⁴⁵

When lines of communication were re-established on May 20, Dana immediately fired off a long dispatch to the news-starved Stanton. It described the successes at Champion's Hill and the Big Black River, and described Grant's progress in investing the formidable Vicksburg defenses. Although he underestimated Confederate strength in the town, Dana realized that Pemberton, a transplanted West Pointer from Pennsylvania, would fight doggedly to counteract any accusations of treachery on his part.⁴⁶

Stanton may have used Dana's description of Champion's Hill as the basis for a War Department press release. In any event, when the story appeared in Northern papers it

⁴⁵Catton, Grant Moves South, pp. 442-446.

⁴⁶Dana to Stanton, May 20, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, p. 86.

produced an angry reaction from Brigadier General Alvin P. Hovey, a prominent division commander in McClernand's corps. Hovey's division had played a large part in the Union triumph at Champion's Hill--so large, in fact, that Hovey lost one-third of his men in the engagement. But Dana's report failed to convey the importance of Hovey's role. At least it did not convey it well enough to satisfy Hovey, who complained to the War Department and asked for a correction.⁴⁷

If there had been a slight, it was probably unintended. Dana later told Stanton that Hovey was one of Grant's best division Commanders. Unlike most volunteer officers, wrote Dana, he "makes it his business to learn the military profession just as if he expected to spend his life in it."⁴⁸ But Dana's critical eye also caught Hovey's concern for his own fame and advancement, qualities which prevented him from achieving greater prominence. Never friendly toward egotists, Dana tolerated such men when they displayed talent and energy as did Hovey; but the men who rated highest in his opinion almost always combined ability with modesty.

⁴⁷O.R., I, 24, pt. 2, pp. 46-49.

⁴⁸Dana to Stanton, July 12, 1863, Dana Papers.

Grant hoped that a frontal assault might result in the surrender of Vicksburg, thereby rendering a lengthy siege unnecessary. The question was resolved May 22, when Pemberton repulsed an attack and inflicted 3,000 casualties on the Union army. Reporting the setback to Stanton, Dana managed to focus attention on McClernand's role. During the attack McClernand notified Grant that he had penetrated the Confederate line, and requested reinforcements which were sent. Dana called McClernand's report false, and said that the consequences had been disastrous.⁴⁹ Implicit in Dana's telegram was the idea that the Union casualties would have been considerably less except for McClernand's message--which was actually misleading rather than false. The real blame for the Union failure belonged to Grant, who had attempted a direct frontal attack against impregnable Confederate defenses. McClernand, acting on the best information available, merely added to the original miscalculation.

Having seen Stanton's message of May 5, Grant considered removing McClernand. He decided that the matter could wait until after the fall of Vicksburg. To make sure

⁴⁹Dana to Stanton, May 23, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, pp. 86-87.

that Stanton and Lincoln really understood McClernand's ineptitude, Dana added his own judgement. "McClernand has not the qualities necessary for a good commander, even of a regiment."⁵⁰ By late May, the Secretary of War no longer believed that amateur generals made better fighters than graduates of West Point. Dana's dispatches had educated him on that subject.⁵¹

The bloody losses of May 22 convinced Grant that Vicksburg would have to be taken by siege. He quickly settled his army down to the back-breaking pick and shovel work of digging entrenchments. In the late spring heat of Mississippi, Dana watched the men labor on the network of tunnels and trenches. He reported outstanding progress on the part of Sherman's corps. In contrast, the work went slowly along the portion of the Union line presided over by McClernand. According to Dana, there was little excuse for this; along McClernand's sector the Confederate line was weakest and the terrain was otherwise favorable.

⁵⁰ Dana to Stanton, May 24, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, pp. 87-88.

⁵¹ Thomas and Hyman, Stanton, p. 269.

Even so, the siege promised to end the campaign fairly soon; Confederate deserters told stories of food and ammunition shortages in the city. Dana forecast Pemberton's surrender within 30 days unless he somehow received reinforcements.⁵² Indulging Stanton's desire for detail, Dana explained that the quarter rations being passed out to Pemberton's men consisted of "about 9 cubic inches of corn bread and one quarter pound of boiled fresh beef served a 8 p.m. . . ."⁵³

Except for a small opening on the Union left, Vicksburg was completely encircled by the end of May. The single gap in McClernand's line, although too small to escape or receive supplies by, enabled Pemberton to communicate by messenger with the rest of the Confederacy. Partly because of this, reports circulated that Johnston was rounding up a large force and would lift the siege. Grant felt the need of additional troops to defend against this possibility. Without result he twice requested Banks to furnish help from the vicinity of Port Hudson. Then Grant decided to

⁵²Dana to Stanton, May 26, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, pp. 88-89.

⁵³Dana to Stanton, May 27, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, pp. 89-90.

send someone to explain the situation in person to Banks. Unable to spare a staff member for the mission, Grant turned to the Special Commissioner of the War Department.⁵⁴

Dana boarded a gunboat for the trip downriver on May 30. The journey ended abruptly, however, when this ship encountered a steamer carrying a message from Banks. Instead of sending any soldiers to Vicksburg, Banks asked Grant for assistance in taking Port Hudson. After learning this, Dana turned around and headed back for Vicksburg, having been gone about 24 hours.⁵⁵ The next day he wired Stanton the information that Banks could not help Grant. Explaining that Johnston might free Pemberton, Dana lectured the Secretary on the importance of Vicksburg.

Pardon me for again urging that reinforcements be at once sent here from Tennessee, Kentucky, or Missouri, in numbers sufficient to put our success beyond all peradventure Our position here is infinitely more secure and the result incomparably more certain than our position and its result at Corinth last year. The place is far more important, its ultimate possession ought to be assured by all the means in our power. Better retreat to Nashville than retreat from the hills of Vicksburg.⁵⁶

⁵⁴O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 3, p. 359.

⁵⁵Dana, Recollections, p. 89.

⁵⁶Dana to Stanton, May 31, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, pp. 91-92.

Within a few days Dana and Grant received reassurance from the War Department. Stanton said that the situation at Vicksburg was not underrated and that Grant would receive every possible assistance from Washington. And he gave his Special Commissioner an unusual and unexpected pat on the back.

Your telegrams are a great obligation, and are looked for with deep interest. I can not thank you as much as I feel for the service you are now rendering. You have been appointed an assistant adjutant general, with rank of major, with liberty to report to General Grant if he needs you. The appointment may be a protection to you.⁵⁷

The "Quarter-Deck Brute" did not praise the performance of subordinates very often; this commendation undoubtedly reflected Stanton's relief in having found a capable observer to satisfy his hunger for news from the battlefield. The appointment as assistant adjutant general was intended to protect Dana in case of his capture by Confederates. Not only would it facilitate exchange, but it also could prevent his execution as a spy.

⁵⁷Stanton to Dana, June 5, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, p. 93.

Stanton did not want to risk losing Dana permanently.

As the siege tightened in June, Dana began making daily visits along the Union lines. This tiresome procedure took up much of the day and occasionally extended into the evening. Once Dana interrupted his inspection tour to climb a hill which provided a better view of the entire scene at Vicksburg. As he studied the city's defenses, he heard a whizzing sound which puzzled him. Suddenly it dawned on him that a Confederate sharpshooter was using him as a target. Falling to the ground for protection, the "Professor" wondered whether he should lie at right angles to the enemy or parallel to him. Either way he seemed vulnerable. After Dana remained motionless for a time the sharpshooter turned his attention elsewhere, and Dana swiftly retreated from the elevation. The incident caused him to be more cautious about exposing himself to such open places; after all, even observers from the War Department could become casualties.⁵⁸

Early in June the monotony of siege warfare lifted as Dana accompanied Grant on a reconnaissance up the Yazoo

⁵⁸Dana, Recollections, p. 88.

River northeast of Vicksburg. Grant wanted to check out a report that indicated a strong Confederate force was massing in this area. The trip turned out to very unmilitary. The exact details are uncertain but it seems that Grant quickly became inebriated after leaving his headquarters on June 6 with Dana.

Sylvanus Caldwellader, a correspondent for the Chicago Times, recorded that Grant went on a spree which achieved monumental proportions. After drinking himself into a stupor June 6, Grant was put to bed by Caldwellader. But the next morning the General imbibed again, and when his ship stopped at Chickasaw Bayou near the spot where the Yazoo emptied into the Mississippi, he set off on horseback. He intended to return to Vicksburg by riding through areas in which he would expose himself to capture by the enemy. Caldwellader finally caught up with him, and managed to secure an ambulance in which Grant returned to his headquarters late in the evening of June 7 or early in the morning of June 8.⁵⁹

⁵⁹Thomas, ed., Three Years With Grant, pp. 102-110.

Dana's version of the story is hazy and much less complete. His dispatches show that he separated from Grant sometime on June 7, and returned to the vicinity of Vicksburg on the following day.⁶⁰ The Recollections politely refer to Grant as ill on June 6, but "fresh as a rose" the next morning at breakfast.⁶¹ Nowhere in his messages to Washington did Dana indicate that Grant acted improperly. Probably Dana never mentioned the drinking to Stanton; if he had it might have nullified the good things that the Secretary had heard about Grant. Certainly a confirmation of Grant's occasional problems with the bottle would have hurt his standing in Washington.

Some historians have expressed doubts that Grant was disabled by drink in the fashion set forth by Cadwallader. But a member of Grant's staff, who read Cadwallader's original manuscript in 1896, admitted that the facts of the

⁶⁰Dana to Stanton, June 7 and 8, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, pp. 94-95.

⁶¹Dana Recollections, pp. 82-83.

episode as related by the Chicago newspaperman were true.

Without repeating details, the subject may be dismissed with the statement that it completed Dana's knowledge of Grant's character and habits from actual observation in a way which no man could gainsay. It is a curious circumstance that neither Grant nor Dana ever made to the other the slightest reference to the peculiar features of the excursion, nor, so far as the records show, did Dana report them to Stanton. On the other hand, nothing can be more certain than that every circumstance connected with it became known at once to the leading officers of Grant's army. One cannot help reflecting that the consequence of this episode might have been far different had Dana been a narrow-minded and unreasonable bigot, or had he not been prepared by the frank and open confidence that had been reposed in him for just such incidents as the one in which he had found himself compelled to play an important part.⁶²

⁶²Wilson, Life of Dana, pp. 231-232. For a lively difference of opinion concerning this incident see the exchange of letters between Benjamin P. Thomas and K. P. Williams in American Heritage, Vol. VII, No. 5, 106-111. Williams defending Grant from Cadwallader's story, criticizes Thomas's acceptance of the account in editing the original manuscript. Bruce Catton in Grant Moves South discards the Cadwallader tale because of a letter that Rawlins wrote Grant in which he accused the latter of drinking. This letter is dated June 6, 1863--before the trip up-river that Cadwallader and Dana relate. Catton argues that the spree could not have occurred after this letter, but his reasoning in this matter is unclear. Either the episode did take place after Rawlins wrote the letter--in which case the reference therein is to an earlier incident--or the message itself is incorrectly dated.

Throughout June, Confederate deserters wandered into the Union lines, and Dana carefully questioned them about morale and supplies in Vicksburg. He sprinkled his dispatches to Stanton with optimistic information derived from such war-weary Southerners. After predicting the imminent surrender of the city, Dana inquired about his next assignment. "Please inform me by telegraph," he requested, "whether you wish me to go to General Rosecrans after the fall of Vicksburg, or whether you have any other orders for me. I should like to go home for a short time."⁶³

As Pemberton's strength deteriorated so did relations between Grant and McClernand. The bad feeling and distrust between the two men, which had simmered throughout the campaign, came to a full boil on June 18. That evening Grant removed McClernand from his command of the XIII Corps. After the ill-fated May 22 assault McClernand had issued a congratulatory address to his men. In it he claimed most of the credit for the success of the Vicksburg campaign, and implied that the issue might have been decided

⁶³Dana to Stanton, June 14, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, pp. 99-100.

on May 22 had the XIII Corps received proper support. The message came to Grant's attention in June after it appeared in the Missouri Democrat. The Union commander asked his subordinate if the newspaper account correctly presented his sentiments. McClelland replied that it did and that he would maintain its statements. Grant immediately wrote out the order removing the obstinate Illinois Democrat; as a final touch, members of Grant's staff woke McClelland early in the morning of June 19 and presented him with the news.⁶⁴

Dana sent Stanton a copy of Grant's order, and added that the congratulatory address was the occasion rather than the cause of the removal. McClelland's disobedience, insubordination, and lack of ability were more important factors according to Dana. But above all McClelland was removed because "his relations with other corps and commanders, rendered it impossible that the chief command of this army should devolve upon him, as it would have done were General Grant disabled, without

⁶⁴Grant to McClelland, June 18, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, pp. 164-165.

most pernicious consequences to the cause."⁶⁵ Perhaps this fear had been foremost in Dana's mind earlier in June when Grant disabled himself by drinking too much. In any event, Dana's reporting certainly prepared Washington for McClernand's dismissal; and it produced the War Department message of May 5 which encouraged Grant "to remove any person who . . . interferes with or delays his operations."

With McClernand gone the siege of Vicksburg entered its final two weeks in heat that often reached ninety degrees by noon. Dana's tent at headquarters was situated behind a segment of line covered by Sherman's troops. Although able to refresh himself occasionally with a cold bath, Dana found disadvantages in his location. The thunder of Sherman's cannons made sleep difficult; " [they] neither rest nor let others rest by night or by day."⁶⁶

The location of Johnston's force remained a puzzle, but the threat he posed had diminished considerably by the first of July. Nevertheless Grant took precautions against

⁶⁵Dana to Stanton, June 19, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, pp. 102-104.

⁶⁶Quoted in Dana, Recollections, p. 80.

a surprise attack; he respected Johnston's ability. A more immediate concern, however, was the way in which Pemberton continued to hold out. Although he hoped to avoid it, Grant considered the possibility of another direct assault. The weakened condition of the Confederate soldiers might produce success. But the plan proved unnecessary. The message that Washington had awaited for so long finally came on July 4, when Dana wired that Vicksburg had capitulated. Along with his dispatch he sent the correspondence between Grant and Pemberton which preceded the surrender.⁶⁷ The negotiations were completed when Grant, who originally demanded unconditional surrender, agreed to parole the Confederate soldiers.

The parole meant that instead of being taken prisoners, the Southerners would be permitted to march out of Vicksburg on the promise that they would not fight again. There were practical reasons to commend this course of action. Shipping Pemberton's men north as prisoners would have required virtually all the Union steamboats. This might have delayed further offensive operations. Also

⁶⁷Dana to Stanton, July 4, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, pp. 114-117.

there was good reason to believe that the paroled soldiers would rapidly melt away to their homes, effectively depriving the South of their services. After a lengthy discussion in which McPherson urged Grant to accept the idea of parole, the Union commander agreed and the surrender took place.⁶⁸

On the morning of July 4 Grant entered the city that had eluded his grasp for so long. At his side, Dana took in the ruined condition of the city and the bedraggled appearance of its defenders. After talking with the defeated soldiers, Dana concluded that they would soon desert the Confederate cause.⁶⁹ His mission finished, Dana left Vicksburg on July 6 and began moving upriver again on the long journey back to Washington.

Arriving in Cairo, he found another message from Stanton praising his performance. It had been sent near the end of June and in it the Secretary thanked Dana for a topographical map and letter sent to Washington by special messenger. The letter, which has been lost, probably discussed the abilities of Grant, Sherman, McPherson, and

⁶⁸Catton, Grant Moves South, pp. 473-476; also Dana to Stanton, July 4, 1863, O.R., I, xxiv, pt. 1, pp. 114-117.

⁶⁹Dana, Recollections, pp. 99-100.

McClernand. Stanton asked Dana to continue his "sketches" --evaluations of Union officers in the Vicksburg campaign.⁷⁰ In response, Dana sent two long letters dissecting the staff and line officers in the Army of the Tennessee. Commenting on the accuracy of these judgments, Wilson wrote that "In every instance, except where death overtook the officer . . . Dana's prediction of future usefulness and distinction was realized. It is remarkable that in no single instance where doubt was cast upon the officer's character or usefulness did his future service show that serious injustice had been done him."⁷¹

In Washington, where he discussed his future assignment with Stanton, Dana discovered that Grant was seriously being considered for an appointment as commander of the Army of the Potomac. This eastern assignment belonged to Major General George Gordon Meade, who had attracted strong criticism for his failure to destroy Lee's army after Gettysburg.

⁷⁰Dana to Stanton, July 12 and 13, 1863, Dana Papers. For copies of these letters see Dana's Recollections, rev.ed. with introd. Paul M. Angle (New York: Collier Brooks, 1963), pp. 75-86.

⁷¹Wilson, Life of Dana, pp. 246-247.

When Dana and Henry W. Halleck, the Union General-in-Chief, argued against the move, Meade was retained. Learning of the near change of command, Grant wrote Dana a letter of thanks.

Gen. Halleck and yourself were both very right in supposing that it would cause me more sadness than satisfaction to be ordered to the command of the Army of the Potomac. Here I know the officers and men and what each Gen. is capable of as a separate commander. There I would have all to learn. Here I know the geography of the country and its resources. There it would be a new study. Besides more or less dissatisfaction would necessarily be produced by importing a General to command an army already well supplied with those who have grown up, and been promoted, with it I feel very grateful to you for your timely intercession in saving me from going to the Army of the Potomac.⁷²

While resting from his labors at the end of July, Dana took time to write his friend at The Hague, James Shepherd Pike. In the letter he included a frank appraisal of Grant.

He reminds me in many things of Zack Taylor. He has the same absolute honesty, the same directness of purpose, and the same dogged determination. He excels Taylor in intelligence and in mental cultivation, but his comprehensiveness of observation, and his

⁷²Grant to Dana, August 5, 1863, Dana Papers.

admirable wisdom of judgment still have something to keep up the parallel with old Rough and Ready. Grant, however, has no political aspirations and I don't believe he could be brought to have any. I never knew such transparent sincerity combined with such mental resources. Not that the last are great or astonishing; they are simply sure and sufficient⁷³

Any War Department doubts concerning the chief paymaster at Vicksburg had been cleared up.

⁷³Dana to Pike, July 29, 1863.

CHAPTER V

WHOLESALE PANIC AT CHICKAMAUGA--

THE BITTER TASTE OF DEFEAT

While the North savored the tide-turning victories at Vicksburg and Gettysburg, Brigadier General James A. Garfield was going through a summer of discontent in Tennessee. Hoping to win enough martial fame to enhance his political ambitions, Garfield had joined the Army of the Cumberland early in 1863 as Major General Williams S. Rosecrans' Chief of Staff. By late July, however, it looked as though he had cast his lot with the wrong army and the wrong commander. Rosecrans appeared to excel only at delay, and finally Garfield felt he had to tell someone of the army's missed opportunities. Garfield recited his grievances to his friend and fellow Ohioan, Secretary of the Treasury Chase. "Thus far," he wrote, "the General has been singularly disinclined to grasp the situation with a strong hand and make the advantage his own. I write this with more sorrow than I can tell you, for I love every bone in his body, and next to my desire to see the rebellion blasted

is my anxiety to see him blessed. But even the breadth of my love is not sufficient to cover this almost fatal delay."¹

After sparkling brightly early in the war, Rosecrans' star seemed to be flickering out. A West Point graduate from Ohio, he had resigned his commission by the time the Civil War began. Re-entering the service as a colonel, he quickly progressed to brigadier and then major general. When Don Carlos Buell failed to push Braxton Bragg's Confederate army out of Kentucky and Tennessee, Rosecrans got the job. He took over the Army of the Cumberland near the end of 1862, and shortly afterwards forced Bragg to retreat after the battle of Murfreesboro. "Old Rosy" became a popular hero, and Washington hoped he would soon capture the vital Confederate rail center of Chattanooga.

Following Murfreesboro, however, the Army of the Cumberland settled down to nearly six months of inactivity. Pleas for action from Stanton, Halleck, and Lincoln accomplished nothing. In March the War Department tried

¹Frederick D. Williams, ed., The Wild Life of the Army: Civil War Letters of James A. Garfield (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1964), p. 290. This letter, dated July 27, 1863, was the one printed by Dana in the New York Sun, March 8, 1882.

to entice Rosecrans toward Chattanooga by notifying him of a vacant major generalship in the Regular Army. Told that it would go to the Union general who produced the first major victory, Rosecrans dismissed the offer as "an auctioneering of honor."² As the weeks continued to pass with no sign of action, his reputation suffered. It seemed that Rosecrans shared McClellan's weakness for lengthy delays, postponed movements, and continual complaints.³

Any resemblance to the inept McClellan ended, however, when Rosecrans moved his army. Near the end of June he took another step toward Chattanooga by outmaneuvering Bragg near Tullahoma and forcing him to retreat. Then another delay followed in July and August while Rosecrans prepared for his next move. This time Stanton wanted to name a new commander but Halleck, as General-in-Chief, interceded in behalf of Rosecrans.⁴ A frustrating exchange of telegrams followed. Halleck issued a peremptory order

²Quoted in William S. Lamers, The Edge of Glory: A Biography of General William S. Rosecrans, U.S.A. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1961), p. 254.

