

The General Who Didn't Want To Be President

(Continued from Page 1)

Army. His knowledge of military science and history was one of the greatest possessed by a Northern general. At military conferences, Rosecrans could always be called upon to cite examples of the past which might be of use in facing current problems.

The thing that Rosecrans excelled in most was the manner in which he handled his troops. He set example for them to follow; he kept a close friendly relationship with them; and, above all, he made it clear that his heart was always with them.

The personal courage that Rosecrans displayed in battle set a fine example for his soldiers and did wonders for bolstering their morale. When they saw the big, energetic, red-faced general standing fearlessly in the heart of battle, they received new courage themselves.

It was not at all uncommon to see him, in the midst of bitter fighting, blessing himself and saying a "Hall Mary" or an "Our Father." He was an inspiration to his soldiers and they deeply respected him both as a soldier and as a man.

Before battle, "Old Rosy," as

he was affectionately called by his soldiers, would address his troops informally. "It's not the number of bullets you shoot but the accuracy of aim that kills men in battle," he would say. "When you meet the enemy, fire low," he would add.

On one occasion, "Old Rosy" came upon a private whose shoes were very worn. He scolded him for wearing such equipment. The soldier informed him that he had requested new shoes but had not received them. Speaking loudly so that all could hear, Rosecrans said that the soldier should demand shoes from his sergeant, and if he still couldn't get shoes, he should come directly to him and he would get the shoes for him. Needless to say, the soldiers were very pleased that "Old Rosy" was so concerned with their welfare.

In the fall of 1863, the army issued a new type of tent which the soldiers quickly nicknamed "pup" tent. Disliking the tents, the soldiers decorated them with signs which showed their disapproval. One day, as "Old Rosy" rode through the camp, his eyes fell upon the signs. "Pups for Sale," read one. "Rat-rippers," read another. Rosecrans, observing that his soldiers had kept their humor despite the hardships of war, simply roared with laughter and rode on, a smile spanning his ruddy face.

It is no wonder that an Illinois soldier, when remarking about Grant's popularity, said that Grant "could get more votes than any other man for commander of the army — always excepting Rosy." In the eyes of his soldiers, no general stood above Rosecrans.

Rosecrans the general was a leader whose personal courage was inspirational to his soldiers. Rosecrans was a devout Catholic whose faith permeated every phase of his life.

One need look no further than his military orders to see reflections of his religious devotion. "Companions-in-arms! Today is both the weekly commemoration of the resurrection of Our Lord and the birthday

of Washington," began one of his orders.

Another Rosecrans' order began with this note, "By the favor of God, you have expelled the insurgents from middle Tennessee." It is no wonder that Carl Sandburg, in his "Abraham Lincoln: The War Years," described Rosecrans as "an able commander, not lacking piety."

"Old Rosy" was a modest man. Lacking the streak of vanity that characterized many of the generals of the era, he never encouraged those who urged him to capitalize on his status as a national hero and he was fair in his appraisals of his superiors, even though it would have been to his material advantage not to have been so fair.

Rosecrans received his first setback of the war in Tennessee at the battle of Stone River. But even though Stone River was considered a defeat, "Old Rosy" still held the field when the last smoke of battle had cleared away and he was able to pull his army together and move forward.

After the setback at Stone River, Rosecrans entered camp in Murfreesboro and gave his soldiers a long rest, after which he marched into Chattanooga and drove the Confederate forces into Georgia. For his Tennessee campaign he received great praise. It was hailed as, "a masterpiece of offensive strategy" and one authority went so far as to call it, "in some respects the outstanding operation of the war."

Rosecrans had not gone through all this without attracting wide attention. He had, in fact, become a national hero and his name was a household word.

One man who had been keeping a close eye on Rosecrans was the vastly influential Horace Greeley. Politically ambitious and hoping for a stronger hand in White House politics, Greeley was searching for a man to replace Lincoln.

