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SCOUTING FOR SHERIDAN

THE YOUNG KENTUCKIANS
SERIES

GENERAL NELSON'S SCOUT
ON GENERAL THOMAS'S STAFF
BATTLING FOR ATLANTA
FROM ATLANTA TO THE SEA
RAIDING WITH MORGAN

THE YOUNG MISSOURIANS
SERIES

WITH LYON IN MISSOURI
THE SCOUT OF PEA RIDGE
THE COURIER OF THE OZARKS
STORMING VICKSBURG
THE LAST RAID

THE YOUNG VIRGINIANS
SERIES

THE BOY SCOUTS OF THE SHENAN-
DOAH
WITH THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC
SCOUTING FOR SHERIDAN

Illustrated, 12mo, per volume, \$1.25

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The branch cracked, then snapped under Jim's weight

THE YOUNG VIRGINIANS SERIES

Scouting for Sheridan

BY

BYRON A. DUNN

Author of "The Young Kentuckians Series,"
"The Young Missourians Series"

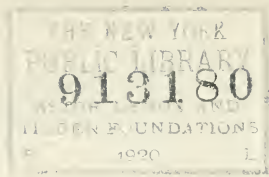
WITH FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS

By J. Allen St. John



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TO THE BOYS OF AMERICA

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PREFACE

THE task which the author commenced twenty years ago is finished. When "The Young Kentuckians Series" was commenced the author intended writing only of the part which the Army of the Cumberland took in the Civil War, for of that army he was a part. But the task grew until it embraced the East and the West.

It is with some misgivings that this volume has been written, for the great war in which this nation is now engaged must necessarily detract from that which occurred fifty and sixty years ago. But the part this country is now taking could never have been if the South had been successful, for we would be a divided people.

The old soldiers of 1861-65 builded better than they knew. In saving the nation they saved freedom to the world, for without the aid of this country Germany would rule the world.

The author has no apology to make for the criticisms he has made in these books. He may be wrong, but he has written what he believes. He has not exaggerated the deeds of General Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley. The author thinks he should be given equal praise with General Grant for the successful termination of the Virginia campaign. In

Preface

fact he believes if Sheridan with his eight thousand splendid cavalry had not joined Grant, Lee and his army would have escaped from Richmond. The end would have been the same but it would have been longer coming.

Scouting is the romance of war, but the days of scouting such as the author has described are over. Today the scout cleaves the air as with the wings of an eagle. No more does he crouch behind rocks, and in tangled thickets, but above the clouds he soars, and in mid-air meets his opponent, and one or both fall to death. The story of the aviator will be the romance of the present war.

To every boy who loves his country and the old flag these books are dedicated. May the deeds of the boys of these books be an inspiration to them to be as brave, merciful and patriotic and as ready to serve their country in time of danger.

BYRON A. DUNN.

WAUKEGAN, ILL.

August, 1918.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I Trailing Lee's Army	1
II Capturing a Train	16
III Lee's Army Escapes	31
IV What Happened in Winchester	43
V Raiding the Enemy's Camp	54
VI Custer's Gallant Charge	66
VII A Fight with Mosby	80
VIII Saving a Forage Train	93
IX Jim Gets Arrested	109
X A Battle with Guerrillas	116
XI A Cry for Vengeance	131
XII Kilpatrick's Raid	149
XIII The Wilderness	167
XIV Bob Joins Sheridan	177
XV Spottsylvania and Cold Harbor	189
XVI Saved by Custer	195
XVII The Crater	206
XVIII The Battle of New Market	213
XIX On to Lynchburg	229
XX The Attack on Washington	243
XXI The Coming of Sheridan	257
XXII Guerrilla Warfare	270
XXIII Go In	288
XXIV Fire and Sword	297
XXV Cedar Creek	320
XXVI Two Generals — One Girl	335
XXVII Bob Meets Clarissa Once More	350
XXVIII On to Richmond	362
XXIX Appomattox	373
XXX What Peace Brought	380

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
The branch cracked, then snapped under Jim's weight <i>Frontispiece</i>	
The boys saw the guerrillas were getting ready to attack from all sides	90
The last dog Bob shot was so close he almost thrust his carbine in the great mouth . .	162
Jim fired, and the fellow's revolver went clattering to the floor	244
Custer's men swept over the rebel works like a whirlwind	366

Scouting for Sheridan

CHAPTER I

TRAILING LEE'S ARMY

TWO boys stood looking over the battle field of Gettysburg. The roar of cannon, the rattle of musketry, the shouts of the combatants were no longer heard, but it was a grewsome sight.

Everywhere the field was covered with the debris of battle. The badly wounded, many of whom had lain on the field since the battle began, were being searched out and cared for. The dead, thousands and thousands of them, were being gathered for burial.

“Well, Jim,” said one of the boys, “the Army of the Potomac has at last gained a victory, a great victory, and news came this morning that Grant has taken Vicksburg. This ought to be the beginning of the end. Now, what do you think of God being with the rebels?”

