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Errata and other transcription notes are included as an appendix

THE STAR OF GETTYSBURG
A STORY OF SOUTHERN HIGH TIDE

by JOSEPH A. ALTSHELER

FOREWORD

"The Star of Gettysburg" is a complete romance, but it is also one of the series dealing with the Civil War, beginning with "The Guns of Bull Run," and continued successively through "The Guns of Shiloh," "The Scouts of Stonewall," and "The Sword of Antietam" to the present volume. The story centers about the young Southern hero, Harry Kenton, and his friends.

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VICTOR WOODVILLE, A Young Mississippi Officer.
JOHN WOODVILLE, Father of Victor Woodville.
CHARLES WOODVILLE, Uncle of Victor Woodville.
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CHARLES GORDON, A Southern Staff Officer.
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W. T. SHERMAN, Northern General.
JAMES LONGSTREET, Southern General.
P. G. T. BEAUREGARD, Southern General.
WILLIAM L. YANCEY, Alabama Orator.
JAMES A. GARFIELD, Northern General, afterwards President of
the United States.

And many others

IMPORTANT BATTLES DESCRIBED IN THE CIVIL WAR SERIES

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CROSS KEYS
WINCHESTER
PORT REPUBLIC
THE SEVEN DAYS
MILL SPRING
FORT DONELSON
SHILOH

PERRYVILLE
STONE RIVER
THE SECOND MANASSAS
ANTIETAM
FREDERICKSBURG
CHANCELLORSVILLE
GETTYSBURG
CHAMPION HILL
VICKSBURG
CHICKAMAUGA
MISSIONARY RIDGE
THE WILDERNESS
SPOTTSYLVANIA
COLD HARBOR
FISHER'S HILL
CEDAR CREEK
APPOMATTOX

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THE STAR OF GETTYSBURG

CHAPTER I

THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY

A youth sat upon a log by a clear stream in the Valley of Virginia, mending clothes.

He showed skill and rapidity in his homely task. A shining needle darted in and out of the gray cloth, and the rent that had seemed hopeless was being closed up with neatness and precision. No one derided him because he was engaged upon a task that was usually performed by women. The Army of Northern Virginia did its own sewing.

"Will the seam show much, Arthur?" asked Harry Kenton, who lay luxuriously upon the leafy ground beside the log.

"Very little when I finish," replied St. Clair, examining his work with a critical eye. "Of course I can't pass the uniform off as wholly new. It's been a long time since I've seen a new one in our army, but it will be a lot above the average."

"I admire your care of your clothes, Arthur, even if I can't quite imitate it. I've concluded that good clothes give a certain amount of moral courage, and if you get killed you make a much more decent body."

"But Arthur St. Clair, of Charleston, sir, has no intention of getting killed," said Happy Tom Langdon, who was also resting upon the earth.

"He means after this war is over to go back to his native city, buy the most magnificent uniforms that were ever made, and tell the girls how Lee and Jackson turned to him for advice at the crisis of every great battle."

"We surely needed wisdom and everything else we could get at Antietam-- leadership, tenacity and the willingness to die," said Dalton, the sober young Virginia Presbyterian. "Boys, we were in the deepest of holes there, and we had to lift ourselves out almost by our own boot straps."

Harry's face clouded. The field of Antietam often returned to him, almost as real and vivid as on that terrible day, when the dead lay heaped in masses around the Dunkard church and the Southern army called forth every ounce of courage and endurance for its very salvation.

"Antietam is a month away," he said, "and I still shudder at the name. We didn't think McClellan would come up and attack Lee while Jackson was away at Harper's Ferry, but he did. How did it happen? How did he know that our army was divided?"

"I've heard a strange story," said Dalton. "It's come through some Union prisoners we've taken. They say that McClellan found a copy of General Lee's orders in Frederick, and learned from them exactly where all our troops were and what they intended. Then, of course, he attacked."

"A strange tale, as you say, a most extraordinary chance," said Harry. "Do you think it's true, George?"

"I've no doubt it fell out that way. The same report comes from other sources."

"At any rate," said Happy Tom, "it gave us a chance to show how less than fifty thousand men could stand off nearly ninety thousand. Besides, we didn't lose any ground. We went over into Maryland to give the Marylanders a chance to rise for the South. They didn't rise worth a cent. I suppose we didn't get more than five hundred volunteers in that state. 'The despot's heel is on thy shore, Maryland, my Maryland,' and it can stay on thy shore, Maryland, my Maryland, if that's the way you treat us. I feel a lot more at home here in Virginia."

"It is fine," said Harry, stirring comfortably on the leaves and looking down at the clear stream of the Opequon. "One can't fight all the time. I feel as if I had been in a thousand battles, and two or three months of the year are left. It's fine to lie here by the water, and breathe pure air instead of dust."

"I've heard that every man eats a peck of dirt in the course of his life," said Happy Tom, "but I know that I've already beat the measure a dozen times over. Why, I took in a bushel at least at the Second Manassas, but I still live, and here I am, surveying this peaceful domestic scene. Arthur is mending his best uniform, Harry stretched on the leaves is resting and dreaming dreams, George is wondering how he will get a new pair of shoes for the season, and the army is doing its autumn washing."

Harry glanced up and down the stream, and he smiled at the homely sight. Thousands of soldiers were washing their ragged clothes in the little river and the equally ragged clothes of many others were drying on the banks or on the bushes. The sun-browned lads who skylarked along the shores or in the water, playing pranks on one another, bore little resemblance to those who had charged so fiercely and so often into the mouths of the cannon at Antietam.

Harry marvelled at them and at himself. It seemed scarcely possible that human nature could rush to such violent extremes within so short a space. But youth conquered all. There was very little gloom in this great army which disported itself in the water or in the shade. Thousands of wounded, still pale, but with returning strength, lay on the October leaves and looked forward to the day when they could join their comrades in either games or war.

Harry himself had suffered for a while from a great exhaustion. He had been terribly anxious, too, about his father, but a letter written just after the battle of Perryville, and coming through with unusual promptness by the way of Chattanooga and Richmond, had arrived the day before, informing him of Colonel Kenton's safety. In this letter his father had spoken of his meeting with Dick Mason in his home at Pendleton, and that also contributed to his new lightness of heart. Dick was not a brother, but he stood in the place of one, and it was good to hear again of him.

The sounds of shouts and laughter far up and down the Opequon became steady and soothing. The October winds blowing gently were crisp and fresh, but not too cold. The four boys ceased talking and Harry on his bed of leaves became drowsy. The forests on the far hills and mountains burned in vivid reds and yellows and browns, painted by the master hand of autumn. Harry heard a bird singing on a bough among red leaves directly over his head, and the note was piercingly sweet to ears used so long to the roar of cannon and rifles.

His drowsy lids sank lower and he would have gone to sleep had he not been roused by a shouting farther down the little river. His eyes opened wide and he sat up.

"What is it, George?" he said to Dalton.

"I don't know, but here comes Captain Sherburne, and I'll ask him."

Sherburne was approaching with long strides, his face flushed with enthusiasm.

"What is it, Captain?" asked Harry. "What are the boys shouting about?"

"The news has just reached them that Old Jack has been made a lieutenant-general. General Lee asked the government to divide his army into two corps, with Old Jack in command of one and Longstreet in charge of the other. The government has seen fit to do what General Lee advises it to do, and we are now the Second Army Corps, two thousand officers, twenty-five thousand men and one hundred and thirty guns, commanded by Lieutenant-General Thomas Jonathan Jackson, better known to his enemy as 'Stonewall' Jackson and to his men as 'Old Jack.'"

"Splendid!" exclaimed Harry. "Never was a promotion better earned!"

"And so say we all of us," said Happy Tom. "But just a moment, Captain. What is the news about me?"

"About you, Tom?"

"Yes, about me? Didn't I win the victory at the Second Manassas? Didn't I save the army at Antietam? Am I promoted to be a colonel or is it merely a lieutenant-colonel?"

"I'm sorry, Tom," replied Sherburne with great gravity, "but there is no

mention of your promotion. I know it's an oversight, and we'll join in a general petition to Richmond that you be made a lieutenant-colonel at the very least."

"Oh, never mind. If it has to be done through the begging of my friends I decline the honor. I don't know that I'd care to be any kind of a colonel, anyhow. I'd have to pass the boys here, and maybe I'd have to command 'em, which would make 'em feel bad. Old Jack himself might become jealous of me. I guess I'm satisfied as I am."

"I like the modesty of the South Carolinians, Tom," said Dalton.

"There's a story going the rounds that you South Carolinians made the war and that we Virginians have got to fight it."

"There may be such a story. It seems to me that it was whispered to me once, but the internal evidence shows that it was invented by a Virginian. Haven't I come up here and shed some of my blood and more of my perspiration to save the sacred soil of the Mother of Presidents from invasion? And didn't I bring with me Arthur St. Clair, the best dressed man in Charleston, for the Yankees to shoot at? Hello, what's that? This is a day of events!"

Hoots, cat-calls, and derisive yells arose along a long line. A trim young officer on a fine bay horse was riding down a path beside the Opequon. He was as beautifully dressed as St. Clair at his best. His hands were encased in long white buckskin gloves, and long brown mustaches curled beautifully up until they touched either cheek. It was he, this Beau Brummel of the Southern army, who had attracted the attention of irreverent youth. From the shelter of trees and bushes came a chorus of cries:

"Take them mice out o' your mouth! I know they're there, 'cause I see their tails stickin' out!"

"What kind o' hair oil do you use? I know your head's oiled, or it wouldn't shine so."

"Be sure you keep your gloves on or the sun'll tan your hands!"

"Oh, my, it's mother's pretty boy, goin' to see his best girl!"

The young officer flushed crimson through his brown, but he knew it was no use to resent the words of his tormentors, and he rode steadily on, looking straight before him.

"That's Caswell, a Georgian, of Longstreet's corps," said Sherburne; "a good soldier and one of the bravest men I ever saw."

"Which proves," said St. Clair, in a tone of conviction, "that clothes do help make the man."

Caswell passed out of sight, pursued by derisive comment, but his place was taken quickly by a new victim. A man of middle age, in civilian

clothes, came riding slowly on a fat horse. He was a well-known sutler named Williams and the wild lads did not confine themselves to hidden cries, but rushed from the shelter of trees and bushes, and held up worn articles of apparel, shouting in his ears:

"Hey, Mr. Williams! The soles of these shoes are made of paper, not leather. I bought leather, not paper."

"What's the price of blue silk neckties? I've got a Yankee sweetheart in New York, and I want to look well when our conquering army marches into that city!"

"A pair of blankets for me, Mr. Williams, to be paid for when we loot the Yankee treasury!"

But Williams was not disconcerted. He was used to such badinage. He spread out his large hands soothingly.

"Boys," he said, "those shoes wore out so fast because you chased the Yankees so hard. They were made for walking, not for foot races. Why do you want to buy blankets on time when you can get them more cheaply by capturing them from the enemy?"

His answers pleased them, and some one called for three cheers for Williams, which were given with a will, and he rode on, unmolested. But in a few minutes another and greater roar arose. Now it was swelling, continuous, and there was in it no note whatever of criticism or derision. It was made up wholly of affection and admiration, and it rolled in unceasing volume along the stream and through the forest.

The four lads and Sherburne sprang to their feet, shading their eyes with their hands as they looked.

"By the great Jupiter!" exclaimed Sherburne, "it's Old Jack himself in a new uniform on Little Sorrel! The boys, I imagine, have heard that he's been made lieutenant-general."

"I knew that nothing could stir up the corps this way except Old Jack or a rabbit," said Happy Tom, as he sprang to his feet--he meant no disrespect to his commander, as thousands would give chase to a rabbit when it happened to be roused out of the bushes.

"Thunderation! What a change!" exclaimed St. Clair, as he ran with the others to the edge of the road to see Stonewall Jackson, the victor of twenty battles, go past in a uniform that at first had almost disguised him from his amazed soldiers. Little Sorrel was galloping. He had learned to do so whenever the soldiers cheered his rider. Applause always embarrassed Jackson, and Little Sorrel, of his own volition, now obeyed his wish to get by it as soon as possible.

"What splendor!" exclaimed Harry. "Did you ever see Old Jack looking like this before?"

"Never! Never!" they exclaimed in chorus.

Stonewall Jackson wore a magnificent uniform of the richest gray, with heavy gold lace wherever gold lace could be used, and massive epaulets of gold. A thick gold cord tied in a bow in front surrounded the fine gray hat, and never did a famous general look more embarrassed as the faithful horse took him along at an easy gallop.

All through the woods spread the word that Stonewall Jackson was riding by arrayed in plumage like that of the dandy, Jeb Stuart himself. It was wonderful, miraculous, but it was true, and the cheers rolled continuously, like those of troops about to go into battle and confident of victory.

Harry saw clearly that his commander was terribly abashed. Blushes showed through the tan of his cheeks, and the soldiers, who would not have dared to disobey a single word of his on the battlefield, now ran joyously among the woods and bushes. Harry and the other three lads, being on Jackson's staff, hid discreetly behind the log as he passed, but they heard the thunder of the cheering following him down the road.

It was in truth a most singular scene. These were citizen soldiers, welded into a terrible machine by battle after battle and the genius of a great leader, but with their youth they retained their personality and independence. Affection was strongly mingled with their admiration for Jackson. He was the head of the family, and they felt free to cheer their usually dingy hero as he rode abroad in his magnificent new uniform.

"I think we'd better cut across the woods to headquarters," said Harry. "I want to see the arrival of Old Jack, and I'd wager any of you five cents to a cent that he'll never wear that uniform again. Why, he doesn't look natural in it at all."

"I won't take your bet," said Happy Tom, "because I'm thinking just as you do. Arthur, here, would look all right in it--he needs clothes to hold him up, anyway, but it doesn't suit Old Jack."

Their short cut took them through the woods to the general's quarters in time to see him arrive and spring hurriedly from Little Sorrel. The man whose name was a very synonym of victorious war was still embarrassed and blushing, and as Harry followed him into the tent he took off the gorgeous uniform and hat and handed them to his young aide. Then as he put on his usual dingy gray, he said to an officer who had brought him the new clothes:

"Give my thanks to General Stuart, Major, but tell him that the uniform is far too magnificent for me. I value the gift, however, and shall keep it in recollection of him."

The major and Harry took the uniform and, smoothing it carefully, laid it away. But Harry, having further leave of absence went forth and answered many questions. Was the general going to wear that uniform all

the time? Would he ride into battle clothed in it? When Harry replied that, in his belief, he would never put it on again, the young soldiers seemed to feel a kind of relief. The head of the family was not going to be too splendid for them. Yet the event had heightened their spirits, already high, and they began to sing a favorite song:

"Come, stack arms, men, pile on the rails;
Stir up the camp fires bright.
No matter if the canteen fails,
We'll make a roaring night.
Here Shenandoah brawls along,
There lofty Blue Ridge echoes strong
To swell the brigade's rousing song
Of Stonewall Jackson's way."

"It's a bully song!" exclaimed Happy Tom, who had a deep and thunderous voice. Then snatching up a long stick he began to wave it as a baton, and the others, instinctively following their leader, roared it forth, more than ten thousand strong.

Langdon in his glory led his cohorts in a vast circle around Jackson's quarters, and the mighty chorus thundered through verse after verse, until they closed in a lower tone with the lines:

"Silence! ground arms! kneel all! caps off!
Old Blue Light's going to pray;
Strangle the fool that dares to scoff!
Attention! it's his way!
Appealing from his native sod
In forma pauperis to God
Lay bare thine arm--stretch forth thy rod,
Amen! That's Stonewall Jackson's way."

Then Happy Tom threw down his stick and the men dispersed to their quarters. But they had paid Stonewall Jackson a tribute that few generals ever received.

"You're a wild and foolish fellow, Tom Langdon," said Dalton, "but I like you for this thing you've done."

"You'll notice that Old Jack never appeared while we were singing," said Langdon. "I don't see why a man should be so modest and bashful. Why, if I'd done half what he's done I'd ride the tallest horse in the country; I'd have one of those Mexican saddles of yellow leather studded with large golden-headed nails; the stirrups would be of gold and the bridle bit would be gold, too. I'd have twelve uniforms all covered with gold lace, and I'd have hats with gold-colored ostrich plumes waving in them after the fashion of Jeb Stuart."

"Don't you worry, Tom," said Dalton. "You'll never have any excuse for wearing so much gold. Have you heard what one of the boys said after the chaplain preached the sermon to us last Sunday about leading the children of Israel forty years through the wilderness?"

"No, George; what was it?"

"Forty years going through the wilderness," he growled. "Why, Stonewall Jackson would have double-quick'd 'em through in three days, and on half rations, too."

"And so he would," exclaimed Harry with emphasis. The great affection and admiration in which his troops held Jackson began to be tinged with something that bordered upon superstition. They regarded his mental powers, his intuition, judgment and quickness as something almost supernatural. His great flanking movement at the Second Manassas, and his arrival in time to save the army at Antietam, inspired them with awe for a man who could do such things. They had long since ceased to grumble when he undertook one of his tremendous marches, and they never asked why they were sent to do a thing--they had absolute confidence in the one who sent them to do it.

The great excitement of Jackson in his new uniform passed and the boys resumed their luxurious quarters on the leaves beside the Opequon. Sherburne, who had left them a while, returned, riding a splendid bay horse, which he tethered to a bush before rejoining them.

"That's not the horse I saw you riding at Antietam, Captain," said Langdon. "I counted that fellow's ribs, and none show in this one. It's no business of mine, but I want to know where you got that fine brute."

"No, it's none of your business, Tom," replied Sherburne, as he settled himself comfortably, "you haven't anything in the world to do with it, but that's no reason why you shouldn't ask and I shouldn't answer."

"Drop the long-winded preliminaries, then, and go ahead."

"I got him on a wild ride with the general, General Stuart. What a cavalryman! I don't believe there was ever such another glutton for adventure and battle. General Lee wasn't just sure what McClellan meant to do, and he ordered General Stuart to pick his men and go see.

"The general took six hundred of us, and four light guns, and we crossed the Potomac at dawn. Then we rode straight toward the north, exchanging shots here and there with Northern pickets. We went across Maryland and clear up into Pennsylvania, a hundred miles it must have been, I think, and at a town called Chambersburg we got a great supply of Yankee stores, including five hundred horses, which came in mighty handy, I can tell you. I got Bucephalus there. He's a fine steed, too, I can tell you. He was intended to carry some fat Pennsylvania colonel or major, and instead he has me for a rider, a thinner and consequently a lighter man. I haven't heard him expressing any sorrow over the exchange."

"What did you do after you got the remounts?" asked Harry.

"We began to curve then. We passed a town called Gettysburg, and we

went squarely behind the Union army. Mountainous and hilly country up there, but good and cultivated beautifully. Those Pennsylvania Germans, Harry, beat us all hollow at farming. I'm beginning to think that slaves are not worth owning. They ruin our land."

"Which may be so," interrupted Langdon, "but we're not the kind of people to give them up because a lot of other people order us to do it."

"Shut up, Tom," exclaimed Harry. "Let the captain go on with his story."

"We went on around the Union rear, rode another hundred miles after leaving Chambersburg, coming to a place called Hyattstown, near which we cut across McClellan's communications with Washington. Things grew warm, as the Yankees, learning that we were in the country, began to assemble in great force. They tried to prevent our crossing the Monocacy River, and we had a sharp fight, but we drove them off before they could get up a big enough force to hold us. Then we came on, forded the Potomac and got back after having made an entire circuit of McClellan's army."

"What a ride!" exclaimed St. Clair, his eyes sparkling. "I wish I had been with you. It would have been something to talk about."

"We did stir 'em up," said Sherburne with pardonable pride, "and we got a lot of information, too, some of it beyond price. We've learned that there will be no more attempts on Richmond by sea. The Yankee armies will come across Virginia soil or not at all."

"I imagine McClellan won't be in any hurry to cross the Potomac," said Harry. "He certainly got us into a hot corner at Antietam, and if the reports are true he had plenty of time to come up and wipe out General Lee's whole force, while Old Jack was tied up at Harper's Ferry. They feel that way about McClellan in the North, too. I've got an old Philadelphia newspaper and I'll read to you part of a poem that's reprinted in it. The poem is called 'Tardy George.' Listen:

"What are you waiting for, George, I pray?
To scour your cross belts with fresh pipe clay?
To burnish your buttons, to brighten your guns?
Or wait for May-day, and warm spring suns?
Are you blowing your fingers because they're cold,
Or catching your breath ere you take a hold?
Is the mud knee-deep in valley and gorge?
What are you waiting for, Tardy George?"

"That's pretty bitter," said Harry, "but it must have been written before the Seven Days. You notice what the author says about waiting for May-day."

"Likely enough you're right, but it applies just the same or they wouldn't be reprinting it in their newspapers. Some of them claim a victory over us at Antietam, and nearly all are angry at McClellan because he wouldn't follow us into Virginia. They think he ought to have crossed the Potomac after us and smashed us."

"He might have got smashed himself."

"Which people are likely to debate all through this generation and the next. But they're bitter against McClellan, although he's done better than any other Yankee general in the east. Just listen to this verse, will you?"

"Suppose for a moment, George, my friend,
Just for a moment you condescend
To use the means that are in your hands
The eager muskets and guns and brands;
Take one bold step on the Southern sod,
And leave the issue to watchful God!
For now the nation raises its gorge,
Waiting and watching you, Tardy George."

Harry carefully folded up the paper and put it back in his pocket. The contrast between these verses and the song that he had just heard ten thousand men sing, as they whirled around Stonewall Jackson's headquarters, impressed him deeply.

"It's hard, boys," he said, "for a general to see things like this printed about him, even if he should deserve them. McClellan, so all the prisoners say, has the confidence of his men. They believe that he can win."

"And we know that we can and do win!" exclaimed Langdon. "We've got the soldiers and the generals, too. Hurrah for Bobby Lee, and Stonewall Jackson and Jim Longstreet, and old Jubal Early, and A. P. Hill and D. H. Hill and Jeb Stuart and--and----"

"And for Happy Tom Langdon, the greatest soldier and general of them all," interrupted Dalton.

"That's true," said Langdon, "only people don't know it yet. Now, by the great horn spoon, what is that? What a day this is!"

A great uproar had begun suddenly, and, as if by magic, hundreds of men had risen from the ground and were running about like mad creatures. But the boys knew that they were not mad. They understood in an instant what it was all about as they heard innumerable voices crying, "Rabbit! Rabbit!"

Rabbits were numerous in the underbrush and they made good stew. The soldiers often surrounded them and caught them with their bare hands, but they dared not shoot at them, as, owing to the number of pursuers, somebody would certainly have been hurt.

Harry and his comrades instantly joined in the chase, which led into the deep woods. The rabbit, frightened into unusual speed by the shouts, darted into the thick brush and escaped them all.

"Poor little rascal," said Harry, "I'm glad he got away after all. What good would one rabbit be to an army corps of twenty-five thousand men?"

As they were returning to their place on the creek bank an orderly came for Harry, and he was summoned to the tent of Jackson. It was a large tent spread in the shade of an old oak, and Harry found that Captain Sherburne had already preceded him there. All signs of splendor were hidden completely. Jackson once more wore with ease his dingy old gray clothes, but the skin of his brow was drawn into a tiny knot in the center, as if he were concentrating thought with his utmost power.

"Sit down, Mr. Kenton," he said kindly. "I've already been speaking to Captain Sherburne and I'll tell you now what I want. General McClellan's army is still beyond the Potomac. As nearly as our spies can estimate it has, present and fit for duty, one hundred and thirty-five thousand men and three hundred and fifty cannon. McClellan, as we well know, is always overcautious and overestimates our numbers, but public opinion in the North will force him to action. They claim there that Antietam was a victory for them, and he will surely invade Virginia again. I shall send Captain Sherburne and his troop to find out where and when, and you are to go with him as my aide and personal representative."

"Thanks, sir," said Harry.

"When can you start?"

"Within five minutes."

"Good. I was going to allow you ten, but it's better to take only five. Captain Sherburne, you have your instructions already. Now go, and bear in mind, both of you, that you are to bring back what you are sent to get, no matter what the cost. Prepare no excuses."

There was a stern and ominous ring in his last words, and Harry and Sherburne, saluting, retired with all speed. Harry ran to his own tent, snatched up his arms and blanket-roll, saddled and bridled his horse, and well within five minutes was riding by the side of Captain Sherburne. He shouted to St. Clair, who had run forward in amazement:

"Gone on a mission for Old Jack. Will be back--some time."

The cavalry troop of two hundred splendid men, led by Sherburne, one of the finest of the younger leaders, trotted fast through the oak forest. They were fully refreshed and they were glad of action. The great heats of that famous summer, unusually hot alike in both east and west, were gone, and now the cool, crisp breezes of autumn blew in their faces.

"Have you heard at what point on the Potomac the Union army is gathered?" Harry asked.

"At a village called Berlin, so our spies say. You know McClellan

really has some high qualities. We found a heavy reconnoitering force of cavalry not far in our front two or three days ago, and we did not know what it meant, but General Jackson now has an idea that McClellan wanted to find out whether we were near enough to the Potomac to dispute his passage."

"We are not."

"No, we're not, and I don't suppose General Lee and General Jackson wish to keep him on the other side. But, at any rate, we're sent to find out whether he is crossing."

"And we'll see."

"We surely will."

CHAPTER II

AHORSE WITH SHERBURNE

Harry was glad that General Jackson had detailed him for this task. He missed his comrades of the staff, but Sherburne was a host in himself, and he was greatly attached to him. He rode a good horse and there was pleasure in galloping with these men over the rolling country, and breathing the crisp and vital air of autumn.

They soon left the forest, and rode along a narrow road between fields. Their spirits rose continually. It was a singular fact that the Army of Northern Virginia was not depressed by Antietam. It had been a bitter disappointment to the Southern people, who expected to see Lee take Baltimore and Philadelphia, but the army itself was full of pride over its achievement in beating off numbers so much superior.

It was for these reasons that Sherburne and those who rode with him felt pride and elation. They had seen the ranks of the army fill up again. Lee had retreated across the Potomac after Antietam with less than forty thousand men. Now he had more than seventy thousand, and Sherburne and Harry felt certain that instead of waiting to be attacked by McClellan he himself would go forth to attack.

Harry had seldom seen a day more beautiful. That long hot, dry summer had been followed by a fine autumn, the most glorious of all seasons in North America, when the air has snap and life enough in it to make the old young again.

He was familiar now with the rolling country into which they rode after

leaving the forest. Off in one direction lay the fields on which they had fought the First and Second Manassas, and off in another, behind the loom of the blue mountains, he had ridden with Stonewall Jackson on that marvelous campaign which seemed to Harry without an equal.

But the land about them was deserted now. There were no harvests in the fields. No smoke rose from the deserted farm houses. This soil had been trodden over and over again by great armies, and it would be a long time before it called again for the plough. The stone fences stood, as solid as ever, but those of wood had been used for fuel by the soldiers.

They watered their horses at a clear creek, and then Sherburne and Harry, from the summit of a low hill, scanned the country with their glasses.

They saw no human being. There was the rolling country, brown now with autumn, and the clear, cool streams flowing through almost every valley, but so far as man was concerned the scene was one of desolation.

"I should think that McClellan would have mounted scouts some distance this side of the Potomac," said Sherburne. "Certainly, if he were making the crossing, as our reports say, he would send them ahead."

"We're sure to strike 'em before we reach the river," said Harry.

"I think with you that we'll see 'em, but it's our business to avoid 'em. We're sent forth to see and not to fight. But if General Stuart could ride away up into Pennsylvania, make a complete circuit around the Union army and come back without loss, then we ought to be successful with our own task, which is an easier one."

Harry smiled.

"I never knew you to fail, Captain. I consider your task as done already."

"Thanks, Harry. You're a noble optimist. If we fail, it will not be for lack of trying. Forward, my lads, and we'll reach the Potomac some time to-night."

They rode on through the same silence and desolation. They had no doubt that eyes watched them from groves and fence corners, keeping cautiously out of the way, because it was sometimes difficult now to tell Federals from Confederates. But it did not matter to Sherburne. He kept a straight course for the Potomac, at least half of his men knowing thoroughly every foot of the way.

"What time can we reach the river and the place at which they say McClellan is going to cross?" asked Harry.

"By midnight anyway," replied Sherburne. "Of course, we'll have to slow down as we draw near, or we may run square into an ambush. Do you see that grove about two miles ahead? We'll go into that first, rest our

horses, and take some food."

It was a fine oak grove, covering about an acre, with no undergrowth and a fair amount of grass, still green under the shade, on which the horses could graze. The trunks of the trees also were close enough together to hide them from anyone else who was not very near. Here the men ate cold food from their haversacks and let their horses nibble the grass for a half hour.

They emerged refreshed and resumed their course toward the Potomac. In the very height of the afternoon blaze they saw a horseman on the crest of a hill, watching them intently through glasses. Sherburne instantly raised his own glasses to his eyes.

"A Yankee scout," he said. "He sees us and knows us for what we are, but he doesn't know what we're about."

"But he's trying to guess," said Harry, who was also using glasses. "I can't see his face well enough to tell, but I know that in his place I'd be guessing."

"As we don't want him hanging on to our heels and watching us, I think we'd better charge him."

"Have the whole troop turn aside and chase him?"

"No; Harry, you and I and eight men will do it. Marlowe, take the rest of the company straight along the road at an easy gait. But keep well behind the hedge that you see ahead."

Marlowe was his second in command, and taking the lead he continued with the troop.

Marlowe rode behind one of the hedges, where they were hidden from the lone horseman on the hill, and Sherburne and Harry and the eight men followed. While they were yet hidden, Sherburne and his chosen band suddenly detached themselves from the others at a break in the hedge and galloped toward the horseman who was still standing on the hill, gazing intently toward the point where he had last seen the troop riding.

Sherburne, Harry and the privates rode at a gallop across the field, straight for the Union sentinel. He did not see them until they had covered nearly half the distance, and then with aggravating slowness he turned and rode over the opposite side of the hill. Harry had been watching him intently, and when he had come much nearer the figure seemed familiar to him. At first he could not recall it to mind, but a moment or two later he turned excitedly to Sherburne.

"I know that man, although I've never seen him before in a uniform," he said. "I met him when President Davis was inaugurated at Montgomery and I saw him again at Washington. His name is Shepard, the most skillful and daring of all the Union spies."

"I've heard you speak of that fellow before," said Sherburne, "and since we've put him to flight, I think we'd better stop. Ten to one, if we follow him over the brow of the hill, he'll lead us into an ambush."

"I think you're right, Captain, and it's likely, too, that he'll come back soon with a heavy cavalry detachment. I've no doubt that thousands of Union horsemen are this side of the river."

Sherburne was impressed by Harry's words, and the little detachment, returning at a gallop, joined the main troop, which was now close to a considerable stretch of forest.

"Ah, there they are!" exclaimed Harry, looking back at the hill on which he had seen the lone horseman.

A powerful body of cavalry showed for a moment against the sun, which was burning low and red in the west. The background was so intense and vivid that the horsemen did not form a mass, but every figure stood detached, a black outline against the sky. Harry judged that they were at least a thousand in number.

"Too strong a force for us to meet," said Sherburne. "They must outnumber us five to one, and since they've had practice the Northern cavalry has improved a lot. It must be a part of the big force that made the scout toward our lines. Good thing the forest is just ahead."

"And a good thing, too, that night is not far off."

"Right, my boy, we need 'em both, the forest and the dark. The Union cavalry is going to pursue us, and I don't mean to turn back. General Jackson sent us to find about McClellan's crossing, and we've got to do it."

"I wouldn't dare go back to Old Jack without the information we're sent to get."

"Nor I. Hurry up the men, Marlowe. We've got to lose the Union cavalry in the forest somehow."

The men urged their horses forward at a gallop and quickly reached the trees. But when Harry looked back he saw the thousand in blue about a mile away, coming at a pace equal to their own. He felt much apprehension. The road through the forest led straight before them, but the trail of two hundred horses could not be hidden even by night. They could turn into the forest and elude their pursuers, but, as Sherburne said, that meant abandoning their errand, and no one in all the group thought of such a thing.

Sherburne increased the pace a little now, while he tried to think of some way out. Harry rode by his side in silence, and he, too, was seeking a solution. Through the trees, now nearly leafless, they saw the blue line still coming, and the perplexities of the brave young captain grew fast.

But the night was coming down, and suddenly the long, lean figure of a man on the long, lean figure of a horse shot from the trees on their right and drew up by the side of Sherburne and Harry.

"Lankford, sir, Jim Lankford is my name," he said to Sherburne, touching one finger to his forehead in a queer kind of salute.

Harry saw that the man had a thin, clean-shaven face with a strong nose and chin.

"I 'low you're runnin' away from the Yankees," said Lankford to Sherburne.

Sherburne flushed, but no anger showed in his voice as he replied:

"You're right, but we run for two reasons. They're five to our one, and we have business elsewhere that mustn't be interrupted by fighting."

"First reason is enough. A man who fights five to one is five times a fool. I'm a good Johnny Reb myself, though I keep off the fightin' lines. I live back there in a house among the trees, just off the road. You'd have seen it when you passed by, if you hadn't been in such a hurry. Just settin' down to take a smoke when Mandy, my wife, tells me she hears the feet of many horses thunderin' on the road. In a moment I hear 'em, too. Run to the front porch, and see Confederate cavalry coming at a gallop, followed by a big Yankee force. Mandy and me didn't like the sight, and we agree that I take a hand. Now I'm takin' it."

"How do you intend to help us?"

"I'm gettin' to that. I saddled my big horse quick as lightnin', and takin' a runnin' jump out of the woods, landed beside you. Now, listen, Captain; I reckon you're on some sort of scoutin' trip, and want to go on toward the river."

"You reckon right."

"About a mile further on we dip into a little valley. A creek, wide but shallow and with a bed all rocks, takes up most of the width of that valley. It goes nearly to the north, and at last reaches the Potomac. A half mile from the crossin' ahead it runs through steep, high banks that come right down to its edges, but the creek bottom is smooth enough for the horses. I 'low I make myself plain enough, don't I, Mr. Captain?"

"You do, Mr. Lankford, and you're an angel in homespun. Without you we could never do what we want to do. Lead the way to that blessed creek. We don't want any of the Yankee vanguard to see us when we turn and follow its stream."

"We can make it easy. They might guess that we're ridin' in the water to hide our tracks, but the bottom is so rocky they won't know whether we've gone up or down the stream. And if they guessed the right way,

and followed it, they'd be likely to turn back at the cliffs, anyhow."

They urged their horses now to the uttermost, and Harry soon saw the waters of the creek shining through the darkness. Everything was falling out as Lankford had said. The pursuit was unseen and unheard behind them, but they knew it was there.

"Slow now, boys," said Sherburne, as they rode into the stream. "We don't want to make too much noise splashing the water. Are there many boulders in here, Mr. Lankford?"

"Not enough to hurt."

"Then you lead the way. The men can come four abreast."

The water was about a foot deep, and despite their care eight hundred hoofs made a considerable splashing, but the creek soon turned around a hill and led on through dense forest. Sherburne and Harry were satisfied that no Union horseman had either seen or heard them, and they followed Lankford with absolute confidence. Now and then the hoofs of a stumbling horse would grind on the stones, but there was no other noise save the steady marching of two hundred men through water.

The things that Lankford had asserted continued to come true. The creek presently flowed between banks fifty feet high, rocky and steep as a wall. But the stone bed of the creek was almost as smooth as a floor, and they stopped here a while to rest and let their horses drink.

The enclosing walls were not more than fifty or sixty feet across the top and it was very dark in the gorge. Harry saw overhead a slice of dusky sky, lit by only a few stars, but it was pitchy black where he sat on his horse, and listened to his contented gurglings as he drank. He could merely make out the outlines of his comrades, but he knew that Sherburne was on one side of him and Lankford on the other. He could not hear the slightest sound of pursuit, and he was convinced that the Union cavalry had lost their trail. So was Sherburne.

"We owe you a big debt, Mr. Lankford," said the captain.

"I've tried to serve my side," said Lankford, "though, as I told you, I'm not goin' on the firin' line. It's not worth while for all of us to get killed. Later on this country will need some people who are not dead."

"You're right about that, Mr. Lankford," said Sherburne, with a little laugh, "and you, for one, although you haven't gone on the firing lines, have earned the right to live. You've done us a great service, sir."

"I reckon I have," said Lankford with calm egotism, "but it was necessary for me to do it. I've got an inquirin' mind, I have, and also a calculatin' one. When I saw your little troop comin', an' then that big troop of the Yankees comin' on behind, I knowed that you needed help. I knowed that this creek run down a gorge, and that I could lead

you into the gorge and escape pursuit. I figured, too, that you were on your way to see about McClellan crossin' the Potomac, an' I figured next that you meant to keep straight on, no matter what happened. So I'm goin' to lead you out of the gorge, and some miles further ahead you'll come to the Potomac, where I guess you can use your own eyes and see all you want to see."

"The horses are all right now and I think we'd better be moving, Mr. Lankford."

They started, but did not go faster than a walk while they were in the gorge. Harry's eyes had grown somewhat used to the darkness, and he could make out the rocky walls, crested with trees, the higher branches of which seemed almost to meet over the chasm.

It was a weird passage, but time and place did not oppress Harry. He felt instead a certain surge of the spirits. They had thrown off the pursuit--there could be no doubt of it--and the first step in their mission was accomplished. They were now in the midst of action, action thrilling and of the highest importance, and his soul rose to the issue.

He had no doubt that some great movement, possibly like that of the Second Manassas, hung upon their mission, and Lee and Jackson might be together at that very moment, planning the mighty enterprise which would be shaped according to their news.

They emerged from the gorge and rode up a low, sloping bank which gave back but little sound to the tread of the horses, and here Lankford said that he would leave them. Sherburne reached over his gauntleted hand and gave him a powerful grasp.

"We won't forget this service, Mr. Lankford," he said.

"I ain't goin' to let you forget it. Keep straight ahead an' you'll strike a cross-country road in 'bout a quarter of a mile. It leads you to the Potomac, an' I reckon from now on you'll have to take care of yourselves."

Lankford melted away in the darkness as he rode back up the gorge, and the troop went on at a good pace across a country, half field, half forest. They came to a road which was smooth and hard, and increased their speed. They soon reached a region which several of their horsemen knew, and, as the night lightened a little, they rode fast toward the Potomac.

Harry looked at his watch and saw that it was not much past midnight. They would have ample opportunity for observation before morning. A half hour later they discerned dim lights ahead and they knew that the Potomac could not be far away.

They drew to one side in a bit of forest, and Sherburne again detached himself, Harry and eight others from the troop, which he left as before under the command of Marlowe.

"Wait here in the wood for us," he said to his second in command.

"We should be back by dawn. Of course, if any force of the enemy threatens you, you'll have to do what seems best, and we'll ride back to General Jackson alone."

The ten went on a bit farther, using extreme care lest they run into a Northern picket. Fortunately the fringe of wood, in which they found shelter, continued to a point near the river, and as they went forward quietly they saw many lights. They heard also a great tumult, a mixture of many noises, the rumbling of cannon and wagon wheels, the cracking of drivers' whips by the hundreds and hundreds, the sounds of drivers swearing many oaths, but swearing together and in an unbroken stream.

They rode to the crest of the hill, where they were well hidden among oaks and beeches, and there the whole scene burst upon them. The late moon had brightened, and many stars had come out as if for their especial benefit. They saw the broad stream of the Potomac shining like silver and spanned by a bridge of boats, on which a great force, horse, foot, artillery, and wagons, was crossing.

"That's McClellan's army," said Harry.

"And coming into Virginia," said Sherburne. "Well, we can't help their entering the state, but we can make it a very uncomfortable resting place for them."

"How many men do you suppose they have?"

"A hundred thousand here at the least, and others must be crossing elsewhere. But don't you worry, Harry. We've got seventy thousand men of our own, and Lee and Jackson, who, as you have been told before, are equal to a hundred thousand more. McClellan will march out again faster than he has marched in."

"Still, he's shown more capacity than the other Union generals in the East, and his soldiers are devoted to him."

"But he isn't swift, Harry. While he's thinking, Lee and Jackson have thought and are acting. Queer, isn't it, that a young general should be slow, and older ones so much swifter. Why, General Lee must be nearly old enough to be General McClellan's father."

"It's so, Captain, but those men are crossing fast. Listen how the cannon wheels rumble! And I know that a thousand whips are cracking at once. They'll all be on our soil to-morrow."

"So they will, but long before that time we'll be back at General Jackson's tent with the news of their coming."

"If nothing gets in the way. Do you remember that man whom we saw on the hill watching, the one who I said was Shepard, the ablest and most daring of all their spies?"

"I haven't forgotten him."

"This man Shepard, Captain, is one of the most dangerous of all our enemies. The Union could much more easily spare one of its generals than Shepard. He's omniscient. He's a lineal descendant of Argus, and has all the old man's hundred eyes, with a few extra ones added in convenient places. He's a witch doctor, medicine man, and other things beside. I believe he's followed us, that some way he's picked up our trail somewhere. He may have been hanging on the rear of the troop when we came through the gorge."

"Nonsense, Harry, you're turning the man into a supernatural being."

"That's just the way I feel about him."

"Then, if that's the case, we'd better be clearing out as fast as we can. We've seen enough, anyhow. We'll go straight back to the company and ride hard for the camp."

They reached the troop, which was waiting silently under the command of the faithful Marlowe. But before they could gallop back toward the south, the loud, clear call of a trumpet came from a point near by, and it was followed quickly by the beat of many hoofs.

"I see him! It's Shepard," exclaimed Harry excitedly.

He had beheld what was almost the ghost of a horseman galloping among the trees, followed in an instant by the more solid rush of the cavalry.

It was evident to both Sherburne and Harry that the Federal pickets and outriders had acquired much skill and alertness, and they urged the troop to its greatest speed. Even if they should be able to defeat their immediate pursuers, it was no place for them to engage in battle, as the enemy could soon come up in thousands.

As they galloped down the road they heard bullets kicking up the dust behind, and the sound made them go faster. But they were still out of range and the pursuit did not make any gain in the next few minutes. But Harry, looking back, saw that the Union cavalry was hanging on grimly, and he surmised also that other forces might appear soon on their flanks.

"We've got to use every effort," he said to Sherburne.

"That's apparent. You were right about your man Shepard, Harry. He has certainly inherited all the eyes of his ancestor, Argus, and about three times as many besides. He's omniscient, right enough."

"Are they gaining?"

"Not yet. But they will, as fresh pursuers come up on the flank. Some of us must fall or be taken, but then at least one of us must get

back to Old Jack with the news. So we're bound to scatter. When we reach that patch of woods on the left running down to the road, you're to leave us, gallop into it and make your way back through the gorge. I'll throw off the other messengers as we go on."

"Must I be the first to go?"

"Yes, you're under my orders now, and I think you the most trustworthy. Now, Harry, off with you, and remember that luck is with him who tries the hardest."

They were within the dark shade of the trees and Harry turned at a gallop among them, guiding his horse between the trunks, pausing a moment further on to hear the pursuit thunder by, and then resuming his race for the gorge.

He continued to ride at a great pace, meeting no enemy, and at last reached the creek. He was a good observer and he was confident that he could ride back up it without trouble. He feared nothing but Shepard. A single horseman in the darkness could throw off any pursuit by cavalry, but the terrible spy might turn at once to the creek and the gorge. He had the consolation, though, of knowing that Shepard could not follow him and all the others at the same time.

Harry paused a moment at the water's edge and listened for the sounds of pursuit. None came. Then he plunged boldly in and rode against the stream, passing into the depths of the gorge. It was darker now, being near to that darkest hour before the dawn, and the slit of sky above was somber.

But he rode on at a good walk until he was about half way through the gorge. Then he heard sounds above, and drawing his horse in by the cliff he stopped and waited. Voices came down to him, and once or twice he caught the partial silhouette of a horse against the dark sky.

He felt quite sure that it was a body of Union cavalry riding practically at random--if they were led by Shepard they would have come up the gorge itself.

Presently something splashed heavily in the water near him. A stone had been rolled over the brink. He drew his horse and himself more closely against the wall. Another stone fell near and a laugh came from above. Evidently the lads in blue had pushed the stones over merely to hear the splash, because Harry ceased to hear the voices and he was quite sure that they had ridden away.

He waited a little while for precaution, and then resumed his own careful journey through the gorge. Just as the dawn was breaking he emerged from the stream and entered the forest. It was a cold dawn, that of late October, white with frost, and Harry shivered. There was still food in his knapsack, and he ate hungrily as he rode through the deserted country, and wondered what had become of Shepard and the others.

It was not yet full day. The grass was still white with frost. The early wind, blowing out of the north, brought an increased chill. The food Harry had eaten defended him somewhat against the cold, but his body had been weakened by so much riding and loss of sleep that he found it wise to unroll his blanket and wrap it around his shoulders and chest.

He was, perhaps, affected by the cold and anxiety, but the country seemed singularly lonesome and depressing. Sweeping the whole circle of the horizon with his glasses, he saw several farm houses, but no smoke was rising from their chimneys. Silent and cold, they added to his own feeling of desolation. He wondered what had become of his comrades. Perhaps Sherburne had been taken, or killed. He was not one to surrender, even to overwhelming numbers, without a fight.

But he would go on. Drawing the blanket more tightly around his body, he turned into the narrow road by which he had come, and urged his horse into that easy Southern gait known as a pace. He would have been glad to go faster, but he was too wise to push a horse that had already been traveling twenty hours.

Harry did not yet feel secure by any means. The lads of the South, where the cities were few and small, had been used from childhood to the horse. They had become at once cavalry of the highest order; but the lads of the North were learning, too. He had no doubt that bands of Northern horsemen were now ranging the country to the very verge of the camps of Jackson and Lee.

The belief became a certainty when a score of riders in blue appeared on a hill behind him. One of their number blew a musical note on a trumpet, and then all of them, with a shout, urged their horses in pursuit of Harry, who felt as if it were for all the world a fox chase, with himself as the fox.

He knew that his danger was great, but he resolved to triumph over it. He must get through to Jackson with the news that the Army of the Potomac was in Virginia. Others from Sherburne's troop might arrive with the same news, but he did not know it. It was not his place to reckon on the possible achievements of others. So far as this errand was concerned, and so far as he was now concerned, there was nobody in the world but himself. Swiftly he reckoned the chances.

He changed the pace of his horse into an easy gallop and sped along the road. But the horse did not have sufficient reserve of strength to increase his speed and maintain the increase. He knew without looking back that the Union riders were gaining, and he continued to mature his plan.

Harry was now cool and deliberate. It was possible that a Confederate troop scouting in that direction might save him, but it was far from a certainty, and he could not take it into his calculations. He was now riding between two cornfields in which all the corn had been cut, but he saw forest on the right, about a half mile ahead.

He believed that his salvation lay in that forest. He hoped that it stretched far toward the right. He had never seen a finer forest, a more magnificent forest, one that looked more sheltering, and the nearer he came to it the better it looked.

He did not glance back, but he felt sure that the blue horsemen must still be gaining. Then came that mellow, hunting note of the trumpet, much nearer than before. Harry felt a thrill of anger. He remained the fox, and they remained the hunters. He could feel the good horse panting beneath him, and white foam was on his mouth.

Harry began to fear now that he would be overtaken before he could reach the trees. He glanced at the fields. If it had been only a few weeks earlier he might have sprung from his horse and have escaped in the thick and standing corn, but now he would be an easy target. He must gain the forest somehow. He said over and over to himself, "I must reach it! I must reach it! I must reach it!"

Now he heard the crack of rifles. Bullets whizzed past. They no longer kicked up the dust behind him, but on the side, and even in front. Men began to shout to him, and he heard certain words that meant surrender. Chance had kept the bullets away from him so far, but the same chance might turn them upon him at any moment. It was a risk that he must take.

The shouts grew louder. The rapid thudding of hoofs behind him beat on his ears in that minute of excitement like thunder. Nearer and nearer came the forest. The rifles behind him were now crashing faster. It seemed to him that he could almost smell their smoke, and still neither he nor his horse was hit. After making all due allowance for badness of aim at a gallop, it was almost a miracle, and he drew new courage from the fact.

He passed the cornfields and with a sharp jerk of the reins turned his weary horse into the woods on the right. The forest was thick with a considerable growth of underbrush, but Harry was a skillful and daring rider, and he guided his horse so expertly that in a few moments he was hidden from the view of the cavalry. But he knew that it could not continue so long. They would spread out, driving everything in front of them as they advanced. He was still the fox and they were still the hunters. Yet he had gained something. For a fugitive the forest was better than the open.

He maintained his direction toward Jackson's camp. His horse leaped a gully and he barely escaped being swept off on the farther side by the bough of a tree. Then some of his pursuers caught sight of him again, and a half dozen shots were fired. He was not touched, but he felt his horse shiver and he knew at once that the good, true animal had been hit. A few leaps more and the living machinery beneath him began to jar heavily.

Another thick clump of undergrowth hid him at that moment from the cavalymen, and he did the only thing that was left to him. Throwing

one leg over the saddle, he leaped clear and darted away. Before he had gone a dozen steps he heard his horse fall heavily, and he sighed for a true and faithful servant and comrade gone forever.

He heard the shouts of the Union horsemen who had overtaken the fallen horse, but not the rider. Then the shouts ceased, and for a little while there was no thud of hoofs. Evidently they were puzzled. They had no use for a dead horse, but they wanted his rider, and they did not know which way he had gone. Harry knew, however, that they would soon spread out to a yet greater extent, and being able to go much faster on horseback than he could on foot, they would have a certain advantage.

He had lost his blanket from his shoulders, but he still had his pistol, and he kept one hand on the butt, resolved not to be taken. He heard the horsemen crashing here and there among the bushes and calling to one another. He knew that they pursued him so persistently because they believed him to be one who had spied upon their army and it would be of great value to them that he be taken or slain.

He might have turned and run back toward the Potomac, doubling on his own track, as it were, a trick which would have deluded the Union cavalry, but his resolution held firm not only to escape, but also to reach Jackson with his news.

He stood at least a minute behind some thick bushes, and it was a precious minute to his panting lungs. The fresh air flowed in again and strength returned. His pulses leaped once more with courage and resolve, and he plunged anew into the deep wood. If he could only reach a part of the forest that was much roughened by outcroppings of rock or gulleys by rains, he felt that his chance of escape would almost turn into a certainty. He presently came to one such gulley or ravine, and as he crossed it he felt that he had made a distinct gain. The horsemen would secure a passage lower down or higher up, but it gave him an advantage of two hundred yards at least.

Part of the gain he utilized for another rest, lying down this time behind a rocky ridge until he heard the cavalymen calling to one another. Then he rose and ran forward again, slipping as quietly as he could among the trees and bushes. He still had the feeling of being the fox, with the hounds hot on his trail, but he was no longer making a random rush. He had become skillful and cunning like the real fox.

He knew that the horsemen were not trailers. They could not follow him by his footsteps on the hard ground, and he took full advantage of it. Yet they utilized their numbers and pursued in a long line. Once, two of them would have galloped directly upon him, but just before they came in sight he threw himself flat in a shallow gully and pulled over his body a mass of fallen leaves.

The two men rode within ten yards of him. Had they not been so eager they would have seen him, as his body was but partly covered. But they looked only in front, thinking that the fugitive was still running ahead of them through the forest, and galloped on.

As soon as they were out of sight Harry rose and followed. He deemed it best to keep directly in their track, because then no one was likely to come up behind him, and if they turned, he could turn, too.

He heard the two men crashing on ahead and once or twice he caught glimpses of them. Then he knew by the sounds of the hoofs that they were separating, and he followed the one who was bearing to the left, keeping a wary watch from side to side, lest others overhaul him.

In those moments of danger and daring enterprise the spirit of Harry's great ancestor descended upon him again. This flight through the forest and hiding among bushes and gulleys was more like the early days of the border than those of the great civil war in which he was now a young soldier.

Instincts and perceptions, atrophied by civilization, suddenly sprang up. He seemed to be able to read every sound. Not a whisper in the forest escaped his understanding, and this sudden flame of a great early life put into him new thoughts and a new intelligence.

Now a plan, astonishing in its boldness, formed itself in his mind. He saw through openings in the trees that the forest did not extend much farther, and he also saw not far ahead of him the single horseman whom he was following. The man had slowed down and was looking about as if puzzled. He rode a powerful horse that seemed but little wearied by the pursuit.

Harry picked up a long fragment of a fallen bough, and he ran toward the horseman, springing from the shelter of one tree trunk to that of another with all the deftness of a primitive Wyandot. He was almost upon the rider before the man turned with a startled exclamation.

Then Harry struck, and his was no light hand. The end of the stick met the man's head, and without a sound he rolled unconscious from the saddle. It was a tribute to Harry's humanity that he caught him and broke his fall. A single glance at his face as he lay upon the ground showed that he had no serious hurt, being merely stunned.

Then Harry grasped the bridle and sprang into the saddle that he had emptied, urging the horse directly through the opening toward the cleared ground. He relied with absolute faith upon his new mount and the temporary ignorance of the others that his horse had changed riders.

As he passed out of the forest he leaned low in the saddle to keep the color of his clothing from being seen too soon, and speaking encouraging words in his horse's ears, raced toward the south. He heard shouts behind him, but no shots, and he knew that the cavalrymen still believed him to be their own man following some new sign.

He was at least a half mile away before they discovered the difference. Perhaps some one had found their wounded comrade in the forest, or the man himself, reviving quickly, had told the tale.