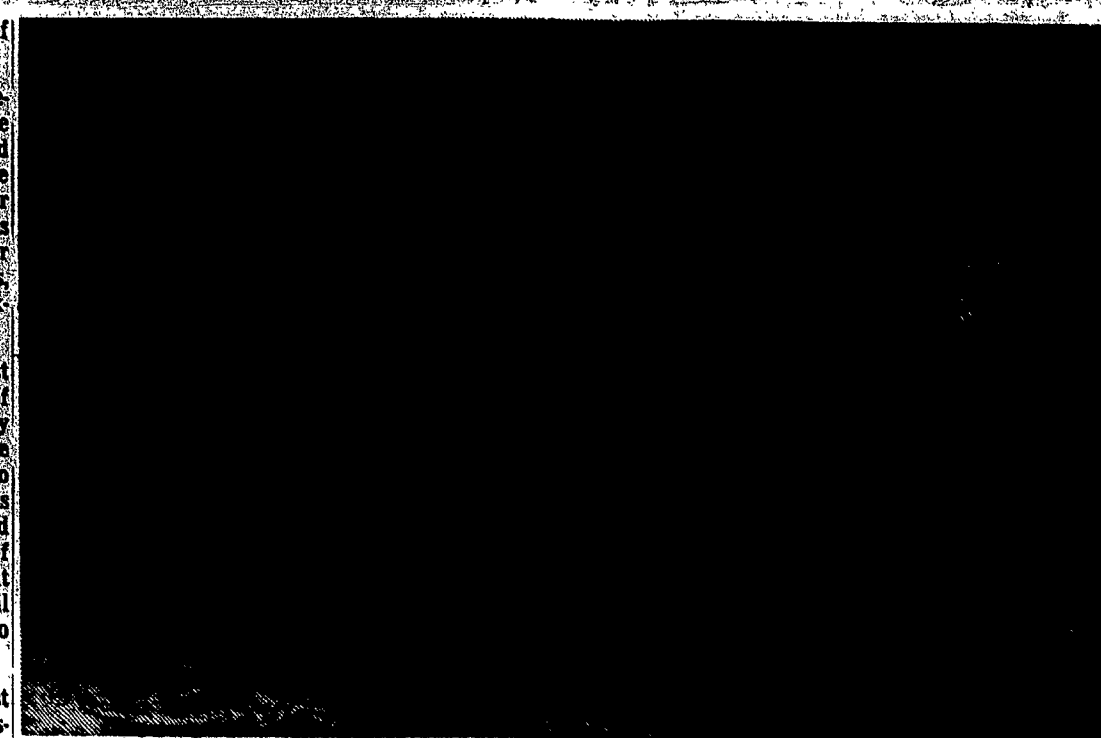
The war not going smoothly for the North — Grant was bogged down outside Vicksburg, the Army of the Potomac was losing battle after battle, and Washington was constantly in danger of being captured by the Confederates.

Most of the blame for the North's sad situation fell upon Lincoln. His popularity fell rapidly and his chances for reelection were slim. It appeared that Horace Greeley would decide which man would be president after 1864.

Greeley, like many others looked to the Army of the Cumberland and its commander, General Rosecrans. He decided that he would defeat Lincoln by giving the party's nomination to Rosecrans instead of Lincoln. Rosecrans had been enjoying tremendous success in his military endeavors and it was pretty well assumed by political leaders that "Old Rosy" was a man on the way up.

Though some bigots might object to a Catholic running for president, Greeley maintained that Rosecrans' Catholicism would be an advantage rather than a disadvantage. No great mention was made of his age. He was forty-four.

Greeley decided to equip his friend, James R. Gilmore, with proper letters and credentials and ask him to serve as an envoy to Rosecrans. Gilmore would make a trip to Tennessee to see Rosecrans and inquire about his stand on the slavery issue. If he would refuse to agree to a peace that did not provide for the total extinction of slavery, the nomination was as good as his.



New Parish's First Breakfast

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS took place at the first Annual Breakfast of Guardian Angels Rosary Society at Country Squire Restaurant, Henrietta, June 4. Included at speakers' table at breakfast after Mass and Communion are: (from left) Mrs. Donald Van Dorer, Mrs. Gerald Sullivan, president; Mrs. John Temmerman, John Temmerman, county chemist; Rev. John Kleintjes, pastor; Mrs. Alfred Gaspar and Mrs. Thomas Conlin.

Since Rosecrans had been one of the leaders in combating the Copperhead movement, there was little doubt about his stand; it was as firm as Greeley's.

At first, Gilmore looked upon the idea of making Rosecrans president as a plot to undo the mine Lincoln. Greeley, however, assured him that they were not trying to pull a weak man down; they were trying to pull a strong man up.

A few days after the conversation between Greeley and Gilmore, news came in about the disastrous defeat of the Army of the Potomac at Chancellorsville. "It is horrible — horrible; and to think of it, 130,000 magnificent soldiers cut to pieces by less than 60,000 half-starved ragamuffins," exclaimed Greeley.