³Thomas and Hyman, Stanton, pp. 276-277.

⁴Thomas and Hyman, Stanton, pp. 277.

to advance, and Rosecrans replied that he would resign unless he had the freedom to decide his own movements. When Halleck assured him that he had this freedom, Rosecrans complained that Stanton wanted to remove him. Back came word that the Secretary would give him a fair chance. Finally, even Lincoln had to write a letter expressing confidence in the general's ability to capture Chattanooga.⁵

By this time Dana, with Vicksburg behind him, was back in Washington, and considering an attractive business offer. But Stanton had other plans for the man who had served him so well at Vicksburg under the code name of Spunky. He asked Dana to enter the War Department as Second Assistant Secretary, and then to go to Tennessee where he would check up on Rosecrans. Dana accepted the offer, and by the first of September he had left Washington for his new assignment.⁶ Stanton informed Rosecrans that a War Department representative would soon be joining

⁵O.R., I, xxx, pt. 3, p. 110; xxiii, pt. 2, pp. 518, 592, and 601-612; and Basler, ed., Works of Lincoln, Vol. VI, pp. 377-378.

⁶Dana to Pike, August 18, 1863. Dana's nomination as Second Assistant Secretary of War reached the Senate on Jan. 20, 1864, and confirmation followed six days later.

him. This time nothing was said about investigating the pay service; instead Dana would be present to confer with Rosecrans on any subject that the general wanted brought to the attention of the War Department.⁷ Stanton's sophistry probably fooled no one; Dana was going West to supply some answers to the question marks which surrounded Rosecrans. It was the Vicksburg situation all over again--except that this time things did not go smoothly.

Even before Dana started out, Rosecrans had once again demonstrated the ability to force an enemy retreat by gaining an advantage in position. The Army of the Cumberland resumed its advance in mid-August, and on Sept. 9, Union soldiers entered Chattanooga. While this prize fell to the North, a small Union force under Maj. Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside captured Knoxville. Bragg's army retreated in apparent confusion. Rosecrans now decided to press his advantage; without halting, he pushed his army south over difficult mountainous terrain in pursuit of Bragg. Split into three sections, the flanks of his army became widely separated.

⁷Stanton to Rosecrans, August 30, 1863, O.R., I, xxx, pt. 3 pp. 229-230.

At times they were fifty miles apart; the position invited counterattack.⁸ Bragg had set a trap. Now, as reinforcements poured in from various parts of the Confederacy, he prepared to spring it.

Meanwhile Dana moved rather slowly toward his new assignment. Pausing in Nashville on September 8, he conferred with Andrew Jackson, the military governor of Tennessee. Johnson expressed confidence regarding the situation in his state, and discussed plans for a general election to establish a provisional state government. Yet, he too was unhappy with the slowness of Rosecrans, and suggested that the Union commander had fallen under the influence of his chief of military police, William Truesdail. Johnson charged that Truesdail wanted the army kept inactive so that he and his accomplices could profit from illegal transactions. He did not, however, furnish Dana any facts to support this charge.⁹ Later Dana recalled a jug of whisky

⁸Glenn Tucker, Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 23-30.

⁹Dana to Stanton, September 8, 1863, O.R., I, xxx, pt. 1, p. 182. Unless otherwise indicated all dates cited in this chapter refer to 1863.

that Johnson produced during the interview. Both men had drinks, but Dana thought he detected signs that the governor drank to excess.¹⁰

Three days later Dana arrived in Chattanooga. When he learned that the Union army was continuing to push South, he corrected an earlier report which told Stanton that Rosecrans had halted in Chattanooga. Dana also passed along the news that Confederate troops were massing along Chickamauga Creek. Evidently the thought of counterattack seemed implausible; instead, Dana thought Bragg wanted to slow down or halt the Union pursuit.¹¹

Meeting Rosecrans for the first time, the Assistant Secretary quickly learned about the general's temper. After reading Dana's letter of introduction, Rosecrans tossed it aside and launched into bitter criticism of Stanton and Halleck. Tact was not Rosecrans's forte; before he finished he had accused his superiors in the War Department of plotting to prevent his success. Surprised, Dana replied that

¹⁰Dana, Recollections, pp. 105-106.

¹¹Dana to Stanton Sept. 12, 1863, O.R., I, xxx, pt. 1, pp. 184-185.

he had no authority to hear complaints against the government; his mission, he explained, was to guide the War Department in their support of the Army of the Cumberland.¹²

Unlike Vicksburg, no carefully planned reception awaited Dana at Chattanooga. Instead of trying to win his support, members of Rosecrans's staff kept their distance. They believed that Dana sought justification for removing "Old Rosy," and the suspicion quickly spread through the army's ranks. When soldiers saw Dana riding around behind Rosecrans they sometimes jeered, "Hay, sutler, when are you going to open up?" There was no mistaking the insult implied. Sutlers traveled with the army and sold various commodities, including liquor, to the troops; they grew fat off the profits of war and generally displayed a lack of ethical standards.¹³

While Dana worried about finding a cipher clerk to assist him in preparing telegrams, Rosecrans evidenced concern

¹²Lamers, Edge of Glory, pp. 311-312.

¹³W. F. G. Shanks, Personal Recollections of Distinguished Generals (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1886), p. 263. Shanks was a war correspondent for the New York Herald.

about Bragg's intentions. Fearing that the enemy might attempt to defeat him in detail, he ordered a concentration. The operation began on Sept. 13. Hindered by the mountains, the three front line units of the army put in five days of hard marching before they were within supporting distance of one another. The hardest task fell to the XX Corps under Major General Alexander McCook on the Union right. McCook, a brother of Stanton's former law partner in Steubenville, Ohio, held up the concentration by marching his men over the longer and more difficult of two routes.¹⁴

The telegraph wire strung south of Chattanooga enabled Dana to pepper Washington with a steady stream of dispatches. Messages arrived without delay, and Dana began sending more than his customary one-a-day. They all tended to be over-optimistic. On September 14, while McCook had three days of marching ahead of him, Dana reported that Rosecrans had the army in position to move into Georgia and finish the war. He praised the army's commander for masterfully overcoming exceptionally difficult terrain, and advised Stanton that the Army of the Cumberland

¹⁴Tucker, Chickamauga, pp. 104-106.

"is advancing with all the rapidity which the nature of the country allows."¹⁵ The possibility of being outflanked on the right did worry Dana, but he felt the danger would be removed if the War Department sent reinforcements to Rosecrans. Even after he learned that McCook had caused some delay, Dana retained his optimism.

By noon of September 18 the Union army was massed, with the corps of McCook, Thomas, and Crittenden, in position and prepared to meet Bragg. Crittenden, a tall, slim, volunteer officer, came from a well-known Kentucky family. His brother was a general in the Confederate army, and his father had authored the Crittenden Compromise in a futile attempt to avert the war in 1861. Thomas was a large, ruddy-complected man who inspired confidence in his soldiers. A Virginian, Thomas had elected to remain in the Union army when war came. Disowned by his family for deserting the Confederate cause, he also found himself the object of suspicion in the North. At the war's end he would stand out as one of the leading Union commanders. Chickamauga would help him win this reputation.

¹⁵Dana to Stanton, Sept. 14, 1863, O.R., I, xxx, pt. 1. pp. 186-187.

After the first contact between the opposing armies, Rosecrans debated whether to launch an attack or wait for Bragg to make the next move.¹⁶ Deciding to take a defensive stand, Rosecrans adjusted his lines to guard against an attempt by Bragg to outflank the Union left and place his men between Chattanooga and the Army of the Cumberland. When the fighting began on Sept. 19, Thomas occupied the Union left, Crittenden held the center, and McCook was on the right.

Dana sent Stanton eleven telegrams during the first day at Chickamauga, attempting to explain the events as they unfolded. His first report incorrectly located the point where the fighting had started, but he quickly rectified this error. Throughout the day Stanton read the favorable wires which predicted Union success. "Rosecrans has everything ready to grind up Bragg's flank Decisive victory seems assured to us Everything is prosperous I do not yet dare to say our victory is complete, but it seems certain The result of the battle is that [the] enemy is defeated in attempt to turn and crush our

¹⁶Dana to Stanton, Sept. 18, 1863, 5 P.M., O.R., I, xxx, pt. 1, pp. 189-190.

left flank and regain possession of Chattanooga."¹⁷ Dana actually saw very little of the fighting, most of which took place in a heavily forested area. His dispatches were based on reports from line officers that filtered into the headquarters of Rosecrans, a small house known as the Widow Glenn's.

That evening Rosecrans called all his corps and division commanders to the Widow Glenn's for a council of war. Each officer reported on the condition of his men, and offered opinions regarding plans for the next day. During the meeting Dana noted that Thomas, who had not slept the previous evening, repeatedly dozed off. When asked for his view of the situation, Thomas roused himself long enough to reply that the left should be strengthened. After hearing from everyone, Rosecrans issued orders for the next day. Then, after coffee was served, the council concluded with McCook singing a tender love ballad entitled "The Hebrew Maiden's Delight."¹⁸

¹⁷Dana to Stanton, Sept. 19, 1863, 10:30 A.M., 2:30 P.M., 4 P.M., 4:30 P.M., and 7:30 P.M., O.R., I, xxx, pt. 1, pp. 190-192.

¹⁸Tucker, Chickamauga, pp. 195-199.

After the meeting Dana settled down for the night on the bare floor of the Widow Glenn home. Captain Horace Porter, Rosecrans' chief of ordnance, shared the makeshift quarters. A cool wind which blew through cracks in the floor made sleep difficult, and both men awoke often. At sunrise Dana went out with Rosecrans on a ride to inspect the Union lines. Before long the fighting resumed as Bragg again attacked the Union left. After returning with Rosecrans to a position not far from the Widow Glenn's, Dana lay down in the grass and went to sleep.¹⁹ It was an unusual thing to do, particularly considering his responsibility to keep Washington informed of developments. But September 20 was to be an unusual day, and Dana's cannon-disturbed nap was but a small part of it. At Vicksburg things had progressed with hardly a hitch; the battles had been small and victories had come with relative ease. Dana had never really seen a large-scale engagement, and he had not yet been tested in defeat. Now he was about to experience both.

¹⁹Dana, Recollections, p. 115.

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Late in the morning Rosecrans received a report of a gap in his line along Crittenden's front. He issued an order to correct the situation, not knowing that the report was mistaken. In following the order, a division pulled out of the line and created a huge gap. With luck the mistake might have been corrected without disaster, but the fortunes of war ruled differently. As it happened, a strong Confederate attack hit the vacated position, and in short order the entire Union right was driven from the field.²⁰

As the Confederate soldiers rolled up the Union flank, Dana was awakened from a deep sleep. Amidst the noisiest battle he had ever heard, he saw Rosecrans, a devout Catholic, making the sign of the cross. Efforts to rally the Union soldiers failed; there was wholesale panic on the right. Rounding up his horse, Dana began his own dash for safety, and soon became separated from Rosecrans.

Urging his horse on in the general direction of Chattanooga, Dana encountered a brigade of mounted infantry under Colonel John T. Wilder. From Indiana, these men carried the remarkable seven-shot Spencer repeating rifles. Dana regarded the battle as lost, unaware that on the Union

²⁰ Fairfax Downey, Storming the Gateway: Chattanooga, 1863 (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1960), pp.115-122.

left Thomas and his corps, with about two-thirds of the entire army, were holding their ground. After indentifying himself as the Assistant Secretary of War, he asked Wilder to escort him into Chattanooga so that news of the battle could be sent to Washington. When Wilder replied that he wanted to move his men in the direction of Thomas rather than retreat, Dana advised him to fall back toward Chattanooga, saying that the battle was hopelessly lost. After detailing a small escort to guide Dana in his retreat, Wilder remained in the field and managed to save some Union artillery. He did not, however, attempt to join Thomas, who would surely have welcomed Spencer rifles.²¹

Galloping back to Chattanooga, Dana got off a long,

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Wilder's account of this meeting changed over the years. In his battle report to Rosecrans immediately after Chickamauga, Wilder says he was preparing to join Thomas "when General Dana, Assistant Secretary of War, came up and said that 'our troops had fled in utter panic; that it was a worse rout than Bull Run; that General Rosecrans was probably killed or captured;' and strongly advised me to fall back and occupy the passes over Lookout Mountain to prevent the rebel occupancy of it." This appears in O.R., I, xxx, pt. 1, p. 449. But in an address delivered on Nov. 4, 1908, Wilder insisted that Dana had given him a peremptory order to fall back. Tucker uses this in Chickamauga, pp. 315-320, and concludes that Dana issued an unusual, unauthorized, and meddlesome order.

gloomy dispatch to Stanton. Since the Confederate breakthrough several hours earlier, he had hardly had time to ascertain what was happening. So he described what seemed to have taken place. "My report today is of deplorable importance," he began. "Chickamauga is as fatal a name in our history as Bull Run." The report of the battle which followed was largely incorrect, including his estimate of 20,000 Union casualties. He described the retreat as "wholesale panic" and closed with the observation that a Confederate take-over of Chattanooga could be resisted for only a short time.²² There was no one to report on Dana's reaction to his first taste of defeat, but obviously the experience had rattled the War Department emissary.

Having recovered his perspective by early evening, Dana realized the necessity of correcting his first report which had "given too dark a view of our disaster. Having been myself swept bodily off the battlefield by the panic-struck rabble," he explained, "my own impressions were naturally colored by the aspect of that part of the field." By now Dana knew that much of the Union army remained in

²²Dana to Stanton, Sept. 20, 1863, 4 P.M., O.R., I, xxx, pt. 1, pp. 192-193.

the field, and that Chattanooga stood in no immediate danger. Although he did not understand how the Union line had been breached, Dana said there had been no fault in the disposition of Rosecrans's forces. He even called attention to the commanding general's courage and gallantry in the field. In assessing blame for the reversal, Dana decided that it might not have happened had McCook marched back more quickly from his advanced position of Sept. 13. "That blunder, wrote Dana, "cost us four days of precious time."²³

Before the second message reached Washington, the Associated Press in Louisville was quoting Dana's first dispatch in reporting the Union defeat. In being relayed to Washington, the wire had passed through Nashville where the telegraph operator unraveled the code and spread word that Dana compared Chickamauga to Bull Run.²⁴ Dana later claimed this was the only instance where one of his dispatches had been deciphered, but it pointed out a very real danger--a wire carrying news of future movements or plans might be intercepted and translated by the Confederacy. At times

²³Dana to Stanton, Sept. 20, 1863, 8 P.M., O.R., I, xxx, pt. 1, pp. 193-194.

²⁴Dana to Stanton, Oct. 5, 1863, O.R., I, xxx, pt.1, pp. 207-208.

this evidently worried Stanton, and once he warned Dana against discussing details of pending movements.²⁵ Most Civil War codes were uncomplicated, and Dana's was no exception. It involved dividing a message into a given number of columns, which were to be read in a predetermined order. Anyone could crack this cipher by guessing out the number of columns and determining the order and direction for reading them.²⁶

The telegrams which reached Washington during the first few days after Chickamauga reflected the confusion around Union headquarters. The day after the retreat Dana reported that Rosecrans was determined to hold Chattanooga; but the next day he advised Stanton that unless reinforcements arrived soon the army would have to retreat. "If you have any advice," he implored, "it should come tonight." Four hours after sending this dispatch, Dana advised the

²⁵Stanton to Dana, Nov. 19, 1863, O.R., I, iii, pt. 1, p. 495.

²⁶The cipher used by Dana is explained briefly in The Recollections, pp. 23-24. For other material on Civil War codes see S. Doc. 251, 58th Congress, 2nd Session, Serial 4592, and R. Plum, The Military Telegraph, 2 Vols. (New York: 1882).

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War Department that Rosecrans intended to hold Chattanooga come what might.²⁷

Then on September 23, the note of determination sounded much clearer. Dana dismissed the recent setback, which only three days before had been of deplorable importance. He pointed out that the campaign's main objective, the possession of Chattanooga and the Tennessee River line, had been accomplished. Although losses at Chickamauga had been costly, the Confederates had also been hurt. Dana predicted that the Army of the Cumberland could hold Chattanooga against all enemy efforts for fifteen to twenty days barring massive Confederate reinforcements. He judged that twenty-five thousand efficient troops would guarantee the Union position in Tennessee. "If such reinforcements can be got there in season," he concluded, "everything is safe, and this place indispensable alike to the defense of Tennessee and as the base of future operations in Georgia will remain ours."²⁸

²⁷Dana to Stanton, Sept. 21, 1863, 4:30 P.M., and Sept. 22, 1863, 3 P.M., 6 P.M., and 9:30 P.M., O.R., I, xxx, pt. 1, pp. 195-197.

²⁸Dana to Stanton, Sept. 23, 1863, 11:30 A.M., O.R., I xxx pt. 1, pp. 197-198.

Back came encouraging news from Stanton. If Chattanooga could be held for half the time predicted by Dana, ample reinforcements would be in Tennessee.²⁹ To make good this promise, the Secretary prepared to send 15,000 men under Major General Joseph Hooker from Virginia to Tennessee by rail. It was a tremendous undertaking that posed many problems, but in the end it proved easier and more successful than securing help for Rosecrans from the Union force under General Burnside at Knoxville.

For some reason Burnside simply refused to move. Even before Chickamauga he had been urged to support Rosecrans, but despite vague promises he did nothing. Finally, he exhausted everyone's patience including Lincoln's. Very often the President went to the telegraph office in the War Department to read incoming wires, particularly Dana's reports. On Sept. 21, as he worried about Rosecrans and Chattanooga, and wondered how long it would be before Burnside sent help, a telegram arrived from the latter. Instead of hurrying toward Rosecrans, Burnside had moved away from Chattanooga in order to capture the town of Jonesboro. Lincoln read the message, and then, for the only time

²⁹ Stanton to Dana, Sept. 23, 1863, 10 P.M., O.R., 1, xxx, pt. 3, p. 792.

in the memory of the telegraph clerks, he swore, "Damn Jonesboro!"³⁰

While he waited hopefully for Burnside to arrive, Dana tried to explain the Union defeat. His interpretation of the battle clearly showed two things. First, he did not understand the combination of events which produced the opening exploited by Bragg. And second, he attached the major portion of blame not to Rosecrans, but rather to McCook, and, to a somewhat lesser degree, Crittenden. Although Dana believed the Union army had been badly outnumbered, he thought the decisive factor occurred when McCook incorrectly positioned his corps. Furthermore, Dana noted that after the breakthrough most Union officers behaved gallantly and attempted to rally their commands, but not McCook and Crittenden. Instead, they retired to Chattanooga, slept all night, and failed to look after their troops until the next day.³¹ In retrospect, said Dana,

³⁰David Homer Bates, Lincoln in the Telegraph Office: Recollections of the United States Military Telegraph Corps During the Civil War (New York: The Century Company, 1907), p. 202.

³¹Dana to Stanton, Sept. 23, 1863, 2 P.M., O.R., I, xxx, pt. 1, pp. 198-199.

any mistakes made by Rosecrans might have been overcome except for "that dangerous blunderhead McCook who always imperils everything."³²

As the Union army dug in to defend their precarious prize, feeling among some officers ran strongly against McCook and Crittenden. Subordinate officers in the corps commanded by these generals felt they had deserted their commands, and a few spoke out boldly and said they would not continue to serve under such men. Four of the six division commanders involved discussed these sentiments with Dana; included were Major General Philip H. Sheridan and Major General John M. Palmer. Both men stated they would resign unless changes were made in the army's organization.³³

All of the turmoil and recrimination produced by defeat and disappointment reached the War Department on September 27. Dana began a very long telegram that day by reporting "a very serious fermentation" throughout the Army of the Cumberland. Stanton must have been unprepared

³²Dana to Stanton, Sept. 24, 1863, O.R., 1, xxx, pt. 1, pp. 199-200.

³³Tucker, Chickamauga, p. 383.

for what followed in the message. Not only did Dana term the removal of McCook and Crittenden imperative, but he also suggested for the first time that Rosecrans himself might have to be replaced.

The feeling of the officers . . . does not seem in the least to partake of a mutinous or disorderly character, it is rather conscientious unwillingness to risk their men and the country's cause in hands proved to be so uncertain and unsafe. No formal representation of this unwillingness has been made to Rosecrans but he has been made aware of the state of things by private conversations with several of the parties. The defects of his character complicate the difficulty. He abounds in friendliness and approbateness and is greatly lacking in firmness and steadiness of will. He is a temporizing man, dreads so heavy an alternative as is now presented and hates to break with McCook and Crittenden. Besides, there is a more serious obstacle to his acting decisively in the fact that if Crittenden and McCook fled to Chattanooga with the sound of artillery in their ears from that glorious field where Thomas and Granger were saving army and their country's honor, he fled also, and although it may be said in his excuse that under the circumstances it was proper for the commanding general to go to his base of operations . . . still he feels that that excuse cannot entirely clear him either in his own eyes or in those of the army. In fact it is perfectly plain that while the subordinate commanders will not resign if he is retained in the chief command, as I believe they certainly will if McCook and Crittenden are not relieved, their respect for him as a general has received an irreparable blow.³⁴

³⁴Dana to Stanton, Sept. 27, 1863, O.R., I, xxx, pt. 1, pp. 201-203.