James Kidder, the boy addressed, was a child of the mountains, brave as a lion, but filled with all the superstition of his class.

The two boys while on one of their scouts had been caught in the advance of the Confederate army

on the evening before the battle of Cedar Run. As they lay concealed on the side of Slaughter Mountain they overheard General T. J. Jackson praying, and so earnestly did he pray that Jim conceived the idea that he talked face to face with God, and that there was no use in fighting him. From then until Jackson was killed, Jim contended that the Federals were waging a hopeless fight.

"I didn't say the Lord was with the rebels," replied Jim. "I said he was with Jackson, an' we couldn't whip until he was killed. Reckon the Lord had Jackson killed so we could whip, and he be on our side now."

"Good for you, Jim," laughed his companion, whose real name was Robert Hunter though he scouted under the name of Bob Jones. "I hope you feel better now. You have hardly been yourself since you heard Jackson pray."

"That's so," replied Jim, "but I feel all right now. I am just achin' to hev another good scout with you."

"And that's what we will have right now," said Bob. "We ought to be on the trail of Lee's army this minute. I don't see any signs of pursuit yet, and every minute is precious. Lee's whole army should be captured before it can get across the Potomac."

The two boys had scouted together for some time, and had won the name of being the most daring and successful of the Union scouts.

At the time of the battle of Gettysburg Bob was scouting for General Hancock in whose corps his brother, General Clayton Hunter, commanded a

division. Jim Kidder had been taken prisoner during Milroy's retreat from Winchester. It was dark when he was captured, and he was able to throw away all his arms so he could claim he was a country boy caught in Milroy's rush back. His rough dress and speech made him seem what he claimed to be, so he was conscripted and placed in a Virginia regiment.

He saw no way of escaping until Pickett's famous charge, then he fell by a stone wall and feigned death, and was taken prisoner with hundreds of others. Bob recognized him among the other prisoners, and to their great joy they were once more reunited.

"Did yo' say we are goin' to start on a scout right away?" asked Jim.

"Yes, but before we start I want you to tell me all that's happened to you since we parted at Washington. You must have a great deal to tell. Above all I want to hear how you came to find and rescue Agnes Somers. It must be an interesting story. You had no time to tell me anything at Winchester, except that you found her in a lonely cabin in the mountains."

Seated beneath a tree that had been shattered with cannon balls, Jim told his story.¹

Bob listened with breathless attention, and when Jim was through said, "Then Agnes believes Colonel Kincaid was at the bottom of it all?"

"Yes, but she has no proof."

"If it were he, it is strange he did not show up at the cabin."

¹ An account of how Agnes Somers was abducted and hidden in the mountains by Colonel Kincaid of the Confederate army, is given in *With the Army of the Potomac*.

“Reckon he was sent on that raid with Imboden. Bob didn’t yo’ tell me a lie when yo’ said she wasn’t yo’ gal?”

“She is not my girl, the way you mean, Jim, but I think a lot of her. I never had a sister, but I believe I love her the same way I would a sister if I had one.”

“Sister! Sister!” mocked Jim. “Bob, if yo’ don’t go fur that gal yo’ be a bigger fool than I take yo’ to be. She’s the purtiest an’ bravest gal I ever saw.”

Bob laughed. “Jim, she is as pretty as they make them, and as good as she is pretty, but there is a serious obstacle in the way even if I wanted her. She is engaged to a Colonel Monroe of the Confederate army.”

“It was a General Monroe who commanded the reb brigade I was in, a mighty fine officer. He is the gineral who was killed right thar by the battery at the stone wall.”

Bob thought a moment, then cried, “Jim, he is the one. I remember now of reading in a Richmond paper of his being promoted for bravery at Chancellorsville. Poor Agnes! I pity her. Yet the news of her betrothal to a Confederate officer was not to my liking. I had hoped that she and— But never mind, it was a vain hope. I must tell Clayt of this and also tell him we are off on a scout.”

Bob found his brother and asked, “Clayt, did you know that the General Monroe who was killed by the battery was the officer to whom Agnes Somers was engaged?”

General Hunter started as if shot, then turned

pale. "Are you sure?" he stammered. "The paper said it was a Colonel Monroe she was engaged to."

"After the battle of Chancellorsville Colonel Monroe was made a general."

Clayton did not answer but as he turned away Bob noticed that he was trembling. "Can it be," he thought, "that there was ever anything between Clayt and Agnes? But that isn't possible. I know they haven't seen each other for years. Yet he always seems strangely interested in her."

It was thought that Meade would follow Lee's retreating army in rapid pursuit, but Bob saw no signs of such a movement, and spoke to his brother about it.

"We have received no orders yet," replied the general, "but of course we will pursue. Orders may come any minute to that effect."

"Clayt, Jim and I have decided to take a little scout. We want to try and find out which way Lee is headed."

