

THE SUNDAY CALL

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THE MAN WHO WILL LEAD OUR ARMY IN CASE OF WAR

WITH every change in the Cuban situation there comes to the front some conspicuous American upon whom are focused the eyes of the world.

When the United States battle-ship Maine was destroyed in the harbor of Havana Captain Sigsbee was the hero of the hour. After him came Fitzhugh Lee, the American Consul-General to Cuba, who, by his firm insistence upon protecting the nation's interests in Cuba, became the chief figure in the exciting panorama of passing events. Then President McKinley, cool, conservative and alert, stepped into the foreground, and, by the influence of his strong personality, obtained by the unanimous vote of Congress an appropriation of \$50,000,000 for the national defense.

And now comes Nelson A. Miles, commander of the United States army, upon whom, in the event of war, will devolve the direction of the nation's fighting forces.

Nelson A. Miles now is a major-general. He is a born fighter, an experienced tactician and a thorough disciplinarian. Few men with the same military training have risen to his rank in the armies of the world. Shall he continue as a major-general, or shall the more distinguished title of lieutenant-general be conferred upon him? Shall the forces of the United States be commanded by an officer of inferior title to that of the commander of the other armies of the world, or shall his rank, as well as his position, be placed on a level with that of the heads of the armies in the other great nations?

These are questions to which Congress, in connection with its consideration of the Cuban situation, is giving a great deal of thought. Major-General Miles, for thirty-five years a conspicuous member of the United States army, has been proposed for the exalted rank of lieutenant-general. There is pending before Congress a joint resolution to make him, in title as well as in fact, the supreme head of the nation's army. It is contended that he should be lieutenant-general Miles not only because he now is but one of three major-generals in the army, but because of the years of distinguished service he has rendered to his country.

Army officers are keenly interested in the joint resolution now before Congress, and thousands of American citizens share with them the feeling that this is one of the first questions that should be settled. With three major-generals in the regular army, and with one of these major-generals in command, soldiers and citizens alike feel a keen interest in knowing whether Congress will decide or refuse to make the present head of the army an officer of supreme rank over all other officers. Why not, they ask, have one lieutenant-general?

Upon but six men since the nation was born has the title of lieutenant-general been conferred. Washington, Scott, Grant, Sherman, Sheridan and Schofield comprise the list of generals who thus have been honored. And of these six alone Grant was honored with the still higher title of general.

When the United States bore a war with France in 1798, and George Washington was called to the command of the army, he was given the title of lieutenant-general.

Another military hero, Winfield Scott, was made lieutenant-general half a century later.

During the Civil War the title was conferred upon Ulysses S. Grant, and when he was made general, in 1866, William T. Sherman became lieutenant-general. Upon the retirement of Lieutenant-General Sherman that title was conferred upon "Phil" Sheridan, who succeeded to the office. But when Sheridan died, in 1888, the title of lieutenant-general passed away with him.

John M. Schofield, head of the army after Sheridan, was made lieutenant-general by special act of Congress eight months before his retirement. When Major-General Nelson A. Miles succeeded to the office he did not succeed to the title, and several efforts



make the head of the army a lieutenant-general, and the three Senators who voted in the negative were Senators Bate, Cockrell and Pettus, all from Southern States.

Major-General Miles became the head of the army toward the end of 1885, and the proposition to make him a lieutenant-general was brought before Congress early in 1896. General Joseph R. Hawley of Connecticut was chairman of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, and he sent a copy of the joint resolution to Mr. Lamont, then Secretary of War. Senator Hawley requested Secretary Lamont to give the committee his opinion on the bill.

In his reply Secretary Lamont, after recalling the fact that but six men had held the title of lieutenant-general in the history of the nation, said: "In no instance has an officer attained this rank until he has commanded the whole of a separate army in battle and active campaign. The grade has been revived three times since its first creation, always with the object of conferring complimentary rank upon generals who had rendered eminent and distinguished services or those most distinguished for courage, skill and ability in war."