In any event Harry heard a distant shout of anger and surprise. Chance had favored him in giving him another splendid horse, and now, as he rode like the wind, the waning pursuit sank out of sight behind him.

CHAPTER III

JACKSON MOVES

It was impossible for Harry to restrain a vivid feeling of exultation. He was in the open, and he was leaving the Northern cavalry far behind. Nor was it likely that any further enemy would appear now between him and Jackson's army. Chance had certainly favored him. What a glorious goddess Chance was when she happened to be on your side! Then everything fell out as you wished it. You could not go wrong.

The horse he rode was even better than the one he had lost, and a pair of splendid pistols in holsters lay across the saddle. He could account for two enemies if need be, but when he looked back he saw no pursuers in sight, and he slowed his pace in order not to overtax the horse.

Not long afterwards he saw the Southern pickets belonging to the vanguard of the Invincibles. St. Clair himself was with them, and when he saw Harry he galloped forward, uttering a shout.

St. Clair had known of the errand upon which Harry had gone with Sherburne, and now he was alarmed to see him riding back alone, worn and covered with dust.

"What's the matter, Harry?" he cried, "and where are the others?"

"Nothing's the matter with me, and I don't know where the others are. But, Arthur, I've got to see General Jackson at once! Where is he?"

Harry's manner was enough to impress his comrade, who knew him so well.

"This way," he said. "Not more than four or five hundred yards. There, that's General Jackson's tent!"

Harry leaped from his horse as he came near and made a rush for the tent. The flap was open, but a sentinel who stood in front put up his rifle, and barred the way. A low monotone came from within the tent.

"The General's praying," he said. "I can't let you in for a minute or two."

Harry took off his hat and stood in silence while the two minutes lasted. All his haste was suddenly gone from him. The strong affection that he felt for Jackson was tinged at times with awe, and this awe was always strongest when the general was praying. He knew that the prayer was no affectation, that it came from the bottom of his soul, like that of a crusader, asking forgiveness for his sins.

The monotone ceased, the soldier took down his rifle which was held like a bar across the way, and Harry, entering, saluted his general, who was sitting in the half light at a table, reading a little book, which the lad guessed was a pocket Bible.

Harry saluted and Jackson looked at him gravely.

"You've come back alone, it seems," he said, "but you've obeyed my instructions not to come without definite news?"

"I have, sir."

"What have you seen?"

"We saw the main army of General McClellan crossing the Potomac at Berlin. He must have had there a hundred thousand men and three or four hundred guns, and others were certainly crossing elsewhere."

"You saw all this with your own eyes?"

"I did, sir. We watched them for a long time. They were crossing on a bridge of boats."

"You are dusty and you look very worn. Did you come in contact with the enemy?"

"Yes, sir. Many of their horsemen were already on this side of the river, and this morning I was pressed very hard by a troop of their cavalry. I gained a wood, but just at the edge of it my horse was killed by a chance shot."

"Your horse killed? Then how could you escape from cavalry?"

"Chance favored me, sir. I dodged them for a while in the woods and underbrush, helped by gullies here and there, and when I came to the edge of the wood only a single horseman was near me. I hid behind a tree and knocked him out of the saddle as he was riding past."

"I hope you did not kill him."

"I did not. He was merely stunned. He will have a headache for a day or two, and then he will be as well as ever. I jumped on his horse and galloped here as straight and fast as I could."

A faint smile passed over Jackson's face.

"You were lucky to make the exchange of horses," he said, "and you have done well. The enemy comes and our days of rest are over. Do you know anything of Captain Sherburne and his troop?"

"Captain Sherburne, under the urgency of pursuit, scattered his men in order that some of them at least might reach you with the news of General McClellan's crossing. I was the first detached, and so I know nothing of the others."

"And also you were the first to arrive. I trust that Captain Sherburne and all of his men will yet come. We can ill spare them."

"I truly hope so, sir."

"You need food and sleep. Get both. You will be called when you are needed. You have done well, Lieutenant Kenton."

"Thank you, sir."

Harry, saluting again, withdrew. He was very proud of his general's commendation, but he was also on the verge of physical collapse. He obtained some food at a camp fire near by, ate it quickly, wrapped himself in borrowed blankets, and lay down under the shade of an oak. Langdon saw him just as he was about to close his eyes, and called to him:

"Here, Harry, I didn't know you were back. What's your news?"

"That McClellan and the Yankee army are this side of the Potomac. That's all. Good night."

He closed his eyes, and although it was near the middle of the day, with the multifarious noises of the camp about him, he fell into the deep and beautiful sleep of the tired youth who has done his duty.

He was still asleep when Captain Sherburne, worn and wounded slightly, came in and reported also to General Jackson. He and his main force had been pursued and had been in a hot little brush with the Union cavalry, both sides losing several men. Others who had been detached before the action also returned and reported. All of them, like Harry, were told to seek food and sleep.

Harry slept a long time, and the soldiers who passed, making many preparations, never disturbed him. But the entire Southern army under Lee, assisted by his two great corps commanders, Jackson and Longstreet, was making ready to meet the Army of the Potomac under McClellan. The spirit of the Army of Northern Virginia was high, and the news that the enemy was marching was welcome to them.

When Harry awoke the sun had passed its zenith and the cool October shadows were falling. He yawned prodigiously, stretched his arms, and for a few moments could not remember where he was, or what he had been doing.

"Quit yawning so hard," said Happy Tom Langdon. "You may get your mouth so wide open that you'll never be able to shut it again."

"What's happened?"

"What's happened, while you were asleep? Well, it will take a long time to tell it, Mr. Rip Van Winkle. You have slept exactly a week, and in the course of that time we fought a great battle with McClellan, were defeated by him, chiefly owing to your comatose condition, and have fallen back on Richmond, carrying you with us asleep in a wagon. If you will look behind you you will see the spires of Richmond. Oh, Harry! Harry! Why did you sleep so long and so hard when we needed you so much?"

"Shut up, Tom. If ever talking matches become the fashion, I mean to enter you in all of them for the first prize. Now, tell me what happened while I was asleep, and tell it quick!"

"Well, me lad, since you're high and haughty, not to say dictatorial about it, I, as proud and haughty as thyself, defy thee. George, you tell him all about it." Dalton grinned. A grave and serious youth himself, he liked Langdon's perpetual fund of chaff and good humor.

"Nothing has happened, Harry, while you slept," he said, "except that the army, or at least General Jackson's corps, has been making ready for a possible great battle. We're scattered along a long line, and General Lee and General Longstreet are some distance from us, but our generals don't seem to be alarmed in the least. It's said that McClellan will soon be between us and Richmond, but I can't see any alarm about that either."

"Why should there be?" said St. Clair, who was also sitting by. "It would make McClellan's position dangerous, not ours."

"Arthur puts it right," said Langdon. "When we go to our tents, show him the new uniform you've got, Arthur. It's the most gorgeous affair in the Army of Northern Virginia, and it cost him a whole year's pay in Confederate money. Have you noticed, Harry, that the weakest thing about us is our money? We're the greatest marchers and fighters in the world, but nobody, not even our own people, seem to fall in love with our money."

"I suppose that General Jackson is now ready to march whenever the word should come," said St. Clair. "The boys, as far as I can see, have returned to their rest and play. There's that Cajun band playing again."

"And it sounds mighty good," said Harry. "Look at those Louisiana Frenchmen dancing."

The spirits of the swarthy Acadians were irrepressible. As they had danced in the great days in the valley in the spring, now they were dancing when autumn was merging into winter, and they sang their songs

of the South, some of which had come from old Brittany through Nova Scotia to Louisiana.

Harry liked the French blood, and he had learned to like greatly these men who were so much underestimated in the beginning. He and his comrades watched them as they whirled in the dance, clasped in one another's arms, their dark faces glowing, white teeth flashing and black eyes sparkling. He saw that they were carried away by the music and the dance, and as they floated over the turf they were dreaming of their far and sunny land and the girls they had left behind them. He had been reared in a stern and more northern school, but he had learned long since that a love of innocent pleasure was no sign of effeminacy or corruption.

"Good to look on, isn't it, Harry?" said St. Clair.

"Yes, and good to hear, too."

"Come with me into this little dip, and I'll show you another sight that's good to see."

There was a low ridge on their right, crested with tall trees and dropping down abruptly on the other side. A little distance on rose another low ridge, but between the two was a snug and grassy bowl, and within the bowl, sitting on the dry grass, with a chessboard between them, were Colonel Leonidas Talbot and Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire. They were absorbed so deeply in their game that they did not notice the boys on the crest of the bank looking over at them.

Colonel Leonidas Talbot and Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire had not changed a particle--to the eyes, at least--in a year and a half of campaigning and tremendous battles. They may have been a little leaner and a little thinner, but they were lean and thin men, anyhow. Their uniforms, although faded and worn, were neat and clean, and as each sat on a fragment of log, while the board rested on a stump between, they were able to maintain their dignity.

It was Colonel Talbot's move. His hand rested on the red king and he pondered long. Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire waited without a sign of impatience. He would take just as long a time with his knight or bishop, or whichever of the white men he chose to use.

"I confess, Hector," said Colonel Talbot at length, "that this move puzzles me greatly."

"It would puzzle me too, Leonidas, were I in your place," said Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire; "but you must recall that just before the Second Manassas you seemed to have me checkmated, and that I have escaped from a most dangerous position."

"True, true, Hector! I thought I had you, but you slipped from my net. Those were, beyond all dispute, most skillful and daring moves you made. It pays to be bold in this world."

"Do you know," whispered St. Clair to Harry, "that this unfinished game is the one they began last spring in the valley? We saw them playing it in a fence corner before action. They've taken it up again at least four or five times between battles, but neither has ever been able to win. However, they'll fight it out to a finish, if a bullet doesn't get one first. They always remember the exact position in which the figures were when they quit."

Colonel Talbot happened to look up and saw the boys.

"Come down," he said, "and join us. It is pleasant to see you again, Harry. I heard of your mission, its success and your safe return. Hector, I suppose we'll have to postpone the next stage of our game until we whip the Yankees again or are whipped by them. I believe I can yet rescue that red king."

"Perhaps so, Leonidas. Undoubtedly you'll have plenty of time to think over it."

"Which is a good thing, Hector."

"Which is undoubtedly a good thing, Leonidas."

They put the chess men carefully in a box, which they gave to an orderly with very strict injunctions. Then both, after heaving a deep sigh, transformed themselves into men of energy, action, precision and judgment. Every soldier and officer in the trim ranks of the Invincibles was ready.

But action did not come as soon as Harry and his friends had thought. Lee made preliminary movements to mass his army for battle, and then stopped. The spies reported that political wire-pulling, that bane of the North, was at work. McClellan's enemies at Washington were active, and his indiscreet utterances were used to the full against him. Attention was called again and again to his great overestimates of Lee's army and to the paralysis that seemed to overcome him when he was in the presence of the enemy. Lincoln, the most forgiving of men, could not forgive him for his failure to use his full opportunity at Antietam and destroy Lee.

The advance of McClellan stopped. His army remained motionless while October passed into November. The cold winds off the mountains swept the last leaves from the trees, and Harry wondered what was going to happen. Then St. Clair came to him, precise and dignified in manner, but obviously anxious to tell important news.

"What is it, Arthur?" asked Harry.

"We've got news straight from Washington that McClellan is no longer commander of the Army of the Potomac."

"What! They've nobody to put in his place."

"But they have put somebody in his place, just the same."

"Name, please."

"Burnside, Ambrose E. Burnside, with a beautiful fringe of whiskers along each side of his face."

"Well, we can beat any general who wears side whiskers. After all, I'm glad we don't have McClellan to deal with again. Wasn't this Burnside the man who delayed a part of the Union attack at Antietam so long that we had time to beat off the other part?"

"The same."

"Then I'm thinking that he'll be caught between the hammer and the anvil of Lee and Jackson, just as Pope was."

"Most likely. Anyhow, our army is rejoicing over the removal of McClellan as commander-in-chief of the Army of the Potomac. That's something of a tribute to McClellan, isn't it?"

"Yes, good-bye, George! We've had two good fights with you, Seven Days and Antietam, with Pope in between at the Second Manassas, and now, ho! for Burnside!"

The reception of the news that Burnside had replaced McClellan was the same throughout the Army of Northern Virginia. The officers and soldiers now felt that they were going to face a man who was far less of a match for Lee and Jackson than McClellan had been, and McClellan himself had been unequal to the task. They were anxious to meet Burnside. They heard that he was honest and had no overweening opinion of his own abilities. He did not wish to be put in the place of McClellan, preferring to remain a division or corps commander.

"Then, if that's so," said Sherburne, "we've won already. If a man thinks he's not able to lead the Army of the Potomac, then he isn't. Anyhow, we'll quickly see what will happen."

But again it was not as soon as they had had expected. The Northern advance was delayed once more, and Jackson with his staff and a large part of his force moved to Winchester, the town that he loved so much, and around which he had won so much of his glory. His tent was pitched beside the Presbyterian manse, and he and Dr. Graham resumed their theological discussions, in which Jackson had an interest so deep and abiding that the great war rolling about them, with himself as a central figure, could not disturb it.

The coldness of the weather increased and the winds from the mountains were often bitter, but the new stay in Winchester was pleasant, like the old. Harry himself felt a throb of joy when they returned to the familiar places. Despite the coldness of mid-November the weather was often beautiful. The troops, scattered through the fields and in the

forest about the town, were in a happy mood. They had many dead comrades to remember, but youth cannot mourn long. They were there in ease and plenty again, under a commander who had led them to nothing but victory. They heard many reports that Burnside was marching and that he might soon cross the Rappahannock, and they heard also that Jackson's advance to Winchester with his corps had created the deepest alarm in Washington. The North did not trust Burnside as a commander-in-chief, and it had great cause to fear Jackson. Even the North itself openly expressed admiration for his brilliant achievements.

Reports came to Winchester that an attack by Jackson on Washington was feared. Maryland expected another invasion. Pennsylvania, remembering the daring raid which Stuart had made through Chambersburg, one of her cities, picking up prisoners on the way, dreaded the coming of a far mightier force than the one Stuart had led. At the capital itself it was said that many people were packing, preparatory to fleeing into the farther North.

But Harry and his comrades thought little of these things for a few days. It was certainly pleasant there in the little Virginia town. The people of Winchester and those of the country far and wide delighted to help and honor them. Food was abundant and the crisp cold strengthened and freshened the blood in their veins. The fire and courage of Jackson's men had never risen higher.

Jackson himself seemed to be thinking but little of war for a day or two. His inseparable companion was the Presbyterian minister, Dr. Graham, to whom he often said that he thought it was the noblest and grandest thing in the world to be a great minister. Harry, as his aide, being invariably near him, was impressed more and more by his extraordinary mixture of martial and religious fervor. The man who prayed before going into battle, and who was never willing to fight on Sunday, would nevertheless hurl his men directly into the cannon's mouth for the sake of victory, and would never excuse the least flinching on the part of either officer or private.

It seemed to Harry that the two kinds of fervor in Jackson, the martial and the religious, were in about equal proportions, and they always inspired him with a sort of awe. Deep as were his affection and admiration for Jackson, he would never have presumed upon the slightest familiarity. Nor would any other officer of his command.

Yet the tender side of Jackson was often shown during his last days in his beloved Winchester. The hero-worshipping women of the South often brought their children to see him, to receive his blessing, and to say when they were grown that the great Jackson had put his hands upon their heads.

Harry and his three comrades of his own age, who had been down near the creek, were returning late one afternoon to headquarters near the manse, when they heard the shout of many childish voices.

They saw that he was walking again with the minister, but that he was

surrounded by at least a dozen little girls, every one of whom demanded in turn that he shake her hand. He was busily engaged in this task when the whole group passed out of sight into the manse.

"The Northern newspapers denounce us as passionate and headstrong, with all the faults of the cavaliers," said St. Clair. "I only wish they could see General Jackson as he is. Lee and Jackson come much nearer being Puritans than their generals do."

Harry that night, as he sat in the little anteroom of Jackson's quarters awaiting orders, heard again the low tone of his general praying. The words were not audible, but the steady and earnest sound came to him for some time. It was late, and all the soldiers were asleep or at rest. No sound came from the army, and besides Jackson's voice there was none other, save the sighing of the winds down from the mountains.

Harry, as he listened to the prayer, felt a deep and overwhelming sense of solemnity and awe. He felt that it was at once a petition and a presage. Sitting there in the half dark mighty events were foreshadowed. It seemed to him that they were about to enter upon a struggle more terrible than any that had gone before, and those had been terrible beyond the anticipation of anybody.

The omens did not fail. Jackson's army marched the next morning, turning southward along the turnpike in order to effect the junction with Lee and Longstreet. All Winchester had assembled to bid them farewell, the people confident that the army would win victory, but knowing its cost now.

There was water in Harry's eyes as he listened to the shouts and cheers and saw the young girls waving the little Confederate flags.

"If good wishes can do anything," said Harry, "then we ought to win."

"So we should. I'm glad to have the good wishes, but, Harry, when you're up against the enemy, they can't take the place of cannon and rifles. Look at Colonel Talbot and Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire. See how straight and precise they are. But both are suffering from a deep disappointment. They started their chess game again last night, Colonel Talbot to make the first move with his king, but before he could decide upon any course with that king the orders came for us to get ready for the march. The chessmen went into the box, and they'll have another chance, probably after we beat Burnside."

They went on up the valley, through the scenes of triumphs remembered so well. All around them were their battlefields of the spring, and there were the massive ridges of the Massanuttons that Jackson had used so skillfully, not clothed in green now, but with the scanty leaves of closing autumn.

Neither Harry nor any of his comrades knew just where they were going. That secret was locked fast under the old slouch hat of Jackson, and Harry, like all the others, was content to wait. Old Jack knew where he

was going and what he meant to do. And wherever he was going it was the right place to go to, and whatever he meant to do was just the thing that ought to be done. His extraordinary spell over his men deepened with the passing days.

As they went farther southward they saw sheltered slopes of the mountains where the foliage yet glowed in the reds and yellows of autumn, "purple patches" on the landscape. Over ridges to both east and west the fine haze of Indian summer yet hung. It was a wonderful world, full of beauty. The air was better and nobler than wine, and the creeks and brooks flowing swiftly down the slopes flashed in silver.

There were no enemies here. The people, mostly women and children--nearly all the men had gone to war--came out to cheer them as they passed, and to bring them what food and clothing they could. The Valley never wavered in its allegiance to the South, although great armies fought and trod back and forth over its whole course through all the years of the war.

They turned east and defiled through a narrow pass in the mountains, where the sheltered slopes again glowed in yellow and gold. Jackson, in somber and faded gray, rode near the head of the corps on his faithful Little Sorrel, his chin sunk upon his breast, his eyes apparently not seeing what was about them, the worn face somber and thoughtful. Harry knew that the great brain under the old slouch hat was working every moment, always working with an intensity and concentration of which few men were ever capable. Harry, following close behind him, invariably watched him, but he could never read anything of Jackson's mind from his actions.

Then came the soldiers in broad and flowing columns, that is, they seemed to Harry, in the intense autumn light, to flow like a river of men and horses and steel, beautiful to look on now, but terrible in battle.

"We're better than ever," said the sober Dalton. "Antietam stopped us for the time, but we are stronger than we were before that battle."

"Stronger and even more enthusiastic," Harry concurred. "Ah, there goes the Cajun band and the other bands and our boys singing our great tune! Listen to it!"

"Southrons hear your country call you;
Up, lest worse than death befall you!
To arms! To arms! To arms in Dixie!
Lo! all the beacon fires are lighted--
Let all hearts now be united!
To arms! To arms! To arms in Dixie!"

The chorus of the battle song, so little in words, so great in its thrilling battle note, was taken up by more than a score of thousand, and the vast volume of sound, confined in narrow defiles, rolled like thunder, giving forth mighty echoes. Harry was moved tremendously and

he saw Jackson himself come out of his deep thought and lift up his face that glowed.

"It's certainly great," said Dalton to Harry. "It would drag a man from the hospital and send him into battle. I know now how the French republican troops on the march felt when they heard the Marseillaise."

"But the words don't seem to me to be the same that I heard at Bull Run."

"No, they're not; but what does it matter? That thrilling music is always the same, and it's enough."

Already the origin of the renowned battle song was veiled in doubt, and different versions of the words were appearing; but the music never changed and every step responded to it.

The army passed through the defile, entered another portion of the valley, forded a fork of the Shenandoah, crossed the Luray Valley, and then entered the steep passes of the Blue Ridge. Here they found autumn gone and winter upon them. As the passes rose and the mountains, clothed in pine forest, hung over them, the soft haze of Indian summer fled, and in its place came a low, gray sky, somber and chill. Sharp winds cut them, but the blood flowed warm and strong in their veins as they trod the upward path between the ridges. Once more a verse of the defiant Dixie rolled and echoed through the lofty and bleak pine forest:

"How the South's great heart rejoices
At your cannon's ringing voices;
 To arms!
For faith betrayed, and pledges broken,
Wrongs inflicted, insults spoken
 To arms!
Advance the flag of Dixie."

Now on the heights the last shreds and patches of autumn were blown away by the winds of winter. The sullen skies lowered continually. Flakes of snow whirled into their faces, but they merely bent their heads to the storm and marched steadily onward. They had not been called Jackson's Foot Cavalry for nothing. They were proud of the name, and they meant to deserve it more thoroughly than ever.

"I take it," said Dalton to Harry, "that some change has occurred in the Northern plans. The Army of the Potomac must be marching along in a new line."

"So do I. The battle will be fought in lower country."

"And we will be with Lee and Longstreet in a day or two."

"So it looks."

Jackson stopped twice, a full day each time, for rest, but at the end of the eighth day, including the two for rest, he had driven his men one

hundred and twenty miles over mountains and across rivers. They also passed through cold and heavy snow, but they now found themselves in lower country at the village of Orange Court House. The larger town of Fredericksburg lay less than forty miles away. Harry was not familiar with the name of Fredericksburg, but it was destined to be before long one that he could never forget. In after years it was hard for him to persuade himself that famous names were not famous always. The name of some village or river or mountain would be burned into his brain with such force and intensity that the letters seemed to have been there since the beginning.

It lacked but two days of December when they came to Orange Court House, but they heard that the Northern front was more formidable and menacing than ever. Burnside had shown more energy than was expected of him. He had formed a plan to march upon Richmond, and, despite the alterations in his course, he was clinging to that plan. He had at the least, so the scouts said, one hundred and twenty thousand men and four hundred guns. The North, moreover, which always commanded the water, had gunboats in the Rappahannock below Fredericksburg, and they would be, as they were throughout the war, a powerful arm.

Harry knew, too, the temper and resolution of the North, the slow, cold wrath that could not be checked by one defeat or half a dozen. Antietam, as he saw it, had merely been a temporary check to the Confederate arms, where the forces of Lee and Jackson had fought off at least double their number. The Northern men could not yet boast of a single clean-cut victory in the battles of the east, but they were coming on again as stern and resolute as ever. Defeat seemed to serve only as an incentive to them. After every one, recruits poured down from the north and west to lift anew the flag of the Union.

There was something in this steady, unyielding resolve that sent a chill through Harry. It was possible that men who came on and who never ceased coming would win in the end. The South--and he was sanguine that such men as Lee and Jackson could not be beaten----might wear itself out by the very winning of victories. The chill came again when he counted the resources pitted against his side. He was a lad of education and great intelligence, and he had no illusions now about the might of the North and its willingness to fight.

But youth, in spite of facts, can forget odds as well as loss. The doubts that would come at times were always dispelled when he looked upon the glorious Army of Northern Virginia. It was now nearly eighty thousand strong, with an almost unbroken record of victory, trusting absolutely in its leadership and supremely confident that it could whip any other army on the planet. Its brilliant generals were gathered with Jackson or with Lee and Longstreet. They were as confident as their soldiers and no movement of the enemy escaped them. Stuart, with his plume and sash, at which no man now dared to scoff, hung with his horsemen like a fringe on the flank of Burnside's own army, cutting off the Union scouts and skirmishers and hiding the plans of Lee.

Messengers brought news that Burnside would certainly cross the

Rappahannock, covered by the Union artillery, which was always far superior in weight and power to that of the South. Harry heard that the passage of the river would not be opposed, because the Southern army could occupy stronger positions farther back, but he did not know whether the rumors were true.

The word now came, and they went forward from Orange Court House toward Fredericksburg to join Lee and Longstreet. When they marched toward the Second Manassas they had suffered from an almost intolerable heat and dust. Now they advanced through a winter that seemed to pour upon them every variety of discomfort. Heavy snows fell, icy rains came and fierce winds blew. The country was deserted, and the roads beneath the rain and snow and the passage of great armies disappeared. Vast muddy trenches marked where they had been, and the mud was deep and sticky, covering everything as it was ground up, and coloring the whole army the same hue. Somber and sullen skies brooded over them continually. Not even Jackson's foot cavalry could make much progress through such a sea of mud.

"A battle would be a relief," said Harry, as he rode with the Invincibles, having brought some order to Colonel Talbot. "There's nothing like this to take the starch out of men. Isn't that so, Happy?"

"It depresses ordinary persons like you, Harry," replied Langdon, "but a soul like mine leaps up to meet the difficulties. Mud as an obstacle is nothing to me. As I was riding along here I was merely thinking about the different kinds we have. I note that this Virginia mud is tremendously sticky, inclined to be red in color, and I should say that on the whole it's not as handsome as our South Carolina mud, especially when I see our product at its best. What kind of mud do you have in Kentucky, Harry?"

"All kinds, red, black, brown and every other shade."

"Well, there's a lot of snow mixed with this, too. I think that at the very bottom there is a layer of snow, and then the mud and the snow come in alternate layers until within a foot of the top, after which it's all mud. Harry, Old Jack doesn't believe it's right to fight on Sunday, but do you believe it's right to fight in winter, when the armies have to waste so much strength and effort in getting at one another?"

He was interrupted by the mellow tones of a bugle, and a brilliant troop of horsemen came trotting toward them through a field, where the mud was not so deep. They recognized Stuart in his gorgeous panoply at their head and behind him was Sherburne.

Stuart rode up to the Invincibles. Colonel Leonidas Talbot and Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire gravely saluted the brilliant apparition.

"I am General Stuart," said Stuart, lifting the plumed hat, "and I am glad to welcome the vanguard of General Jackson. May I ask, sir, what regiment is this?"

"It is the South Carolina regiment known as the Invincibles," said Colonel Talbot proudly, as he lifted his cap in a return salute, "although it does not now contain many South Carolinians. Alas! most of the lads who marched so proudly away from Charleston have gone to their last rest, and their places have been filled chiefly by Virginians. But the Virginians are a brave and gallant people, sir, almost equal in fire and dash to the South Carolinians."

Stuart smiled. He knew that it was meant as a compliment of the first class, and as such he took it.

"I think, sir," he said, "that I am speaking to Colonel Leonidas Talbot?"

"You are, sir, and the gentleman on my right is the second in command of this regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire, a most noble gentleman and valiant and skillful officer. We have met you before, sir. You saved us before Bull Run when we were beleaguered at a fort in the Valley."

"Ah, I remember!" exclaimed Stuart. "And a most gallant fight you were making. And I recognize this young officer, too. He was the messenger who met me in the fields. Your hand, Mr. Kenton."

He stretched out his own hand in its long yellow buckskin glove, and Harry, flushing with pride, shook it warmly.

"It's good of you, General," he said, "to remember me."

"I'm glad to remember you and all like you. Is General Jackson near?"

"About a quarter of a mile farther back, sir. I'm a member of his staff, and I'll ride with you to him."

"Thanks. Lead the way."

Harry turned with Stuart and Sherburne and they soon reached General Jackson, who was plodding slowly on Little Sorrel, his chin sunk upon his breast as usual, the lines of thought deep in his face. General Stuart bowed low before him and the plumed hat was lifted high. The knight paid deep and willing deference to the Puritan.

Jackson's face brightened. He wished plain apparel upon himself, but he did not disapprove of the reverse upon General Stuart.

"You are very welcome, General Stuart," he said.

"I thank you, sir. I have come to report to you, sir, that General Burnside's army is gathering in great force on the other side of the Rappahannock, and that we are massed along the river and back of Fredericksburg."

"General Burnside will cross, will he not?"

"So we think. He can lay a pontoon bridge, and he has a great artillery to protect it. The river, as you know, sir, has a width of about two hundred yards at Fredericksburg, and the Northern batteries can sweep the farther shore."

"I'm sorry that we've elected to fight at Fredericksburg," said General Jackson thoughtfully. "The Rappahannock will protect General Burnside's army."

Stuart gazed at him in astonishment.

"I don't understand you, sir," he said. "You say that the Rappahannock will protect General Burnside when it seems to be our defense."

"My meaning is perfectly clear. When we defeat General Burnside at Fredericksburg he will retreat across the river over his bridge or bridges and we shall not be able to get at him. We will win a great victory, but we will not gather the fruits of it, because of our inability to reach him."

"Oh, I see," said Stuart, the light breaking on his face. "You consider the victory already won, sir?"

"Beyond a doubt."

"Then if you think so, General Jackson, I think so, too," said Stuart, as he saluted and rode away.

CHAPTER IV

ON THE RAPPAHANNOCK

The division of Jackson reached Fredericksburg the next day and went into camp, partly in the rear of the town, and a portion of it further down the Rappahannock. Harry, as an aide, rode back and forth on many errands while the troops were settling into place. Once more he saw General Lee on his famous white horse, Traveler, conferring with Jackson on Little Sorrel. And the stalwart and bearded Longstreet was there, too.

But Harry's heart bled when he rode into the ancient town of Fredericksburg, a place homelike and picturesque in peaceful days, but now lying between two mighty armies, directly within their line of fire, and abandoned for a time by its people, all save a hardy few.

The effect upon him was startling. He rode along the deserted streets and looked at the closed windows, like the eyeless sockets of a blind man. In the streets mud and slush and snow had gathered, with no attempt of man to clean them away, but the wheels of the cannon had cut ruts in them a foot deep. The great white colonial houses, with their green shutters fastened tightly, stood lone and desolate amid their deserted lawns. No smoke rose from the chimneys. The shops were closed. There was no sound of a child's voice in the whole town. It was the first time that Harry had ever ridden through a deserted city, and it was truly a city of the dead to him.

"It's almost as bad as a battlefield after the battle is over," he said to Dalton, who was with him.

"It gives you a haunted, weird feeling," said Dalton, looking at the closed windows and smokeless chimneys.

But the people of Fredericksburg had good cause to go. Two hundred thousand men, hardened now to war, faced one another across the two hundred yards of the Rappahannock. Four hundred Union cannon on the other side of the river could easily smash their little city to pieces. The people were scattered among their relatives in the farmhouses and villages about Fredericksburg, eagerly awaiting the news that the invincible Lee and Jackson had beaten back the hated invader.

But the Southern army, save for a small force, did not occupy Fredericksburg itself.

Along the low ridge, a mile or so west of the town, Longstreet had been posted and he had dug trenches and gunpits. The crest of this ridge, called Marye's Hill, was bare, and here, in addition to the pits and trenches, Longstreet threw up breastworks. Down the slopes were ravines and much timber, making the whole position one of great strength. Harry gazed at it as he carried one of his messages from general to general, and he was enough of a soldier to know that an enemy who attacked here was undertaking a mighty task.

But Burnside did not move, and the somber blanket of winter thickened. More snows fell and the icy rains came again. Then the mercury slid down until it reached zero. Thick ice formed over everything and some of the shallower brooks froze solidly in their beds. The Southern lads were not nearly so well equipped against the winter as their foes. Not many had heavy overcoats, and blankets and shoes were thin and worn.

The forest was now their refuge. The river was lined thickly with it, running for a long distance, and thousands of axes began to bite into the timber. Hardy youths, skilled in such work, they rapidly built log huts or shelters for themselves, and within these or outside under the trees innumerable fires blazed along the Rappahannock, the crackling flames sending a defiance to other such flames beyond the frozen river.

Harry had a letter from Dr. Russell, which had come by the way of the mountains and Richmond. He had already heard of the terrible day of

Perryville in Kentucky, and the doctor had been able to confirm his earlier news that his father, Colonel Kenton, had passed through it safely. But the hostile armies in the west had gone down into Tennessee, and there were reports that they would soon move toward each other for a great battle. It seemed that the rival forces in both east and west would meet at nearly the same time in terrible conflict.

Dr. Russell told that Dick Mason had been wounded in the combat at Perryville, but had been nursed back to health by his mother, who with others had found him upon the field. He had since gone into Tennessee to rejoin the Union army, and his mother had returned to Pendleton.

Harry folded the letter, put it in his pocket, and for a while he was very thoughtful.

It was a great relief to be sure that his father had gone safely through Perryville, and that Dick Mason, although wounded there, was well again. His heart yearned over both. His devotion to his father had always been strong and Dick Mason had stood in the place of a brother. They were alive for the present at least, but Harry knew of the sinister threat that hung over the west. The terrible battle that was to be fought at Stone River was already sending forth its preliminary signals, and for a little while Harry thought more of those marching forces in Tennessee than of the great army to which he belonged and of the one yet more numerous that faced it.

But these thoughts could not last long. The events in which he was to have a part were too imminent and mighty for anyone to detach himself from them more than a few minutes. He quickly returned, heart and soul, to his duties, which in these days took all his time. Many messages were passing between Lee and Jackson and Longstreet and the commanders next to them in rank, and Harry carried his share.

A few days after the letter from Dr. Russell the cold abated considerably. The ice in the river broke, the melting snows made the country a sea of mud and slush and horses often became mired so deeply that it took a dozen soldiers to drag them out again. It was on such a day as this that Dalton came to him, his grave face wearing a look of importance.

"General Jackson has just told me," he said, "to take you and join General Stuart, who is going with his horse to the neighborhood of Port Royal on the river."

"What's up?"

"Nothing's up yet. But we understand that some of the Yankee gunboats are trying to get up, now that they have a clear passage through the ice."

"Cavalry can't stop them."

"No, but Stuart is taking horse artillery with him, and he's likely to

make it warm for the enemy in the water. Harry, if we only had a navy, too, this war wouldn't be doubtful."

"But, as we haven't got a navy, it is doubtful, very doubtful."

They quickly joined General Stuart, who was eager for the duty, and falling in line with the troop of Sherburne rode swiftly toward Port Royal, the cavalymen carrying with them several light guns.

As they galloped along, mixed mud and snow flew in every direction, but most of them had grown so used to it that they paid little attention. The river flowed a deep and somber stream, and all the hills about were yet white with snow. At that time, colored too, as it was by his feelings, it was the most sinister landscape that Harry had ever looked upon. Black winter and red war, neither of which spared, were allied against man.

But his pulses began to leap when they saw coils of black smoke blown a little to one side by the wind. He knew that the smoke came from gunboats. They must be endeavoring to land troops, and Stuart was no man to allow a detached force to pass the Rappahannock and appear in their rear.

As the cavalry burst into a gallop from the snowy forest Harry saw that he was right. A fleet of gunboats was gathered in the stream and on the far shore they were embarking troops. But his quick eye caught a horseman on their own side of the river who was galloping away. He was already too distant for a rifle shot, but Harry instinctively knew that it was Shepard. He had seen the man under such extraordinarily vivid circumstances that the set of his figure was familiar.

Nor was he surprised to behold Shepard now. He merely wondered that he had not seen him earlier, so great was his activity and daring, and he had no doubt that he had brought the gunboats and the Union troops warning that Stuart was coming. He was sure of it the moment the cavalry emerged from the woods, because one of the gunboats instantly turned loose with two heavy guns which sent shells whistling and screaming over their heads. Had they been a little better aimed they would have done much destruction, and Harry saw at once that they were going to have an ugly time with these saucy little demons of the water.

Another boat fired. One of the cavalymen was killed and several wounded. Stuart promptly drew his men back to the edge of the wood, unlimbered and posted his cannon. Quick as they were, the black wasps on the river buzzed and stung as fast. Shells and solid shot were whistling among them and about them. They were good gunners on those boats and the men in gray acknowledged it by the rapidity with which they took to shelter.

But Stuart's blood was at its utmost heat. He had no intention of being driven off, and soon his own light guns were sending shell and solid shot toward the boats, which had relanded their troops on the other side, and which were now puffing up and down the river like the angry little

demons they were, sending shells, solid shot, grape and canister into the woods and along the slopes where the horsemen had disappeared.

Harry and Dalton were glad to dismount and to get behind both the trees and the curve of the embankment. Harry, despite a pretty full experience now, could not repress involuntary shivers as the deadly steel flew by. He and Dalton had nothing to do but hold their horses and watch the combat, which they did with the keenest interest.

Stuart's cannon had unlimbered in a good place, where they were protected partly by a ridge, and their deep booming note soon showed the gunboats that they had an enemy worthy of their fire. Dalton and Harry looked on with growing excitement. Dalton, for once, grew garrulous, talking in an excited monotone.

"Look at that, Harry!" he cried. "See the water spurt right by the bow of that boat! A shell broke there! And there goes another! That struck, too! See the fallen men on the boat! Look at that little black fellow coming right out in the middle of the stream! And it got home, too, with that shot! By George, how the shell raked our ranks! Ah, but, you saucy little creature, that shell paid you back! See, Harry, its wheel is smashed, and it's floating away with the stream! Guns on land have an advantage over guns on the water! As the negro said, 'When the boat blows up, whar are you? But if the explosion is on dry land, dar you are!' Ah, another has caught it, and is going out of action! Oh my, little boats, you're brave and saucy, but you can't stand up to Stuart's guns."

Dalton was right. The gunboats, sinkable and fully exposed, were rapidly getting the worst of it. Stuart's guns, protected by the ridge, were inflicting so much damage that they were compelled to drop down the stream, two or three of them disabled and in tow of the others.

A covering Union battery of much heavier guns opened fire from a hill beyond the river, but it was unable either to protect the gunboats or to demolish Stuart's horse artillery, which was sheltered well by the ridge. The men in gray began to cheer. It soon became obvious that they would win. Gradually all of the gunboats, having suffered much loss, dropped down the stream and passed out of range. The heavy battery was also withdrawn from the hill and the detached attempt to cross the Rappahannock had failed.

Stuart and his men rode back exultant, but Dalton said to Harry that he thought it merely a forerunner.

"A good omen, you mean?" said Harry.

"Good, I hope, but I meant chiefly a sign of much greater things to come. I'm thinking that Burnside will attack in a day or two now. Lots of Northern newspapers find their way into our lines, and the whole North is urging him on. They demand that a great victory be won in the east right away."

"I feel sorry for a general who is pushed on like that."

"So do I, because he hasn't a ghost of a chance. He'll be able to cross the river under cover of his great batteries, but look, Harry, look at those frowning heights around Fredericksburg, covered with the finest riflemen in the world, the ditches and trenches sown with artillery, and the best two military brains on the globe there to direct. What chance have they, Harry? What chance have they?"

"Very little that I can see, but a battle is never won or lost until it's fought. We'd better report now to General Jackson."

They saluted General Stuart, and rode away over the icy mud. General Jackson received their report with pleasure.

"Excellent! Excellent!" he said. "General Stuart has routed them with horse artillery! A capable man! A most wonderful man!"

He said the last words to himself, rather than to Harry, and Stuart soon proved that his horse artillery was not underrated by winning a second encounter with the gunboats a day or two later. Early also beat back an attempt to cross the river at a third place, and it became apparent now that the Union army could make no flanking attack upon its enemy south of the Rappahannock. It must be made, if at all, directly on its front at Fredericksburg.

But Harry had no doubt that it would be made. The reports of their numerous scouts and spies told with detail of the immense preparations going on in the Union camp. He could often watch them himself with his glasses from the hills. He did not see much of St. Clair and Langdon these days, as they remained closely with their regiment, the Invincibles, but Dalton and he were much together.

It was well into December when they were watching through the glasses the concentration of Union cannon on Stafford Heights across the river. One hundred and fifty great guns were in position there and they could easily blow Fredericksburg to pieces. Harry looked down again at this little city which had jumped suddenly into fame by getting itself squarely between the two armies arrayed for battle.

He felt the old sensation of pity as he gazed at the closed shutters and the smokeless chimneys. Nobody was stirring in the streets, except some Mississippi soldiers who had been placed there to oppose the passage, and who were fortifying themselves in the houses and cellars along the river front.

"It's no good looking any more," Harry said to Dalton. "There's nothing to do now but wait. That's what General Jackson is doing. I saw him in his tent to-day, reading a book on theology that Dr. Graham has just sent him."

"You're right, Harry. If the general can rest, so can we. Well, not much of this day is left. See how the Yankee batteries are fading

away in the twilight."

"Yes, Harry, fading now, but they'll come back again, massive metal and as sinister as ever, in the morning."

"Which won't keep me from sleeping soundly to-night. Funny how you get used to anything. Neither the presence nor the absence of the Yankee army will interfere with my sleep unless the general wants to send me on an errand."

"And we also grow used to sights so tremendous in their nature that they turn the whole current of our history. Look at that winter sun setting there over the western hills. It may be my fancy, Harry, but it seems to have the colors of bronze and steel in it, a sort of menace, one might call it."

"I see the same colors, George, but I suppose it's fancy. The whole sky is one of steel to me. I see the gleaming of steel everywhere, over the hills, the river and the armies."

"Our imaginations are too vivid, Harry. But look how that darkness closes in on everything! Now the Yankee cannon and the Yankee army are gone! The river itself is fading, and there goes the town! Now, see the lights spring up on the far shore!"

"It's supper and sleep for me," said Harry. "It doesn't do to let your imagination run away with you. You know that Lee and Old Jack and Jim Longstreet have arranged for everything."

They ate their suppers, and, the general giving them leave, they lay down in the tent next to his, wrapped in their blankets. Harry slept soundly, but while the pitchy darkness of a winter night still enclosed the land he was awakened by a heavy rumbling noise. His nerves had been attuned so highly by exciting days that he was awake in an instant and sprang to his feet, Dalton also springing up with equal promptness.

They saw General Jackson standing in front of his tent and peering down in the darkness toward the river. Other officers were already gathering near him. Harry and Dalton stood at attention, where he could see them, if he wished to send them on any errand. But Jackson was silent and listening.

The heavy rumbling reports--cannon shots--came again, but they were fired on their side of the river.

"Gentlemen," said General Jackson, "the enemy has begun the passage. Those are our guns giving the signal to the army."

Harry's pulses began to throb. But, although fires flared up here and there, little was to be seen in the darkness. Fortune seemed to have shifted suddenly to the side of the Union. Not night alone protected the bridge builders, but a thick, impenetrable fog, rising from the river and the muddy earth, covered the stream and its shores. The

Southerners could not see just where the bridge head was and their cannon must fire at random through the heavy darkness. Sixteen hundred Mississippians were stationed in Fredericksburg below, well concealed in cellars and rifle pits, but they could not see either, and for the present their rifles were silent.

But Harry's imagination immediately became intensely vivid again. He fancied that he could hear through all the shifting gloom the sound of axes and hammers and saws at work upon that bridge. These army engineers could throw a bridge across a river in half a day. He recognized at all times the great resources and the mechanical genius of the North. The South had good bridge builders herself, but she had bent all her powers to the development of public men and soldiers. Harry felt more intensely all the time the one-sided character of her growth and its defects.

Dalton stood by Harry's side, and the darkness was so intense that he seemed but a shadow. A little further away was Jackson. No fires had been lighted in his camp, but nevertheless he was not a shadow. That personality, quiet and modest, was so intense, so powerful that it seemed to Harry to become luminous, to radiate light in the blackness of the night. It was imagination, he knew, at work again, but it was Jackson who had loosed its springs.

"Can you see your watch, George?" he whispered to Dalton.

"Yes, and its says only twenty minutes past three in the morning."

"And our signal guns began about twenty minutes ago. They will have nearly four hours in which to work before the sun rises and we can see them well enough to take good aim."

"And maybe longer than that, Harry. The whole night is permeated with the heaviest inland fog I ever knew. Maybe it will take the sun a long time to strike through it or drive it away. It's bad for us."

"But we'll win anyhow. I tell you, we'll win anyhow! Do you hear me, George?"

"Yes, Harry, I hear you. You're excited. So am I. There are mighty few who wouldn't be at such a time; but look at the general! He stands like a statue!"

General Jackson did not move, save to lift his glasses now and then, as if with their magnifying powers he could pierce the dark. But the night and the swollen fog still hid everything going on beyond the river from those on the heights. Down by the shore the Mississippians in their rifle pits might see a little, and the scouts undoubtedly had seen much, else the signal guns would not be firing.

Harry's pulses, after a while, began to beat more smoothly and there was not such a painful and insistent drumming in his head. Emotions yielded now to will and he waited patiently. General Jackson for the first time

told some of his young officers that they could lie down and rest.

"There can be no action before daylight," he said, "and it's best to be fresh and ready."

He spoke to them with the grave kindness that he always used, save when some great fault was committed, and then his words burned like fire. Harry and Dalton procured their blankets from their tents, wrapped them about their bodies and lay down on the driest spots they could find, but they had no thought of sleep. They permitted their limbs to relax, and that was a help to the nerves, but neither closed his eyes.

Those dark hours seemed an eternity to Harry. The floating fog seemed to grow thicker and to enter his very bones. He shivered and drew the blanket close. Now, with his ears close to the earth, he was sure that he could hear the axes and the saws and the hammers beating on steel rivets on the other side of the Rappahannock.

The Confederate cannon still fired the signals of alarm at regular intervals, but the night and the fog always closed in again quickly over the flash that the discharge had made. After a while a murmur came from the long Southern line along the heights and on the ridges. Horses stirred here and there, cannon, moved to new positions, made sighing sounds as their wheels sank in the mud; sabres and bayonets clanked, thousands of men whispered to one another. All these varying sounds united into one great soft voice which was like the murmur of a wind through the summer night.

Toward five o'clock in the morning, when the darkness had not diminished a whit, a messenger from General Lee rode up with a note for General Jackson. It merely stated that all was ready and to hold the positions that he had taken up the night before. Jackson wrote a brief reply by the light of a lantern that an orderly held, and the messenger galloped away with it. It was the only incident that had occurred in a long time.

"They're not using many lights on the other side of the river," said Harry, although he noted an occasional flame in the darkness. "Of course, they want to hide their bridge building, but you'd think they'd have fires burning elsewhere."

"They've learned the value of caution," said Dalton. "I'm bound to say they're going about the first part of their work with skill."

He spoke with the calm superiority of a young Officer.

Harry took out his own watch, and by holding it close to his eyes was able to read its face.

"A quarter to six," he said. "According to the watch it is less than three hours since we first heard those alarm guns, but my five known senses and all the unknown tell me that it has been at least a week."

"In an hour we should see something," said Dalton. "Confound this fog."

If it weren't so thick we could see now."

Harry's pulses began to beat hard again in the next hour. He strove with glasses even for a glimpse of the winter sun which he knew would come so late, but as yet the fog showed nothing save a faint luminous tinge low down in the east. An orderly brought food to them, and while they ate they saw the luminous tinge broaden and deepen.

"The sun's rising behind that fog," said Dalton, "but here comes a little wind that will drive away the fog or thin it out so we can see."

"Yes, I feel it," said Harry, "and you can see the dull, somber red of the sun trying to break through. Look, George, unless I'm mistaken the fog's moving down the river!"

"So it is, there's the flash of the stream, the color of steel, and by all the stars, there's their bridge two-thirds of the way across!"

Heavier puffs of wind came and the fog billowed off down the river. The whole gigantic theater of action sprang at once into the light. There were the two great armies clustered on opposing ridges, there was the deserted town, there was the deep river, the color of lead, flowing between the foes, two-thirds of its width already spanned by the Union bridge, the bridge itself covered with workmen, and boats swarming by its side.

Harry felt a thrill and a shudder which were almost simultaneous. Then came a deep muffled roar from the two armies on the ridges looking at each other. But as the roar died it was succeeded by the rapid, stinging fire of rifles. The Mississippians in their pits and cellars near the bank of the river were sending a hail of bullets upon the bridge builders.

The rest of the Southern army stood by and watched. Harry knew that Lee and Jackson would make their chief defense on the ridges, but the Mississippians were there to keep the enemy from being too forward. So deadly were their rifles that every workman fled off the bridge to the Union shore, save those who were struck down upon it, falling into the water.

Then came a pause, a period of intense waiting, short, but seemingly long, even to the veteran generals, after which the gallant builders, who truly deserved the name of the bravest of the brave, ventured again upon the bridge in the face of those terrible Mississippi rifles. A blast of death again blew upon them. Bullets in hundreds struck upon bodies or rattled on timbers. The workmen could not live in the face of such a fire, and those who had not been slain retreated again to their own side of the stream. A third time the heroic bridge builders returned to their work, and a third time they were driven back by the deadly Mississippi hail. Harry felt pity for them.

"I never saw anything braver," he said to Dalton.

"Nor did I, Harry, nor anything more useless. The bridge builders never had a chance before the rifles. But now their supports, which should have been there all the time, are coming up."

Heavy columns of Union riflemen moved forward to the edge of the river and replied to the Mississippians. But the Southerners, in the shelter of the cellars and pits, held their ground. But few of them were hit and they kept up that deadly hail which swept the uncompleted bridge clear of every workman who attempted to go upon it.

The rapid fire of the rifles crashed up and down both sides of the river, two sheets of flame seeming to reach out as if they would meet each other. The wind that had driven away the fog also carried off the smoke, and the river still gleamed like steel between. Then, as the rifle fire died again, there was another silence for a while.

"It will take more than rifles," said Harry, "to drive out those intrenched Mississippians."

"So it will, Harry," said Dalton, who was watching through glasses, "and here it comes. Their great batteries are about to open."

The next instant the whole earth seemed to be shaken by the roar of heavy cannon. The opposing hills and ridges fairly poured forth flame, and shells and solid shot crashed upon the whole devoted town. Nor did this tremendous fire from a hundred and fifty great guns cease for an instant. The roar and crash were appalling. Harry saw houses crumbling in Fredericksburg, with flames leaping up from others.

The artillery of Longstreet immediately facing the Union batteries was too light and weak to reply, and the gunners remained quiet in their trenches while the storm rained its showers of steel upon the town. Yet the Mississippians in the rifle pits held fast, their earthen shelters protecting them. While the bombardment was at its very height workmen ran out on the bridge for the fourth time to complete it, and while the shells and solid shot were whistling over their heads, the rifles of the Mississippians once more swept it clean. Harry groaned. He could not help it at the sight of men so brave who were cut down like grass by the scythe. Then his attention turned away from the bridge to the mighty cannonade which seemed to be growing in volume. The wind took much of the smoke across the river and it floated in a great cloud over Fredericksburg, through which shot the flames of the burning buildings.

But the main army of the South, stretched along a front of six miles, remained silent. Jackson on the right scarcely moved, but all the while he attentively watched through his glasses the great cannonade. Nearly all the soldiers were lying down, and to most of them the earth seemed to heave with the shock of all those blazing cannon.

Harry and Dalton walked once to the point where the Invincibles lay. That is, all but Colonel Leonidas Talbot and Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire were lying down. They stood rigidly erect, their eyes on

the great cannonade, and as Harry approached they were exchanging brief comments with each other.

"What harm does that cannonade do, Hector?" asked Colonel Talbot.

"Much to the town, little to us."

"What a pity we don't have an artillery equal to theirs."

"A great pity, Leonidas."

"They will presently move forward in much greater force to finish the bridge."

"Undoubtedly, Leonidas. They have shown folly, wasting the lives of such brave men in small efforts one after another. They will try something else."

"I see a great many boats against the bank on their side of the river. I fancy they will use them in their next attempt, whatever it may be."

"I agree with you. Good morning, Lieutenant Kenton. A mighty and appalling sight."

"Truly it is, sir," said Harry, saluting the two officers.

"The Yankees will force the passage," said Colonel Talbot. "Our artillery is not strong enough to reply to their covering cannonade. We are glad to see you safe and whole, Harry. You'll find your friends lying in that ravine just behind us."

It was a rather deep ravine, and when Harry looked over its edge, St. Clair and Langdon greeted him gladly.

"Come down, Harry," said Langdon, "and be joyful. This gully is pretty well dried out and you can rest. We've got a West Point fellow here and he's humming one of his old songs to about the biggest chorus a song ever had. Captain Swayne, Lieutenant Kenton, once of the Invincibles, but now of General Jackson's personal staff. Swayne's from Tennessee, Harry, and you two are well met. Swayne belongs to a regiment a few yards beyond the gully. He was at the Seven Days and the Second Manassas. We three thought we won those battles ourselves, but it seems that Swayne was at both all the time, helping us. Take off your cap, Harry, and thank the gentleman."

Swayne, a slender, fair man, not over twenty-three, smiled and extended a hearty hand, which Harry received with equal heartiness. The smile turned into a slight twinkle.

"I've been glad to meet your friends here, Mr. Kenton," he said, "but the meeting has brought a disappointment with it."

"How's that?"

"Until we began talking I thought I had won the Seven Days and the Second Manassas all by myself. Now, it seems that I have to share the honors with you fellows."

"So you do," said Langdon, and then he sang:

"There comes a voice from Florida,
From Tampa's lonely shore,
It speaks of one we've lost,
O'Brien is no more.
In the land of sun and flowers,
His head lies pillowed low,
No more he'll drink the gin cocktail,
At Benjamin Haven's, Oh!
At Benny Haven's, Oh!
At Benny Haven's, Oh!"