"Bob, I believe you and Jim would die if you could not go on a scout, but this time I am willing. It is important to know whether Lee will retreat by the same route he came, or try and get in between us and Washington. I know General Meade is of the opinion that he may make the latter movement. When do you boys want to start?"

"Right away, within the next hour," replied Bob.

"Afoot or horseback?"

"Horseback! We want to beat Lee to the Potomac, if we can."

"In that case I will have to let Jim have his horse," said the general, and turning to one of his

staff he said, "Captain, I will have to ask you to exchange mounts. The horse you are riding belongs to Jim Kidder, and the boys are going on a scout."

"Sorry to give up the horse," said the captain. "He is a mighty good one, but I know he belongs to the boy."

It did not take the boys long to prepare for the scout, and they were soon on the way, eager to learn the enemies' movements.

"I believe Lee will retreat the same way he came, and cross the Potomac at or near Williamsport. He ought to be stopped before he can cross," said Bob.

"I have not seen much preparation to chase him," replied Jim, "an' he has a good day's start now."

"I think by rapid riding we can beat him to Williamsport and find out how the land lies," said Bob. "We are in a friendly country, and there is no danger from guerrillas."

The boys started as if headed for Frederick, Maryland, but soon turned towards Williamsport, keeping far enough to the left to avoid running into the advance of Lee's retreating army.

Night came, but they continued on their way. The past few days had been insufferably hot, but now the sky was overcast, and the roll of distant thunder gave notice that a storm was brewing. Soon the tempest burst in fury and the rain fell in torrents. The flashes of lightning and the crashes of thunder were incessant. Though buffeted by the wind and rain the boys kept on. One moment they would be in a glare as of the noonday sun and the next plunged into midnight darkness.

"Gee! This is as bad as Gettysburg," exclaimed

Jim, as the lightning struck and shattered a tree a few rods in front of them.

"I believe you told me once you were afraid in a thunder storm," said Bob.

"Yes, thunder be the voice of God speakin'," gasped Jim. "I wonder what this storm says."

"I hope it says the Potomac will rise so fast the rebels can't get across, and they will be caught in a trap," replied Bob.

The storm became so violent that the boys found talking impossible, and bending low over their saddles they rode on. Soon the thunder and lightning ceased but the rain continued to fall.

Morning found them within a few miles of Williamsport. Their rubber coats had protected them in a great measure from the storm, but they were tired, and the stumbling of their horses told them they would have to stop and rest.

They came to a substantial looking farm house in which, early as it was, a light showed the family were up.

Riding to the door, Bob called, and the farmer came out.

"Good morning," said Bob pleasantly. "We are both wet and hungry, and our horses are the same. Can you give us breakfast and provide for them? We will pay you well."

The farmer looked at them suspiciously and asked gruffly who they were.

"Union scouts. Just from Gettysburg," replied Bob.

"Union scouts!" gasped the farmer. "Why some of the rebels were here last evening and told me the

Yankees had been licked blind, that they were running like rabbits, and that Lee would soon capture Philadelphia."

"All a lie," replied Bob. "It was Lee who got whipped, and you will soon see the whole rebel army coming this way and getting back into Virginia as fast as their legs can carry them."

"Glory to God!" shouted the farmer. "Boys, I will be mighty glad to feed you and care for your horses, although the rebels have about cleaned me out. But if you are Union scouts you are in great danger. The rebs may be around here any moment. It is only fifteen miles to Williamsport."

"We will have to run the risk," answered Bob. "We will keep a sharp outlook."

"Come on then," said the farmer. "So you licked them. Glory be!" And he started for the barn.

"Let me look around a little," said Bob. "I don't like the idea of putting the horses in the barn, if there is any danger of the rebs coming. A good soldier always wants a way to retreat if he has to."

"I know just the place," replied the farmer, who told the boys his name was Caldwell, and he led them around the barn to a shed which was partly hidden by a straw stack. A lane led back from the barn yard through the fields.

"Where does that lane go to?" asked Bob.

"It ends at the woods," replied Mr. Caldwell, "but one can ride through the woods, and come to another road about a mile north."

"Just the thing, Jim," cried Bob. "We can hitch the horses here under the shed, and make a quick getaway if necessary."

Slipping the bits from the horses' mouths so they could eat they saw them well fed.

The rain was still falling as they started for the house. Mrs. Caldwell had been apprised of her unexpected guests, and was busily preparing breakfast for them.

"If this rain keeps up the Potomac will surely be past fording," said Mr. Caldwell, "and I heard some of the rebels saying a General French had destroyed their pontoon bridge."

"That is fine news," said Bob. "If true we will have them sure."

Breakfast was announced and the boys sat down to a substantial meal.

The only other inmate of the house was a bright little boy about twelve, called David. He was told to watch and give warning if anyone approached.

The boys were just finishing their meal which had been frequently interrupted by Mr. and Mrs. Caldwell's questions about the battle when David came running in crying, "Pa, Pa, the rebels are coming."

