

THE PETERSBURG FAILURE.

GENERAL BURNSIDE, it appears, has been "relieved from command," as a consequence of the enquiry into the causes of the failure of the assault on Petersburg, on the 30th ult., in which our troops suffered so severe a repulse and such heavy losses. General Burnside's career as a commander has not been a very brilliant one, and previous failures may have made him a convenient scape-goat for a blunder which damaged Mr. Lincoln's chances of re-election even more seriously than it disarranged Grant's plans for the capture of the rebel position. But we cannot help thinking that the deposed officer is made to bear more than his due weight of responsibility. It is now understood that at the time of the explosion of the mine there were but three brigades within the rebel works. Had the assault been made at various points, it would have been impossible for so small a force to have shown front on a line so extended, the opposition would have been weakened, our troops would have escaped the fearful losses they suffered, and victory, not defeat, would have been the result. Instead of this our troops were massed against the narrow face of the fort which the mine was expected to open, the assaulting column had to advance through a path made as difficult and defensible by the debris of the explosion as it previously was by the untouched earthworks; in so narrow an area numbers availed only to swell the carnage, and the point of attack was completely within the power of defence of the few troops inside. These, at least, were not Burnside's errors, and though, in our opinion, they contributed more to our defeat than the delay on which so much stress has been laid, we shall probably never hear that anybody was to blame. For, who should be?