

G. N. MILES DROPS DEAD

(Continued from page one.)

times at the point of death from wounds, and emerged from the great struggle the possessor of many enviable citations for bravery and distinguished service. Continuing in the army, he fought and pursued Indians on the Great Plains for more than 20 years; led the army of occupation in Porto Rico during the Spanish-American war, and although long retired when the United States entered the World war, he was ready and eager to participate once again in the service to which his life had been devoted.

It was the saddest disappointment of a long and adventurous career when, despite his best efforts, General Miles was not recalled to active service in 1917. He had been retired in 1903 upon reaching the age limit, but when the United States entered the European war, he asked to be sent to Siberia with the American troops. It was decided, however, that an exception could not be made in his case.

His last military service was in 1916, when he presided over the medal of honor board which reviewed the list of officers and men who had been honored by the nation with that decoration. General Miles received his first military training at the hands of a former officer of the French army who eked out a livelihood in Boston by teaching a number of young men the tactics employed by the French army. It was quite natural that his ambitions should center on the army, for he sprang from a long line of fighting colonists on the paternal side. The family traced its ancestry back to the Rev. John Miles, a "fighting parson," who, upon the outbreak of "King Philip's War" in 1675, girded on his sword and led the colonists against the Indians. Captain Miles's home was fortified by the pioneers, and from there he led many subsequent forays against the red men.

Daniel Miles and Jacob Miles, great-grandfather and grand-father, respectively, of General Nelson A. Miles, fought in the Revolutionary war and were "in at the death" when Yorktown fell. His father, Daniel also was a fighter.

The elder Daniel Miles at one time possessed a large fortune, which he had built up through long years of unremitting toil. Just as the country was settling back after the War of Independence, Daniel Miles was one of those who reposed enough confidence in the government he had aided in establishing to convert his farms and treasure into colonial currency. There was a great wave of counterfeiting sweeping the land at the time, however, and hardly had the Miles fortune been counted out in paper money when the government suddenly repudiated the entire issue, and the family, along with many others, was reduced almost to poverty.

An Indian Fighter
Young Nelson himself was a fighter and Indian vanquisher from his earliest youth. While at school he was never so happy as when leading his comrades against imaginary "Indians" who were always uppermost in the young soldier's mind. His elder brother, Daniel, who taught him in school, used this military predilection to calm the boy's prankish moments. He was sore pressed to discipline Nelson until he used military terms. Being kept after school or threatened had little effect, but when the teacher said "Nelson, you have disobeyed the command of your superior officer, and are a prisoner of war," the results were immediate.

General Miles was born at Westminister, Mass., April 8, 1839, and received an academic education there and in Boston. In later years he was awarded the honorary degree of LL.D. by Harvard, Brown and Colgate.

When the Civil War broke out, many civilians organized units with their own funds, and later took command of their townsmen in the army. When the Roxbury Guards were recruited, the enthusiastic citizens of that town promised a bounty of \$20 for each man who enlisted. The money was delayed, however, and when the company was completed and the funds still failed to materialize, Miles took the only thousand dollars he had in the world and by borrowing \$2500 more, paid the men their bonus. He was never reimbursed by the forgetful town council. Miles passed through the bloody battle of Antietam unscathed and won further commendation. At Chancellorsville he again elicited the praise of Hancock and was marked for promotion. Some years later he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for the nation's highest distinction, "for distinguished gallantry at Chancellorsville. It was at this battle that he received his most serious wound, a shot in the abdomen. It kept him out of the battle of Gettysburg; but he recovered in time to take part in Grant's campaign against Richmond.

By some queer coincidence many years after the war, Miles met the Confederate soldier who fired the bullet. The man was only 150 yards from his target, and only the fact that the bullet struck Miles's belt buckle saved the officer from death.

"I aimed at your heart," the man said, "but think the motion of your horse carried the ball a little low. After what has occurred during those thirty-six years I am glad I missed that shot."

Soon Became Famous
Although only 24 years old, Miles had become famous in army circles, and Grant, Meade, Burnside, McClellan, Hooker, Hancock and every other field officer under whom he served urged his promotion. He continued his record at the Wilderness, and at Spotsylvania he led his men with such bravery that he soon received his commission as brigadier general. He was later honored with the brevet of major general, with the citation, "for gallant and meritorious service at Spotsylvania."

His last service in the war was to pursue Lee's forces to their surrender at Appomattox, winning Grant's highest praise. He was then given command of eastern Maryland and Virginia and at Fortress Monroe was given the custody of Jefferson Davis, after the plot which resulted in the assassination of Lincoln. Several unpleasant duties resulted from this task, which brought sharp criticism at the time from southern statesmen

who charged him with having used unduly harsh measures to safeguard the prisoner, among which was the shackling of Mr. Davis.