The boys sprang to their feet and ran to a window which commanded a view of the road. Sure enough a squadron of cavalry was approaching.

"Jim, run get the horses ready," cried Bob. "I will stay and see if they halt or not."

Jim ran, David with him, for he had been telling him about being a scout, and the child had taken a great fancy to him.

The cavalry rode through the rain with bowed heads, their horses splashing through the mud.

When they reached the house, three officers dismounted and leaving their horses in charge of an

orderly entered the house. The main body of troops kept on.

Mr. Caldwell was greatly excited, but Bob, said, "Keep cool and act as if nothing had happened. If they ask if you have seen any Yankee soldiers say no, for we are not soldiers. If possible I want to hear what these officers have to say. Even if they should see me, they will take me for one of the farm hands, dressed as I am."

There was no time to say more. Bob slipped into the kitchen from which a door led into the back yard, so the way of retreat was open.

The three officers entered noisily. "Beastly weather, this," said one of them, shaking the rain from his cape. "Farmer, any news?"

"Only that some Confederate soldiers were here last evening. They said a great battle had been fought, and Lee won a great victory," replied Mr. Caldwell.

"I only wish the news were true," muttered one of the officers, scowling.

At the sound of that voice Bob felt the blood leaping through his veins for he knew his enemy, Colonel Kincaid was near him.

"Your name?" gruffly asked the colonel.

"Caldwell," was the answer.

"Well, Mr. Caldwell, a forage train will soon be along. Be prepared to turn over all the forage you have. You will receive a voucher for it, payable in Confederate script."

Mr. Caldwell bowed, saying nothing. He knew it was no use.

Turning to the other officers the colonel said,

“Captain Hepburn if this rain continues it will surely raise the river, and then the — Oh! what does a little rain matter?”

For reply the captain gave a sniff and said, “Colonel, I believe I smell ham and eggs.”

“Yes,” replied Mr. Caldwell, “we have just finished breakfast, and had ham and eggs. If you gentlemen will wait I will have Mrs. Caldwell prepare you some.”

“Ham and good fresh eggs sure sounds fine,” said Colonel Kincaid. “Captain, I think we will stay. How about coffee, Mrs. Caldwell?”

“You shall have coffee with rich cream.”

“Better and better,” laughed the colonel. “Mrs. Caldwell, you are a trump. It’s a pity you have a Yankee for a husband.”

“He suits me,” replied Mrs. Caldwell as she went into the kitchen to prepare the meal.

Bob listened to this conversation with a palpitating heart. Then a wild idea entered his head. The cavalry had passed on and the forage train had not yet appeared. Why not capture these officers? He and Jim could do it. They would have to parole them, but they might find some valuable papers. He made his way to the shed where Jim was and explained the situation to him.

“So it is that devil Kincaid, is it?” said Jim. “Bob, let me take a shot at him for Miss Agnes’ sake.”

“No. Jim, we must not shoot him unless he resists,” replied Bob. “There is another thing also. If we do this it may put Mr. Caldwell in danger. Hello, David, you here?”

"David says he wants to be a scout," said Jim. "I believe he would make a good one."

Bob thought a moment. "David, you are for the Union, are you not?" he asked.

"You bet!" exclaimed the little fellow drawing himself up proudly. "I want to be a soljer and fight, I have a drum and I want to go as a drummer boy. Pa don't want me to, but Uncle Dave, he is the one I was named after, is a captain in the army and he says he will take me, if Dad will let me go. I think he will soon."

"Then, Davy, if you are brave and want to serve your country, listen," said Bob.

"Jim and I want to capture those rebels in the house, but are afraid to try it for fear they will think your father is in the plot and harm him. What do you say Davy if we bind and gag you? Then you can say that we suddenly set upon you, and that no one knew we were in the barn. Be careful to say that you never saw us before. Can you do it? Do you understand?"

"Try me," replied the boy. "I'm a soljer, I am."

To tie and gag David was but the work of a moment. Then carefully looking over their revolvers to see they were in trim, the boys made their way to the house.

The officers had just finished their repast when the boys burst in on them.

"A cry! A word! The least show of resistance, and you are dead men," the boys cried.

Had a thunderbolt fallen, the officers would not have been more surprised.

"Hands up, quick," ordered Bob.

"Robert Hunter!" gasped Colonel Kincaid, his hands slowly going up. The other officers followed his example.

Mrs. Caldwell in her excitement dropped a dish and stood as if petrified. Mr. Caldwell was dumfounded. He did not understand.

"Jim, search them," said Bob. "Take nothing except what papers you may find. You farmer there, raise your hands and stand by the side of these officers. I can't trust you. By the way you are feeding these rebels I imagine you are an old copperhead, worse than a rebel." Bob gave Mr. Caldwell a look which meant much. He understood, and raising his hands stood by the side of the officers.

Jim searched the men taking quite a package of papers from the colonel.

