

**THE BOY GENERAL: STORY
OF THE LIFE
OF MAJOR-GENERAL
GEORGE A. CUSTER**

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The Boy General: Story of the Life of Major-General George A. Custer by Elizabeth B. Custer & Mary E. Burt

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ELIZABETH B. CUSTER & MARY E. BURT

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THE BOY GENERAL

STORY OF THE LIFE OF
MAJOR-GENERAL GEORGE A. CUSTER

AS TOLD BY
Bacon
Mrs ELIZABETH B. CUSTER
IN "TENTING ON THE PLAINS," "FOLLOWING THE GUIDON,"
AND "BOOTS AND SADDLES"

EDITED BY
MARY E. BURT

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NEW YORK

To

SEVEN YOUNG SOLDIERS

WHO STRUGGLE WITH SAVAGE LESSONS

AND FIGHT BRAVELY

THE BATTLES OF COMMON EVERY-DAY LIFE

WARREN KENNETH

GARDNER TOMMY

PETER COOPER

CHARLES AND MERLE

PREFACE

"THE BOY GENERAL" is a condensed survey of the life of Major-General George Armstrong Custer, as told by his wife, Elizabeth B. Custer, in her matchless books, "Tenting on the Plains," "Following the Guidon," and "Boots and Saddles." It summarizes General Custer's public services, from the reorganization of Texas after the Civil War and the suppression of the intended Mexican Invasion, to the pioneer work of himself and his brave soldiers in opening up the Northwest.

Sympathize as we may with the unfortunate Indian, we can but acknowledge that there is no longer any room on earth for uncivilized conditions to exist. Humanity is in the process of evolution toward a brotherhood that must be universal. "The Earth is the Lord's." It is not the Indian's. It is not the White Man's. It must open up for the good of all men, each individual to use it for his highest development.

In her descriptions of the joys and sorrows, the glory and the grief, the courage and the sacrifices of the daring troopers of the Plains, Mrs. Custer has well served the purposes of graver history, for her facts are indisputable and at first hand. She furnishes the original colors with which the future artist may paint, the action which the poet and novelist weave into song and romance. Her pages are crowded with pictures of a type of life almost extinct. Washington Irving in his Indian stories drew on records of a dead past. Mrs. Custer has drawn on living records of an intense present.

As good literature, "The Boy General" is a valuable accessory in teaching. It is an invaluable accessory as well in teaching history and geography. But to the really professional teacher knowledge is nothing as compared with character. The greatest value of the book lies in the fact that its pages teem with examples of fortitude, self-sacrifice, temperance, self-control, tenderness, kindness in dealing with difficult dispositions, a patriotism that cannot be bribed, resistance of temptations to dishonorable wealth, devotion to one's country in spite of pestilence, cold, fatigue, and starvation. These are lessons in manliness and they mean more than dates and statistics.

The chapters from "Boots and Saddles," recalling the most dangerous adventures of General Custer's life, have been repeatedly used in Western schools, and it was the enthusiasm of Western school-children that first gave the impulse to editing this book. Since then I have read the book critically with a class of New York children, and to their comments I owe the clew to my choice of text. It is with regret that many thrilling scenes have been omitted. In no case has the meaning been altered, and the text has been cut down to the necessary proportions only as the author has approved. The closing chapter is edited from reliable sources, chiefly from the writings of Lieutenant-General Nelson A. Miles, and an article in the *Century Magazine* of January, 1892, written by Captain Edward S. Godfrey, of the Seventh U. S. Cavalry, who was in the battle of the Little Big Horn. Information was also gathered from the letters and comments of Generals Sherman and Sheridan, McClellan and Fry, and Colonel Smith, of Brigadier-General Alfred H. Terry's staff. Many thanks are due to Mrs. Annie Gibson Yates, widow of Captain George W. Yates (the hero who planned the capture of Rain-in-the-face), for collecting these data, and to General Miles