"Do I get it right, Swayne? Remember that I heard you sing it only three times."

"Fine! Fine!" said Swayne with enthusiasm. "You have it right, or as near right as need be, and you're using it in a much better voice than I can."

"I'm a great soldier, but my true place is on the operatic stage," said Langdon modestly.

"It's an old West Point song of ours, Kenton," said Swayne. "While I was lying here listening to the continued roar of all those great guns, I couldn't keep from humming it as a sort of undernote."

"This gully has a queer effect," said St. Clair, who, lying on a blanket, was dusting every minute particle of dried mud from his uniform.

"It seems to soften the sounds of all those guns--and they must be a couple of hundred at least. It produces a kind of harmony."

"It's the old god Vulcan and a thousand assistants of his hammering away on their anvils," said Harry, "and they hammer out a regular tune."

"Besides hammering out a tune," said St. Clair, "they're also hammering out swords and bayonets to be used against us."

As he spoke he drew from his pocket a tiny round mirror, not more than three inches in diameter, and carefully examined the collar of his coat.

"Have you found a speck, Arthur?" asked Langdon. "If I hadn't seen you risk your life fifteen or twenty thousand times I'd say you're a dandy."

"I am a dandy," said St. Clair. "At least, I mean to be one, if I come out of the war alive."

"What do you intend to wear?" asked Harry.

"Depends upon what I can afford. If I have the money, it's going to be the best, the very best any market can afford."

"A dozen suits, I suppose."

"At least as many, with hats, shoes, overcoats, cloaks, shirts and all the et ceteras to match. Why shouldn't I wear fine clothes if I want 'em? Do you demand that instead I spend it on fiery whisky to pour down me, as so many public men and leading citizens do? The clothes at least don't burn me out and finally burn me to death."

Langdon put up his hands in defense.

"I haven't jumped on you, Arthur," he said. "I admire you, though I can't equal you. And as I'm not willing to be second even to you, I'm going to our sea island, near the Carolina coast, when this war is over, lie down under the shade of a live oak, have our big colored man, Sam, to bring me luxurious food about once every three hours, and between these three-hour periods I'll be fanned by Julius, another big colored man of ours, and I won't make any exertion except to tell day by day to admiring visitors how I whipped the Yankees every time I could get near enough to see 'em, and how a lot more were scared to death just because they heard me crashing through the brush."

"You'll do the bragging part, all right, Happy," said St. Clair.

"I believe you could keep up the sort of existence you describe for a year at least."

"I'd like to try. Now, what under the stars is that?"

Nothing had happened. Something had merely ceased to happen. The great cannonade had stopped in an instant, as if by a preconcerted signal, and their nerves, attuned so long to such a continuous roar, seemed to collapse, because some support was withdrawn. Harry's face turned white and his heart beat very fast, but in a few moments he recovered himself.

"I suppose they've given it up for the time being," he said, "but they're sure to try it again in some other way."

"That's a safe prediction," said St. Clair. "Burnside is trying to get across the Rappahannock to attack us, because the whole North is driving him on, and he hasn't got the moral courage to hold back until he can choose his time and place. Funny how this silence oppresses one."

The whole Southern army, along its six miles of length, was now standing up and looking toward the point on the other shore of the Rappahannock where the Union batteries were massed. All work seemed to have been abandoned there, although the troops were still clustered along the shore and about the bridge head. Clouds of smoke from the great batteries floated down the river.

"A Yankee failure so far, Harry," said Colonel Leonidas Talbot. "The

bridge has advanced no further, and I should say that our shore is now enriched by about fifty thousand pounds of steel hurled from those batteries and with little harm to us."

"I've no doubt you're right, sir," said Harry, "and now that a period of rest has come, I shall hurry back to General Jackson, who may need me to carry some order."

"A moment, please, Harry, my boy," said Colonel Talbot, twirling his mustaches. "You are near to General Jackson, of course, being his personal aide. If it should fall out conveniently, would you do myself and my most excellent friend and second, Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire, a small favor?"

"Of course, Colonel. Gladly. What is it?"

"If the enemy should cross the river, as he probably will, and if you should be near enough to Lieutenant-General Thomas Jonathan Jackson, and if the moment should be propitious, would you kindly whisper in his ear that the skeleton regiment, known as the Invincibles, Leonidas Talbot, Colonel, and Hector St. Hilaire, Lieutenant-Colonel, would be overjoyed at the honor of leading the attack upon the intrusive and invading Yankee army?"

"Promise, Harry, promise!" seconded Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire in his softest and most persuasive South Carolina accent. "You really owe that to us."

"I promise gladly," replied Harry; "but you know what General Jackson is. He makes his plans without telling anybody what they are, and he carries them out. If it is a part of his plan for the Invincibles to lead the attack, so far as his division is concerned, you'll lead it. If not, you won't."

"But still a word in his ear might have some influence," persisted Colonel Talbot. "It might come at the very moment when he was hesitating over a choice, and it would probably decide him in our favor."

"Then I shall do my best, sir," said Harry. "You can rely upon me"

He returned to General Jackson, but found that his commander was yet inactive. He was still waiting and watching with a patience that seemed equal to that of the Sphinx. Noon came, food was served, and the hours trailed their slow length on.

Then they saw a great movement in the Union army. The Northern generals were about to make their supreme effort. Hooker, who had shown such desperate courage at Antietam and who had won the name of Fighting Joe, called for men who would cross the river in boats under the fire of the Mississippi rifles. It looked like certain death, but four entire regiments came forward at once. They entered the boats, which promptly pulled for the right bank, and the great batteries at once opened a covering fire.

The Mississippians once more sent forth their hail of bullets, but the boats were so numerous that, although some were stopped, the majority came on. Man after man, shot through, fell over the sides into the deep river. Sometimes a boat itself sank, but the main force rapidly approached the Southern side.

"They have lost many men, but they will make the crossing at last, Harry," said Dalton.

"So it seems," said Harry. "I suppose our generals could bring up enough men to drive them back, but it looks as if they don't want to do it."

"It may be that they're holding the trap open for the victim to walk in."

"However it may be, they're across. See, they're landing in thousands, and the Mississippians, leaving their rifle pits, are retreating. Now they can finish the bridge and as many more as they need at their leisure."

The retreating Mississippians rejoined their comrades, and still the Southern army did not stir. The Northern army, almost unmolested, continued its bridge building, and the afternoon and a dark night passed.

CHAPTER V

FREDERICKSBURG

Before night the Union army had three bridges across the Rappahannock, and before morning it had six. The regiment that had crossed held the right bank of the river, that is, the side of the South, and the boats moved freely back and forth in the stream.

Yet the main army itself did not yet begin the crossing. Harry slept a few hours before and after midnight, lying in the lee of a little ridge and wrapped in a pair of heavy blankets, but as he wakened from time to time he heard little from the river. There were no sounds to indicate that great streams of armed men with their cannon were pouring over the bridges. After the tremendous cannonade of the afternoon the night seemed very quiet and peaceful.

Fires were burning here and there, but they were not many. The Confederate generals did not care to furnish beacons for the enemy. When Harry stood up he could catch glimpses of the river, the color of steel again, but the farther bank, where the great army of the foe yet

lay, was buried in darkness. He wondered why Burnside was not using every hour of the night for crossing, but he remembered how the same general had delayed so long at Antietam that Lee and Jackson were able to save themselves.

He became conscious that it was growing much colder again. The zero weather of a few days since was returning. Every light puff of wind was like the stab of an icicle. He was glad that he had a pair of blankets and that they were heavy ones, too. But he did not ask anything more. It was remarkable how fast the youth of both North and South became inured to every form of privation. They lived almost like the primitive man, and many thrived on it.

When he last awoke, about four o'clock in the morning, he did not lie down to sleep again; he walked to the edge of the slope and stared once more toward the river and the Union camp. He found Dalton already there, closely examining the river and the shores with his glasses.

"What do you see, George?" Harry asked.

"Not much; they've got all the bridges now they need, but they're not using them. Why, Harry, the battle's won already. Lee and Jackson don't merely fight. Plenty of generals are good fighters, but our leaders measure and weigh the generals who are coming against them, look right inside of them, and read their minds better than those generals can read them themselves."

"I believe you're right, George. And since Burnside is not crossing to-night, he can't attack in the morning."

"Of course not. Lee and Jackson knew all the time that he'd waste a day. They knew it by the way he delayed at Antietam, and they've been reading his mind all the time he's been sitting here on the banks of the Rappahannock. They knew just where he'd attack, just when, too, and they'll have everything ready at the right point and at the right time."

"Of course they will."

They were but boys, and the great tactics and brilliant victories of Lee and Jackson had overwhelmed the imaginations of both. In their minds all things seemed possible to their leaders, and they had not the least fear about the coming battle.

They walked back toward their general's tent and saw him sitting on a log outside. The night was not so dark as the one before. A fair moon and clusters of modest stars furnished some light. The general was gazing toward Stafford Heights, tapping his bootleg at times with a little switch. But he turned his gaze upon the two boys as they came forward and saluted respectfully.

"Well, lads," he said in a voice of uncommon gentleness, "what have you seen?"

"Nothing, sir, but the river and the dark shore beyond," replied Dalton.

"But the enemy will cross to-morrow, and they say they will annihilate us."

"I think, sir, that they will recross the Rappahannock as fast as they will cross it."

Dalton spoke boldly, because he saw that Jackson was leading him on.

"The right spirit," said Jackson quietly. "I see it throughout the army, and so long as it prevails we cannot lose."

Then he turned his glasses again toward the river and paid them no further attention. Officers of greater age and much higher rank came near, but he ignored them also. His whole soul seemed to be absorbed in the searching examination that he was making of the river and the opposite shore. Harry and Dalton watched him a little while and then went back to the shelter of the ridge, where, sitting with their backs against the earth, they, too, took up the task of watching.

The earth was frozen hard now, but toward morning they saw the fog rising again.

"It will cover the river, the far shore, and what's left of the town," said Dalton, "but what do we care? They'll be protected by it as they advance on the bridges, but they wouldn't dare move through it to attack us here on the heights."

"Here's the dawn again," said Harry. "I can see the ghost of the sun over there trying to break through, but as there's no wind now the fog's going to hang heavy and long."

Breakfast was served once more to the waiting army on the heights, and then the youths in gray saw that the Union army, having let the night pass, was beginning to cross the river. When the dawn finally came many regiments were already over and the wheels of the heavy cannon were thundering on the bridges. But the Confederate army lay quiet on the heights, although before morning it had drawn itself in somewhat, shortening the lines and making itself more compact.

"Look how they pour over the bridges!" said Harry, who stood glass to eye. "They come in thousands and thousands, regiments, brigades and whole divisions. Why, George, it looks as if the whole North were swarming down upon us!"

"They're a hundred and twenty thousand strong. We know that positively, and they're as brave as anybody. But we're eighty thousand strong, just sitting here on the heights and waiting. Harry, they'll cross that river again soon, and when they go back they'll be far less than a hundred and twenty thousand!"

He spoke with no sign of exultation. Instead it was the boding tone of

an old prophet, rather than the sanguine voice of youth.

The fog deepened for a little while, and then some of the marching columns were hidden. Out of the mists and gloom came the quick music of many bands, playing the Northern brigades on to death. Then the fog lifted again, and along the heights ran the blaze of the Southern cannon as they sent shot and shell into the black masses of the Union troops crowding by Fredericksburg.

But as the echoes of the shots died away, Harry heard again the bands playing, and from the great Northern army below came mighty rolling cheers.

"The battle is here now, Harry," said Dalton, "and this is the biggest army we've ever faced."

The Union brigades, black in the somber winter dawn, seemed endless to Harry. From the point where he stood the advancing columns as they crossed the river looked almost solid. He knew that men must be falling, dead or wounded, beneath the fire of the Southern guns, but the living closed up so fast that he could not see any break in the lines.

"You can't see any sign of hesitation there," said Dalton. "The Northern generals may doubt and linger, but the men don't when once they get the word. What a tremendous and thrilling sight! It may be wicked in me, Harry, but since there is a war and battles are being fought, I'm glad I'm here to see it."

"So am I," said Harry. "It's something to feel that you're at the heart of the biggest things going on in the world. Now we've lost 'em!"

His sudden exclamation was due to a shift of the wind, bringing back the fog again and covering the river, the town and the advancing Union army. The Confederate cannon then ceased firing, but Harry heard distinctly the sounds made by scores of thousands of men marching, that measured tread of countless feet, the beat of hoofs, the rumbling of cannon wheels over roads now frozen hard, and the music of many bands still playing. The thrill was all the keener when the great army became invisible in the fog, although the mighty hum and murmur of varied sounds proved that it was still marching there.

Jackson was on the right of Lee's line. He would be, as usual, in the thick of it. His fighting line ran through deep woods, and he was protected, moreover, by the slope up which the Union troops would have to come, if they got near enough. Fourteen guns, guarded by two regiments, were on Prospect Hill at his extreme right, and on his left the ravine called Deep Run divided him from the command of Longstreet, which spread away toward Marye's Hill.

Jackson's own line was a mile and a half long and he had thirty thousand men, while Longstreet and the others had fifty thousand more. Lee himself, directing the whole, rode along the lines on his white horse, and whenever the men saw him cheers rolled up and down. But Lee had

little to say. All that needed to be said had been said already.

Harry saw the great commander riding along that morning as calmly as if he were going to church. Lee, grave, imperturbable, was the last man to show emotion, but Harry thought once that he caught a gleam from the blue eye as he spoke a word or two with Jackson and went on. As he passed near them, Harry, Dalton and all the other young officers took off their hats, saluted and stood in silence. General Lee raised his own hat in return, and rode back toward the division of Longstreet.

Harry glanced toward General Jackson, who was also mounted. But he did not move and the reins lay loose on the animal's neck. Once the horse dropped his head and nuzzled under some leaves for a few blades of sheltered grass that had escaped the winter. But the general took no notice. He kept his glasses to his eyes and watched every movement of the enemy, when the fog lifted enough for him to see. Presently he beckoned to Harry.

"Ride over to General Stuart," he said, "and see if he has made any change in his lines. It is important that our formation be preserved intact and that no gaps be left."

Then General Jackson himself rode to another elevation for a different view, and the soldiers, from whom he had been hidden before by the fog, gazed at him in amazement. The gorgeous uniform that Stuart had sent him, worn only once before, and which they had thought discarded forever, had been put on again. The old slouch hat was gone, and another, magnificent with gold braid, looped and tasseled, was in its place. Instead of the faithful pony, Little Sorrel, he rode a big charger.

Usually cheers ran along the line whenever he appeared upon the eve of battle, but for a little space there was silence as the men gazed at him, many of them not even knowing him. Jackson flushed and looked down apologetically at the rich cloth and gold braid he wore. His eyes seemed to say, "Boys, I've merely put these on in honor of the victory we're going to win. But I won't do it again."

Then the cheers burst forth, spontaneous and ringing, proving a devotion that few men have ever been able to command. Stern and unflinching as Jackson invariably was in inflicting punishment, his soldiers always regarded him as one of themselves, the best man among them, one fitted by nature to lead democratic equals. After the cheers were over they watched him as he looked through the glasses from his new position. But he stayed there only a minute or two, going back then to his old point of vantage.

Harry meanwhile had reached Stuart, who, mounted upon a magnificent horse and clad in a uniform that fairly glittered through the fog itself, was waiting restlessly. But he had not changed any part of his line. Everything remained exactly as Jackson had ordered. He now knew Harry well and always called him by his first name.

"Have you an order?" he exclaimed eagerly. "Does General Jackson want

us to advance?"

"He has said nothing about an advance," replied Harry tactfully.

"He merely wanted me to ride down the line and report to him on the spirit of the soldiers as far as I could judge. He knew that your men, General, would be hard to hold."

Stuart threw back his head, shook his long yellow hair and laughed in a pleased way.

"General Jackson was right about my men," he said. "It's hard to keep them from galloping into the battle, and my feelings are with them. Yet we'll have all the fighting we want. Look at the great masses of the Union army!"

The fog had lifted again and the Northern columns were still advancing, marching boldly against the intrenched foe, although nearly every one of their generals save Burnside himself knew that it was a hopeless task. In all the mighty events of the war that Harry witnessed few were as impressive to him as this solemn and steady march of the Union army, heads erect and bands playing, into the jaws of death.

He stayed only a few moments with Stuart, returning direct to Jackson. On his way he passed Sherburne, who, with his troop, was on Stuart's extreme left flank. Harry leaned over, shook hands with him, nothing more, and rode on. With the lifting of the fog the Southern guns were again sending shot and shell into the blue masses. Then, from the other side of the river, the great Union batteries left on Stafford Heights began to hurl showers of steel toward the hostile ridges a little more than a mile and a half away. It was long range for those days, but the Union gunners, always excellent, rained shot and shell upon the Southern position.

Harry, used now to such a fire, went calmly on until he rejoined Jackson, who accepted with a nod his report that Stuart had not changed his lines anywhere. The general signed to him and the rest of the staff as they rode toward the center of the Southern line. Harry did not know their errand, but he surmised that they were to meet General Lee for the final conference. The general said no word, but rode steadily on. Union skirmishers, under cover of the fog and bushes, had crept far in advance of their columns, and, as the fog continued to thin away and the day to brighten, they saw Jackson and his staff.

Harry heard bullets whistling sinister little threats in his ear as they passed, and he heard other bullets pattering on the trees or the earth. They alarmed him more than the huge cannon thundering away from the other side of the river. But the fog, although thin, was still enough to make the aim of the skirmishers bad, and General Jackson and his staff went on their way unhurt.

They reached a little hill near the middle of the Southern bent bow. It had no name then, but it is called Lee's Hill now, because at nine o'clock that morning General Lee, mounted on his white horse, was upon

its crest awaiting his generals, to give them his last instructions. Longstreet was already there, and, just as Jackson came, the fog thinned away entirely and the sun began to blaze with a heat almost like that of summer, rapidly thawing the hard earth.

The young officers on the different staffs reined back, while their chiefs drew together. Yet for a few moments no one said anything. Harry always believed that the veteran generals were moved as he was by the sight below. The great banks of white fog were rolling away down the river before the light wind and the brilliant sun.

Now Harry saw the Army of the Potomac in its full majesty. On the wide plain that lay on the south bank of the Rappahannock nearly a hundred thousand men were still advancing in regular order, with scores and scores of cannon on their flanks or between the columns. The army which looked somber black in the misty dawn now looked blue in the brilliant sun. The stars and stripes, the most beautiful flag in the world, waved in hundreds over their heads. The bands were still playing, and the great batteries which they had left on Stafford Heights across the river continued that incessant roaring fire over their heads at the Southern army on its own heights. The smoke from the cannon, whitish in color, drifted away down the river with the fog, and the whole spectacle still remained in the brilliant sunlight.

Harry's respect for the Union artillery, already high, increased yet further. The field was now mostly open, where all could see, and the gunners not only saw their targets, but were able to take good aim. The storm of shot and shell from Stafford Heights was frightful. It seemed to Harry--again his imagination was alive--that the very air was darkened by the rush of steel. Despite their earthworks and other shelter the Southern troops began to suffer from that dreadful sleet, but the little conference on Lee's Hill went on.

Longstreet, sitting his horse steadily, looked long at the dense masses below.

"General," he said to General Jackson, "doesn't that myriad of Yankees frighten you?"

"It won't be long before we see whether we shall frighten them," replied Jackson.

General Lee said a few words, and then Jackson and Longstreet returned to their respective divisions, Jackson, as Harry noted, showing not the least excitement, although the resolute Union general, Franklin, with nearly sixty thousand men and one hundred and twenty guns, was marching directly against his own position.

But Harry felt excitement, and much of it. In front of Jackson in a great line of battle, a mile and a half long, they were moving forward, still in perfect array. But there was something wanting in that huge army. It was the lack of a great animating spirit. There was no flaming flag, like the soul of Jackson, to wave in the front of a fiery

rush that could not be stopped.

The blue mass hesitated and stopped. Out of it came three Pennsylvania brigades led by Meade, who was to be the Meade of Gettysburg, and less than five thousand strong they advanced against Jackson. Harry was amazed. Could it be possible that they did not know that Jackson with his full force was there?

The Pennsylvanians charged gallantly. The young General Pelham, who had been sent forward with two pieces of artillery, opened on them fiercely, but the heavy batteries covering the advance of the Pennsylvanians drove Pelham out of action, although he held the whole force at bay for half an hour. In his retreat he lost one of his own guns, and then Franklin brought up more batteries to protect the further advance of Meade and the Pennsylvanians. The batteries across the river helped them also, never ceasing to send a rain of steel over their troops upon the Southern army.

But Jackson's men still lay close in the woods and behind their breastworks. Nearly all that rain of steel flew over their heads. A shower of twigs and boughs fell on them, but so long as they stayed close the great artillery fire created terror rather than damage. The men were panting with eagerness, but not one was allowed to pull trigger, nor was a cannon fired.

"Burnside must think there's but a small force here," said Dalton, "or he wouldn't send so few men against us. Harry, when I look down at those brigades of Yankees I think of the old Roman salute--it was that of the gladiators, wasn't it?--'Morituri salutamus.'"

"They're doomed," said Harry.

Jackson, like the others, had dismounted, and he walked forward with a single aide to observe more closely the Union advance. A Northern sharpshooter suddenly rose out of high weeds, not far in front, and fired directly at them. The bullet whistled between Jackson and his aide. Jackson turned to the young man and said:

"Suppose you go to the rear. You might get shot."

The young man, of course, did not go, and Harry, who was not far behind them in an earthwork, watched them with painful anxiety. He had seen the sudden uprising of the Northern skirmisher in the weeds and the flame from the muzzle. The man might not have known that it was Jackson, but he must have surmised from the gorgeous uniform that it was a general of importance.

Harry, with the trained eye of a country boy, saw a rippling movement running among the weeds. The sharpshooter would reload and fire upon his general from another point. The second bullet might not miss.

But the second shot did not come. The marksman, doubtless thinking that another shot was too dangerous a hazard, had retreated into the plain.

General Jackson walked on calmly, inspecting the whole Northern advance, and then returning took up his station on Prospect Hill, where he waited with the singular calmness that was always his, for the fit time to open fire.

The leader of the Army of the Potomac was watching from the other side of the Rappahannock with a terrible eagerness. The man who had not wished the command of the splendid Union army, who had deemed himself unequal to the task, was now proving the correctness of his own intuitions. He had taken up his headquarters in a fine colonial residence on one of the highest points of the bank. He was surrounded there by numerous artillery, and the officers of his staff crowded the porches, many of them already sad of heart, although they would not let their faces show it.

But Burnside, now that his men had forced the river in such daring fashion, began to glow with hope. Such magnificent troops as he had, having crossed the deep, tidal Rappahannock in the face of an able and daring foe, were bound to win. He swept every point of the field with his glasses, and from his elevated position he and his officers could see what the troops in the plain below could not see, the long lines of the Confederates waiting in the trenches or in the woods, their cannon posted at frequent intervals.

But Burnside hoped. Who would not have hoped with such troops as his? Never did an army, and with full knowledge of it, too, advance more boldly to a superhuman task. He saw the gallant advance of the Pennsylvanians and he saw them drive off Pelham. Hope swelled into confidence. With an anxiety beyond describing he watched the further advance of Meade and his Pennsylvanians.

Stonewall Jackson also was watching from his convenient hill, and his small staff, mostly of very young men, clustered close behind him. Jackson no longer used his glasses, as Burnside was doing. Meade and his Pennsylvanians were coming close to him now. The great Union batteries on Stafford Heights must soon cease firing or their shells and shot would be crashing into the blue ranks.

"It cannot be much longer," said Harry.

"No, not much longer," said Dalton. "We'll unmask mighty soon. How far away would you say they are now, Harry?"

"About a thousand yards."

"Over a half mile. Then I'll say that when they come within a half mile Old Jack will give the word to the artillery to loosen up."

Harry and George, in their intense absorption, had forgotten about the other parts of the line. In their minds, for the present at least, Jackson was fighting the battle alone. Longstreet was forgotten, and even Lee, for a space, remained unremembered. They were staring at the brigades which were coming on so gallantly, when the jaws of death

were already opened so wide to receive them.

"They're at the half mile," said Dalton, who had a wonderful eye for distance, "and still Old Jack does not give the word."

"The closer the better," said Harry. Glancing up and down the lines he saw the men bending over their guns and the riflemen in line after line rising slowly to their feet and looking to their arms. In spite of himself, in spite of all the hard usage of war through which he had been, Harry shuddered. He did not hate any of those men out there who were coming toward them so boldly; no, there was not in all those brigades, nor in all the Union army, nor in all the North a single person whom he wished to hurt. Yet he knew that he would soon fight against them with all the weapons and all the power he could gather.

"Eight hundred yards," said Dalton.

"Fire!" was the word that ran like an electric blaze along the whole Southern front; and Jackson's fifty cannon, suddenly pushing forward from the forest, poured a storm of steel upon the devoted Pennsylvanians. Harry felt the earth rocking beneath him, and his ears were stunned by the roaring and crashing of the cannon all about him.

The Union officers on the porches of the colonial mansion across the river saw that terrible blaze leap from the Confederate line, and their hearts sank within them like lead. Alarmed as they had been before, they were in consternation now. Some had said that Jackson was not there, that it was merely a detachment guarding the woods, but now they knew their mistake.

Harry and Dalton stayed close to their general. Shells and shot from the batteries below on the plain were crashing along the trees, but, like those from the great guns on Stafford Heights, they passed mostly over their heads. The two youths at that moment had little to do but watch the battle. The Southern riflemen crept forward in the woods, and now their bullets in sheets were crashing into the hostile ranks. The Union division commander hurried up reinforcements, and the Pennsylvanians, despite their frightful losses and shattered ranks, still held fast. But the Southern batteries never ceased for a moment to pour upon them a storm of death. With red battle before him and the fever in his blood running high, Harry now forgot all about wounds and death. He had eye and thought only for the tremendous panorama passing before him, where everything was clear and visible, as if it were an act in some old Roman circus, magnified manifold.

Then came a message from Jackson to hurry to the left with an order for a brigadier who lay next to Longstreet. As he ran through the trees, he heard now the roar of the battle in the center, where the stalwart Longstreet was holding Marye's Hill and the adjacent heights. A mighty Union division was attacking there, and out of the south from the embers of Fredericksburg came another great division in column after column.

Harry heard the fire of Jackson slackening behind him, and he knew it

was because Meade had been stopped or was retreating, and he stayed a little with the brigadier to see how Longstreet received the enemy. The hill and all the ridges about it seemed to be in one red blaze, and every few minutes the triumphant rebel yell, something like the Indian war-whoop, but poured from thirty thousand throats, swelled above the roar of the cannon and the crash of the rifles and made Harry's pulses beat so hard that he felt absolute physical pain.

He hurried to Jackson, where the battle, which had died for a little space, was swelling again. As the Pennsylvanians were compelled to draw back, leaving the ground covered with their dead, the Union batteries on Stafford Heights reopened, firing again over the heads of the men in blue. The Southern batteries, weaker and less numerous, replied with all their energy. A far-flung shot from their greatest gun, at the extreme southern end of the line, killed the brave Union general, Bayard, as he was sitting under a tree watching his troops.

Gregg, one of the best of the Southern generals, was mortally wounded. A great body of the Pennsylvanians, charging again, reached the shelter of the woods and burst through the Southern line. At another point, Hancock, always cool and brilliant on the field of battle, rallied shattered brigades and led them forward in person to new attacks. Hooker, who had shown such courage at Antietam, equally brave on this occasion, rushed forward with his men at another point. Franklin, Sumner, Doubleday and many other of the best Union generals showed themselves reckless of death, cheering on their men, galloping up and down the lines when they were mounted, and waving their swords aloft after their horses were killed, but always leading.

The Pennsylvanians who had cut into the Southern line were attacked in flank, but they held on to their positions. Jackson did not yet know of Meade's success. He still stood on Prospect Hill with his staff, which Harry had rejoined. The forest and vast clouds of smoke hid from his view the battle, save in his front. Harry saw a messenger coming at a gallop toward the summit of the hill, and he knew by his pale face and bloodshot eyes that he brought bad news.

Jackson turned toward the messenger, expectant but calm.

"What is it?" he asked.

"The enemy have broken through General Archer's division, and he directed me to say to you that unless help is sent, both his position and that of General Gregg will be lost."

Jackson showed no excitement. His calm and composure in the face of disaster always inspired his men with fresh courage.

"Ride back to General Archer," he said, "and tell him that the division of Early and the Stonewall Brigade are coming at once."

He turned his horse as if he would go with the relief, but in a moment he checked himself, put his field glasses back to his eyes, and

continued to watch heavy masses of the enemy who were coming up in another quarter.

Harry did not see what happened when Early and Taliaferro, who now led the Stonewall Brigade, fell upon the Pennsylvanians, but the Invincibles were in the charge and St. Clair told him about it afterward. The Union men had penetrated so far that they were entangled in the forest and thickets, and nobody had come up to support them. They were much scattered, and as their officers were seeking to gather them together the men in gray fell upon them in overpowering force and drove them back in broken fragments. Wild with triumph, the Southern riflemen rushed after them and also hurled back other riflemen that were coming up to their support. But on the plain they encountered the matchless Northern artillery. A battery of sixteen heavy guns met their advancing line with a storm of canister, before which they were compelled to retreat, leaving many dead and wounded behind.

Yet the entire Union attack on Jackson had been driven back, the Northern troops suffering terrible losses. The watchers on the Phillips porch on the other side of the river saw the repulse, and again their hearts sank like lead.

The watchers turned their field glasses anew to the Southern center and left, where the battle raged with undiminished ferocity. Marye's Hill was a formidable position and along its slope ran a heavy stone wall. Behind it the Southern sharpshooters were packed in thousands, and every battery was well placed.

Hancock, following Burnside's orders, led the attack upon the ensanguined slopes. Forty thousand men, almost the flower of the Union army, charged again and again up those awful slopes, and again and again they were hurled back. The top of the hill was a leaping mass of flame and the stone wall was always crested with living fire. No troops ever showed greater courage as they returned after every repulse to the hopeless charge.

At last they could go forward no longer. They had not made the slightest impression upon Marye's Hill and the slopes were strewn with many thousands of their dead and wounded, including officers of all ranks, from generals down. The Union army was now divided into two portions, each in the face of an insuperable task.

But Burnside, burning with chagrin, was unwilling to draw off his army. The reserve troops, left on the other side of the river, were sent across, and Fighting Joe Hooker was ordered to lead them to a new attack. Hooker, talking with Hancock, saw that it merely meant another slaughter, and sent such word to his commander-in-chief. But Burnside would not be moved from his purpose. The attack must be made, and Hooker--whose courage no one could question--still trying to prevent it, crossed the river himself, went to Burnside and remonstrated.

Men who were present have told vivid stories of that scene at the Phillips House. Hooker, his face covered with dust and sweat, galloping

up, leaping from his horse, and rushing to Burnside; the commander-in-chief striding up and down, looking toward Marye's Hill, enveloped in smoke, and repeating to himself, as if he were scarcely conscious of what he was saying: "That height must be taken! That height must be taken! We must take it!"

He turned to Hooker with the same words, "That height must be taken to-day," repeating it over and over again, changing the words perhaps, but not the sense. The gallant but unfortunate man had not wanted to be commander-in-chief, foreseeing his own inadequacy, and now in his agony at seeing so many of his men fall in vain he was scarcely responsible.

Hooker, his heart full of despair, but resolved to obey, galloped back and prepared for the last desperate charge up Marye's Hill. The advancing mists in the east were showing that the short winter day would soon draw to a close. He planted his batteries and opened a heavy fire, intending to batter down the stone wall. But the wall, supported by an earthwork, did not give, and Longstreet's riflemen lay behind it waiting.

At a signal the Union cannon ceased firing and the bugles blew the charge. The Union brigades swarmed forward and then rushed up the slopes. The volume of fire poured upon them was unequalled until Pickett led the matchless charge at Gettysburg. Pickett himself was here among the defenders, having just been sent to help the men on Marye's Hill.

Up went the men through the winter twilight, lighted now by the blaze of so many cannon and rifles pouring down upon them a storm of lead and steel, through which no human beings could pass. They came near to the stone wall, but as their lines were now melting away like snow before the sun, they were compelled to yield and retreat again down the slopes, which were strewn already with the bodies of so many of those who had gone up in the other attacks.

Every charge had broken in vain on the fronts of Jackson and Longstreet, and the Union losses were appalling. Harry knew that the battle was won and that it had been won more easily than any of the other great battles that he had seen. He wondered what Jackson would do. Would he follow up the grand division of Franklin that he had defeated and which still lay in front of them?

But he ceased to ask the question, because when the last charge, shattered to pieces, rolled back down Marye's Hill, the magnificent Northern artillery seemed to Harry to go mad. The thirty guns of the heaviest weight that had been left on Stafford Heights, and which had ceased firing only when the Northern men charged, now reopened in a perfect excess of fury. Harry believed that they must be throwing tons of metal every minute.

Nor was Franklin slack. Hovering with his great division in the plain below and knowing that he was beaten, he nevertheless turned one hundred and sixteen cannon that he carried with him upon Jackson's front and swept all the woods and ridges everywhere. The Union army was beaten

because it had undertaken the impossible, but despite its immense losses it was still superior in numbers to Lee's force, and above all it had that matchless artillery which in defeat could protect the Union army, and which in victory helped it to win.

Now all these mighty cannon were turned loose in one huge effort. Along the vast battle front and from both sides of the river they roared and crashed defiance. And the Army of the Potomac, which had wasted so much valor, crept back under the shelter of that thundering line of fire. It had much to regret, but nothing of which to be ashamed. Sent against positions impregnable when held by such men as Lee, Jackson and Longstreet, it had never ceased to attack so long as the faintest chance remained. Its commander had been unequal to the task, but the long roll of generals under him had shown unsurpassed courage and daring.

Harry thought once that General Jackson was going to attack in turn, but after a long look at the roaring plain he shrugged his shoulders and gave no orders. The beaten Army of the Potomac preserved its order, it had lost no guns, the brigadiers and the major-generals were full of courage, and it was too formidable to be attacked. Three hundred cannon of the first class on either side of the river were roaring and crashing, and the moment the Southern troops emerged for the charge all would be sure to pour upon them a fire that no troops could withstand.

General Lee presently appeared riding along the line. The cheers which always rose where he came rolled far, and he was compelled to lift his hat more than once. He conferred with Jackson, and the two, going toward the left, met Longstreet, with whom they also talked. Then they separated and Jackson returned to his own position. Harry, who had followed his general at the proper distance, never heard what they said, but he believed that they had discussed the possibility of a night attack and then had decided in the negative.

When Jackson returned to his own force the twilight was thickening into night, and as darkness sank down over the field the appalling fire of the Union artillery ceased. Thirteen thousand dead or wounded Union soldiers had fallen, and the Southern loss was much less than half.

All of Harry's comrades and friends had escaped this battle uninjured, yet many of them believed that another battle would be fought on the morrow. Harry, however, was not one of these. He remembered some words that had been spoken by Jackson in his presence:

"We can defeat the enemy here at Fredericksburg, but we cannot destroy him, because he will escape over his bridges, while we are unable to follow."

Nevertheless the young men and boys were exultant. They did not look so far ahead as Jackson, and they had never before won so great a victory with so little loss. Harry, sent on a message beyond Deep Run, found the Invincibles cooking their suppers on a spot that they had held throughout the day. They had several cheerful fires burning and they saluted Harry gladly.

"A great victory, Harry," said Happy Tom.

"Yes, a great victory," interrupted Colonel Leonidas Talbot; "but, my friends, what else could you have expected? They walked straight into our trap. But I have learned this day to have a deep respect for the valor of the Yankees. The way they charged up Marye's Hill in the face of certain death was worthy of the finest troops that South Carolina herself ever produced."

"That is saying a great deal, Leonidas," said Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire, "but it is true."

Harry talked a little with the two colonels, and also with Langdon and St. Clair. Then he returned to his own headquarters. Both armies, making ready for battle to-morrow, if it should come, slept on their arms, while the dead and the wounded yet lay thick in the forest and on the slopes and plain.

But Harry was not among those who slept, at least not until after midnight. He and Dalton sat at the door of Jackson's tent, awaiting possible orders. Jackson knew that Burnside, with a hundred thousand men yet in line and no artillery lost, was planning another attack on the morrow, despite his frightful losses of the day.

The news of it had been sent to him by Lee, and Lee in turn had learned it from a captured orderly bearing Burnside's dispatches. But neither Harry nor Dalton knew anything of Burnside's plans. They were merely waiting for any errand upon which Jackson should choose to send them. Several other staff officers were present, and as Jackson wrote his orders, he gave them in turn to be taken to those for whom they were intended.

Harry, after three such trips of his own, sat down again near the door of the tent and watched his great leader. Jackson sat at a little table, on a cane-bottomed chair, and he wrote by the light of a single candle. His clothing was all awry and he had tossed away the gold-braided cap. His face was worn and drawn, but his eyes showed no signs of weariness. The body might have been weak, but the spirit of Jackson was never stronger.

Harry knew that Jackson after victory wasted no time exulting, but was always preparing for the next battle. The soldiers, both in his own division and elsewhere, were awakened by turns, and willing thousands strengthened the Southern position. More and deeper trenches were constructed. New abatis were built and the stone wall was strengthened yet further. Formidable as the Southern line had been to-day, Burnside would find it more so on the morrow.

After midnight, Jackson, still in his gorgeous uniform and with boots and spurs on, too, lay down on his bed and slept about three hours. Then he aroused himself, lighted his candle and wrote an hour longer. Then he went to the bedside of the dying Gregg and sat a while with him,

the staff remaining at a respectful distance.

When they rode back--they were mounted again--they passed along the battle front, and the sadness which was so apparent on Jackson's face affected them. It was far toward morning now and the enemy was lighting his fires on the plain below. The dead lay where they had fallen, and no help had yet been given to those wounded too seriously to move. It had been a tremendous holocaust, and with no result. Harry knew now that the North would never cease to fight disunion. The South could win separation only at the price of practical annihilation for both.

The night was very raw and chill, and not less so now that morning was approaching. The mists and fogs, which as usual rose from the Rappahannock, made Harry shiver at their touch. In the hollows of the ridges, which the wintry sun seldom reached, great masses of ice were packed, and the plain below, cut up the day before by wheels and hoofs and footsteps, was now like a frozen field of ploughed land.

The staff heard enough through the fogs and mists to know that the Army of the Potomac was awake and stirring. The Southern army also arose, lighted its fires, cooked and ate its food and waited for the enemy. Before it was yet light Harry, on a message to Stuart, rode to the top of Prospect Hill with him, and, as they sat there on their horses, the sun cleared away the fog and mist, and they saw the Army of the Potomac drawn up in line of battle, defiant and challenging, ready to attack or to be attacked.

Harry felt a thrill of admiration that he did not wish to check. After all, the Yankees were their own people, bone of their bone, and their courage must be admired. The Army of the Potomac, too, was learning to fight without able chiefs. The young colonels and majors and captains could lead them, and there they were, after their most terrible defeat, grim and ready.

"The lion's wounded, but he isn't dead, by any means," said Harry to Stuart.

"Not by a great deal," said Stuart.

There was much hot firing by skirmishers that day and artillery duels at long range, but the Northern army, which had fortified on the plain, would not come out of its intrenchments, and the Southern soldiers also stuck to theirs. Burnside, who had crossed the river to join his men, had been persuaded at last that a second attack was bound to end like the first.

The next day Burnside sent in a flag of truce, and they buried the dead. The following night Harry, wrapped to the eyes in his great cloak, stood upon Prospect Hill and watched one of the fiercest storms that he had ever seen rage up and down the valley of the Rappahannock. Many of the Southern pickets were driven to shelter. While the whole Southern army sought protection from the deluge, the Army of the Potomac, still a hundred thousand strong, and carrying all its guns, marched in perfect

order over the six bridges it had built, breaking the bridges down behind it, and camping in safety on the other side. The river was rising fast under the tremendous rain, and the Southern army could find no fords, even though it marched far up the stream.

Fredericksburg was won, but the two armies, resolute and defiant, gathered themselves anew for other battles as great or greater.

CHAPTER VI

A CHRISTMAS DINNER

After the great battle at Fredericksburg both armies seemed to suffer somewhat from reaction. Besides, the winter deepened. There was more snow, more icy rain, and more hovering of the temperature near the zero mark. The vast sea of mud increased, and the swollen Rappahannock, deep at any time, flowed between the two armies. Pickets often faced one another across the stream, sometimes firing, but oftener exchanging the news, when the river was not too wide for the shouted voice to reach.

Harry, despite his belief that the North would hold out, heard now that the hostile section had sunk into deep depression. The troops had not been paid for six months. Desertion into the interior went on on a great scale. One commander-in-chief after another had failed. After Antietam it had seemed that success could be won, but the South had come back stronger than ever and had won Fredericksburg, inflicting appalling loss upon the North. Yet he heard that Lincoln never flinched. The tall, gaunt, ugly man, telling his homely jokes, had more courage than anybody who had yet led the Union cause.

Harry often went down to Fredericksburg, where some houses still stood among the icy ruins. A few families had returned, but as the town was still practically under the guns of the Northern army, it was left chiefly to the troops.

The Invincibles were stationed here, and Harry and Dalton got leave to spend Christmas day with its officers. Nothing could bring more fully home to him the appalling waste and ruin of war than the sight of Fredericksburg. Mud, ice and snow were deeper than ever in the streets. Many of the houses had been demolished by cannon balls and fire, and only fragments of them lay about the ground. Others had been wrecked but partially, with holes in the roofs and the windows shot out. The white pillars in front of colonnaded mansions had been shattered and the fallen columns lay in the icy slough. Long icicles hung from the burned portions of upper floors that still stood.

Used to war's ruin as he had become, Harry's eyes filled with tears at the sight. It seemed a city dead, but not yet buried. But on Christmas day his friends and he resolutely dismissed gloom, and, first making a brave pretence, finally succeeded in having real cheerfulness in a fine old brick house which had been pretty well shot up, but which had some sound rooms remaining. Its owner had sent word that, while he could not yet come back to it with his family, he would be glad if the Southern army would make use of it in his absence.

It was in this house that the little colony of friends gathered, everyone bringing to the dinner what he could. Colonel Leonidas Talbot and Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire occupied the great sitting room on the ground floor, and here the dinner would be spread, as a part of the dining-room had been shot away and was still wet from snow and rain.

But the sitting room gladdened the eye. A heavy imported carpet covered the central portion of the polished oaken floor. Old family portraits lined its walls and those of the parlor adjoining it. Curtains hung at the windows. They were more or less discolored by smoke and other agencies, but they were curtains. All about the chamber were signs of wealth and cultivation, and a great fire of wood was burning in a huge chimney under a beautifully carved oaken mantelpiece.

The room seemed to remain almost as it had been left by the owner, save that two one-hundred-pound cannon balls, fired by the Union guns into Fredericksburg, were lying by either side of the door.

"Tickets, sir," said Langdon, as Harry appeared at the door.

Harry drew from under his cloak two boxes of sardines which he had taken from a deserted sutler's wagon on the field of Fredericksburg. He handed them to Langdon, who said:

"Pass in, most welcome guest."

Harry was the first arrival, but Dalton was next.

"Tickets double price to all Virginia Presbyterians," said Langdon.

"Instead of a double ticket here are two singles," said Dalton, as he drew from under his cloak two fine dressed chickens. "Don't these take me in?"

"They certainly do. Go in on the jump, Dalton."

The next arrival was Sherburne, who brought a five-pound bag of coffee. Then came the two colonels together, one with the half of a side of bacon, and the other with a twenty-pound bag of flour. More followed, bringing like tickets that were perfectly good, and it seemed that all the invited ticket holders were in, when a big black man on a big black horse rode up and saluted Langdon respectfully. He held out a pass.

"This pass am from Gen'ral Jackson," he said.

"Am it?" said Langdon, looking at the pass, "Yes, it am."

"Is you the orf'cer in command of this yere house?" asked the colored man, his wide mouth parting in an enormous grin that showed his magnificent white teeth.

"For the present I am, Sir Knight of the Dark but Kind Countenance. What wouldst thou?"

The man scratched his head and looked doubtfully at Langdon.

"Guess you're asking me some kind of a question, sah?"

"I am. Who art thou? Whence comest thou, Sir Knight of Nubia? Bearest thou upon thy person some written token, or, as you would say in your common parlance, what's your business?"

"Oh, I see, sah. Yes, sah, I done got a lettah from Mr. Theophilus Moncrieffe. That's the owner of this house, and I belong to him. I'se Caesar Moncrieffe. Here's the lettah, sah."

He handed a folded paper to Harry, who opened and read it. It was addressed to the chief of whatever officers might be occupying his house, and it ran thus, somewhat in the old-fashioned way:

SIRS AND GENTLEMEN:

The bearer of this is Caesar Moncrieffe. He and his ancestors have been servants of my family and my ancestors in the State of Virginia for more than two hundred years. He is a good man, as were his father and grandfather before him. He will not steal unless he should think it for his benefit or yours. He will not lie unless convinced of its necessity. He will work if you make him.

All of his impulses are good, and though he will strenuously deny it at first, he is about the best cook in the world. Knowing the scarcity of nutritious food in the army, I have therefore sent him to you with what I could gather together, in order that he might cook you a dinner worthy of Christmas. Put him to work, and if he disobeys, shuffles or evades in any manner, hit him over the head with anything that you can find hard enough or heavy enough to make an impression.

Wishing the Army of Northern Virginia the continued and brilliant success that has attended it heretofore,

I remain,

Your most obedient servant,

THEOPHILUS MONCRIEFFE.

"Ah, Sir Knight of the Dark but not Rueful Countenance, thou art doubly welcome!" said Happy Tom, now thrice-happy Tom. "It is a stout and goodly horse from which thou hast dismounted, and I see that he yet carries on his back something besides the saddle. But let me first speak to my Lord Talbot, our real commander, who is within."

Caesar did not wholly understand, but he saw that Langdon meant well, and he grinned. Happy Tom rushed toward Colonel Talbot, who stood before the fire with Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire.

"Colonel Talbot! Colonel Talbot, sir!" he exclaimed.

"What is it, Thomas, my lad? You appear to be excited, and that is not seemly in a soldier of your experience."

"But, Colonel, this isn't a battle. Of course, I wouldn't let myself be stirred up by the Yankees, but it's a dinner, Colonel! It's a Christmas dinner, and it bears all the signs of being as fine as any we ever ate in the old times of peace!"

"Thomas, my lad, I regret it, but I must say that you are talking in a much more light-headed way than usual. All that we had we brought with us, and your young brother officers, who I must say excel you in industry, are now assembling it."

"But, Colonel, there's a big black fellow outside. He's just come in with a loaded horse, belonging to the owner of this house, and he's brought a letter with him. Read it, sir."

Colonel Talbot gravely read the letter and passed it to Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire, who read it with equal gravity.

"Sounds well, eh, Hector?" Colonel Talbot said.

"Most excellent, Leonidas."

They went to the door with Happy Tom, and again Caesar saluted respectfully.

"You are welcome, Caesar," said Colonel Talbot. "I am commander here. What has your kind master sent us?"

Caesar bowed low before the two colonels and then proceeded to unload his horse. The young officers had come crowding to the door, but Happy Tom received the first package, which was wrapped in sacking.

"An old Virginia ham, nut-fed and sugar-cured!" he exclaimed. "Yes, it's real! By all the stars and the sun and the moon, too, it's real, because I'm pinching it! I thought I'd never see another such ham again!"

"And here's a dressed turkey, a twenty-pounder at least!" said Harry.
"Ah, you noble bird! What better fate could you find than a tomb in the stomachs of brave Confederate soldiers!"

"And another turkey!" said Dalton.

"And a bag of nuts!" said Sherburne.

"And, as I live, two bottles of claret!" said St. Claire.

"And a big black cake!" said Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire.

"And a great bunch of holly!" said Colonel Talbot, in whose eye, usually so warlike, a large tear stood.

"Dat," said Caesar, "was sent by little Miss Julia Moncrieffe, just nine years old. She wished she had a bunch for every soldier in the army, an' she sent her lub to all uv 'em."

"God bless little Julia Moncrieffe, aged nine," said Colonel Talbot, much moved.

"God bless her, so say we all of us," the others added together.

"And now, Caesar," said Colonel Talbot, "put your horse in the part of the stable that remains. I noticed some hay there which you can give to him. Then come to the kitchen. Mr. Moncrieffe, whose name be praised, says that you're the best cook since those employed by Lucullus. It's great praise, Caesar, but in my opinion it's none too great."

Caesar, highly flattered, led his horse to the stable, and the approving looks of the youths followed him.

"Sometimes I've had my doubts about Santa Claus" said Happy Tom.

"So have I," said St. Clair, "but like you I have them no longer."

"And there's a curious thing about this restoration of our belief in Santa Claus," said Dalton.

"Since we see him in person we all observe the fact," said Harry.

"That he is a very large man."

"Six feet two at the very least."

"Weight about two twenty, and all of it bone and muscle."

"And he is coal black."

"So black that even on a dark night he would seem to be clothed around with light."

"Why did it never occur to anybody before that Santa Claus was a very black, black man?"

"Because we are the first who have ever seen him in the flesh."

Caesar stabled his horse, went to the kitchen, where he lighted a fire in the big stove, and fell to work with a will and a wonderful light-handed dexterity that justified Mr. Moncrieffe's praise of him. The younger officers helped in turn, but in the kitchen they willingly allowed to Caesar his rightful position as lord and master.

Delicious aromas arose. The luxury of the present was brightened by the contrast with the hardships and hunger of two years. More than twenty officers were present, and by putting together three smaller tables they made a long one that ran full length down the center of the sitting-room.

"We'll save a portion of what we have for friends not so fortunate," said Colonel Talbot.

"You have always had a generous heart, Leonidas," said Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire.

"We have much for others and much for ourselves. But many of our friends and many thousands of the brave Southern youth have gone, Hector. However, we will not speak of that to-day, and we will try not to think of it, as we are here to celebrate this festival with the gallant lads who are still living."

Caesar proved to be all that his master had promised and all that they had hoped. No better Christmas dinner was eaten that day in the whole United States. Invincible youth was around the board, and the two colonels lent dignity to the gathering, without detracting from its good cheer.

The table had been set late, and soon the winter twilight was approaching. As they took another slice of ham they heard the boom of a cannon on the far side of the Rappahannock. Harry went to the window and saw the white smoke rising from a point about three miles away.

"They can't be firing on us, can they, sir?" he said to Colonel Talbot.
"They wouldn't do it on a day like this."

"No. There are two reasons. We're so far apart that it would be a waste of good powder and steel, and they would not violate Christmas in that manner. We and the Yankees have become too good friends for such outrageous conduct. If I may risk a surmise, I think it is merely a Christmas greeting."

"I think so, too, sir. Listen, there goes a cannon on our side."

"It will be answered in a few moments. The favorite Biblical numbers are seven and twelve, and I take it that each side will fire either seven or twelve shots. It is certainly a graceful compliment from the

Yankees, befitting the season. I should not have said a year ago that they would show so much delicacy and perception."

"I think that the number of shots on each side will be twelve," said Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire. "It's three apiece now, isn't it?"

"Yes, three apiece," said Colonel Talbot.

"Four now," said Sherburne.

"Five now," said Dalton.

"Six now," said St. Clair.

"Seven now," said Harry.

"Eight now," said Happy Tom.

"And seven has been passed," said Colonel Talbot. "It will surely be twelve."

All were silent now, counting under their breath, and they felt a certain extraordinary solemnity as they counted. Harry knew that both armies, far up and down the river, were counting those shots, as the little group in the Moncrieffe house were counting them. Certainly there would be no hostilities on that day.

"Nine," they said under their breath.

"Ten!"

"Eleven!"

"Twelve!"

Then they listened, as the echo of the twelfth Southern shot died away on the stream, and no sound came after it. Twenty-four shots had been fired, twelve by each army, conveying Christmas good wishes, and the group in the house went back to their dinner. Some glasses had been found, and there was a thimbleful of wine, enough for everyone. The black cake was cut, and at a word from Colonel Talbot all rose and drank a toast to the mothers and wives and sweethearts and sisters they had left behind them.

Then the twilight thickened rapidly and the winter night came down upon them, hiding the ruined town, the blackened walls, the muddy streets and the icicles hanging from scorched timbers.

Caesar Moncrieffe washed all the dishes--those left in the house had been sufficient for their purpose--wiped them carefully, and returned them to the cupboard. Then he announced that he must go.

"Come now, Santa Claus," said Happy Tom, "you must stay here. You've

done enough for one day. In fact, I should say that you've earned a week's rest."

"I ain't no Santy Claus," said Caesar, "but I done got to git back to Massa Moncrieffe. He'll be expectin' me."

"But you'll get lost in the dark. Besides, some Yankee scout may shoot the top of your head off."

"You can't lose me anywhar' roun' here. 'Sides, I kin dodge them Yankees every time. On a dark night like this I could go right up the gullies and through the biggest army in the world without its seein' me."

Caesar felt that he was bound to go, and all the officers in turn shook his big rough black hand. Then they saw him ride away in the darkness, armed with his pass from General Jackson, and on the lookout for any prowling Yankees who might have ventured on the right bank of the river.

"Isn't it odd, Colonel," said Harry to Colonel Talbot, "that so many of our colored people regard the Yankees who are trying now to free them as enemies, while they look upon us as their best friends?"