"You devils will pay for this outrage," snarled Kincaid.

"Bob, let me shoot the dirty skunk," said Jim leveling his revolver at the head of the colonel. "I ought to shoot him for stealing Agnes Somers."

The colonel turned pale, "What do you mean, boy? What do you know about Agnes Somers?" he cried.

"Know!" cried Jim. "Didn't I find her shut up in a cabin in the mountains whar yo' put her. I had rather shoot yo' than a wildcat."

"It's a lie! It's a lie!" fairly shouted the colonel. "So it was you who found her. She can't prove I had anything to do with her abduction."

"Wall, she believes you had," grimly replied Jim. "Confess now, or I shoot."

“Jim,” exclaimed Bob, but got no farther for the sound of voices and trampling of horses was heard outside. The forage train had put in an appearance guarded by a strong escort.

“Good day,” cried Bob, as he and Jim beat a hurried exit.

Colonel Kincaid rushed to the door. “Ho, there,” he cried. “Pursue those two boys who have just escaped through the back door. On your lives don’t let them escape.”

A squad of horsemen dashed around the house and surrounded the barn, but they only caught sight of two horsemen riding swiftly down the lane.

Colonel Kincaid turned furiously on Mr. Caldwell, “If I thought you had anything to do with this”—But he stopped suddenly for Mrs. Caldwell had uttered a scream, and was wringing her hands crying, “David! David! Where is David? Those two boys have killed him.”

A search was made, and David found in the barn, bound and gagged. When liberated he told his story and told it well. Colonel Kincaid frowned. “If I thought you were lying I’d skin you,” he growled. “Weren’t those boys here all the time?”

“Never saw them before,” stoutly answered David. “Skin me if you will, but I’ll never say anything different.”

Mr. Caldwell took the opportunity of speaking to Mrs. Caldwell and both declared they had never seen the boys before. That they must have taken refuge in the barn in the night during the storm, was, they thought, the true solution of the mystery.

“It is well you had nothing to do with it,” said

Colonel Kincaid, "for if you had I would burn every building on the place, and hang you to a tree."

When the rebels had gone Mrs. Caldwell clasped David to her exclaiming, "My brave, true boy, you saved us. God will forgive you for the lie you told."

"I would not have said different if they had burned me alive, Mamma," David proudly replied.

CHAPTER II

CAPTURING A TRAIN

COLONEL KINCAID was not only a deeply disgusted but a greatly alarmed man. To be captured and rifled of his papers by two boys was humiliating to his pride, and he knew he would be called to account for his carelessness. But what Jim said about Agnes Somers caused him serious misgivings. If his part in her abduction ever became known he would not only be a disgraced, but a ruined man.

“She has no proof,” he muttered. “If she accuses me publicly I’ll make her rue it, but I do not believe she will. It was Robert Hunter who put that idea in the boy’s head.”

Yet it was days before he rested easy in his mind.

The boys rode away highly elated. The rain had ceased but the sky was still overcast, and thunder was muttering in the distance.

When they found they were not pursued, Bob halted to examine the papers they had taken from the colonel. Many of them were old orders relating to past events, and were of no value. But there was one order that greatly interested Bob. It was dated the sixth and commanded the colonel to gather all the forage he could as the army was falling back to the river.

It showed Lee was retreating by the same route by which he had entered the state.

"We must get this to General Meade as soon as possible," cried Bob. "It shows Lee is getting back into Virginia as quickly as he can. I heard some of the generals saying Lee might not retreat by the same route he came but try and slip in between our army and Washington. This shows he has no such intentions."

The boys now urged their horses forward at full speed, but had not gone many miles when they ran into a regiment of Confederate cavalry. They had just reached the top of a hill when they discovered the cavalry coming up the other side, and but a few rods away. Behind the cavalry was a large train.

They took one glance and turned to fly but had been discovered, and amid cries of halt and a storm of balls dashed down the hill, the foe in hot pursuit.

For a time the chase was a close one, then coming to a crossroad the boys turned down it. The cavalry pursued them down this road for a couple of miles, then gave up the chase in disgust.

"That was a hot one," exclaimed Bob as he reined in his panting horse.

"Some race," answered Jim, mopping his face with the sleeve of his blouse. "That was a large train getting back to the river, I suppose."

"Yes, and it should never be allowed to get across," replied Bob. "I wonder what Meade is doing. Let's ride on, we may meet with some of our cavalry."

After riding several miles they caught sight of a body of cavalry approaching.

“Hurrah!” shouted Bob, “they are our men.” They spurred their horses forward to meet them. The advance guard of the cavalry saw them coming and halted, the foremost hastily unslinging their carbines.

“Holy smoke! they take us for rebs, and be goin’ to shoot,” exclaimed Jim.

In fact the appearance of the boys had caused great excitement.

Bob drew his handkerchief and waved it, then they rode slowly forward, the cavalry waiting for them to approach.

“Who are you?” asked the officer in command as the boys came up.