As for the major-generals of recent times, Secretary Lamont wrote: "The present major-generals of our army attained brilliant reputations for gallantry while commanding subdivisions of army corps during the late conflict, and have added to their laurels since by the efficient performance of arduous services on the frontier, but it is no reflection upon those excellent officers to say that the services they have so far rendered are not of that exalted character that has hitherto been regarded as prerequisite to the advancement now proposed."

This opinion of Secretary Lamont evidently prevailed with the members of the Fifty-fourth Congress, for the joint resolution was passed in neither branch, although it made some progress in the House. Since that time, however, the distinguished services performed by General Miles have come to be better understood, and there is a strong feeling that the present head of the army will be a lieutenant-general before the expiration of the present session, Secretary Alger's earnest advocacy of the joint resolution is certain to have a marked effect, and General Miles' admirers in the army are losing no opportunity to press forward the project.

In whatever light one chooses to view the matter, General Miles is a most interesting personality. He won the confidence of the principal men in the Civil War by his conduct during the four years' conflict, and he since has made a world-wide reputation as a fearless Indian fighter. He has the manner of a successful business man when out of his uniform, and is every inch the soldier when engaged in any military function. He is quiet, firm and resolute, and at all times gentlemanly. To the casual observer General Miles appears to be a man who has had a successful business career, rather than a man who had been fighting for two-thirds of his active life and who has recovered from four serious bullet wounds.

One effective answer is given by the friends of General Miles to those persons who oppose making him a lieutenant-general on the ground that he did not attain to sufficient prominence in the Civil War. That answer is that no man, either in the Civil War or in any other conflict, attained to the distinction at the age of 26 years that Miles won under Grant. When this officer's age is kept in mind, what he did from 1861 to 1865 becomes most conspicuous.

He was not quite 22 years old when Fort Sumter was fired upon, and was then employed in a store not far from Boston. He had come into the possession of \$1000, and promptly devoted this money to organizing a company of volunteers. He succeeded in borrowing \$2500 more from a relative, giving his personal note as security. With this money young Miles equipped his company, was elected as its captain, and made all arrangements to go to the front. But the Governor of Massachusetts, learning the age of the young captain, refused to issue a commission to him. Instead he made Miles a lieutenant, and in that capacity he joined the Federal forces.

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MAJOR GENERAL NELSON A. MILES.

If war is declared General Miles would, unless superseded, direct the invasion and command the volunteer army. At present he is in command of the regular standing army, U. S. A., and directly controls all forts inland and along our coasts. There is a bill now before Congress to raise him to the rank of Lieutenant-General, a title that has been held by only six soldiers in the history of the nation—Washington, Scott, Grant, Sherman, Sheridan and Schofield.

have been made during the last two years to re-establish the title.

There is no army politics in the joint resolution now pending in both branches of Congress to make Nelson A. Miles a lieutenant-general. Democrats and Republicans favor it and other Democrats and Republicans oppose it. General Miles was designated to succeed General Schofield by former President Cleveland, through Daniel S. Lamont, his Secretary of War. Yet Secretary Lamont, three months after General Miles' elevation, wrote a letter in which he strongly opposed reviving the title of lieutenant-general. On the other hand, General Russell A. Alger, Mr. Lamont's successor as Secretary of War, is as strongly in favor of making Miles a lieutenant-general as Secretary Lamont was opposed to it.

It is a very interesting side light to all of the current war talk, is this question of whether the armies of the United States shall be commanded by a major-general, with two other major-generals as assistants, or by a lieutenant-general. In the event of war, the Federal forces would be commanded by Major-General Miles, under whose immediate direction has been carried on all of the work of coast defense undertaken since the passage of the \$50,000,000 appropriation.

Under Major-General Miles would be Major-General Wesley Merritt and Major-General John R. Brooke, with Brigadier-General Graham in charge of the Department of the South. There would be no confusion of major-generals, probably, and no member of the army could be excused should he forget that Major-General Miles is the senior officer of that title.

