

GEN. V. GRANT AND THE JEWS.

Gen. Grant's Mississippi Order—Explanatory Letter from Gen. Rawlins.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES, }
WASHINGTON, May 6, 1868. }

SIR: Your letter relating to the order of Gen. GRANT, dated Oxford, Miss., Dec. 17, 1862, expelling Jews, as a class, from his department, is before me. You are doubtless aware that Gen. GRANT has never, either by himself or through the aid of friends, attempted to defend any military order which the emergencies of the service seemed at the time to require. However, as my name is attached to it as Assistant Adjutant-General, it may not be improper to state that at and previous to its date, our military affairs were in a most critical condition, and important movements were transpiring. Gen. SHERMAN was collecting forces at Memphis and Helena. Gen. GRANT was moving steadily against PEMBERTON, at Grenada, keeping up appearances of immediate attack, to divert his attention from SHERMAN, and in coöperation with GRANT, DODGE was moving south from Corinth. The success of GRANT'S plans depended in keeping the enemy in ignorance of his real purpose, namely, the surprise and capture of Vicksburg by SHERMAN, and it was therefore of the utmost importance that every avenue of information to the enemy should be closed.

The most stringent orders had previously been published, forbidding persons going or coming through our lines, limiting traders to certain boundaries, and prohibiting the passage of coin South, or the payment of it for Southern products. Persistent violations of these orders by persons principally of the Jewish race, were the subjects of constant reports by many of Gen. GRANT'S subordinates, some of whom had even issued orders expelling them from the lines, but which Gen. GRANT had promptly revoked. Reports of the same character were also received from other than military sources. At length, on the evening of Dec. 17, 1862, (the date of the order,) the mail brought from Washington a large number of complaints, officially referred to him by the General-in-Chief of the army, against this class of persons, for violations of the above mentioned orders. The General felt, on reading them, that some immediate action was demanded of him. He realized to its full extent the critical condition of military affairs, and judged, whether wisely or unwisely, that to meet the exigency action must be immediate, thorough and in a form not to be evaded. The order you refer to was the result. It was written, and telegraphed to his subordinates, without revision, leaving all persons not justly amenable to its terms to be relieved on their individual application.

The idea that it was issued on account of the religion of the Jews cannot be seriously entertained by any one who knows the General's steadfast adherence to the principles of American liberty and religious toleration.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN A. RAWLINS.

To LEWIS N. DEMBITS, Esq., Louisville, Ky.