



Grant Takes Command

Bruce Catton

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In the summer of 1863 after the climatic battle at Vicksburg, Lincoln's government was more interested in Ulysses Simpson Grant than any other man alive. Although he was their most successful soldier, few men in Washington had even met him. Over the next several months his face, his morals, his total conduct would become commonly known and discussed by a nation tragically divided by the Civil War. Richard Henry Dana, Jr., was later to describe him as having "no gait, no manner, and no station- and as looking like "nobody at all." Yet as his close comrade-in-arms, General William T. Sherman, put it: "To me he is a mystery, and I believe he is a mystery to himself." Grant Takes Command gives us invaluable assistance in untangling the enigma of this remarkable Union warrior who has puzzled so many for so long. It gives a detailed and revealing portrait of Grant during the last year and a half of the war. Because he was made commander in chief after his decisive victory at Chattanooga, the account of his activities becomes in essence the story of how the war was won. As any good history should, it thereby answers the crucial questions concerning its topic-why Lincoln who could win the war for him; now Grant kept his footing amidst the tangle of political snares that had brought many of his predecessors to grief; and why Robert E. Lee was unable to break out of this Yankee's grip and frustrate his aim, as that courtly Confederate had done so successfully heretofore. Thus the book shows what sort of man it was whom Lincoln took into partnership and what that man did with his share of the responsibilities. Part two of the classic Civil War study of General Ulysses S. Grant is a detailed portrait of the enigmatic commander-in-chief of the Union forces during the last year and a half of the Civil War. Illustrated.

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