"Propinquity and association, Harry," replied Colonel Talbot, "and in the border states, at least, we have seldom been cruel to them. I hope there has been little of cruelty, too, in my own South Carolina. They are used to our ways, and they turn to us for the help that is seldom refused. The Northerner will always be a stranger to them, and an unsympathetic stranger, because there is no personal contact, none of that 'give and take' which makes men friends."

"What a pity we didn't free 'em ourselves long ago!"

"Yes, it is. I say this to you in confidence now, Harry. Of course, I would be denounced by our people if I said it. But many of our famous men, Harry, have not approved of it. The great Washington said slavery, with its shiftless methods of farming, was draining the life out of the land, and he was right. Haven't we seen the 'old fields' of Virginia?"

"And Clay was against it, too," said Harry; "but I suppose it's one of the things we're now fighting for, unless we should choose to liberate them ourselves after defeating the North."

"I suppose so," said Colonel Talbot, "but I am no politician or statesman. My trade unfits me for such matters. I am a West Pointer--a proud and glorious fact I consider it, too--but the life of a regular army officer makes him a man set apart. He is not really in touch with the nation. He cannot be, because he has so little personal contact with it. For that reason West Pointers should never aspire to public office. It does not suit them, and they seldom succeed in it. But here, I'm becoming a prosy old bore. Come into the house, lad. The boys are growing sentimental. Listen to their song. It's the same, isn't it, that some of our bands played at Bull Run?"

"Yes, sir, it is," replied Harry, as he joined the others in the song:

"The hour was sad, I left the maid
A lingering farewell taking,
Her sighs and tears my steps delayed
I thought her heart was breaking.

"In hurried words her name I blessed,
I breathed the vows that bind me,
And to my heart in anguish pressed
The girl I left behind me."

Most all the officers had leave for the full day. Harry and Dalton in fact were to stay overnight at the house, and, forgetful of the war, they sang one song after another as the evening waned. At nine o'clock all the guests left save Harry and Dalton.

"You and Langdon will show them to their bedrooms," said Colonel Talbot. "Take the candle. The rest of us can sit here by the firelight."

There was but a single candle, and it was already burning low, but Happy Tom and Arthur, shielding it from draughts, led the way to the second floor.

"Most of the houses were demolished by cannon shot and fire," said Langdon, "but we've a habitable room which we reserve for guests of high degree. You will note here where a cannon shot, the result of plunging fire, came slantingly through the roof and passed out at the wall on the other side. You need not get under that hole if it should rain or snow, and meanwhile it serves splendidly for ventilation. The rip in the wall serves the same purpose, and, of course, you have too much sense to fall through it. Some blankets are spread there in the corner, and as you have your heavy cloaks with you, you ought to make out. Sorry we can't treat you any better, Sir Harry of Kentucky and Sir George of Virginia, but these be distressful times, and the best the castle affords is put at your service."

"And I suspect that it's really the best," said Harry to Dalton, as St. Clair and Langdon went out. "There's straw under these blankets, George, and we've got a real bed."

The moonlight shone through two windows and the cannon-shot hole, and it was bright in the room.

"Here's a little bureau by the wall," said Dalton, "and as I intend to enjoy the luxury of undressing, I'm going to put my clothes in it, where they'll keep dry. You'll notice that all the panes have been shot out of those windows, and a driving rain would sweep all the way across the room."

"Now and then a good idea springs up in some way in that old head of yours, George. I'll do the same."

Dalton opened the top drawer.

"Something has been left here," he said.

He held up a large doll with blue eyes and yellow hair.

"As sure as we're living," said Harry, "we're in the room of little Miss Julia Moncrieffe, aged nine, the young lady who sent us the holly. Evidently they took away all their clothing and lighter articles of furniture, but they forgot the doll. Put it back, George. They'll return to Fredericksburg some day and we want her to find it there."

"You're right, Harry," said Dalton, as he replaced the doll and closed the drawer. "You and I ought to be grateful to that little girl whom we may never see."

"We won't forget," said Harry, as he undressed rapidly and lay down upon their luxurious bed of blankets and straw.

Neither of them remembered anything until they were dragged into the middle of the room next morning by St. Clair and Langdon.

"Here! here! wake up! wake up!" cried Langdon. "It's not polite to your hosts to be snoring away when breakfast is almost ready. Go down on a piece of the back porch that's left, and you'll find two pans of cold water in which you can wash your faces. It's true the pans are frozen over, but you can break the ice, and it will remind you of home and your little boyhood."

They sprang up and dressed as rapidly as they could, because when they came from the covers they found it icy cold in the room. Then they ran down, as they had been directed, broke the ice in the pans and bathed their faces.

"Fine air," said Harry.

"Yes, but too much of it," said Dalton.

"Br-h-h-h-h, how it freezes me! Look at the icicles, George! I think some new ones came to town last night! And what a cold river! I don't believe there was ever a colder-looking river than the Rappahannock!"

"And see the fogs and mists rising from it, too. It looks exactly as it did the morning of the battle."

"Let it look as it pleases," said Harry. "I'm going to make a dash for the inside and a fire!"

They found the colonels and the rest of the staff in the sitting-room, all except two, who were acting as cooks, but their work ceased in a moment or two, as breakfast was ready. It consisted of coffee and bread and ham left over from the night before. A heap of timber glowed in the fireplace and shot forth ruddy flames. Harry's soul fairly warmed

within him.

"Sit down, all of you," said Colonel Talbot, "and we'll help one another."

They ate with the appetite of the soldier, and Colonel Talbot and Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire, finishing first, withdrew to a wide window seat. There they produced the board and box of chessmen and proceeded to rearrange them exactly as they were before the battle of Fredericksburg.

"You will recall that your king was in great danger, Leonidas," said Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire.

"Truly I do, Hector, but I do not think it beyond my power to rescue him."

"It will be a hard task, Leonidas."

"Hector, I would have you to remember that I am an officer in the Army of Northern Virginia, and the Army of Northern Virginia prefers hard tasks to easy ones."

"You put the truth happily, Leonidas, but I must insist that your position is one of uncommon danger."

"I recognize the fact fully, Hector, but I assert firmly that I will rescue my red king."

Harry, his part of the work finished, watched them. The two gray heads bent lower and lower over the table until they almost touched. Everybody maintained a respectful silence. Colonel Talbot's brow was corded deeply with thought. It was a full quarter of an hour before he made a move, and then his opponent looked surprised.

"That does not seem to be your right move, Leonidas."

"But it is, Hector, as you will see presently."

"Very well. I will now choose my own course."

Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire's own brow became corded and knotted as he put his whole mental energy upon the problem. Harry watched them a little while, and then strolled over to the other window, where St. Clair was looking at the ruined town.

"Curious how people can find entertainment in so slow a game," he said, nodding toward the two colonels.

"That same game has been going on for more than a year," said St. Clair, with a slight smile. "It's odd how something always breaks it up. I wonder what it will be this time. But it's an intelligent game, Harry."

"I don't think a sport is intellectual, merely because it is slow."

Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire made a move, Colonel Leonidas Talbot made another, and then promptly uttered a little cry of triumph.

"My king is free! He is free! You made no royal capture, Hector!" he exclaimed joyously.

"It is so, Leonidas. I did not foresee your path of retreat. I must enter upon a new campaign against you."

Harry, who was looking toward the heights on the other side of the river, saw a flash of flame and a puff of smoke. A rumbling noise came to him.

"What is it, Harry?" asked Colonel Talbot.

"A Yankee cannon. I suppose it was telling us Christmas is over. The ball struck somewhere in Fredericksburg."

"A waste of good ammunition. Why, they've done all the damage to Fredericksburg that they can do. It's your move, Hector."

Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire corded and knotted his brow again, and once more the two heads nearly met over the chessboard. A whistling sound suddenly came from the street without. Something struck with a terrible impact, and then followed a blinding flash and roar. The whole house shook and several of the men were thrown down, but in a half minute they sprang to their feet.

Colonel Leonidas Talbot and Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire were standing erect, staring at each other. The chessmen were scattered on the floor and the board was split in half. A fragment of the exploding shell had entered the window and passing directly between them had done the damage. The same piece had gone entirely through the opposite wall.

Harry's quick glance told him that nothing had suffered except the chessboard. He sprang forward, picked up the two halves, and said:

"No real harm has been done. Two strips underneath, a few tacks, and it's as good again as ever."

The other lads carefully gathered up the scattered chessmen and announced that not one of them was injured.

"Thank you, boys," said Colonel Talbot. "It is a pleasing thing to see that, despite the war, the young still show courtesy to their elders. You will bear in mind, Hector, when this game is resumed at a proper time and place, that the position of one of your knights was very delicate."

"Assuredly I will not forget it, Leonidas. It will be no trouble to either of us to replace them exactly as they were at a moment's notice."

Harry and Dalton were compelled now to return to General Jackson, and they did so, after leaving many thanks with their generous hosts. Heavy winter rains began. The country on both sides of the Rappahannock became a vast sea of mud, and the soldiers had to struggle against all the elements, because the rains were icy and the mud formed a crust through which they broke in the morning.

While they lingered here news came of the great battle in the West, fought on the last day of the old year and the first day of the new, along the banks of Stone River. Harry and his comrades looked for a triumph there like that which they had won, and they were deeply disappointed when they heard the result.

Harry had a copy of a Richmond paper and he was reading from it to an attentive circle, but he stopped to comment:

"Ours was the smaller army, but we drove them back and held a part of the field. Two or three days later we withdrew to Chattanooga. Well, I don't call it much of a victory to thump your enemy and then go away, leaving him in possession of the field."

"But the enemy was a third more numerous than we were," said Happy Tom, "and since it looks like a draw, so far as the fighting was concerned, we, being the smaller, get the honors."

"That's just the trouble," said Dalton gravely. "We are loaded down with honors. Look at the great victories we've won in the East! Has anything solid come of them? Here is the enemy on Virginia soil, just as he was before. We've given the Army of the Potomac a terrible thrashing at Fredericksburg, but there it is on the other side of the Rappahannock, just as strong as ever, and maybe stronger, because they say recruits are pouring into it."

"Stop! Stop, Dalton!" said Happy Tom. "We don't want any lecture from you. We're just having a conversation."

"All right," said Dalton, laughing, "but I gave you my opinion."

Days of comparative idleness followed. The Army of the Potomac moved farther up the river and settled itself around the village of Falmouth. The Army of Northern Virginia faced it, and along the hillsides the young Southern soldiers erected sign posts, on the boards of which were painted, in letters large enough for the Union glasses to see, the derisive words:

THIS WAY TO RICHMOND

JEB STUART'S BALL

But Hooker, the new Northern commander, did not yet move. The chief cause was mud. The winter having been very cold in the first half, was very rainy in the second half. The numerous brooks and creeks and smaller rivers remained flooded beyond their banks, and the Rappahannock flowed a swollen and mighty stream. Ponds and little lakes stood everywhere. Roads had been destroyed by the marching of mighty masses and the rolling of thousands of heavy wheels. Horses often sank nearly to the knee when they trod new paths through the muddy fields. There was mud, mud everywhere.

Hooker, moreover, was confronted by a long line of earthworks and other intrenchments, extending for twenty miles along the Rappahannock, and defended by the victors of Fredericksburg. After that disastrous day the Northern masses at home were not so eager for a battle. The country realized that it was not well to rush a foe, led by men like Lee and Jackson.

But Hooker was a brave and confident man. The North, always ready, was sending forward fresh troops, and when he crossed the Rappahannock, as he intended to do, he would have more men and more guns than Burnside had led when he attacked the blazing heights of Fredericksburg. Lincoln and Stanton, warned too by the great disasters through their attempts to manage armies in the field from the Capitol, were giving Hooker a freer hand.

On the other hand, the Confederate president and his cabinet suddenly curtailed Lee's plans. A fourth of his veterans under Longstreet were drawn off to meet a flank attack of other Northern forces which seemed to be threatened upon Richmond. Lee was left with only sixty thousand men to face Hooker's growing odds.

It was not any wonder that the spirits of the Southern lads sank somewhat. Harry realized more fully every day that it was not sufficient for them merely to defeat the Northern armies. They must destroy them. The immense patriotism of those who fought for the Union always filled up their depleted ranks and more, and they were getting better generals all the time. Hancock and Reynolds and many another were rising to fame in the east.

The Invincibles were posted nearly opposite Falmouth, and Harry had many chances to see them. On his second visit the chessboard was mended so perfectly that the split was not visible, and the two colonels sat down to finish their game. Fifteen minutes later a dispatch from General Jackson to Colonel Leonidas Talbot arrived, telling him to leave at once by the railway in the Confederate rear for Richmond. President Davis wished detailed information from him about the fortifications along the coasts of North Carolina and South Carolina, which were now heavily

threatened by the enemy.

The two colonels had not made a move, but Colonel Leonidas Talbot rose, buttoned every button of his neat tunic, and said in precise tones:

"Hector, I depart in a half hour. You will, of course, have command of the regiment in my absence, and if any young lieutenants should be exceedingly obstreperous in the course of that time, perhaps I can prove to them that they are not as old as they think they are."

The colonel's severity of tone was belied by a faint twinkle in the corner of his eye, and the lads knew that they had nothing to fear, especially as Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire was quite as stern and able a guardian as Colonel Talbot.

Colonel Talbot departed, good wishes following him in a shower, and that day a young officer arrived from South Carolina and took a place in the Invincibles that had been made vacant by death.

Harry was still with his friends when this officer arrived, and the tall, slender figure and dark face of the man seemed familiar to him. A little thought recalled where he had first seen that eager gesture and the manner so intense that it betrayed an excessive enthusiasm. But when Harry did remember him he remembered him well.

"How do you do, Captain Bertrand?" he said--the man wore the uniform of a captain.

Bertrand stared at Harry, and then he gradually remembered. It was not strange that he was puzzled at first, as in the two years that had passed since Bertrand was in Colonel Kenton's house at Pendleton, Harry had grown much larger and more powerful, and was deeply tanned by all kinds of weather. But when he did recall him his greeting was full of warmth.

"Ah, now I know!" he exclaimed. "It is Harry Kenton, the son of Colonel George Kenton! And we held that meeting at your father's house on the eve of the war! And then we went up to Frankfort, and we did not take Kentucky out of the Union."

"No, we didn't," said Harry with a laugh. "Captain Bertrand, Lieutenant St. Clair and Lieutenant Langdon."

But Bertrand had known them both in Charleston, and he shook their hands with zeal and warmth, showing what Harry thought--as he had thought the first time he saw him--an excess of manner.

"We've a fine big dry place under this tree," said St. Clair. "Let's sit down and talk. You're the new Captain in our regiment, are you not?"

"Yes," replied Bertrand. "I've just come from Richmond, where I met my chief, that valiant man, Colonel Leonidas Talbot. I have been serving mostly on the coast of the Carolinas, and when I asked to be sent to the

larger theater of war they very naturally assigned me to one of my own home regiments. Alas! there is plenty of room for me and many more in the ranks of the Invincibles."

"We have been well shot up, that's true," said Langdon, whom nothing could depress more than a minute, "but we've put more than a million Yankees out of the running."

"How are your Knights of the Golden Circle getting on?" asked Harry.

Bertrand flushed a little, despite his swarthy complexion.

"Not very well, I fear," he replied. "It has taken us longer to conquer the Yankees than we thought."

"I don't see that we've begun to conquer them as a people or a section," said St. Clair, who was always frank and direct. "We've won big victories, but just look and you'll see 'em across the river there, stronger and more numerous than ever, and that, too, on the heels of the big defeat they sustained at Fredericksburg. And, if you'll pardon me, Captain, I don't believe much in the great slave empire that the Knights of the Golden Circle planned."

Bertrand's black eyes flashed.

"And why not?" he asked sharply.

"To take Cuba and Mexico would mean other wars, and if we took them we'd have other kinds of people whom we'd have to hold in check with arms. A fine mess we'd make of it, and we haven't any right to jump on Cuba and Mexico, anyway. I've got a far better plan."

"And what is that?" asked Bertrand, with an increasing sharpness of manner.

"The North means to free our slaves. We'll defeat the North and show to her that she can't. Then we'll free 'em ourselves."

"Free them ourselves!" exclaimed Bertrand. "What are we fighting for but the right to hold our own property?"

"I didn't understand it exactly that way. It seems to me that we went to war to defend the right of a state to go out of the Union when it pleases."

"I tell you, this war is being fought to establish our title to our own."

"It's all right, so we fight well," said Harry, who saw Bertrand's rising color and who believed him to be tinged with fanaticism; "it's all that can be asked of us. After Happy Tom sleeps in the White House with his boots on, as he says he's going to do, we can decide, each according to his own taste, what he was fighting for."

"I've known all the time what was in my mind," said Bertrand emphatically. "Of course, the extension of the new republic toward the north will be cut off by the Yankees. Then its expansion must be southward, and that means in time the absorption of Mexico, all the West Indies, and probably Central America."

St. Clair was about to retort, but Harry gave him a warning look and he contented himself with rolling into a little easier position. Harry foresaw that these two South Carolinians would not be friends, and in any event he hated fruitless political discussions.

Bertrand excused himself presently and went away.

"Arthur," said Harry, "I wouldn't argue with him. He's a captain in the Invincibles now, and you're a lieutenant. It's in his power to make trouble for you."

"You're not appealing to any emotion in me that might bear the name of fear, are you, Harry?"

"You know I'm not. Why argue with a man who has fire on the brain? Although he's older than you, Arthur, he hasn't got as good a rein on his temper."

"You can't resist flattery like that, can you, Arthur? I know I couldn't," said Happy Tom, grinning his genial grin.

St. Clair's face relaxed.

"You're right, fellows," he said. "We oughtn't to be quarreling among ourselves when there are so many Yankees to fight."

Mail forwarded from Richmond was distributed in the camp the next day and Harry was in the multitude gathered about the officers distributing it. The delivery of the mail was always a stirring event in either army, and as the war rolled on it steadily increased in importance.

There were men in this very group who had not heard from home since they left it two years before, and there were letters for men who would never receive them. The letters were being given out at various points, but where Harry stood a major was calling them in a loud, clear voice.

"John Escombe, Field's brigade."

Escombe, deeply tanned and twenty-two, ran forward and received a thick letter addressed in a woman's handwriting, that of his mother, and, amid cheering at his luck, disappeared in the crowd.

"Thomas Anderson, Gregg's brigade. Girl's handwriting, too. Lucky boy, Tom."

"Hey, Tom, open it and show it to us! Maybe her picture's inside it! I'll bet she's got red hair!"

But Tom fled, blushing, and opened his letter when he was at a safe distance.

"Carlton Ives, Thomas' brigade."

"In hospital, Major, but I'll take the letter to him. He's in my company."

"Stephen Brayton, Lane's brigade."

There was a silence for a moment, and then some one said:

"Dead, at Antietam, sir."

The major put the letter on one side, and called:

"Thomas Langdon, the Invincibles."

Langdon darted forward and seized his letter.

"It's from my father," he said as he glanced at the superscription, although it was half hidden from him by a mist that suddenly appeared before his eyes.

"Here, Tom, stand behind us and read it," said Harry, who was waiting in an anxiety that was positively painful for a letter to himself.

"Henry Lawton, Pender's brigade," called the major. "This is from a girl, too, and there is a photograph inside. I can feel it. Wish I could get such a letter myself, Henry."

Lawton, his letter in his hand, retreated rapidly amid envious cheers.

"Charles Carson, Lane's brigade."

"Dead at Fredericksburg, sir; I helped to bury him."

"Thomas Carstairs, Field's brigade."

"Killed at the Second Manassas, sir."

"Richard Graves, Archer's brigade."

"Died in hospital after Antietam, sir."

"David Moulton, Field's brigade."

"Killed nearly a year ago, in the valley, sir."

"William Fitzpatrick, Lane's brigade."

"Taken prisoner at Antietam. Not yet exchanged, sir."

"Herbert Jones, Pender's brigade."

"Killed at South Mountain, sir."

Harry felt a little shiver. The list of those who would never receive their letters was growing too long. But this delivery of the mail seemed to run in streaks. Presently it found a streak of the living. It was a great mail that came that day, the largest the army had yet received, but the crowd, hungry for a word from home, did not seem to diminish. The ring continually pressed a little closer.

St. Clair received two letters, and, a long while afterwards, there was one for Dalton, who, however, had not been so long a time without news, as the battlefield was his own state, Virginia. Harry watched them with an envy that he tried to keep down, and after a while he saw that the heap of letters was becoming very small.

His anxiety became so painful that it was hard to bear. He knew that his father had been in the thick of the great battle at Stone River, but not a word from him or about him had ever come. No news in this case was bad news. If he were alive he would certainly write, and there was Confederate communication between Eastern Tennessee and Northern Virginia.

It was thus with a sinking heart that he watched the diminishing heap. Many of the disappointed ones had already gone away, hopeless, and Harry felt like following them, but the major picked up a thick letter in a coarse brown envelope and called:

"Lieutenant Henry Kenton, staff of Lieutenant-General Thomas Jonathan Jackson."

Harry sprang forward and seized his letter. Then he found a place behind a big tree, where St. Clair, Langdon and Dalton were reading theirs, and opened it. He had already seen that the address was in his father's handwriting and he believed that he was alive. The letter must have been written after the battle of Stone River or it would have arrived earlier. He took a hurried glance at the date and saw that it was near the close of January, at least three weeks after the battle. Then all apprehension was gone.

It was a long letter, dated from headquarters near Chattanooga, Tennessee. Colonel Kenton had just heard of the battle of Fredericksburg and he was rejoicing in the glorious victory. He hoped and believed that his son had passed through it safely. The Southern army had not been so successful in the west as in the east, but he believed that they had met tougher antagonists there, the men of the west and northwest, used to all kinds of hardships, and, alas! their own Kentuckians. At both Perryville and Stone River they had routed the antagonists who met them first, but they had been stopped by their own brethren.

Harry smiled and murmured to himself:

"You can never put down dad's state pride. With him the Kentuckians are always first."

He had a good deal of this state pride himself, although in a less accentuated form, and, after the momentary thought, he went on. The colonel was looking for a letter from his son--Harry had written twice since Fredericksburg, and he knew now that the letters would arrive safely. He himself had been wounded slightly in a skirmish just after Stone River, but he was now entirely well. The Southern forces were gathering and General Bragg would have a great army with which they were confident of winning a victory like that of the Second Manassas or Fredericksburg. He was glad that his son was on the staff of so great a genius as General Jackson and that he was also under the command of that other great genius, Lee.

Harry stopped reading for a moment or two and smiled with satisfaction. The impression that Lee and Jackson had made upon the South was as great in the west as in the east. The hero-worship which the fiery and impressionable South gives in such unstinted measure to these two men had begun already. Harry was glad that his father recognized the great Virginians so fully, men who allied with genius temperate and lofty lives.

He resumed his reading, but the remainder of the letter was occupied with personal details. The colonel closed with some good advice to his son about caring for himself on the march and in camp, drawn from his own experience both in the Mexican war and the present strife.

Harry read his letter three times. Then he folded it carefully and put it in an inside pocket of his tunic.

"Is it good news, Harry?" asked Happy Tom, who had already finished with his own letter.

"Yes, it's cheerful."

"So's mine. I'm glad to hear that your father's all right. Mine didn't go to the war. I wish you could meet my father, Harry. I get my cheerful disposition and my good manners from him. When the war was about to begin and I went over to Charleston in about the most splendid uniform that was ever created, he said: 'You fellows will get licked like thunder, and maybe you'll deserve it. As for you, you'll probably get a part of your fool head shot off, but it's so thick and hard that it will be a benefit to you to lose some of it and have the rest opened up. But remember, Tom, whenever you do come back, no matter how many legs and arms and portions of your head you've left behind, there'll be a welcome in the old house for you. You're the fatted calf, but you're sure to come back a lot leaner and maybe with more sense.'"

"He certainly talked to you straight."

"So he did, Harry; but those words were not nearly so rough as they

sound, because when I came away I saw tears in his eyes. Father's a smart man, a money-maker as good as the Yankees themselves. He's got sea island cotton in warehouses in more than one place along the coast, and he writes me that he's already selling it to the blockade runners for unmentionable prices in British and French gold. Harry, if your fortunes are broken up by the war, you and your father will have to come down and share with us."

"Thanks for your invitation, Tom; but from what you say about your father we'd be about as welcome as a bear in a kitchen."

"Don't you believe it. You come."

"Arthur, what do you hear?" asked Harry.

"My people are well and they're sending me a lot of things. My mother has put in the pack a brand new uniform. She sewed on the gold lace herself. I hope the next battle won't be fought before it gets here."

"Impossible," said Harry gravely. "General Hooker is too polite a man to push us before Lieutenant St. Clair receives his new clothes."

"I hope so," said St. Clair seriously.

The new uniform, in fact, came a few days later, and as it even exceeded its promise, St. Clair was thoroughly happy. Harry also received a second letter from Colonel Kenton, telling of the receipt of his own, and wishing him equally good fortune in the new battle which they in the west heard was impending in the east.

Harry believed they would surely close with Hooker soon. They had been along the Rappahannock for many weeks now, and the winter of cold rain had not yet broken up, but spring could not be far away. Meanwhile he was drawn closer than ever to Jackson, his great commander, and was almost constantly in his service.

It was, perhaps, the difference in their natures that made the hero-worship in the boy so strong. Jackson was quiet, reserved and deeply religious. Harry was impulsive, physically restless, and now and then talkative, as the young almost always are. Jackson's impassive face and the few words--but always to the point--that he spoke, impressed him. In his opinion now Stonewall Jackson could do no wrong nor make any mistake of judgment.

The months had not been unpleasant. The Southern army was recuperating from great battles, and, used to farm or forest life, the soldiers easily made shelter for themselves against the rain and mud. The Southern pickets along the river also established good relations with the pickets on the other side. Why not? They were of the same blood and the same nation. There was no battle now, and what was the use of sneaking around like an Indian, trying to kill somebody who was doing you no harm? That was assassination, not war.

The officers winked at this borderline friendship. A Yankee picket in a boat near the left shore could knot a newspaper into a tight wad and throw it to the Johnny Reb picket in another boat near the right bank, and there were strong-armed Johnny Reb pickets who could throw a hunk of chewing tobacco all the way to the Yankee side. Already they were sowing the seeds of a good will which should follow a mighty war.

Harry often went to the bank on the warmer and more sunny days and leisurely watched the men on the other side. St. Clair, Langdon and Dalton usually joined him, if their duties allowed. It was well into March, a dry and warm day, when they sat on a little hillock and gazed at four of the men in blue who were fishing from a small boat near their shore. St. Clair was the last to join the little party, and when he came he was greeted with a yell by the men on the left bank. One of them put up his hands, trumpet-shaped, to his mouth and called:

"Is that President Davis who has just joined you?"

"No," replied Harry, using his hands in like fashion. "What makes you think so?"

"Because Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like him. I've got to put my hands over my eyes to protect them from the blaze of that uniform."

St. Clair, who wore his new uniform, which was modelled somewhat after the brilliant fashion of Stuart's, smiled with content. He was making a great hit.

"You can do all the talking, Harry," he said.

"As I told you, he isn't President Davis," Harry called, "but he's sure, when he's old enough, to be one of his successors."

"Bet you a dollar, Johnny Reb, that President Davis has no successor."

"Take you, Yank, and I'll collect that bet from you when I ride down Pennsylvania Avenue in my Confederate uniform at the head of the Army of Northern Virginia."

"Oh, no, you won't; you'll pay it to me before the State House in Richmond, with the Army of the Potomac looking on and the Stars and Stripes waving gracefully over your head."

"Both of you are betting on things too far off," said Langdon, who could keep out of the conversation no longer. "I'll bet you two dollars that not one of those four men in the boat catches a fish inside of ten minutes."

"In Confederate bills or in money?" was called back.

Roars of laughter, from both sides of the Rappahannock, crossed one another above the middle of the stream.

"What's this?" exclaimed a sharp voice behind the four. "Conversation with the enemy! It's against all the rules of war!"

They looked around and saw Bertrand, his face flushed and his eyes sparkling. Harry leaned back lazily, but St. Clair spoke up quickly.

"We've been having conversations off and on with the enemy for two years," he said. "We've had some mighty hot talks with bullets and cannon balls, and some not so hot with words. Just now we were having one of the class labelled 'not so hot.'"

"What's the matter with you Johnnies?" was called across. "You've broken off the talk just when it was getting interesting. Are you going to back out on that bet? We thought you had better manners. We know you have."

"You're right, we have," said St. Clair, shouting across the stream, "but we were interrupted by a man who hasn't."

"Oh, is that so?" was called back. "If you've troubles of your own, we won't interfere. We'll just look on."

Bertrand was pallid with rage.

"I'm a captain in the Invincibles, Mr. St. Clair," he said, "and you're only a lieutenant. You'll return to your regiment at once and prepare a written apology to me for the words that you've just used to those Yankees."

"Oh, no, I won't do either," drawled St. Clair purposely. "It is true that a captain outranks a lieutenant, but you're a company commander and I'm a staff officer. I take no orders from you."

"Nevertheless you have insulted me, and there is another and perhaps better way to settle it."

He significantly touched the hilt of his sword.

"Oh, if you mean a duel, it suits me well enough," said St. Clair, who was an expert with the sword.

"Early to-morrow morning in the woods back of this point?"

"Suits me."

"Your seconds?"

Then Harry jumped to his feet in a mighty wrath and indignation.

"There won't be any duel! And there won't be any seconds!" he exclaimed.

"Why not?" asked Bertrand, his face livid.

"Because I won't allow it."

"How can you help it?"

"It's a piece of thunderation foolishness! Two good Southern soldiers trying to kill each other, when they've sworn to use all their efforts killing Yankees. It's a breach of faith and it's silliness on its own account. You've received the hospitality of my father's house, Captain Bertrand, and he's helped you and been kind to you elsewhere. You owe me enough at least to listen to me. Unless I get the promise of you two to drop this matter, I swear I'll go straight to General Jackson and tell all about it. He'll save you the trouble of shooting each other. He'll have you shot together. You needn't frown, either of you. It's not much fun breaking the rules of a Presbyterian elder who is also one of the greatest generals the world has ever seen."

"You're talking sound sense, Harry," said Happy Tom, an unexpected ally. "I've several objections to this duel myself. We'll need both of these men for the great battle with Hooker. Arthur would be sure to wear his new uniform, and a bullet hole through it would go far toward spoiling it. Besides, there's nothing to fight about. And if they did fight, I'd hate to see the survivor standing up before one of Old Jack's firing squads and then falling before it. You go to General Jackson, Harry, and I'll go along with you, seconding every word you say. Shut up, Arthur; if you open your mouth again I'll roll you and your new uniform in the mud down there. You know I can do it."

"But such conduct would be unparalleled," said Bertrand.

"I don't care a whoop if it is," said Harry, who had been taught by his father to look upon the duel as a wicked proceeding. "General Jackson wouldn't tolerate such a thing, and in his command what he says is the Ten Commandments. Isn't that so, Dalton?"

"Undoubtedly, and you can depend upon me as a third to you and Happy Tom."

"Now, Captain," continued Harry soothingly, "just forget this, won't you? Both of you are from South Carolina and you ought to be good friends."

"So far as I'm concerned, it's finished," said St. Clair.

But Bertrand turned upon his heel without a word and walked away.

"Hey, there, you Johnnies!" came a loud hail from the other side of the river. "What's the matter with your friend who's just gone away? I was watching with glasses, and he didn't look happy."

"He had a nightmare and he hasn't fully recovered from it yet."

There was a sudden tremendous burst of cheering behind them.

"On your feet, boys!" exclaimed Happy Tom, glancing back. "Here comes Old Jack on one of his tours of inspection."

Jackson was riding slowly along near the edge of the river. He could never appear without rolling cheers from the thirty thousand veteran troops who were eager to follow wherever he led. The mighty cheering swept back and forth in volumes, and when a lull came, one among their friends, the Yankee pickets on the other side of the river, called at the top of his voice:

"Hey, Johnnies, what's the racket about?"

"It's Stonewall Jackson!" Harry roared back, pointing to the figure on the horse.

Then, to the amazement of all, a sudden burst of cheering came from the far bank of the Rappahannock, followed by the words, shouted in chorus: "Hurrah for Stonewall Jackson! Hurrah for Jackson!" Thus did the gallant Northern troops show their admiration for their great enemy whose genius had defeated them so often. Some riflemen among them lying among the bushes at the water's edge might have picked him off, but no such thought entered the mind of anyone.

Jackson flushed at the compliment from the foe, but rode quietly on, until he disappeared among some woods on the left.

"We'd better be going back to headquarters," said Harry to Dalton. "It'll be wise for us to be there when the general arrives."

"That's right, lazy little boys," said Happy Tom. "Wash your faces, run to school, and be all bright and clean when teacher comes."

"It's what we mean to do," said Harry, "and if Arthur says anything more about this silly dueling business, send for us. We'll come back, and we three together will pound his foolish head so hard that he won't be able to think about anything at all for a year to come."

"I'll behave," said St. Clair, "but you fellows look to Bertrand."

Dalton and Harry walked to the headquarters of their general, who now occupied what had been a hunting lodge standing in the grounds of a large mansion. The whole place, the property of an orderly in his service, had been offered to him, but he would only take the hunting lodge, saying that he would not clutter up so fine and large a house.

Now Harry and Dalton walked across the lawn, which was beginning to turn green, and paused for a little while under the budding boughs of the great trees. The general had not yet arrived, but the rolling cheers never ceasing, but coming nearer, indicated that he would soon be at hand.

"A man must feel tremendous pride when his very appearance draws such

cheers from his men," said Harry.

The lawn was not cut up by the feet of horses--Jackson would not allow it. Everything about the house and grounds was in the neatest order. Beside the hunting lodge stood a great tent, in which his staff messed.

"Were you here the day General Jackson came to these quarters, Harry?" asked Dalton.

"No, I was in service at the bank of the river, carrying some message or other. I've forgotten what it was."

"Well, I was. We didn't know where we were going to stay, and a lady came from the big house here down to the edge of the woods, where we were still sitting on our horses. 'Is this General Jackson?' asked she. 'It is, madame,' he replied, lifting his hat politely. 'My husband owns this house,' she said, pointing toward it, 'and we will feel honored and glad if you will occupy it as your headquarters while you are here.' He thanked her and said he'd ride forward with a cavalry orderly and inspect the place. The rest of us waited while he and the orderly rode into the grounds, the lady going on ahead.

"The general wouldn't take the house. He said he didn't like to see so fine a place trodden up by young men in muddy military boots. Besides, he and his staff would disturb the inmates, and he didn't want that to happen. At last he picked the hunting lodge, and as he and the orderly rode back through the gate to the grounds, the orderly said: 'General, do you feel wholly pleased with what you have chosen?' 'It suits me entirely,' replied General Jackson. 'I'm going to make my headquarters in that hunting lodge.' 'I'm very glad of that, sir, very glad indeed.' 'Why?' asked General Jackson. 'Because it's my house,' replied the orderly, 'and my wife and I would have felt greatly disappointed if you had gone elsewhere.'"

"And so all this splendid place belongs to an orderly?" said Harry.

"Funny you didn't hear that story," said Dalton. "Most of us have, but I suppose everybody took it for granted that you knew it. As you say, that grand place belongs to one of our orderlies. After all, we're a citizen army, just as the great Roman armies when they were at their greatest were citizen armies, too."

"Ah, here comes the general now," said Harry, "and he looks embarrassed, as he always does after so much cheering. A stranger would think from the way he acts that he's the least conspicuous of our generals, and if you read the reports of his victories you'd think that he had less than anybody else to do with them."

General Jackson, followed by an orderly, cantered up. The orderly took the horse and the general went into the house, followed by the two young staff officers. They knew that he was likely to plunge at once into work, and were ready to do any service he needed.

"I don't think I'll want you boys," said the general in his usual kindly tone, "at least not for some time. So you can go out and enjoy the sunshine and warmth, of which we have had so little for a long time."

"Thank you, sir," said Harry, but he added hastily:

"Here come some officers, sir."

Jackson glanced through the window of the hunting lodge and caught sight of a waving plume, just as its wearer passed through the gate.

"That's Stuart," he said, with an attempt at severity in his tone, although his smiling eye belied it. "I suppose I might as well defer my work if Jeb Stuart is coming to see me. Stay with me, lads, and help me to entertain him. You know Stuart is nothing but a joyous boy--younger than either of you, although he is one of the greatest cavalry leaders of modern times."

Harry and Dalton were more than willing to remain. Everybody was always glad when Jeb Stuart came. Now he was in his finest mood, and he and the two staff officers with him rode at a canter. They leaped from their horses at Jackson's door, throwing the reins over their necks and leaving them to the orderly. Then they entered boldly, Stuart leading. He was the only man in the whole Southern army who took liberties with Jackson, although his liberties were always of the inoffensive kind.

If St. Clair was gorgeous in his new clothes, he would have been pale beside Stuart, who also had new raiment. A most magnificent feather looped and draped about his gold-braided hat. His uniform, of the finest cloth, was heavy with gold braid and gold epaulets, and the great yellow silk sash about his waist supported his gold-hilted sword.

"What new and splendid species of bird is this?" asked General Jackson, as Stuart and his men saluted. "I have never before seen such grand plumage."

Stuart complacently stroked the gold braid on his left sleeve and looked about the hunting lodge, the walls of which had been decorated accordingly long since by its owner.

"Splendid picture this of a race horse, General," he said, "and the one of the trotter in action is almost as fine. Ah, sir, I knew there were good sporting instincts in you and that they would come out in time. I approve of it myself, but what will the members of your church say, sir, when they hear of your moral decline?"

Jackson actually blushed and remained silent under the chaff.

"And here is a picture of a greyhound, and here of a terrier," continued the bold Stuart. "Oh, General, you're not only going in for racing, but for coursing dogs as well, and maybe fighting dogs, too! Throughout the South all the old ladies look up to you as our highest moral representative. What will they think when they hear of these things?"

It would be worse than a great battle lost."

"General Stuart," said Jackson, "I know more about race horses than you think I do."

He would add no more, but Harry had learned that, when quite a small boy, he had ridden horses in backwoods races for a sport-loving uncle. But Stuart continued his jests and Jackson secretly enjoyed them. The two men were so opposite in nature that they were complements and each liked the society of the other.

The two lads and the staff officers went outside presently, and the two generals were left together to talk business for a quarter of an hour. When Stuart emerged he glanced at Harry and Dalton and beckoned to them. When they came up he had mounted, but he leaned over, and pointing a long finger in a buckskin glove in turn at each, he said:

"Can you dance?"

"Yes, sir," replied Harry.

"And you, Sir Knight of the Sober Mien?"

"I can try, sir," said Dalton.

"But can you make it a good try?"

"I can, sir."

"That's the right spirit. Well, there's going to be a ball down at my headquarters to-night; not a little, two-penny, half-penny affair, but a real ball, a grand ball. The bands of the Fifth Virginia and of the Acadians will be there to play, alternating. You're invited and you're coming. I've already obtained leave from General Jackson for you both. I wish the general himself would come, but he's just received a theological book that Dr. Graham at Winchester has sent him, and he's bound to spend most of the night on that. Put on your best uniforms and be there just after dark."

Harry and Dalton accepted eagerly, and Stuart, a genuine knight of old alike in his courage and love of adornment, rode out of the grounds.

"There goes a man who certainly loves life," said Dalton.

"And don't you love it, and don't I love it, Mr. Philosopher and Cynic?" said Harry.

"So we do. But, as General Jackson said, General Stuart is a boy, younger than either of us."

"I hope to be the same kind of a boy when I'm his age."

Stuart was riding on, looking about with a luminous eye, fired by

the spirit within him and the great landscape spread out before him. It was a noble landscape, the wooded ranges stretching to right and left, with the long sweep of rolling country between. The somber ruins of Fredericksburg were hidden from view just then, but in front of him flowed the great Rappahannock, still black with floods and ice yet floating near the banks.

Stuart drew a deep breath. It was a beautiful part of Virginia, old and with many fine manor houses scattered about. And the people, educated, polite, accustomed to everything, gladly sacrificed all they had for the Confederacy in its hour of need. They had cut up their rugs and carpets and sent them to the great camp on the Rappahannock that the soldiers who had no blankets might use them. The cattle and poultry from the rich farms were also sent to Lee's men. Virginia sacrificed herself for the Confederate cause with a devotion that would have brought tears from a stone.

Some such thoughts as these were in the mind of Stuart as he rode toward his own camp. There was a mist for a few moments before the eyes of the great horseman, but as it cleared he became once more his natural self, the gayest of the gay. He hummed joyously as he rode along, and the refrain of his song was: "Old Joe Hooker, won't you come out of the Wilderness?"

Harry and Dalton had gone back to the big mess tent and were already arraying themselves with the utmost care for Jeb Stuart's ball. Their clothes were in good condition now. After the long rest they had been able to brush and furbish up their best uniforms, until they were both neat and bright. They had no thought of rivalling St. Clair, who undoubtedly would be there, but they were satisfied--they never expected to rival St. Clair in that respect. But they were splendid youths, fine, tall, upstanding, and with frank eyes and tanned faces.

"Will many girls be there?" asked Dalton.

"Of course. They'll come in from all the country around to be at Jeb Stuart's ball. I wish we could invite a few of the Yankees over to see what girls we have in Virginia."

"That would be fine, but Hooker wouldn't let 'em, and Lee and Jackson would certainly disapprove."

Harry and Dalton started at twilight, and on their way they met Captain Sherburne, who was bound for the same place. The captain was pretty fond of good dress himself, and he, too, had a new uniform, perhaps not so bright as St. Clair's, but fine and vivid, nevertheless.

"Well, well," said Harry, as he greeted him heartily. "You've got a lot of shine about you, but you just watch out for St. Clair. He's sure to be there, and he has a new uniform straight from Charleston. He's making the most of it, too. Now may be the time to settle that sartorial rivalry between you."

"All right," said Sherburne joyously. "I'm ready. Come on."

The house, a large one standing in ample grounds, was already lighted as brilliantly as time and circumstances afforded. It is true that most of these lights were of home-made tallow candles, because no other illumination was to be had, and they made a brave show to these soldiers who were used so long only to the light of their fires and the moon and stars.

Before these lights people were passing and repassing, and the sounds of pleasant voices reached their ears. But they were stopped by four figures just emerging from the shadows. The four were Colonel Leonidas Talbot, just returned from Richmond, Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire, Lieutenant Arthur St. Clair, and Lieutenant Thomas Langdon, all arrayed with great care and bearing themselves haughtily. Sherburne and St. Clair cast quick glances at each other. But each remained content, because the taste of each was gratified.

The meeting was most friendly. Harry and Dalton were very glad to see Colonel Talbot, whom they had missed very much, but Harry detected at once a note of anxiety in the voice of each colonel.

"Hector," said Colonel Talbot, "I shall certainly dance. What, go to Jeb Stuart's ball and not dance, when the fair and bright young womanhood of Virginia is present? And I a South Carolinian! What would they think of my gallantry, Hector, if I did not?"

"It is certainly fitting, Leonidas. I used to be a master myself of all the steps, waltz and gavotte and the Virginia reel and the others. Once, when I was only twenty, I went to New Orleans to visit my cousins, the de Crespignys, and many of them there were, four brothers, with seven or eight children apiece, mostly girls; and 'pon my soul, Leonidas, for the two months I was gone I did little but dance. What else could one do when he had about twenty girl cousins, all of dancing age? We danced in New Orleans and we danced out on the great plantation of Louis de Crespigny, the oldest of the brothers, and all the neighbors for miles around danced with us. There was one of my cousins, a third cousin only she was, Flora de Crespigny, just seventeen years of age, but a beautiful girl, Leonidas, a most beautiful girl--they ripen fast down there. Once at the de Crespigny plantation I danced all day and all the night following, mostly with her. Young Gerard de Langeais, her betrothed, was furious with jealousy, and just after the dawn, neither of us having yet slept, we fought with swords behind the live oaks. I was not in love with Flora and she was not in love with me, but de Langeais thought we were, and would not listen to my claim of kinship.

"I received a glorious little scratch on my left side and he suffered an equally glorious little puncture in his right arm. The seconds declared enough. Then we fell into the arms of each other and became friends for life. A year later I went back to New Orleans, and I was the best man at the wedding of Gerard and Flora, one of the happiest and handsomest pairs I ever saw, God bless 'em. Their third son, Julien, is in a

regiment in the command of Longstreet, and when I look at him I see both his father and his mother, at whose wedding I danced again for a whole day and night. But now, Leonidas, I fear that my knees are growing a little stiff, and think of our age, Leonidas!"

"Age! age! Hector Lucien Philip Etienne St. Hilaire, how dare you talk of age! Your years are exactly the same as mine, and I can outride, outwalk, outdance, and, if need be, make love better than any of these young cubs who are with us. I am astonished at you, Hector! Why, it's been only a few years since you and I were boys. We've scarcely entered the prime of life, and we'll show 'em at Jeb Stuart's ball!"

"That's so, Leonidas, and you do well to rebuke me," and Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire puffed out his chest--he was, in fact, a fine figure of a man. "We'll go to Jeb Stuart's ball, as you say, and in the presence of the Virginia fair show everybody what real men are."

"And we'll be glad to see you do it, Colonel," said Sherburne.

The dancing had not yet begun, but as they entered the grounds the Acadian band swung into the air of the Marseillaise, playing the grand old Revolutionary tune with all the spirit and fervor with which Frenchmen must have first played and sung it. Then it swung into the soul-stirring march of Dixie, and a wild shout, which was partly feminine, came from the house.

The two colonels had walked on ahead, leaving the young officers together. Langdon caught sight of a figure standing before an open door, with a fire blazing in a large fireplace serving as a red background. That background was indeed so brilliant that every external detail of the figure could be seen. Langdon, stopping, pulled hard on the arms of Harry and Sherburne.

"Halt all!" he said, "and tell me if in very truth I see what I see!"

"Go on!" said St. Clair.

"Item No. one, a pink dress of some gauzy, filmy stuff, with ruffle after ruffle around the skirt."

"Correct."

"Item No. two, a pink slipper made of silk, perchance, with the toe of it just showing beyond the hem of the skirt."

"You observe well, my lord."

"Item three, a fair and slim white hand, and a round and beautiful wrist."

"Correct. Again thou observest well, Sir Launcelot."

"Item four, a rosy young face which the firelight makes more rosy, and a crown of golden hair, which this same firelight turns to deeper gold."

"Correct, ye Squire of Fair Ladies; and now, lead on!"

They entered the great house and found it already filled with officers and women, most of whom were young. The visitors had brought with them the best supplies that the farms could furnish, turkeys, chickens, hams, late fruits well preserved, and, above all, that hero-worship with which they favored their champions. To these girls and their older sisters the young officers who had taken part in so many great battles were like the knights of old, splendid and invincible.

There was no warning note in all that joyous scene, although a hostile army of one hundred and thirty-five thousand men and four hundred guns lay on the other side of the river which flowed almost at their feet. It seemed to Harry afterward that they danced in the very face of death, caring nothing for what the dawn might bring.

Stuart was in great feather. In his finest apparel he was the very life and soul of the ball, and these people forgot for a while the desolation into which war was turning their country. The Virginia band and the Acadians carried on an intense but friendly rivalry, playing with all the spirit and vigor of men who were anxious to please. It was a joy to Harry when he was not dancing to watch them, especially the Acadians, whose faces glowed as the dancers and their own bodies swayed to the music they were making.

Harry and his comrades were very young, but youth matures rapidly in war, and they felt themselves men. In truth they had done the deeds of men for two years now, and they were treated as such by the others. Bertrand also was present, and while he cast a dark look or two at St. Clair, he kept away from him.

Bye and bye another young man, obviously of French blood, appeared. But he was not dark. He had light hair, blue eyes, and he was tall and slender. But the pure strain of his Gallic blood showed, nevertheless, as clearly as if he had been born in Northern France itself. Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire welcomed him with warmth and pride and introduced him to the lads, who at that moment were not dancing.

"This is that young cousin of mine of whom I was speaking," he said. "It is Julien de Langeais, son of that beautiful cousin, Flora de Crespigny, and of that gallant and noble man, Gerard de Langeais, with whom I fought the duel. I did not know that you would be here, Julien, and the surprise makes the pleasure all the greater."

"I did not know myself, sir, until an hour ago, that I could come," replied young de Langeais, "but it is a glorious sight, sir, and I'm truly glad to be here."

His eyes sparkled at the sight of the dancers and his feet beat time

to the music. Harry saw that here was one who was in love with life, a soul akin to that of Langdon, and he and his comrades liked him at once and without reservations. Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire saw how they received him and his splendid mustaches curled up with pleasure.

"Go with them, Julien," he said, "and they will see that you enjoy yourself to the full. They are good boys. Meanwhile I have a dance with that beautiful Mrs. Edgehill, and if I am not there, Leonidas, honorable and lofty-minded as he is, but weak where the ladies are concerned, will insert himself into my place."

"Go, sir. Do not delay on my account," said young de Langeais. "I'm sure that I'll fare well here."

Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire hurried away. Both he and Colonel Talbot were fully maintaining their reputations as dancing men. St. Clair and Langdon had partners, and making apologies they left to join them. Harry and Dalton remained with de Langeais.

"Colonel St. Hilaire said that you were with Longstreet," said Harry.

"I am, or rather was. At least our regiment belongs with him, but when he was detached to meet the possible march on Richmond we were left with General Lee, and I am glad of it."

"The great operations are sure to be where Lee and Jackson are."

They got along so well that in another hour they felt as if they had known de Langeais all their lives. The night lengthened. Refreshments were served at times, but the dancers took them in relays. The dancing in the ballroom never ceased, and Jeb Stuart nearly always led it.

It was after midnight now and Harry and his new friend, de Langeais, throwing their military cloaks over their shoulders, walked out on one of the porticos for air. Many people, black and white, had gathered as usual to watch the dancing.

Harry glanced at them casually, and then he saw a large figure almost behind the others. His intuition was sudden, but he had not the least doubt of its accuracy. He merely wondered why he had not looked for the man before.

"Come with me a minute," he said to de Langeais, and they walked toward the tree. But Shepard was gone, and Harry had expected that, too. He did not intend to hunt for him any further, because he was sure not to find him.

The brilliant spirit of the ball suddenly departed from him, and as he and de Langeais went back toward the house it was the stern call of war that came again. The deep boom of a cannon rolled from a point on the Rappahannock, and Harry was not the only one who felt the chill of its note. The dancing stopped for a few moments. Then the gloom passed away, and it was resumed in all its vigor.

But Stuart came out on the porch and Harry and de Langeais halted, because they heard the hoofs of a galloping horse. The man who came was in the dress of a civilian, and he brought a message.

CHAPTER VIII

IN THE WILDERNESS

Stuart's brilliant figure was seen no more in the ballroom that night, but he disappeared so quietly that his absence created no alarm at first. There was a low call for Sherburne, and the great cavalry leader and his most daring horsemen were soon up and away. Harry and Dalton, standing under the boughs of an oak, near the edge of the grounds, saw them depart, but the dancers, at least the women and girls, knew nothing.

Another cannon shot came from some distant point along the stream, and its somber echoes rolled and died away among the hills, but the music of the band in the ballroom did not cease. It was the Acadians who were playing now, some strange old dance tune that they had brought from far Louisiana, taken thence by the way of Nova Scotia from its origin in old France.

"They don't know yet," said Harry, "but I'm thinking it will be the last dance for many a day."

"Looks like it," said Dalton. "What time is it, Harry?"

"Past two in the morning, and here comes Colonel Talbot and Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire."

The two colonels walked out on the lawn. Military cloaks were thrown over their shoulders and all signs of merry-making were gone from their faces. They stood side by side and with military glasses were sweeping the horizon toward the river. Presently they saw Harry and Dalton standing under the boughs of the oak, and beckoned to them.

"You know?" said Colonel Talbot.

"Yes, sir, we do," replied Harry. "We saw General Stuart and his staff ride away, because a messenger had come, stating that divisions of Hooker's army were about to cross the Rappahannock."

"That is true, but we wish no panic here. Go back in the house, lads, and dance. Officers are scarcer there than they were a half hour ago.

But you two lads will return to General Jackson before dawn, while Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire and I will gather up our young men and return to our own place."

Harry and Dalton obeyed promptly, and took their places again in the dancing, but they soon discovered that the spirit was gone from it. The absence of Stuart, Sherburne and others almost as conspicuous was soon noted, and although those who knew gave various excuses, they were not satisfactory. Gradually the belief spread that the long vacation was over. After Fredericksburg the armies had spent four months in peace along the Rappahannock, but there was a certainty in the minds of all that the armed peace had passed.

The music ceased by and by, the girls and the women went away in their carriages or on horseback, the lights were put out, and the heroes of the ballroom, veterans of the battlefield, too, went quietly to their commands once more. The youths, including their new friend, Julien de Langeais, parted shortly before dawn, and their parting was characteristic.

"See you again, I think, at the edge of the Wilderness, where we'll be holding converse with Hooker," said St. Clair.

"At any rate you can look for me in the White House with my boots on," said Happy Tom, returning to his original boast.

Then they shook hands and hurried away to join the two colonels, leaving de Langeais with Dalton and Harry.

"Gallant spirits," said the young Louisianian. "I like them."

"As fine as silk, both of them," said Harry with enthusiasm. "I'm glad we've met you, de Langeais, and I hope you'll be equally glad you've met us. We'll see you again after the battle, whenever and wherever it may be."

