Remarks
at Grant Birthday Banquet
held at
Brooklyn N.Y.
April 28th 1890

No. 19.

Subject
Vicksburg

Gentlemen:

Siege of Vicksburg

To form the most meagre idea of a military campaign one must understand the nature of ~~a~~ the country. The Mississippi river from the mouth of the Arkansas to Vicksburg, a distance of two hundred miles in a straight line, and of over four hundred by the sinuosities of the current, flows through a region of most extraordinary features. When the great river overflows vast regions are flodded, often from sixty to a hundred miles in breadth; and ordinarily branches start out from the main river from different points, and winding and twisting, re-unite, as in the Yazoo, and flow back into the main river. From these side currents Bayous, often fringed with high banks and entanglements of vines and timber in all shapes, find their way, in and out, through cow fertile districts. flowing from deep Bay Again like Lake Providence, west of the Mississippi not far from the mouth of the Arkansas, there are channels and cuts and bayous sweeping off westward and southward so as to bring all the surplus spring-water back into the Red river and thence into the Mississippi. The Mississippi has immense bends like that of Vicksburg where, apparantly, a short artificial canal may cut off a city from navigation. In the spring over this vast region many roads that are dry in the summer become slimy and almost impassable, sometimes they are overflowed, and so all movement upon them has to be suspended for months. Vicksburg was built upon a high bluff of some twenty miles in extent, more or less. We may call the upper part by the Yazoo, Haine's Bluff, and the lower part, though not within the Vicksburg defenses proper, Grand Gulf; these bluffs and sort of promontories vary from fifty to two hundred feet in ~~heighth~~ elevation. In the spring of 1863, Vicksburgh was occupied by the army of General Pemberton who held Haines' Bluff above, Grand Gulf and Port Gibson below. His army was about thirty thousand strong. He had a thorough system of fortifications, well manned with cannon and well supported by infantry. Considering the nature of the coun-

try, above and below, it is no wonder that Jefferson Davis pronounced Vicksburg the "Gibraltar" of his Confederacy. General Grant at the same time approaching from above had an army proper for field service of about fifty thousand effectives, and a naval force, under Admiral Porter, of 7 iron clads ..... ~~vessels~~, besides abundant transports and barges. Four plans of operation presented themselves. The first to cut off Vicksburg by a canal so situated as to enable vessels to pass through it without being exposed to batteries at Vicksburg. The whole world pressed him to undertake this plan of operation; the canal was dug and partially finished, when in a day the gigantic Mississippi ~~obstructed the issue,~~ came in to demolish his work, and at the same time the confederates, by their counter-plans, obstructed the of the canal issue. The second plan was to break through the Yazoo-Pass and come through various channels into the Yazoo, take Fort Pemberton and operate against Haines' Bluff ~~in~~ and the rear of Vicksburg. The results of this effort brought some fruit; quantity frightened Mississippi farmers, but evidently was postponing the final object of the campaign. The third plan, which was to pass into Lake Providence through the bayous and small streams, out into the Red river, and so cooperate with Banks coming up from Louisiana; with him cross the Mississippi below, take Port Hudson, and then sweep back again to the rear of Vicksburg. This plan does not seem to have been seriously considered. It was too long and too difficult, and would only serve for some contingent operations. In fact it would but transfer the Vicksburg problem to the Port Hudson problem with no greater chances of success. But all the trials during this wonderful springtime, of naval men and army men, developed their strength of energy and brought to the surface their skill when finally the actual plan was adopted, namely, to move two corps, by land, down the west side of the Mississippi to points opposite Grand Gulf; to have Grierson

ty' above and below' it is no wonder that Lieutenant Dwain pronounc-
ed Alexander the "Liberator" to his companions." Central Grant at
Alexander the "Liberator" to his companions." Central Grant at
Alexander found a small steamer' out into the Red River' and so co-
operate with Banks column up from Louisiana' with him cross the
Mississippi below' take Fort Hudson and then sweep back again to
the rear of Alexander. This plan does not seem to have been seri-
ously considered. It was too long and too difficult, but would only
serve for some contingent object, or more. In fact it would put Grant
the Alexander problem to the Port Hudson problem with no greater
chances of success." But all the final duties fell somewhat upon
time of least men and time when finally the actual plan
and brought to [illegible] then [illegible] two corps, by land, down the west side
may above, namely, to move two corps by land down the west side
of the Mississippi to points on the Red River, Fort Hempstead
and come through Natchez and Jackson into the Amazoo, take Fort Hempst-
ington and Grant's "base." The second was to place through the Amazoo-Bas
ington and Grant's "base." The second was to place through the Amazoo-Bas
operate against Banks column up from Louisiana with him cross the
Mississippi below' take Fort Hudson and then sweep back again to
the rear of Alexander. This plan does not seem to have been seri-
ously considered. It was too long and too difficult, but would only
serve for some contingent object, or more. In fact it would put Grant
the Alexander problem to the Port Hudson problem with no greater
chances of success." But all the final duties fell somewhat upon
time of least men and time when finally the actual plan
and brought to [illegible] then [illegible] two corps, by land, down the west side
may above, namely, to move two corps by land down the west side
of the Mississippi to points on the Red River, Fort Hempstead
and come through Natchez and Jackson into the Amazoo, take Fort Hempst-
ington and Grant's "base." The second was to place through the Amazoo-Bas
operate against Banks column up from Louisiana with him cross the
Mississippi below' take Fort Hudson and then sweep back again to
the rear of Alexander. This plan does not seem to have been seri-
ously considered. It was too long and too difficult, but would only
serve for some contingent object, or more. In fact it would put Grant
the Alexander problem to the Port Hudson problem with no greater
chances of success." But all the final duties fell somewhat upon
time of least men and time when finally the actual plan
and brought to [illegible] then [illegible] two corps, by land, down the west side
may above, namely, to move two corps by land down the west side
of the Mississippi to points on the Red River, Fort Hempstead
and come through Natchez and Jackson into the Amazoo, take Fort Hempst-
ington and Grant's "base." The second was to place through the Amazoo-Bas
operate against Banks column up from Louisiana with him cross the
Mississippi below' take Fort Hudson and then sweep back again to
the rear of Alexander. This plan does not seem to have been seri-