“Two scouts,” answered Bob. “Whose command is this?”

“Kilpatrick’s.”

“Where is he?”

“A short distance in the rear. Why?”

“There is a rebel train a few miles ahead which I think can be captured.”

“Come with me at once,” said the officer. “The general must know of this.”

A short ride brought them to Kilpatrick, and in a few words Bob told what he knew.

“Was the train heavily guarded?” asked Kilpatrick.

“We only saw cavalry,” answered Bob. “Not more than a regiment, but infantry might have been near.”

“How far is it to where you saw the train?” asked Kilpatrick.

“I should judge it to be about eight miles to

where we turned off the road on which the train was traveling, and we sighted the train about four or five miles north of where we left the road. They gave us a hot chase for that distance. From the road they were on I think the train is making for Monterey, and will no doubt park there tonight."

"If it does that train is my meat," cried Kilpatrick.

Quickly the order was given, and the company swept forward on a gallop.

The storm now showed signs of starting again. A heavy black cloud streaked with vivid flashes of lightning was rolling up from the west. Night came and with it the storm.

Through the darkness and storm Kilpatrick pushed on. As Bob expected, the train had parked at Monterey.

Like a thunderbolt Kilpatrick was on them, and the cries of the combatants and crackling of fire-arms mingled with the noise of the elements.

The destruction of the train, which belonged to Ewell's corps, was complete.

Now news came that a heavy force of infantry was approaching and Kilpatrick withdrew, well satisfied with his work.

"I will have to thank you boys for this job," he said. "I would not have come so far if it had not been for your report."

"Where is Meade?" asked Bob. "He should be on the heels of the retreating army."

"Meade is careful," replied the general. "He is afraid Lee is only feinting a general retreat, and is watching his chance to slip between us and Wash-

ington. Lee could do this if Meade followed directly in his wake."

"I think this train looks as if Lee were making for the Potomac as swiftly as possible," replied Bob. "I am afraid a glorious opportunity will be lost. A farmer told us this morning that Lee's pontoon bridge across the Potomac had been destroyed. These rains will raise the river so fording will be impossible. It looks to me as though Lee was in a trap, if he were pushed."

General Kilpatrick laughed. "It looks a little like that," he replied, "but General Meade should know best. Great issues are at stake. The losses of the army at Gettysburg were fearful. It may be best to be careful. Have you boys been scouting long?"

"Ever since the war began," answered Bob, "but mostly in West Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley. My brother is a general in the army. It was his division that mainly met Pickett's charge."

"What! You a brother of General Clayton Hunter," cried the general. "Give me your hand, my boy, but I should think you would want to be with him."

"He has frequently offered me a position on his staff," replied Bob modestly, "but I prefer scouting. There is more excitement in it."

"So I should judge," answered the general smiling. "What do you propose to do next?"

"I think we will ride south and try and reach the river below Williamsport. I would like to find out what Lee is doing in trying to cross the river. You know now all we could tell Meade. There is no use in our going back to report."

“Well, good luck to you. You may be sure I will report to General Meade the good turn you have done here.”

Bob thanked him, and the boys turned their horses southward.

“That is some general,” said Jim.

“Kilpatrick is a dashing officer,” replied Bob. “I think we will hear more of him.”

The boys did not push their horses as they wished to keep them fresh in case they should run into trouble. It was well they did so for before they had gone many miles they suddenly ran into a scouting party of Confederates. It was at a turn in the road and neither side discovered the other until they were almost on to each other.

Quick as lightning the boys opened fire with their carbines. Two of the enemy fell and three or four of the horses reared and plunged as if hit.

So sudden was the attack the surprised rebels fired a futile volley and fell back in confusion.

“What are you running for? There are but two of them. Charge!” they heard an officer yell.

“Now’s the time to go,” cried Bob. Wheeling their horses, they were off like a shot.

The enemy was shy in following. They were afraid of being led into a trap.

“Shucks!” said Jim when they were out of danger. “That was no fight. Just like firing into a flock of geese.”

“Geese don’t fire back,” laughed Bob. “Look here.” He pulled off his cap and showed where a ball had torn the crown. “But if you want to we will turn around and charge the bunch.”

Jim looked a little crestfallen. "Didn't know they shot that close, Bob. Reckon we had better go on."

Night was near and the boys not only were tired but hungry and sleepy, so they decided to stop at the first farm house they came to.

This proved a substantial looking place, and they asked the owner, a surly looking man about fifty years of age if he could not give them and their horses something to eat. "We can sleep anywhere," said Bob, "and we will pay you well."

"Who are you and what's your business?" growled the man. "You are armed like soldiers."

"We are scouts," replied Bob.

"Scouts! For which army?"

"The Union army."

Bob noticed the man's face darken. For a moment he was silent, then said, he supposed they could stay as they were willing to pay. He was for the Union too, but he had a lot of secession neighbors and had to be careful.