Greeley sat in his chair, his face pale and his body trembling. Looking at Gilmore, he said, "I have your letters all ready — can't you go at once? I will give you my word that if you find Rosecrans the man that is needed, I will go personally to Lincoln and force him to resign. Hamlyn (Lincoln's Vice-president) will give Rosecrans command of the armies, and there'll be a chance of saving the country."

Later, however, Greeley calmed down about the defeat at Chancellorsville and he was once again content to have Rosecrans as the next president rather than general of all the armies. Gilmore then went to Murfreesboro, Tennessee. He spent two weeks with "Old Rosy" and his staff, observing the man as closely as possible.

At the end of the two week period he was thoroughly convinced that Rosecrans was the man for the presidency.

Finally, Gilmore decided to inform Rosecrans of the true purpose of his visit. After days of patient waiting, he was granted a private conference with Rosecrans. He informed "Old Rosy" that Greeley and other prominent political leaders were backing him for the presidency. Rosecrans was very surprised and deeply touched.

Answering Gilmore's question about whether or not he was available as a candidate, Rosecrans said, "The good opinion of those gentlemen is extremely gratifying to me, and yes, you are, and I assure you that I have not had the remotest suspicion that you were here for any such purpose. I

have supposed that you were merely gathering literary material; but, my good friend, it cannot be.

"My place is here. The country gave me my education, and so has a right to my military services; and it educated me for precisely this emergency. So this, and not the presidency, is my post of duty, and I cannot, without violating my conscience, leave it.

"But let me tell you, and I wish you would tell your friends who are moving in this matter, that you are mistaken about Mr. Lincoln. He is in his right place. I am in a position to know, and if you live you will see that I am right about him."

And so Gilmore left Rosecrans' camp and returned to Greeley to inform him that "Old Rosy" had definitely declined the presidential nomination. Rosecrans who had risen rapidly in the army turned down the glory and glamour of the presidency because he believed that he could better serve his country as a general in her army than as her president.

Few men have had a presidential nomination so easily in their reach; fewer still have refused a presidential nomination when it was so easily theirs.

Not too long after Rosecrans had declined the nomination, the war began to pick up for the North — there were victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg and the North was beginning to win the war. Lincoln's popularity rose and he received the nomination that Rosecrans had turned down. The election battle of 1864 was held between Lincoln and McClellan, Rosecrans' former commander. Lincoln was re-elected and led the nation through the remainder of the Civil War.

Today, Rosecrans is a forgotten hero concealed in the pages of history books. Had he not been so firm in his devotion to his duty as a soldier, he might have been the first Catholic to be president of the United States. He finished out the last days of the war at a post in Missouri.

But although "Old Rosy" never became president, he did, nevertheless, contribute immensely to our American heritage. He was a great soldier and a great leader of men whose devotion to God and courage in battle set an exam-

Congress Hears

Conscience Plea of Clergy

Washington — (NC) — Catholic, Protestant and Jewish leaders have joined in a "declaration of conscience" to Congress urging reform of the Mexican farm labor program.

The religious leaders said the nation has an "inescapable moral responsibility" to reform the program under which hundreds of thousands of Mexicans, called braceros, are imported into the U.S. each year to work on farms.

THEY CHARGED that the program, conducted under Public Law 78, undermines the economic position of domestic farm workers.

This statement was presented (June 12) before a subcommittee of the Senate Agriculture Committee by Martin H. Work, executive director of the National Council of Catholic Men.

ing Public Law 78 for two years unchanged, despite the opposition of leaders of religious and other groups.

Among the signers of the appeal were Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Archbishop Edwin V. Byrne of Santa Fe, N.M., Archbishop Robert E. Lucey of San Antonio, Tex., Bishop Stephen S. Woznicki of Saginaw, Mich., Methodist Bishop John Wesley Lord of Washington, D.C. and Rabbis Theodore L. Adams and Julius Mark, both of New York.

COURIER-JOURNAL Friday, June 16, 1961

The statement endorsed a bill (S. 1945) sponsored by Sen. Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota as "embodying the minimum reforms" necessary at this time. They also called for a gradual phasing out of the bracero program and eventually its complete termination.

The House of Representatives on May 11 passed a bill extending

Notre Dame — (NC) — The University of Notre Dame has received a \$25,000 grant from the Ford Motor Company Fund.

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