"Many thanks," said de Langeais. "It gives me much pride to be taken into your company. My command is several miles away, and therefore I must ride. Adieu."

He was holding his horse's reins as he spoke. Then he leaped lightly into the saddle and was gone.

"A brave and true spirit, if I know one," said Harry. "And now come, George, the sooner we get back to Old Jack's headquarters the better it will be for us."

"Do you think Hooker's army can cross?" asked Dalton, looking at the black river.

"Of course it can. Remember that they have four hundred guns with which they can cover a passage. Didn't Burnside build his bridges and force the crossing in our face, when we had twenty thousand more men than we have now, and the Union army had twenty thousand less? Their line is so

long and they are so much superior in numbers that we can't guard all the river. As I take it, Lee and Old Jack will not make any great opposition to the crossing, but there will be a thunderation of a time after it's made."

It was sunrise when they reached their own headquarters and entered the great mess tent, where some of the officers who had not gone to the ball were already eating breakfast. They said that the general had been awake more than two hours and that he was taking his breakfast, too, in the hunting lodge. He sent for various officers from time to time, and presently Harry's turn came.

Jackson was sitting at a small table, upon which his breakfast had been laid. But all that had been cleared away long ago. He was reading in a small book when Harry entered, a book that the youth knew well. It was a copy of Napoleon's Maxims, which Jackson invariably carried with him and read often. But he closed it quickly and put it in his pocket. During the long rest Jackson's face had become somewhat fuller, but the blue eyes under the heavy brows were as deep and thoughtful as ever. He nodded to Harry and said:

"You were present when General Stuart received the message that the enemy was advancing? Was anything more ascertained at the time? Did any other messenger come?"

"No, sir. General Stuart mounted and rode at once. I remained at the ball until its close. No other messenger came there for him. Of that I am sure."

"Very well, very well," said Jackson to himself, rather than to the young lieutenant. "One message was enough. Stuart has acted promptly, as he always does. You, Mr. Kenton, I judge have been up all night dancing?"

"Most all of it, sir."

"We must get ready now for another and less pleasant kind of dancing. But nothing will happen to-day. You'd better sleep. If you are needed you will be called."

Harry saluted and withdrew. At the door he glanced back. Jackson had taken out Napoleon's Maxims and was reading the volume again. The brow was seamed with thought, but his countenance was grave and steady. Harry never forgot any look or act of his great chief in those days when the shadow of Chancellorsville was hovering near.

A dozen officers were in the mess tent, and they talked earnestly of various things, but Harry, unheeding their voices, lay down in a corner without taking off his clothes and went quietly to sleep. Many came into the tent or went out of it in the course of the morning, but none of them disturbed him. A man in the army slept when he could, and there was none wicked enough to awaken him until the right time for it.

He slept heavily nearly all through the day, and shortly after he awoke Sherburne and two other officers, their horses splashed with mud, rode up to the hunting lodge. Jackson was standing in the door, and with a rising inflection he uttered one word:

"Well?"

"It's true, General," said Sherburne. "The enemy is advancing in heavy force toward Kelly's Ford. We saw them with our own eyes. General Stuart asked me to tell you this. He did not come himself, because, as well as we can ascertain, General Hooker has separated his army into two or three great divisions and they are seeking the crossing at different fords or ferries."

"As I thought," said Jackson. "It's the advantage given them by their great numbers and powerful artillery. Ride back to General Stuart, Captain, and tell him that I thank him, and you, too, for your diligence."

Sherburne, flushing deep with gratification, took off his cap and bowed. But he knew too well to waste any time in words.

That night the Union army laid its pontoon bridges again across the Rappahannock near Fredericksburg and began to cross in great force. Hooker, like Burnside four months before, was favored by thick fogs, but he met with practically no resistance. At dawn a strong force under Sedgwick was across at Deep Run, and another as strong had made the passage at Kelly's Ford.

The advanced riflemen of Sedgwick were engaged in scattered firing with those of Jackson before the fog had yet lifted, but the main force had made no movement. Dalton had been sent at dawn with a message telling Lee that Sedgwick was over the river. Dalton, some time after his return, told Harry of his ride and reception.

"When I rode up," he said, "General Lee was in his tent. An aide took me in and I gave him the message. He did not show any emotion. Several others were present, some of them staff officers as young as myself. He turned to them and said, smiling a little: 'Well, I heard firing not long since, and I had concluded that it was about time for some of you young idlers to come and tell me what it was all about. Go back to General Jackson, Mr. Dalton, and tell him that I send him no orders now. He knows as well what to do in the face of the enemy as I do.' I brought this message, word for word, just as General Lee delivered it to me, and General Jackson smiled a little, just as General Lee had done. It's my opinion, Harry, that Lee and Old Jack haven't the slightest fear of the enemy."

Harry was convinced of it, too, but he felt also the steadily hardening quality of the Army of the Potomac. Whatever Hooker might be he was neither dilatory nor afraid. He and his comrades saw the corps of Sedgwick entrenching on the Confederate side of the river, and they also saw the great batteries still frowning from Stafford Heights, ready to

protect their men on the plain near Fredericksburg.

But Jackson made no movement. He watched the enemy calmly, and meanwhile messengers passed between him and Lee. Both were waiting to see what their enemy, who was displaying unusual energy, would do. In the evening they received news that the Union troops had crossed the river at two more points. They still remained stationary, waiting, and without alarm.

Cavalrymen on both sides were active, ranging over a wide area. Stuart came the next morning, having taken prisoners from whom he learned that three more Union corps led by Meade, Slocum and Howard, all famous names, had crossed the river and were advancing toward a little place called Chancellorsville on the edge of a region known as the Wilderness. The Southern general, Anderson, with a much smaller force, was falling back before them.

The Northern leaders had now shown the energy and celerity which hitherto had so often marked the Southern. Hooker, with seventy thousand splendid troops, had gone behind Lee and now three divisions were united in the forest close to Chancellorsville. Sedgwick, with his formidable corps, lay in the plain of Fredericksburg, facing Jackson, and thousands of Northern cavalry rode on the Southern flanks.

Harry was bewildered, and so were many officers of much higher rank than he. It seemed that the Confederate army, surrounded by overwhelming numbers, was about to be crushed. The exultation of Hooker at the success of his movements against such able foes was justified for the moment. He issued to his army a general order, which said:

It is with heartfelt satisfaction that the commanding general announces to his army that the operations of the last three days have determined that our enemy must either ingloriously fly or come out from behind his defences, and give us battle on our own ground, where certain destruction awaits him.

Hooker, it can be said again, had cause for exultation. He was closing in with more than a hundred thousand stern fighters, and ten thousand splendid cavalrymen under Stoneman were hanging on the Southern flank, ready to cut off retreat. Besides, there were reserves, and he could also join to the artillery the great batteries on Stafford Heights, on the left bank of the river, which had done such good service for the Army of the Potomac. He could go into action with men and guns outnumbering his enemy more than two to one, and Lee and Jackson would have no such hills and intrenchments as those which had protected them while they cut down the army of Burnside at Fredericksburg.

Harry and his young comrades were lost in the mists and doubts of uncertainty. Nothing could shake their confidence in Lee and Jackson, but yet they were only human beings. Had the time come when there was more to be done than any men, great and brilliant as they might be,

could do? Yet they refused to express their apprehensions to one another, and waited, their hearts now and then beating heavily.

Thus the last day of April passed, and for Harry it was more fully surcharged with suspense and anxiety than any other that he had yet known. The forests and the fields were flush with the green of early spring. Little wild flowers were peeping up in the thickets, and now and then a bird, full throated, sang on a bough, indifferent to passing armies.

But Harry saw a red tint over everything. The spirit of his great ancestor had descended upon him again. The acute sense which warned him of mighty and tragic events soon to come was alive and active. His mind traveled backward too. Sometimes he did not see the men around him, but saw instead Pendleton, the boys playing in the fields, and his father. He also saw again that log house in the Kentucky mountains, and the old, old woman who had known his great-grandfather, Henry Ware. Once more he heard like a whisper in his ears her parting words: "You will come again, and you will be thin and pale and in rags, and you will fall at the door. I see you coming with these two eyes of mine."

What did they mean? What did those strange words mean? It was the first time in a year, perhaps, that he had thought of that old, old woman, and the log house in the mountains. But he saw her now, and she was strangely vivid for one so old and so withered. Then she vanished, and for the time was forgotten completely, because Lee and Jackson were riding past, one on Traveler and the other on Little Sorrel, and it was no time to be dreaming of glens in the mountains and their peace, because mighty armies were closing in, bent upon the destruction of each other.

All that afternoon Harry heard in a half circle about him the distant moaning of cannon, and he caught glimpses of galloping horsemen. Stuart, equally at home on the floor of the ballroom or the field of battle, was leading his troopers in a daring circuit. When he saw that the Army of the Potomac was moving toward Chancellorsville he had cut in on its right flank, taking prisoners, and when a Union regiment had stood in his way, attempting to bar his path to his own army, he had ridden over it and gone.

All the time the sinister moaning of the guns on the far horizon never ceased. It was this distant threat that oppressed Harry more than anything else. It beat softly on the drums of his ears, and it said to him continually that his army must make a supreme effort or perish. General Jackson did not call upon him to do anything, and once he rode forward with Dalton and looked at Sedgwick's Union masses upon the plains of Fredericksburg, still protected by the batteries which had not yet been moved from Stafford Heights. Harry thought, for a while, that Lee and Jackson would certainly attack there, but night came and they had made no movement for that purpose.

But before the sun had set Harry with his glasses had been able to command a wide view. He saw high up in the air three captive balloons,

from which some of Hooker's officers looked upon the Southern intrenchments. Hooker also had signalmen on every height, and an ample field telegraph. What Harry did not see he learned from the Southern scouts. It seemed impossible that Lee and Jackson could break through the circle of steel, and Hooker thought so, too.

When the red sun set on that last day of April the confidence of the Northern general was at its height. He had sent word to Sedgwick to keep a close watch upon the enemy in his front, and if he exposed a weak point to attack and destroy him. And if he showed signs of retreat, also to follow and attack with the utmost vigor.

The moaning of the cannon ceased with the night, and it brought Harry intense relief. He was glad that those guns were silent for a while, although he knew that they would be far busier on the morrow. The bands of red and yellow left by the sun sank away, and as the cool, spring night came down, a pleasant breeze began to blow through the forest. Harry felt all the thrill of a mighty movement which was at hand, but the nature of which he did not yet know.

He had no wish to sleep. The feeling of tremendous events impending was too strong and his nervous system was keyed too highly for such thoughts to enter his mind. He was used to great battles now, but there was a mystery, a weirdness about the one near at hand that sometimes turned the blood in his veins to ice.

They were not far from Fredericksburg, but the country about them looked wild and lonely, despite the fact that nearly two hundred thousand men were moving somewhere in those shades and thickets, preparing for desperate combat. Harry knew that just back of them lay the Wilderness, a desolate and somber region. Dalton, a Virginian, had been there, and he told Harry that in ordinary times one could walk through it for many miles without meeting a single human being.

"And they say that Hooker is along its edge with the bulk of his army," said Dalton. "He is in our rear ready to attack with his veterans. What conclusion do you draw from it, Harry?"

"I infer that Lee and Jackson will not attack Sedgwick at Fredericksburg. They will go for Hooker. They will strike where the enemy is strongest. It's their way, isn't it?"

"Right, of course, Harry. We'll be marching against Hooker long before the dawn."

Dalton's prediction came true earlier than he had expected. Jackson marched at midnight from his position on the Massaponax Hills to join the small command of Anderson, which alone faced Hooker. He was as silent as ever, the figure bent forward a little and the brow knitted with thought. Close behind him came his staff, Harry and Dalton knee to knee. They had known as soon as Jackson mounted his horse and turned his head southwestward that they were marching toward the Wilderness and against Hooker. Sedgwick at Fredericksburg might do as he pleased.

Harry and Dalton were glad. They were quite sure now that Lee and Jackson had formed their plan, and, as they had formed it, it must be good. It was a long ride under the moon and stars. There was but little talk along the lines. The noises were those of marching feet and not of men's voices. All the troops felt the mystery and solemnity of the night and the deep import of their unknown mission.

The dawn found them still marching, but that dawn was again heavy with the fogs and mists that rose from the broad river. The three Northern balloons could see nothing. The signalmen were of no avail. The clouds of vapor rolled over the ruins of Fredericksburg and along the hills south of the river. Neither Sedgwick and his men nor any of the Union officers on the other shore knew that Jackson had gone, leaving only a rear guard behind. Before the fog had cleared away Jackson with his fighting generals had joined Anderson and they were forming a powerful line of battle near Chancellorsville and facing Hooker.

Harry now heard much of this name Chancellorsville, destined to become so famous, and he said it over and over again to himself. And yet it was not a town, nor even a village. Here stood a large house, with the usual pillared porticoes, built long since by the Chancellor family and inhabited by them in their generation, but now turned into a country inn. Yet it had importance. Roads ran from it in various directions and in territories very unlike, including the strange and weird region known as the Wilderness.

Hooker had come through the Wilderness with his main force, and was now forming a line of battle in front of it in the open country, when for some reason never fully known he fell back on Chancellorsville and began to concentrate his army in the edge of the Wilderness.

Harry, riding with Dalton and some others to inspect the enemy's front through their glasses, saw this gloomy forest, destined to such a terrible fame not alone from the coming battle, but from others as great. Nature could have chosen no more fitting spot for the mighty sacrifice to save the Union, because here everything is dark, solemn and desolate.

For twenty miles one way and fifteen the other the Wilderness stretched its somber expanse. The ancient forest had been cut away long since and the thin, light soil had produced a sea of scrub and thickets in its place, in which most of the houses were the huts of charcoal burners. The undergrowth and jungle were often impenetrable, save by some lone hunter or wild animal. The gnarled and knotted oaks were distorted and the bushes, even in the flush of a May morning, were black and ugly. At evening it was indescribably desolate, and save when the armies came there was no sound but the lone cry of the whip-poor-will, one of the saddest of all notes.

It was upon this forest that Harry looked, and he wondered, as many officers much older and much higher in rank than he wondered, that Hooker, with forces so much superior, should draw back into its shades.

And many of the Union generals, too, had protested in vain against Hooker's orders. They knew, as the Confederate generals knew, that Hooker was a brave man, and they never understood it then or afterwards.

"It gives us our chance," said Dalton, with sudden intuition, to Harry.

"We'll carry the battle to them in the forest, and there numbers will not count so much."

"Look!" exclaimed Harry. "They're withdrawing farther into the Wilderness. There go the last bayonets!"

"It's so," said Dalton. "I can still see a few of them moving among the trees and thickets. Now they're all gone. What does it mean?"

"It means that Old Jack will follow into the Wilderness, as sure as you and I are here. He isn't the man to let an enemy retreat in peace."

"That's so. There are the bugles calling, and it's time for us to rejoin Old Jack."

Jackson was not more than a hundred yards away, and they were soon just behind him, riding slowly forward, while he swept the forest with his glasses. Riflemen sent far in advance began to fire, and from the forest came replies. Harry saw bits of earth and grass kicked up by the bullets, and now and then a man fell or, wounded, limped to the rear. There was no fog here and the day had become beautiful and brilliant, as became the first morning in May. The little white puffs of smoke arose all along the edges of the Wilderness, and, sailing above the trees and bushes, dissolved into the blue sky. It was yet only a skirmish between the Southern vanguard and the Northern vanguard, but the riflemen increased to hundreds and they made a steady volume of sound. Now and then the lighter guns were fired and the like replied from the thickets.

Harry gazed intently at Jackson. Would he with his relatively small force follow Hooker into the Wilderness, despising the dangers of ambush and the possibility that his foe might turn upon him in overwhelming numbers? Lee was with the troops elsewhere, and Jackson for the present must rely upon his own judgment.

But Jackson never hesitated. While the fire of the riflemen deepened he plunged into the Wilderness in pursuit of Hooker, who for some inscrutable reason was concentrating his masses about the Chancellor House for pitched battle. They advanced by two ways, a pike and a plank road, with Jackson himself on the plank road.

Harry felt a strange prickling at the roots of his hair as the Wilderness closed in on pursuer and pursued, but it was only for a moment. The enemy far down the plank road held his attention. Many riflemen were there and they were sending back bullets, most of which fell short. Now and then a curving shell struck among the bushes, burst, and hurt no one.

It had grown darker when they entered the Wilderness. The scrub forest, not lofty enough for dignity and nobility, was nevertheless dense enough to shut out most of the sunlight. Despite the blaze of the firing, both pursuer and pursued were enveloped in heavy shadows.

Harry had nothing to do but to keep near his general, in case he was wanted. But he watched everything with the utmost interest. Once he looked back and saw the Invincibles, few in number, but still preserving their regiment, marching in brave style along the plank road. Colonel Talbot and Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire were riding side by side at its head, and in all the army there were not two more erect and soldierly figures than theirs.

They soon heard heavy artillery discharges from the other force on the pike, and the fire in front of them increased heavily. Nevertheless both forces pushed resolutely onward. Harry had no idea what it all meant. The movements of Hooker were a mystery to him, but he felt the presence of an enveloping danger, through which, however, he felt sure that the sword of Jackson could slash.

He saw that the generals were neglecting no precautions. The scouts and hardy riflemen were now pressing through all the forests and thickets, like Indians trailing in the Wilderness. They kept the two forces, the one on the plank road and the other on the pike, in touch. McLaws, who had shown so much spirit and judgment at Antietam, led on the pike.

Now the fighting increased on both roads. Batteries faced batteries and cavalry charged. But Harry felt all the time that these were not supreme efforts. The opposing force seemed to be merely a curtain before Hooker, and as the Southern army advanced the curtain was drawn steadily back, but it was always there.

One of the encounters rose almost to the dignity of a battle. A heavy division of Northern regulars drove in all the Southern skirmishers, but Jackson, sending forward a strong force, pushed back the regulars in their turn. Harry watched the fighting most of the time, but at other times he watched his general's face. It was the usual impenetrable mask, but late in the afternoon Harry saw a sudden sparkle in the blue eye. He always believed that at that moment the general divined the enemy's intentions, but the boy never had any way of knowing.

Scouts came in presently and reported that another heavy column was marching from the Rappahannock to join Hooker in the Wilderness, and now the advance of the Southern force became slower. It was obvious to Harry that Jackson, while resolute to follow Hooker, intended to guard against all possibility of ambush. Harry knew nothing then of the Chancellor House, but Dalton told him.

"It's a big place," he said, "standing on a heavy ridge surrounded by thick timber, and it's a natural presumption that Hooker will stop there. From the timbered ridge his cannon can sweep every approach."

Harry had no doubt that Hooker would halt at the Chancellor House.

It was incredible that a great army of brave and veteran troops should continue to retreat before a force which his scouts had surely informed Hooker was far smaller, and only a portion of the Confederate army. It must be merely a part of some comprehensive plan, and he was confirmed in his belief by the increasing stubbornness of the defense.

There was not sufficient room on either the plank road or the pike for all the Confederate infantry, and masses were toiling through the dense thickets of bushes and briars and creeping vines. The afternoon was growing late, and while it was yet brilliant sunshine in the open, it was dark and somber in the Wilderness.

The division of Jackson seemed almost lost in the forest and undergrowth. The cavalry riding along some of the narrow paths were checked by large forces in front, and fell back under the protection of their own infantry. On another path a strong body of Southern skirmishers drove back those of the North, but were checked in their turn by a heavy fire of artillery.

Harry witnessed the repulse of the Southern riflemen and saw them crowding back down the path and through the bushes which lined it on either side. He also saw the usually calm and imperturbable face of Jackson show annoyance. The general signed to his staff, and, galloping forward a hundred yards or so, joined Stuart, who was just in front. Stuart also showed annoyance, but, more emotional than Jackson, he expressed it in a much greater degree. His face was red with anger. Harry, who as usual kept close behind his commander, heard their talk.

"General Stuart," said General Jackson, "we must find some position from which we can open a flanking fire upon that Northern battery."

"Aye, sir," said Stuart. "Nothing would delight me more. The narrowness of the road, and their place at the head of it, give them an immense advantage. Ah, sir, here is a bridle path leading to the right. Maybe it will give us a chance."

The two generals, followed by their staffs and a battery, turned from the main body into the narrow path and pushed their way between the masses of thick undergrowth, bearing steadily toward the right. But the road was so narrow that not more than two could go abreast, the generals in their eagerness still leading the way.

Harry, rising up in his stirrups, tried to see over the dense undergrowth, but patches of saplings and scrub oaks farther on hid the view. Nevertheless he caught the flash of heavy guns and saw many columns of smoke rising. It was toward their left now, and they would soon be parallel with it, whence their own guns would open a flanking fire, if any open spot or elevation could be found.

They had gone about a half mile, when Stuart uttered an exclamation and pointed to a hillock. It was not necessary to say anything, because everyone knew that this was the place for the guns.

"Now we'll drop a few shells of our own among those Yankee gunners and see how they like it," said Dalton.

The cannon were unlimbering rapidly, but the open space on the hillock was so small that only one gun could be brought up, and it sent a shot toward the Union lines. The Union artillery, superb as always, marked the spot whence the shot came, and in an instant two batteries, masked by the woods, poured a terrible fire upon the hillock and those about it.

So deadly was the steel rain that the little force was put out of action at once. Harry had never beheld a more terrifying scene. Most of the horses and men around the first cannon were killed. One horse and one gunner fell dead across its wheels. Other horses, wounded and screaming with pain and fright, rushed into the dense undergrowth and were caught by the trailing vines and thrown down. Some of the cavalrymen themselves were knocked out of the saddle by the fleeing horses, but they quickly regained their seats.

A second discharge from many guns sent another rain equally as deadly upon the hillock and its vicinity. More men and horses fell, and a scene of wild confusion followed. Attempting to turn about and escape from that spot of death, the cannon crashed together. There was not room for all the men and horses and guns. Most of them were compelled to plunge into the undergrowth and struggle desperately through it for shelter.

But Harry did not forget the two generals who were worth so much to the South. It would be fate's bitterest irony if Jackson and Stuart were killed in a small flanking movement, when, as was obvious to everyone, a battle of the first magnitude was just before them. And yet, while fragments of steel, hot and hissing, fell all around them, Jackson and Stuart and all the members of their staffs escaped without hurt.

The deadly fire followed them as they retreated, but the two generals rode on, unharmed. Harry and Dalton breathed deep sighs of relief when they were out of range.

"If a bullet had gone through my left side," said Dalton, "it wouldn't have come near my heart."

"Why not?"

"Because my heart was in my mouth. In fact, I don't think it has gone back yet to its natural place. The Yankees certainly have the guns."

"And the gunners who know how to use them. But doesn't it feel good, George, to be back on the plank road?"

"It does. I'll take my chance in open battle, but when I'm tangled up among bushes and vines and briars, I do hate to have a hundred-pound shell fired from an invisible gun burst suddenly on the top of my head. What's all that firing off there to the left and farther on?"

"It means that some of our people have got deeper into the Wilderness than we have, and are feeling out Hooker. I imagine we won't go much farther. Look how the night's dropping down. I'd hate to pass a night alone in such a place as this Wilderness. It would be like sleeping in a graveyard."

"You won't have to spend the night alone here. I wish I was as sure of Heaven as that. You'll have something like two hundred thousand near neighbors."

The sun set and darkness swept over the Wilderness, but it was still lighted at many points by the flash of the firing and, after that ceased, by the campfires. Jackson's advance was at an end for the time. He was fully in touch with his enemy and understood him. Hooker had retreated as far as he would go. When the fog cleared away in the morning the men in the captive balloons had informed him that heavy Southern columns were marching toward Chancellorsville. He was sure now that the full strength of the Southern army was before him, and he continued to fortify the Chancellor House and the plateau of Hazel Grove. He also threw up log breastworks through the heavily wooded country, and his lines, bristling with artillery and defended now by six score thousand men, extended along a front of six miles.

Jackson's division lay in the Wilderness before Hooker, but out of cannon shot. All along that vast front hundreds and hundreds of pickets and riflemen on either side were keeping a vigilant watch. Jackson and his staff had dismounted and were eating their suppers around one of the campfires. The general was again impassive.

After the supper Harry walked a little distance and found the Invincibles, resting comfortably on the trodden undergrowth. The two colonels had preserved the neatness of their attire, and whatever they felt, neither showed any anxiety. But St. Clair and Langdon were free of speech.

"Well, Harry," said Happy Tom, "is Old Jack going to send us up against intrenchments and four to one?"

"He hasn't confided in me, but I don't think he means to do any such thing. He remembers, as even a thick-head like you, Happy, would remember, how the splendid army of Burnside beat itself to pieces against our works at Fredericksburg."

"Well, then, why are we here?"

"There's sense in your question, Tom, but I can't answer it."

"No, there isn't any sense in it," interrupted St. Clair. "Do you suppose for an instant that Lee and Jackson would bring us here if they didn't have a mighty good reason for it?"

"That's so," admitted Happy Tom; "but General Lee isn't here. Yes, he is! Listen to the cheering!"

They sprang to their feet and saw Lee coming through the woods on his white horse, Traveler, a roar of cheers greeting him as he advanced. Behind him came new brigades, and Harry believed that the whole Southern army was now united before Hooker.

Lee dismounted and Jackson went forward to meet his chief. The staffs stood at a respectful distance as the two men met and began to talk, glancing now and then toward the distant lights that showed where the army of Hooker stood.

CHAPTER IX

CHANCELLORSVILLE

Harry and Dalton sat down on a tiny hillock and waited while the two generals carried on their long conference, to which now and then they summoned McLaws, Anderson, Pender and other division or brigade commanders. The two lads even then felt the full import of that memorable night.

Nature herself had stripped away all softness, leaving only sternness and desolation for the terrible drama which was about to be played in the Wilderness. The night was dark, and to Harry's imaginative mind the forest turned to some vast stretch of the ancient, primitive world.

Naturally cheerful and usually alive with the optimism of youth, the air seemed to him that night to be filled with menacing signals. Often he started at familiar sounds. The clank of arms to which he had been so long used sent a chill down his spine. As the campfires died, the gloom that hung over the Wilderness became for him heavier and more ominous.

"What's the matter, Harry?" asked Dalton, catching a glimpse of his face in the moonlight.

"I don't know, George. I suppose this war is getting on my nerves. I must be looking too much into the future. Anyway, I'm oppressed to-night, and I don't know what it is that's oppressing me so much."

"I don't feel that way. Maybe I'm becoming blunted. But the generals are talking a long time."

"I suppose they have need to do a lot of talking, George. You know how small our army is, and we can't rush Hooker behind the strong intrenchments they say he has thrown up. Oh, if only Longstreet and his corps were back with us!"

"Well, Longstreet and his men are not here, and we'll have to do the best we can without them. Hold up your head, Harry. Lee and Jackson will find a way."

While Lee and Jackson and their generals conferred, another conference was going on three miles away at the Chancellor House in the depths of the Wilderness. Hooker, a brave man, who had proved his courage more than once, was bewildered and uneasy. He lacked the experience in supreme command in which his great antagonist, Lee, was so rich. The field telegraph had broken down just before sunset, and his subordinates, Sedgwick and Reynolds, brave men too, who had divisions elsewhere, were vague and uncertain in their movements. Hooker did not know what to expect from them.

Some of the generals, chafing at retreat before a force which they knew to be smaller than their own, wanted to march out and attack in the morning. Hooker, suddenly grown prudent, awed perhaps by his great responsibilities, wished to contract his camp and build intrenchments yet stronger. He compromised at last amid varying counsels, and decided to hold his present intrenched lines along their full length. His gallant officers on the extended right and left were indignant at the thought of withdrawing before the enemy, sure that they could beat him back every time.

But there were bolder spirits at the Southern headquarters, three miles away. Lee and Jackson always saw clearly and were always able to decide upon a course. Besides, their need was far more desperate. The Southern army did not increase in numbers. Victories brought few new men to its standards. Winning, it held its own, and losing, it lost everything. Before it stood the Army of the Potomac, outnumbering it two to one, and behind that army stood a great nation ready to pour forth more men by the hundreds of thousands and more money by the hundreds of millions to save the Union.

Harry, leaning against a bush, fell into a light doze, from which Dalton aroused him by and by. But the habit of war made him awake fully and instantly. Every faculty was alive. He arose to his feet and saw that Lee and Jackson were just parting. A faint moon shone over the Wilderness, revealing but little of the great army which lay in its thickets.

"I fancy that the plan which will give us either victory or defeat is arranged," said Dalton.

But neither Harry nor Dalton was called, and by and by they sank into another doze. They were awakened toward morning by Sherburne, who stood before them holding his horse by the bridle. The horse was wet with foam, and it was evident that he had been ridden far and hard.

"What is it?" asked Harry, springing to his feet. "I've been riding with General Stuart," replied Sherburne, who looked worn and weary, but nevertheless exultant. "How many miles we've ridden I'll never know,

but we've been along the whole Northern front and around their wings. With the help of Fitz Lee we've discovered their weak point. The Northern left, fortified in the thickets, is impossible. We'd merely beat ourselves to pieces against it; but their right has no protection at all, that is, no trenches or breastworks. I thought you boys might be wanted presently, and, as I saw you sleeping here, I've awakened you. Look down there and you'll see something that I think the Northern army has cause to dread."

Harry and Dalton looked at a little open space in the center of which Lee and Jackson sat, having met for another talk, each on an empty cracker box, taken from a heap which the Northern army had left behind when it withdrew the day before. The generals faced each other and two or three men were standing by. One of them was a major named Hotchkiss, whom Harry knew.

Harry and Dalton did not hear the words said, but one of those present subsequently told them much that was spoken at this last and famous conference. A man named Welford had recently cut a road toward the northwest through the Wilderness in order that he might haul wood and iron ore to a furnace that he had built. He had certainly never dreamed of the far more important purpose to which this road would be put, but he had been found at his home by Hotchkiss, the major, and, zealous for the South, he had given him the information that was of so much value. He had also volunteered to guide the troops along his road and he had marked it on a map which the major carried.

"What is your report, Major Hotchkiss?" asked General Lee.

The major took a cracker box from the heap, put it between the two generals, and spread his map upon it, pointing to Welford's road. The two generals studied it attentively, and then Lee asked Jackson what he would suggest. Jackson traced the road with his finger and replied that he would like to follow it with his whole corps and fall upon the Northern flank. He suggested that he leave his commander with only a small force to make a noisy demonstration in the Northern front, while Jackson was executing his great turning movement.

Lee considered it only a few moments and agreed. Then he wrote brief and crisp instructions, and when he finished, General Jackson rose to his feet, his face illumined with eagerness. He was absolutely confident that he would succeed in the daring deed he was about to undertake.

"It's over," said Dalton. "Whatever it is, we start on it at once."

Jackson beckoned to all his staff, and soon Harry, Dalton and the others were busy carrying orders for a great march that Jackson was about to begin. Many of these orders related to secrecy. The ranks were to be kept absolutely close and compact. If anybody straggled he was to receive the bayonet.

The Invincibles were in the vanguard. Harry and Dalton were near,

behind Jackson. Harry could speak now and then with his friends.

"It's the Second Manassas over again, isn't it, Harry?" said St. Clair.

"If it is, why do we seem to be marching away from the enemy?"

"I don't know any more than you do. But I take it that when Stonewall Jackson draws back from the enemy he merely does it in order to make a bigger jump. We all know that."

The dark South Carolinian, Bertrand, was riding just in front of them. Now he turned suddenly and said:

"St. Clair, we're about to go into a great battle, and I've felt for some time that I provoked the quarrel with you. I'm sorry and I apologize."

St. Clair looked astonished, but he was not one to refuse so manly an advance.

"That's so, Captain, we did have a quarrel," he said, "but I had forgotten it. It's not necessary for anybody to apologize where there's no rancor."

He took Bertrand's hand in a hearty grasp, which Bertrand returned with equal vigor. Then the captain pushed his horse and rode a little ahead of them.

"Now, that was a singular thing," said Dalton, who came of a deeply religious family, "and to my mind it was predestined."

"Predestined?"

"Yes, predestined! Decreed! Captain Bertrand is going to die. He'll be killed in the coming battle. He was moved to make up the quarrel which he forced on St. Clair because of his approaching fate, although he does not know of it himself."

"Come, come, George! So much battle has keyed your mind too highly."

But Dalton shook his head and remained resolute in his belief.

Harry's confidence returned with action and the glorious flush of a May morning. They had started after dawn. A splendid sun was rising in a sky of satin blue. It even gilded the somber foliage of the Wilderness, and the spirits of all the men in the great corps rose.

Jackson stopped presently with his staff and let some of the regiments file past him. General Lee was awaiting him there and the two talked briefly. Harry saw that both were firm and confident. It was rare with him, but Jackson's face was flushed and his eyes shining. He lingered for only a few moments, and then rode on with his column. Lee's eyes followed him, but he and his great lieutenant had spoken together for

the last time.

Now they settled into silence, save for the marching sounds, of which the most dominant was the rumbling of the artillery. But all the men in the great column knew that they were embarked upon some mighty movement. Very few asked themselves what it was. Nor did they care. They put their faith in the great leader who had always led them to victory. He could lead them where he chose.

A light wind arose and the bushes and scrub forest of the Wilderness moved gently like the surface of a lake. But that forest, as dense as ever, extended on all sides of them and hid the tens of thousands who marched in its shade.

Harry presently heard the rolling of artillery fire and the distant crash of rifles behind them. But he knew that it was Lee with the minor portion of his army making the demonstration in Hooker's front, deceiving him into the belief that he was about to be attacked by the whole Southern army, while Jackson with his main force was making the wide circuit under cover of the Wilderness in order to fall like a thunderbolt upon his flank.

Harry admired the daring of his two leaders, and at the same time he trembled with apprehension. They had split their force, already far smaller, in the face of the foe. Suppose that foe, with his army of splendid fighters, should come suddenly from his intrenchments and attack either division. Surely the Northern scouts and spies were in the thickets. So great a movement as this could not escape their attention. It would be impossible for a large army to pass on that journey of many miles around Hooker and not one of the hundred thousand men he had in the Wilderness bring him a word of it.

They might be discovered by one of the balloons, and Harry strained his eyes toward the far Rappahannock. He saw a black speck floating in the sky, which he thought to be one of the balloons, and he felt a little dread, but in a moment he realized that Jackson's army was as completely hidden by the Wilderness from any such possible observer as if a blanket lay over it. Then he dismissed all thoughts of balloons and rode on in silence beside Dalton.

Now he listened to the roar behind them. It had the violence of a great battle, but he noticed that the sounds neither advanced nor retreated. He smiled a little. Lee was still amusing Hooker, but it was a grim amusement.

A long time passed. Although the army could not move fast in the Wilderness, its march was steady. The roar of Lee's attack had become subdued, but Harry knew that the effect was due only to distance. His trained ear told him that the demonstration in Hooker's front, instead of decreasing, had increased in vigor. It was assuming the proportions of a real battle, and with thickets and forests to obscure sight, Hooker might well believe that the whole Southern army was yet in front of him.

The onward march had become rhythmic now. It was to Harry like the regular throbbing of a pulse. The tread of many men, the beat of horses' hoofs, and the clanking of guns melted into one musical note. The sun crept slowly up, gilding thickets and forests with pure gold. The sky was still an unbroken blue, save for the little white clouds that floated in its bosom. The breeze of that May morning was wonderfully crisp and fresh. It came tingling with life to the thousands, so many of whom were about to die.

It seemed to Harry as they went on through the thickets of the Wilderness that the Union scouts would never discover them, but Northern troops on an open eminence of Hazel Grove had seen a long column moving away through the thickets and made report of it to the Northern generals. But these leaders did not understand it. They had not grasped the great daring of Jackson's march.

They believed that Lee was merely extending his lines, but an hour before noon a battery opened fire from a hill upon the marching Confederate column. Harry and Dalton heard shrapnel whizzing over their heads. After the first involuntary shiver they regained the calm of youthful veterans and rode on in silence.

But the fire of the Northern artillery was damaging, even at great range. Shells and shrapnel sprayed showers of steel over the column. Men were killed and others wounded. As they could not turn back to fight those troublesome cannon, the column turned farther away and forced a road through a new path. It seemed now that Jackson's march was discovered and that the whole Northern army might press in between him and Lee. Harry's heart rose in his throat and he looked at his general. But Jackson rode calmly on.

The curiosity of the Union generals in regard to that marching column increased. Several of them appealed to Hooker to let them advance in force and see what it was. Sickles was allowed to go out with a strong division, but instead of reaching Jackson he was confronted by a portion of Lee's force, thrown forward to meet him, and the battle was so fierce that Sickles was compelled to send for help. A formidable force came and drove the Southern division before it, but the vigilant Jackson, informed by his scouts of what was happening behind him, turned his rear guard to meet the attack, and Sickles was driven off a second time with great loss. Then Jackson's men quickly rejoined him and they continued their march, the vanguard, in fact, never having stopped.

Harry took no part in this, but from a distance he saw much of it. Once more he admired the surpassing alertness and vigor of Jackson, who never seemed to make a mistake, a man who was able while on a great march to detach men for the help of his chief, while never ceasing to pursue his main object.

The Northern forces, although they had fought bravely, retreated, and the great movement that was going on remained hidden from them. The gap between Lee and Jackson was growing wider, but they did not know

it was there. Hooker's retreat with his great army into the Wilderness had given his enemies a chance to befog and bewilder him.

Harry's supreme confidence returned. All things seemed possible to his chief, and once more they were marching, unimpeded. It was now much past noon, and they turned into a new road, leading north through the thickets.

"It scarcely seems possible that we can pass around a great army in this way," said Dalton; "but, Harry, I'm beginning to believe the general will do it."

"Of course he will," said Harry. "It's Old Jack's chief pleasure to do impossible things. He leaves the possible to ordinary men. See him. He didn't even stop to look back while our rear guard returned to help drive off the Yankees."

The sun was near the zenith and the afternoon grew warm. They had come upon hard, dry paths, and under the tread of the army great clouds of dust arose, but it did not float high in the air, the thick boughs of the trees and bushes catching it. But as it hovered so close to the ground it made the breathing of the soldiers difficult and painful. It rasped their throats, and soon they began to burn with the heat. Many fell exhausted beside the paths, but they were helped by their comrades or were put into the wagons, and the long column of steel never ceased to wind onward.

Near the middle of the afternoon, when they were about to cross the western extension of the plank road, a young cavalry officer galloped up and rode straight for Jackson. It was Fitzhugh Lee, whose services were great at Chancellorsville. His glowing face showed that he brought news of great importance.

As he saluted, General Jackson checked his horse and Harry heard his general ask:

"You bring news. What is it?"

"I do, sir," responded young Lee eagerly. "I have something to show you. A great Northern force is only a short distance away, and it does not suspect your advance at all. If you will come with me to the crest of a little hill here, I can show them to you."

Jackson never hesitated a moment, signing to Harry to follow him, evidently meaning to use him as a courier, if need arose. The three then turned and rode through the bushes toward the hill, and Harry's heart beat so hard that it gave him an actual physical pain when he looked down on the sight below. He glanced at Jackson and saw that his face was flushed and his eyes glowing.

They were gazing upon a great Northern force which was to protect Hooker's right. Its first lines were only three or four hundred yards away. There were breastworks and other lines of defense running far

through the forest, positions that were formidable, but not manned at this moment by riflemen or cannons. Rifles were stacked neatly behind the intrenchments, extending in a long line as far as they could see. Thousands of soldiers were sitting on the grass and among the bushes, some asleep, some playing games, while others were cooking, reading newspapers sent from the North, and some were singing. It was a picture of idleness and ease in a camp, and not one among them suspected that thirty thousand veterans of the South, led by Stonewall Jackson himself, were within rifle shot, hidden under the vast canopy of the Wilderness.

Harry drew a deep breath, and then another. It was extraordinary, unbelievable, but it was true. He looked again at Jackson and saw that his eyes were still burning with blue fire. The general gazed for five minutes, but never said a word. Then he turned and rode down the hill, and swiftly the word was passed through the army that they would soon be upon the enemy.

"What is it, Harry?" asked St. Clair eagerly, as Harry rode along the lines with a message for a general for whom he was looking.

"They're just over there," replied Harry, nodding toward his right.

"And they don't know we're here?"

"They don't dream it."

"And Lee and Jackson have got 'em in the trap again?"

"It looks like it."

Then Harry was gone with his message. And he bore other messages, and like most of those he had borne earlier, their burden was secrecy and silence. He never forgot any detail of that memorable day. Years afterwards he could shut his eyes at any time and see the eve of Chancellorsville in all its vivid colors, thirty thousand Southern troops lying hidden in the thickets, General Jackson, followed by himself and two other aides, riding upon the hill again and taking one more look at the unsuspecting enemy below, the spreading out of the cavalry like a curtain between them and Howard's corps to keep even a single stray Northern picket or scout from seeing the mortal danger at hand, and then Jackson dismounting and, seated on a stump, writing to Lee that he was on the enemy's flank and would attack as soon as possible. Harry was in fear lest the general should choose him to carry back the dispatch, as he wished to stay with the corps and see what happened, but the duty was assigned to another man.

Confidence meanwhile reigned in the Union army. In the morning Hooker had ridden around his whole line, and cheers received him as he came. Scouts had brought him word that Jackson was moving, and he had taken note of the encounter with the rearguard of Stonewall's force. But as that force continued its march into the deep forest and disappeared from sight, the brave and sanguine Hooker was confirmed in his opinion that

the whole Southern army was retreating. His belief was so firm that he sent a dispatch to Sedgwick, commanding the detached force near Fredericksburg, to pursue vigorously, as the enemy was fleeing in an effort to save his train.

While Hooker was writing this dispatch the "fleeing enemy," led by the greatest of Lee's lieutenants, lay in full force on his flank, almost within rifle-shot, preparing with calmness and in detail for one of the greatest blows ever dealt in war. Truly no soldiers ever deserved higher praise than those of the Army of the Potomac, who, often misled and mismanaged by second-rate men, grew better and better after every defeat, and never failed to go into battle zealous and full of courage.

It seemed almost incredible to Harry, who had twice looked down upon them, that the whole Union right should remain ignorant of Jackson's presence. Twenty-eight regiments and six batteries strong, the Northern troops were now getting ready to cook their suppers, and there was much laughter and talk as they looked around at the forest and wondered when they would be sent in pursuit of the fleeing enemy. Six of the regiments were composed of men born in Germany, or the sons of Germans, drawn from the great cities of the North, little used to the forests and thickets and having the stiffness of Germans on parade. They were at the first point of exposure, and they were certainly no match for the formidable foe who was creeping nearer and nearer.

Not all the country here was in forest. There were some fields, a little wooden cottage on a hill, and in the fields a small house of worship called the Wilderness Church. It was the little church of Shiloh and the Dunkard church of Antietam over again.

Harry and Dalton in the front of the lines often saw the gleam of Northern guns and Northern bayonets through the foliage, but there was still no sign that anyone in the Northern right flank dreamed of their presence. Evidently the unconscious thousands there thought that all chance of battle had passed until the morrow. The sun was already going down the western heavens, and behind them in the Wilderness the first shadows were gathering.

Jackson's troops were filled with confidence and exultation. As they formed for battle among the trees and bushes they too talked, and with the freedom of republican troops, who fight all the better for it, they chaffed the young officers, especially the aides, as they passed. Harry received the full benefit of it.

"Sit up straight in the saddle, sonny. Don't dodge the bullets!"

"You haven't told the Yanks that we're comin'."

"Will me that hoss if you get shot. I always did like a bay boss."

"Tell old Hooker that we jest had to arrange a surprise party for him."

"Tell 'em to make way there in front. We want to git into the fuss

before it's all over."

"Tell Old Jack I'm here and that he can begin the battle."

Harry smiled, and sometimes chaffed back. They were boys together. Most of the troops in either army were very young. He recognized that all this talk was the product of exuberant spirits, and officers much older than he, chaffed in a like manner, took it in the same way.

But as they drew nearer, orders that all noise should cease were given, and officers were ready to enforce them. But there was little need for sternness. The soldiers themselves understood and obeyed. They were as eager as the officers to achieve a splendid triumph, and it remains a phenomenon of history how a great army came creeping, creeping within rifle shot of another, and its presence yet remained unknown.

The Southern lines now stretched for a long distance through the forest, cutting across a turnpike, down which the muzzles of four heavy guns pointed. The cavalry, not far away, were holding back their magnificent horses. Harry saw Sherburne on their flank nearest to him, and a smile of triumph passed between them. Off in the forest the strong division of A. P. Hill was advancing, the sound of their coming audible to the South but not to the North.

For an hour and a half the formation of the Southern army went on. Despite the danger of discovery, present every moment, Jackson was resolved to perfect his preparations for the attack. He was calm, methodical, and showed no emotion now, however much he may have felt it. Harry rode back and forth, sometimes with him and sometimes alone, carrying messages. He expected every instant to hear the crack of some Northern scout's rifle and his shout of alarm, but the incredible not only happened--it kept on happening. There was not a single Northern skirmisher in the bushes. The only sounds that came from their camp to the Southern scouts were the clatter of dishes and the laughter of youths who knew that no danger was near.

The sun was far down the western arch, and it seemed to Harry for a moment or two that no battle might occur that day, but a glance at Jackson and his incessant activity showed him he was mistaken. The arrangements were now almost complete. In front were the skirmishers, then the first line, and a little behind it the second line, and then Hill with the third line. Although they stood in thick forest, the lines were even and regular, despite trees and bushes.

The Invincibles were in the second line. Owing to the density of the forest, the two colonels and their young staff officers had dismounted. Harry passed them, and Colonel Talbot said to him:

"Do you know when we'll advance, Harry?"

"It can't be much longer. What time is it, Colonel?"

Colonel Talbot opened his watch, looked carefully at the face, and as he

closed it again and put it back in his pocket, he replied gravely:

"It's five forty-five o'clock of a memorable afternoon, Harry."

"It's true, Leonidas," said Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire, "and whatever happens to us, it will be a pleasure to us both to know, even beyond the grave, that we have served long under the Christian soldier and great genius, Stonewall Jackson."

"You'll both go through it," said Harry. "I know you'll be with us when our victorious army goes over the Long Bridge and enters Washington."

St. Clair and Langdon stood near, but said nothing. Harry saw that they were enveloped by the mystery, the vastness and the terrible grandeur of the occasion. So he said nothing to them, but rode back toward his commander. Then he glanced again at the sun and saw that it was low, filling all the western heavens with bars of red and yellow and gold. He looked once again at that formidable line of battle, stretching in either direction through the forest farther than he could see, the soldiers eager, excited and straining hard at the hand that held them there so firmly. It seemed now that nothing was left to be done, and the time had grown to six o'clock in the evening.

Jackson turned to Rodes, who commanded the first line of battle, just in the rear of the skirmishers, and said:

"Are you ready, General?"

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Then charge," said Jackson.

Rodes nodded toward the leader of the skirmishers, who gave the word. A powerful man put a glittering brazen bugle to his throat and blew a long, mellow note that was heard far through the forest. It was followed by a shout poured from thirty thousand throats, the guns in the turnpike fired a terrible volley straight into the Union camp, and then the whole army of Jackson, line upon line, rushed from the thickets and hurled itself upon its foe.

The Northern army was paralyzed for a moment. Never was surprise more sudden and terrific. Brave as anybody, the Union men rushed to their arms, but there was no time to use them. The flood was upon them and overwhelmed them. The German regiments were cut to pieces in an instant, and the demoralized survivors retreated into the mass. Elsewhere a battery was manned and stopped for a moment the Southern advance, but only for a moment. It, too, was overwhelmed by the Southern artillery which rushed forward, firing as fast as the cannoneers could load and reload.

Jackson himself was with his artillery, shouting to them and encouraging them, and Harry, trying to follow him, found it hard to keep clear of the guns. The second and third lines of the Southern army pressed

forward with the first, and the terrific impact overwhelmed everything. The Northern officers showed supreme courage in their attempt to stem the rout. Everyone on horseback was either killed or wounded, and their bravery and self-sacrifice were in vain. Nothing could stem the relentless tide that poured upon them. Harry had never before seen the Southern troops so exultant. Jackson's march of a whole day, unseen, almost by the side of the enemy, and then his sudden attack upon his right flank, made their battle rush fierce and irresistible. They might be stayed for a few moments, but they swept on and on, carrying before them the blue brigades.

The scene, while extraordinarily vivid to Harry, was nevertheless wild and confused. The fire of the cannon and rifles on a long line was so rapid and terrific that he was almost blinded by the incessant blaze, which was like one solid sheet of flame. The dense smoke gathered once more among the bushes and trees and the forest was filling with a tremendous shouting.

Harry kept as close as he could to his general, who was now in the very heart of the conflict. But it was a difficult task. His clothing was torn by bushes and briars, and boughs whipped him across the face. Now and then in a rift in the smoke he beheld a terrible sight. The ground was covered with the arms and blankets and tents of the Union army. Ahead of them were great masses of men, retreating and jammed among the wagons. The horses, many of them wounded, were running about, neighing in pain and terror. Officers, their uniforms often red from wounds, were rushing everywhere, seeking to stay the panic.

Yet the Union officers at last succeeded in getting some order out of the chaos. A battery was rallied on a hill and threw a sleet of steel on the charging men in gray. Some of the seasoned infantry regiments were managing to form a line and they were beginning to send back a rifle fire. Harry felt that the resistance in front of them was hardening a little.

But as usual the eye of Jackson saw everything, even through the flame and smoke and confusion of a battle fought in dense forests and thickets.

He galloped up the turnpike himself, his staff hot at his heels, and shouting to the gunners and pointing forward, he urged on the artillery. Then he rode among the infantry, and they, as eager as he, rushed on at increased speed. Yet the Northern resistance was still hardening. Some of the German regiments atoned for their earlier panic by reforming and making a brave resistance. Other regiments formed behind a breastwork.

"They are going to make a bold stand," shouted Harry to Dalton.

"But it will not help them," the Virginian replied.

The Southern battle front, which for a few minutes had lost cohesion, now swelled higher than ever. Led by Jackson in person, nearly all the officers in front sword in hand, the whole division with a mighty shout

charged. Harry saw the Invincibles in the first line, the two colonels, one on either flank, waving their swords and their faces young again with the battle fire. But it was only a glimpse. Then they were lost from his sight in the fire and smoke.

There could be no sufficient defense against the charge of such a foe, numerous, prepared and wild with victory. They swept over the breastwork, they seized the cannon, they took prisoners, and before them they swept the right wing of the Union army in irreparable rout and confusion. Harry had not seen its like in the whole war, nor was he destined to see it again. An entire corps had been annihilated. The Wilderness was filled with the fragments of regiments seeking to join the main force with Hooker at Chancellorsville.

Harry thought Jackson would stop. They were now in the deep woods. The sun was almost gone. The shadows from the east had crept over the whole sky, and it was already dark among the dense thickets of the Wilderness. An hour had passed since the first rush, and few generals would have had the daring to push on in the forest, dark already and rapidly growing darker. But Jackson was one of the few. He continued to urge on his men, and he sent his staff officers galloping back and forth to help in the task. There was a road in the very rear of Hooker. He intended to seize it, and he was resolved before the night closed down utterly to plant himself so firmly against the very center of the Union army that Hooker's complete defeat in the morning would be sure.

The bugles sang the charge again all along the Southern line, and in the dying twilight, lit by the flame of cannon and rifles, they swept forward, driving all resistance before them.

It was one of the most appalling moments in the history of a nation which has had to win its way with immense toil and through many dangers. Hooker, brave, not lacking in ability, but far from being a match for the extraordinary combination that faced him, two men of genius working in perfect harmony, had been sitting with two of his staff officers on the portico of the Chancellor House. He was serene and confident. He knew the courage of his soldiers and their numbers. The cannonade in his front had died down. He was a full-faced man, ruddy and stalwart, and with his powerful army of veterans he felt equal to anything. There was nothing to indicate that the Southern army was not in full retreat, as he had stated in his dispatch earlier in the day. The thought of Jackson had passed out of his mind for the time, because his long columns, he was sure, were marching farther and farther away.

Hooker, as the cool of the later afternoon, so pleasant after the heat of the day, came on, felt an increase of satisfaction. All his great forces would be massed in the morning. Now and then he heard in the east the far sound of cannon like muttering thunder on the horizon, but after a while it ceased entirely. He heard that distant thunder in the south, too, but it passed farther and farther away, and he felt sure that it came from his valiant guns hanging on the rear guard of the retreating Jackson.

One wonders what must be the feelings of a man who, sitting in apparent security, is suddenly plunged into a terrible pit. Commanders less able than Hooker have had better luck. What had he to fear? With one hundred and thirty thousand veterans of the Army of the Potomac within call, almost any other general in his place would have felt a like security. But he had not fathomed fully the daring and skill of the two men who confronted him.

It is related that on the approach of that memorable evening there was a remarkable peace and quiet at the Chancellor House itself. Hooker was conversing quietly with his aides. Officers inside the house were copying orders. The distant mutter of the guns that came now and then was harmonious and rather soothing. The east was already darkening and it seemed that a quiet sun would set over the Wilderness.

The cannonade in the south seemed to pass into a new direction, but the officers at the Chancellor House did not give it much attention. Hooker was still quiet and confident. Suddenly a terrific crash of cannon fire came from a point in the northwest. It was followed by another and then others, so swiftly that they merged. It never ceased for an instant and it rapidly rolled nearer. Hooker and his officers leaped to their feet and gazed appalled at the forest whence came those ominous sounds. An officer ran upon the plank road and took a look through his glasses.