Stanton recognized that Dana used words with precision, and so the comment that respect for Rosecrans had suffered "an irreparable blow" was extremely serious. Dana even took the liberty of suggesting a new commander for the army--it should be a western general of high rank and great prestige, rather than someone from the eastern theater. Of course the western general with the highest rank and the greatest prestige was Grant; Dana mentioned him as a man who fit the prescription.

Three days later on September 30, Dana administered the finishing blows to McCook and Crittenden and also continued to chip away at Rosecrans. Several officers "of prominence and worth" had sought out Dana to present their views. Garfield was in the group which confirmed Dana's conviction that victory would be impossible if McCook and Crittenden retained their commands. This feeling pervaded the entire army. As for Rosecrans, his soldiers no longer cheered him unless ordered to do so. This time Dana suggested that Thomas, the army's hero, would be an ideal replacement for Rosecrans.³⁵

³⁵Dana to Stanton, Sept. 30, 1863, O.R., I, xxx, pt. 1, pp. 204-205.

That evening Stanton informed his assistant that appropriate action would be taken. Crittenden and McCook were being removed and ordered to Indianapolis for a court of inquiry.³⁶ Their commands would be consolidated into one corps and placed in the hands of General Gordon Granger, who, according to Dana, had performed "with the electrical courage of a Ney" at Chickamauga. Stanton expressed his belief that once Hooker arrived with his men, only a competent commander would be needed to save Chattanooga. "The merit of General Thomas and the debt of gratitude the nation owes to his valor and skill are fully appreciated here, and I wish you to tell him so," wrote Stanton. "It was not my fault that he was not in chief command months ago."³⁷

Because Dana was in Nashville to check on the arrival of Hooker's men he did not receive Stanton's wire until October 3. The next day he went to Thomas's headquarters and conveyed the Secretary's message to him. Dana, too, was

³⁶The McCook-Crittenden Court of Inquiry did not censure either man for leaving the field of Chickamauga, although in McCook's case they termed it an error in judgment. See O.R., I, xxx, pt. 1, pp. 930-1053.

³⁷Stanton to Dana, Sept. 30, 1863, 6:30 P.M., O.R., I, xxx, pt. 3, p. 946.

deeply impressed with the "Rock of Chickamauga." A West Point graduate, Thomas displayed the marks of a well-educated man. Dana considered him a delightful person to be with, "and a man of the greatest dignity of character." Fond of comparisons, Dana thought Thomas reminded him most of George Washington.³⁸ After hearing Stanton's praise, Thomas told Dana that he felt grateful for the expression of confidence. But he added that if he took command of the army it might appear that he had intrigued against Rosecrans whom he respected and liked. A few days later Thomas stated his feelings more strongly. Expressing confidence in the ability of Rosecrans, he said that he would refuse command of the army if it were offered him.³⁹

While the cauldron of dissension simmered, the Union position at Chattanooga grew more uncertain. Hoping to starve his adversary into surrender, Bragg effectively bottled up the Union supply line between Bridgeport, Alabama and Chattanooga. Ordinarily supplies for the Union

³⁸Undated memorandum, Tarbell Papers. Ironically, Rosecrans also compared Thomas to Washington. See Tucker, Chickamauga, p. 323.

³⁹Dana to Stanton, Oct. 8, 1863, O.R., I, xxx, pt. 1, p. 211.

army came by rail from Nashville to Bridgeport, and then on to Chattanooga. Confederate control of the Tennessee River between the last two points, however, ruled out transporting goods by rail or boat. This forced the Army of the Cumberland to rely on draft animals to pull supply wagons across tortuous mountain roads. When it rained heavily, as it did in October, these roads turned into muddy quagmires which quickly wore out horses and mules that had already been weakened by a lack of forage. And if this were not enough, wagon trains also had to watch out for Confederate cavalry raids and sharpshooters.

Dana explained this predicament to Stanton on October 12, and emphasized the error made by Rosecrans in abandoning Lookout Mountain on September 24. This had enabled Bragg to control the vital segment of river between Bridgeport and Chattanooga. Both Garfield and Granger had protested the move, according to Dana.

But Rosecrans who is sometimes as obstinate and inaccessible to reason as at others he is irresolute, vacillating and inconclusive, pettishly rejected all their arguments and the mountain was given up. It is difficult to say which was the greater error, this order or that which on the day of battle created the gap in our lines. At any rate such is our present situation, our animals starved and

the men with starvation before them, and the enemy bound to make desperate efforts to dislodge us. In the midst of this the commanding general devotes that part of the time which is not employed in pleasant gossip to the composition of a long report to prove that the Government is to blame for his failure. It is my duty to declare that while few persons exhibit more estimable social qualities, I have never seen [a] public man possessing talent with less administrative power, less clearness and steadiness in difficulty, and greater practical incapacity than Gen. Rosecrans. He has invention, fertility, and knowledge, but he has no strength of will and no concentration of purpose. His mind scatters, there is no system in the use of his busy days and restless nights, no courage against individuals in his composition, and with great love of command he is a feeble commander. He is conscientious and honest just as he is imperious and disputatious, always with a stray vein of caprice and an overweening passion for the approbation of his personal friends and the public outside. Under the present circumstances I consider this army to be very unsafe in his hands.⁴⁰

It was an overwhelming indictment. Rosecrans had to go. Rumors that Bragg planned to cross the Tennessee before long made the situation more urgent. Believing that top-notch administrative talent could save the day, Dana

⁴⁰Dana to Stanton, Oct. 12, 1863, 8 A.M., O.R., I, xxx, pt. 1, pp. 214-215.

inquired whether General Halleck might be able to come to Chattanooga and straighten things out.⁴¹ It was an odd suggestion, and one that Dana mentioned only once. Halleck had more than he could handle as General-in-Chief in Washington.

During the next few days torrential rains washed out roads, and Dana's pessimism deepened. Mortality increased among the forage-starved draft animals, and the army itself went on half-rations. Two disheartened dispatches on October 15, evidently galvanized Washington into action. The second of these forecast withdrawal from Chattanooga within two weeks unless supply lines were opened. " . . . our dazed and mazy commander cannot perceive the catastrophe that is close upon us, nor fix his mind upon the means of preventing it. I never saw anything which seemed so lamentable and hopeless."⁴²

⁴¹ Dana to Stanton, Oct. 12, 1863, 1 P.M. and 9 P.M., O.R., 1, xxx, pt. 1, pp. 215-216.

⁴²Dana to Stanton, Oct. 15, 1863, O.R., I, xxx, pt. 1, pp. 218-219.

The next evening Halleck sent Grant a telegram ordering him to Louisville where he would meet an officer of the War Department. And he was told to prepare his staff for immediate operations in the field.⁴³ Grant met the unnamed War Department officer in the train station at Indianapolis. It turned out to be Stanton. He handed the general two orders signed by Lincoln, and told him to take his pick. Both orders placed Grant in command of the newly devised Military Division of the Mississippi, consisting of all Union armies west of the Allegheny Mountains except for General Banks's independent command in the southwest. One order, however, retained Rosecrans as commander of the Army of the Cumberland; the other replaced him with Thomas. Grant selected the latter.⁴⁴ He and Stanton continued on to the Galt House in Louisville, where on the following day they discussed the Union position at Chattanooga.

⁴³Halleck to Grant, Oct. 16, 1863, 9 P.M., O.R., I, xxx, pt. 4, p. 404.

⁴⁴General Orders No. 337, O.R., I, xxx, pt. 4, p. 404; Thomas and Hyman, Stanton, pp. 290-291. In January, 1864, Rosecrans was reassigned to the Department of Missouri.

Late that evening Stanton received a telegram from Dana, which predicted imminent retreat from Chattanooga unless Rosecrans received contrary orders. After a frantic search the Secretary located Grant, who immediately wired Thomas to take command and hold the city at all costs. Reassurance came back quickly. "We will hold the town till we starve," replied the Army of the Cumberland's new leader.⁴⁵

Who caused the removal of Rosecrans? That question became the center of a lively post-war controversy in which each of the principals involved offered his own version of the truth. Obviously Lincoln signed the necessary order, and Grant selected it. But who destroyed the administration's confidence in "Old Rosy?"

Several months after Chickamauga, Dana claimed, in a private conversation, that his reports produced the change in commanders.⁴⁶ Later, in the Sun, he tried to shift the

⁴⁵O.R., I, xxx, pt. 4, p. 479. Thomas was talking with Rosecrans when the order from Grant arrived. Having learned earlier in the evening of his removal, Rosecrans urged Thomas to accept the command over the Army of the Cumberland.

⁴⁶Henry Villard, Memoirs of Henry Villard: Journalist and Financier, 1835-1900 (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904), Vol. II, p. 210. Villard served as a war correspondent for the New York Herald and also the New York Tribune.

responsibility to Garfield. Dana charged that Garfield's letter to Chase, which criticized Rosecrans, had been the deciding factor. He used this to oppose Garfield's election in 1880. In 1882, having obtained the letter from Chase's private secretary, Dana featured it in his paper. It helped convince Rosecrans that his own Chief of Staff had toppled him. "I now begin to think," he apologized to Dana, "I have done you injustice in all these years."⁴⁷

This allegation, however, seriously distorted the truth. When Dana published the letter he conveniently overlooked the stack of telegrams in the War Department which pointed at his own responsibility. Garfield's letter, written almost two months before Chickamauga, constituted feeble criticism compared to the onslaughts of Dana's reports. His was the lion's share of accountability, and Rosecrans lived long enough to realize it.⁴⁸

⁴⁷Rosecrans to Dana, March 17, 1882, Dana Papers. At this time Rosecrans was serving in the House of Representatives.

⁴⁸Dana's part in the dismissal of Rosecrans became public knowledge in 1890 when Vol. XXX of the Official Records appeared.

The dismissal itself might have come earlier than October 16, except for an important gubernatorial election in Ohio. The Army of the Cumberland cast almost 10,000 ballots in this contest which pitted John Brough, a Republican, against Clement C. Vallandigham, a Copperhead Democrat. Dana reported on the evening of October 14 that Ohio regiments in the army had voted overwhelmingly for Brough.⁴⁹ Had Rosecrans been removed before this election it might have affected the outcome and perhaps even cost the Republicans the state.⁵⁰

Without question Dana's role in the postwar game of finger-pointing enhanced his role as a troublemaker. Yet he had not gone to Chattanooga in 1863 with any intention of destroying Rosecrans. Before Chickamauga he radiated confidence in the army and its commander. He said nothing unfavorable about Rosecrans until several days after the unsettling defeat. By then the general had begun to display the qualities that Lincoln later

⁴⁹Dana to Stanton, Oct. 14, 1863, O.R., I, xxx, pt. 1, p. 217. In the Army of the Cumberland Brough received 9234 votes, while Vallandigham had only 252.

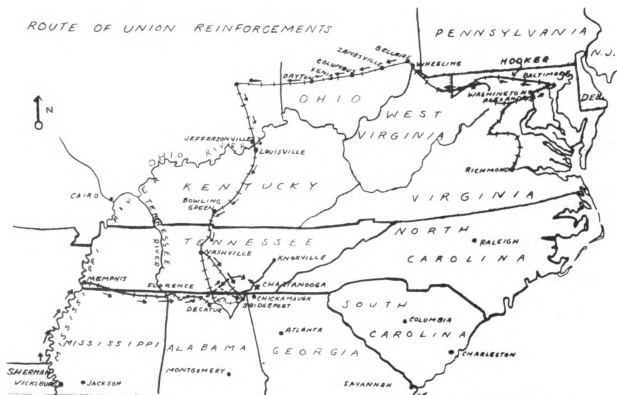
⁵⁰Lamers, Edge of Glory, p. 380.

compared to those of "a duck hit on the head."⁵¹ Dana reported only what he saw and heard; that was his job. For the most part he performed it well despite frequent hardships and personal dangers, and although his prewar studies hardly qualified him as a military expert, he was sincere and patriotic. His reports kept Stanton better advised than any other single source.⁵²

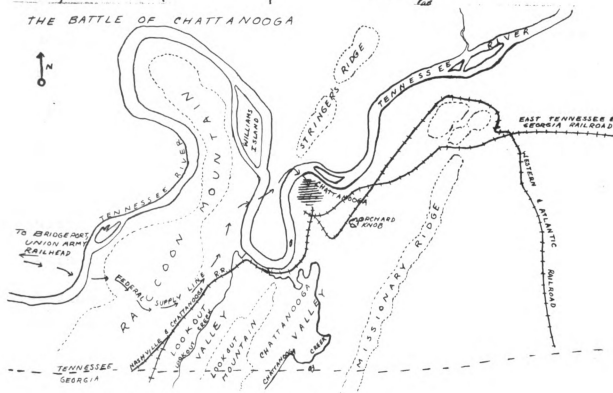
⁵¹Quoted in Carl Sandburg, Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and The War Years, in three volumes, (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1960), Vol. II, p. 392.

⁵²Villard, Memoirs, p. 189.

ROUTE OF UNION REINFORCEMENTS



THE BATTLE OF CHATTANOOGA



CHAPTER VI

"GLORY TO GOD! THE DAY IS DECISIVELY OURS"

On the morning of October 19, only hours before Rosecrans learned of his removal, Dana received a telegram ordering him to join Stanton in Louisville. The message was three days late in reaching Chattanooga, but Dana began the rugged journey anyway. Riding over the difficult and dangerous route to Bridgeport, he observed the grim reminders of a recent wagon train which had bogged down--dead and dying draft animals strewn along the muddy roads. At Bridgeport he caught a train for Nashville where he arrived late in the evening of October 20, having survived a near derailment along the way. When he learned that Grant and his staff were in Nashville, Dana paid them a visit. After explaining the Louisville meeting, Grant said that Stanton had granted him permission to take the Assistant Secretary back to Chattanooga.¹

¹Dana, Recollections, pp. 129-131.

Dana had hoped for an opportunity to visit his family in New York. Instead, surrounded by his companions from the Vicksburg campaign, he was headed back toward the beleaguered Army of the Cumberland.

When Grant reached Chattanooga he learned that Thomas already had a plan for opening a new supply line to the city. West of Chattanooga the Tennessee River looped northward around Raccoon Mountain. By occupying the finger of elevated land which jutted out in this loop the Confederate army was able to control a vital segment of river. If Raccoon mountain were freed, supplies could flow between Bridgeport and Chattanooga by an all-water route or by a shorter combination of water and land. Brigadier General W. F. Smith, a crusty West Pointer and Thomas's Chief of Engineers, proposed a coordinated attack to accomplish this. "Fighting Joe" Hooker's detachment from the Army of the Potomac would move east from Bridgeport while another Union force converged from the west. Hopefully, they would surprise the enemy and drive them back and away from the river. After a personal reconnaissance, Grant gave his approval to the strategy.²

²Downey, Storming of the Gateway, pp. 140-146.

Two days later, on October 25, Dana rode over to Bridgeport to watch Hooker's advance. This marked Dana's third trip over the fifty-five mile route in three weeks. Although an expert horseman, he still nursed cuts and bruises from a recent spill which he had suffered when a river bank crumbled, plunging horse and rider about fourteen feet.³

Dana quickly evidenced dissatisfaction with Hooker. Not only did this officer lack zeal in his judgement, but he also seemed inadequately prepared for the movement to Raccoon Mountain. As the Union soldiers began marching east, Dana wired the War Department that Hooker appeared uncooperative and "as truculent toward the plan he is now to execute as toward the impotence and confusion of the old regime."⁴ Perhaps some of the criticism stemmed from a recent breach of military etiquette which had offended Grant. Instead of visiting his new commander, Hooker sent Grant an invitation to call upon him. It was a small

³Dana, Recollections, p. 132.

⁴Dana to Stanton, Oct. 27, 1863, O.R., I, xxi, pt. 1, p. 72.

slight--but not so small that it went unnoticed.⁵ For the next few days "Fighting Joe" fared poorly in the dispatches that went to Stanton.

Despite the criticism, Hooker performed his role with skill and energy, and the strategy for freeing the Tennessee River worked smoothly. Dana reported the operation's success on October 28, and commented that its brilliancy could not be exaggerated. He also praised "Baldy" Smith for devising the plan.⁶ Goods now came upriver from Bridgeport as far as Raccoon Mountain. From here they traveled by road to Chattanooga, crossing the river twice, once by ferry and once by pontoon bridge. Hungry Union soldiers labeled their new supply route the "Cracker Line." Relief came just in time; the commissary storehouses in Chattanooga were virtually empty. This removed the immediate pressure from the Army of the Cumberland, but Bragg still held Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge. From these positions he could keep the Union army on the defensive.

Even before the opening of the "Cracker Line" Dana thought he detected a new spirit throughout the army.

⁵Wilson, Life of Dana, p. 278.

⁶Dana to Stanton, Oct. 28, 1863, O.R., I, xxxi, Pt. 1, p. 72.

Before the change in commanders, uncertainty and confusion were evident around headquarters; now, under Grant, order and a quiet determination prevailed. Probably the most noticeable results of the army's reorganization appeared in the ranks where soldiers felt new confidence. "Careful inquiry through the army," Dana reported, "discloses nothing but general satisfaction at recent changes."⁷

Yet if the army was pleased with Grant, Grant was not yet pleased with the army. He wanted to make some more changes among his subordinate officers, and hoped that Dana would help clear the way as he had at Vicksburg with McClernand. On October 29, the Assistant Secretary sent a very frank dispatch to Stanton, explaining exactly what Grant had in mind.

Gen. Grant desires me to request for him that Lieut. Col. J. H. Wilson of his staff, captain of engineers, be appointed Brig. Gen. Volunteers. Grant wants him to command cavalry, for which he possesses uncommon qualifications. Knowing Wilson thoroughly I heartily endorse the application. Grant also wishes to have both Hooker and [Major General Henry W.] Slocum removed from his command, and the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps consolidated under [Major General O. O.] Howard. He would

⁷Dana to Stanton, Oct. 23 and Oct. 25, 1863, O.R., I, xxxi, pt. 1, p. 69 and 71.

himself order Hooker and Slocum away, but hesitates because they have just been sent here by the President. Besides I think he would rather prefer that so serious a proceeding should come from headquarters. Hooker has behaved badly ever since his arrival, and Slocum has just sent in a very disorderly communication stating that when he came here it was under promise that he should not have to serve under Hooker, whom he neither regards with confidence as an officer nor respects as a man. Altogether Grant feels that their presence here is replete with both trouble and danger. Besides the smallness of the two corps requires their consolidation, and even after that it will be necessary to add troops to make the numbers of the now consolidated corps respectable.⁸

The promotion for Wilson came through, but Hooker and Slocum stayed on with their commands. Grant was surprised; usually requests made through Dana were granted. But this time Stanton evidently felt that enough changes had taken place. It was Bragg, rather than Hooker or Slocum, who needed to be removed.⁹

During the last week of October, Grant became concerned over signs of a Confederate troop movement toward Knoxville. Southern deserters reported that 5,000 mounted infantrymen had crossed the Tennessee River and were marching

⁸Dana to Stanton, Oct. 29, 1863, O.R., I, xxxi, pt. 1, p. 73.

⁹Wilson, Life of Dana, pp. 285-286.

toward the northeast. Furthermore a Union reconnaissance showed that the number of enemy soldiers on Lookout Mountain had noticeably diminished.¹⁰ Bragg had sent a strong force under Lt. Gen. James Longstreet to attack Burnside. Grant decided that an attack on Bragg would be the best way to protect the Union army at Knoxville. Sufficient pressure would force the Confederate commander to recall Longstreet. But when Thomas received orders to attack Missionary Ridge, he replied that such an attack was impossible; he needed fresh horses and mules to move his artillery.¹¹

To learn more about Burnside's strength, Grant asked Dana and Wilson to visit Knoxville. It was a dangerous 175 mile trip over difficult terrain, but Stanton told Dana that he could perform any service which Grant requested.¹² With a cavalry escort, Dana and Wilson left Chattanooga on November 9. Their journey proved less

¹⁰Dana to Stanton, Oct. 25, 1863, O.R., I, xxxi, Pt. 1, pp. 70-71.

¹¹Grant to Halleck, Nov. 21, 1863, O.R., I, xxxi, Pt. 3, p. 216.

¹²Stanton to Dana, Nov. 5, 1863, O.R., I, iii, Pt. 1, p. 490.

difficult than anticipated. Besides enjoying each other's company, they benefited from the strong pro-Union sentiment of people living in East Tennessee. "It was during this ride," recalled Wilson later, " . . . that Dana beguiled our journey with an almost continuous disquisition on history, romance, poetry, and practical life. His extraordinary memory for the great passages of both prose and poetry of all ages and countries struck me at the time as phenomenal."¹³

When they reached Knoxville late on the evening of November 12, the two men immediately called on Burnside. Dana had never met the General who had so disastrously misused the Army of the Potomac in 1862 at Fredericksburg. Burnside's physical appearance and energy impressed Dana, but the officer's intelligence seemed more apparent than real. "You had to know him some time before you really took his measure." said Dana later.¹⁴

Burnside commanded more than 30,000 men, but less than half of these were concentrated around Knoxville.

