



HAVE WE A GENERAL AMONG US?

THEY say at Washington that we have some thirty-eight to forty Major-Generals, and nearly three hundred Brigadiers; and now the question is, have we one man who can fairly be called a first-class General in the proper meaning of the term?

Before this war broke out, it was the prevailing opinion in military circles—more or less inspired by General *Scott*—that "*Bob Lee*," now Commander-in-Chief of the rebel army, was the ablest strategist in our service. He had been chief of staff to the Conqueror of Mexico. Next to him, Albert S. *Johnston*, who commanded our expedition to Utah, and was killed on the battlefield of Shiloh, was understood to rank in point of military capacity. But it was doubted by General *Scott* whether either of these two men, or any other officer in the service, was capable of manuvring 50,000 men.

When the rebellion occurred, and *Scott*, with his rare sagacity, foresaw the nature of the struggle, and that we must have a *Hoche* or a *Wolfe* to lead our army, himself being too old for the work, the question arose—who should be the man? *Lee* and *Johnston* were with the enemy. *Harney* was not trusted. Between *Scott* and *Wool* a deadly feud reigned. *Twiggs* had played traitor. *Patterson*, like *Scott*, was superannuated. After much consultation the choice of Government fell upon *Irwin M`Dowell*, a soldier of fair repute, who had been employed for many years in the bureaux at Washington. The recent court-martials have effectually silenced the calumnies which at one time obscured General *M`Dowell`S* fair fame; no blot now rests upon his honor. But his original appointment was probably due to political influence, and his subsequent record at Bull Run, and in the campaign of 1862, showed that, while his abilities were respectable, he had no claim to the first place among Generals.

To him succeeded *M`Clellan*, whom every one pronounced the coming man. Such opportunities as he enjoyed have seldom been vouchsafed to any one in any country at any time. And it is still an open question whether or no he made the most of them. For though his delays were

exasperating, it is not sure that greater haste would have been safe: though his peninsular campaign was a failure, it is not sure that this was not caused exclusively by the refusal of the Government at the last hour to allow M`Dowell to co-operate with him: though he wasted a precious month in inaction after Antietam, and refused to move at the command of the President, it is not sure that if he had moved he would not have met his Fredericksburg. It is certain that he possesses some of the qualities of a first-rate General. As a strategist, he is admitted to be perfect. His plans are comprehensive, far-reaching, and safe. He never neglects "lines of retreat." He knows the value of earth-works, and is aware that cannon-shot hit hard. He has made an army, and, more than that, he has won their love, as Napoleon won the love of his *vieille garde*. But, on the other hand, it is doubted by his critics whether he has the dash and daring which are essential to the making of a first-class General. He is said never to have made an attack upon the enemy, but always to have waited to be attacked. In him caution is said to preponderate over enterprise: he is always prone rather to exaggerate than to underrate an enemy's strength: a man, it is even said, of more science than genius. Such a soldier would be admirable and perfect in command of a fortress, but could not aspire to the first rank among Generals.

Burnside's place among soldiers is undetermined. He has hitherto given proof of the very qualities which M`Clellan is said to lack, viz., energy and daring. His attack upon the rebel batteries at Roanoke and Newbern, and the attempt to storm *Lee's* intrenchments at Fredericksburg, were not at all in the M`Clellan style. They remind one more of *Napoleon's* method. He resembles M`Clellan in his perseverance and in his popularity with his men. It remains to be seen whether he possesses the other great qualities of that eminent commander—his coolness, his power of combination, his foresight, and his rapidity of conception. If he does, he will prove the General for the crisis.

The West has been prolific of Generals of fair merit. *Lyon*, had he lived, would probably have stood high. General *Pope*, who at one time enjoyed a repute second to none, struck his name off the list of competitors for fame by the disastrous campaign ending at Centreville. *Ulysses Grant* has given evidence of enterprise, determination, and personal gallantry which have stood him in good stead. He was very fortunate at Fort Donelson. Whether his record at Shiloh—where he would have been destroyed but for accidents beyond his control—will bear the test of inquiry, is a question yet undetermined. However, he has still opportunities of vindicating his claim to the confidence reposed in him by General *Halleck*. *General W.*

T. Sherman is making his record at Vicksburg; hitherto he has been known as a capable officer and a far-seeing man. General *Curtis* did extremely well on the frontier of Missouri, and showed such administrative ability that, when General *Halleck* was called East, he succeeded him at St. Louis. General *Blunt* has lately won laurels in Arkansas; his march to Van Buren is one of the finest exploits of the war, and if his expedition terminates successfully he will rank high among our heroes.

At the present moment, however, the most promising of our soliders is *William S. Rosecrans*. This officer was selected by General *M`Clellan* at the outbreak of the war, and served under him in Western Virginia. He, like *M`Clellan*, had served in the army, resigned, and engaged in scientific and business pursuits. When *M`Clellan* was ordered to Washington *Rosecrans* succeeded him, and thoroughly accomplished his work. He drove the rebels out of Western Virginia, and enabled the people of that State to organize a State government in peace. But for an accident he would have "bagged" *Floyd* and his army. After a period of idleness, he was sent to Corinth, where he spent some weeks in necessary preparations, knowing that the enemy must attack him if he remained still. The attack came, and resulted not only in the repulse, but in the destruction of the rebel army, and enabled General *Grant* to move forward to Oxford. Promoted then to the command of the Army of the Ohio, he spent six weeks at Nashville in concentrating his forces, and accumulating equipments and supplies for the campaign. He moved on 29th December, and after five days' desperate fighting, completely defeated, and "drove" the rebel army under Bragg, which, according to the Richmond papers, was "to repossess Nashville within a week." As a strategist *Rosecrans* has proved himself second to none. In Western Virginia his combinations were most ingenious, and his foresight wonderful. So at Corinth, where he alone of his officers foresaw the battle, and how it would end. His wonderful mathematical ability, which was remarked at West Point, stood him in good stead. At Murfreesboro he seems to have developed personal gallantry of the *Grant* order. Twice, at least, in the course of those five days' battles, he saved the day, and repelled the enemy, by galloping into the thick of the fight, and reanimating his troops by the spectacle of his courage. He is a man of enthusiasm, as well as a man of calculation: when his army fights, he is with them. If he pursues the enemy as briskly as he attacked them, none of our Generals will stand higher than *Rosecrans*.

General *Banks's* record as a soldier has thus far only been illustrated in his successful retreat up the Shenandoah Valley, and in the battle of

Cedar Mountain. Both operations were correct, and showed that he understood his new calling. Those who know General *Banks* expect more of him, and believe that before this war ends he will take a high place among its heroes. West Point has furnished the country with but few generals-in-chief. Not that a military education naturally unfits a man for being a great soldier. But war being an art, not a science, a man can no more be made a first-class general than a first-class painter, or a great poet, by professors and text-books; he must be born with the genius of war in his breast. Very few such men are born in a century, and the chances are rather that they will be found among the millions of the outside people than in the select circle who are educated at West Point.

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