

ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship. The government will support you to the utmost of its ability, which is neither more nor less than it has done and will do for all commanders. I much fear that the spirit which you have aided to infuse into the army, of criticizing their commander and withholding confidence from him, will now turn

upon you. I shall assist you as far as I can to put it down. Neither you nor Napoleon, if he were alive again, could get any good out of an army while such a spirit prevails in it; and now beware of rashness. Beware of rashness, but with energy and sleepless vigilance go forward and give us victories.

LINCOLN TO HOOKER, JANUARY 26, 1863.

30. GRANT MEETS LINCOLN

General Grant's account of his first private interview with President Lincoln, on the occasion in the early spring of 1864 when he was given command of all the Federal armies, explains many of the reasons for Lincoln's interference in military matters, for which he has been severely criticised. At last Lincoln had found the man who would accept the responsibility and bring final victory.

In my first interview with Mr. Lincoln alone he stated to me that he had never professed to be a military man or to know how campaigns should be conducted, and never wanted to interfere in them: but that procrastination on the part of commanders, and the pressure from the people at the North and Congress, *which was always with him*, forced him into issuing his series of "Military Orders"—one, two, three, etc. He did not know but they were all wrong, and did know that some of them were. All

he wanted or had ever wanted was some one who would take the responsibility and act, and call on him for all the assistance needed, pledging himself to use all the power of the government in rendering such assistance. Assuring him that I would do the best I could with the means at hand, and avoid as far as possible annoying him or the War Department, our first interview ended.

Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant.

31. A MAN'S NEED OF HUMOR

Lincoln's story telling proclivities were well known in his own time. On the old eighth circuit in Illinois his humor and fund of anecdotes were proverbial. What was not so well known was that the tall homely man needed a blanket of humor to suppress the fires of depression, gloom, and sense of tragedy that almost consumed him. He sought desperately to supply this need. Then, too, he daily turned his great gift to very practical purposes. Often he softened a rebuke or a refusal or avoided a long discussion or a laborious explanation by an appropriate story that illustrated his point of view. It was principally the purpose or effect of a story that interested Lincoln, not the story itself. The following three selections show the characteristic quality of Lincoln's wit and humor.

Some of Mr. Lincoln's intimate friends once called his attention to a certain member of his Cabinet who was quietly working to secure a nomination for the Presidency, although knowing that Mr. Lincoln was to be a candidate for reelection. His friends insisted that the Cabinet officer ought to be made to give up

his Presidential aspirations or be removed from office. The situation reminded Mr. Lincoln of a story.

"My brother and I," he said, "were once plowing corn, I driving the horse and he holding the plow. The horse was lazy, but on one occasion he rushed across the field so that I, with my long legs, could