¹³Wilson, Life of Dana, p. 288.

¹⁴Undated memorandum, Tarbell Papers.

He believed that an attack by Longstreet would force him to retreat. At one point in his discussion with Grant's envoys, Burnside proposed a line of retreat which would have cut off his communications and exposed his army to capture. Dana argued against the plan, and Wilson sarcastically remarked that Grant did not want Burnside to include the capture of his army in his plan of operations. After some talk Burnside's resolve stiffened. By the time his visitors began their ride back to Chattanooga, Burnside thought that Knoxville could be held for the time being.¹⁵

Dana and Wilson started back just in time. The area between Knoxville and Chattanooga was becoming more dangerous as Longstreet advanced. Although no incidents marred the homeward journey, Dana lost contact with Washington for four days. Stanton grew concerned for his safety. When he finally heard from his assistant on November 18, the Secretary breathed a sigh of relief. "I am rejoiced that you have got safely back," wired Stanton. "My anxiety about you for several days has been

¹⁵ Dana to Stanton, Nov. 18, 1863, O.R., I, xxxi, pt. 1, pp. 260-261.

very great. Make your arrangements to remain in the field during the winter."¹⁶

The Union forces around Chattanooga had grown considerably during Dana's absence. Sherman, who had been en route since late September, finally arrived in Bridgeport on November 15 with about 17,000 men. He had moved his army from Vicksburg by steamboat to Memphis, and from there had come the rest of the way by marching overland. Although Sherman's army traveled less than half the distance covered by the reinforcements under Hooker, he was slowed down by transportation problems. Grant, eager to break the siege, had been waiting for Sherman and his men. The added manpower would be essential in trying to dislodge Bragg.¹⁷

The Confederate army occupied strong positions. West of Chattanooga a small force held Lookout Mountain; east of the town Bragg placed the rest of his men on

¹⁶Stanton to Dana, Nov. 19, 1863, O.R., I, lii, pt. 1, p. 495. Stanton also wired the news of Dana's safe return to Lincoln, who was in Gettysburg for the dedication of the cemetery there. Stanton to Lincoln, Nov. 19, 1863, O.R., I, xxxi, pt. 3, p. 190.

¹⁷Downey, Storming the Gateway, p. 152.

Missionary Ridge which ran for several miles in a southeasterly direction. The elevated terrain was well-suited for defensive warfare. From somewhat similar positions at Gettysburg, the Union army had repulsed Lee's offensive efforts and inflicted heavy casualties in the process.

Grant's original battleplan called for Sherman to move north of Chattanooga, and place his troops behind a ridge where they would be hidden from enemy view. From here Sherman would attempt to cross the Tennessee River by pontoon bridge and surprise the Confederates at the north end of Missionary Ridge. At the same time the Army of the Cumberland under Thomas would advance on this elevation, try to unite with Sherman, and sweep the rebels southward off the heights and away from their base of supplies. Hooker's assignment was to demonstrate in front of Lookout Mountain, and keep the enemy busy there. Union cavalry would help cover Sherman's advance, and then they would attack enemy communications.¹⁸ The strategy was sound, but it did not work out so neatly in the field as it did on a headquarters map.

¹⁸Dana to Stanton, Nov. 18, 1863, O.R., I, xxi, pt. 2, p. 60.

Rather unexpectedly a delay occurred when heavy rains on November 20 slowed down Sherman's advance. And Dana noted Grant's surprise at learning that Sherman was encumbering himself with heavy wagon trains. Instead of moving all troops and artillery first, Sherman advanced with these wagon trains in the rear of each division. Grant blamed himself for failing to specify that the wagons be left behind, but Dana remarked that such orders should not have been necessary--Sherman should have known better.¹⁹

Then on November 22, Grant heard reports that Bragg was either withdrawing his army or sending more help to Longstreet. Modifying his plans, the Union commander ordered Thomas to test Confederate strength along his front. The target of the attack was Orchard Knob, a low hill about one mile in front of Missionary Ridge. After a fight of less than two hours on November 23, the outnumbered Confederates retreated, leaving the hill in Union hands. Dana informed

¹⁹Dana to Stanton, Nov. 23, 1863, 10 A.M., O.R., I, xxxi, pt. 2, p. 64.

Stanton that the victory at Orchard Knob would facilitate the planned attack on Missionary Ridge.²⁰

Immediately following this initial success, Dana joined Sherman's force as it prepared to cross the river and attack the northern end of Missionary Ridge. Sherman had approximately 25,000 men, and river crossings always presented certain problems and dangers. The major worry was whether the enemy would attack during the crossing. Early in the morning of November 24, Sherman pushed a small force across the river in pontoon boats. These soldiers seized the Confederate pickets and began fortifying a bridge-head. At daybreak construction started on the bridge itself, and by early afternoon the span was completed. The rest of Sherman's troops marched across the river without difficulty. It was a skillful and well-coordinated movement. Sherman told Dana that he had never seen anything done so quietly and so well--a thirteen hundred and fifty foot bridge had been erected in just a few hours.²¹ That evening Sherman

²⁰Dana to Stanton, Nov. 23, 1863, 3:30 P.M., O.R., I, xxi, pt. 2, pp. 65-66.

²¹Dana to Stanton, Nov. 24, 1863, O.R., I, xxxi, pt. 2, pp. 66-67.

seized a foothold on Missionary Ridge, encountering only token opposition along the way.

While this progress took place east of Chattanooga, Hooker threw his men at Lookout Mountain. Instead of a demonstration, he now had orders to take the height and descend into the valley beyond, where he would also be in position to attack Missionary Ridge. To accomplish this he had a unique command consisting of three divisions, each from a different army corps. Over steep, rugged, heavily-wooded ground the Union soldiers advanced. After brisk fighting in heavy fog, the Southern troops fell back although possession of the mountain was still disputed. The fog, which helped cut short the engagement in the afternoon, caused the fight to be remembered later as "The Battle Above the Clouds." That evening under a bright, full moon, Dana watched as another Union assault forced the enemy to withdraw from the elevation and march to Missionary Ridge.²²

The decisive action in the three day struggle took place the next day, and it produced one of the most spectacular feats of the war. At daylight Sherman and Hooker

²²Dana to Stanton, Nov. 25, 1863, 7:30 A.M., O.R., I, xxxi, pt. 2, p. 67.

were to move toward opposite ends of Missionary Ridge; Thomas, occupying the center, was ordered to advance when Hooker reached the heights. With several leading officers Dana watched the battle develop from Orchard Knob. When rebel artillery shelled this position Dana observed that everyone fell to the ground except for Grant, Thomas, and Granger. The latter rounded up an artillery piece of his own and began returning the Confederate fire.²³

Both Sherman and Hooker ran into difficulties in carrying out Grant's plan. Strong entrenchments kept Sherman from advancing along the ridge, while Hooker's approach was delayed in order to repair a vital bridge. Thomas was not supposed to attack until Hooker arrived, and so Bragg concentrated on Sherman. Grant sized up the situation and decided to send Thomas against the Confederate center. This was intended to be a demonstration in force which would require Bragg to divert troops away from Sherman.

Thomas' target was the enemy rifle pits at the base of the ridge. The Confederate position appeared to be too strong to permit much success beyond this point. Ravines,

²³Dana, Recollections, pp. 148-149.

boulders, and rebel breastworks covered the slope. After some delay, which Dana attributed to Granger's preoccupation with firing his cannon, the attack got underway about 4:00 P.M.²⁴ Dana watched as the assault rolled over the first line of rebel works, and then, instead of halting, continued up the ridge. Under the bright afternoon sun the Union charge relentlessly drove back Confederate gray. The amazed observers at Orchard Knob suddenly realized that the men of Thomas had reached the crest; Southern soldiers were scrambling down the other side.

Rushing off a wire to Stanton, Dana exclaimed, "Glory to God! The day is decisively ours. Missionary Ridge has just been carried by a magnificent charge"²⁵ The feat seemed even more incredible to Dana the next day. After examining the slope over which the Army of the Cumberland had sent Bragg reeling in defeat, Dana termed the triumph "one of the greatest miracles in military history."

²⁴Dana to Stanton, Nov. 25, 1863, 8 P.M., O.R., I, xxxi, pt. 2, pp. 68-69.

²⁵Dana to Stanton, Nov. 25, 1863, 4:30 P.M., O.R., I, xxxi, pt. 2, p. 68.

No man who climbs the ascent by any of the roads that wind along its front can believe that eighteen thousand men were moved up its broken and crumbling face unless it was his fortune to witness the deed. It seems as awful as a visible interposition of God. Neither Grant nor Thomas intended it. Their orders were to carry the rifle pits along the base of the ridge and capture their occupants but when this was accomplished the unaccountable spirit of the troops bore them bodily up those impracticable steeps, over the bristling rifle pits on the crest and thirty cannon enfilading every gully.²⁶

The siege of Chattanooga had ended.

Bragg, however, avoided further disaster by managing a skillful retreat despite Grant's pursuit. Union forces chased the Confederate army to a point near Ringgold, south-east of Chattanooga. But here, Bragg placed a division of troops atop another ridge, and the Union pursuit bogged down. When the rest of the Confederate force had withdrawn successfully, the rear guard followed. From Missionary Ridge, Dana described the scene in the valley below him. "Bragg is in full retreat," he wrote, "burning his depots and bridges. The Chickamauga Valley for a distance of ten miles is full of the fires lighted in his flight."²⁷

²⁶ Dana to Stanton, Nov. 26, 1863, 10 A.M., O.R., I, xxxi, pt. 2, p. 69.

²⁷ Dana to Stanton, Nov. 26, 1863, 1:30 P.M., O.R., I, xxxi, pt. 2, p. 70.

The descriptions of victory elicited more praise from Washington. Stanton was in Ohio for Thanksgiving, and so the message came from his assistant, Peter H. Watson, "The Secretary of War is absent and the President is sick, but both receive your dispatches regularly and esteem them highly, not merely because they are reliable, but for their clearness of narrative and their graphic pictures of the stirring events they describe."²⁸

The campaign in Tennessee, however, was still unfinished. In the eastern part of the state Burnside had been using delaying tactics to hold off Longstreet. By slowly giving ground and avoiding any serious battles, he had managed to pull the Confederate general farther away from Chattanooga. The Union force withdrew into Knoxville on November 16, and the following day Longstreet placed the city under siege. After the success at Missionary Ridge, Granger was ordered to lead approximately 20,000 men to relieve Burnside. But when the movement failed to

²⁸Peter H. Watson to Dana, Nov. 27, 1863, O.R., I, xxxi, pt. 3, p. 256.

get off on time, Grant replaced Granger with Sherman. Dana accompanied the expedition as an observer.²⁹

Longstreet waited until November 29 to attack Knoxville. The assault failed and before it could be renewed Longstreet learned of the defeat at Missionary Ridge. On December 4, he withdrew his men and began a retreat toward Virginia; two days later the relief force under Sherman drew up at Knoxville. Dana discovered that Burnside had more provisions at the end of the brief siege than he had had at the beginning. The loyal Unionists of the region had supported him well. In his report Dana credited Burnside and his soldiers for their strong performance.³⁰ After Sherman provided a larger garrison for the town, he headed the rest of his force back to Chattanooga.

Already, Grant had plans for a winter campaign designed to keep his army active and useful. Only a small portion of his men would be required to protect Chattanooga and to collect supplies for future movements. Why not use

²⁹Dana to Stanton, Nov. 29, 1863, O.R., I, xxxi, pt. 2, p. 72.

³⁰Dana to Stanton, Dec. 6, 1863, O.R., I, xxxi, pt. 1, p. 263.

the rest of the army in an offensive aimed at Mobile and the interior of Alabama? Shortly after Missionary Ridge, Grant asked Dana to explain this plan to Stanton. About 35,000 men would move down the Mississippi to New Orleans. Then they would advance on Mobile and invest the Confederate garrison there. For this only a portion of the troops would be needed; the rest could march north toward Montgomery and other points. The army would maintain itself by living off the Alabama countryside. Dana liked this plan, and after detailing its features to Stanton, he added his own approval. "I earnestly hope that you will agree to his design, and as soon as may be give your assent to its execution. A winter campaign may be made there with little if any difficulty. I can see nothing to condemn but everything to approve in the scheme."³¹

When Dana returned to Chattanooga from Knoxville, he asked permission to go north to Washington and New York.

³¹Dana to Stanton, Nov. 29, 1863, O.R., I xxxi, pt. 2, pp. 71-72.

Thinking that he would probably accompany Grant on the proposed expedition into Alabama, Dana wanted to visit his home before leaving. He argued that he could join Grant as easily from New York or Washington as elsewhere. "I am sure that I can be more useful anywhere else than I can here," he added, "Since all has become safe, quiet, and regular."³²

When this failed to bring an affirmative response, Dana decided to take more positive action. He wired Stanton that Grant wanted him to go to Washington so that the Alabama campaign might be explained more fully. And this time he did not wait for an answer. Instead he started north, and advised Stanton that contrary orders could reach him at any point along the rail line between Chattanooga and Washington.³³

The trip proved only partially successful. It got Dana home where he wanted to be, but Grant's plans failed to win approval. After discussing the campaign with Lincoln, Stanton, and Halleck, Dana reported the results to Grant.

³²Dana to Stanton, Dec. 10, 1863, O.R., I, xxxi, pt. 1, p. 264.

³³Dana to Stanton, Dec. 12, 1863, O.R., I, xxxi, pt. 2, p. 73.

Stanton considered the plan sound, but General-in-Chief Halleck objected on the grounds that it would weaken the Union hold on Tennessee and perhaps result in another Confederate attempt to capture Knoxville. Dana suggested that pressure from the Army of the Potomac would keep the enemy out of east Tennessee, but Halleck rejected this by saying that the army's Commander, Major General George Gordon Meade, could not be relied upon.

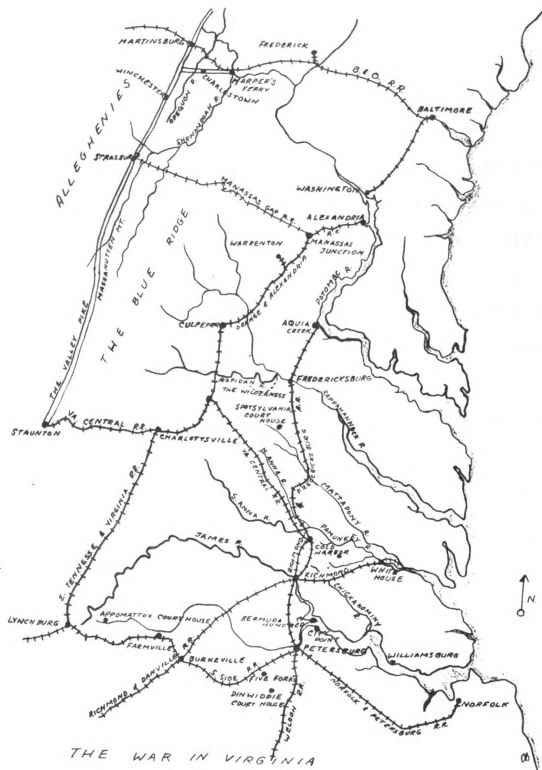
This naturally led to your second proposition, namely that either Sherman or W. F. Smith should be put in command of the army. To this the answer is such as to leave little doubt in my mind that the second of these officers will be appointed to that post. Both Secretary of War and General Halleck said to me that as long as a fortnight before my arrival they had come to the conclusion that when a change should be made General W. F. Smith would be the best person to try. Some doubts which they seemed to have respecting his disposition and personal character I think I was able to clear up As yet, however, nothing has been decided upon, and you will understand that I have somewhat exceeded my instructions from the Secretary of War . . . but it seems to me necessary that you should know all these particulars.³⁴

Disappointed, Grant settled his army down to winter quarters and waited. Despite Dana's optimism regarding a change in

³⁴Dana to Grant, Dec. 21, 1863, O.R., I, xxxi, pt. 3, pp. 457-458.

the commander of the Army of the Potomac, nothing was done and Major General George Gordon Meade stayed on. Instead of Alabama, Grant's next campaign was destined to take place in Virginia.

The Christmas holidays found Dana enjoying his family in New York. Since March he had seen his wife and children for only a few days. Now with Vicksburg, Chickamauga, and Chattanooga behind him, he could entertain his oldest son, Paul, with stories of battles and leaders. 1863 had been the pivotal year in the war, and Dana had seen the decisive events in the West. Even more important he had helped shape those events.



CHAPTER VII

FROM WASHINGTON THROUGH THE WILDERNESS

As 1864 began, the military action slowed to a virtual halt. The year before there had been campaigns in Tennessee and along the Mississippi; now there was only an ill-fated Federal expedition into Florida. It was the last breathing space either side enjoyed before the resumption of fighting that eventually culminated at Appomattox Courthouse.

For Dana, the interlude meant a new assignment--to an office on the third floor of the War Department building. There he found more than enough to keep him busy. Under the burdens of wartime, Stanton's office conducted a vast amount of business. There were new soldiers to recruit, supplies to purchase, Confederate spies to watch, discontented officers to deal with, newspaper censorship to enforce, and myriad other duties to perform. The awesome workload killed Christopher P. Wolcott, one of Stanton's assistants in 1863; the other Assistant Secretary, Peter H. Watson, a well-known patent attorney, suffered periodic illnesses and only Stanton's

pleas prevented his resignation. The Secretary himself had to take occasional vacations from the endless responsibilities which at times threatened to grind him down.¹

But if the routine that Dana faced in January 1864 appeared more wearying than his battlefield duties, it at least afforded him a chance to know Stanton better. Many people in Washington did not envy Dana the opportunity. They disliked the Secretary's bullying tactics, his secretive ways, and his violent temper. Unlike other Cabinet members Stanton remained aloof from the whirl of Washington society. He went to very few parties, and never attended the theater; furthermore, he seemed to lack any close friends. More than anything else he was feared. "Stanton strode across the stage of war-stricken Washington." in the words of one historian, "as a gladiator whose tongue was his howitzer and his temper his arsenal."²

Dana, however, never shared this popular view of Stanton's irascibility. The two men respected one another

¹Thomas and Hyman, Stanton, p. 267.

²Earl Schenk Miers, The Web of Victory: Grant at Vicksburg (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), p. 131; also Margaret Leech, Reveille in Washington 1860-1865 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941), pp. 159-162.

and got along very well, each admiring the other's ability. Later in his life Dana could recall only one occasion when Stanton became unpleasant with him. This resulted from an incident in which a large sum of money had been confiscated from a man in Virginia. When the man appeared at the War Department in the company of a friendly congressman and demanded his money back, Stanton refused. The two men continued to press Stanton for the return of the money, and he finally turned the case over to Dana, informing him that the matter should be settled as he saw fit. When Dana proceeded to return the confiscated currency after satisfying himself that all was in order, Stanton exploded. He demanded to know on whose authority Dana had acted. When confronted with the note delegating the matter to his Assistant Secretary, Stanton laughed and conceded that Dana had only followed his instructions.³

Stanton's quick mind and ability to penetrate to the heart of any problem impressed Dana. "He was a man of the quickest intelligence and understood a thing before he had half of it told to him," Dana once remarked, "and his

³Memorandum of December 18, 1896, Tarbell Papers.

judgement was just as swift." Well-versed in history, Stanton made an interesting partner in conversation. With his friends he often displayed a gift for satirical wit, and Dana enjoyed the stories he told. Around the War Department office, however, the Secretary was usually all business. He expected a high level of performance from his subordinates. Those who measured up, like Dana, he regarded favorably; those who did not were treated to displays of his volatile temper.

Plunging into the sea of paper-work Dana quickly learned that Stanton asked no more of his associates than he did of himself. Often the Secretary worked from early in the morning until late at night. Dana's weak eyes forced him to adopt a less-demanding routine; usually he arrived at his office early in the morning and worked until sundown. A systematic worker, Dana always tried to dispose of the daily pile of papers that he found waiting on his desk. Methodically reading each document, Dana would write a brief description of contents on the back and forward it to the proper War Department bureau for comment and action. For example, when an inventor submitted a plan for a breech-loading cannon, Dana looked it over quickly and sent it on

to the Ordnance Bureau. After receiving the report of this bureau, Dana acted on its recommendations and took care of the necessary correspondence--in this case a polite note to the inventor explaining that the design had been judged faulty. By January 26, when the Senate approved his nomination as Assistant Secretary of War, Dana had already taken part in a variety of War Department transactions.⁴

Dana's earliest contribution to the efficiency of Stanton's office involved the administration of the Cavalry Bureau. Organized the previous July, this bureau had charge of organizing and equipping the cavalry forces, including the responsibility for purchasing forage and new horses. The first officer to serve as chief of the Cavalry Bureau was Major General George Stoneman, a career officer characterized by Dana as "another expensive failure. He is not worth a continental. Out of twenty-four thousand cavalry horses brought here under his supervision, less than four thousand are reported as effective for service. This is a fact not to be repeated, but I tell it to you

⁴War Department Record Group 107, Letters Sent, January 1864, National Archives.

for the general, who may have to decide how or when to use him or not to use him."⁵

Believing the Cavalry Bureau could benefit from the guidance of his friend Wilson, Dana wired Grant a request for the young officer's services. Wilson could perform the job better than anyone else, argued Dana, and he would be able to eliminate much wasteful spending. Furthermore the appointment would be temporary--just long enough for Wilson to put things in order. Grant readily assented to the proposal, and soon Wilson was on his way to Washington.⁶

Taking up residence in the same rooming house with Dana, the new head of the Cavalry Bureau concentrated his efforts on improving the quality of horses purchased. When Wilson took over, he found that horse contractors often foisted off sick or inferior animals on inexperienced quartermasters, most of whom lacked proper qualifications for judging cavalry mounts. With Dana's help, Wilson arranged for cavalry officers to inspect horses and set up

⁵Dana to Wilson, Jan. 11, 1864, Quoted in Wilson, Life of Dana, p. 303. The "general" mentioned was Grant.