"Good God!" he cried, as he turned quickly back. "Here they come!"

Down the road was pouring a mass of fugitives, and they brought with them news that did not suffer in the telling, either in magnitude or color. Stonewall Jackson and the bulk of the rebel army had suddenly fallen on their wing, they said, and he and his men were hard upon their heels. Hooker passed in a moment from the certainty of victory to the certainty that his army must fight for its very existence. Yet he and his generals showed presence of mind and great courage in the crisis, bringing forward troops rapidly and, above all, massing the superb artillery.

Harry Kenton, his horse shot under him, again was in the front line of the Southern troops that followed the mass of fugitives down the road toward the Chancellor House. In the mad rush he lost sight of Jackson for the time, and found himself mingled with the Invincibles. Both the colonels were bleeding from slight wounds, but with fire equal to that of any youth they were still at the head of their troops, leading them straight toward the Union center.

Harry only had time to glance at his friends and receive their glances in return, and then he found Jackson again. Catching one of the riderless horses, so numerous, he sprang upon him and rode close behind his general, where Dalton, a slight bullet wound in the arm, had been able to remain through all the confusion.

Now the Southern troops were crashing through the woods and bearing down upon the Chancellor House. The blaze of the cannon and rifles lit

up the early night, and the crash and tumult around the place became indescribable. Many a Northern officer thought that all was lost, but the trained artillerymen of the North never flinched. Occupying an eminence, battery after battery was wheeled into line, until fifty cannon manned by the best gunners in the world were pouring an awful fire upon the Southern front. Jackson's men were compelled to stop, and elsewhere the Southern line was halted also by the density of the thickets.

Yet it was but a lull. It was far into the night. Nevertheless, Jackson meant to push the battle. He rode among his troops and encouraged them for another effort. Everywhere he was received with tremendous cheers, and the men were willing and eager to push on the attack. Lee, his chief, meanwhile was closing in with the smaller force. The whole line was reformed. Jackson cried to Hill and Lane and other generals to push on. The whole army was in line for a fresh attack, and they could hear the sounds made by the enemy cutting down timber and fortifying.

It was now nearly nine o'clock at night, and save for the fires that burned here and there and the flash of the picket firing, the night that hung over the Wilderness was dark and heavy.

Harry passed once more near the Invincibles, who were lying down, panting with weariness, but exultant. They had lost a third of their numbers in the attack, but the wounds of his own friends were not serious.

"Do you know whether we charge them again, Harry?" asked Colonel Talbot.

"I don't know, sir; but you know General Jackson."

"Then it probably means that we attack. Keep down, Captain Bertrand! Those Northern pickets in the bushes in front of us are active, and, upon my word, they know how to shoot, as the honorable wounds of many of us attest!"

Bertrand, eager to see the enemy, was standing on a hillock, and he did not seem to hear the words of his chief. A rifle cracked in the bushes and he fell back without a word. The arms of St. Clair received him and eased him gently to the earth. But Harry saw at a glance that the man and his fevered ambitions were gone forever. He was dead before he touched the ground.

"I'm glad that I was the one to catch his body," said St. Clair simply.

Harry was moved at the fall of this man, although he had never really liked him, but he went on and rejoined his general. Colonel Talbot was right. Jackson was still intent upon pressing the attack. Night and darkness were now nothing to him. He meant to achieve Hooker's ruin.

Harry always believed afterward that he felt the shadow of the great tragedy soon to come. The roar of the cannon had died down, but from

every direction came the firing of scattered riflemen, skirmishers and pickets. They buzzed like angry bees, and no man on the front of either army was safe from their sting. But all through the Wilderness along the line of Jackson's charge the dead and wounded lay. Here and there clumps of fallen and dead wood of the winter before, set on fire by the shells, were burning slowly. The smoke from so much firing drifted in vast banks of vapor through the forest. The air was filled with bitter odors.

Harry felt a sensation of awe and terror, not terror inspired by man, but of the unknown or uncontrolled forces that drive men to meet one another in such deadly combat. Now night did not suffice to stop the titanic struggle. He saw all around him the regiments ready for a new attack, and he plainly heard in front of him the thud of axes as the Northern men cut down trees for their defense. Now and then stray moonbeams, penetrating the forest and the smoke, fell over them like discs of burnished silver, but faded quickly.

The firing of the skirmishers increased. Twigs and leaves cut off by the bullets fell in little showers to the earth. Harry, on horseback now, saw an impatient look pass over the general's face. The intrepid fighter, A. P. Hill, was coming up fast, but not fast enough for Stonewall Jackson. He turned and rode back toward him, careless of the danger from the Northern skirmishers, who might at any moment see him.

"General," said one of his staff in protest, "don't expose yourself so much."

"There is no danger," said the general quickly. "The enemy is routed and we must push him hard. Hurry to General Hill and tell him to press forward."

The little group of men, Jackson and his staff, rode on. It was very dark where they were, in the shade of the stunted forest. No moonlight reached them there. Jackson paused, listening to the rising fire of the skirmishers. A rifle suddenly flashed in the thickets before them. Northern troops, lost in the bush and the darkness, were coming directly their way.

Jackson turned and, followed by his staff, rode toward his own lines. The men of a North Carolina regiment, dimly seeing a group of horsemen coming down upon them, thought they were about to be attacked, and an officer gave an order to fire. He was obeyed at once, and the most costly volley fired by Southern troops in the whole war sent the deadly bullets whistling into Jackson's group.

Officers and horses fell, shot down by their own men. Jackson was struck in the right hand and received two bullets in his left arm. One cut an artery and another shattered the bone near the shoulder. The reins dropped from his hands, and his horse, the famous Little Sorrel, broke violently away, rushing through the woods toward the Northern lines. A bough struck Jackson in the face and he reeled in the saddle. But with a violent effort he righted himself, seized the bridle

in his stricken right hand, and turned back his frightened horse.

Harry had sat still in his saddle, petrified with horror. Then he urged forward his horse and tried to reach his general, but another aide, Captain Wilbourn, was before him. Wilbourn seized the reins of Little Sorrel and then Harry felt the thrill of horror again as he saw Jackson reel forward and fall. But he was caught in the arms of the faithful Wilbourn.

They laid Jackson on the ground, and a courier was sent in haste for his personal physician, Dr. McGuire. Harry sprang down, and abandoning his horse, which he never saw again, knelt beside his general. Wilbourn with a penknife was cutting the sleeve from the shattered arm.

The whole battle passed away for Harry. Death was in his heart at that moment. When he looked at the white, drawn face of Jackson and his shattered arm, he had no hope then, nor did he ever have any afterwards, save for a few moments. The paladin of the Confederacy was gone, shot down in the dark by his own men.

General Hill, who also had been in great danger from the bullets of the North Carolinians, galloped up, sprang from his horse and helped to bind up the shattered arm.

"Are you much hurt, General?" he asked, his face distorted with grief and alarm.

"I fear so," was the reply, in a weak voice, "and I have suffered all my wounds from my own men. I think my right arm is broken."

Harry remained motionless. He saw Dalton by his side, and he also saw tears on his face. Jackson closed his eyes and uttered no word of complaint, although it was obvious that he was suffering terribly. General Hill felt his pulse. He was rapidly growing weaker. Harry was so stunned that he would not have known what to do, even had not senior officers been present. When his pulse began to beat again he remained silent, waiting upon his superiors.

But Harry was now alert and watchful again. He heard the heavy firing of the skirmishers on the right, on the left, and in front, and through the darkness he saw the flashes of flame. The little group around the fallen man was detached from the army and the enemy might come upon them at any moment. Even as he looked, two Union skirmishers came through the thicket and, pausing, their rifles in the hollows of their arms, looked intently at the shadowy figures before them, trying to discern who and what they were. It was General Hill who acted promptly. Turning to Harry and Dalton, he said in a low tone:

"Take charge of those men."

The two young lieutenants, with levelled pistols, instantly sprang forward and seized the soldiers before they had time to resist. They were given to orderlies and sent to the rear. Harry and Dalton returned

to the side of their fallen general. While all stood there trying to decide what to do, an aide who had gone down the road reported that a battery of Northern artillery was unlimbering just before them.

"Then we must take the General away at once," said Hill.

Hill lifted in his arms the great leader who was now almost too weak to speak, although he opened his eyes once, and, as ever, thoughtful of his troops and the cause for which he fought, said.

"Tell them it's only a wounded Confederate soldier whom you are carrying."

Then he closed his eyes again and lay heavy and inert in Hill's arms. Hill held him on his feet, and the young staff officers, now crowding around, supported him. Thus aided he walked among the trees until they came to the road. It was as dark as ever, save for the flash of the firing which went on continuously to right, to left, and in front, mingled now with the sinister rumble of cannon.

Harry, helping to support Jackson and overwhelmed with grief, felt as if the end of the world had come. The darkness, the flash of the rifles, the mutter of cannon, the blaze of gunpowder, the fierce shouts that rose now and then in the thickets, the foul odors, made him think that they had truly reached the infernal regions.

The lieutenant, who saw the battery unlimbering, had not been deceived by his imagination. Just as they entered the road it fired a terrible volley of grape and shrapnel. Luckily in the darkness it fired high, and the little Southern group heard the deadly sleet crashing in the bushes and boughs over their heads.

The devoted young staff officers instantly laid Jackson down in the road, and, sheltering him with their own bodies as they lay beside him, remained perfectly still while the awful rain of steel swept over their heads again. Whether Jackson was conscious of it Harry never knew.

It was one of the most terrible moments of Harry's life. He felt the most overwhelming grief, but every nerve, nevertheless, was sensitive to the last degree. His first conviction that Jackson's wounds were mortal was in abeyance for the moment. He might yet recover and lead his dauntless legions as of old to victory, and he, like the other young officers who lay around him, was resolved to save him with his own life if he could.

The deadly rain from the cannon did not cease. It swept over their heads again and again, all the more fearful because of the darkness. Harry felt the twigs and leaves, cut from the bushes, falling on his face. The whining of the grape and shrapnel and canister united in one ferocious note. Some of it struck in the roadway beyond them and fire flew from the stones.

The general revived a little after a while and tried to get up, but one

of the young officers threw his arms around him and, holding him down, said:

"Be still, General! You must! It will cost you your life to rise!"

The general made no further attempt to rise, and perhaps he lapsed into a stupor for a little space. Harry could not tell how long that dreadful shrieking and whining over their heads continued. It was five minutes perhaps, but to him it seemed interminable. Presently the missiles gave forth a new note.

"They're using shells now," said Dalton, "because they're seeking a longer range, and they're going much higher over our heads than the canister."

"And here are men approaching," said Harry. "I can make out their figures. They must be our own."

"So they are!" said Dalton, as they came nearer.

It was a heavy mass of Confederate infantry pressing forward in the darkness, and the young officers who had been so ready to give their lives for their hero lifted him to his feet. Not wishing to have the ardor of his men quenched by the sight of his wounds, Jackson bade them take him aside into the thick bushes. But Pender, the general who was leading these troops, saw him and recognized him, despite the heavy veil of darkness and smoke.

Pender rushed to Jackson, betraying the greatest grief, and said that he was afraid he must fall back before the tremendous artillery fire of the enemy. As he spoke, that fire increased. Shells and round shot, grape and canister and shrapnel shrieked through the air, and the bullets, too, were coming in thousands, whistling like hail driven by a hurricane. Men fell all about them in the darkness.

But the great soul of Jackson, wounded to death and unable to stand, was unshaken. Harry saw him suddenly straighten up, draw himself away from those who were supporting him, and say:

"You must hold your ground, General Pender! You must hold out to the very last, sir!"

Once more the eyes shot forth blue fire. Once more the unquenchable spirit had spoken. The figure reeled, and the young officers sprang to his support. He wanted to lie down there and rest, but the youths would not let him, because every form of missile hurled from a cannon's mouth was crashing among them. A litter arrived now and they carried him toward a house that had been used as a tavern. A shot struck one of the men who held the litter in his arm and he was compelled to let go. The litter tipped over and Jackson fell heavily to the ground, his whole weight crashing upon his wounded arm. Harry heard him utter then his first and only groan. The boy himself cried out in horror.

But they lifted him up again, and the litter bearers carried him on, the young officers crowded close around him. Although it was far on toward midnight, the roar of the battle swelled afresh through the Wilderness. They came presently to an ambulance, by the side of which Jackson's physician, Dr. McGuire, stood. The surgeon, tears in his eyes, bent over the general and asked him if he were badly hurt. Jackson replied that he thought he was dying.

An officer of high rank, Colonel Crutchfield, whom Jackson esteemed highly, was already lying in the ambulance, wounded severely. They put Jackson beside him and drove slowly toward the rear. Once, when Crutchfield groaned under the jolting of the ambulance, Jackson made them stop until his comrade was easier. Then the mournful procession moved on, while the battle roared and crashed about the lone ambulance that bore the stricken idol of the Confederacy, Lee's right arm, the man without whom the South could not win. Harry heard long afterward that a minister in New Orleans used in his prayer some such words as these, "Oh, Lord, when Thou in Thy infinite wisdom didst decree that the Southern Confederacy should fail, Thou hadst first to take away Thy servant, Stonewall Jackson."

Harry and Dalton might have followed the ambulance that carried Jackson away, as they were members of his staff, but they felt that their place was on this dusky battlefield. While they paused, not knowing what to do, a body of men came through the brushwood and they recognized the upright and martial figures of Colonel Leonidas Talbot and Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire. Just behind them were St. Clair, Langdon and the rest of the Invincibles. The two colonels turned and gazed at the retreating ambulance, a shadow for a moment in the dusk, and then a shadow gone.

"I saw them putting an officer in that ambulance, Harry," said Colonel Talbot. "Who was it?"

Harry choked and made no answer.

Colonel Talbot, surprised, turned to Dalton.

"Who was it?" he repeated.

Dalton turned his face away, and was silent.

At sight of this emotion, a sudden, terrible suspicion was born in the mind of Colonel Leonidas Talbot. It was like a dagger thrust.

"You don't mean--it can't be--" he exclaimed, in broken words.

Harry could control his feelings no longer.

"Yes, Colonel," he burst forth. "It was he, Stonewall Jackson, shot down in the darkness and by mistake by our own men!"

"Was he hurt badly?"

"One arm was shattered completely, and he was shot through the hand of the other."

The moonlight shone on Harry's face just then, and the colonel, as he looked at him, drew in his breath with a deep gasp.

"So bad as that!" he muttered. "I did not think our champion could fall."

Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire, Langdon and St. Clair, who had heard him, also turned pale, but were silent.

"We must not tell it," said Harry. "General Jackson did not wish it to be known to the soldiers, and there is fighting yet to be done. Here comes General Hill!"

Harry and Dalton flung themselves into the ranks of the Invincibles. Hill took command in Jackson's place, but was soon badly wounded by a fragment of shell, and was taken away. Then Stuart, the great horseman, rode up and led the troops to meet the return attack for which the Northern forces were massing in their front. Harry saw Stuart as he came, eager as always for battle, his plumed hat shining in the light of the moon, which was now clear and at the full.

"If Jackson can lead no longer, then Stuart can," said Colonel Talbot, looking proudly at the gallant knight who feared no danger. "What time is it, Hector?"

"Nearly midnight, Leonidas."

"And no time for fighting, but fighting will be done. Can't you hear their masses gathering in the wood?"

"I do, Hector. The Yankees, despite their terrible surprise, have shown great spirit. It is not often that routed troops can turn and put on the defense those who have routed them."

"Yes, and they'll be on us in a minute," said Harry.

It was much lighter now, owing to the clearness of the moon and the lifting of the smoke caused by a lull in the firing. But Harry was right in his prediction. Within five minutes the Northern artillery, sixty massed guns, opened with a frightful crash. Once more that storm of steel swept through the woods, but now the lack of daylight helped the Southerners. Many were killed and wounded, but most of the rain of death passed over their heads, as they were all lying on the ground awaiting the charge, and the Northern gunners, not able to choose any targets, fired in the general direction of the Southern force.

The cannon fire went on for several minutes, and then, with a mighty shout, the Northern force charged, but in a great confused struggle in the woods and darkness it was beaten back, and soon after midnight the

battle for that day ceased.

Yet there was no rest for the troops. Stuart, appreciating the numbers of his enemy and fearing another attack, moved his forces to the side to close up the gap between himself and Lee, in order that the Southern army should present a solid line for the new conflict that was sure to come in the morning.

All that night the Wilderness gave forth the sound of preparations made by either side, and Harry neither slept nor had any thought of it. He knew well that the battle was far from over, and he knew also that the Union army had not yet been defeated. Hooker's right wing had been crushed by the sudden and tremendous stroke of Jackson, but his center had rallied powerfully on Chancellorsville, and instead of a mere defense had been able to attack in the night battle. The fall of Jackson, too, had paralyzed for a time the Southern advance, and Lee, with the slender forces under his immediate eye, had not been able to make any progress.

Harry and Dalton finally left the Invincibles and reported to General Stuart, who instantly recognized Harry.

"Ah," he said, "you were on the staff of General Jackson!"

"Yes, sir," replied Harry, "and so was Lieutenant Dalton here. We report to you for duty."

"Then you'll be on mine for to-night. After that General Lee will dispose of you, but I have much for you both to do before morning."

Stuart was acting with the greatest energy and foresight, manning his artillery and strengthening his whole line. But he knew that it was necessary to inform his commander-in-chief of all that was happening, in order that Lee in the morning might have the two portions of the Southern army in perfect touch and under his complete command. He selected Wilbourn to reach him, and Harry was detailed to accompany that gallant officer. They were well fitted to tell all that had happened, as they had been in the thick of the battle and had been present at the fall of Jackson.

The two officers, saying but little, rode side by side through the Wilderness. They were so much oppressed with grief that they did not have the wish to talk. Both were devotedly attached to Jackson, and to both he was a hero, without fear and without reproach. They heard behind them the occasional report of a rifle. But it was only a little picket firing. Most of the soldiers, worn out by such tremendous efforts, lay upon the ground in what was a stupor rather than sleep.

As they rode forward they met pickets of their own men who told them where Lee and his staff were encamped, and they rode on, still in silence, for some time. Harry's cheeks were touched by a freshening breeze which had the feel of coming dawn, and he said at last:

"The morning can't be far away, Captain."

"No, the first light of sunrise will appear very soon. It seems to me I can see a faint touch of gray now over the eastern forest."

They were riding now through the force that had been left by General Lee. Soldiers lay all around them and in all positions, most to rise soon for the fresh battle, and some, as Harry could tell by their rigidity, never to rise at all.

They asked again for Lee as they went on, and a sentinel directed them to a clump of pines. Wilbourn and Harry dismounted and walked toward a number of sleeping forms under the pines. The figures, like those of the soldiers, were relaxed and as still as death. The dawn which Harry has felt on his face did not appear to the eye. It was very dark under the boughs of the pines, and they did not know which of the still forms was Lee.

Wilbourn asked one of the soldiers on guard for an officer, and Lee's adjutant-general came forward. Wilbourn told him at once what had occurred, and while they talked briefly one of the figures under the pines arose. It was that of Lee, who, despite his stillness, was sleeping lightly, and whom the first few words had awakened. He put aside an oilcloth which some one had put over him to keep off the morning dew, and called:

"Who is there?"

"Messengers, sir, from General Jackson," replied Major Taylor, the Adjutant-General.

General Lee pointed to the blankets on which he had been lying, and said:

"Sit down here and tell me everything that occurred last evening."

Wilbourn sat down on the blankets. Harry stood back a little. The other staff officers, aroused by the talk, sat up, but waited in silence. Captain Wilbourn began the story of the night, and Lee did not interrupt him. But the first rays of the dawn were now stealing through the pines, and when Wilbourn came to the account of Jackson's fall, Harry saw the great leader's face pale a little. Lee, like Jackson, was a man who invariably had himself under complete command, one who seldom showed emotion, but now, as Wilbourn finished, he exclaimed with deep emotion:

"Ah, Captain Wilbourn, we've won a victory, but it is dearly bought, when it deprives us of the services of General Jackson, even for a short time!"

Harry inferred from what he said that he did not think General Jackson's wounds serious, and he wished that he could have the same hope and belief, but he could not. He had felt the truth from the first, that Jackson's wounds were mortal. Then Lee was silent so long that Captain

Wilbourn rose as if to go.

Lee came out of his deep thought and bade Wilbourn stay a little longer. Then he asked him many questions about the troops and their positions. He also gave him orders to carry to Stuart, and as Wilbourn turned to go, he said with great energy:

"Those people must be pressed this morning!"

Then Wilbourn and Harry rode away at the utmost speed, guiding their horses skilfully through lines of soldiers yet sleeping. The freshening touch of dawn grew stronger on Harry's cheeks and he saw the band of gray in the east broadening. Presently they reached their own corps, and now they saw all the troops ready and eager. Harry rode at once with Wilbourn to Stuart and fell in behind that singular but able general.

Harry saw that Stuart's face was flushed with excitement. His eyes fairly blazed. It had fallen to him to lead the great fighting corps which had been led so long by Stonewall Jackson, and it was enough to appeal to the pride of any general. Nor had he shed any of the brilliant plumage that he loved so well. The great plume in his gold-corded hat lifted and fluttered in the wind as he galloped about. The broad sash of yellow silk still encircled his waist, and on his heels were large golden spurs. Harry, as he followed him, heard him singing to himself, "Old Joe Hooker, won't you come out of the Wilderness?" That line seemed to have taken possession of Stuart's mind.

All the staff and many of the soldiers along the battle front noted the difference between their new commander and the one who had fallen so disastrously in the night. There was never anything spectacular about Jackson. In the soberest of uniforms, save once or twice, he would ride along the battle front on his little sorrel horse, making no gestures.

It was not until the soldiers saw Stuart in the light that they knew of Jackson's fall. Then the news spread among them with astonishing rapidity, and while they liked Stuart, their hearts were with the great leader who lay wounded behind them. But eagerness for revenge added to their warlike zeal. Along the reformed lines ran a tremendous swelling cry: "Remember Jackson!"

They wheeled a little further to the right in order to come into close contact with Lee, and then, as the first red touch of the dawn showed in the Wilderness, the trumpets sounded the charge. The batteries blazed as they sent forth crashing volleys, and in a minute the thunder of guns came from the east and south, where Lee also attacked as soon as he heard the sounds of his lieutenant's charge.

Nothing could withstand the terrible onset of the troops who were still shouting "Remember Jackson!" and who were led on by a plumed knight out of the Middle Ages, shaking a great sabre and now singing at the top of his voice his favorite line, "Old Joe Hooker, won't you come out of the Wilderness?"

They swept away the skirmishers and seized the plateau of Hazel Grove which had been of such use to Hooker the night before, and the Southern batteries, planted in strength upon it, rained death on the Northern ranks. The veterans with Lee rushed forward with equal courage and fire, and from every point of the great curve cannon and rifles thundered on the Union ranks.

Harry and Dalton stayed as closely as they could with their new chief, who, reckless of the death which in truth he seemed to invite, was galloping in the very front ranks, still brandishing his great sabre, and now and then making it whirl in a coil of light about his head. He continually shouted encouragement to his men, who were already full of fiery zeal, but it was the spirit of Jackson that urged them most. It seemed to Harry, excited and worshipping his hero, that the figure of Jackson, misty and almost impalpable, still rode before him.

But it was no mere triumphal march. They met stern and desperate resistance. It was American against American. Once more the superb Northern batteries met those of the South with a fire as terrible as their own. The Union gunners willingly exposed themselves to death to save their army, and from their breastworks sixty thousand riflemen sent vast sheets of bullets.

But the Northern leader was gone. As Hooker leaned against a pillar in the portico of the Chancellor House a shell struck it over his head, the concussion being so violent that he was thrown to the floor, stunned and severely injured. He was carried away, unconscious, but the brave and able generals under him still sustained the battle, and had no thought of yielding.

The Southern army, Lee and Stuart in unison, never ceased to push the attack. The forces were now drawing closer together. The lines were shorter and deeper. The concentrated fire on both sides was appalling. Bushes and saplings fell in the Wilderness as if they had been levelled with mighty axes.

Harry saw a vast bank of fire and smoke and then he saw shooting above it pyramids and spires of flame. The Chancellor House and all the buildings near it, set on fire by the flames, were burning fiercely, springing up like torches to cast a lurid light over that scene of death and destruction. Then the woods, despite their spring sap and greenness, caught fire under the showers of exploding shells, and their flames spread along a broad front.

The defense made by the Union army was long and desperate. No men could have shown greater valor, but they had been surprised and from the first they had been outgeneralled. An important division of Hooker's army had not been able to get into the main battle. The genius of Lee gathered all his men at the point of contact and the invisible figure of Jackson still rode at the head of his men.

For five hours the battle raged, and at last the repeated charges of the

Southern troops and the deadly fire of their artillery prevailed.

The Northern army, its breastworks carried by storm, was driven out of Chancellorsville and, defeated but not routed, began its slow and sullen retreat. Thirty thousand men killed or wounded attested the courage and endurance with which the two sides had fought.

The Army of the Potomac, defeated but defiant and never crushed by defeat, continued its slow retreat to Fredericksburg, and for a little space the guns were silent in the Wilderness.

The men of Hooker, although surprised and outgeneralled, had shown great courage in battle, and after the defeat of Chancellorsville the retreat was conducted with much skill. Lee had been intending to push another attack, but, as usual after the great battles of the Civil War, Chancellorsville was followed by a terrific storm. It burst over the Wilderness in violence and fury.

The thunder was so loud and the lightning so vivid that it seemed for a while as if another mighty combat were raging. Then the rain came in a deluge, and the hoofs of horses and the wheels of cannon sank so deep in the spongy soil of the Wilderness that it became practically impossible to move the army.

After a night of storm, Harry and Dalton rode forward with Sherburne and his troop of cavalry, sent by Stuart to beat up the enemy and see what he was doing. They found that Hooker's whole army had crossed the river in the night on his bridges.

Twice the Northern army had been driven back across the Rappahannock at the same place--after Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville--but Harry felt no elation as he returned slowly through the mud with Sherburne.

"If it were in my power," he said, "I'd gladly trade the victory of Chancellorsville, and more like it, to have our General back."

By "our General" he of course meant Jackson, and both Sherburne and Dalton nodded assent. The news had come to them that Jackson was not doing well. His shattered arm had been amputated near the shoulder, and the report spread through the army that he was sinking. Just after the victory, Lee, with his wonted greatness of soul, had sent him a note that it was chiefly due to him. Jackson, although in great pain, had sent back word that General Lee was very kind, "but he should give the praise to God."

The deep religious feeling was no affectation with him. It showed alike in victory and suffering. It was a part of the man's being, bred into every fiber of his bone and flesh.

As soon as the news of Hooker's escape across the Rappahannock had been told, Harry and Dalton asked leave of Stuart to visit General Jackson. It was given at once. Stuart added, moreover, that he had merely taken them on his staff while the battle lasted. They were now to return to

their own chief. But his heart warmed to them both and he said to them that if they happened to need a friend to come to him.

They thanked Stuart and rode away, two very sober youths indeed. Both were appalled by the vast slaughter of Chancellorsville. Harry began to have a feeling that their victories were useless. After every triumph the enemy was more numerous and powerful than ever. And the cloud of Jackson's condition hung heavy over both. When he was first struck down in the Wilderness, Harry had felt no hope for him, and now that premonition was coming true.

They learned that he was in the Chandler House at a little place called Guiney's Station, and they rode briskly toward it. They passed many troops in camp, resting after their tremendous exertions, many of whom knew them to be officers of Jackson's staff. They were besieged by these. Young soldiers fairly clung to their horses and demanded news of Jackson, who, they had heard, was dying. Harry and Dalton returned replies as hopeful as they could make them, but their faces belied their word. Gloom hung over the Southern army which had just won its most brilliant victory.

Harry and Dalton found the same gloom at the Chandler House. The officers who were there welcomed them in subdued tones, and in the house everybody moved silently. The general's wife and little daughter had just arrived from Richmond, and they were with him. But after a while the two young lieutenants were admitted. Jackson spoke a few words to both, as they bent beside his bed, and commended them as brave soldiers. Harry knew now, when he looked at the thin face and the figure scarcely able to move, that the great Jackson was going.

They went out oppressed by grief, and sought the Invincibles, whom they at last found encamped in an old orchard. Colonel Talbot and Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire sat beneath an apple tree, and the chessboard was between them.

"They've been sitting there an hour," whispered Langdon, "but they haven't made a single move, nor will they make one if they stay there all day. It's in my mind that neither of them sees the chessmen. Instead they see the General--they visited him this morning."

Harry did not speak to the two colonels, but turned away.

"We found the body of Bertrand yesterday," said Langdon, "and buried it just where he fell."

"I'm glad of that," said Harry.

Harry and Dalton lingered at the Chandler House with the staff to which they belonged. Three days passed and Sunday came. Jackson was sinking all the while, and that morning the doctor informed his wife that he was about to die. Pneumonia had followed the weakness from his wounds and his breathing had grown very faint. Mrs. Jackson herself told him that all hope for him was gone, and he heard the words with resignation.

After a while, as Harry learned, his mind began to wander. He spoke in disjointed sentences of the army, of his battles, of his boyhood and of his friends. This lasted into the afternoon, when he sank into unconsciousness. Then came his death, and it was much like that of Napoleon. He awoke suddenly from a deep stupor and cried out, in a clear voice:

"Order A. P. Hill to prepare for action! Pass the infantry to the front! Tell Major Hawks--"

He stopped, seemed to sink into a stupor again, but a little later roused suddenly from it once more, and said, in the same clear voice:

"Let us cross over the river and rest under the shade of the trees."

Then, as his eyes closed, the soul of the great Christian soldier passed into the fathomless beyond, to sit in peace with Cromwell and Washington, and in time with Lee and Grant and Thomas, who were yet to come.

That night a whole army wept.

CHAPTER X

THE NORTHERN MARCH

It was days before Harry felt as if life could move on in the usual way. He had loved Jackson next to his father. In fact, in the absence of his own father the great general had stood in that place to him. He had received from him so many marks of approval, and, riding as a trusted member of Jackson's staff, his head had been in such a rosy cloud of glory and victory, that now it seemed for a while as if the world had come to an end.

He was disappointed, too, that they had reaped so little from Chancellorsville. He believed at times that his general had died in vain. He had but to ride a little distance and see the enemy across the Rappahannock, where he had been so many months, with the same bristling guns and the same superior forces.

He had been eager, like all the other young officers, to move directly after the battle and attack the foe on his own ground, but when he talked with the two colonels he realized that their numbers were too small. They must wait for Longstreet's great division, which had been detached from the battle to guard against a possible flank attack upon Richmond. Oh, if Longstreet and his twenty thousand veterans had been

at Chancellorsville! And if Jackson had not fallen just at the moment when he was about to complete the destruction of Hooker's right wing! He believed that then they would have annihilated the Army of the Potomac, that only a few fugitives from it would have escaped across the Potomac. The time came to him in after years when he often asked himself would such a result have been a good result for the American people.

But now he was only a boy, as old, it is true, as many boys who led companies, or even regiments, and the days were sufficient for his thoughts. He was not thinking of the distant years and what they might bring. Both he and Dalton felt joy when General Lee sent for them and told them that, having been valued members of General Jackson's staff, they were now to become members of his own. All he asked of them was to serve him as well as they had served General Jackson.

Harry was moved so deeply that he could scarcely thank him. He felt springing up in his breast the same affection and hero-worship for Lee that he had felt for Jackson. And as the close association with Lee continued, this feeling grew both in his heart and in that of Dalton.

The soul of youth cannot be kept down, and Harry's spirits returned as he rode back and forth on Lee's errands. Moreover, spring was in full tide and his blood rose with it. The Wilderness, in which the dead men lay, and all the surrounding country were turning a deep green, and the waters of the Rappahannock often flashed in gold or silver as the sun blazed or grew dim. Pleasant relations between the sentries on the two sides of the river were renewed. Tobacco, newspapers, and other harmless articles were passed back and forth, when the officers conveniently turned their backs. Nor was it always that the younger officers turned away.

Harry was in a boat near the right bank when he saw another boat about thirty yards from the left shore. It contained a half dozen men, and he recognized one of the figures at once. Putting his hands, trumpet-shaped, to his mouth, he shouted:

"Mr. Shepard! Oh, I say, Mr. Shepard!"

The man looked up, and, evidently recognizing Harry, he had the boat rowed a little nearer. Harry had his own moved forward a little, and he stopped at a point where they could talk conveniently.

"You may not believe me," said Shepard, "but I felt pleasure when I heard your voice and recognized your face. I am glad to know that you did not fall in the great battle."

"I do believe you, and I am not merely exchanging compliments when I say that I rejoice that you, too, came out of it alive."

"Nevertheless, luck was against us then," said Shepard, and Harry, even at the distance, saw a shadow cross his face. "I saw the great flank movement of Jackson and I understood its nature. I was on my way

to General Hooker with all speed to warn him, and I would have got there in time had it not been for a chance bullet that stunned me. That bullet cost us thousands of men."

"And the bullets that struck General Jackson will cost us a whole army corps."

"We hear that they were fired by your own men."

"So they were. A North Carolina company in the darkness took us for the enemy."

"I don't rejoice over the fall of a great and valiant foe, but whether Jackson lived or died the result would be the same. I told you long ago that the forces of the Union could never be beaten in the long run, and I repeated it to you another time. Now I repeat it once more. We have lost two great battles here, but you make no progress. We menace you as much as ever."

"But your newspapers say you're growing very tired. There's no nation so big that it can't be exhausted."

"But you'll be exhausted first. So long, I see some of our generals coming out on the bluffs with their glasses. I suppose we mustn't appear too friendly."

"Good-bye, Mr. Shepard. We've lost Jackson, but we've many a good man yet. I think our next great battle will be farther north."

They had not spoken as enemies, but as friends who held different views upon an important point, and now they rowed back peacefully, each to his own shore.

With the return of Longstreet, the Southern army was raised to greater numbers than at Chancellorsville. With Stuart's matchless cavalry it numbered nearly eighty thousand men, most of them veterans, and a cry for invasion came from the South. What was the use of victories like Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, if they merely left matters where they were? The fighting hitherto had been done on Southern soil. The South alone had felt the presence of war. It was now time for the North to have a taste of it.

Harry and his comrades heard this cry, and it seemed to them to be full of truth. They ought to strike straight at the heart of the enemy. When their victorious brigades threatened Philadelphia and New York, the two great commercial centers of the North, then the Northern people would not take defeat so easily. It would be a different matter altogether when a foe appeared at their own doors.

Rumors that the invasion would be undertaken soon spread thick and fast. Harry saw his general, Lee now in place of Jackson, in daily conference with his most trusted lieutenants. Longstreet and A. P. Hill were there often, and one day Harry saw riding toward headquarters a man who had

only one leg and who was strapped to his saddle. But a strong Roman nose and a sharp, penetrating eye showed that he was a man of force and decision. Once, when he lifted his hat to return a salute, he showed a head almost wholly bald.

Harry looked at him for a moment or two unknowing, and then crying "General Ewell!" ran forward to greet him.

Harry was right. It was what was left of him who had been Jackson's chief lieutenant in the Valley campaigns and who had fallen wounded so terribly at the Second Manassas. After nine months of suffering, here he was again, as resolute and indomitable as ever, able to ride only when he was strapped in his saddle, but riding as much as any other general, nevertheless.

And Ewell, who might well have retired, was one of those who had most to lose by war. He had a great estate in the heart of a rich country near Virginia's ancient capital, Williamsburg. There he had lived in a large house, surrounded by a vast park, all his own. Even as the man, maimed in body but as dauntless of mind as ever, rode back to Lee, his estate was in the hands of Union troops. He had all to lose, but did not hesitate.

Harry saluted him and spoke to him gladly. Ewell turned his piercing eyes upon him, hesitated a moment, and then said:

"It's Kenton, young Harry Kenton of Jackson's staff. I remember you in the Valley now. We've lost the great Jackson, but we'll beat the Yankees yet."

Then he let loose a volley of oaths, much after the fashion of the country gentleman of that time, both in America and England. But Harry only smiled.

"I'm to have command of Jackson's old corps, the second," said Ewell, "and if you're not placed I'll be glad to have you on my staff."

"I thank you very much, General," said Harry with great sincerity, "but General Lee has taken me over, because I was with Jackson."

"Then you'll have all the fighting you want," said the indomitable Ewell. "General Lee never hesitates to strike. But don't be the fool that I was and get your leg shot off. If anything has to go, let it be an arm. Look at me. I could ride with any man in all Virginia, a state of horsemen, and now a couple of men have to come and fasten me in the saddle with straps. But never mind."

He rode cheerily on, and Harry, turning back, met St. Clair and Langdon. Both showed a pleased excitement.

"What is it?" asked Harry.

"Colonel Talbot and Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire are at it again,

and there have been results!"

"What has happened?"

"Colonel Talbot has lost a bishop and Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire has lost a knight. Each claims that he has gained a technical advantage in position, and they've stopped playing to argue about it. From the way they act you'd think they were Yankee generals. See 'em over there under the boughs of that tree, sitting on camp stools, with the chessmen on another camp stool between them."

Harry looked over a little ridge and saw the two colonels, who were talking with great earnestness, each obviously full of a desire to convince the other.

"My dear Hector," said Colonel Talbot, "each of us has taken a piece. It is not so much a question of the relative value of these pieces as it is of the position into which you force your opponent."

"Exactly so, Leonidas. I agree with you on that point, and for that reason I aver that I have made a tactical gain."

"Hector, you are ordinarily a man of great intelligence, but in this case you seem to have lost some part of your mental powers."

"One of us has suffered such a loss, and while I am too polite to name him, I am sure that I am not the man."

"Ah, well, we'll not accuse each other while the issue still hangs in doubt. Progress with the game will show that I am right."

When Harry passed that way an hour later they were still bent over the board, the best of friends again, but no more losses had been suffered by either.

May was almost spent and spring was at the full. The Southern army was now at its highest point in both numbers and effectiveness. Only Jackson was gone, but he was a host and more, and when Lee said that he had lost his right arm, he spoke the truth, as he was soon to find. Yet the Southern power was at the zenith and no shadow hung over the veteran and devoted troops who were eager to follow Lee in that invasion of the North of which all now felt sure.

Doubts were dispelled with the close of May. Harry was one of the young officers who carried the commander-in-chief's orders to the subordinate generals, and while he knew details, he wondered what the main plan would be. Young as he was he knew that no passage could be forced across the Rappahannock in the face of the Army of the Potomac, which was now as numerous as ever, and which could sweep the river and its shores with its magnificent artillery. But he had full confidence in Lee. The spell that Jackson had thrown over him was transferred to Lee, who swayed his feelings and judgment with equal power.

The figure of Lee in the height and fullness of victory was imposing. An English general who saw him, and who also saw all the famous men of his time, wrote long afterward that he was the only great man he had ever seen who looked all his greatness. Tall, strongly built, with thick gray hair, a short gray beard, clipped closely, ruddy complexion and blue eyes, he was as careful in dress as Jackson had been careless. He spoke with a uniform politeness, not superficial, but from the heart, and his glance was nearly always grave and benevolent.

General Lee in these warm days of late spring occupied a large tent. Even when the army was not on the march he invariably preferred tents to houses, and now Harry saw nearly all the famous Southern generals in the east passing through that door. There was Longstreet, blue of eye like Lee, full bearded, thick and powerful, and proud of his horsemanship, in which he excelled.

Ewell, too, stumped in on his crutches, vigorous, enthusiastic, but never using profane language where Lee was. And there was A. P. Hill, of soldierly slenderness and of fine, pleasing manner; McLaws, who had done so well at Antietam; Pickett, not yet dreaming of the one marvelous achievement that was to be his; Old Jubal Early, as he was familiarly called, bald, bearded, rheumatic, profane, but brave and able; Hood, tall, yellow-haired; Pender, the North Carolinian, not yet thirty, religious like Jackson, and doomed like him to fall soon in battle; Tieth, Edward Johnson, Anderson, Trimble, Stuart, as gay and dandyish as ever; Ramseur, Jones, Daniel, young Fitzhugh Lee; Pendleton, Armistead, and a host of others whose names remained memorable to him. They were all tanned and sun-burned men. Few had reached early middle age, and the shadows of death were already gathering for many of them.

But the high spirits of the Southern army merely became higher as they began to make rapid but secret preparation for departure. The soldiers did not know where they were going, except that it was into the North, and they began to discuss the nature of the country they would find there. Harry took the message to the Invincibles to pack and march. Colonel Talbot and Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire reluctantly dropped their unfinished game, put up the chessmen, and in an hour the Invincibles--few, but trim and strong--were marching to a position farther up the river.

The corps of Longstreet was to lead the way, and it would march the next morning. Harry now knew that the army would advance by way of the Shenandoah valley. The Northern troops had been raiding in the great valley and again had retaken Winchester, the pleasant little city so beloved of Jackson. Harry shared the anger at this news that Jackson would have felt had he been alive to hear it.

Harry was well aware, however, that the army could not slip away from its opponent. Hooker, still in command, was watching on the heights across the river, and there were the captive balloons hovering again in the sky. But the spirit of the troops was such that they did not care whether their march was known or not.

Harry and Dalton were awake early on the morning of the third of June, and they saw the corps of Longstreet file silently by, the bugle that called them away being the first note of the great and decisive Gettysburg campaign. They were better clothed and in better trim than they had been in a long time. They walked with an easy, springy gait, and the big guns rumbled at the heels of the horses, fat from long rest and the spring grass. They were to march north and west to Culpeper, fifty miles away, and there await the rest of the army.

Harry and Dalton felt great exhilaration. Movement was good not only for the body, but for the spirit as well. It made the blood flow more freely and the brain grow more active. Moreover, the beauty of the early summer that had come incited one to greater hope.

The great adventure had now begun, but it was not unknown to Hooker and his watchful generals on the other shore. The ground was dry and they had seen a column of dust rise and move toward the northwest. Their experienced eyes told them that such a cloud must be made by marching troops, and the men in the balloons with their glasses were able to catch the gleam of steel from the bayonets of Longstreet's men as they took the long road to Gettysburg.

Hooker had good men with him. He, too, as he stood on the left bank of the Rappahannock, was surrounded by able and famous generals, and others were to come. There was Meade, a little older than the others, but not old, tall, thin, stooped a bit, wearing glasses, and looking like a scholar, with his pale face and ragged beard, a cold, quiet man, able and thorough, but without genius. Then came Reynolds, modest and quiet, who many in the army claimed would have shown the genius that Meade lacked had it not been for his early death, for he too, like Pender, would soon be riding to a soldier's grave. And then were Doubleday and Newton and Hancock, a great soldier, a man of magnificent presence, whose air and manner always inspired enthusiasm, soon to be known as Hancock the Superb; Sedgwick, a soldier of great insight and tenacity; Howard, a religious man, who was to come out of the war with only one arm; Hunt and Gibbon, and Webb and Sykes, and Slocum and Pleasanton, who commanded the cavalry, and many others.

These men foresaw the march of Lee into the North, and the people behind them realized that they were no longer carrying the battle to the enemy. He was bringing it to them. Apprehension spread through the North, but it was prepared for the supreme effort. The Army of the Potomac, despite Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, had no fear of its opponent, and the veterans in blue merely asked for another chance.

On the following morning and the morning after, Ewell's corps followed Longstreet in two divisions toward the general rendezvous at Culpeper Court House, but Lee himself, although most of his troops were now gone, did not yet move. Hill's corps had been held to cover any movement of the Army of the Potomac at Fredericksburg, and Lee and his staff remained there for three days after Longstreet's departure.

The Invincibles had gone, but Harry and Dalton were just behind Lee,

who sat on his white horse, Traveler, gazing through his glasses toward a division of the Army of the Potomac which on the day before had crossed the Rappahannock, under a heavy fire from Hill's men.

But Harry knew that it was no part of Lee's plan to drive these men back across the river. A. P. Hill on the heights would hold them and would be a screen between Hooker's army and his own. So the young staff officer merely watched his commander who looked long through his glasses.

It was now nearly noon, and the June sky was brilliant with the sun moving slowly toward the zenith. Lee at length lowered his glasses and, turning to his staff, said:

"Now, gentlemen, we ride."

Harry by some chance looked at his watch, and he always remembered that it was exactly noon when he started on the journey that was to lead him to Gettysburg. He and Dalton from a high crest looked back toward the vast panorama of hills, valleys, rivers and forest that had held for them so many thrilling and terrible memories.

There lay the blackened ruins of Fredericksburg. There were the heights against which the brave Northern brigades had beat in vain and with such awful losses. And beyond, far down under the horizon, was the tragic Wilderness in which they had won Chancellorsville and in which Jackson had fallen. Harry choked and turned away from the fresh wound that the recollection gave him.

Lee and his staff rode hard all that afternoon and most of the night through territory guarded well against Northern skirmishers or raiding bands, and the next day they were with the army at Culpeper Court House. Meanwhile Hooker was undecided whether to follow Lee or move on Richmond. But the shrewd Lincoln telegraphed him that Lee was his "true objective." At that moment the man in the White House at Washington was the most valuable general the North had, knowing that Lee in the field with his great fighting force must be beaten back, and that otherwise Richmond would be worth nothing.

It was Harry's fortune in the most impressionable period of life to be in close contact for a long time with two very great men, both of whom had a vast influence upon him, creating for him new standards of energy and conduct. In after years when he thought of Lee and Jackson, which was nearly every day, no weighing of the causes involved in the quarrel between the sections was made in his mind. They were his heroes, and personally they could do no wrong.

As Lee rode on with his staff through the fair Virginia country he talked little, but more than was Jackson's custom. Harry saw his brow wrinkle now and then with thought. He knew that he was planning, planning all the time, and he knew, too, what a tremendous task it was to bring all the scattered divisions of an army to one central point in the face of an active enemy. This task was even greater than Harry imagined, as Lee's army would soon be strung along a line of a hundred

miles, and a far-seeing enemy might cut it apart and beat it in detail. Lee knew, but he showed no sign.

Harry felt an additional elation because he rode westward and toward that valley in which he had followed Jackson through the thick of great achievements. In the North they had nicknamed it "The Valley of Humiliation," but Jackson was gone, and Milroy, whom he had defeated once, was there again, holding and ruling the little city of Winchester. Harry's blood grew hot, because he, too, as Jackson had, loved Winchester. He did not know what was in Lee's mind, but he hoped that a blow would be struck at Milroy before they began the great invasion of the North.

Culpeper was a tiny place, a court house and not much more, but now its eager and joyous citizens welcomed a great army. Although Hill and his corps were yet back watching Hooker, fifty thousand veterans were gathered at the village. Soon they would be seventy thousand or more, and Culpeper rejoiced yet again. The women and children--the men were but few, gone to the war--were never too tired to seek glimpses of the famous generals, whom they regarded as their champions. Stuart, in his brilliant uniform, at the head of his great cavalry command, appealed most to the young, and his gay spirit and frank manners delighted everybody. They paid little attention to the Northern cavalry and infantry on the other side of the Rappahannock, knowing that Hooker's main army was yet far away, and feeling secure in the protection of Lee and his victorious army.

Harry slept heavily that night, wearied by the long ride. He, Dalton and two other young officers had been assigned to a small tent, but, taking their blankets, they slept under the stars. Harry seldom cared for a roof now on a dry, warm night. He had become so much used to hardships and unlimited spaces that he preferred his blankets and the free breezes that blew about the world. It was a long time after the war before he became thoroughly reconciled to bedrooms in warm weather.

He was aroused the next morning by Dalton, who pulled him by his feet out of his blankets.

"Stick your head in a pail of water," said Dalton, "and get your breakfast as soon as you can. Everything is waiting on you."

"How dare you, George, drag me by the heels that way? I was marching down Broadway in New York at the head of our conquering army, and millions of Yankees were pointing at me, all saying with one voice: 'That's the fellow that beat us.' Now you've spoiled my triumph. And what do you mean by saying that everything is waiting for me?"

"Our army, as you know, is spectacular only in its achievements, but to-day we intend to have a little splendor. The commander-in-chief is going to review Jeb Stuart's cavalry. For dramatic effect it's a chance that Stuart won't miss."

"That's so. Just tell 'em I'm coming and that the parade can begin."

Harry bathed his face and had a good breakfast, but there was no need to hurry. Jeb Stuart, as Dalton had predicted, was making the most of his chance. He was going not only to parade, but to have a mock battle as well. As the sun rose higher, making the June day brilliant, General Lee and his staff, dressed in their best, rode slowly to a little hillock commanding a splendid view of a wide plain lying east of Culpeper Court House.

General Lee was in a fine uniform, his face shaded by the brim of the gray hat which pictures have made so familiar. His cavalry cape swung from his shoulders, but not low enough to hide the splendid sword at his belt. His face was grave and his whole appearance was majestic. If only Jackson were there, riding by his side! Harry choked again.

Lee sat on his white horse, Traveler, and above him on a lofty pole a brilliant Confederate flag waved in the light wind. Harry and Dalton, as the youngest, took their modest places in the rear of the group of staff officers, just behind Lee, and looked expectantly over the plain. They saw at the far edge a long line of horsemen, so long, in fact, that the eye did not travel its full distance. Nearer by, all the guns of "Stuart's Horse Artillery" were posted upon a hill.

Harry's heart began to beat at the sight--mimic, not real, war, but thrilling nevertheless. A bugle suddenly sounded far away, its note coming low, but mellow. Other bugles along the line sang the same tune, and then came rolling thunder, as ten thousand matchless horsemen, led by Stuart himself, charged over the plain straight toward the hill on which Lee sat on his horse.

The horsemen seemed to Harry to rise as if they were coming up the curve of the earth. It was a tremendous and thrilling sight. The hoofs of ten thousand horses beat in unison. Every man held aloft his sabre, and the sun struck upon their blades and glanced off in a myriad brilliant beams. Harry glanced at Lee and he saw that the blue eyes were gleaming. He, too, sober and quiet though he was, felt pride as the Murat of the South led on his legions.

The cavalrymen, veering a little, charged toward the guns on the hill, and they received them with a discharge of blank cartridges which made the plain shake. Back and forth the mimic battle rolled, charge and repulse, and the smoke of the firing drifted over the plain. But the wild horsemen wheeled and turned, always keeping place with such superb skill that the officers and the infantry looking on burst again and again into thunderous applause.

The display lasted some time. When it was over and the smoke and dust were settling, General Lee and his staff rode back to their quarters, the young officers filled with pride at the spectacle and more confident than ever that their coming invasion of the North would be the final triumph.

Northern cavalry, on the other side of the river, had heard the heavy

firing and they could not understand it. Could their forces following Lee on the right bank be engaged in battle with him? They had not heard of any such advance by their own men, yet they plainly heard the sounds of a heavy cannonade, and it was a matter into which they must look. They had disregarded sharp firing too often before and they were growing wary. But with that wariness also came a daring which the Union leaders in the east had not usually shown hitherto. They had a strong cavalry force in three divisions on the other side of the river, and the commanders of the divisions, Buford, Gregg and Duffie, with Pleasanton over all, were forming a bold design.

Events were to move fast for Harry, much faster than he was expecting. He was sent that night with a note to Stuart, who went into camp with his ten thousand cavalry and thirty guns on a bare eminence called Fleetwood Hill. The base of the hill was surrounded by forest, and not far away was a little place called Brandy Station. Harry was not to return until morning, as he had been sent late with the message, and after delivering it to Stuart he hunted up his friend Sherburne.

He found the captain sitting by a low campfire and he was made welcome. Sherburne, after the parade and sham battle, had cleaned the dust from his uniform and he was now as neat and trim as St. Clair himself.

"Sit down, Harry," he said with the greatest geniality. "Here, orderly, take his horse, but leave him his blankets. You'll need the blankets to-night, Harry, because you bunk with us in the Inn of the Greenwood Tree. We've got a special tree, too. See it there, the oak with the great branches."

"I'll never ask anything better in summer time, provided it doesn't rain," said Harry.

"Wasn't that a fine parade?" Sherburne ran on. "And this is the greatest cavalry force that we've had during the war. Why, Stuart can go anywhere and do anything with it. A lot of Virginia scouts under Jones are watching the fords, and we've got with us such leaders as Fitz Lee, Robertson, Hampton and the commander-in-chief's son, W. H. F. Lee--why should a man be burdened with three initials? We can take care of any cavalry force that the Yankees may send against us."

"I've noticed in the recent fighting," said Harry, "that the Northern cavalrymen are a lot better than they used to be. Most of us were born in the saddle, but they had to learn to ride. They'll give us a tough fight now whenever we meet 'em."

"I agree with you," said Sherburne, "but they can't beat us. You can ride back in the morning, Harry, and report to the commander-in-chief that he alone can move us from this position. Listen to that stamping of hoofs! Among ten thousand horses a lot are likely to be restless; and look there at the hilltop where thirty good guns are ready to turn their mouths on any foe."

"I see them all," said Harry, "and I think you're right. I'll ride back

peaceably to General Lee in the morning, and tell him that I left ten thousand cavalymen lying lazily on the grass, and ten thousand horses eating their heads off near Brandy Station."

"But to-night you rest," said one of the young officers. "Do you smoke?"

"I've never learned."

"Well, I don't smoke either unless we get 'em from the Yankees. Here's what's left of a box that we picked up near the Chancellor House. It may have belonged to Old Joe Hooker himself, but if so he'll never get it back again."

