



THE PHILADELPHIA TIMES

Feb. 19th, 1899.

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
"The Edward",
Washington, D.C.

My dear Friend:-

I have your letter giving copy of the telegram sent by President Lincoln to me on June 30th, 1863. It had passed from my recollection but quoting it as you do, recalls it distinctly and also the circumstances which brought it out.

When Lee's army entered Pennsylvania in June, 1863, there was general consternation throughout the State. The friends of General McClellan, who had been relieved of his command in the fall of '62, believed that he could best defend the State in command of the army. He was admittedly the best organizer in our entire army and pre-eminently equipped as a defensive officer, and they assumed that his restoration to the command would bring an immense Democratic support to the army and to the administration.

The movement began with a number of prominent business men in Philadelphia, among them being J. Edgar Thompson, President of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, and Governor Curtin, who was personally very friendly to General McClellan, and who had great faith in him especially as a defensive commander, was induced to join in the movement.

The Army of the Potomac was believed to be very much demoralized by the defeat of Chancellorsville, by want of confidence in Hooker as commander, and by the apprehension that any of the corps commanders

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called suddenly to lead the army just on the eve of the greatest battle of the war, would not inspire the trust of the soldiers; and many who doubted McClellan's fitness to command in an aggressive campaign, were more than willing to have him in command to defend Pennsylvania. Among these was Governor Curtin, and he especially desired that if McClellan could not be called to the command of the Army of the Potomac, he should be called to command an emergency volunteer corps in this State.

Among others, I presented this view of the situation to President Lincoln, as I believed McClellan more capable than any of the corps commanders of the army to conduct a defensive campaign, and Mr. Lincoln's telegram to which you refer, was his answer to my suggestions on the subject.

I have noted your supplementary chapters on Lincoln and have found nothing in them to criticise excepting your account of Lincoln's midnight journey from Harrisburg to Washington. I was at the dinner at which it was decided to send Lincoln back through Philadelphia, and so far from Mr. Lincoln having predetermined such a course before arriving at Harrisburg, he was the last of all those at the dinner to assent to the midnight journey. He was absolutely overruled in it and reluctantly submitted in silence.

Yours truly,

Dictated.

A. K. McClure
[A. K. McClure]