Thanking him the boys dismounted and led their horses to the barn where they saw them well provided for.

"Them air fine horses you fellers ride," said the man eyeing them with covetous eyes. "Whar did you git them?"

"Uncle Sam furnishes his boys with horses," answered Bob.

"Well he furnished you with mighty good ones," said the farmer, who now became quite talkative informing them his name was Cribbins and asking for the news, saying he had heard of Lee's defeat at Gettysburg, but could hardly believe it.

“Why not believe it?” asked Bob.

“Because, because,” stammered Cribbins, “all my secesh neighbors say Bobby Lee can’t be whipped, and I’d began to believe it.”

“Well, you can believe now that Lee was whipped at Gettysburg good and plenty. I know for I was there.”

“You thar!” exclaimed Mr. Cribbins. “Tell me about it.”

“I’ll feel more like talking after supper,” replied Bob. “I’m both tired and hungry.”

But this did not keep Mr. Cribbins from plying Bob with questions. While this was going on Jim was looking around, and discovered some things that aroused his suspicions.

Supper was now announced, and Bob found that the household consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Cribbins, a comely daughter about twenty years of age and a son about fourteen.

The boys were left alone in the sitting room for a few minutes and Jim whispered, “Bob, I believe the old scoundrel is a rebel instead of a Union man as he pretends. What do yo’ think I found in the hay? Several guns and thar be signs that a number of men make this place their headquarters.”

“We’ll keep our eyes open, Jim. You have your gun in your bosom, haven’t you?”

“You bet! Allers do.”

The boys found the meal to be a good one and did ample justice to it.

After eating while Bob and Mr. Cribbins were engaged in conversation Jim said he would go to the barn and see how the horses were. As he was

passing the corner of the house he heard the shrill voice of the daughter say, "Mother, why did father let these nasty Yankees stay? You know we are expecting Ed and John tonight."

"Hush!" replied her mother. "Father thinks they are couriers carrying important dispatches, and when the boys come they can capture them. Father says they have two mighty fine horses he wants."

Mrs. Cribbins had lowered her voice, but not so low but what Jim could hear. As she finished speaking she glanced from the window, and saw Jim in the act of drawing his revolver from his bosom. She gave a piercing scream which brought both Mr. Cribbins and Bob.

"What's the matter?" cried Mr. Cribbins.

"This is the matter," drawled Jim strolling into the room and leveling his revolver at Mr. Cribbins' head. "Hands up, you old reprobate, or I'll put a bullet through you. Bob, I'd better shoot him anyway. The old villain be plottin' to steal our horses and deliver us up to the rebs. Thinks we carry important dispatches."

"Don't shoot, Jim," cried Bob. "How did you find out?"

"Heard the gal an' the ole woman talkin'."

Bob turned to Mr. Cribbins who was shaking like a leaf.

"So that was it," he said, "what have you to say for yourself, that we do not shoot you like a dog?" He drew his revolver.

"Mercy," gasped the man and "Spare him! Spare him!" wailed the women as they threw themselves on their knees before the boys.

“Get up,” said Bob. “We have no intentions of shooting, not if Mr. Cribbins behaves himself. As it is we must ask him to accompany us to the barn. Come to think of it you must all come. I can’t trust you.”

Turning to Mrs. Cribbins he bowed and said, “I wish to thank you for the bountiful meal you so kindly gave us and as there is plenty left I must ask you to put us up a good lunch for our breakfast as we may not be able to stop and get one.”

The woman flew to obey.

“Hold on!” said Bob. “That is plenty. I promised to pay Mr. Cribbins for our lodging. I am sorry circumstances prevent our accepting the lodging part, but here is the pay for the food.” He threw a dollar on the table. “Now, forward, march!”

The whole family was marched to the barn where Bob stood guard over them while Jim got out the horses.

“Good night,” cried the boys and they mounted their horses, and rode away leaving the Cribbins family gazing after them with thoughts which were better not expressed.

It was now quite dark and the boys were sadly in need of sleep, so they turned into a piece of woods they had come to. Dismounting and leading their horses they made their way some distance into the woods. Then Bob said, “Jim, I believe we can rest here in perfect security. My! I am tired and sleepy.”

“Same heah,” replied Jim.

Securely tethering their horses they made their

bed beneath the branches of a tree and in a few moments were sound asleep.

Dawn was beginning to show in the east when they awoke.

"That sure was a sleep," said Bob stretching himself.

"Believe I will reconnoiter a little before I partake of Mrs. Cribbins' generosity," said Jim with a grin.

He was gone so long that Bob began to be uneasy when he reappeared carrying a large bundle of fresh mown hay. "Couldn't think of eatin', and let the horses go hungry," he said. "Fine meddar of hay out thar."

"Good for you, Jim. I was wondering what we would do about the horses," replied Bob.

Giving the hay to the horses the boys were soon eating the lunch provided by Mrs. Cribbins.

