Interviews: Charles A. Dana's Recollections of the Civil War

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He was Chief of Staffs and was an Ohio man; Rosecrans was an Ohio man and Rosecrans brother was Bishop of Columbis---Catholic Bishop---and the Secretary of the Treasury Mr. Chace, was an Ohio man. Garfield, I think, was a competent officer and performed his duties as Chief of the Staff in a satisfactory manner.

No there is nothing particular; nothing to add to that that I know of. Crittenden was a gallant fellow; he was one of the Kentuckians who adhered to the Union, and he was a very manly intellectual man; he was not a professional soldier, I think. I do not think he was a West Point man; but he was deserving of the position he held.

McCook was a West Pointer and belonged to a very influential family known as the "Fighting McCooks" and they were Democrats. And he was a graduate of the Academy. Men with military educations are very much sought after and are very much desired. There were not enough of them.

Not a bit of it. We had plenty to eat and very comfortable places to sleep and we got the newspapers every day and had not anything to complain of. We did not feel that in headquarters because those rations were not so much supplied by the Commissary Department but were got around---bought.
I do not recollect any privation; there were short rations in the army, but that was because the Commissary Department could not bring them forward. It was a difficult transportation—very.

Oh no, General Rosecrans took for his headquarters an abandoned house. I was with him. I remember that I lived in the room during that whole time and with General Baldy Smith. He was a very pleasant companion, a very able man, an able soldier.

Oh, no, all fighting or attending to fighting. It was all military work and we went to bed early and got up early generally and we were on horseback pretty much the whole time.

Well, he may have done that to some regiment, but it was never advertised; there were no posters about it in the streets.

No, I do not think he had. I don't know; I never heard. I was down there. I can't tell what was done elsewhere. Very likely there had been, but I don't know anything certain about it.

Grant was already in command. I think this placed him over all the armies, entirely, West and East and everywhere
He was made a General; he was the only General; the others were Major Generals. It was later than 1864.

I would not like to say that because this was a suggestion made by a man of no great importance ---in an out of the way place, Chattanooga; only made with a view to keeping the army there in good heart. If any Potomac General had been sent there they would not have liked it, and if the men took Vicksburg when he was there it was perfectly satisfactory to everybody.

It must have been after this dispatch here; after this dispatch of October 8th, when General Thomas sent a confidential friend to me to say that while he would gladly accept any command he could not take it because he would not like himself or having intrigued against his Commander and besides he still had confidence in Rosecrans ability, and immediately after that I got a telegram from the Secretary of War saying: I wish you to go directly to see General Thomas and say to him that his services, his abilities, his character his unselfishness, have always been most cordially appreciated by me, and that it is not my fault that he has not long since had command of an independent army. So I went over to General Thomas. I got there about after the dinner had been cleared away. I think I got the telegram while I was taking
my dinner or they had finished dinner and there was nobody in the dining room and the table was not cleared off; although there was none of the dinner remaining and when General Thomas came in there was nobody there but he and I, and I read to him this telegram from the Secretary. He was affected by it and he did not reply immediately but waited a minute perhaps and said: Mr. Dana, I wish you would say to the Secretary of War that I am greatly affected by this expression of his confidence, that I should have long since liked to have had an independent command, but what I should have desired would have been the command of an army that I could myself have organized, disciplined, distributed and combined, and I wish you would add also that I would not like to take the command of an army where I should be exposed to the situation of having intrigued, or of having operated, or of influencing or exercising any effort to supplant my previous Commander. So I sent that directly to Washington. Then I received immediately after that—probably the same night or the first thing the next day—a telegram. They came to Louisville; the Secretary would be there. He wanted me; so, in the morning I started and went straight to Nashville. I had the train bound all the way through to Louisville. I do not think there was anybody with me except the train hands and the
engineer. We were halted and I was told that General Grant was there and that we were stopped in order that our train might get out of the way so that he may have a clear track, and directly there came in an officer, I think it was Major Burrows of General Grant's staff and he said: General Grant wants to see you. So I got out of my train and went over to his and I haven't seen him since we parted at Fickburg and he said: Mr. Dana, I am going to interfere with your journey. I have got the Secretary's permission to take you back with me to Chattanooga and I want you to go back with me now and want you to dismiss your train and get in mine and we will give you comfortable quarters; we are going directly on. Said I: General, did you ask the Secretary to let me go back with you. He said: I did; I wanted to have you. So I went back with him, and we got there, I think, about midnight one night, going to Chattanooga. Grant went on quicker and I stopped somewhere on the way perhaps. I didn't go in his train I don't remember how that was. I didn't get there as soon as he did. I think he got there before noon and I remember General Wilson was with us; we got there about midnight. I heard then that Rosecrans had not only been relieved but that Thomas had been appointed to command the Army of the Tennessee in Rosecrans' place. The next morning I went to
see General Thomas; it was not an official visit in any way but a friendly visit—-visits which I very often made to Generals. When we shook hands he said: Mr. Dana, you have got me this time, but there is nothing for a man to do in such a case but to obey orders.

McCook you know was tried by court martial officials.

About the scarcity of supplies in October, 1864: The soldiers were never short of any food but the animals were and the whole transportation train service was disabled on account of a great many animals dying of starvation, but I think the men may have been somewhat short in their rations, but nobody was weak or debilitated.

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