General Grant in the Field

As Perceived by New York Times Correspondent Franc Wilkie, under the pseudonym of Galway. This profile sketch of General Grant was widely copied from the New York Times by many other newspapers.

From the New York Times, June 12, 1863, Less Than a Month Before the Fall of Vicksburg

Almost at any time one can see a small but compactly-built man of about forty-five years of age walking through the camps. He moves with his shoulders thrown a little forward of the perpendicular, his left hand in the pocket of his pantaloons, an unlighted cigar in his mouth, his eyes thrown straight forward, which, from the haze of abstraction that veils them, and a countenance drawn into furrows of thought, would seem to indicate that he is intensely preoccupied. The soldiers observe him coming, and rising to their feet, gather on each side of the way to see him pass—they do not salute him, they only watch him curiously, with a certain sort of familiar reverence. His abstract air is not so great, while he thus moves along, as to prevent his seeing everything without apparently looking at it; you will see this in the fact, that however dense the crowd in which you stand, if you are an acquaintance, his eye will for an instant rest on yours with a glance of recollection, and with it a grave nod of recognition. A plain blue suit, without scarf, sword, or trappings of any sort, save the double-starred shoulder strap—an indifferently good "Kossuth" hat, with the top battered in close to his head; full beard, of a cross between "light" and "sandy;" a square cut face, whose lines and contour indicate extreme endurance and determination, complete the external appearance of this small man, as one sees him passing along, turning and chewing restlessly the end of his unlighted cigar.
His countenance, in rest, has the rigid immobility of cast iron; and, while this indicates the unyielding tenacity of a bulldog, one finds only in his gray eyes the smiles and other evidences of the possession of those softer traits seen upon the lips and over the entire faces of ordinary people. On horseback he loses all the awkwardness which distinguishes him as he moves about on foot. Erect and graceful, he seems a portion of his steed, without which the full effect would be incomplete. He held in early days the reputation of being the best rider in the Academy, and he seems to have lost none of his excellence in this respect...

Of Gen. Grant's ability I need say nothing--he has been so long before the public that all can judge for themselves. The South calls his successes "luck;" we in the West believe that he owes them mostly to the possession of a cautious military judgment, assisted by good advisers, and backed by invincible perseverance, endurance and determination.

This is a link to the full article.