⁶Dana to Grant, Jan. 17, 1864, and Grant to Dana, Jan. 18, 1864, O.R., I, xxxii, pt. 2, pp. 115-116.

carefully defined procedures to guide them. Horse contractors were notified that if their bids were accepted they had to furnish all the horses themselves without resorting to sub-contracting. And all horses purchased had to conform to certain specifications as to age and condition. When several contractors violated the new regulations, Dana authorized their arrest and trial in Washington by a military commission. The guilty parties were sentenced to prison, and the judgment caused other sellers to sit up and take notice. "The result," remarked Wilson, "was that the business of the bureau was put on a sound basis, the remounts purchased thereafter were good and serviceable, and . . . the measures resorted to were successful in putting an end to the frauds which had come to be the rule rather than the exception in that branch of army business."⁷

Wilson served the War Department until the spring when he was reassigned to a cavalry command with the Army of the Potomac. His experience in Washington was pleasant, but he failed to share Dana's high regard for Stanton. Wilson thought the Secretary displayed a serious character defect which caused him to bully any officer who failed to

⁷Wilson, Life of Dana, p. 308.

show the proper deference. He also believed that Stanton curtailed his own usefulness by giving in to his temper-- something that resulted in undignified conduct at times. There were others, Wilson felt, who could have filled the war office more successfully. He placed Dana at the head of his list, regarding him as the best administrator he ever met in any public office. He maintained that Dana was better qualified than Stanton to be Secretary of War by virtue of his contacts with the army and its leaders, by his natural capacity and administrative ability, "as well as by conviction, sanity of temper and method."⁸

Sometimes the flood of supplicants which descended on the War Department interrupted Dana's routine. People came with all sorts of requests, but more often than not they wanted passes that would allow them to enter military zones. Most of the time such passes were denied, but occasionally someone presented valid reasons for traveling to the front. During the winter of 1864 a Quaker from Philadelphia visited Dana, and asked for permission to

⁸ James H. Wilson, Under the Old Flag (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1912) Vol. I, pp. 342 and 538-539.

transport himself and some supplies into East Tennessee. The man had charitable intentions--he wanted to relieve some of his less fortunate Quaker brethren who had been caught up in the war. Dana felt the request was worthwhile, and provided the man with the necessary passes and rail transportation. Not long afterward a letter from General Sherman arrived at the War Department for Dana.

Preparing for a campaign into Georgia, Sherman outlined the problems of finding enough railroad cars to provision his army. Alluding to the great number of requests by private citizens to come within the lines, Sherman expounded on the necessity for total war.

Yet come these pressing claims of charity, by men and women who can not grasp the great problem. My usual answer is 'Show me that your presence at the front is more valuable than two hundred pounds of powder, bread or oats'; and it is generally conclusive, I have given Mr. Savery a pass on your letter, and it takes two hundred pounds of bread from our soldiers, or the same of oats from our patient mules; but I could not promise to feed the suffering Quakers at the expense of our army In peace there is a beautiful harmony in all the departments of life--they all fit together like the Chinese puzzle; but in war all is ajar. Nothing fits, and it is the struggle between the stronger and weaker; and the latter, however it may appeal to the better feelings of our nature,

must kick the beam. To make war we must and will harden our hearts.

Therefore, when preachers clamor and the sanitaries wail, don't join in, but know that war, like the thunderbolt, follows its laws, and turns not aside even if the beautiful, the virtuous, and charitable stand in its path.⁹

The polite reprimand went into the drawer of Dana's desk--henceforth applicants for passes found themselves confronted with Sherman's forcefully stated arguments. Undoubtedly the humanitarian Dana of earlier days would have rejected its reasoning. But by 1864 the harsh realities of politics and war had hardened Dana's outlook.

During his stay in Washington, Dana had the opportunity to be of service to Lincoln. Since his days as managing editor of the Tribune, Dana's regard for the President had grown steadily. A frequent visitor to the War Department, Lincoln often stopped by Dana's office. His genial good-nature and humility impressed the Assistant Secretary. But Dana also noted that as President, Lincoln was always the master without ever giving the impression of it. "He never gave a hair's breadth," remarked Dana, "never gave way--he always had his own way. The relations

⁹Sherman to Dana, April 21, 1864, Dana Papers.

between him and all the Secretaries were perfectly cordial and unaffected, and without any appearance of his thinking himself the boss, but it was always his will, his order, that determined a decision."¹⁰ Dana credited Lincoln's superb ability as a politician to his great understanding of human nature. The President's humorous stories sometimes irked certain of his advisers, but Dana observed that the tales were almost never told for the humor alone--usually they illustrated some crucial point or idea.

One day in March 1864, Lincoln came into Dana's office with a small favor to ask. Explaining that the antislavery amendment to the constitution would greatly strengthen the Union cause, the President evidenced concern for its ratification. Getting the required three-fourths majority of states would be difficult, but Lincoln thought that it could be obtained if Nevada, then applying for statehood, were admitted to the Union. "It is easier to

¹⁰Memorandum of December 21, 1896, Tarbell Papers.

admit Nevada," he told Dana, "than to raise another million of soldiers."¹¹

The bill permitting Nevada to form a state government had passed the Senate, but faced rough going in the House. Lincoln knew he needed three more Democratic votes there for the proposal to pass. He asked Dana to contact three congressmen that he knew personally, two from New York and one from New Jersey. Lincoln promised to fulfill any promises made by Dana to get these votes. After visiting the congressmen, Dana found that they each wanted patronage, and he made the necessary promises in the name of the President. As a result the bill passed and Nevada became a state in October; in February 1865, it became one of the first states to ratify the 13th amendment.¹²

Dana also proved to be of value to Grant during this period in Washington. Rumors circulated in January that Grant was to be promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General and

¹¹Charles Anderson Dana, Lincoln and His Cabinet, A Lecture Delivered on Tuesday March 10, 1896, Before The New Haven Historical Society (Cleveland and New York: Printed at the DeVinne Press, 1896), pp. 51-60.

¹²Dana, Recollections, p. 177.

placed in command of all the Union armies. From this position, his followers maintained, Grant could lead the country to final victory. There were still some, however, who doubted the ability of the man from Galena. In particular, the men who watched the eastern theater of war retained a "show-me" attitude. They had seen the Army of the Potomac placed in the hands of several highly touted generals, only to be disappointed each time. McClellan, Pope, Burnside, Hooker, Meade--each had displayed some defect in battling Robert E. Lee.

Besides, Grant was comparatively unknown in Washington; his staunchest supporter in Congress was Elihu B. Washburne, Republican congressman from his home district. The only non-military man in Washington, however, who had seen Grant operate in the field was Dana. He was in a position to promote Grant's reputation, and Washburne naturally enlisted his services. The two men lived in the same boarding house along with several other congressmen, and when the measure to revive the rank of Lieutenant General came before Congress they mobilized their forces. Washburne arranged for Dana to talk with numerous congressmen who had questions about Grant's habits, his character, his ability as

a commander, and his political ambitions. In the latter connection Dana clearly stated that Grant's ambition was to end the rebellion, and that he supported Lincoln's re-election. Wilson was present during many of these interviews and he believed that Dana's comments were particularly effective because they were regarded as more objective than Washburne's.¹³ In late February the bill to re-create the rank of Lieutenant General of the Armies of the United States passed, and Lincoln named Grant to the position. Senate confirmation quickly followed, and in early March, Grant traveled to Washington to receive his new commission.

As commanding general of all Union forces, Grant worked out plans for an all-out, coordinated attack against the Confederacy. It was the kind of strategy that Lincoln had long advocated. In the West, Sherman would drive toward Atlanta as the army under Banks moved toward Mobile. In the East, three separate forces would confront Lee. The Army of the Potomac would try to engage Lee in an open battle, while one army under General Benjamin Butler attacked along the James River, and another moved into the Shenandoah

¹³Wilson, Life of Dana, pp. 310-312.

Valley to guard against a Confederate thrust toward Washington. Although Meade remained in command of the Army of the Potomac, Grant decided to accompany the army into Virginia and issue orders from there. This arrangement left Halleck in Washington functioning as chief of staff and taking care of the paperwork.¹⁴

The Army of the Potomac crossed the Rapidan River on May 4, and entered an area of dense brush and second-growth, scrub forests known as the Wilderness. There, within a few miles of Chancellorsville, Lee slammed into Grant's right flank, initiating a bloody, three-day struggle. For two tense days Washington waited for word from Grant. Finally, on the evening of May 6, Lincoln decided to send Dana to the front. Arriving at the War Department in the evening clothes he had worn to a reception, Dana found Lincoln and Stanton worriedly discussing the fighting about which they knew so little. Lincoln asked Dana how long it would take him to prepare for his trip into Virginia; the Assistant Secretary replied that he could be ready to leave in less than an

¹⁴Thomas and Hyman, Stanton, pp. 297-298.

hour. In that period of time he rounded up some camp clothes, a borrowed pistol, and a cavalry escort. Then as he prepared to leave, another message arrived from Lincoln summoning him back to the War Department. After a quick ride Dana again confronted the President, who now said that perhaps the mission was too dangerous.

"You can't tell " said Lincoln, "just where Lee is or what he is doing, and Jeb Stuart is rampaging around pretty lively in between the Rappahannock and the Rapidan. It's a considerable risk, and I don't like to expose you to it."¹⁵

Dana replied that he realized the risks, but that he wanted to go anyway. With the cavalry escort. he said, the degree would be minimized. The President looked at him and smiled. "Well now, Dana, if you feel that way, I rather wish you would [go] . Good night and God bless you."

Dana reached Grant's headquarters in the following day; once there he learned of the heavy fighting that had taken place. It was a critical juncture in the war.

¹⁵Quoted in Dana, Recollections, pp. 188-189.

Always before when the Army of the Potomac had moved toward Richmond, Lee had forced it back. This time, however, despite heavy casualties which produced no decisive result, Grant was determined to continue marching southward. If he could place his army between Lee and Richmond, then perhaps he could force a showdown battle. The soldiers, reassured by Grant's determination, were in high spirits; Dana reported that the cry "On to Richmond" was heard throughout the army.¹⁶ The news cheered Lincoln and Stanton. It was a new beginning; one which would produce ugly casualty lists for the next few weeks, but which would also wear Lee down. During those weeks Dana helped sustain Washington's confidence in Grant.

Throughout May, Grant tried to move around Lee's right, but the Confederate leader skillfully blocked the flanking maneuvers. The first stop was near Spotsylvania Court House, where five days of terrible fighting added another 12,000 Union casualties to the 18,000 suffered at the Wilderness. Dana had never seen such intense, sustained fighting. After the battle he rode out with Rawlins, Grant's Chief of Staff, to inspect a costly piece of ground which

¹⁶Dana to Stanton, May 8, 1864, 10 A.M., O.R., I, xxvi, pt. 1, pp. 63-64.

had been nicknamed the "Bloody Angle." The two men found the area chewed up so badly that they had to get off their horses and walk. During the day the noise here had been deafening, but now except for the moans of wounded soldiers, there was an eerie silence. As Dana and Rawlins surveyed the large number of dead and dying men they came to a pool of mud whose smooth surface was suddenly broken by a booted leg.¹⁷ Both sides had suffered heavy losses, but in his report Dana indicated his belief that the war of attrition was weakening Lee.¹⁸ The North could replace its casualties; the South could not.

For several days following the battle at Spotsylvania, heavy rains made troop movements impossible. Grant issued orders for the army to resume its march south, but until the roads dried out nothing could be done. The lull in offensive operations gave Dana an opportunity to return to Washington. There he picked up personal articles and

¹⁷Dana, Recollections, pp. 196-197.

¹⁸Dana to Stanton, May 12, 1864, 7 P M., O.R., I, xxxvi, pt. 1, p. 68.

enough clothes to see him through what promised to be a long, hard campaign. "When I left I brought with me only a toothbrush." he explained to Stanton, "which proves inadequate to the exigencies of a prolonged campaign."¹⁹

By the time Dana rejoined Grant, the Army of the Potomac was moving forward once again, marching through country that resembled the Wilderness region. Dana's dispatches, which Stanton now used regularly as the basis for War Department press releases, sounded a note of reassurance. On May 23 a Confederate attack at Jericho Mills near the North Anna River failed, and Dana noted that enemy prisoners acted very discouraged.²⁰ Furthermore he emphasized the strength of the Union positions and reported that Grant did not intend to fight Lee except under favorable circumstances. In the meantime the Union army would continue to try to move around the Confederate force which confronted it. The most important result of the campaign in Dana's estimation was the change in attitudes

¹⁹Dana to Stanton, May 19, 1864, O.R., I. xxxvi, pt. 1, p. 74.

²⁰Dana to Stanton, May 23, 1864, 10 P.M., and May 24, 1 P.M., O.R., I. xxxvi, pt. 1, pp. 76-78.

of the opposing forces. " [The] Rebels have lost all confidence, and are already morally defeated. This army has learned to believe that it is sure of victory. Even our officers have ceased to regard Lee as an invincible military genius Rely upon it, the end is near as well as sure."²¹

As May ended, however, hard-marching blue troops discovered that Lee had once again parried their flanking efforts--this time within a few miles of Richmond near a place called Cold Harbor. The Confederate troops there were dug in behind heavy breastworks, and if they were discouraged it did not show. In three days fighting the Union army suffered another 12,000 casualties. Most of them came on June 3, when a direct frontal assault was ordered against the strong Confederate entrenchments. It was the bloodiest half-hour of the war for the North--many Union soldiers went into the ill-fated assault with nametags pinned to their clothing, mute testimony to their confidence in the plan. Only four days before Dana had sent a wire to

²¹Dana to Stanton, May 26, 1864, 8 A.M., O.R., I, xxxvi, pt. 1, p. 79.

Washington saying that "Grant will not run his head against heavy works."²²

In his report on Cold Harbor Dana described the heavy fighting and mentioned advantages that had been gained "here and there." Nowhere, however, did he even hint at any criticism of Grant's leadership. But privately he discussed the futility of the recent battle with other Union officers. "Baldy" Smith termed the attack "murderous," and there were other rumblings of discontent. Along with Rawlins and Wilson, Dana expressed disgust with the policy of trying to storm rebel entrenchments. Rawlins characterized such attacks as "Smash 'em up!" strategy, and maintained that it originated with one of Grant's advisers rather than with the commander himself. Yet Grant's responsibility was inescapable; after Cold Harbor he came in for criticism in the Northern press. The portrait of Grant as a clumsy butcher who wasted the lives of his men gained currency. It was the beginning of a critical period for Grant and the Union.

²²Dana to Stanton, May 30, 1864, 1 P.M., O.R., I, xxxvi, pt. 1, p. 82.

Dana did his best to sustain confidence in the Union commander by keeping any doubts he felt to himself.²³ He could hardly admit now that the man he had touted so highly was no match for Lee. Fortunately that was not the case anyway.

In early June, while Grant mapped out his next move, Dana's messages to Stanton maintained a tone of optimism despite a few problems. On June 5, without sounding in any way alarmed, Dana mentioned large numbers of stragglers among reinforcements which had arrived recently. Even the veteran units reported a higher percentage of missing soldiers since the fights at Spotsylvania and Cold Harbor.

²³Wilson, Life of Dana, pp. 323-327. In Dana's Recollections, the assault on Cold Harbor is defended on the ground that the objective justified the risk--i.e. that success at Cold Harbor would have meant the breaking of Lee's lines and the collapse of the Confederacy. To refute the charge that Grant lost soldiers recklessly, there is a table appended to Chapter XIV which compares the casualties suffered under Grant to those suffered under all the commanders which preceded him. According to this estimate, Grant lost 19,000 fewer men than his predecessors, although the number of killed and wounded was approximately equal. The difference of course is that Grant achieved his goal whereas the others did not. Thus, in the Recollections Dana appears to approve Grant's generalship in charging enemy entrenchments. One must bear in mind, however, Tarbell's role in writing these memoirs.

The large number of wounded men also produced difficulties, especially in the matter of transporting them back to hospitals. The available steamers were ill-equipped and overworked. Dana saw one of the ships, and communicated his disgust to Stanton. "I saw one bed," he reported, "which became saturated from its former occupants, and was now putrid, containing maggots I also saw beef, cut up for wounded so fat and grisly that even the well could not eat it."²⁴

During this time, the military reputation of General Meade came under attack. A Cincinnati newspaper story, written by a correspondent at the front, charged that after the battle of the Wilderness Meade had counseled retreat. Stung by the false report, Meade sought out the offending journalist and on June 8 exacted some measure of revenge. Dana reported that the writer was paraded through the lines on horseback, with large signs affixed to his chest and back which read "Libeler of the Press."²⁵ Meade continued to

²⁴Dana to Stanton, June 5, 1864, 10 A. M., and June 7 1864, 7 P.M., O.R., I, xxxvi pt. 1, pp. 89-90.

²⁵Dana to Stanton, June 8, 1864, 4 P.M., O.R., I xxxvi, pt. 1, pp. 92-94.

fret about the incident until Dana solicited a soothing telegram from Stanton. "Please say to General Meade," Stanton advised his assistant, "that the lying report . . . was not even for a moment believed by the President or myself. We have the most perfect confidence in him. He could not wish a more exalted estimation of his ability, his firmness, and every quality of a commanding general than is entertained for him"²⁶ This constituted heady praise--only five months before, serious consideration had been given to removing Meade from his command. Furthermore, within a month of Stanton's verbal pat on the back, Dana himself would suggest that Meade be relieved.

Grant made another attempt to skirt Lee's flank on June 12. Beautifully executed, it came very near to forcing a showdown battle. Instead of moving toward Richmond, as Lee anticipated, Grant aimed his army at Petersburg, a rail center some 20 miles south of the rebel capital. The capture of Petersburg would sever Richmond's supply line to the South. To accomplish this the Army of the Potomac

²⁶Stanton to Dana, June 10, 1864, O.R., I, xxxvi, pt. 3, p. 722. Meade's grateful reply can be found on p. 758.

had to slip around Lee and cross the James River while an advance corps under Major General "Baldy" Smith moved up the same river and attacked the town.²⁷ If all went well the town would fall before Lee could arrive with his army. Dana outlined Grant's plans for moving his army, and although this violated Stanton's request of the previous November not to discuss pending movements, there was no complaint from Washington. "Everything is going prosperously forward," Dana reported on June 13 as the army marched along.²⁸ The next day he described the difficulties of erecting a pontoon bridge across the James River. The 700 yard span was completed early on the morning of June 15. As the army marched across the river Dana exulted that "All goes on like a miracle."²⁹ Perhaps the biggest part of the miracle was that Lee did not yet know where the Union army was located.

²⁷ Bruce Catton, A Stillness at Appomattox (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1953), pp. 177-178.

²⁸ Dana to Stanton, June 13, 1864, 6 A.M., O.R., I, xl, pt. 1 p. 18.

²⁹ Dana to Stanton, June 15, 1864, 8 A.M., O.R., I, xl, pt. 1, p. 19; also see Dana to Stanton, June 14, 1864, 2:20 P.M. on the same page.

Early on June 16, Dana hurried off to inspect the progress made by Smith, who had attacked Petersburg the previous day. After riding over the Union lines, Dana wired Stanton that Smith had gained heights which commanded the city. Praising the performance of Smith's men, Dana marvelled at the positions which they had carried. They seemed even more formidable, thought Dana, than the ones at Missionary Ridge. "The hardest fighting was done by the black troops," he reported. "The forts they stormed were, I think, the worst of all. After the affair was over General Smith went to thank them and tell them he was proud of their courage and dash. He says they cannot be exceeded as soldiers, and that hereafter he will send them in a difficult place as readily as the best white troops."³⁰

Although Lee did not know that Grant had crossed the James River until June 17, Dana's reports suggesting that Petersburg had been won, proved overly optimistic. Smith had not pushed forward far enough; the positions gained did not force Confederate evacuation of the town. As the Army of the Potomac arrived before the city, the

³⁰Dana to Stanton, June 16, 1864, 1 P.M., O.R., I, xl. pt. 1, p. 21.

undermanned Confederate force under the showy General Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard offered stubborn resistance from behind entrenchments. Had an all-out Union assault on the thinly-held Confederate lines taken place soon enough, the city would probably have fallen. But various delays and mix-ups provided Lee with the necessary time to bring his veterans into the struggle. The Union attack did not come until June 18, and by then it was too late. It only demonstrated once again the futility of charging straight into an enemy protected by earthworks.

