

His far sight discerned the need of those bridges if the army was to advance. He protested against the order, but loyally obeyed it. Later on when the Rip Van Winkles began to wake up and trudge along further South, they found those bridges were needed. General Halleck sent a dispatch to Washington saying, "Mitchel's foolish destruction of bridges embarrassed me very much." But at the time Mitchel knew nothing of this dispatch, and the mischief of that blunder of Halleck's was allowed to do its work. But he fretted under delays. He planned advances, but that fatal inability in his superiors to say "Go" prevented his moving. He communicated to the War Department his fears that we were losing golden opportunities, and begged for action. The superior generals wrote to the War Department talking about their difficulties. Confederate reports published since the war show that these difficulties were born of their own timidity; that the troops Mitchel and others prepared outnumbered theirs and were so posted as to almost assure the victory. After the war General Grant in his Memoirs outlined the very plan which Mitchel had proposed as the one to have been followed, and which he himself when he first came into command in the Southwest put into execution.

Mitchel, unable to brook delay, finally resigned his commission. Whether rightly or not, he believed that his own life, and the resources of the country, were being wasted. Now we see that Mitchel was right. He was called to Washington. President Lincoln had wonderful discernment of men. He believed in Grant when others did not. He believed in Mitchel, and proposed that he should have the command of a grand expedition down the Mississippi, such as later severed the Confederacy. Secretary Stanton and Mr. Chase nobly seconded the President in their enthusiastic approbation, but suggested giving Mitchel the command of the Army of the Potomac. But by one of those curious compromises which bring men's second choice to the front, Halleck was selected to direct all our armies. This was the end of Mitchel's prospect for promotion. Halleck would have been almost more than human if he could have favored the man whom, ignorantly or malevolently (we do not judge which), he had condemned. In spite of the urging of Stanton and Chase, and the unstinted praise of Lincoln, Mitchel was unused for weeks. He chafed under enforced idleness. At length he was appointed to command on the coast of South Carolina with the 10th Army Corps; an important point to be held, but where there could be no opportunity for the display of great ability; a very honorable place in which to shelve a troublesome rival. To one who met him on arrival at Port Royal and exclaimed, "Why, General! what brought you here?" he replied, "I came to be buried." The shadow of a great injustice was on him; it ate itself into his heart, yet, except in letters to personal friends, he made no complaint. In his address to his new troops he used these words—words which only