

pose of organizing and recruiting it. After it was complete I was chosen captain. I had received my commission, and was about ready to go to the field, when Governor Andrews wrote me, asking me to return the commission, as he did not think so young a man as myself ought to be in command of a company. I was at this time twenty-one. I sent my commission back, and he sent me that of a first lieutenant instead."

"That must have seemed very hard," said I.

"Yes," was the reply, "but I had to accept it. I could not fight the governor of Massachusetts. I wanted to go to the army, and I obeyed. It was not long, however, before Colonel Barlow of the sixty-first New York volunteers asked me if I did not want to join his regiment, and through the governor of New York he made me his lieutenant colonel. Then he was promoted, and I became colonel of that New York regiment. It is rather curious that, though I went into the army from Massachusetts, nearly all of my work during the civil war was with New York soldiers rather than with those of my own state. Later on I was in command of a division made of New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio regiments, and at near the close of the war I had command of the second army corps, in which there were thirty-two New York regiments. At this time I was twenty-five. I was a major general, and was wearing the same uniform that I wear today. I have, in fact, the same yellow sash and the same sword."

"You were at the battle of Appomattox, general. Did you see Lee's surrender to Grant?"

"No, I did not," replied General Miles. "I was at the front, in command of my troops, and though General Lee's preliminary correspondence in regard to the surrender passed through my lines, I did not see the actual surrender. General Lee came up to our lines, expecting to meet General Grant there."

"You must have seen much of Grant at this time, general. How did he impress you?"

"Yes, I saw him every day. I was struck most by his intense earnestness. He seemed to have only one thought, and that was to succeed. He fought every battle as though that was to be his last one. He did not appear to be troubled at all as to the future. He wanted to succeed at the time, and he was ready to risk everything for success."

"How about President Lincoln?"

"He came frequently to the army, especially after a defeat. He had a fatherly influence on the soldiers. They all admired him and loved him."

The conversation here turned to the general's experience at Fortress Monroe, where General Miles had command at the time that Jefferson Davis was confined, and then came back to the battles of the war. General Miles had just finished answering some questions as to the terrible fight at Chancellorsville, where he was severely wounded, when I asked:

"General, I wonder how a soldier feels when he comes under the fire of battle for the first time. You were only twenty-one at the time of your first fight. Do you remember how you felt when the bullets began to whistle around you? Were you not afraid?"

"No, I can't say that I was afraid," replied General Miles. "I think soldiers

always feel exhilarated when they are about to go into battle. The struggle calls forth all that is in them. Every faculty is exerted to its full, every nerve is stretched to its utmost. I know of no greater pleasure nor more inspiring moment for the soldier than when he first faces his enemy and makes the charge which is to win or lose a battle. The excitement of victory is also great, and on the other hand, there is nothing so depressing as the knowledge that you are losing ground and may be defeated."

"You have been wounded several times, general. How does it feel to be shot?"

"That depends upon where the ball strikes you," replied Gen. Miles. "If it passes through the fleshy part of the body without hitting the bone, it is a half mile away before you realize that you are shot. If it meets with resistance, however, you get the full force of the bullet, and it strikes you like a sledge hammer. I was once shot in the neck. The ball cut along the side of my throat, under my ear, and passed on. At Chancellorsville, a ball struck my waist-belt plate, and then deflecting, went off into my body. The blow paralyzed me. I could not move for weeks from my waist downward, and every one thought I would die. I was taken home to Massachusetts, and after a few days I surprised the doctor by moving my right foot. They took this for a sign that the ball was in the opposite side of my body, and probed for it, laying the bone of my hip bare. They found the bone broken, and took out nine pieces, leaving one, which they failed to find. They found the bullet several inches further down than these pieces of broken bone. At another time I was wounded in the shoulder by the half of a bullet. I was holding my sword up to my shoulder when the bullet struck the edge of the blade and was cut in two, one-half of the bullet flying on and the other going into my shoulder. At another time I was wounded in the foot, the ball striking a Mexican spur that I was wearing, and going off into my foot. By the way, I think I have the spur." Here the general opened a drawer in his desk and pulled out a big Mexican spur which was broken on one side. The break was caused by the bullet striking the spur.

It is not generally known that Gen. Miles had a good chance to enter political life at the time the war closed. The truth is that he was offered the nomination for Congress by one of the Massachusetts districts. Had he accepted, his abilities are such that he would probably have taken high rank as a statesman. Thinking of this, I asked:

"General, have you ever regretted staying in the army? Don't you think you might have had a pleasanter life had you given up your military career at the close of the war?"

"No," replied Gen. Miles, "I have not. I like the army; and my life, though it has had some hardships, has not been an unpleasant one. I have had many advantages. I have had a chance to see the great west grow from a wilderness to an empire, and have been permitted to work in its development. When I went west to take my place as colonel of one of the regiments of the regular army, from the Canadian boundary to the Rio Grande and from Topeka to the Rockies was little more

than an Indian camping ground. This strip is about 400 miles wide and 1,300 miles long. It is as big as all the Atlantic states with Kentucky and Ohio. It is bigger than New England, with New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, added to it. It is a country equal, in short, to that of the best part of the United States. I have seen this vast territory opened to settlement. I have seen the Indians upon it subdued and changed from fighting braves to good citizens. They have taken up lands and they are now adopting our ways. Upon their old camping grounds have grown up big cities, and I have seen a population of millions construct an empire on the wilds where they have hunted. It is, I think, a great thing to have witnessed all this, and I deem myself fortunate in having done so."

At one time during the conversation the subject of military improvements came up, and I asked Gen. Miles where he thought would be the next great advance in army matters.

He replied: "It will probably be in the line of transportation of men and equipment. The bicycle and the horseless vehicle will have much to do in the wars of the future. Put an army on bicycles and their opponents would be at their mercy if they were not similarly equipped. The bicycle troops could feed off of the supplies of their enemy's country. They could move so rapidly that the others could not catch them. They could choose their own positions and fly from one point to another at a few hours' notice. They could forestall supplies and have every position of advantage, both in attacking and retreating. Take the horseless carriage. The French have shown that some such vehicles will go at the rate of sixteen miles an hour and at the same time carry four persons. They had a competitive race for such vehicles from Paris to Bordeaux and return, a distance of 750 miles, and the average speed was sixteen miles per hour. The different motive powers used was steam, electricity, naphtha and petroleum. Petroleum came out ahead, and the amount used was very small, a single gallon carrying a small carriage over a hundred miles of travel. There is no doubt but that such vehicles can be utilized in place of horses. I am glad of it. The horse has been the slave of mankind for thousands of years, and it is time that he should have a rest."

"What do you think, general, of the possibilities of getting an armor which will be bullet proof? You know this is being experimented upon in Europe."

"I doubt it," was the reply. "Any such armor, to be really effective, must be too heavy for use."

"How about dynamite, general? May the day not come when a few men with a bushel of dynamite and a balloon will blot out a city or an army?"

"It may come," replied Gen. Miles, and it would be effective if one nation could have a monopoly of such inventions and such explosives, but such things cannot be. If one nation has them, others will have them, and battles will go on all the same. It may be that the wars of the future will be fought to some extent above ground. We may have battles in the air, and the efficiency of modern guns is already such that in such battles balloons would be in great danger. We now have mortars which will shoot three miles straight up in the