Dana, ill in camp at Grant's City Point headquarters, relayed the news to Washington--Petersburg remained in Confederate hands and Lee's troops were on the scene. A member of Grant's staff, who saw the fight on June 18, told Dana that the assault was not equal to previous attacks, and suggested that the loss of many officers was responsible. "The men fight as well," Dana explained, "but are not directed with the same skill and enthusiasm."³¹ Actually there had been a lack of enthusiasm, but it was not confined to the

³¹Dana to Stanton, June 19, 1864, 9 A.M., O.R., I, xl, pt. 1, pp. 24-25.

officers. At one point in the battle some veterans of Cold Harbor saw rookies preparing to charge Confederate forts. "Lie down, you damn fools," they shouted, "you can't take them forts."³²

The heavy casualties caused Grant to direct that no more frontal assaults would be made. From now on, Dana advised Stanton, the army would maneuver for an opening, and in the meantime try to reduce Lee by laying siege to Petersburg. Rather than blame Grant for the losses suffered on June 18, Dana tried to shift the blame to Meade, implying that the latter had ordered the attack on his own.³³ Such was not the case--the orders had come from Meade's headquarters, but they reflected the thinking of Grant.

Lincoln arrived at City Point on June 21 to inspect the Union lines around Petersburg. During the visit Dana watched the President pass through the division of colored troops which had fought so well on June 15. The scene impressed Dana. "It was a memorable thing," he told Stanton

³²Catton, A Stillness at Appomattox, p. 198.

³³Dana to Stanton, June 19, 1864, 11 P.M., O.R., I, xl pt. 1 p. 25.

"to behold the President, whose fortune it is to represent the principle of emancipation, passing bareheaded through the enthusiastic ranks of those negroes armed to defend the integrity of the American nation."³⁴ When Lincoln returned to Washington, Dana accompanied him and remained in the city for a week. The rest helped him recuperate from his recent illness.

Returning to City Point on July 1, Dana found the Union positions relatively unchanged. To shut off Lee's supply routes, Grant had ordered cavalry attacks on railroads leading into Petersburg.³⁵ For a time it was rumored that Wilson had been killed leading one of the cavalry strikes. But on July 3, Dana reported his friend's safe return. Although his losses were heavy, Wilson had destroyed almost sixty miles of railroad.³⁶ A Richmond newspaper, however, charged Wilson and his troopers with looting

³⁴Dana to Stanton, June 21, 1864, O.R., I, xl, pt. 1, p. 27.

³⁵Dana to Lincoln, and Dana to Stanton, July 1, 1864, O.R., I, xl, pt. 1, p. 28.

³⁶Dana to Stanton, July 3, 1864, 9 A.M., O.R., I, xl, pt. 1, pp. 31-32.

Southern homes and, even worse, forcibly carrying off negroes.³⁷ When the story reached Meade, he lectured Wilson and demanded an explanation--a reaction that aroused hostile criticism at Grant's headquarters among Wilson's friends. The incident also resulted in a surprising dispatch from Dana to the War Department.

Prior to July 7, Dana had never suggested any difficulties between Grant and Meade; in fact, judging from the Assistant Secretary's telegrams, the two officers seemed to work well together. On that date, however, Stanton received a telegram which began with the startling news that "A change in the commander of the Army of the Potomac now seems probable." According to Dana, there was a strong dislike of Meade among his subordinate officers, who found it difficult to work under him.

The facts in the matter have come very slowly to my knowledge, and it was not until yesterday that I became certain of some of the most important. I have long known Meade to be a man of the worst possible temper, especially toward his subordinates. I do not think he has a friend in the whole army. No man, no matter what his business or his service, approaches him without being

³⁷Dana to Stanton, July 4, 1864, 4 P.M., O.R., I, xl, pt. 1, pp. 33-34.

insulted in one way or another, and his own staff officers do not dare to speak to him, unless first spoken to, for fear of either sneers or curses. At the same time--as far as I am able to ascertain--his generals have lost their confidence in him as a commander. His order for the last series of assaults upon Petersburg, in which he lost 10,000 men without gaining any decisive advantage, was to the effect that he had found it impracticable to secure the co-operation of corps commanders, and therefore each one was to attack on his own account and do the best he could by himself Of course there are matters about which I cannot make inquiries, but what I have above reported is the general sense of what seems to be the opinion of fair-minded and zealous officers. For instance, I know that General [Horatio] Wright has said to a confidential friend that all of Meade's attacks have been made without brains and without generalship.³⁸

Grant himself, reported Dana, expressed the belief that Meade might have to be relieved.

Had Dana remained at the front with Grant, as he fully expected to do, the telegraphic assaults on Meade probably would have continued. But the events of war decided differently; on July 9 he was hurrying up to Washington at Grant's request. The problem was a familiar one--a Confederate army threatened the Northern capital from the

³⁸Dana to Stanton, July 7, 1864, 8 A.M., O.R., I, xl, pt. 1 pp. 35-36.

Shenandoah Valley. In 1862 McClellan's Peninsular Campaign had been disrupted by General T. J. "Stonewall" Jackson, whose movements in the Valley induced Lincoln to recall troops which were headed for McClellan. Now, in the summer of 1864 another Confederate force commanded by General Jubal Early was causing similar concern.

Rumors of Confederate troop movements toward the Valley had been circulating for three weeks. At first they were disregarded as attempts to mislead the Union army around Petersburg. Then, in early July, Washington inquired about the possibility of Early's force being in the Valley. Dana's reply on July 3 was reassuring. He stated that Early was with Lee at Petersburg, and estimated that if there were a Confederate army in the Valley, it could not exceed 10,000 men.³⁹ The next day Dana seemed less sure--of all the Confederate prisoners taken thus far, none was from Early's command. And on the same day a rebel deserter volunteered the information that Confederate soldiers were moving down

³⁹Dana to Stanton, July 3, 1864, 3:30 P.M., O.R., I, xl, pt. 1, p. 32.

the Valley.⁴⁰ On July 5, Meade told Dana he believed the report was true.

Still, the news did not particularly alarm Grant. After all, he had carefully placed a Union army in the Shenandoah Valley to guard against just such a threat as Early now posed. The only trouble was that Early had routed this force and sent it into a hurried retreat--not in the direction of Washington, but towards West Virginia. Early now had a clear path to the northwest.⁴¹

About the time that Dana was cataloging Meade's faults as a commander, Early was raising havoc in Maryland. As General-in-Chief, Grant was responsible for the safety of Washington, and on July 6 he started troops northward to help man the elaborate fortifications around the capital. After three more days of sparse and conflicting reports, Grant received word that Early had 20,000 men and was threatening communications between Washington and Baltimore. The Union commander decided that he needed a reliable observer in Washington to keep him fully informed. It was

⁴⁰Dana to Stanton, July 4, 1864, 12:30 P.M., and 4 P.M., O.R., I, xl, pt. 1, p. 34.

⁴¹Catton, A Stillness at Appomattox, pp. 257-258.

a good job. he felt, for Dana.⁴² And so the Assistant Secretary of War received a new assignment. For a while, at least, he would be serving as the eyes of Grant in the national capital.

⁴²Dana to Burnside, July 9, 1864, O.R., I, xl, pt. 3, p. 111; also Wilson, Life of Dana, p. 336.

CHAPTER VIII

DANA RETURNS TO THE WAR DEPARTMENT

By the time that Dana arrived in Washington on July 11, Early had already pushed his way to within a few miles of the city. For several days, frightened citizens from the surrounding countryside had been streaming into the capital, seeking safety. Stanton himself evidenced deep concern about the threat posed by Early. He removed his government bonds and hard cash from a War Department safe, and made other provisions for their safekeeping. And the evening before Dana appeared, Lincoln, who spent the summer months in a residence near the Soldier's Home on the outskirts of Washington, was forced to return to the White House. The President became angry when informed that a gunboat was standing by to whisk him away from the capital if the situation worsened. Such measures, he felt, would only add to the public panic.¹

¹Thomas and Hyman, Stanton, pp.319-320.

A frightened citizenry, however, bothered Dana less than the weak and confused state of the Union defenses. Not only were the Federal ranks thin, but they were also rather poor in quality--for the most part they consisted of Veteran Reserves, who were physically unable to serve at the front, and inexperienced militia. All the able-bodied soldiers had been absorbed into the Army of the Potomac for Grant's campaign in Virginia. The Union fortifications surrounding Washington contained only about 10,000 men, and some reports estimated the Confederate force at five times that number. As the gray columns approached the city, members of the sizable Quartermaster's Department were pressed into service. Armed with rifles, they marched out of their offices and into the Union line of defense. Hardly a match for Early's battle-tried veterans, the army clerks could at least present the appearance of soldiers.² Yet there was no shortage of Union officers. When one brigadier general offered his services to Halleck, the latter replied that "We have five times as many generals here as we want,

²Weigley, Quartermaster General of the Union Army, p. 300.

but are greatly in need of privates. Any one volunteering in that capacity will be thankfully received."³

In his first report to Grant, Dana outlined the situation in Washington, and gratefully reported the arrival of reinforcements from the Army of the Potomac. He estimated Confederate strength at between 20,000 and 30,000 men, and described the heavy damages they had inflicted on private property. "Mills, workshops, and factories of every sort have been destroyed. From twenty-four to fifty miles of Baltimore and Ohio Railroad have been torn up."⁴ Furthermore, he reported the burning of homes belonging to the Governor of Maryland, Augustus W. Bradford, and the Postmaster-General, Montgomery Blair.

Early's penetration of the suburbs around Washington on July 11, however, marked the high point of his raid. When he discovered the presence of Union reinforcements, the Confederate commander decided not to attempt an all-out attack. Despite the exaggerated estimates regarding the

³O.R., I, xxxviii, pt. 2, p. 196.

⁴Dana to Grant, July 11, 1864, O.R., I, xxxviii, pt. 2, pp. 192-194.

size of his force, he had only about 14,000 men. It was an insufficient number, he felt, to capture Washington. Failure would mean the loss of his entire command, and even success would entail heavy casualties. With more than a little regret, he ordered a retreat into Virginia.⁵

Dana had already warned Grant that it would be very difficult to cut off Early's withdrawal. The Confederates controlled numerous fords and ferries with which to manage the necessary crossing of the Potomac. And besides, it seemed to Dana that Union leadership in and around Washington was confused. Early on the morning of July 12, he asked Grant to remedy the weakness in command.

Nothing can possibly be done here toward pursuing or cutting off the enemy for want of a commander . . . there is no head to the whole, and it seems indispensable that you should at once appoint one General Halleck will not give orders except as he receives them; the President will give none, and until you direct positively and explicitly what is to be done, everything will go on in the deplorable and

⁵Douglas S. Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), Vol. III, pp. 558, 566-567.

fatal way in which it has gone on for the past week.⁶

Dana failed to explain what had happened that was "fatal," but he did mention that Stanton also believed that more was needed from Grant than simply advice or suggestions. The Union commander responded to Dana's telegram by ordering Major General Horatio G. Wright to take charge of all the troops pursuing Early.⁷ Wright, who commanded the VI Corps of the Army of the Potomac, was an engineer. Dana considered him a man of good intellect with a capacity for leadership, but he felt that Wright lacked any special talents for fighting. By the time Wright organized his men for the chase, Early was already some distance south of the Potomac.⁸

⁶Dana to Grant, July 12, 1864, O.R., I, xxxvii, pt. 2, p. 223. K. P. Williams criticizes this dispatch in Lincoln Finds a General: A Military Study of the Civil War, 5 Vols. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949-1959). Vol. V, p. 282. Dana had only been in Washington for one day when he sent the wire, and Williams believes that it was particularly unfair to Halleck.

⁷Grant to Halleck, July 12, 1864, O.R., I xxxviii, pt. 2, pp. 222-223. For other evidence that Grant acted on the reports sent him by Dana, see Grant to Halleck, July 14, O.R., I, xxxviii, pt. 2, pp. 300-301.

⁸Dana to Grant, July 14, 1864, O.R., I, xxxviii, pt. 2, p. 303.

With the pressure on Washington removed, the hastily impressed war clerks returned to their desks. Reports soon filtered into Washington of the plunder carried off by Early's men. Besides obtaining several thousand excellent cavalry horses, they had reportedly picked up some 1,700 recruits in Maryland. Along with the material resources gained by the enemy, Dana worried about the probable effect of the raid on Northern morale. "The enemy will doubtless escape with all his plunder and recruits," he told Grant, "leaving us nothing but the deepest shame that has yet befallen us."⁹

Throughout July, Federal attempts to catch up with Early failed. Finally, in early August, Grant assigned a new officer, Major General Philip H. Sheridan, to take charge of Union forces operating in the Shenandoah Valley. A small, explosive Irishman, Sheridan was a dynamic leader and a "no-holds-barred" fighter. Lincoln and Stanton feared that he might be too inexperienced for such a large-scale command, but Grant believed that he would work out very well.¹⁰

⁹ Dana to Grant, July 15, 1864, O.R., I, xxxviii, pt. 2, pp. 331-332.

¹⁰ Thomas and Hyman, Stanton, p. 321.

With things back to normal in Washington, Dana expected to return to Grant's headquarters near Petersburg. But instead, Stanton asked him to remain in the capital. The Secretary believed that his assistant could be put to better use at the War Department than at the front. The war appeared to be entering another critical phase, and the lack of military progress was complicating the political picture. Dana outlined the problems for his old friend, Pike, who was still serving as minister at The Hague. Grant's campaign against Lee would have to be halted until the Shenandoah Valley could be cleared of rebel troops. Morale in the Army of the Potomac was low because of bad feelings among certain officers, and Dana reasoned that reorganization would be necessary before offensive operations resumed. And Sherman's progress in taking Atlanta was painfully slow.

"At all this," explained Dana, "the country is deeply discouraged and the party for peace at any cost very active. Still more active . . . is the anti-Lincoln party among the Republicans. This is composed of all the elements of discontent that a four year administration could produce."¹¹

¹¹Dana to Pike August 8, 1864.

Dana worried that the anti-Lincoln Republicans might try to find a candidate acceptable to the War Democrats. If the two factions could settle on a nominee, he thought, Lincoln's chance for re-election would be badly damaged. "Butler hopes that he may be chosen but . . . the War Democrats hate him so that he is out of the question." More troublesome in Dana's estimation were the supporters of George B. McClellan. This group caused the Assistant Secretary to see the spectre of military revolution on the political horizon.

These people mean . . . to make their hero the leader of a revolution in case they are beaten at the polls, providing they can get a starting point which will offer a chance of success. I mean by this, provided they can get McClellan into a position where he can control any considerable part of the army. To this end they have been laboring for several months past with a great deal of ingenuity to get him appointed to command the Department of Washington, or to General Halleck's place as chief of the general staff of the army.

Adding to the sense of frustration felt by Dana and others in the government, was the knowledge that the Confederacy stood near the point of collapse. Dana had seen the desolate condition of Virginia, and he had talked with disheartened Confederate prisoners and deserters. He believed that the South would be unable to raise any more armies,

and yet he regarded the Richmond government as defiant as ever. There was a very real danger that the Confederate States of America might still achieve independence through a negotiated peace with the war-weary North.

Fortunately for the Union, the situation had improved by early September. The Democratic party, meeting in Chicago, nominated McClellan on August 29. Party unity, however, was damaged by the Democratic platform, part of which called for an immediate end to fighting followed by a negotiated peace. McClellan personally rejected this peace plank, causing dismay among some of his supporters. At the same time, the military situation brightened. In August, Rear Admiral David Glasgow Farragut won a dramatic victory at Mobile Bay which boosted Northern morale. And when Atlanta fell to Sherman's army on September 2, Dana sensed an improved political climate.¹² The victory would help Lincoln at the polls in November. Within three weeks of Sherman's triumph, there were two additional causes for celebration. The Union force in the Shenandoah Valley responded to Sheridan's forceful leadership with an important

¹²Dana to Wilson, August 29, 1864, quoted in Wilson, Life of Dana, pp. 342-343.

victory at Winchester; and on the same day, Fremont, who had been nominated for the presidency by a group of radical Republicans, gave up his candidacy. The radicals now concluded that they had best support Lincoln. Some of the problems which had worried Dana in mid-summer were solved.¹³

Still, this was hardly the time for the Lincoln administration to rest on its laurels. There was an election to win, and in the weeks prior to the balloting, the War Department worked diligently to insure a favorable outcome for Lincoln and the National Union party. The first opportunity for service came in early October, when Ohio, Pennsylvania and Indiana held local and congressional elections. The results in these three important states would offer some measure of public sentiment regarding the war; they would also provide encouragement for the side that triumphed. The War Department, with Stanton and Dana playing lead roles, did little to disguise its partiality. Soldiers were furloughed home to vote in the elections; pro-McClellan officers were removed or reassigned; government favors went only to those newspapers which supported Lincoln; and everyone in the War Department contributed

¹³William F. Zornow, Lincoln and the Party Divided (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954), pp. 146-147.

money for the campaign.¹⁴ "All the power and influence of the War Department " recalled Dana later " . . . was employed to secure the re-election of Lincoln."¹⁵

On the evening of October 11, Lincoln walked over to Stanton's office to see the telegraphed returns from Ohio, Pennsylvania and Indiana. Dana was also present, and as the reports of balloting began to come in, Lincoln asked the Assistant Secretary if he was familiar with the humorous writings of Petroleum V. Nasby. When Dana replied that he was not, the President pulled out a Nasby booklet and began reading aloud. Dana enjoyed the performance, but the resort to humor apparently upset Stanton. Later in the evening the Secretary drew Dana aside and exploded.

"God damn it to hell," he roared. "Was there ever such nonsense? Was there ever such inability to appreciate what is going on in an awful crisis? Here is the fate of this whole republic at stake and here is the man around whom it all centers, on whom it all depends, turning aside from

¹⁴Thomas and Hyman, Stanton, pp. 327-329.

¹⁵Undated memorandum, Tarbell Papers.

this monumental issue to read the God damned trash of a silly mountebank!"¹⁶

Results of the voting on October 11 were reassuring to Lincoln. The Union ticket won in all three states, although in Indiana there were charges of fraud, and in Pennsylvania the margin of victory was quite slim. Then, a few days later, the citizens of Maryland voted on a new state constitution which prohibited slavery. It passed narrowly by 475 votes out of almost 60,000. The decisive ballots were cast by soldiers, who voted 2,633-163 for the constitution. Lincoln considered this a great triumph; before the voting he had said that he would trade Maryland's electoral vote for a favorable decision on the issue of emancipation.¹⁷

Stanton and Dana continued to work hard for Lincoln's re-election during the campaign's final days. Stanton arranged for anti-McClellan stories in the newspapers, and

¹⁶Quoted in Thomas and Hyman, Stanton, p. 330. In Dana's Recollections this incident is placed on the evening of the presidential election, November 8. Other evidence indicates, however, that it must have occurred on October 11.

¹⁷Zornow, Lincoln and the Party Divided, p. 201.

also ordered furloughs for all soldiers from crucial states who were not fit for action but who could travel. Arrangements were also made for soldiers to vote in the field. In at least one case Dana fixed a watchful eye on an army officer who supported the Democratic candidate. In a telegram, he warned the Provost Marshall General of the Army of the Potomac about favoring McClellan. The officer, a New York Democrat, confided disgustedly to his diary that "The insolence of the Secretary and of the Administration generally, is intolerable."¹⁸ Furthermore, when Sheridan won his decisive victory at Cedar Creek on October 19, the Union officer was promoted immediately to Major General in the Regular Army--and Dana himself presented the commission. The resulting publicity produced a favorable result; and the campaign was soon enlivened by a poem commemorating Sheridan's triumph.¹⁹ Dana came back from the Valley

¹⁸David S. Sparks, ed., Inside Lincoln's Army: The Diary of Marsena Rudolph Patrick, Provost Marshall General, Army of the Potomac (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1964) p. 435; Thomas and Hyman, Stanton, pp. 331-333.

¹⁹Leech, Reveille in Washington, p. 350. For Dana's reaction to the events in the Valley, see his wire to John A. Rawlins, O.R., I, xliii, pt. 2, pp. 487-488.

filled with praise for Sheridan's generalship, which had produced a timely victory.

By election day, Stanton was so completely exhausted that he was home in bed. But his efforts had not been wasted. In the popular vote, Lincoln won a majority of 400,000, and this translated itself into a lopsided electoral count of 212-21. Support from the army was a significant, if not decisive, factor in his victory. Of those soldiers who cast their ballot in the field, 119,754 went for Lincoln while only 34,291 ended up in McClellan's column. The vote of furloughed soldiers also added to Lincoln's margin.²⁰ Grant wired his congratulations to the War Department, and noted that the peaceful decision at the polls counted far more than a battlefield victory.²¹ With this hurdle cleared, the way now seemed open for the final push to victory.

²⁰Thomas and Hyman, Stanton, pp. 333-334. For a more detailed analysis of the voting in 1864 consult Zornow, Lincoln and the Party Divided, pp. 196-221. Zornow, concludes that Lincoln could have won without the soldier vote, but that the electoral decision would have been closer.