with his cavalry sweep~~ing~~ through Mississippi from Corinth southward, cut~~ting~~ railroad communications, destroy~~ing~~ bridges, supplies and all public property; while the gallant Admiral Porter was moving his fleet of gun-boats, transports and barges by night, down the swift Mississippi to encounter a terrible fire from all the forts; after supplying ~~supplying~~ the army, to bombard Grand Gulf and transport Grant and his troops across from west to east to a practicable landing. Such was the plan laughed at by Confederates, opposed strongly and conscientiously by every prominent officer of Grant's army, yes, Logan, McPherson & others opposed by his close friend and best adviser, General Sherman, yet this desperate measure ~~it~~ was executed and the river was crossed to ~~Bruinsburg~~ at Bruinsburg (not sure) where a faithful colored man had told them, truly, there was a practicable road. Then followed at once ~~the battles~~ of Port Gibson; " Grand Gulf " fell of itself; " " " " then Champion Hills; then Jackson; then Big Black. To relieve the pressure at the place of crossing Sherman and Porter had made a demonstration above, at Haines' Bluffs and then with extraordinary swiftness Sherman's force had returned to Milliken's Bend; descended the river; crossed to Grand Gulf and participated in the Jackson campaign. The forces of the enemy that Grant met were, first, the able Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston with his relieving army, which had advanced as far as Champion Hills. In two battles it was beaten and driven beyond the chance of return. After that Big Black was Pemberton's desperate fight for Vicksburg. There were dreadful charges by Grant's troops up the steep ravines often into the very out-works of the enemy; but Pemberton held his fort until hope of reinforcements had ceased. Yes, he held on till his supplies were exhausted and then knowing that it was useless to attempt to hold out longer, on the fourth day of July, 1863, he surrendered without condition to Gen. Grant. The Mississippi was ours and the Confederacy severed, the one part from the other, beyond hope of recovery. In this accomplishment Gen. Grant had the able assistance from officers & men of both Army & Navy but, the honor was his, there was a singular reliance in his planing; a remarkable persistency in his operations, and an ability in every

with his cavalry passed through Virginia from Central South-
ward, cutting railroad communications, destroying bridges, supplies
and all hostile property, while the Eighth Admiral was moving his
fleet of gun-boats, transports and barges by night down the south
shore to encounter a reinforcing force from all the forces after
Mississippi to embarkation at Port Royal and make a
landing. Lord, he surrendered to Gen. Grant. The Mississippi was once
more open to navigation and the one half from the other, beyond hope
of recovery. But there was a minority resistance in his behalf: a
temporary peninsula in his operations, and an appeal to early
demonstration upon St. Helena, Bluffs and then with extraordinary
swiftness Sherman's force had returned to Milliken's Bend: descend-
ed the river: crossed to Grand Gulf and participated in the jackson
campaign. The forces of the enemy that Grant met were: first: the
able commander General Johnston with his veteran army, which
had advanced as far as Champion Hills. In two battles it was beaten
and driven beyond the chance of return. His black was Pemberton,a
desperate fight for Vicksburg. There were already chasing up the
steep ravines close into the very out-works of the enemy: but Pem-
berton held his lofty citadel hope of reinforcements had ceased. Yes,
he held on till his supplies were exhausted and then knowing that
it was useless to attempt to hold out longer, on the tenth day of
July, 1863, he surrendered to Gen. Grant. The Mississippi was once
more open and the confederacy reached, the one half from the other, beyond hope
of recovery but there was a minority resistance in his behalf: a
temporary peninsula in his operations, and an appeal to early
pierce at the place of crossing Chetham and Porter had made a
diversion upon St. Helena, Bluffs and then with extraordinary
swiftness Sherman's force had returned to Milliken's Bend: descend-
ed the river: crossed to Grand Gulf and participated in the jackson
campaign. The forces of the enemy that Grant met were: first: the
able commander General Johnston with his veteran army, which
had advanced as far as Champion Hills. In two battles it was beaten
and driven beyond the chance of return. His black was Pemberton,a
desperate fight for Vicksburg. There were already chasing up the
steep ravines close into the very out-works of the enemy: but Pem-
berton held his lofty citadel hope of reinforcements had ceased. Yes,
he held on till his supplies were exhausted and then knowing that
it was useless to attempt to hold out longer, on the tenth day of
July, 1863, he surrendered to Gen. Grant. The Mississippi was once
more open and the confederacy reached, the one half from the other, beyond hope
of recovery but there was a minority resistance in his behalf: a
temporary peninsula in his operations, and an appeal to early

direction, now clearly demonstrated to be Napoleonic in character. We do well to cherish the memory of such a man whom God helped more than men. Yes, let us rejoice yearly at this festival which marks the day of his birth.

"Vicksburg"
Reply to toast at
Grant Birthday banquet
at Brooklyn April
27 1890.

Grant Post G.A.R.