He distributed the cigars among the smokers, who puffed them with content. Meanwhile the noises of the camp sank, and presently Harry, taking his blankets and saying good night, went to sleep in the Inn of the Greenwood Tree.

CHAPTER XI

THE CAVALRY COMBAT

Harry was a fine sleeper. One learns to be in long campaigns. Most of those about him slept as well, and the ten thousand horses, which had been ridden hard in the great display during the day, also sank into quiet. The restless hoofs ceased to move. Now and then there was a snort or a neigh, but the noise was slight on Fleetwood Hill or in the surrounding forests.

A man came through the thickets soon after midnight and moved with the greatest caution toward the hill on which the artillery was ranged. He was in neither blue nor gray, just the plain garb of a civilian, but he was of strong figure and his smoothly shaven face, with its great width between the eyes and massive chin, expressed character and uncommon resolution.

The intruder--he was obviously such, because he sought with the minutest care to escape observation--never left the shelter of the bushes. He had all the skill of the old forest runners, because his footsteps made no sound as he passed and he knew how to keep his figure always in the shadows until it became a common blur with them.

His was a most delicate task, in which discovery was certain death, but he never faltered. His heart beat steadily and strong. It was an old risk to him, and he had the advantage of great natural aptitude, fortified by long training in a school of practice where a single

misstep meant death.

The sharp eyes of the spy missed nothing. He counted the thirty pieces of artillery on the hill. He estimated with amazing accuracy the number of Stuart's horsemen. He saw a thousand proofs that the heavy firing he had heard in the course of the day was not due to battle with Northern troops. Although he stopped at times for longer looks, he made a wide circuit about the Confederate camp, and he was satisfied that Stuart, vigilant and daring though he might be, was not expecting an enemy.

Shepard's heart for the first time beat a little faster. He had felt as much as any general the Northern defeats and humiliations in the east, but, like officers and soldiers, he was not crushed by them. He even felt that the tide might be about to turn. Lee, invading the North, would find before him many of the difficulties which had faced the Northern generals attacking the South. Shepard, a man of supreme courage, resolved that he would spare no effort in the service to which he had devoted himself.

He spent fully four hours in the thickets, and then, feeling that he had achieved his task, bore away toward the river. Taking off his coat and belt with pistols in it, and fastening them about his neck, he swam with bold strokes to the other side of the stream. However, had anyone been on the watch at that very point, it was not likely that he would have been seen. It was the approach of dawn and heavy mists were rising on the Rappahannock, as they had risen at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville.

Shepard gave the countersign to the pickets and was shown at once to General Pleasanton, an alert, vigorous man, who was awaiting him. His report was satisfactory, because the cavalry general smiled and began to send quick orders to his leaders of divisions.

But the peace in Stuart's command was not broken that night. No one had seen the figure of the spy sliding through the thickets, and Harry and his comrades in the Inn of the Greenwood Tree were very warm and snug in their blankets. As day came he yawned, stretched, closed his eyes again, thinking that he might have another precious fifteen minutes, but, recalling his resolution, sprang to his feet and began to rub his eyes clear.

He had slept fully dressed, like all the rest, and he intended to go down to a brook in a few minutes and bathe his face. But he first gave Sherburne a malicious shove with his foot and bade him wake up, telling him that it was too late for an alert cavalry captain to be sleeping.

Then Sherburne also yawned, stretched, and stood up, rubbing his eyes. The others about them rose too, and everybody felt chilled by the river fog, which was uncommonly heavy.

"Breakfast for me," said Sherburne.

"Not just now, I think," said Harry. "Listen! Aren't those rifle shots?"

A patter, patter, distant but clear in the morning, came from a point down the stream.

"You're right!" exclaimed Sherburne in alarm. "It's on our side of the river and it's increasing fast! As sure as we live, the enemy has crossed and attacked!"

They were not left in doubt. The pickets, running in, told them that a heavy force of Northern cavalry was across the Rappahannock and was charging with vigor. In fact, two of the divisions had passed the fords unseen in the fog and were now rushing Stuart's camp.

But Stuart, although surprised, never for an instant lost his presence of mind. Throughout the Southern lines the bugles sounded the sharp call to horse. It was full time. The outposts had been routed already and were driven in on the main body.

Harry ran to his horse, which had been left saddled and bridled for any emergency. He leaped upon him and rode by the side of Sherburne, whose troop was already in line. They could not see very well for the mists, but the fire in front of them from cavalry carbines had grown into great violence. It made a huge shower of red dots against the white screen of the mist, and now they heard shouts and the beat of thousands of hoofs.

"They're making for our artillery!" exclaimed Sherburne with true instinct. "Follow me, men! We must hold them back, for a few minutes at least!"

Sherburne and his gallant troops were just in time. A great force of cavalry in blue suddenly appeared in the whitish and foggy dawn and charged straight for the guns. Without delaying a moment, Sherburne flung his troops in between, although they were outnumbered twenty to one or more. He did not expect to stop them; he merely hoped to delay them a few minutes, and therefore he offered himself as a sacrifice.

Harry was beside Sherburne as they galloped straight toward the Northern cavalry, firing their short carbines and then swinging their sabres.

"They'll ride over us!" he shouted to Sherburne.

"But we'll trouble 'em a little as they pass!" the captain shouted back.

Harry shut his teeth hard together. A shiver ran over him, and then his face grew hot. The pulses in his temples beat heavily. He was sure that Sherburne and he and all the rest were going to perish. The long and massive Northern line was coming on fast. They, too, had fired their carbines, and now thousands of sabres flashed through the mists. Harry was swinging his own sword, but as the great force bore down upon them, the white mist seemed to turn to red and the long line of horsemen fused into a solid mass, its front flashing with steel.

He became conscious, as the space between them closed rapidly, that a heavy crackling fire was bursting from a wood between the Northern cavalry and the river. The Southern skirmishers, brushed away at first, had returned swiftly, and now they were sending a rain of bullets upon the blue cavalymen. Many saddles were emptied, but the line went on, and struck Sherburne's troop.

Harry saw a man lean from his horse and slash at him with a sabre. He had no sabre of his own, only a small sword, but he cut with all his might at the heavy blade instead of the man, and he felt, rather than saw, the two weapons shatter to pieces. Then his horse struck another, and, reeling in the saddle, he snatched out a pistol and began to fire at anything that looked like a human shape.

He heard all about him a terrible tumult of shots and shouts and the thunder of horses' hoofs. He still saw the red mist and a thousand sabres flashing through it, and he heard, too, the clash of steel on steel. The Northern line had been stopped one minute, two minutes, and maybe three. He was conscious afterwards that in some sort of confused way he was trying to measure the time. But he was always quite certain that it was not more than three minutes. Then the Northern cavalry passed over them.

Harry's horse was fairly knocked down by the impetus of the Northern charge, and the young rider was partly protected by his body from the hoofs that thundered over them. Horse and rider rose together. Harry found that the reins were still clenched in his hand. His horse was trembling all over from shock, and so was he, but neither was much harmed. Beyond him the great cavalry division was galloping on, and he gazed at it a moment or two in a kind of stupor. But he became conscious that the fire of the Southern skirmishers on its flank was growing heavier and that many horses without riders were running loose through the forest.

Then his gaze turned back to the little band that had stood in the path of the whirlwind, and he uttered a cry of joy as he saw Sherburne rising slowly to his feet, the blood flowing from a wound in his left shoulder.

"It isn't much, Harry," said the captain. "It was only the point of the sabre that grazed me, but my horse was killed, and the shock of the fall stunned me for a moment or two. Oh, my poor troop!"

There was good cause for his lament. Less than one-fourth of his brave horsemen were left unhurt or with but slight wounds. The wounded who could rise were limping away toward the thickets, and the unwounded were seeking their mounts anew. Harry caught a riderless horse. His faculties were now clear and the effect of the physical shock had passed.

"We held 'em three minutes at least, Captain," he cried, "and it may be that three minutes were enough. We were surprised, but we are not beaten. Here, jump up! We've saved the guns from capture! And listen how the rifle fire is increasing."

Sherburne sprang into the saddle and his little band of surviving troopers gathered around him. They uttered a shout, too, as they saw heavy forces of their own cavalry coming up and charging, sabre in hand. Inspired by the sight and forgetting his wound, Sherburne wheeled about and led his little band in a charge upon the Northern flank.

A desperate battle with sabres ensued. Forest and open rang with shouts and the clash of steel, and hundreds of pistols flashed. The Northern horsemen were driven back. Davis, who led them here, a Southerner by birth, but a regular officer, a man of great merit, seeking to rally them, fell, wounded mortally. A strong body of Illinois troops came up and turned the tide of battle again. The Southern horsemen were driven back. Some of them were taken prisoners and a part of Stuart's baggage became a Northern prize.

This portion of the Southern cavalry under Jones, which Harry and Sherburne had joined, now merely sought to check the Northern advance until Stuart could arrive. Everyone expected Stuart. Such a brilliant cavalryman could not fail. But the Northern force was increasing. Buford and his men were coming down on their flank. It seemed that the Confederate force was about to be overwhelmed again, but suddenly their guns came into action. Shell and canister held back the Northern force, and then arose from the Southern ranks the shout: "Stuart! Stuart!"

Harry saw him galloping forward at the head of his men, his long, yellow hair flying in the air, his sabre whirled aloft in glittering circles, and he felt an immense sensation of relief. Leading his division in person, Stuart drove back the Northern horsemen, but he in his turn was checked by artillery and supporting columns of infantry in the wood.

Pleasanton, the Union leader, was showing great skill and courage. Having profited by his enemy's example, he was pressing his advantage to the utmost. Already he had found in Stuart's captured baggage instructions for the campaign, showing that the whole Southern army was on its way toward the great valley, to march thence northward, and he resolved instantly to break up this advance as much as possible.

Pleasanton pressed forward again, and Stuart prepared to meet him. But Harry, who was keeping by the side of Sherburne, saw Stuart halt suddenly. A messenger had galloped up to him and he brought formidable news. A heavy column of horsemen had just appeared directly behind the Southern cavalry and was marching to the attack. Stuart was in a trap.

Harry saw that Stuart had been outgeneralled, and again he shut his teeth together hard. To be outgeneralled did not mean that they would be outfought. The Northern force in their rear was the third division under Gregg, and Stuart sent back cavalry and guns to meet them.

Harry now saw the battle on all sides of him. Cavalry were charging, falling back, and charging again. The whole forces of the two armies were coming into action. Nearly twenty thousand sabres were flashing in the sunlight that had driven away the fog. Harry had never before seen

a cavalry battle on so grand a scale, but the confusion was so great that it was impossible for him to tell who was winning.

The Northern horse took Fleetwood Hill; Stuart retook it. Then he sought to meet the cavalry division in his front, and drove it to the woods, where it reformed and hurled him back to the hill. The Northern division, under Gregg, that had come up behind, fell with all its force on the Southern flank. Had it driven in the Southern lines here, Pleasanton's victory would have been assured, but the men in gray, knowing that they must stand, stood with a courage that defied everything. The heavy Northern masses could not drive them away, and then Stuart, whirling about, charged the North in turn with his thousands of horsemen. They were met by more Northern cavalry coming up, and the combat assumed a deeper and more furious phase.

Sherburne, with the fragment of his troop and Harry by his side, was in this charge. The effect of it upon Harry, as upon his older comrade, was bewildering. The combatants, having emptied their pistols or thrust them back in their belts, were now using their sabres alone. Nearly twenty thousand blades were flashing in the air. Again the battle was face to face and the lines became mixed. Riderless horses, emerging from the turmoil, were running in all directions, many of them neighing in pain and terror. Men, dismounted and wounded, were crawling away from the threat of the trampling hoofs.

The gunners fired the cannon whenever they were sure they would not strike down their own, but the horsemen charged upon them and wrenched the guns from their hands, only to have them wrenched back again by the Southerners. It was the greatest cavalry battle of the war, and the spectacle was appalling. Many of the horses seemed to share the fury of their riders and kicked and bit. Their beating hoofs raised an immense cloud of dust, through which the blades of the sabres still flashed.

Harry never knew how he went through it unhurt. Looking back, it seemed that such a thing was impossible. Yet it occurred. But he became conscious that the Southern horsemen, after the long and desperate struggle, were driving back those of the North. They had superior numbers. One of the Northern divisions, after having been engaged with infantry elsewhere, failed to come up.

Pleasanton, after daring and skill that deserved greater success, was forced slowly to withdraw. Roused by the roar of the firing, heavy masses of Ewell's infantry were now appearing on the horizon, sent by Lee, with orders to hurry to the utmost. Pleasanton, maintaining all his skill and coolness, dexterously withdrew his men across the river, and Stuart did not consider it wise to follow. Each side had lost heavily. Pleasanton had not only struck a hard blow, but he had learned where Lee's army lay, and, moreover, he had shown the horsemen of the South that those of the North were on the watch.

It was late in the afternoon when the last Northern rider crossed the Rappahannock, and Harry looked upon a field strewn with the fallen, both men and horses. Then he turned to Sherburne and bound up his

wounded shoulder for him. The hurt was not serious, but Sherburne, although they had driven off the Northern horse, was far from sanguine.

"It's a Pyrrhic victory," he said. "We had the superior numbers, and it was all we could do to beat them back. Besides, they surprised us, when we thought we had a patent on that sort of business."

"It's so," said Harry, his somber glance passing again over the field.

Their feeling was communicated, too, to the advancing masses of infantry. The soldiers, when they saw the stricken field and began to hear details from their brethren of the horse, shook their heads. There was no joy of victory in the Southern army that night. The enemy, when he was least expected, had struck hard and was away.

Harry rode to General Lee and gave him as many details as he could of the cavalry battle, to all of which the general listened without comment. He had reports from others also, and soon he dismissed Harry, who took up his usual night quarters with his blankets under a green tree. Here he found Dalton, who was eager to hear more.

"They say that the Yankees, although inferior in numbers, pushed us hard, Harry; is it so?" he asked.

"It is, and they caught us napping, too. George, I'm beginning to wonder what's waiting for us there in the North."

It was dark now and he gazed toward the North, where the stars already twinkled serenely in the sky. It seemed to him that their army was about to enter some vast, illimitable space, swarming with unknown enemies. He felt for a little while a deep depression. But it was partly physical. His exertions of the day had been tremendous, and the intense excitement, too, had almost overcome him. The watchful Dalton noticed his condition, and wisely said nothing, allowing his pulses to regain their normal beat.

It was nearly an hour before his nerves became quiet, and then he sank into a heavy sleep. In the morning youth had reasserted itself, both physically and mentally. His doubts and apprehensions were gone. The unconquerable Army of Northern Virginia was merely marching again to fresh triumphs.

Although Hooker now understood Lee's movement, and was pushing more troops forward on his side of the Rappahannock, the Southern general, with his eye ever on his main object, did not cease his advance. He had turned his back on Washington, and nothing, not even formidable irruptions like that of Pleasanton, could make him change his plan.

The calls from the Valley of Virginia became more frequent and urgent. Messengers came to Lee, begging his help. Milroy at Winchester, with a strong force, was using rigorous measures. The people claimed that he had gone far beyond the rules of war. Jackson had come more than once to avenge them, and now they expected as much of Lee.

They did not appeal in vain. Harry saw Lee's eyes flash at the reports of the messengers, and he himself took a dispatch, the nature of which he knew, to Ewell, who was in advance, leading Jackson's old corps. Ewell, strapped to his horse, had regained his ruddiness and physical vigor. Harry saw his eyes shine as he read the dispatch, and he knew that nothing could please him more.

"You know what is in this, Lieutenant Kenton?" he said, tapping the paper.

"I do, sir, and I'm sorry I can't go with you."

"So am I; but as sure as you and I are sitting here on our horses, trouble is coming to Mr. Milroy. Some friends of yours in the little regiment called the Invincibles are just beyond the hill. Perhaps you'd like to see them."

Harry thanked him, saluted, and rode over the hill, where he found the two colonels, St. Clair and Langdon riding at the head of their men. The youths greeted him with a happy shout and the colonels welcomed him in a manner less noisy but as sincere.

"The sight of you, Harry, is good for any kind of eyes," said Colonel Talbot. "But what has brought you here?"

"An order from General Lee to General Ewell."

"Then it must be of some significance."

"It is, sir, and since it will be no secret in a few minutes, I can tell you that this whole corps is going to Winchester to take Milroy. I wish I could go with you, Colonel, but I can't."

"You were at Brandy Station, and we weren't," said St. Clair quietly. "It's our turn now."

"Right you are, Arthur," said Langdon. "I mean to take this man Milroy with my own hands. I remember that he gave us trouble in Jackson's time. He's been licked once. What right has he to come back into the Valley?"

"He's there," said Harry, "and they say that he's riding it hard with ironshod hoofs."

"He won't be doing it by the time we see you again," said St. Clair confidently as they rode away.

Harry did not see them again for several days, but when Ewell's division rejoined the main army, all that St. Clair predicted had come to pass. St. Clair himself, with his left arm in a sling, where it was to remain for a week, gave him a brief and graphic account of it.

"All the soldiers in the army that he had once led knew how Old Jack loved that town," he said, "and they were on fire to drive the Yankees away from it once more. We marched fast. We were the foot cavalry, just as we used to be; and, do you know, that Cajun band was along with our brigade, as lively as ever. The Yankees had heard of our coming, but late. They had already built forts around Winchester, but they didn't dream until the last moment that a big force from Lee's army was at hand. Their biggest fort was on Applepie Ridge, some little distance from Winchester. We came up late in the afternoon and had to rest a while, as it was awful hot. Then we opened, with General Ewell himself in direct command there. Old Jube Early had gone around to attack their other works, and we were waiting to hear the roaring of his guns.

"We gave it to 'em hot and heavy. General Ewell was on foot--that is, one foot and a crutch--and you ought to have seen him hopping about among the falling cannon balls, watching and ordering everything. Sunset was at hand, with Milroy fighting us back and not dreaming that Early was coming on his flank. Then we heard Early's thunder. In a few minutes his men stormed the fort on the hill next to him and turned its guns upon Milroy himself.

"It was now too dark to go much further with the fighting, and we waited until the next morning to finish the business. But Milroy was a slippery fellow. He slid out in the night somehow with his men, and was five miles away before we knew he had gone. But we followed hard, overtook him, captured four thousand men and twenty-three cannon and scattered the rest in every direction. Wasn't that a thorough job?"

"Stonewall Jackson would never have let them escape through his cordon and get a start of five miles."

"That's so, Harry, Old Jack would never have allowed it. But then, Harry, we've got to remember that there's been only one Stonewall Jackson, and there's no more to come."

"You're telling the whole truth, St. Clair, and if General Ewell did let 'em get away, he caught 'em again. It was a brilliant deed, and it's cleared the Valley of the enemy."

"Our scouts have reported that some of the fugitives have reached Pennsylvania, spreading the alarm there. I suppose they'll be gathering troops in our front now. What's the news from Hooker, Harry?"

"He's moving northwest to head us off, but I don't think he has any clear idea where we're going."

"Where are we going, Harry?"

"It's more than I can tell. Maybe we're aiming for Philadelphia."

"Then there'll be a big stir among the Quakers," said Happy Tom.

"It doesn't matter, young gentlemen, where we're going," said Colonel

Talbot, who heard the last words. "It's our business to be led, and we know that we're in the hands of a great leader. And we know, too, that whatever dangers he leads us into, he'll share them to the full. Am I not right, Hector?"

"You speak the full truth, Leonidas."

"Aye, aye, sir," said Harry. "It's sufficient for us to follow where General Lee leads."

"But we need a great victory," said Colonel Talbot. "We've had news from the southwest. The enemy has penetrated too far there. That fellow Grant is a perfect bulldog. They say he actually means to take our fortress of Vicksburg. He always hangs on, and that's bad for us. If we win this war, we've got to win it with some great stroke here in the east."

"You speak with your usual penetration and clearness, Leonidas," said Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire, and then the two rode on, side by side, firm, quiet figures.

Now came days when suspense and fear hung heavy over the land. The sudden blow out of the dark that had destroyed Milroy startled the North. The fugitives from his command told alarming stories of the great Southern force that was advancing. The division of Hill, watching Hooker on the Rappahannock, also dropped into the dark where Lee's main army had already gone. The Army of the Potomac took up its march on a parallel line to the westward, but it was never able to come into close contact with the Army of Northern Virginia. There were clouds of skirmishers and cavalry between.

Undaunted by his narrow escape at Brandy Station, Stuart showed all his old fire and courage, covering the flanks and spreading out a swarm of horsemen who kept off the Northern scouts. Thus Lee was still able to veil his movements in mystery, and the anxious Hooker finally sent forward a great force to find and engage Stuart's cavalry. Stuart, now acting as a rear guard, was overtaken near the famous old battlefield of Manassas. For a long time he fought greatly superior numbers and held them fast until nightfall, when the Northern force, fearing some trap, fell back.

Harry had been sent back with two other staff officers, and from a distance he heard the crash and saw the flame of the battle. But he had no part in it, merely reporting the result late in the night to his general, who speedily pressed on, disregarding what might occur on his flanks or in his rear, sure that his lieutenants could attend to all dangers there.

The days were full of excitement for Harry. While he remained near Lee, the far-flung cavalry continually brought in exciting reports. As Harry saw it, the North was having a taste of what she had inflicted on the South. The news of Milroy's destruction, startling enough in itself, had been magnified as it spread on the wings of rumor. The same rumor

enlarged Lee's army and increased the speed of his advance.

Sherburne, recovered from his slight wound, was the most frequent bringer of news. There was not one among all Stuart's officers more daring than he, and he was in his element now, as they rode northward into the enemy's country. He told how the troopers had followed Milroy's fugitives so closely that they barely escaped across the Potomac, and then how the Unionists of Maryland had fled before the gray horsemen.

Sherburne did not exaggerate. Hitherto the war had never really touched the soil of any of the free states, but now it became apparent that Pennsylvania, the second state of the Union in population, would be invaded. Excitement seized Harrisburg, its capital, which Lee's army might reach at any time. People poured over the bridges of the Susquehanna and thousands of men labored night and day to fortify the city.

Jenkins, a Southern cavalry leader, was the first to enter Pennsylvania, his men riding into the village of Greencastle, and proceeding thence to Chambersburg. While the telegraph all over the North told the story of his coming, and many thought that Lee's whole army was at hand, Jenkins turned back. His was merely a small vanguard, and Lee had not yet drawn together his whole army into a compact body.

The advance of Lee with a part of his army was harassed moreover by the Northern cavalry, which continued to show the activity and energy that it had displayed so freely at Pleasanton's battle with Stuart. Harry, besides bearing messages for troops to come up, often saw, as he rode back and forth, the flame of firing on the skyline, and he heard the distant mutter of both rifle and cannon fire. Some of these engagements were fierce and sanguinary. In one, more than a thousand men fell, a half to either side.

Harry was shot at several times on his perilous errands, and once he had a long gallop for safety. Then Lee stopped a while at the Potomac, with his army on both sides of the river. He was waiting to gather all his men together before entering Pennsylvania. Already they were in a country that was largely hostile to them, and now Harry saw the difficulty of getting accurate information. The farmers merely regarded them with lowering brows and refused to say anything about Union troops.

Harry had parted company for the time with his friends of the Invincibles. They were far ahead with Ewell, while he and Dalton remained with Lee on the banks of the Potomac. Yet the delay was not as long as it seemed to him. Soon they took up their march and advanced on a long line across the neck of Maryland into Pennsylvania, here a region of fertile soil, but with many stony outcrops. The little streams were numerous, flowing down to the rivers, and horses and men alike drank thirstily at them, because the weather was now growing hot and the marching was bad.

It was near the close of the month when Harry learned that Hooker had

been relieved of the command of the Army of the Potomac at his own request, and that he had been succeeded by Meade.

"Do you know anything about Meade?" he asked Dalton.

"He's been one of the corps commanders against us," replied the Virginian, "and they say he's cautious. That's all I know."

"I think it likely that we'll find out before long what kind of a general he is," said Harry thoughtfully. "We can't invade the North without having a big battle."

The corps of Hill and Longstreet were now joined under the personal eye of Lee, who rode with his two generals. Ewell was still ahead. Finally they came to Chambersburg, which the Southern advance had reached earlier in the month, and Lee issued an order that no devastation should be committed by his troops, an order that was obeyed.

Harry and Dalton walked a little through the town, and menacing looks met them everywhere.

"We've treated 'em well, but they don't like us," he said to Dalton.

"Why should they? We come as invaders, as foes, not as friends. Did our people in the Virginia towns give the Yankees any very friendly looks?"

"Not that I've heard of. I suppose you can't make friends of a people whom you come to make war on, even if you do speak kind words to them."

"Is General Stuart here?" asked Dalton.

"No, he's gone on a great raid with his whole force. I suppose he's going to sweep up many detachments of the enemy."

"And meanwhile we're going on to Harrisburg, the capital of Pennsylvania."

"But it seems to me that Stuart ought to be with us."

"Maybe he's gone to find out just where the Army of the Potomac is. We've lost Meade, and Meade has lost us. Some prisoners that we've brought in say that nobody in the North knows just where our army is, although all know that it's in Pennsylvania."

But that night, while Harry was at General Lee's headquarters, a scout arrived with news that the Army of the Potomac was advancing upon an almost parallel line and could throw itself in his rear. Other scouts came, one after another, with the same report. Harry saw the gravity with which the news was received, and he speedily gathered from the talk of those about him that Lee must abandon his advance to the Pennsylvania capital and turn and fight, or be isolated far from Virginia, the Southern base.

Stuart and the cavalry were still absent on a great raid. Lee's orders to Stuart were not explicit, and the cavalry leader's ardent soul gave to them the widest interpretation. Now they felt the lack of his horsemen, who in the enemy's country could have obtained abundant information. A spy had brought them the news that the Army of the Potomac had crossed the Potomac and was marching on a parallel line with them, but at that point their knowledge ended. The dark veil, which was to be lifted in such a dramatic and terrible manner, still hung between the two armies.

The weather turned very warm, as it was now almost July. So far as the heat was concerned Harry could not see any difference between Pennsylvania and Kentucky and Virginia. In all three the sun blazed at this time of the year, but the country was heavy with crops, now ripening fast. It was a region that Harry liked. He had a natural taste for broken land with slopes, forests, and many little streams of clear water. Most of the fields were enclosed in stone fences, and the great barns and well-built houses indicated prosperous farmers.

He and Dalton rode up to one of these houses, and, finding every door and window closed, knocked on the front door with a pistol butt. They knew it was occupied, as they had seen smoke coming from the chimney.

"This house surely belongs to a Dutchman," said Dalton, meaning one of those Pennsylvanians of German descent who had settled in the rich southeast of Pennsylvania generations ago.

"I fear they don't know how to talk English," said Harry.

"They can if they have to. Hit that door several times more, Harry, and hit it hard. They're a thrifty people, and they wouldn't like to see a good door destroyed."

Harry beat a resounding tattoo until the door was suddenly thrown open and the short figure of a man of middle years, chin-whiskered and gray, but holding an old-fashioned musket in his hands, confronted them.

"Put down that gun, Herr Schneider! Put it down at once!" said Dalton, who had already levelled his pistol.

The man was evidently no coward, but when he looked into Dalton's eye, he put the musket on the floor.

Harry, still sitting on his horse--they had ridden directly up to the front door--saw a stalwart woman and several children hovering in the dusk of the room behind the man. He watched the whole group, but he left the examination to Dalton.

"I want you to tell me, Herr Schneider, the location of the Army of the Potomac, down to the last gun and man, and what are the intentions of General Meade," said Dalton.

The man shook his head and said, "Nein."

"Nine!" said Dalton indignantly. "General Meade has more than nine men with him! Come, out with the story! All those tales about the rebels coming to burn and destroy are just tales, and nothing more. You understand what I'm saying well enough. Come, out with your information!"

"Nein," said the German.

"All right," said Dalton in a ferocious tone. "After all, we are the rebel ogres that you thought we were."

He turned toward his comrade and, with his back toward the German, winked and said:

"What do you think I'd better do with him?"

"Oh, kill him," replied Harry carelessly. "He's broad between the eyes and there's plenty of room there for a bullet. You couldn't miss at two yards."

The German made a dive toward his musket, but Dalton cried sharply:

"Hands up or I shoot!"

The German straightened himself and, holding his hands aloft, said:

"You would not kill me in the shelter of mein own house?"

"Well, that depends on the amount of English you know. It seems to me, Herr Schneider, that you learned our language very suddenly."

"I was a man who learns very fast when it was necessary. Mein brain works in a manner most wonderful when I look down the barrel of a big pistol."

"This pistol is a marvelous stimulant to a good education."

"How did you know mein name was Schneider?"

"Intuition, Herr Schneider! Intuition! We Southern people have wonderful intuitive faculties."

"Well, it was not Schneider. My name was Jacob Onderdonk."

Harry laughed and Dalton reddened.

"The joke is on me, Mr. Onderdonk," said Dalton. "But we're here on a serious errand. Where is General Meade?"

"I have not had my regular letter from General Meade this morning. Vilhelmina, you are sure you have had wordings from General Meade?"

"Noddings, Jacob," she said.

Dalton flushed again and muttered under his breath.

"We want to know," he said sharply, "if you have seen the Army of the Potomac or heard anything of it."

A look of deep sadness passed over the face of Jacob Onderdonk.

"I haf one great veakness," he said, "one dot makes my life most bitter. I haf de poorest memory in de vorld. Somedimes I forget de face of mein own Vilhelmina. Maybe de Army uf de Potomac, a hundred thousand men, pass right before my door yesterday. Maybe, as der vedder vas hot, that efery one uf dem hundred thousand men came right into der house und take a cool drink out uf der water bucket. But I cannot remember. Alas, my poor memory!"

"Then maybe Wilhelmina remembers."

"Sh! do not speak uf dot poor voman. I do not let her go out uf der house dese days, as she may not be able to find der vay back in again."

"We'd better go, George," said Harry. "I think we only waste time asking questions of such a forgetful family."

"It iss so," said Onderdonk; "but, young Mister Rebels, I remember one thing."

"And what is that?" asked Dalton.

"It vas a piece of advice dot I ought to gif you. You tell dot General Lee to turn his horse's head and ride back to der South. You are good young rebels. I can see it by your faces. Ride back to der South, I tell you again. We are too many for you up here. Der field uf corn iss so thick und so long dot you cannot cut your way through it. Your knife may be sharp and heavy, but it vill veer out first. Do I not tell the truth, Vilhelmina, mein vife?"

"All your life you haf been a speaker of der truth, Hans, mein husband."

"I think you're a poor prophet, Mr. Onderdonk," said Dalton. "We recognize, however, the fact that we can't get any information out of you. But we ask one thing of you."

"Vat iss dot?"

"Please to remember that while we two are rebels, as you call them, we neither burn nor kill. We have offered you no rudeness whatever, and the Army of Northern Virginia is composed of men of the same kind."

"I vill remember it," said Onderdonk gravely, and as they saluted him politely, he returned the salute.

"Not a bad fellow, I fancy," said Harry, as they rode away.

"No, but our stubborn enemy, all the same. Wherever our battle is fought we'll find a lot of these Pennsylvania Dutchmen standing up to us to the last."

Harry and Dalton rejoined the staff, bringing with them no information of value, and they marched slowly on another day, camping in the cool of the evening, both armies now being lost to the anxious world that waited and sought to find them.

Lee himself, as Harry gathered from the talk about him, was uncertain. He did not wish a battle now, but his advance toward the Susquehanna had been stopped by the news that the Army of the Potomac could cut in behind. The corps of Ewell had been recalled, and Harry, as he rode to it with a message from his general, saw his old friends again. They were in a tiny village, the name of which he forgot, and Colonel Talbot and Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire, sitting in the main room of what was used as a tavern in times of peace, had resumed the game of chess, interrupted so often. Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire was in great glee, just having captured a pawn, and Colonel Talbot was eager and sure of revenge, when Harry entered and stated that he had delivered an order to General Ewell to fall back yet farther.

"Most untimely! Most untimely!" exclaimed Colonel Talbot, as they rapidly put away the board and chessmen. "I was just going to drive Hector into a bad corner, when you came and interrupted us."

"You are my superior officer, Leonidas," said Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire, "but remember that this superiority applies only to military rank. I assert now, with all respect to your feelings, that in regard to chess it does not exist, never has and never will."

"Opinions, Hector, are--opinions. Time alone decides whether they are or are not facts. But our corps is to fall back, you say, Harry? What does it signify?"

"I think, Colonel, that it means a great battle very soon. It is apparent that General Lee thinks so, or he would not be concentrating his troops so swiftly. The Army of the Potomac is somewhere on our flank, and we shall have to deal with it."

"So be it. The Invincibles are few but ready."

Harry rode rapidly back to Lee with the return message from Ewell, and found him going into camp on the eve of the last day of June. The weather was hot and scarcely any tents were set, nearly everybody preferring the open air. Harry delivered his message, and General Lee said to him, with his characteristic kindness:

"You'd better go to sleep as soon as you can, because I shall want you to go on another errand in the morning to a place called Gettysburg."

Gettysburg! Gettysburg! He had never heard the name before and it had absolutely no significance to him now. But he saluted, withdrew, procured his blankets and joined Dalton.

"The General tells me, George, that I'm to go to Gettysburg," he said. "What's Gettysburg, and why does he want me to go there?"

"I'm to be with you, Harry, and we're both going with a flying column, in order that we may report upon its conduct and achievements. So I've made inquiries. It's a small town surrounded by hills, but it's a great center for roads. We're going there because it's got a big shoe factory. Our role is to be that of shoe buyers. Harry, stick out your feet at once!"

Harry thrust them forward.

"One sole worn through. The heel gone from the other shoe, and even then you're better off than most of us. Lots of the privates are barefooted. So you needn't think that the role of shoe buyer is an ignominious one."

"I'll be ready," said Harry. "Call me early in the morning, George. We're a long way from home, and the woods are not full of friends. Getting up here in these Pennsylvania hills, one has to look pretty hard to look away down South in Dixie."

"That's so, Harry. A good sleep to you, and to-morrow, as shoe buyers, we'll ride together to Gettysburg."

He lay between his blankets, went quickly to sleep and dreamed nothing of Gettysburg, of which he had heard for the first time that day.

CHAPTER XII

THE ZENITH OF THE SOUTH

The sun of the first day of July, which was to witness the beginning of the most tremendous event in the history of America, dawned hot and clouded with vapors. They hung in the valleys, over the steep stony hills and along the long blue slopes of South Mountain. The mists made the country look more fantastic to Harry, who was early in the saddle. The great uplifts and projections of stone assumed the shapes of castles and pyramids and churches.

Over South Mountain, on the west, heavy black clouds floated, and the

air was close and oppressive.

"Rain, do you think?" said Harry to Dalton.

"No, just a sultry day. Maybe a wind will spring up and drive away all these clouds and vapors. At least, I hope so. There's the bugle. We're off on our shoe campaign."

"Who leads us?"

"We go with Pettigrew, and Heth comes behind. In a country so thick with enemies it's best to move only in force."

The column took up its march and a cloud of dust followed it. The second half of June had been rainy, but there had been several days of dry weather now, allowing the dust to gather. Harry and Dalton soon became very hot and thirsty. The sun did not drive away the vapors as soon as they had expected, and the air grew heavier.

"I hope they'll have plenty of good drinking water in Gettysburg," said Harry. "It will be nearly as welcome to me as shoes."

They rode on over hills and valleys, and brooks and creeks, the names of none of which they knew. They stopped to drink at the streams, and the thirsty horses drank also. But it remained hard for the infantry. They were trained campaigners, however, and they did not complain as they toiled forward through the heat and dust.

They came presently to round hillocks, over which they passed, then they saw a fertile valley, watered by a creek, and beyond that the roofs of a town with orchards behind it.

"Gettysburg!" said Dalton.

"It must be the place," said Harry. "Picturesque, isn't it? Look at those two hills across there, rising so steeply."

One of the hills, the one that lay farther to the south, a mass of apparently inaccessible rocks, rose more than two hundred feet above the town. The other, about a third of a mile from the first, was only half its height. They were Round Top and Little Round Top. In the mists and vapors and at the distance the two hills looked like ancient towers. Harry and George gazed at them, and then their eyes turned to the town.

It was a neat little place, with many roads radiating from it as if it were the hub of a wheel, and the thrifty farmers of that region had made it a center for their schools.

Harry had learned from Jackson, and again from Lee, always to note well the ground wherever he might ride. Such knowledge in battle was invaluable, and his eyes dwelled long on Gettysburg.

He saw running south of the town a long high ridge, curving at the east

and crowned with a cemetery, because of which the people of Gettysburg called it Cemetery Ridge or Hill. Opposed to it, some distance away and running westward, was another but lower ridge that they called Seminary Ridge. Beyond Seminary Ridge were other and yet lower ridges, between two of which flowed a brook called Willoughby Run. Beyond them all, two or three miles away and hemming in the valley, stretched South Mountain, the crests of which were still clothed in the mists and vapors of a sultry day. Near the town was a great field of ripening wheat, golden when the sun shone. Not far from the horsemen was another little stream called Plum Run. They also saw an unfinished railroad track, with a turnpike running beside it, the roof and cupola of a seminary, and beside the little marshy stream of Plum Run a mass of jagged, uplifted rocks, commonly called the Devil's Den.

Harry knew none of these names yet, but he was destined to learn them in such a manner that he could never forget them again. Now he merely admired the peaceful and picturesque appearance of the town, set so snugly among its hills.

"That's Gettysburg, which for us just at this moment is the shoe metropolis of the world," said Dalton, "but I dare say we'll not be welcomed as purchasers or in any other capacity."

"You take a safe risk, George," said Harry. "Tales that we are terrible persons, who rejoice most in arson and murder, evidently have been spread pretty thoroughly through this region."

"Both sections scatter such stories. I suppose it's done in every war. It's only human nature."

"All right, Mr. Pedantic Philosopher. Maybe you're telling the truth. But look, I don't think we're going into Gettysburg in such a great hurry! Yankee soldiers are there before us!"

Other Southern officers had noted the blue uniforms and the flash of rifle barrels and bayonets in Gettysburg. As they used their glasses, the town came much nearer and the Union forces around it increased. Buford, coming up the night before, had surmised that a Southern force would advance on Gettysburg, and he had chosen the place for a battle. He had with him four thousand two hundred mounted men, and he posted them in the strong positions that were so numerous. He had waited there all night, and already his scouts had informed him that Pettigrew and Heth were advancing.

"Are we to lose our shoes?" whispered Harry.

"I don't think so," replied Dalton in an undertone. "We're in strong force, and I don't see any signs that our generals intend to turn back. Harry, your glasses are much stronger than mine. What do you see?"

"I see a lot. The Yankees must be four or five thousand, and they are posted strongly. They are thick in the railroad cut and hundreds of horses are held by men in the rear. It must be almost wholly a cavalry

force."

"Do you see any people in the town?"

"There is not a soul in the streets, and as far as I can make out all the doors are closed and the windows shuttered."

"Then it's a heavy force waiting for us. The people know it, and expecting a battle, they have gone away."

"Your reasoning is good, and there's the bugle to confirm it. Our lines are already advancing!"

It was still early in the morning, and the strong Southern force which had come for shoes, but which found rifles and bayonets awaiting them instead, advanced boldly. They, the victors of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, had no thought of retreating before a foe who invited them to combat.

Harry and Dalton found their hearts beating hard at this their first battle on Northern soil, and Harry's eyes once more swept the great panorama of the valley, the silent town, the lofty stone hills, and far beyond the long blue wall of South Mountain, with the mists and vapors still floating about its crest.

Heth was up now, and he took full command, sending two brigades in advance, the brigades themselves preceded by a great swarm of skirmishers. Harry and Dalton rode with one of the brigades, and they closely followed those who went down the right bank of the stream called Willoughby Run, opening a rapid fire as they advanced upon a vigilant enemy who had been posted the night before in protected positions.

Buford's men met the attack with courage and vigor. Four thousand dismounted cavalry, all armed with carbines, sent tremendous volleys from the shelter of ridges and earthworks. The fire was so heavy that the Southern skirmishers could not stand before it, and they, too, began to seek shelter. The whole Southern column halted for a few minutes, but recovered itself and advanced again.

The battle blazed up with a suddenness and violence that astonished Harry. The air was filled in an instant with the whistling of shells and bullets. He heard many cries. Men were falling all around him, but so far he and Dalton were untouched. Heth, Davis, Archer and the others were pushing on their troops, shouting encouragement to them, and occasionally, through the clouds of smoke, which were thickening fast, Harry saw the tanned faces of their enemies loading and firing as fast as they could handle rifle and cannon. The Northern men had shelter, but were fewer in number. The soldiers in gray were suffering the heavier losses, but they continued to advance.

The battle swelled in volume and fierceness along the banks of Willoughby Run. There was a continuous roar of rifles and cannon, and the still, heavy air of the morning conducted the sound to the

divisions that were coming up and to the trembling inhabitants of the little town who had fled for refuge to the farmhouses in the valley.

Harry and George had still managed to keep close together. Both had been grazed by bullets, but these were only trifles. They saw that the division was not making much progress. The men in blue were holding their ground with extraordinary stubbornness. Although the Southern fire, coming closer, had grown much more deadly, they refused to yield.

Buford, who had chosen that battlefield and who was the first to command upon it, would not let his men give way. His great hour had come, and he may have known it. Watching through his glasses he had seen long lines of Southern troops upon the hills, marching toward Gettysburg. He knew that they were the corps of Hill, drawn by the thunder of the battle, and he felt that if he could hold his ground yet a while longer help for him too would come, drawn in the same manner.

Harry once caught sight of this officer, a native of Kentucky like himself. He was covered with dust and perspiration, but he ran up and down, encouraging his men and often aiming the cannon himself. It was good fortune for the North that he was there that day. The Southern generals, uncertain whether to push the battle hard or wait for Lee, recoiled a little before his tremendous resistance.

But the South hesitated only for a moment. Hill, pale from an illness, but always full of fire and resolution, was hurrying forward his massive columns, their eagerness growing as the sound of the battle swelled. They would overwhelm the Union force, sweep it away.

Yet the time gained by Buford had a value beyond all measurements. The crash of the battle had been heard by Union troops, too, and Reynolds, one of the ablest Union generals, was leading a great column at the utmost speed to the relief of the general who had held his ground so well. A signalman stationed in the belfry of the seminary reported to Buford the advance of Reynolds, and the officer, eager to verify it, rushed up into the belfry.

Then Buford saw the columns coming forward at the double quick, Reynolds in his eagerness galloping at their head, and leaving them behind. He looked in the other direction and he saw the men of Hill advancing with equal speed. He saw on one road the Stars and Stripes and on the other the Stars and Bars. He rushed back down the steps and met Reynolds.

"The devil is to pay!" he cried to Reynolds.

"How do we stand?"

"We can hold on until the arrival of the First Corps."

Buford sprang on his horse, and the two generals, reckless of death, galloped among the men, encouraging the faint-hearted, reforming the lines, and crying to them to hold fast, that the whole Army of the

Potomac was coming.

Harry felt the hardening of resistance. The smoke was so dense that he could not see for a while the fresh troops coming to the help of Buford, but he knew nevertheless that they were there. Then he heard a great shouting behind him, as Hill's men, coming upon the field, rushed into action. But Jackson, the great Jackson whom he had followed through all his victories, the man who saw and understood everything, was not there!

The genius of battle was for the moment on the other side. Reynolds, so ably pushing the work that Buford had done, was seizing the best positions for his men. He was acting with rapidity and precision, and the troops under him felt that a great commander was showing them the way. His vigor secured the slopes and crest of Cemetery Hill, but the Southern masses nevertheless were pouring forward in full tide.

The combat had now lasted about two hours, and, a stray gust of wind lifting the smoke a little, Harry caught a glimpse of a vast blazing amphitheater of battle. He had regarded it at first as an affair of vanguards, but now he realized suddenly that this was the great battle they had been expecting. Within this valley and on these ridges and hills it would be fought, and even as the thought came to him the conflict seemed to redouble in fury and violence, as fresh brigades rushed into the thick of it.

Harry's horse was killed by a shell as he rode toward a wood on the Cashtown road, which both sides were making a desperate effort to secure. Fortunately he was able to leap clear and escape unhurt. In a few moments Dalton was dismounted in almost the same manner, but the two on foot kept at the head of the column and rushed with the skirmishers into the bushes. There they knelt, and began to fire rapidly on the Union men who were advancing to drive them out.

Harry saw an officer in a general's uniform leading the charge. The bullets of the skirmishers rained upon the advance. One struck this general in the head, when he was within twenty yards of the riflemen, and he fell stone dead. It was the gallant and humane Reynolds, falling in the hour of his greatest service. But his troops, wild with ardor and excitement, not noticing his death, still rushed upon the wood.

The charge came with such violence and in such numbers that the Southern skirmishers and infantry in the wood were overpowered. They were driven in a mass across Willoughby Run. A thousand, General Archer among them, were taken prisoners.

Harry and Dalton barely escaped, and in all the tumult and fury of the fighting they found themselves with another division of the Southern army which was resisting a charge made with the same energy and courage that marked the one led by Reynolds. But the charge was beaten back, and the Southerners, following, were repulsed in their turn.

The battle, which had been raging for three hours with the most extraordinary fury, sank a little. Harry and Dalton could make nothing

of it. Everything seemed wild, confused, without precision or purpose, but the fighting had been hard and the losses great.

Heth now commanded on the field for the South and Doubleday for the North. Each general began to rectify his lines and try to see what had happened. The Confederate batteries opened, but did not do much damage, and while the lull continued, more men came for the North.

Harry and Dalton had found their way to Heth, who told them to stay with him until Lee came. Heth was making ready to charge a brigade of stalwart Pennsylvania lumbermen, who, however, managed to hold their position, although they were nearly cut to pieces. Hill now passed along the Southern line, and like the other Southern leaders, uncertain what to do in this battle brought on so strangely and suddenly, ceased to push the Union lines with infantry, but opened a tremendous fire from eighty guns. The whole valley echoed with the crash of the cannon, and the vast clouds of smoke began to gather again. The Union forces suffered heavy losses, but still held their ground.

Harry thought, while this comparative lull in close fighting was going on, that Dalton and he should get back to General Lee with news of what was occurring, although he had no doubt the commander-in-chief was now advancing as fast as he could with the full strength of the army. Still, duty was duty. They had been sent forward that they might carry back reports, and they must carry them.

"It's time for us to go," he said to Dalton.

"I was just about to say that myself."

"We can safely report to the general that the vanguards have met at Gettysburg and that there are signs of a battle."

Dalton took a long, comprehensive look over the valley in which thirty or forty thousand men were merely drawing a fresh breath before plunging anew into the struggle, and said:

"Yes, Harry, all the signs do point that way. I think we can be sure of our news."

They had not been able to catch any of the riderless horses galloping about the field, and they started on foot, taking the road which they knew would lead them to Lee. They emerged from some bushes in which they had been lying for shelter, and two or three bullets whistled between them. Others knocked up the dust in the path and a shell shrieked a terrible warning over their heads. They dived back into the bushes.

"Didn't you see that sign out there in the road?" asked Harry.

"Sign! Sign! I saw no sign," said Dalton.

"I did. It was a big sign, and it read, in big letters:

'No Thoroughfare.'

"You must be right. I suppose I didn't notice it, because I came back in such a hurry."

They had become so hardened to the dangers of war that, like thousands of others, they could jest in the face of death.

"We must make another try for it," said Dalton. "We've got to cross that road. I imagine our greatest danger is from sharpshooters at the head of it."

"Stoop low and make a dash. Here goes!"

Bent almost double, they made a hop, skip and jump and were in the bushes on the other side, where they lay still for a few moments, panting, while the hair on their heads, which had risen up, lay down again. Quick as had been their passage, fully a dozen ferocious bullets whined over their heads.

"I hate skirmishers," said Harry. "It's one thing to fire at the mass of the enemy, and it's another to pick out a man and draw a bead on him."

"I hate 'em, too, especially when they're firing at me!" said Dalton. "But, Harry, we're doing no good lying here in the bushes, trying to press ourselves into the earth so the bullets will pass over our heads. Heavens! What was that?"

"Only the biggest shell that was ever made bursting near us. You know those Yankee artillerymen were always good, but I think they've improved since they first saw us trying to cross the road."

"To think of an entire army turning away from its business to shoot at two fellows like ourselves, who ask nothing but to get away!"

"And it's time we were going. The bushes rise over our heads here. We must make another dash."

They rose and ran on, but to their alarm the bushes soon ended and they emerged into a field. Here they came directly into the line of fire again, and the bullets sang and whistled around them. Once more they read in invisible but significant letters the sign, "No Thoroughfare," and darted back into the wood from which they had just come, while shells, not aimed at them, but at the armies, shrieked over their heads.

"It's not the plan of fate that we should reach General Lee just yet," said Harry.

"The shells and bullets say it isn't. What do you think we ought to do?"

Harry rose up cautiously and began to survey their position. Then he uttered a cry of joy.

"More of our men are coming," he exclaimed, "and they are coming in heavy columns! I see their gray jackets and their tanned faces, and there, too, are the Invincibles. Look, you can see the two colonels, riding side by side, and just behind them are St. Clair and Langdon!"

Dalton's eyes followed Harry's pointing finger, and he saw. It was a joyous sight, the masses of their own infantry coming down the road in perfect order, and their own personal friends not two hundred yards away. But the Northern artillerymen had seen them too, and they began to send up the road a heavy fire which made many fall. Ewell's men came on, unflinching, until they unlimbered their own guns and began to reply with fierce and rapid volleys.

The two youths sprang from the brush and rushed directly into the gray ranks of the Invincibles before they could be fired upon by mistake as enemies. The two colonels had dismounted, but they recognized the fugitives instantly and welcomed them.

"Why this hurry, Lieutenant Kenton?" said Colonel Talbot politely.

"We were trying to reach General Lee, and not being able to do so, we are anxious to greet friends."

"So it would seem. I do not recall another such swift and warm greeting."

"But we're glad, Leonidas, that they've found refuge with us," said Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire.

"So we are, Hector. Down there, lads, for your lives!"

The colonel had seen a movement in the hostile artillery, and at his sharp command all of the Invincibles and the two lads threw themselves on their faces, not a moment too soon, as a hideous mass of grape and canister flew over their heads. The Invincibles, rising to their feet, sent a return volley from their rifles, and then, at the command of a general, fell back behind their own cannon.

The Northern artillery in front was shifted, evidently to protect some weaker position of their line, but the Southern troops in the road did not advance farther at present, awaiting the report of scouts who were quickly sent ahead.

"You're welcome to our command," said Langdon, "but I notice that you come on foot and in a hurry. We're glad to protect officers on the staff of the commander-in-chief, whenever they appeal to us."

"Even when they come running like scared colts," said St. Clair.

"Why, Happy, I saw both of 'em jump clean over bushes ten feet high."

"You'd have jumped over trees a hundred feet high if a hundred thousand Yankees were shooting at you as they were shooting at us," rejoined Harry.

"What place is this in the valley, Harry?" asked Colonel Talbot.

"It's called Gettysburg, sir. We heard that it was full of shoes. We went there this morning to get em, but we found instead that it was full of Yankees."

"And they know how to shoot, too," said Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire. "We heard all the thunder of a great battle as we came up."

"You haven't come too soon, sir," said Dalton. "The Yankees are fighting like fiends, and we've made very little headway against 'em. Besides, sir, fresh men are continually coming up for 'em."

"And fresh men have now come for our side, too," said Colonel Leonidas Talbot proudly. "I fancy that a division of Jackson's old corps will have a good deal to say about the result."

"What part of the corps, sir, is this?" asked Harry.

"Rodes' division. General Ewell himself has not yet arrived, but you may be sure he is making the utmost haste with the rest of the division."

Rodes, full of eagerness, now pushed his troops forward. Hill, who saw his coming with unmeasured joy, shifted his men until they were fully in touch with those of Rodes, the whole now forming a great curving line of battle frowning with guns, the troops burning for a new attack.

Harry looked up at the sun, which long ago had pierced the mists and vapors, but not the smoke. He saw to his surprise that it had reached and passed the zenith. It must now be at least two o'clock in the afternoon. He was about to look at his watch when the Southern trumpets at that moment sounded the charge, and, knowing no other way to go, he and Dalton fell in with the Invincibles.

Howard was in command of the Northern army at this time, and from a roof of a house in Gettysburg he had been watching the Southern advance. He and Doubleday gathered all their strength to meet it, and, despite the new troops brought by Rodes, Hill was unable to drive them back. Harry felt, as he had felt all along, that marked hardening of the Northern resistance.

The battle wavered. Sometimes the North was driven back and sometimes it was the South, until Hill at last, massing a great number of men on his left, charged with renewed courage and vigor. The Union men could not withstand their weight, and their flank was rolled up. Then Gordon and his Georgians marched into the willows that lined Rock Creek, forded the stream and entered the field of wheat beyond.

Harry saw this famous charge, and during a pause of the Invincibles he watched it. The Georgians, although the cannon and rifles were now turned upon them, marched in perfect order, trampling down the yellow wheat which stood thick and tall before them. The sun glittered on

their long lines of bayonets. Many men fell, but the ranks closed up and marched unflinchingly on. Then, as they came near their foe, they fired their own rifles and rushed forward.

The men in blue were taken in the flank at the same time by Jubal Early, and two more brigades also rushed upon them. It was the same Union corps, the Eleventh, that had suffered so terribly at Chancellorsville under the hammer strokes of Jackson, and now it was routed again. It practically dissolved for the time under the overwhelming rush on front and flank and became a mass of fugitives.