²¹Grant to Stanton, November 10, 1864, O.R., I xlii, pt. 3, p. 581.

Following the election there was considerable speculation concerning possible changes in Lincoln's cabinet. Rumors circulated that Stanton would be appointed to the Supreme Court to fill the vacancy created by the recent death of Chief Justice Roger B. Taney. Worried about his finances and his health, Stanton wanted the coveted judicial position. His friends visited Lincoln and urged his appointment. The President took his time, however, and gave little indication of who he would select. If he named Stanton, as some people felt he would, then who would take over the War Department? That question troubled many Union officers, including Grant, who feared that the cabinet post might go to a politically troublesome politician such as General Benjamin Butler. Grant was sufficiently concerned to visit Washington and discuss the subject with Lincoln. The President promised not to make any change in the War Department without consulting Grant. Almost simultaneously, Stanton, patriotically decided to sacrifice his chances for the Supreme Court, and remain in the war office. He removed himself from the

running for the judicial vacancy, and three weeks later the appointment went to Chase.²² It seemed an unlikely choice in view of the fact that Chase had led the radical group which opposed the President. Dana refused to believe that Lincoln had acted in the matter with complete willingness. "He is a man," wrote Dana of the President, "who keeps a grudge as faithfully as any other living Christian, and consented to Mr. Chase's elevation only when the pressure became very general and very urgent."²³ Actually some of the support for Chase was provided by Stanton himself, who was a close personal friend of the new Chief Justice.

November was also enlivened for Dana by the discovery of a bizarre Confederate plan to terrorize New York. Since his return to Washington in July, Dana had been working closely with the War Department's secret service. About the time of the election he learned of a plot to burn New York; the information came from a Union counterspy who had gained the confidence of key rebel agents operating in Canada. Two of these agents, Jacob Thompson and Clement C. Clay, were important Southerners who were well-known in

²²Thomas and Hyman, Stanton, pp. 336-339.

²³Dana to Pike, December 12, 1864.

Washington. Clay was a former United States Senator from Alabama, and Thompson had served as Secretary of the Interior under Buchanan. Jefferson Davis had sent them to Canada in May 1864, where they could carry out assorted espionage activities. Their primary aim was to increase Northern sentiment for a negotiated peace. As part of a larger conspiracy, they arranged for fires to be set at various places in New York City on the day after Thanksgiving. The War Department, however, alerted the authorities in New York and the plot, poorly conceived to begin with, failed. Small fires were set in several hotels, but these were quickly extinguished.²⁴

The fear of other attempts at espionage continued to concern Dana, and in January, 1865, he focused his attention on messages which ran in the personal columns of newspapers. During the war the major newspapers on both sides carried large numbers of personal

²⁴Charles A. Dana, "The War--Some Unpublished History," North American Review, Vol. CLIII, No. 417 (August 1891), pp. 240-245. A more detailed discussion of the conspiracy is contained in James D. Horan, Confederate Agent: A Discovery in History (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1954).

notices. It was lucrative business, and some papers even offered to forward messages to the addressee whenever possible. Dana noted, for example, that the Richmond Inquirer of January 10 carried five and a half columns of personal advertisements. Such notices could be used for a variety of purposes, and often they were written so that they could not be understood by anyone other than the intended recipient. Dana felt that this system of correspondence should be terminated. After all, legitimate communication between North and South was possible through regular exchanges of inspected, flag-of-truce mail.

So on January 16, the Assistant Secretary submitted the question of newspaper messages to Joseph Holt, the Judge-Advocate-General, for a legal decision. After studying the matter, Holt concluded that the practice was illegal and should be stopped. He indicated a believe that newspaper communications between North and South had probably lengthened the war, and recommended an immediate halt. Northern publishers should be advised to discontinue the questionable

advertisements; and violators would be tried before a military commission.²⁵

Actually it was a bit late for the War Department to plug up such loopholes. By the end of January it was apparent that the war was nearing its end. Confederate morale steadily declined as Union armies punished the South severely. Sheridan had devastated the Shenandoah Valley, rendering it useless for any future rebel operations; Sherman had marched to the sea at Savannah, leaving an ugly ribbon of wreckage 300 miles long and 60 miles wide--and now he was pushing northward through the Carolinas; Thomas had virtually destroyed an entire Confederate army in Tennessee; and Wilson, who with Dana's assistance had procured Spencer repeating rifles for his cavalry, supplied the finishing touches in Tennessee, and then led a destructive raid into Georgia and Alabama. And at Petersburg, Lee's desperate army was slowly being encircled and strangled

²⁵ Joseph Holt to Stanton, January 20, 1865, O.R., III, iv, pp. 1064-1068. One of the papers about which Dana was especially concerned was the New York Daily News, which was openly sympathetic to the Copperheads. It was later proved that Phineas Wright, editor of this paper, had received \$25,000 from Jacob Thompson to promote peace sentiment in the North.

by Grant. Finally on April 2, Lee evacuated Petersburg and Richmond, and began a movement which he hoped would permit him to join forces with another Confederate army in North Carolina.

When the news of Richmond's fall arrived in Washington, it touched off a joyous celebration. Even Stanton relaxed his strict standards; for the first time since he took over the War Department there was a respite from work. But early the next morning things were back to normal. Dana was called from his home by the Secretary, and ordered to proceed at once to the fallen Confederate capital. Once there he was instructed to impound all papers of the Confederate government, and more important, to keep Stanton informed of events in the city. Lincoln was already in Richmond and holding talks there with Confederate officials. Stanton wanted to know the results of these conferences.²⁶

²⁶ Stanton to Dana, April 5, 1865, O.R., I, xlvi, pt 3, p. 575; also Thomas and Hyman, Stanton, p. 353.

CHAPTER IX

THE FINAL ACT: MISSION TO RICHMOND AND THE GREAT CONSPIRACY

Dana regarded his new assignment with pleasant anticipation. The mission to Richmond afforded him an excellent opportunity to witness the final scenes of the war, and at the same time it provided welcome relief from the War Department routine. His work in the Confederate capital would probably only require a few days, he thought, and hopefully he could finish in time to join Grant's relentless pursuit of Lee. With this in mind, Dana left Washington on April 3, accompanied by his wife and son Paul.¹ Seeing the Army of the Potomac in action would be a memorable experience for his son. And in a sense it would be fitting for Dana to be with Grant at the final surrender. The General-in-Chief of the Union armies had come a long way in the two years since Dana had arrived at Milliken's Bend with orders to

¹Sparks, ed., The Diary of General Patrick, p. 488.

check up on things. Then, Grant had only been a Major General of Volunteers, a man in whom the administration lacked confidence; now, he possessed that confidence as few men ever had, and special legislation had elevated him to the rank of Lieutenant General in the Regular Army. Dana had played a key role in this transformation.

Arriving in Richmond on April 5, Dana found the city still smouldering from a destructive fire supposedly set by the retreating Confederates. The blaze had caused heavy damage in the business district, and among the many buildings destroyed was the one housing the rebel war office. This made the search for Confederate documents somewhat disappointing. Many papers had been evacuated before Richmond fell, and others went up in smoke during the fire. Those that survived were rounded up under Dana's direction and shipped to Washington. Dana told Stanton that he doubted whether anything valuable would be discovered. He did, however, come across a Confederate cipher key, and later this was used by the War Department

in an attempt to demonstrate Confederate complicity in the Lincoln assassination.² The key consisted of a cylinder fixed in a frame with a printed cipher pasted over it.

The job of restoring order in Richmond was a formidable one. Rubble from the fire had to be cleared, public utilities restored, and a military police system established to prevent looting and other crimes. Dana estimated that 20,000 citizens remained in the city, and virtually all of these people were without food. Surprisingly there was little resistance to the Union occupation of Richmond. The well-known Tredegar Iron Works, undamaged by the fire, now operated under the direction of Union soldiers, while the infamous Libby Prison took on a new look as it was filled with Confederate prisoners. And despite the turmoil and confusion, Dana matter-of-factly reported the opening of the theater on his first night in the city.³

²Bates, Lincoln and the Telegraph Office, p. 76.

³Dana to Stanton, April 5, 1865, O.R., I, xlvi, pt. 3, pp. 574-575.

To alleviate the suffering of the populace, almost half of whom were Negroes, Major General Godfrey Weitzel, the Union commander in Richmond, began distributing food to any citizen who took the oath of allegiance to the United States. Many people obtained rations in this manner, and Weitzel believed the expressions of Union sentiment were sincere. Somewhat more suspicious, Dana suggested that empty stomachs might better explain the willingness to take the Union oath.⁴ Stanton agreed with his assistant's opinion. He wired Dana to inquire by whose authority Weitzel was distributing food to civilians. The Secretary did not order the practice stopped, but he did command Weitzel to furnish daily reports of all rations given "to persons not belonging to the military service, and not authorized by law to receive rations, designating the color of the persons, their occupation and sex."⁵

Subsequent dispatches established that Weitzel was acting on orders issued by his superior officer, Major

⁴Dana to Stanton, April 6, 1865, O.R., I, xlvi, pp. 593-594.

⁵Stanton to Dana, April 6, 1865. O.R., I, xlvi, p. 594.

General E. O. C. Ord. And the orders had been approved by Grant. Weitzel was to pay for the rations by selling confiscated property such as tobacco. Some of the citizens who received food were put to work clearing debris from the streets and putting public utilities in order. Despite his doubts concerning the sincerity of the oath-taking, Dana thought the program a good one.

"It is certain" he told Stanton, "that unless some system like that contemplated by Ord's order be established many persons must die of absolute starvation."⁶

This satisfied Stanton that the Union army was not simply indulging in acts of charity, but Weitzel's difficulties with the War Department were just beginning. Stanton's wrath was soon directed to another matter, and a rather unlikely one at that.

On Friday, April 7, Weitzel authorized the opening of the Richmond churches on Sunday, the only conditions being that no disloyal sermons could be delivered and that Episcopal ministers should be required to read a

⁶Dana to Stanton, April 8, 1865, O.R., I, xlvi, pt. 3, p. 658.

prayer for the President of the United States.⁷ It was intended that this prayer would replace the one normally said for Jefferson Davis during the Episcopal service. But on Sunday morning, Dana wired the War Department that Weitzel wanted permission to relax the prayer requirement--instead of praying for Lincoln, Episcopalians would merely refrain from praying for Davis. Replying that he lacked authority to act in the matter, Dana told Weitzel to rely on his own judgement. According to Dana's telegram, Weitzel had then consented to the prayer's omission at the specific request of Campbell. Dana claimed, however, that Weitzel denied having been influenced by Campbell. "I report the fact," wrote the Assistant Secretary, "confessing that it shakes a good deal my confidence in Weitzel."⁸ This was all that was needed; soon the wires between Washington and Richmond were humming with explanations and counter-explanations by the principals involved.

⁷Dana to Stanton, April 7, 1865, O.R., I, xlvi, pt. 3, p. 619.

⁸Dana to Stanton, April 9, 1865, O.R., I, xlvi, pt. 3, p. 677.

Later on Sunday, Dana reported that Weitzel had explained the "prayer question" more fully, and that the decision to omit the prayer had evidently been made by a subordinate officer. Weitzel confessed that he had doubted the wisdom of this, but he failed to offer any explanation as to why the order was not countermanded.⁹ Stanton angrily demanded that Weitzel personally report his actions in the matter. The War Department strongly condemned, said the Secretary, dispensing with the presidential prayer. Stanton also ordered Weitzel to discontinue meeting with Campbell--from now on if the latter had something to communicate he was to put it in writing and it was to be forwarded to Stanton for instructions. Quite obviously Stanton felt that Weitzel was dancing to Campbell's tune.¹⁰

Back came Weitzel's reply. He had merely been "following the advice of the President," and besides, one

⁹Dana to Stanton, April 9, 1865, O.R., I, xlvi, pt. 3, p. 678.

¹⁰Stanton to Weitzel, April 9, 1865, O.R., I, xlvi, pt. 3, p. 678.

of his staff members had conferred with Dana "and distinctly understood him to authorize and sanction my course upon this subject."¹¹ On April 11, Weitzel learned that Stanton remained unappeased by this account, and that he and Dana were telling conflicting stories about whether or not the latter had consented to omit the prayer.

In the meantime Dana tried to clarify the situation, modifying his original story in the process. Weitzel had deferred to the judgment of a subordinate, and Campbell had exercised his influence to have the prayer omitted. But there had been no meeting between Campbell and Weitzel. "Weitzel's decision not to give a positive order," explained Dana, "was also in a great measure the result of the President's verbal direction to him, to let them down easy."¹² And perhaps to mollify Stanton's anger, Dana added that although the Episcopal churches had not prayed directly for Lincoln, they had prayed for "all those in authority."

¹¹Weitzel to Stanton, April 10, 1865, O.R., I, xlvi, pt. 3, pp. 696-697.

¹²Dana to Stanton, April 10, 1865, O.R., I, xlvi, pt. 3, p. 684.

It is doubtful that such an ambiguous sentiment soothed Stanton very much.

Disgusted over the whole controversy, Weitzel framed a request with sarcastic politeness and sent it to the War Department.

I have the honor to request authority, through the War Department, of his Excellency the President of the United States to state to the honorable Secretary of War conversations, suggestions, and orders which took place and were given me confidentially in order that I may enable the honorable Secretary of War to judge correctly of action in regard to the churches and prayers in this place. Not having authority to divulge these things, I am convinced my action has been judged incorrectly. With regard to Mr. Dana's statement, it is a matter between him and my chief of staff¹³

When Lincoln read this telegram, he replied that he could not recall talking with Weitzel about prayers. But he had no doubt, he told Weitzel, that " you have acted in what appeared to you to be the spirit and temper manifested by me while there."¹⁴ Happily, the seemingly innocuous subject of prayers was put to rest. But Stanton and Dana were not yet through with Weitzel.

¹³Weitzel to James A. Hardie, Inspector-General, April 11, 1865, O.R., I, xlvi, pt. 3, p. 712.

¹⁴Works of Lincoln, Vol. VIII, p. 405.

One of Stanton's main objectives in sending Dana to Richmond was to keep track of Lincoln's negotiations with Confederate officials there. The President, having arrived in Richmond before Dana, held a conference on April 5 with several prominent Virginians including John Archibald Campbell, Assistant Secretary of War for the Confederacy. Campbell, a former Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, wanted to discuss means by which Virginia might return to the Union. Although he missed the meeting, Dana managed to learn that the Confederates wanted Lincoln to promise them a general amnesty. They suggested that such a gesture would influence other rebel states to lay down their arms. Furthermore they conceded that slavery would be abolished. Stanton was relieved to learn from Dana that Lincoln had refused to promise the amnesty. He had told Campbell and the others, however, that he "would save any repentant sinner from hanging."¹⁵

¹⁵Dana to Stanton, April 5, 1865, O.R., I, xlvi, pt. 3, p. 575.

On April 7, the President held another talk with the Virginians, who claimed the right to act as the Virginia legislature. Following the meeting, Lincoln met with Dana and confidentially showed him two papers. The first, addressed to Campbell, outlined the terms that Lincoln considered indispensable to peace--resumption of federal authority, emancipation, and the disbanding of all forces hostile to the Union. Acceptance of these terms, said the President, would have to precede any detailed discussion about reunion.¹⁶ The second document offered the Virginians a chance to act on the terms offered by Lincoln. It ordered Weitzel to permit "the gentlemen who have acted as the Legislature of Virginia" to meet in Richmond in order to withdraw their state from the Confederacy. If they attempted any business hostile to the interests of the United States, however, they were to be asked to leave, and should they refuse, they were to be arrested.¹⁷ Lincoln had carefully worded this order so as to avoid recognizing the small group of Virginians as the rightful legislature of the state.

¹⁶Works of Lincoln, Vol. VIII, pp. 386-387.

¹⁷Works of Lincoln, Vol. VIII, p. 389.

Campbell and his colleagues discussed the terms for reunion without formally accepting them. And while they talked, Lee finally settled the matter of taking Virginia out of the Confederacy by surrendering his army at Appomattox on April 9. Lincoln had already remarked to Dana, that Sheridan could take Virginia troops out of the war faster than the legislature could think. When Lee surrendered there was no longer any need for an acting Virginia legislature, and so the President ordered them disbanded.¹⁸

News of Appomattox produced a deep realization of defeat throughout the ranks of the Confederacy. "Even the most malignant women," Dana wrote from Richmond, "now feel that the defeat is perfect and the rebellion finished, while among the men there is no sentiment but submission to the power of the nation, and a returning hope that their individual property may escape confiscation."¹⁹ Disappointed at having missed the surrender ceremony, Dana perked up on April 11, when Stanton sent him instructions to proceed to

¹⁸Works of Lincoln, Vol. VIII, pp. 406-407.

¹⁹Dana to Stanton, April 10, 1865, O.R., I, xlvi, pt. 3, pp. 683-684.

Grant's headquarters at once. From there he was to pass on anything of use or interest to the War Department.²⁰

The next day Dana sent several telegrams from City Point. Most of the information dealt with aspects of Lee's capitulation. Grant and his staff told the Assistant Secretary that the Confederates had been gratified by the generous terms offered them, especially the extra favor of permitting Southern soldiers to claim their horses. Lee, they said, had indicated his willingness to help bring the Southern people back into the Union. Grant and other Union officers believed that the Confederate leader "had always been for the Union in his heart, and could find no justification for the politicians who had brought on the war, whose origin he believed to have been in the folly of extremists on both sides."²¹

Learning that Grant was going to Washington, Dana cabled Stanton that he would accompany the general unless contrary orders reached him. Before leaving City Point, however, he telegraphed the news that Ord had removed

²⁰Stanton to Dana, April 10, 1865, O.R., I, xlvi, pt. 3, p. 711.

²¹Dana to Stanton, April 12, 1865, O.R., I, xlvi, pt. 3, pp. 716-717.



Weitzel from his command in Richmond, and was placing him near Petersburg.²² Control of the Confederate capital would be entrusted to Major General Marsena Rudolph Patrick, Provost Marshal General of the Army of the Potomac. Actually Weitzel's removal was accomplished on the orders of Grant.²³ And in all probability, Grant acted on advice furnished by Dana. Stanton, who believed Weitzel too lenient to command in Richmond, was undoubtedly pleased with the change, which at the same time appeared to vindicate Dana's judgment in the prayer controversy.

By the afternoon of Good Friday, April 14, Dana was back at his War Department desk. Among the incoming dispatches that day was one from an agent in Portland, Maine stating that Jacob Thompson would be passing through the town that evening in order to catch a ship for England. Dana's informant asked for orders, obviously thinking he would receive instructions to arrest the Confederate spy

²²Dana to Stanton, April 12, 1865, O.R., I, xlvi, pt. 3, pp. 717-718.

²³O.R., I, xlvi, pt. 3, pp. 724-728. The actual orders placing Patrick in command of Richmond were not issued until April 13--the day after Dana told Stanton of the change.

who had caused so much trouble from Canada. When Dana consulted Stanton on the matter, however, the Secretary suggested that his assistant check with Lincoln before doing anything. So Dana walked over to the White House, where he found the President washing his hands in a small room off the executive office.

"Halloo, Dana!" said Lincoln, "What is it? What's up?" Dana displayed the telegram about Thompson, and told the President that Stanton thought the Confederate should be arrested, but that Lincoln should decide. "Well no, I rather think not," responded the Chief Executive. "When you have got an elephant by the hind leg, and he's trying to run away, it's best to let him run."

Returning to the war office, Dana related Lincoln's humorous analogy. "Oh, Stuff!" replied the disgusted Stanton.²⁴

Within a few hours of Dana's White House visit, Lincoln lay near death in the small bedroom of a home across from Ford's Theater. John Wilkes Booth had stamped his name indelibly on the pages of history. Dana, awakened by a messenger from Stanton, hurried

²⁴Dana, Lincoln and His Cabinet, pp. 66-70.

to the house on Tenth Street. In the parlor he saw the stunned faces of numerous government officials, all of whom seemed as inert as their stricken chief. From the bedroom, the labored and irregular breathing of Lincoln told Dana that the wound would be fatal.

The Secretary of War dominated the situation. Ordering his assistant to sit down, Stanton briefly explained the tragic events of the evening. In addition to Lincoln, the assassins had attempted to kill Secretary of State Seward, and there were indications that they had marked other leading members of the government for death. Then Stanton began dictating orders which Dana wrote down for the telegraph. One of the first wires went to Grant, warning him to be on the lookout for suspicious persons aboard the train on which he was traveling.²⁵ Another dispatch went to General John A. Dix, the Union commander in New York, explaining the circumstances of the assassination. This was the first of four dispatches to Dix

²⁵ Dana to Grant, April 15, 1865, O.R., I, xlvi, pt. 3, p. 756.

which were released to the newspapers.²⁶ Orders also went out to the United States Marshal in Portland, Maine, to arrest Thompson if he passed through that town.²⁷ It was a good bet, thought Stanton, that Lincoln's "elephant" had figured in the conspiracy.

