

Preserve the American Republic

By Lieutenant General NELSON A. MILES, U. S. A., Retired

LET US FOR a moment consider our condition — more than one hundred millions of people occupying a continent walled in by two great oceans, exercising the largest measure of civil government, enjoying more independence, freedom of thought and action, more security, prosperity and happiness than any people have ever enjoyed in the world's history.

We might well ask the question: "Do our people rightly comprehend and appreciate these unprecedented and bountiful blessings? Do our citizens realize the centuries of fortitude, dangers, valor and sacrifice endured by our ancestors before our freedom and independence was secured?"

Our ancestors had long endured the oppression and tyranny of arbitrary and autocratic governments. A little more than a century ago the great mass of the human race were serfs, slaves or abject subjects of some despotic power, yet the spirit of liberty and the rights of the individual had been awakened in the minds and hearts of the people; and they hoped and prayed for a better sphere of life.

The Magna Charta, June 15, 1215; the compact on the Mayflower, November 11, 1620, and the Bill of Rights, February 13, 1688, were instrumental in promoting a desire for freedom and creating a more enlightened civilization. The splendid patriotism of our fathers in 1776, inspired by the spirit of liberty, contended against the most powerful nation of the world for seven long years to establish our independence.

That was a heroic age when the resolute men in every section of the sparsely populated colonies of the Atlantic coast espoused the cause of liberty. It brought forward from among that self-reliant, sturdy race the noblest and the bravest, the highest and most representative men of any age or of any country. Orators, scholars, statesmen, soldiers were the controlling spirits. There never has been a time

when both in war and in peace this country has produced as strong a class of men intellectually, physically and morally as the men of that age. The highest, noblest and grandest with them all was that great character which was not only first in war but first in peace.

The citizens of America need not look elsewhere than to the Father of their Country for an example and a true patriotic character. No more instructive

lesson could be given to the rising generations than that which is found in his public acts, his state papers, his wise counsels, his remarkable prophecy, and the sage warnings of the patriot and statesman who comprehended the passions and frailties of the human heart, and the danger that would environ the great government that he had been so instrumental in establishing.

He desired to prevent our nation from running the course that had "hitherto marked the destiny of nations," and it was his prayer that the "Union might be perpetual," that the "free constitution might be carefully maintained and its administration conducted with wisdom and virtue," that the "happiness of the people under the auspices of liberty might be complete," and that they "might have the glory of recommending it to the affection and adoption of every

ON THE EVE of the last national election Lieutenant General Nelson A. Miles, a venerable old chieftain of the military forces of the United States, now retired, wrote this stirring article on patriotism and true citizenship at the request of the editor of the Lions Club Magazine. A veteran of the Civil War and a leading figure for many years in the forces of national defense, this aged citizen who has spent his entire life in the service of his country is well qualified to speak admonishingly to those who are to carry on. Though for him life's sun is setting he sits in his little world, in a Washington hospital, keeping the vigil while the shadows of evening are falling, interpreting the spirit of the America of the past, the America that fought its way to the high plane of human liberty and justice, annihilating and shattering the forces of doubt and fear whose strength had withstood all attacks through long ages. Having caught a vision of the America to be, this venerable patriot is well qualified to give Young America counsel and advice and in a reminiscent way recount her blessings, caution her against reckless indifference and point to her responsibilities as he throws the torch of liberty and justice to stronger hands ere his arms that held it so high shall fall limp at his side. Every American, whether he has been born to his rights or has become a participant through adoption, should pray for a baptism of that noble patriotism that radiates through the life and thoughts, through the very soul of this aged American. Though his span of life is finished he belongs for ages to come to that immortal army of Americans that will furnish young America with its inspirations, aspirations, lofty dreams and its determination to retain the faith, to keep the inheritance unsullied and the flag unstained. — The Editor.

nation that was as yet a stranger to it." He wrote to Lafayette that he "believed they had created the best constitution ever devised by human minds and that he hoped it might be administered with such wisdom and integrity that in time the people of the country would have the glory of commending it to the people of the world who were then strangers to it." That prayer of Washington's has been answered.

Patriotism does not alone require heroic acts upon the red fields of war. The patriotism of Benjamin Franklin, Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, Roger

(Continued on Page Eleven.)