Harry heard for the first time that day the long, thrilling rebel yell of triumph, and both Howard and Doubleday, watching the battle intently, had become alarmed for their force. Howard was already sending messages to Meade, telling him that the great battle had begun and begging him to hurry with the whole army. Doubleday, seeing one flank crushed, was endeavoring to draw back the other, lest it be destroyed in its turn.

Harry and Dalton and all the Invincibles felt the thrill of triumph shooting through them. They were advancing at last, making the first real progress of the day.

Harry felt that the days of Jackson had come back. This was the way in which they had always driven the foe. Ewell himself was now upon the field. The loss of a leg had not diminished his ardor a whit. Everywhere his troops were driving the enemy before them, increasing the dismay which now prevailed in the ranks of men who had fought so well.

Harry began to shout with the rest, as the Southern torrent, irresistible now, flowed toward Gettysburg, while Ewell and Hill led their men. The town was filled with the retreating Union troops and the cannon and rifles thundered incessantly in the rear, driving them on. The whole Southern curve was triumphant. Ewell's men entered the town after the fugitives, driving all before them, and leaving Gettysburg in Southern hands.

But the Northern army was not a mob. The men recovered their spirit and reformed rapidly. Many brave and gallant officers encouraged them and a reserve had already thrown up strong entrenchments beyond the town on Cemetery Hill, to which they retreated and once more faced their enemy.

Harry and Dalton stopped at Gettysburg, seeing the battle of the vanguards won, and turned back. Their place was with the general to the staff of whom they belonged, and they believed they would not have to look far. With a battle that had lasted eight hours Lee would surely be upon the field by this time, or very near it.

There were plenty of riderless horses, and capturing two, one of which had belonged to a Union officer, they went back in search of their commander. It was a terrible field over which they passed, strewn with human wreckage, smoke and dust still floated over everything. They inquired as they advanced of officers who were just arriving upon the field, and one of them, pointing, said:

"There is General Lee."

Harry and Dalton saw him sitting on his horse on Seminary Ridge, his figure immovable, his eyes watching the Union brigades as they retreated up the slopes of the opposite hill. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon and the sunlight was brilliant. The commander and his horse stood out like a statue on the hill, magnified in the blazing beams.

Harry and his comrade paused to look at him a few moments. Their spirits had risen when they saw him. They felt that since Lee had come all things were possible and when the whole of the two armies met in battle the victory would surely be theirs.

The two rode quietly into the group of staff officers gathered at a little distance behind Lee. They knew that it was not necessary now to make any report or explanation. Events reported for themselves and explained everything also. Their comrades greeted them with nods, but Harry never ceased to watch Lee.

The commander-in-chief in his turn was gazing at the panorama of battle, spread almost at his feet. Although the combat was dying, enough was left to give it a terrible aspect. The strife still went on in a part of Gettysburg and cannon were thudding and rifles cracking. The flames from houses set on fire by the shells streamed aloft like vast torches. Horses that had lost their riders galloped aimlessly, wild with terror.

While he looked, General Hill rode up and joined them. Hill had been ill that day. His face was deadly in its pallor, and he swayed in his saddle from weakness. But his spirit and courage were high. Harry saw the two generals talking together, and again he glanced at the valley. After long and desperate fighting the Southern victory had been complete. Any young lieutenant could see that. The whole Northern force was now being driven in great disorder upon Cemetery Hill, and a man like Jackson, without going to see Lee, would have hurled his whole force instantly upon those flying masses. Some one had called Ewell and Hill, brave and able as they were, small change for Jackson, and the phrase often came to Harry's mind. Still, it was not possible to find any man or any two men who could fill the place of the great Stonewall.

The day was far from over. At least three hours of sunlight were left. More Southern troops had come up, and Harry expected to see Lee launch his superior numbers against the defeated enemy. But he did not. There was some pursuit, but it was not pressed with vigor, and the victors stopped. Contradictory orders were given, it was claimed later, by the generals, but Lee, with the grandeur of soul that places him so high among the immortals, said afterward:

"The attack was not pressed that afternoon, because the enemy's force was unknown, and it was considered advisable to await the rest of our troops."

When failure occurred he never blamed anyone but himself. Yet Harry

always thought that his genius paled a little that afternoon. He did not show the amazing vigor and penetration that were associated with the name of Lee both before and afterwards. Perhaps it was an excess of caution, due to his isolated position in the enemy's country, and perhaps it was the loss of Jackson. Whatever it was, the precious hours passed, the enemy, small in numbers, was not driven from his refuge on Cemetery Hill, and the battle died.

The Southern leaders themselves did not know the smallness of the Northern force that had taken shelter on the hill. That hardening of the resistance which Harry had felt more than once had been exemplified to the full that deadly morning. Buford and Reynolds had shown the penetration and resolution of Jackson himself, and their troops had supported them with a courage and tenacity never surpassed in battle. Only sixteen or seventeen thousand in number, they had left ten thousand killed and wounded around the town, but with only one-third of their numbers unhurt they rallied anew on Cemetery Hill and once more turned defiant faces toward the enemy.

Hancock, whose greatest day also was at hand, had arrived, sent forward in haste by Meade. Unsurpassed as a corps commander, and seeing the advantage of the position, he went among the beaten but willing remnants, telling them to hold on, as Meade and the whole Army of the Potomac were coming at full speed, and would be there to meet Lee and the South in the morning.

Both commanding generals felt that the great battle was to be fought to a finish there. Meade had not yet arrived, but he was hurrying forward all the divisions, ready to concentrate them upon Cemetery Hill. Lee also was bringing up all his troops, save the cavalry of Stuart, now riding on the raid around the Northern army, and absent when they were needed most.

Harry did not know for many days that this fierce first day and the gathering of the foes on Gettysburg was wholly unknown to both North and South. The two armies had passed out of sight under the horizon's rim, and the greatest battle of the war was to be fought unknown, until its close, to the rival sections.

Harry and Dalton, keeping close together, because they were comrades and because they felt the need of companionship, watched from their own hill the town and the hill beyond. Harry felt no joy. The victory was not yet to him a victory. He knew that the field below, terrible to the sight, was destined to become far more terrible, and the coming twilight was full of omens and presages.

The sun sank at last upon the scene of human strife and suffering, but night brought with it little rest, because all through the darkness the brigades and regiments were marching toward the fatal field.

CHAPTER XIII

GETTYSBURG

Harry took many messages that night, and he witnessed the gathering of the generals about Lee. He saw Ewell come, hobbling on his crutches, eager for battle and disappointed that they had not pushed the victory. Hill returned again, refusing to yield to his illness. And there was Longstreet, thick-bearded, the best fighter that Lee had since the death of Jackson; McLaws, Hood, Heth, Pender, Jubal Early, Anderson and others, veterans of many battles, great and small.

They talked long and earnestly and pointed many times to the battlefield and the opposing heights. While they talked, a man appeared among the men in blue on Cemetery Hill, accompanied only by a staff officer and an orderly. He had ridden a long distance, and naturally lean and haggard, these traits in his appearance were exaggerated by weariness and anxiety. He looked as little like a great general as Jackson had looked in those days before he had sprung into fame.

His military hat was black and broad of brim, and the brim, having become limp, drooped down over his face. There were spectacles on his nose, and it is said of him that he could have been taken more easily for a teacher than for a commander-in-chief. Thus Meade came to his army in the decisive moment of his country's life. He inspired neither enthusiasm nor discouragement. He looked upon those left from the battle and upon the brigades which had come since, thousands of men already sound asleep among the white stones of the churchyard. Then he turned in a calm and businesslike manner to the task of arranging a stern front for the storm which he knew would burst upon them to-morrow. The respect of his officers for him increased.

Lee's generals went to their respective commands. Harry once more took orders, and, as he carried messages or brought them back, he never failed to see all that he could. The great corps of Ewell was drawn up on the battlefield of the day, Hill's forces extended to Willoughby Run, and the Southern line was complete along the whole curve. They also had the welcome news that Stuart at Carlisle had heard of the battle and would be present with the cavalry on the morrow.

Harry, riding about in the darkness, recovered much of his spirits. The whole Southern army would be present in the morning, and while Jackson was dead, his spirit might ride again at their head. Now he awaited the dawn with confidence, believing that Lee would win another great victory.

Harry was sent on his last errand far after midnight, and it took him to one of Ewell's divisions, in the edge of Gettysburg. It was a clear night, with a bright summer sky, a good moon and the stars in their

myriads twinkling peacefully over the panorama of human passion and death. But they seemed very far away and cold to the boy, who was chilled by the night and the impending sense of mighty conflict. In Virginia they were fighting against the invader and in defense of their own soil. Now they were the invader, and it was the men in blue who defended.

As he passed over that battlefield, on which the dead and the badly hurt yet lay, his heart was dissolved for the time in sadness. The dead were thick all around him, and there were many hurt seriously who were so still that he did not know whether they were alive or not. He heard very few groans. He noticed often on the battlefields that the hurt usually shut their teeth together and endured in silence. As he approached one of the little streams, a form twisted itself suddenly from his path, and a weak voice exclaimed:

"For God's sake don't step on me!"

Harry looked down. It was a boy with yellow hair, younger than himself. He could not have been over sixteen, but he wore a blue uniform and a bullet had gone through his shoulder. Harry had a powerful sensation of pity.

"I would not have stepped on you," he said. His duty urged him on, but his feelings would not let him go, and he added:

"I'll help you."

He lifted the lad, rapidly cut away his coat, and slicing it into strips, bound up tightly the two wounds in his shoulder where the bullet had gone in and where it had come out.

"You've lost a lot of blood," he said, "but you've got enough left to live on until you gather another supply, and you won't lose any more now."

"Thank you," murmured the boy; "but you're very good for--for a rebel."

Harry laughed.

"Why, you innocent child!" he said. "Have they been filling your head with tales of our ferocity and cruelty?"

He went down to the stream, dipped up water in his cap, and brought it back to the boy, who drank eagerly. Then he placed him in a more comfortable position on the turf, and patting his head, said:

"You'll get well sure, and maybe you and I will meet after the war and be friends."

All of which came true. Its like happened often in this war. But he went out of Harry's mind, as he walked on and delivered his message in the edge of Gettysburg. He could not return before seeking the

Invincibles, who were surely here in the vanguard--if they were yet alive. Harry shuddered. All his friends might have perished in that whirlwind of death. He soon learned that they had suffered greatly, but that those who were left were lying on the grass of what had been a lawn.

He found the lawn quickly and saw dark figures strewn about upon the ground. They were so still and silent that they looked like the dead, but Harry knew that it was the stupor of exhaustion. As they were inside the lines and needing no watch, there was no sentinel.

Harry stepped over the low fence and looked again at the figures. The moonlight silvered them and they did not stir. He could not see a single form move. It was weird, uncanny, and the blood chilled in his veins. But he shook himself violently, angry at his weakness, and walked among them, looking for the two colonels and the two lieutenants. A figure suddenly sat up before him and a dignified voice said:

"Your footstep awakened me, Harry, and if there is a message, I am here to receive it. But I ask you in the name of mercy to be quick. I was never before so much overpowered that I could not hold up my head a minute."

Before Harry could speak another figure rose.

"Yes, Harry, be quick if you can, and let us go back to sleep," said Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire in a pleading voice.

"Thank God I've found you both. I have no message for you. I was merely looking to see if all of you were alive."

"You've always had a kind heart, Harry," said Colonel Talbot, "and we can't tell you how much we appreciate what you've done."

"Are St. Clair and Happy Tom here?"

"I cannot tell you. We suffered from such tremendous exhaustion that our men fell upon the grass, we with them, and all of us sank into stupor. But, Harry, they must be here! We couldn't have lost those boys! Why, I can't think of them as not living!"

"If you'll let me make a suggestion, lie down and go to sleep again," said Harry. "I'll find 'em."

The two colonels stretched a little, as if they were about to rise and go with him, but the effort was beyond their powers. They sank back and returned to sleep. Harry went on, his heart full of fear for the two young friends who were so dear to him.

The survivors of the Invincibles lay in all sorts of positions, some on their backs, some on their sides, some on their faces, and others doubled up like little children. It was hard to recognize those dark figures, but he came at last to one in a lieutenant's uniform, and he

was sure that it was Langdon. He was afraid at first that he was dead, but he put his hand on his shoulder and shook it.

There was no response, but Harry felt the warmth of the body pass through the cloth to his hand, and he knew that Langdon was living. He shook him again.

Happy opened his eyes slowly and regarded Harry with a long stare.

"Are you a ghost?" he asked solemnly.

"No, I was never more alive than I am now."

"I don't believe you, Harry. You're a ghost and so am I. Look at the dead men lying all around us. We're just the first up. Why, Harry, nobody could go through the crater of an active volcano, as we've done, and live. I was either burned to death or shot to death with a bullet or blown to pieces with a shell. I don't know which, but it doesn't matter. What kind of a country is this, Harry, into which we've been resurrected?"

"Stop your foolishness, Happy. You're alive, all right, although you may not be to-morrow night. The whole Army of the Potomac is coming up and there's going to be another great battle."

"Then it's just as well that I'm alive, because General Lee will need me. But, Harry, don't you think I've answered enough questions and that I've been awake long enough? Harry, remember that I'm your friend and comrade, almost your brother, and let me go back to sleep."

"Where is St. Clair? Was he killed?"

"No. A million shells burst over both of us, but we escaped them all. But Arthur will be dead to the world for a while, just the same. His is the fourth figure beyond me, but you couldn't wake him if you fired a cannon at his ear, and in two minutes you won't be able to wake me with another cannon."

Happy's head fell back as he spoke, and in less than half the time he gave he had joined the band of the original seven sleepers. Harry, stepping lightly over the slumbering figures--he had left his horse on the hill--went back to the staff, where he saw that many were yet watching. At the urgent advice of an older officer he stretched himself between two blankets to protect his body from dew and slept a little before dawn. He, too, had felt the exhaustion shown by the Invincibles, but his nervous system was keyed highly, too high, in fact, to sleep long. Moreover, he seemed to find some new reserve of strength, and when Dalton put his hand upon his shoulder he sprang to his feet, eager and active. Dalton had not been sent on many errands the night before, and, sleeping longer than Harry, he had been up a half hour earlier.

"You'll find coffee and food for the staff back a little," said Dalton,

"and I'd advise you to take breakfast, Harry."

"I will. What's going on?"

"Nothing, except the rising of the sun. See it, Harry, just coming over the edge of the horizon behind those two queer hills."

The rim of the eastern sky was reddening fast, and Round Top and Little Round Top stood out against it, black and exaggerated. They were raised in the dawn, yet dim, to twice their height, and rose like gigantic towers.

But there was light enough already for Harry to see masses of men on the opposing slopes, and stone fences running along the hillsides, some of which had been thrown up in the night by soldiers.

"I take it that the whole Army of the Potomac is here," he said.

"So our scouts tell us," replied Dalton. "Our forces are gathered, too, except the six thousand infantry under Pickett and McLaws and the cavalry under Stuart. But they'll come."

Harry and Dalton ate breakfast quickly, and, hurrying back, stood near their chief, ready for any service. All the Southern forces were in line. Heth held the right, Pender the left, and Anderson, Hood, and McLaws and the others were stationed between. The brilliant sun moved slowly on and flooded the town, the hills and the battlefield of the day before with light. The officers of either side with their powerful glasses could plainly see the hostile troops. Harry had glasses of his own, and he looked a long time. But he saw little movement in the hostile ranks. Meade and Hancock and the others had worked hard in the hours of darkness and the Army of the Potomac was ready.

Harry expected to hear the patter of rifles. Surely the battle would open at once. But there was no sound of strife. It seemed instead that a great silence had settled over the two armies and all between. Perhaps each was waiting for the other to make the first cast of the dice.

Harry studied Lee's face, but he could read nothing there. Like Jackson he had the power of dismissing all expression. He wore a splendid new uniform which had recently been sent to him by the devoted people of Virginia, and with his height and majestic figure, his presence had never seemed more magnificent than on that morning. It was usually he who opened the battle, never waiting for the enemy, but as yet he gave no order.

Longstreet, Hill and Hood presently joined Lee, and the four walked a little higher up the ridge, where they examined the Northern army for a long time through their glasses. Lee must have recognized the strength of that position, the formidable ridges, the stone walls bristling with batteries, all crowned with an army of veterans more numerous than his own, and, even when Stuart and Pickett should come, more numerous yet

by fifteen thousand men. But his army, with the habit of victory, was eager for battle, sure that it could win, despite the numbers and position of the enemy.

The generals came back, but Lee said little. Harry often wished that he could have penetrated the mind of the great commander that morning, a mind upon which so much hung and which must have been assailed by doubts and fears, despite the impenetrable mask of his face. But he did not yet give any orders to attack, and Harry and Dalton, who had nothing to do but look on, were amazed. There was the Army of the Potomac waiting, and it was not Lee's habit to let it wait.

Slow though the sun was, it was now far up the blue arch and the day was intensely hot. The golden beams poured down and everything seemed to leap out into the light. Harry clearly saw the Northern cannon and now and then he saw an officer moving about. But the men in blue were mostly still, lying upon their arms. The troops of his own army were quiet also, and they, too, were lying down.

It suddenly occurred to Harry that no more fitting field for a great and decisive battle could have been chosen. It was like a vast arena, enclosed by the somber hills and the two Round Tops, on both of which flew the flags of the Union signalmen.

Yet the day drew on. The two armies of nearly two hundred thousand men merely sat and stared at each other. Noon passed and the afternoon advanced. Harry yet wondered, as many another did. But it was not for him to criticize. They were led by a man of genius, and the great mind must be working, seeking the best way.

He and Dalton and some others lay down on the grass, while the heavy silence still endured. Not a single cannon shot had been fired all that day, and soon the sun would begin its decline from the zenith.

"I think I'll go to sleep," said Dalton.

"You couldn't if you tried," said Harry, "and you know it. If General Lee is waiting, it's because he has good reasons for waiting, and you know that, too."

"You're right in both instances, Harry. I could never shut my eyes on a scene like this, and, late as it grows, there will yet be a battle to-day. Weren't some orders sent along the line a little while ago?"

"Yes, the older men took 'em. What time is it, George?"

"Four o'clock." Then he closed his watch with a snap, and added:

"The battle has begun."

The heavy report of a cannon came from the Southern right under Longstreet. It sped up the valleys and returned in sinister echoes. It was succeeded by silence for a moment, and then the whole earth shook

beneath a mighty shock. All the batteries along the Southern line opened, pouring a tremendous volume of fire upon the whole Northern position.

The young officers leaped to their feet. A volcano had burst. The Union batteries were replying, and the front of both armies blazed with fire. The smoke hung high and Harry and Dalton could see in the valley beneath it. They caught the gleam of bayonets and saw the troops of Longstreet advancing in heavy masses to the assault of the slope where the peach trees grew, now known as the Peach Orchard. Here stood the New Yorkers who had been thrust forward under Sickles, a rough politician, but brave and in many respects capable. There was some confusion among them as they awaited the Confederates, Sickles, it is charged, having gone too far in his zeal, and then endeavoring to fall back when it was too late. But the men under him were firm. On this field the two great states of New York and Pennsylvania, through the number of troops they furnished for it, bore the brunt of the battle.

Harry and Dalton, crouched down in order that they might see better under the smoke, watched the thrilling and terrible spectacle. The Southern vanguard was made up of Texans, tall, strong, tanned men, led by the impetuous Hood, and shouting the fierce Southern war cry they rushed straight at the corps of Sickles. The artillery and rifle fire swept through their ranks, but they did not falter. Many fell, but the others rushed on, and Harry, although unconscious of it, began to shout as he saw them cross a little stream and charge with all their might against the enemy.

The combat was stubborn and furious. The men of Sickles redoubled their efforts. At some points their line was driven in and the Texans sought to take their artillery, but at others they held fast and even threatened the Southern flank. They knew, too, that reinforcements were promised to them and they encouraged one another by saying they were already in sight.

Harry could not turn his eyes away from this struggle, much of which was hidden in the smoke, and all of which was confused. The cannon of Hill and Ewell were thundering elsewhere, but here was the crucial point. The Round Tops rose on one side of the combatants. Round Top itself seemed too lofty and steep for troops, but Little Round Top, accessible to both men and cannon, would dominate the field, and he believed that Hood, as soon as his men crushed Sickles, would whirl about and seize it. But he could not yet tell whether fortune favored the Blue or the Gray.

The generals from both sides watched the struggle with intense anxiety and hurried forward fresh troops. Woods and rocks and slopes helped the defense, but the attack was made with superior numbers. Longstreet himself was directing the action and a part of Hill's men were coming up to his aid. Sedgwick and Sykes, able generals, were rushing to help Sickles. The whole combat was beginning to concentrate about the furious struggle for the Peach Orchard and Little Round Top.

Hood, in all the height of the struggle, saw the value of Little Round Top and tried his utmost to seize it. Again the Northern generals were to show that they had learned how to see what should be done and to do it at once. Little Round Top rose up, dominant over the whole field, a prize of value beyond all computation. Just then it was the most valuable hill in all the world.

A Northern general, Warren, the chief engineer of the army, had seen the value of Little Round Top as quickly as Hood. The signalmen were about to leave, but he made them stay. An entire brigade, hurrying to the battle, was passing the slope, when Warren literally seized upon them by force of command and rushed the men and their cannon to the crest.

Hood's soldiers were already climbing the slopes, when the fire of the brigade, shell and bullets, struck almost in their faces. Harry, watching through his glasses, saw them reel back and then go on again, firing their own rifles as they climbed over the rocky sides of Little Round Top. Again that fierce volley assailed them, crashing through their ranks, and again they went on into the flame and the smoke.

Harry saw the battle raging around the crest of Little Round Top. Then he uttered a cry of despair. The Southerners, with their ranks thin--woefully thin--were falling back slowly and sullenly. They had done all that soldiers could do, but the commanding towers of Little Round Top remained in Union hands, and the Union generals were soon crowding it with artillery that could sweep every point in the field below.

But Sickles himself was not faring so well. His men, fighting for every inch of ground about the Peach Orchard, were slowly driven back. Sickles himself fell, a leg shattered, and walked on one leg for more than fifty years afterwards. Hood, his immediate opponent, also fell, losing an arm then and a leg later at Chickamauga, but Longstreet still pushed the attack, and the Northern generals who had stood around Sickles resisted with the stubbornness of men who meant to succeed or die.

Early in the battle Harry had seen General Lee walk forward to a point in the center of his line and sit down on a smooth stump. There he sat a long time, apparently impassive. Harry sometimes took his eyes away from the combat for the Peach Orchard and Little Round Top to watch his commander-in-chief. But the general never showed emotion. Now and then General Hill or his military secretary, General Long, came to him and they would talk a little together, but they made no gestures. Lee would rise when the generals came, but when they left he would resume his place on the stump and watch the struggle through his glasses. Throughout the whole battle of that day he sent a single order and received but one message. He had given his orders before the advance, and he left the rest to his lieutenants.

"I wish I could be as calm as he is," said Harry.

"I'll risk saying that he isn't calm inside," said Dalton. "How could

any man be at such a time?"

"You're right. Duck! Here comes a shell!"

But the shell fell short and exploded on the slope.

"Now listen, will you!" exclaimed Harry. "That's the spirit!"

Immediately after the shell burst a Southern band began to play. And it played the merriest music, waltzes and polkas and all kinds of dances. Harry felt his feet move to the tunes, while the battle below, at its very height, roared and thundered.

But he promptly forgot the musicians as he watched the battle. He knew that the Invincibles were somewhere in that volcano of fire and smoke, and it was almost too much to hope that they would again come unhurt out of such a furious conflict. But they, too, passed quickly from his mind. The struggle would let nothing else remain there long.

He saw that the Union troops were still in the Peach Orchard and that they were pouring a deadly fire also from Little Round Top. Hancock had come to take the place of Sickles, and he was drawing every man he could to his support. The afternoon was waning, but the battle was still at its height. Men were falling by thousands, and generals, colonels, majors, officers of all kinds were falling with them. The Southerners had not encountered such resistance in any other great battle, and the ground, moreover, was against them.

Yet the grim fighter, Longstreet, never ceased to push on his brigades. The combat was now often face to face, and sharpshooters, hidden in every angle and hollow of the earth, picked off men by hundreds. The great rocky mass known as the Devil's Den was filled with Northern sharpshooters and for a long time they stung the Southern flank terribly, until a Southern battery, noticing whence the deadly stream of bullets issued, sprayed it with grape and canister until most of the sharpshooters were killed, while those who survived fled like wolves from their lairs.

The day was now passing, but Harry could see no decrease in the fury of the battle. Longstreet was still hurling his men forward, and they were met with cannon and rifle and bayonet. The Confederate line now grew more compact. The brigades were brought into closer touch, and, gathering their strength anew, they rushed forward in a charge, heavier and more desperate than any that had gone before. Generals and colonels led them in person. Barksdale, young, but with snow-white hair, was riding at the very front of the line, and he fell, dying, in the Union ranks.

The Southern charge was stopped again on the left wing of the Union army, and with the coming of the night the battle there sank, but elsewhere the South was meeting with greater success. Ewell, making a renewed and fierce attack at sunset, drove in the Northern right, and, seconded by Early, took their defenses there. But the darkness was coming fast,

and although the firing went on for a long time, it ceased at last, with the two enemies still face to face and the battle drawn.

Harry, who had expected to see a glorious victory won by the setting of the sun, was deeply depressed. His youth did not keep him from seeing that very little advantage had been won in that awful conflict of the afternoon, and he saw also that the Army of the Potomac had been fighting as if it had been improved by defeat. Nor had Lee thrown in his whole force where it was needed most. If Jackson had only been there! Harry pictured his swift flank movement, his lightning stroke, and the crumpling up of the enemy. Jackson loomed larger than ever now to his disappointed and excited mind.

Harry had been all day long and far into the night on Seminary Hill. Often he had scarcely moved for an hour, and now, when the firing ceased and he stood up and tried to peer into the valley of death, he found his limbs so stiff for a minute or two that he could scarcely move. His eyes ached and his throat was raw from smoke and the fumes of burned gunpowder. But as he shook himself and stretched his muscles, he regained firmness of both mind and body.

"We didn't win much," he said to Dalton.

"Not to-day, but we will to-morrow. Harry, wasn't it awful? It looks to me down there like a pit of destruction."

And Dalton described it truly. The losses of the day before had been doubled. Thirty thousand men on the two sides had now fallen, and there was another day to come.

Harry saw that the generals themselves were assailed by doubts and fears. He with other young staff officers witnessed the council of Lee and his leading officers in the moonlight on Seminary Ridge. Some spoke of retreat. A drawn battle in the enemy's country, and with an inferiority of numbers, was for them equivalent to a defeat. Others pointed out, however, that while their losses had been enormous, the courage and spirit of the Army of Northern Virginia were unshaken. Stuart with the cavalry, expected earlier, would certainly be up soon, and, after all, the day had not been without its gains. Longstreet held the Peach Orchard and Ewell was in the Union defenses on the flank of Gettysburg.

But Lee thought most of the troops. These ragged veterans of his who had been invincible asked to be led once more against the enemy. A spirit so high as theirs could not be denied. His decision was given. They would stay and smash the Union army on the morrow.

Harry heard of the decision. He had never doubted that it would be so. They must surely win the next day with the addition of Pickett's men and Stuart's cavalry. He wondered why Stuart had not come up already, but he learned the next morning that a good reason had held him back.

The Union cavalry, always vigilant now, had intercepted Stuart in the

afternoon and had given him battle, just when the combat of the second day had begun at Gettysburg. Gregg led the horsemen in blue and there was another combat like that at Brandy Station, now about five thousand sabres on a side. There was a long and desperate struggle in which neither force could win, young Custer in particular showing uncommon skill and courage for the North, while Wade Hampton performed prodigies for the South. At last they drew off by mutual consent, Gregg into the forest, while Stuart, with his reduced force, rode on in the night to Lee. But Gregg in holding back Stuart had struck the Southern army a great blow.

Harry and Dalton with nothing to do received permission to go among the soldiers, and as they marked their spirits, their own rose. Then they passed down toward the battlefield. Harry had some idea that they might again find the Invincibles, as they had found them the night before, but their time was too short. The Invincibles were somewhere in the front, he learned, and, disappointed, he and Dalton turned back into the valley.

The night was clear and bright, and they saw many men coming and going from a cold spring under the shadow of the trees. Some of them were wounded and limped painfully. Others carried away water in their hats and caps for comrades too badly wounded to move. Harry observed that some wore the blue, and some the gray. Both he and Dalton were assailed by a burning thirst at the sight of the water, and they went to the spring.

Here men who an hour or two ago had been striving their utmost to kill one another were gathered together and spoke as friends. When one went away another took his place. No thought of strife occurred to them, although there would be plenty of it on the morrow. They even jested and foes complimented foes on their courage. Harry and Dalton drank, and paused a few moments to hear the talk.

The moon rode high, and it has looked down upon no more extraordinary scene than this, the enemies drinking together in friendship at the spring, and all about them the stony ramparts of the hills, bristling with cannon, and covered with riflemen, ready for a red dawn, and the fields and ridges on which thirty thousand had already fallen, dead or wounded.

"Another meeting, Mr. Kenton," said a man who had been bent down drinking. As he rose the moonlight shone full upon his face and Harry was startled. And yet it was not strange that he should be there. The face revealed to Harry was one of uncommon power. It seemed to him that the features had grown more massive. The powerful chin and the large, slightly curved nose showed indomitable spirit and resolution. The face was tanned almost to blackness by all kinds of weather. Harry would not have known him at first, had it not been for his voice.

"We do meet in unexpected places and at unexpected times, Mr. Shepard," he said.

"I'm not merely trying to be polite, when I tell you that I'm glad to find you alive. You and I have seen battles, but never another like this."

"And I can truthfully welcome you, Mr. Shepard, as an old acquaintance and no real enemy."

It was an impulse but a noble one that made the two, different in years and so unlike, shake hands with a firm and honest grip.

"Your army will come again in the morning," said Shepard, not as a question, but as a statement of fact.

"Can you doubt it?"

"No, I don't, but to-morrow night, Mr. Kenton, you will recall what I told you at our first meeting in Montgomery more than two years ago."

"You said that we could not win."

"And you cannot. It was never possible. Oh, I know that you've won great victories against odds! You've done better than anybody could have expected, but you had genius to help you, while we were led by mediocrity in the saddle. But you have reached your zenith. Mark how the Union veterans fought to-day. They're as brave and resolute as you are, and we have the position and the men. You'll never get beyond Gettysburg. Your invasion is over. Hereafter you fight always on the defensive."

Harry was startled by his emphasis. The man spoke like an inspired prophet of old. His eyes sparkled like coals of fire in the dark, tanned face. The boy had never before seen him show so much emotion, and his heart sank at the appalling prophecy. Then his courage came back.

"You predict as you hope, Mr. Shepard," he said.

Shepard laughed a little, though not with mirth, and said:

"It is well that it should be settled here. There will be death on a greater scale than any the war has yet seen, but it will have to come sooner or later, and why not at Gettysburg? Good-bye, I go back to the heights. May we both be alive to-morrow night to see which is right."

"The wish is mine, too," said Harry sincerely.

Shepard turned away and disappeared in the darkness. Harry rejoined Dalton who was on the other side of the spring, and the two returned to Seminary Ridge, where they walked among sleeping thousands. They found their way to their comrades of the staff, and their physical powers collapsing at last they fell on the ground where they soon sank into a heavy sleep. The great silence came again. Sentinels walked back and forth along the hostile lines, but they made no noise. There was little

moving of brigades or cannon now. The town itself became a town of phantom houses in the moonlight, nearly all of them still and deserted. On all the slopes of the hostile ridges lay the sleeping soldiers, and on the rocks and fields between lay the dead in thousands. But from the crest of Little Round Top, the precious hill so hardly won, the Union officers watched all through the night, and, now and then, they went through the batteries for which they were sure they were going to have great use.

Harry and Dalton awoke at the same time. Another day, hot and burning, had come, and the two armies once more looked across the valley at each other. Harry soon heard the booming of cannon off to his right, where Ewell's corps stood. It came from the Northern guns and for a long time those of the South did not answer. But after a while Harry's practiced ear detected the reply. The hostile wings facing each other were engaged in a fierce battle. He saw the flash of the guns and the rising smoke, but the center of the Army of Northern Virginia and the other wing did not yet move. He looked questioningly at Dalton and Dalton looked questioningly at him.

They expected every instant that the combat would spread along the entire front, but it did not. For several hours they listened to the thunder of the guns on the left, and then they knew by the movement of the sound that the Southern wing had been driven back, not far it is true, but still it had been compelled to yield, and again Harry's heart sank.

But it rose once more when he concluded that Lee must be massing his forces in the center. The left wing had been allowed to fight against overwhelming numbers in order that the rest of the army might be left free to strike a crushing blow.

Then noon came and the battle on their left died completely. Once more the great silence held the field and Harry was mystified and awed. Lee, as calm and impassive as ever, said little. The ridges confronted one another, bristling with cannon but the armies were motionless. The day was hotter than either of those that had gone before. The sun, huge and red, poised in the heavens, shot down fiery rays in millions. Harry gasped for breath, and when at last he spoke in the stillness his voice sounded loud and harsh in his own ears.

"What does it mean, George?" he said.

"I don't know, but I think they are massing behind us for a charge."

"Not against the sixty or seventy thousand men and the scores of cannon on those heights?"

"Maybe not yet. It's likely there will be a heavy artillery fire first. Yes, I'm right! There go the guns!"

One cannon shot was followed by many others, and then for a while a tremendous cannonade raged along the front of the armies, but it too

died, the smoke lifted, and then came the breathless, burning heat again.

The fire of the sun and of the battle entered Harry's brain. The valley, the town, the hills, the armies, everything swam in a red glare. The great pulses leaped in his throat. He was anxious for them to go on, and get it over. Why were the generals lingering when there was a battle to be finished? Half the day was gone already and nothing was decided.

Conscious that he was about to lose control of himself he clasped his hands to his temples and pressed them tightly. At the same time he made a mighty effort of the will. The millions of black specks that had been dancing before his eyes went away. The solid earth ceased to quiver and settled back into its place, careless of the armies that trampled over it. Again he clearly saw through his glasses the long lines of men in blue along the slopes and on the crest of Cemetery Hill. He marked, too, there, at the highest point, a clump of trees waving their summer green in the hot sunshine. Turning his glasses yet further he saw the massed artillery on Little Round Top, and the gunners leaning on their guns. A house, set on fire purposely or by shells, was burning brightly, like some huge torch to light the way to death.

"You told me they were preparing for a charge," he said to Dalton.

"So they are, Harry. Pickett's men, who have not been here long, are forming up in the rear, but their advance will be preceded by a cannonade. You can see them wheeling guns into line."

Lee, with Hill and Longstreet, had recently ridden along the lines followed by the older staff officers, and often shells and the bullets of sharpshooters had struck about them, but they remained unhurt. Now Lee stopped at one of his old points of observation. It was now about one o'clock in the afternoon, and as the last gun took its place the whole artillery of the Southern army opened with a fire so tremendous that Harry felt the earth trembling, and he was compelled to put his fingers in his ears lest he be deafened.

A storm of metal flew across the valley toward the Northern ranks, but the guns there did not reply yet. The Union troops lay close behind their intrenchments and mostly the storm beat itself to pieces on the side of the hill. The smoke soon became so great that Harry could not tell even with glasses what was going on in the enemy's ranks, but he inferred from the fact that they were not yet replying that they were not suffering much.

But in a quarter of an hour the tremendous cannonade was suddenly doubled in volume. The Union guns were now answering. Two hundred cannon facing one another across the valley were fighting the most terrible artillery duel ever known in America. The air was filled with shells, shot, grape, shrapnel, canister and every form of deadly missile.

Harry and Dalton sprang to cover, as some of the shells struck about them, but they stood up again when they saw that Lee was talking calmly

with his generals.

The Southern fire was accurate. General Meade's headquarters were riddled. Many important officers were wounded, but the Northern gunners, superb always, never flinched from their guns. They fell fast, but others took their places. Guns were dismounted but those in the reserve were brought up instead.

The appalling tumult increased. The shells shrieked as they flew through the air in hundreds, and shrapnel and grape whined incessantly. Harry thought it in very truth the valley of destruction, and it was a relief to him when he received an order to carry and could turn away for a little while. He saw now in the rear the brigades of Pickett which were forming up for the charge, about four thousand five hundred men who had not yet been in the battle, while nearly ten thousand more, under Trimble, Pettigrew and Wilcox, were ready to march on their flanks. Pickett's men were lying on their arms patiently waiting. The time had not quite come.

When Harry came back from his errand the cannonade was still at its height. The roar was continuous, deafening, shaking the earth all the time. A light wind blew the smoke back on the Southern position, but it helped, concealing their batteries to a certain extent, while those of the North remained uncovered.

The Northern army was now suffering terribly, although its infantry stood unflinching under the fire. But the South was suffering too. Guns were shattered, and the deadly rain of missiles carried destruction into the waiting regiments. Harry saw Lee and Longstreet continually under the Union fire. They visited the batteries and encouraged the men. Showers of shells struck around them, but they went on unharmed. Wherever Lee appeared the tremendous cheering could be heard amid the roar of the guns.

Now the Southern artillerymen saw that their ammunition was diminishing fast. Such a furious and rapid fire could not be carried on much longer, and Lee sent the word to Pickett to charge. Harry stood by when the men of Pickett arose--but not all of them. Some had been struck by the shells as they lay on the ground and had died in silence, but their comrades marched out in splendid array, and a vast shout arose from the Southern army as they strove straight into the valley of death.

Harry shouted with the rest. He was wild with excitement. Every nerve in him tingled, and once more the black specks danced before his eyes in myriads. Peace or war! Right or wrong! He was always glad that he saw Pickett's charge, the charge that dimmed all other charges in history, the most magnificent proof of man's courage and ability to walk straight into the jaws of death.

The dauntless Virginians marched out in even array, stepping steadily as if they were on parade, instead of aiming straight at the center of the Union army, where fifty thousand riflemen and a hundred guns were awaiting them. Their generals and those of the supporting divisions

rode on their flanks or at their head. Besides Pickett, Garnett, Wilcox, Armistead, Pettigrew and Trimble were there.

The Southern cannon were firing over the heads of the marching Virginians, covering them with their fire, but the light breeze strengthened a little, driving away the smoke. There they were in the valley, visible to both friend and foe, marching on that long mile from hill to hill. The Southern army shouted again, and it is true that, at this moment, the Union ranks burst into a like cry of admiration, at the sight of a foe so daring, men of their own race and country.

But Harry never took his eyes for a moment from Pickett's column. He was using his glasses, and everything stood out strong and clear. The sun was at the zenith, pouring down rays so fiery that the whole field blazed in light. The nature of the ground caused the Virginians to turn a little, in order to keep the line for the Union center, but they preserved their even ranks, and marched on at a steady pace.

Harry began to shout again, but in an instant or two he saw a line of fire pass along the Union front. Forty guns together opened upon the charging column, and Hancock at the Union center, seeing and understanding the danger, was heaping up men and cannon to meet it.

The shells began to crash into the ranks of the Virginians and the ten thousand on their flanks. Men fell in hundreds and now the batteries on Little Round Top added to the storm of fire. The clouds of smoke gathered again, but the wind presently scattered them and Harry, waiting in agony, saw Pickett's division marching straight ahead, never faltering.

But he groaned when he saw that there was trouble on the flanks. The men of Pettigrew, exhausted by the great efforts they had already made in the battle, wavered and lost ground. Another division was driven back by a heavy flank attack. Others were lost in the vast banks of smoke that at times filled the valley. Only the Virginians kept unbroken ranks and a straight course for the Union center.

Pickett paused a few moments at the burning house for the others to get in touch with him, but they could not do so, and he marched on, with Cemetery Hill now only two hundred yards away. The covering fire of the Southern cannon had ceased long since. It would have been as dangerous now to friend as to foe. Harry, watching through his glasses, uttered another cry. Pickett and his men were marching alone at the hill. Half of them it seemed to him were gone already, but the other half never paused. The fire of a hundred guns had been poured upon them, as they advanced that deadly mile, but with ranks still even they rushed straight at their mark, the Union center.

Then Harry saw all the slopes and the crest of Cemetery Hill blaze with fire. The Virginians were near enough for the rifles now, and the bullets came in sheets. Harry saw it, and he groaned aloud. He no longer had any hope for those brave men. The charge could not succeed!

Yet he saw them rush into the Union ranks and disappear. A group in gray, still cleaving through the multitude, reappeared far up the slope, and then burst, a little band of a few dozen men, into the very heart of the Union center, the point to which they had been sent.

A battle raged for a few minutes under the clump of trees where Hancock had stood directing. There Armistead, who had led them, his hat on the point of his sword, fell dead among the Northern guns, and Cushing, his brave foe who commanded the battery, died beside him. All the others fell quickly or were taken. A few hundreds on the slopes cut their way back through the Union army and reached their own. Pickett, preserved by some miracle, was among them.

Harry gasped and threw down his glasses. Now he knew that the words Shepard had spoken to him the night before at the spring were true. The Southern invasion had been rolled back forever.

He looked at General Lee, who on foot had been watching the charge. The impenetrable mask was gone for a moment, and his face expressed deep emotion. Then the great soul reasserted itself and mounting his horse went forward to meet the fugitives and encourage them. He rode back and forth among them, and Harry heard him say once:

"All will come right in the end. We'll talk it over afterward, but meanwhile every good man must rally. We want all good and true men just now."

His manner was that of a father to his children, and, though they had failed, the spontaneous cheers again burst forth wherever he passed. The wounded as they were carried to the rear raised themselves up to see him, and their cheers were added to the others.

Harry never forgot anything that he saw or heard then. Although the battle, in effect, was over, the Northern artillery, roaring and thundering triumphantly, was sending its shells across the valley and upon Seminary Ridge. But he did not think anything of them, even when they struck near him. It would be days before he could feel fear again. He heard Lee say to an officer who rode up, and stated, between sobbing breaths, that his whole brigade was destroyed:

"Never mind, General. All this has been my fault. It is I who have lost this fight, and you must help me out of it in the best way you can."

To another he said:

"This has been a sad day for us, a sad day. But we can't expect always to gain victories."

Beholding such greatness of soul, Harry regained his own composure. He rejoined Dalton, and soon they saw the Southern army reform its lines, and turn a bristling front to the enemy. The Northern cannon were still flashing and thundering, but the Northern army made no return attack. Gettysburg, in all respects the greatest battle ever fought on the

American continent, was over, and fifty thousand men had fallen.

The sun set, and Harry at last sank on the ground overpowered. The next day the two armies stood on their hills looking at each other, but neither cared to renew the battle after such frightful losses. That afternoon a fearful storm of thunder, lightning and rain burst over the field. It seemed to Harry an echo of the real battle of the day before.

That night Lee, having gathered up his wounded, his guns and his wagons, began his retreat toward the South. His army had lost, but it was still in perfect order, willing, even anxious to fight again. The wagons containing the wounded and the stores stretched for many miles, moving along in the rain, and the cavalry rode on their flanks to protect them.

It was not until the next morning that Harry discovered anything of the Invincibles. In the dawn he saw a covered wagon by the side of which rode an officer, much neater in appearance than the others. He knew at once that it was St. Clair and he galloped forward with a joyous shout.

"Arthur! Arthur!" he cried.

St. Clair turned a pale face that lighted up at the sight of his friend.

"Thank God, you're alive, Harry!" he said, as their hands clasped.

"Are you alone left?" asked Harry.

"Look into the wagon," he said.

Harry lifted a portion of the flap, and, looking in, saw Colonel Leonidas Talbot and Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire sitting on rolls of blankets facing each other. One had his right arm in a sling and the other the left, but the chessmen rested on a board between them and they were playing intently. They stopped a moment or two to give Harry a glad welcome. Then he let the flap drop back.

"They began at daylight," said St. Clair.

"Where's Happy?"

"He's in the wagon, too. He's lying on some blankets behind them."

"Not hurt badly?"

"He was nipped in the shoulder, but it doesn't amount to anything. What he wanted was sleep and he's getting it. He told me not to wake him up again for a month."

"Well, Arthur, we lost."

"Yes, and I don't know just how it happened."

"But we're here, ready to fight them again whenever they come."

"So we are, Harry, and if they ever reach Richmond it will be many a long day before they do it."

"I say so, too."

The great train toiled on through the mud, and the Army of Northern Virginia continued its slow march southward.

Appendix: Transcription notes:

This etext was transcribed from a volume of the 15th printing

The following modifications were applied while transcribing the printed book to e-text:

chapter 1

- page 3, para 4, added a missing open-quote
- page 8, para 3, deleted a misplaced comma
- page 13, Langdon and Dalton are having a conversation, but para 4 incorrectly stated "said St. Clair". It is clear that this should be changed to "said Dalton", because Langdon replies to "George" in his next sentence.
- page 20, para 7, the troop is specified here as "six hundred" men, but is subsequently repeatedly specified as two hundred - changed this reference from "six" to "two"

chapter 2

- page 25, para 8, Sherburne incorrectly called Harry "Dick" - changed to "Harry"
- page 36, para 7, fixed typo "ghose"

chapter 3

- page 49, para 3, fixed typo "Jackkson"
- page 53, para 3, fixed typo "lud"

chapter 5

- page 105, para 3, Dalton incorrectly called Harry "Dick" - changed to "Harry"
- page 109, para 6, changed "Its" to "It's"
- page 120, para 5, added a missing open-quote
- page 121, para 1, fixed typo ("plan" changed to "plain")
- page 121, para 1, fixed typo "cannister"

chapter 6

- page 143, para 5, changed an erroneous period to a comma

chapter 7

- page 153, para 3, changed "And" to "and"
- page 181, para 2, fixed typo "Longeais"

chapter 8

- page 189, para 1, added a missing close-quote

chapter 9

- page 259, para 3, changed "outgenerated" to "outgeneralled"
(whether 'tis a word or not, the variant with double-"l" occurs 3 times in this book, the single-"l" variant only once)

chapter 10

- page 272, para 2, changed "fulness" to "fullness"
- page 273, para 1, fixed typo "marvellous"
- page 282, end of para 2, changed "division" to "divisions"

chapter 11

- page 295, para 3, fixed typo "dextrously"

chapter 13

- page 347, para 4, fixed typo "occurrred"
- page 351, para 4, fixed typo "wofully"
- page 358, para 9, added a missing close-quote
- page 359, para 1, changed "You" to "Your"

Modifications resulting from conversion to plain ASCII:

- chapter 1, page 12, the phrase "In forma pauperis" was presented in italics in the printed book
- chapter 10, page 282, the name "Duffie" was presented in the printed book with an accented "e"

I did not modify:

- There are instances where the use of the comma in the printed book seems to me inappropriate. However, I have adhered to the punctuation as printed (except for obvious printing errors, which are noted above).

For example:

But Harry, having further leave of absence went forth and answered many questions.

- Each section of verse is formatted to appear similar to its presentation in the printed book. Consequently: some verse is indented more than others, some is left-aligned, some is staggered on the left margin, some is center-aligned.
- The author sometimes uses a technique whereby a paragraph introducing a quotation ends with a colon, with the quotation following as the next paragraph.

End of The Project Gutenberg Etext of The Star of Gettysburg
by Joseph A. Altsheler

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that long mile from

hill to hill. The Southern army shouted again, and it is true that,
at this moment, the Union ranks burst into a like cry of admiration,
at the sight of a foe so daring, men of their own race and country.

But Harry never took his eyes for a moment from Pickett's column.

He was using his glasses, and everything stood out strong and clear.

The sun was at the zenith, pouring down rays so fiery that the whole
field blazed in light. The nature of the ground caused the Virginians
to turn a little, in order to keep the line for the Union center,
but they preserved their even ranks, and marched on at a steady pace.

Harry began to shout again, but in an instant or two he saw a line
of fire pass along the Union front. Forty guns together opened upon
the charging column, and Hancock at the Union center, seeing and
understanding the danger, was heaping up men and cannon to meet it.

The shells began to crash into the ranks of the Virginians and the ten
thousand on their flanks. Men fell in hundreds and now the batteries
on Little Round Top added to the storm of fire. The clouds of smoke
gathered again, but the wind presently scattered them and Harry, waiting
in agony, saw Pickett's division marching straight ahead, never

faltering.

But he groaned when he saw that there was trouble on the flanks.

The men of Pettigrew, exhausted by the great efforts they had already made in the battle, wavered and lost ground. Another division was driven back by a heavy flank attack. Others were lost in the vast banks of smoke that at times filled the valley. Only the Virginians kept unbroken ranks and a straight course for the Union center.

Pickett paused a few moments at the burning house for the others to get in touch with him, but they could not do so, and he marched on, with Cemetery Hill now only two hundred yards away. The covering fire of the Southern cannon had ceased long since. It would have been as dangerous now to friend as to foe. Harry, watching through his glasses, uttered another cry. Pickett and his men were marching alone at the hill.

Half of them it seemed to him were gone already, but the other half never paused. The fire of a hundred guns had been poured upon them, as they advanced that deadly mile, but with ranks still even they rushed straight at their mark, the Union center.

Then Harry saw all the slopes and the crest of Cemetery Hill blaze with fire. The Virginians were near enough for the rifles now, and the bullets came in sheets. Harry saw it, and he groaned aloud. He no longer had any hope for those brave men. The charge could not succeed!

Yet he saw them rush into the Union ranks and disappear. A group in

gray, still cleaving through the multitude, reappeared far up the slope, and then burst, a little band of a few dozen men, into the very heart of the Union center, the point to which they had been sent.

A battle raged for a few minutes under the clump of trees where Hancock had stood directing. There Armistead, who had led them, his hat on the point of his sword, fell dead among the Northern guns, and Cushing, his brave foe who commanded the battery, died beside him. All the others fell quickly or were taken. A few hundreds on the slopes cut their way back through the Union army and reached their own. Pickett, preserved by some miracle, was among them.

Harry gasped and threw down his glasses. Now he knew that the words Shepard had spoken to him the night before at the spring were true. The Southern invasion had been rolled back forever.

He looked at General Lee, who on foot had been watching the charge. The impenetrable mask was gone for a moment, and his face expressed deep emotion. Then the great soul reasserted itself and mounting his horse went forward to meet the fugitives and encourage them. He rode back and forth among them, and Harry heard him say once:

"All will come right in the end. We'll talk it over afterward, but meanwhile every good man must rally. We want all good and true men just now."

His manner was that of a father to his children, and, though they had

failed, the spontaneous cheers again burst forth wherever he passed.

The wounded as they were carried to the rear raised themselves up to see him, and their cheers were added to the others.

Harry never forgot anything that he saw or heard then. Although the battle, in effect, was over, the Northern artillery, roaring and thundering triumphantly, was sending its shells across the valley and upon Seminary Ridge. But he did not think anything of them, even when they struck near him. It would be days before he could feel fear again.

He heard Lee say to an officer who rode up, and stated, between sobbing breaths, that his whole brigade was destroyed:

"Never mind, General. All this has been my fault. It is I who have lost this fight, and you must help me out of it in the best way you can."

To another he said:

"This has been a sad day for us, a sad day. But we can't expect always to gain victories."

Beholding such greatness of soul, Harry regained his own composure.

He rejoined Dalton, and soon they saw the Southern army reform its lines, and turn a bristling front to the enemy. The Northern cannon were still flashing and thundering, but the Northern army made no return attack.

Gettysburg, in all respects the greatest battle ever fought on the American continent, was over, and fifty thousand men had fallen.

The sun set, and Harry at last sank on the ground overpowered. The next day the two armies stood on their hills looking at each other, but neither cared to renew the battle after such frightful losses. That afternoon a fearful storm of thunder, lightning and rain burst over the field. It seemed to Harry an echo of the real battle of the day before.

That night Lee, having gathered up his wounded, his guns and his wagons, began his retreat toward the South. His army had lost, but it was still in perfect order, willing, even anxious to fight again. The wagons containing the wounded and the stores stretched for many miles, moving along in the rain, and the cavalry rode on their flanks to protect them.

It was not until the next morning that Harry discovered anything of the Invincibles. In the dawn he saw a covered wagon by the side of which rode an officer, much neater in appearance than the others. He knew at once that it was St. Clair and he galloped forward with a joyous shout.

"Arthur! Arthur!" he cried.

St. Clair turned a pale face that lighted up at the sight of his friend.

"Thank God, you're alive, Harry!" he said, as their hands clasped.

"Are you alone left?" asked Harry.

"Look into the wagon," he said.

Harry lifted a portion of the flap, and, looking in, saw Colonel Leonidas Talbot and Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire sitting on rolls of blankets facing each other. One had his right arm in a sling and the other the left, but the chessmen rested on a board between them and they were playing intently. They stopped a moment or two to give Harry a glad welcome. Then he let the flap drop back.

"They began at daylight," said St. Clair.

"Where's Happy?"

"He's in the wagon, too. He's lying on some blankets behind them."

"Not hurt badly?"

"He was nipped in the shoulder, but it doesn't amount to anything.

What he wanted was sleep and he's getting it. He told me not to wake him up again for a month."

"Well, Arthur, we lost."

"Yes, and I don't know just how it happened."

"But we're here, ready to fight them again whenever they come."

"So we are, Harry, and if they ever reach Richmond it will be many a long day before they do it."

"I say so, too."

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