Dana remained with Stanton almost until dawn. By then, enough information was available to indicate Booth as the assassin of Lincoln. There was some confusion, however, as to the identity of the other conspirators. Shortly before 9 A.M. on April 15, Dana sent out a description of the alleged assassins.

The assassin of the President is J. Wilkes Booth, well known to all theatrical people. He is about five feet six inches tall; of a slight graceful figure; black hair and eyes rather close together, and pale complexion; about twenty-six years old. The assailant of Mr. Seward has been known here by the name of G. A. Atzerodt. He is twenty-six or twenty-eight years old, five feet eight inches tall; light complexion, brown from exposure; brown hair; long and rather curly moustache and goatee, dark from being dyed; rather round-shouldered and stooping; wore dark pants,

²⁶ Stanton to Dix, April 15, 1865, O.R., I, xlvi, pt. 3, pp. 780-781.

²⁷ Dana to U. S. Marshal in Portland, Maine, April 15, 1865, O.R., II, viii, p. 493.

vest, and coat with a long gray overcoat,
and a low slouched hat, much worn²⁸

These were fairly accurate descriptions, but there was one rather surprising mistake. Atzerodt, an odd-looking German carriage painter, had been assigned to kill Vice-President Andrew Johnson; he had not figured in the attempt on Seward, which was made by a much larger man named Lewis Payne.

From the beginning, Stanton believed that the Confederate government had been involved in the assassination plot. In the days that followed Lincoln's death, that belief hardened into conviction. Dana shared this feeling. While the conspirators were tracked down, the Assistant Secretary recalled two letters which had been forwarded to him the previous November from New York. Picked up on a streetcar by a Mrs. Mary Hudspeth, the letters were turned over to General Dix, who in turn sent them on to Washington. One letter was addressed to a "Dear Louis," who was told that he must kill Lincoln. "Abe must die, and now," it read. "You can choose your weapons."

²⁸O.R., I, xlvi, pt. 3, p. 782.

It was signed "Charles Selby." The other letter, addressed "Dear Husband," pleaded with the mysterious Louis to return home to St. Louis, where his wife and child awaited him. This was signed "Leenea."²⁹

Dana took both letters to Lincoln, but the President seemed to consider them unimportant. After the murder, however, Dana visited the White House to search for them. He found them in Lincoln's desk, enclosed in an envelope marked "Assassination." This caused Stanton and Dana to conclude that somehow the President had attached more importance to the threats than originally supposed. The letters were turned over to John A. Bingham, special judge advocate in the conspiracy trial. They were to be used by the prosecution, and would be supplemented by the testimony of their finder, Mrs. Hudspeth.

By the time the military commission met to try the conspirators, a presidential proclamation had been issued which implicated Jefferson Davis, Jacob Thompson, Clement C. Clay, and other leading Confederates in the

²⁹The rest of these letters appears in Dana, Recollections, pp. 276-278.

assassination. Dana testified twice during the trial, both times in an attempt to establish the existence of a general conspiracy. On May 20, he identified the cipher key that he had found in Richmond; subsequent testimony established that it matched a code found in Booth's trunk.³⁰ Probably more than anything else, this convinced Dana that Confederate officials "were accessory to the murder before the fact, gave it their approval, and even furnished the funds by which the enormous number of actors in the plot were supported and enabled to carry out their design."³¹

Dana's second appearance before the military commission, on June 9, dealt with the letters found by Mrs. Hudspeth. The latter told the court that she had observed a man on the same streetcar in which she found the letters³,

³⁰ Benn Pitman, The Assassination of President Lincoln and The Trial of the Conspirators, ed. by Philip Van Doren Stern, Facsimile Edition (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1954), pp. 41-42.

³¹ Dana to Pike, May 10, 1865. Unfortunately, in attempting to involve the Confederate government in the assassination, the prosecution engaged in some highly questionable practices. This included the use of purjured witnesses, some of whom received payments for their testimony. The matching of the code found in Richmond with the one found in Booth's trunk was not necessarily evidence of conspiracy. With such elementary cipher systems, it was not unusual to find codes that matched.

who was wearing false whiskers and carrying a pistol. Mrs. Hudspeth did not positively identify Booth as the man she saw, but her testimony invited comparison. When Dana took the stand, he brought out his belief that Lincoln had attached special significance to the letters. A brief cross-examination forced Dana to admit, however, that the War Department received a large number of puzzling letters, and many of these were of a threatening nature.³²

During the trial, Jefferson Davis was captured. Along with other top-ranking Confederate prisoners, including Clay, Davis was placed aboard a ship and taken to Fortress Monroe at the entrance to Hampton Roads, Virginia. Major General Nelson A. Miles was in charge of the prisoners, but Stanton worried that Davis might commit suicide. This would cheat justice, he thought, and so he sent Dana to Fortress Monroe for a first-hand report on security provisions. Dana arrived on May 22, just in time to witness the transfer of Davis and Clay to the prison. "Davis marched," wrote Dana later, "with as haughty and defiant an air as Lucifer, Son of the Morning, bore after he was expelled from heaven" ³³ After talking with

³²Pitman, The Assassination of President Lincoln, p. 41.

Miles about the possibility of suicide, and visiting the prisoners' cells, Dana wired Stanton that the situation was secure. This time Dana inclined toward understatement.

Each one [Clay and Davis] occupies the inner room of a casemate; the window is heavily barred. A sentry stands within, before each of the doors leading into the outer room. These doors are to be grated, but are now secured by bars fastened on the outside. Two other sentries stand outside of these doors. An officer is also constantly on duty in the outer room, whose duty is to see his prisoners every fifteen minutes. The outer door of all is locked on the outside, and the key is kept exclusively by the general officer of the guard. Two sentries are also stationed without that door, and a strong line of sentries cuts off all access to the vicinity of the casemates. Another line is stationed on top of the parapet overhead, and a third line is posted across the moats on the counterscarps opposite the places of confinement. The casemates on each side and between these occupied by the prisoners are used as guard rooms, and soldiers are always there.³⁴

³³Dana to Wilson, May 30, 1865, Quoted in Wilson, Live of Dana, p. 365. The cavalry unit which captured Davis was part of Wilson's command.

³⁴Dana to Stanton, May 22, 1865, O.R., II, viii, p. 563-564.

Dana did not order the prisoners placed in irons because he knew General Halleck opposed it; but he did leave a written order for Miles, authorizing him to use "manacles and fetters" if necessary.³⁵ Miles, like a good soldier, decided to take no chances--after Dana's departure Davis received a pair of iron anklets.³⁶

Hurrying back to Washington, Dana arrived on the morning of May 23, just as the citizens of Washington prepared to watch the grand review of the Army of the Potomac. From a stand in front of the White House on Pennsylvania Avenue, Dana watched the ranks of victorious Union blue troop by. Seated on the same reviewing stand were Johnson, members of the cabinet, and Grant. Dana enjoyed the marching, and he believed that the display of military might would exercise a deep influence upon the minds of foreign

³⁵O.R., II, viii, p. 565. This authorization reads "By order of the Secretary of War." Although this was not unusual, it is quite possible that Dana was acting on the basis of prior instructions from Stanton.

³⁶Dana, Recollections, p. 287. Davis remained in prison for two years.

observers. ". . . . They will now distinctly understand," he wrote Wilson, "that, as a warlike people the Americans are not to be despised."³⁷

The next day it was the Army of the Tennessee's turn to march down Pennsylvania Avenue with the cheers of the crowd ringing in their ears. For General Sherman, commander of this army, the day was less happy than it might have been. Not quite two weeks after Appomattox, Sherman had received the surrender of the Confederate army in North Carolina under General Joseph E. Johnston. Although Sherman believed his terms were in accord with Lincoln's policy, they touched upon political issues and caused considerable excitement in Washington. Especially in the War Department. Among other things, Stanton caused the Northern press to accuse Sherman of disobedience.³⁸ The unhappy incident took some of the lustre from Sherman's brilliant record, and produced hard feelings between Stanton and the hero of Atlanta.

³⁷ Dana to Wilson, May 30, 1865, Quoted in Wilson, Life of Dana, p. 362.

³⁸ Thomas and Hyman, Stanton, pp. 405-418.

When Sherman joined the reviewing stand on May 24, to watch his men parade by, many people focused their attention on him. Dana noticed that Stanton made a slight nod of his head as Sherman passed by, but did not see the Secretary offer to shake hands. Others, including Sherman, thought they saw Stanton hold out his hand only to have it refused.³⁹

With the war over, Dana made plans to leave the War Department. To a friend he explained that he had made little money during the war. Now he prepared to engage in more lucrative, if less exciting work. Among various job offers, there were several newspaper positions. Oddly enough, Dana expressed little desire to re-enter paper work. Instead, he wrote Wilson, he hoped "to find some sphere of practical or industrial activity." But nothing that fitted this vague description presented itself, and in May he decided to accept a post as editor of a new paper in Chicago. As Dana explained it, the job

³⁹ Dana's account of the confrontation between Sherman and Stanton is in his long letter to Wilson of May 30, 1865, Quoted in Wilson, Life of Dana, pp. 362-363.

promised an ample return politically as well as financially.

The prospects of pecuniary success seems to me to be very encouraging. Many of the leading politicians of the state, and a great number of the most prominent business men in Chicago, have assured me that no effort will be wanting on their part to establish the prosperity of the new concern, and I see no reason to doubt that I shall be able not only to make a livelihood there, but to gain a political position in many respects agreeable as well as useful.⁴⁰

Dana resigned his commission as Assistant Secretary of War on July 1, but Stanton talked him into staying on for an additional week. In mid-July he departed for the West with hardly a backward glance, but behind him, the major source of his importance in the Civil War remained--his dispatches. His role in evaluating military events and leaders was controversial by its very nature. He was a civilian without any substantial experience in military affairs, but his judgments and opinions carried great weight in the councils of Washington. Yet the assignments Stanton gave Dana did not really require an expert, but only a good observer and reporter. With his quick intelligence and newspaper background Dana proved

⁴⁰Dana to Wilson, May 30, 1865, Quoted in Wilson, Life of Dana, p. 362.

an excellent choice. Stanton was not an easy man to work for, or with, and yet the Secretary was eminently satisfied with the performance of his assistant. Personalities and friendships sometimes shaped Dana's opinions and his dispatches, but in this respect he differed little from most of his contemporaries. He may have been wrong about some of the officers he criticized--his battlefield judgments were sometimes quick and arbitrary. But he was not wrong about the officers he praised--Grant, Sherman, Thomas, Sheridan, and Wilson all made great contributions to the Union cause. Dana recognized their ability, and helped them acquire the support and confidence of Washington. Without question, his greatest service was in setting the government's mind at ease in relation to Grant. At Vicksburg, Dana's dispatches gave the government confidence in a man who reportedly drank too much; at Chickamauga, the reports made it possible for Grant to receive a new, more important command; in Washington, Dana acquired congressional backing for Grant's promotion to Lieutenant General in command of all the Union armies; and, during the bloodiest days of Grant's Richmond campaign, Dana never wavered in his support of the Union commander.

Had it not been for Dana, Grant's ability might never have been put to such effective use.

But on the negative side, the Civil War experience seemed to accentuate certain personality changes which colored Dana's outlook on life. Hardened by the disillusionment of war, he became increasingly suspicious about the motives of men, and ever ready to judge them. The youthful humanitarian of Brook Farm, the radical who had championed the cause of revolution in 1848, was gone; in his place was a somewhat cynical and materialistic man in his mid-forties, eager to improve himself rather than society. The idealism of the 1830's and 1840's had been replaced by a new spirit of acquisitiveness which was coming to dominate America. This spirit became the foundation for the age of rugged individualism--a period which excelled in the qualities that Dana had detested as a youth. The years on the New York Sun still lay ahead. They would bring Dana both wealth and fame. One can only wonder whether they also brought happiness and a sense of fulfillment.

ESSAY ON SOURCES

The primary source materials which relate to Dana's early life and Civil War service are not as voluminous as one might reasonably expect. The Charles Anderson Dana Papers in the Library of Congress consist of only three volumes, two of which are taken up by copies of Dana's war-time dispatches. Of the few personal letters in the collection, perhaps the most interesting are the two which Dana sent Stanton after the fall of Vicksburg. These confidentially evaluate a large number of officers with whose attributes Dana had become familiar during the Vicksburg campaign. It is quite possible that Dana wrote other letters of a similar nature during the war, but if so, they have not survived.

The Edwin M. Stanton Papers and the James Harrison Wilson Papers, also in the Library of Congress, contain some helpful material. Included in the Stanton Papers are copies of Dana's telegrams and some letters which cannot be found elsewhere. In the Wilson Papers there is a letter from

Wilson to Dana's son Paul, which indicates that the latter loaned his father's biographer many letters and personal papers. Wilson returned these, however, after completing the biography, The Life of Charles A. Dana (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1907). This study, although properly a secondary source, contains much useful primary material including many letters written by Dana.

For the most extensive collection of Dana letters, however, one must turn to the James Shepherd Pike Papers in the Calais Free Library, Calais, Maine. These contain ninety-six letters covering the period 1850-1881. The majority of these were written during the 1850's, and they shed important light on Dana's years with the New York Tribune. The correspondence tapered off somewhat after Pike became Minister to the Netherlands, but there are several good letters available for the war years. In this collection, better than anywhere else, one can get some idea of Dana's personal life. A microfilm of the Dana-Pike letters is in the Alderman Library at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville; edited versions of some of the letters appear in James Shepherd Pike, First Blows of the Civil War (New York: The American News Company, 1879).

Another important primary source exists in the Ida M. Tarbell Papers in the Reis Library. Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania. A careful researcher, Tarbell interviewed Dana during the winter of 1896-1897, in order to acquire information for her work on Dana's Recollections of the Civil War (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1898). Typed copies of these interviews are available, but they must be used carefully because Dana's memory was not always accurate. Also Tarbell herself later admitted that Dana seemed unenthusiastic about having his memoirs written. He seldom offered information unless it was in response to some specific question. As a result of this, Tarbell constructed the Recollections primarily around Dana's dispatches and letters. Generally she used these in such a way that Dana was permitted to speak for himself. Tarbell also included considerable material from Dana's Lincoln and His Cabinet, A Lecture Delivered on Tuesday, March 10, 1896, Before the New Haven Colony Historical Society (Cleveland and New York: Printed at the De Vinne Press, 1896), and his article "The War--Some Unpublished History."

North American Review, Vol. CLIII, No. 417 (August 1891), 240-245. A recent paperback version of the Recollections (New York: Collier Books, 1963), features an introduction by Paul M. Angle.

Other manuscript collections which have material on Dana, include the papers of Horace Greeley, Benjamin L. Butler, and George Hay Stuart, all in the Library of Congress.

Virtually all the telegrams sent by Dana during the war may be found in The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1881-1901). Papers relating to the Cairo Claims Commission are in the Records of the War Department, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; they should be supplemented by the information contained in House Reports, 37th Congress, 2nd Session, Vol. 2, Serial 1143 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1862). For Dana's testimony in the Lincoln conspiracy trial consult Benn Pitman, The Assassination of President Lincoln and The Trial of the Conspirators, intro. by Philip Van Doren Stern, Facsimile Edition (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1954).

Many of Dana's Civil War contemporaries left behind autobiographical works which offer helpful information. The most important of these are James H. Wilson, Under the Old Flag, 2 Vols. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1912); David Homer Bates, Lincoln in the Telegraph Office (New York: The Century Company, 1907); Benjamin P. Thomas, ed., Three Years with Grant: As Recalled by War Correspondent Sylvanus Cadwallader; Jacob Dolson Cox, Military Reminiscences of the Civil War, 2 Vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900); Henry Villard, Memoirs of Henry Villard, Journalist and Financier, 2 Vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1904); and William F. G. Shanks, Personal Recollections of Distinguished Generals (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1866). The book by Bates tells how War Department telegraph operators were forced to arm themselves with a copy of Roget's Thesaurus when Dana began sending his dispatches in 1863.

Rather surprisingly, the personal memoirs of Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan make little mention of Dana. But Adam Badeau, Grant's military secretary, concedes in his Military History of Ulysses S. Grant, 3 Vols. (New York:



D. Appleton and Company, 1881), that Dana and the general usually saw eye-to-eye.

Of course the most important newspaper source is the New York Tribune, which offers examples of Dana's journalistic style, and also reveals his thinking on the crucial issues of the 1850's. As the editorials in this paper were not always signed, it is impossible to trace all of Dana's work. The paper is useful also in assessing Dana's skill as a managing editor. In general he seems to have developed a preference for a concise, witty style of journalism, which emphasized news that appealed to a broad majority of readers. He carried this style over to the New York Sun in 1868, and became well-known there for editing a paper of high readability.

There are many significant secondary works which treat various aspects of Dana's life to 1865, but only Wilson's biography discusses the years prior to Brook Farm. On Brook Farm itself, the most helpful work is Lindsay Swift, Brook Farm: Its Members, Scholars, and Visitors (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1900).

Although not so well organized as the Swift study, Edith Roelker Curtis, A Season in Utopia: The Story of Brook Farm

(New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1961), does succeed in bringing the experiment's main characters to life. Curtis also includes in her book, excerpts from several letters that Dana wrote to Isaac Hecker, the originals of which are in the Archives of the Paulist Fathers in New York. Dana's own remembrances of Brook Farm were summed up in the speech he delivered at the University of Michigan on January 21, 1895. This is most easily found in Wilson, Life of Dana, pp. 517-534.

For the period of Dana's association with Horace Greeley, the most significant work is Jeter Allen Isely, Horace Greeley and the Republican Party 1853-1861 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947). Also important is William Harlan Hale, Horace Greeley: Voice of the People (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950). Edited copies of Greeley's letters to his managing editor in 1856 are available in Joel Benton, ed., Greeley on Lincoln: With Mr. Greeley's Letters to Charles A. Dana and a Lady Friend to which are added Reminiscences of Horace Greeley (New York: The Baker and Taylor Co., 1893). Dana's activity on the eve of the Civil War is well-told in Louis M. Starr, Bohemian Brigade: Civil War

Newsmen in Action (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954).

The best study of Stanton is by Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman, Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962). This work is the only one on Stanton which emphasizes the services rendered by Dana. There is no general work on the War Department for the years 1861-1865, but A. Howard Meneeley, The War Department, 1861: A Study in Mobilization and Administration (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928), examines the early problems under Cameron.

K. P. Williams in his excellent work Lincoln Finds a General: A Military Study of the Civil War, 5 Vols. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949-1959), states that Dana's Vicksburg dispatches provide one of the best accounts of that campaign. Other secondary works which evaluate Dana's contributions during the spring and early summer of 1863, are Earl Schenk Miers, The Web of Victory: Grant at Vicksburg (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), and Bruce Catton, Grant Moves South (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960).

The literature on Chickamauga and Chattanooga is extensive, and it is here that one finds the heaviest criticism of Dana. Glenn Tucker, Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in

the West (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1961), labels Dana "an informer whom Andrew Jackson would have put in irons" Also taking a dim view of Dana's activities before and after Chickamauga, is William M. Lamers, The Edge of Glory: A Biography of General William S. Rosecrans U.S.A. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1961). Referring to Dana as a "bird of ill-omen," Lamers says that Dana's dispatches were often inaccurate and full of camp gossip. At the same time, however, Lamers concedes certain defects and weaknesses in the character of his subject. Perhaps the most balanced appraisal of Dana's role in the Chickamauga-Chattanooga campaigns appears in the Villard memoirs previously cited.

Margaret Leech, Reveille in Washington 1860-1865 (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1941), is excellent for Early's Raid and for the atmosphere of wartime Washington. The best analysis of the political problems which faced Lincoln and the Republican party in 1864, is William Frank Zornow, Lincoln and the Party Divided (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954).

Secondary works on Grant's Virginia campaign generally fail to make use of Dana's telegrams. One exception

is the critical evaluation contained in Carswell McClellan, The Personal Memoirs and Military History of U.S. Grant versus the Record of the Army of the Potomac (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1887). McClellan, a member of Meade's staff, points out that Dana sometimes absorbed opinions from Grant and his staff which entered into the dispatches. David S. Sparks, ed., Inside Lincoln's Army: The Diary of Marsena Rudolph Patrick, Provost Marshal General, Army of the Potomac (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1964), offers some useful primary source material.

Otto Eisenschiml, Why Was Lincoln Murdered (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1937), discusses many puzzling aspects surrounding the assassination of Lincoln. Eisenschiml suggests that Stanton might have been responsible for the murder, but admits that the existing evidence cannot actually sustain such a hypothesis. Eisenschiml portrays Dana as a trusted and loyal follower of Stanton, a man on whose blind allegiance the Secretary could depend.

Finally, the most important works for an understanding of Dana's post-Civil War career are Candace Stone, Dana and the Sun (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1938), which includes an extensive bibliography; Frank M. O'Brien,

The Story of the Sun (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1928); Charles J. Rosebault, When Dana Was the Sun: A Story of Personal Journalism (New York: Robert M. McBride and Company, 1931); and Edward P. Mitchell, Memoirs of an Editor: Fifty Years of American Journalism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924). The last three books are by men who knew Dana personally, and who worked for him on the New York Sun.