The President has requested nine gentlemen to act as a committee “to examine into the conduct of the Commissary, Quartermaster, and Medical Bureaus of the War Department during the war, and into the extent, causes, and treatment of sickness in the field and in the camps.” The following are the names of the gentlemen: General John M. Schofield, General John B. Gordon, General Grenville M. Dodge, President Gilman, of Johns Hopkins University, Charles F. Manderson, Robert T. Lincoln, Daniel S. Lamont, Dr. W. W. Keene, and Colonel James A. Sexton. At this writing Messrs. Lamont and Gordon have declined, Messrs. Dodge, Gilman, and Sexton have accepted, Messrs. Schofield, Lincoln, and Manderson have requested more time to consider the matter, and no reply has been received from Dr. Keene, who is in Europe. The President seems to us to have done wisely in requesting these gentlemen to conduct such an investigation. Their character is a guarantee that they will be influenced in their investigation by neither fear nor favor, and the President’s request is an evidence that he has no desire to stifle the inquiry into the conduct of the war, and that neither political nor personal considerations have any influence with him to prevent such inquiry. His act appears to us to be another evidence of the value of character in political position; it is this character in the President which has unmistakably governed him in the appointment of the Commissioners to investigate the Maine, the appointment of the Commissioners to conduct the peace negotiations, and the present appointment of the Commissioners to conduct the peace negotiations, and the present appointment of the Commissioners to investigate the conduct of the War Department. We think that the country will and should accept the sincerity of his declaration, “It is my desire that the full and exact truth shall be ascertained and made known.” He has also given it to be understood, unofficially, that this Presidential Commission is not intended to preclude or prevent a thorough Congressional investigation. It must, indeed, rather be subsidiary thereto, for the gentlemen whom the President has requested to act will not have, as we understand it, any power to compel the attendance of witnesses, to administer oaths, or to require answers to interrogatories. But their appointment should convince the country that the President desires the whole truth to be known, and their work should help Congress to get at the facts, and through Congress to fix the responsibility for the evils which have been great and manifold.

Typical Complaints Among the events of the week which indicate that such an investigation as the President has set on foot may well be thought necessary by conservative and intelligent men are such as these: On Tuesday the Eighth Ohio Regiment was held nine hours at Montauk Point waiting for transportation from the place; many of the men were ill and weak, and the scene is described as being one of intense suffering. On the next day the First Illinois Regiment was detained at Montauk Point under much the same circumstances, and again positive suffering was entailed. In both these cases railroad arrangements had been allowed to get into a complete tangle of red tape, and for many hours no official seemed to know what it was planned to do with them. It may be noted also that in the same number of the “Medical News” which contains
take, if necessary, extra-legal steps to exterminate the bands of conspirators who are capable of such seemingly aimless and desperately wicked acts. The sympathy of the world is extended to the venerable Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria, who thus in his old age receives one more of those tragic blows which have darkened the life of an amiable and able ruler. The Empress was sometimes charged with eccentricity and hypochondria. In point of fact, she was, at the most, singular in a few respects. She was married at the age of sixteen, and her education followed instead of preceding her marriage. Until comparatively recent years she was passionately devoted to riding, and many are the tales told of her fearless feats in hunting and in cross-country riding. No stain of scandal was ever attached to her name, and although a political prejudice made her unpopular in the society of Vienna in her youth, she was, in fact, both accomplished and intelligent. The terrible tragedy of the death of her only son (alleged to be a suicide, but in all probability a murder for revenge by a wronged man) left an impress on the life of the Empress never to pass away. She was fond of traveling quietly and incognito, and, in the end, this taste made possible her assassination.

The Dreyfus Case

The flight of Colonel Esterhazy, following the suicide of Colonel Henry, confirms (if any confirmation were needed) the main contention of Zola in the Dreyfus case—namely, that, whether the evidence against Dreyfus did or did not indicate his guilt, it is certain that his trial was vitiated by the grossest possible irregularities, and that the conviction was followed by atrocious efforts, on the part of military officers high in command in the army, to make the public believe in Dreyfus's guilt by manufactured evidence. To those who have followed the complications of this remarkable case nothing has seemed less capable of explanation than the acquittal of Esterhazy. Whether or not the famous bordereau was written by him—and not only is there resemblance in the handwriting evident to the non-expert, but several experts have declared that the writing was identical—it is true that, entirely outside of the Dreyfus case, Esterhazy was guilty of writing letters insulting to the nation, inconsistent with the honor of an officer, and coming very close, at least, to treason. In view of these facts, his acquittal, after a sham trial, showed that there were secret influences at work, and the secret of these influences has not even yet been made public. The only wonder is that Esterhazy has not fled the country before this. His departure makes still more imperative the retrial of the Dreyfus case; and while no decision has been reached as we write, the general belief is that a revision of the case must be had. Another Cabinet crisis is thought to be at hand in France, growing out of the Dreyfus matter.

The Cape Colony Election

The electoral contest in Cape Colony has resulted in a victory for the Africander Bund, that party having returned forty members to the Assembly as against thirty-seven Progressives. Mr. Rhodes has won a personal triumph in his own election, but he is denied the control of the Cape Legislature, and to that extent is hampered in the realization of the vast plans to which he has dedicated his life. The result of the election is likely to be misunderstood unless carefully considered. In the first place, a minority of the Dutch element did not vote with the Bund, and there is not the slightest threat of any extreme policy being put in force by the victorious party. It is regarded simply as a vindication of the opposition to Mr. Rhodes, and as a rebuke to the effort charged against him of trying to divide the Dutch element. Hostility felt against him on account of the Jameson raid also had something to do with the result. The Africander majority is only three, and political measures against British rule would be quite impracticable. Another aspect of the result is open to misinterpretation; we refer to the alleged political defeat of Mr. Rhodes's policy. This extraordinary man had, it is believed, two distinct aims in seeking re-election. He wished, in the first place, to gain a complete victory for the Progressives who rallied round him, and, failing that, to make sure of his personal election as well as that of a strong minority, so that he could have a political vantage-ground in Cape Colony for the better co-ordination of his many schemes. In the latter respect he has won a distinct triumph quite sufficient for his needs. Had he regained the control of the Cape Legislature, that would not have very materially strengthened his present position. His horizon is conti-