But Major-General Merritt, now commanding the Department of the East, undoubtedly would take charge of the forces in the field, and Major-General Brooke, who would be sent to Governor's Island to take charge of the Department of the East in Major-General Merritt's absence, would be certain to figure prominently in subsequent events.

It is partly because of the confusion that might follow the multiplicity of major-generals that Congress is being urged to take immediate action on the resolution to make Major-General Miles a lieutenant-general. If that is done there will be no reason for confusion as to who is the ranking head of the army.

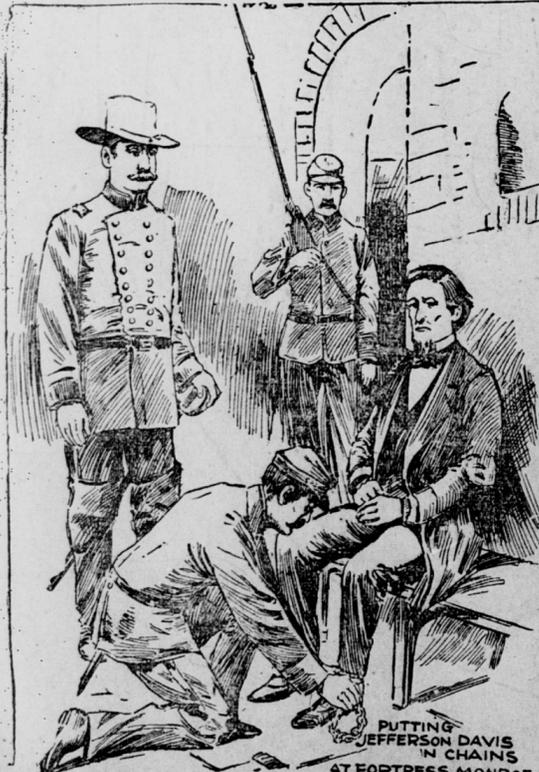
Few, if any, other armies of the world, are organized without a lieutenant-general, and it was because of this fact that the present movement to revive the title was started. General Miles has scores of enthusiastic admirers among the officers of the army who would like to see him made lieutenant-general, both because he is the head of the army and because they believe his services entitle him to the honor. They hold that a man who organized a volunteer company when he was 22 years old, served throughout the Civil War with distinction, and afterward made a world-wide reputation as an Indian fighter should receive the title of lieutenant-general when called upon to perform the duties of that responsible position.

It was Daniel S. Lamont who furnished the first argument in opposition to conferring the title of lieutenant-

general upon Nelson A. Miles. That fact attained interest because of the other fact that it was Secretary Lamont who, obeying the instructions of President Grover Cleveland, formally placed General Miles at the head of the United States army. Since Secretary Lamont first made known his opposition, more than two years ago, certain Southern leaders, nearly all of whom were prominent in the Civil War, have joined in the effort to defeat the project.

General Miles was a mere boy when he entered the Union army, and he rose so rapidly during the conflict that he came out of the army with the title of brevet major-general, although he was but 26 years old. After the war, when Jefferson Davis was sent to Fortress Monroe as a prisoner, Miles was selected by Secretary Stanton to take charge of the noted captive. Those were uncertain times, and the young officer took every precaution to see that his prisoner did not escape. It has been charged against him that General Miles put Davis in chains, and because of this charge there is much opposition to making him a lieutenant-general on the part of Southern members of Congress.

General Miles' friends have explained that in his treatment of the President of the Confederacy he merely obeyed explicit instructions from Washington, but the vote in the Senate Committee on Military Affairs the other day indicated that the Davis incident still rankles in the bosom of the Southerners. Six members of the Senate committee voted in favor of the joint resolution to



PUTTING JEFFERSON DAVIS IN CHAINS AT FORTRESS MONROE



GENERAL MILES AS AN INDIAN FIGHTER