"Jefferson Davis was not held and arrested for being president of the Confederate states," General Miles said in defending himself, "but was captured for his part in the great plot which aimed at the deaths of Lincoln, Seward, Grant and many other government leaders. A reward of \$100,000 was posted, and I was ordered to use every precaution in imprisoning him. He was later released under a similar bond and died of old age twenty-two years later."

At the age of 26 Miles was mustered out of the Volunteers, when the war ceased, and was recommissioned in the regular establishment. After commanding the department of Maryland and Virginia, he was detailed to command the department of North Carolina, and here showed his great ability in the tasks of peacetime reconstruction, far more difficult than those of war.

His Indian service began in 1870. He then embarked on campaigns which were to bring to a close the Indian wars which had lasted through all the history of the country. He won the thanks of the legislatures of four western states, and the ranks, in succession, of brigadier and major general in the regular army.

He made a forced march of 168 miles in the winter of 1877, when the temperature at times dropped to 40 degrees below zero, and captured Chief Joseph and his Nez Perces who had long caused the government trouble.

Crazy Horse, Lame Deer, Spotted Eagle, Elk Horn, Broad Road, Natchez and other Indian chiefs quailed before his advance. Geronimo and his bloody Apaches, when chased and cornered by Miles, refused to capitulate unless they could do so to Miles personally. He conquered the last great Indian uprising, in 1890, during which Sitting Bull was shot, and the

other rebellious Indians meekly surrendered when they heard that it was the "Big Chief Bear Coat" who was on the trail.

It is interesting to note that serving under Miles at this time were Captain Anson Mills, later a famous general, and a young second lieutenant who was afterwards to skyrocket to fame and the command of the army, Leonard A. Wood.

Was Kind to Indians
Miles's tactics in treating with the Indians had their wild as well as bloody phases. He advocated kindness to them and always made it a point to place in charge of their agencies and reservations officers noted for their integrity, to guard the Indians from thefts and other depredations. So successful was his system that it was quite generally adopted by the government upon his recommendation.

Nor is subjugation of the Indian the only debt the government, and especially the settlers of the west, owes to General Miles. With characteristic foresight, he saw that in time the great western plains would be settled by westward-moving colonists, and years before reclamation by irrigation was thought of, he had reported on the feasibility of this project to the government, and recommended spreading the nourishing waters on the arid land. General Miles always prided himself on being "the father of irrigation and reclamation."

In 1894 Miles was called to subdue the historic Chicago railroad strike. He handled the crisis with such tact and executive ability that he won further renown.

President Cleveland rewarded the general's distinguished services by appointing him commanding general of the United States army. He was then 55 years old. During his tenure in office he represented the army as observer in the Turko-Grecian war, and at Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee in 1897.

When the war with Spain broke out Miles found he had several influential

foes in the administration, and it is said they prevented his taking active command in the field in Cuba. However, he was sent to close the campaign at Santiago, and then went to Porto Rico.

At the age of 60 he was raised to the rank of lieutenant general, the sixth army officer to bear that rank.

Political enemies were now rife in the army. Miles was in opposition to the administration. He was declared to have taken the stand that as commander of the army he was the supreme military power of the country and was therefore unwilling to take orders from the administration. Forgetting, it was said, the powers of the president as commander-in-chief, the fiery war horse was constantly quar-

reling with the president and secretaries of war. He quarreled with President Cleveland and his secretary, Lamont; with McKinley and Secretary Alger, and with Roosevelt and Root.

He was officially reprimanded for publicly endorsing Admiral Dewey's report in the Schley case, and because of strained relations with Roosevelt, he was sent, shortly before retiring, to make a tour of the world to inspect the armies of other powers. On his 64th birthday, having reached the age of retirement, but yet never an old man, General Miles was retired from office without the appreciation and praise customary toward retiring commanders.

He retained his fighting spirit however and maintained his military con-

nections by becoming adjutant general of the Massachusetts militia, in which he served for some time. He devoted considerable time to writing several books and a number of magazine articles, both before and after retirement. "Serving the Republic," "and "Personal Recollections," his two books, describe his career from New England to the time of his retirement, and are full of Civil War detail and "wild west" adventures.

General Miles married Miss Mary Hoyt Sherman, niece of the famous Civil War leader, in 1868, while serving with western troops. Two children, a son and a daughter were born to them. The son, Colonel Sherman Miles, established an enviable record in the World War, and was later sent

to Constantinople as an observer for the United States when the Turkish army defeated the Greeks in 1922 and re-entered Europe. The daughter, Cecile Sherman Miles, married Colonel Samuel Reber, U. S. A.

General Miles survived his wife many years, preserving his great vitality through his advancing years. His carriage was erect, his eyes remained clear and ever sparkling with humor, and his memory retained the clearness of his youthful days.

In recent years much of his time was devoted to golf and walking. Almost every day the wealth was fair he could be found on the public links along the Potomac, or at one of the country clubs in the vicinity of Washington.

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