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**GENERAL FITZHUGH LEE.**

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WASHINGTON, June 1st, 1896.



**B**EFORE THIS letter is published General Fitzhugh Lee will probably be in Havana acting as the American consul general and also as personal confidential adviser to President

Cleveland as to the Cuban troubles. He will for the time have the most important diplomatic post under our government, and he is, I believe, especially fitted for the position. General Lee is a man of high culture, a soldier of experience, and his life has been spent in dealing with public men and affairs.

I spent a morning with him here in Washington shortly before his appointment and had a chat with him about himself and public matters. Just before meeting him I had finished looking over his "Life of Robert E. Lee," and our talk of this brought out some of his own war experiences which have never been given to the public. He has, you know, had some of the most narrow escapes of any man now living. Three horses were shot from under him at the battle of Winchester, and he has been wounded again and again, both in his Indian service and in the war of the rebellion.

As I looked at General Lee I could not realize that he had been through so many perils. His modest, unassuming manner does not comport with the idea of battle scars, and it is hard to associate his low, sweet voice with that which in stentorian tones gave the orders to the brigades under him when he was the chief cavalry general of the southern confederacy. His pictures give you but little idea of the man. You need the colors of a Titian or a Rubens to bring out his characteristic features. General Lee has a complexion of that delicate red and white which shows the veins running here and there through it. His eyes are of the brightest blue, and his head makes you think of a piece of fine china thatched and bearded with the purest of frosted silver. He has a striking face. His forehead is high and full, his nose straight and his jaw firm. He is under medium height, and though his form is well rounded, it is muscular rather than fat. He stands as straight as a West Point cadet, and though he is now sixty he moves about with all the

vitality that he showed when he was in the regular army in Texas about forty years ago.

I found General Lee very loath to talk about himself, and I had to ask many questions to draw him out. During the talk his service in Texas as a lieutenant came up, and I showed him a statement which his friend Major Hayes had made concerning the great Indian fight in which he and General Lee took part. Major Hayes is now in the regular army. General Lee was, I am told, very anxious to take him with him to Cuba, but owing to the rules of the service was not able to accomplish his end. He read the statement very carefully, and said that it was substantially correct. The incident occurred in 1860. Fitzhugh Lee was a lieutenant at the time and Hayes was a bugler. Both were in service at Colorado, Texas, when the scouts reported that a body of Indians had massacred some settlers near by. The officer commanding, Major Van Dorn, at once took Lee, Hayes and other soldiers and started in pursuit of the Indians. It was in the winter, and it was snowing hard. They marched sixty-eight miles in less than two days, and finally came upon the Indians on a ridge of timber. During the charge the troops became separated, Fitzhugh Lee and Hayes going together in pursuit of two Indians who were making for the timber. They killed one before they reached the woods, and followed the other for several miles through the trees. There was much snow on the ground, and they could see his tracks. Finally they came out of the woods and in the distance saw him hiding behind a ledge of rock. Lee at once rushed toward him, firing as he ran. The Indian shot an arrow at Lee. It struck him, passing through his arm and breaking off. A moment later the Indian, who was a chief of more than six feet in height, jumped for Lee and tried to stab him. Lee had a revolver in his right hand. The Indian grabbed the barrel. The revolver went off, but the Indian was not hit, the pistol dropping to the ground. Fitzhugh Lee was six inches shorter than the Indian. He saw that he could do nothing if he allowed the Indian to use his knife, and he threw his arms around him and hugged him for dear life. The Indian tried again and again to stab him, but Lee held tightly to him, and the two swayed to and fro, packing the snow under their feet.

"At this time," said Major Hayes, "I started to Lee's rescue, but I did not dare to shoot, as both Lee and the Indian were twisting and writhing, so that I could not be sure of not killing both at the same time, or Lee instead of the Indian. As I approached, however, I saw the two fall to the ground with Fitzhugh

Lee on top. As they went down they struck the ground not far from the revolver. Lee saw it. He grabbed it and shot the Indian through the head. The mouth of the savage was open at the time. He was just about to give one of his terrible yells, and the ball went through his cheeks and mouth without striking a tooth. A second later Lee discharged the revolver again, the ball this time going through the Indian's brain. The savage at once relaxed, his head fell back and Lee rose to his feet. He first shook himself and felt of his body to see if he was wounded, for the knife had cut his coat. I asked him how he felt. He replied: 'Oh, I am all right now, and my muscle is in good trim. I used to be very fond of wrestling when I was at college, and it was my knowledge of wrestling that saved my life today. When I first grabbed that Indian I thought he had me, but at the last moment I remembered the old 'Virginia back-heel trip,' and that brought the red skin down.'"

"Yes, that's the truth," said Fitzhugh Lee, as he looked over the above story. "Hayes was there, and he saw the fight, but if you publish it give it as coming from him and not from me."

I here asked General Lee how he happened to enter the confederate army. He replied:

"Before I resigned from the Union army I waited to see what my father and my Uncle Robert would do. I was, you know, about twenty-five years old at the time. I had been ordered from Texas to West Point to serve there as instructor of cavalry and I was acting as such at the breaking out of the war. I wrote my father and uncle and asked them what they were going to do. They replied that they were not certain as yet, but at last I saw a report in the New York Herald stating that they had both resigned from the service. On that same day I received a telegram from my father containing these words: 'Do as you please.' He did not telegraph me to resign, but left the whole matter to me. I did not reply to this message, but I at once went and got a seven days' leave of absence to go to Washington, intending to there offer my resignation. As I passed through New York I met Phil. Kearney, whom I had known before. He asked me where I was going and I told him I was going to Washington to resign my services to the Union army. He replied, 'Well, I am going to Washington to offer mine, so we may as well travel together. You can act as the chiet if we are stopped by the southerners, and I will do my part if there is any trouble with the northerners as to our getting through the lines.' I agreed to this and we traveled together. At Havre de Grace we found