"Fine cook, that woman," said Jim, patting his stomach. "Too good for that old hypocrite. Now, Bob, whar?"

"I want to strike the river a few miles below Williamsport," replied Bob. "I want to find out what General French is doing, if anything, to prevent Lee from crossing the river."¹

The boys rode hard and by noon had neared the Potomac some miles below Williamsport.

Meeting an old negro in the road, Bob stopped him saying, "Uncle, are you for Massa Lincoln or Massa Jeff Davis?"

The old man looked at them suspiciously and

¹ General French was in command at Harper's Ferry, and it was part of his force which had destroyed Lee's pontoon at Williamsport.

asked, "What difference do it make what a po' ole nigger be fo'? Who be yo' fo'?"

Bob laughed and said, "Uncle, you're a sharp one. We are for Lincoln every time."

"Bress de Lord," shouted the negro, "I be for Massa Linkum too."

"Then, Uncle, can you tell me of some good white man who lives near the river and is for Lincoln?"

The negro scratched his head and at length said, "Thar be Linkum men around heah but dey be keepin' mighty mum jest now, 'fraid of de rebs. But ole man Watkins, who libs near de ribber spits right out. He be nothin' but white trash, an' he be so ole and crippled wid de rheumatics dey let him alone."

"Thank you, Uncle. Can you direct us to where he lives?"

The negro did so, and the boys rode for old man Watkins'.

They found the old man sitting by the door of a poor log cabin smoking. He was bent with rheumatism, and looked at them with no pleasant countenance.

"Who be yo' an' what do yo' want?" he asked.

"Something you can tell us, Mr. Watkins," replied Bob pleasantly. "We hear you are a good Union man, and not afraid to say so. We are Union scouts and want to know how to get across the river. I see you are a fisherman so you must have a boat."

"How do I know but what yo' be rebs an' jest want to get my boat?" asked Watkins. "If I lose that boat, reckon I'll starve."

"Do you see these horses, Mr. Watkins?"

"Yas, dey be fine hosses."

"Well, let us have the boat and we will leave the horses here. If we don't return the boat or pay for it the horses are yours."

"Maybe yo' nebber cum back. De rebs be tick across de ribber."

"Then the horses are yours."

The old man stared. "Dey'll tink I stole 'em," he said.

Bob took a sheet from a small note book he carried and wrote:

These horses were left in charge of Mr. Thomas Watkins by two Union scouts. If they never return the horses are to be his.

ROBERT HUNTER
JAMES KIDDER.

Bob read the paper to the old man and then handed it to him. He took it with trembling hands, scarcely believing what he heard.

A small stream flowed into the Potomac near by and to this the old man hobbled, and showed them a boat concealed in a clump of willows.

"Yo' be goin' in danger," he said, "but maybe yo' cum back safe. Even if I don't get de hosses I'd rather see yo' again."

The boys thanked him and started. "Whew! But the old river is high," said Jim. "We'll have to be careful. The current is full of driftwood."

"Better cross diagonally down stream," said Bob. "See that wooded point down about a half mile? We'll try and make that."

With care they made the point, although they were nearly upset by a log striking the boat.

Concealing the boat the best they could, they climbed the bank, taking care to keep well concealed.

Mr. Watkins had told them of a Union man, Hebron, who lived on the Virginia side, a man who said little, but kept his eyes and ears open.

They located his place without difficulty, and found Mr. Hebron to be a man about sixty years of age. He eyed them with suspicion.

"We came to you on recommendation of Mr. Thomas Watkins," said Bob. "We are Union scouts and wish to find out all we can."

"How did you come?" asked Mr. Hebron.

"We crossed the river in Watkins' boat."

"I reckon it is all right," replied Mr. Hebron. "Old man Watkins is O. K. but blamed if I didn't take you for guerrillas!"

"We pass ourselves off as guerrillas when we think it safer to do so," replied Bob.

"What can I do for you?" asked Mr. Hebron satisfied that they were all right.

"Find us something to eat," replied Bob.

"Sartin. The old woman will fix you up such as we have."

Just then a gray-haired woman came to the door. "Heah, Molly," called Mr. Hebron. "These two boys are Union scouts. They want some supper. Can you give them some?"

"If you say it's all right, Homer, but you must get a ham."

"Excuse me a moment," said Mr. Hebron to the boys, and he disappeared, returning in a short time with a fine ham.

"It doesn't pay to keep such things lying around

in full sight. Too many soldiers and guerrillas. We are always mighty hard up for something to eat when they come."

"So you have a secret store," laughed Bob. "Mr. Hebron, you are a wise man."

When their host found out they had been at Gettysburg, he made them tell him all about the battle and seemed sorry when his wife announced that supper was ready.

It was a bountiful repast the boys sat down to and Jim did not let up on the ham until he groaned because he could eat no more.

CHAPTER III

LEE'S ARMY ESCAPES

AFTER supper Mr. Hebron told the boys all he knew. After Lee had crossed over into Pennsylvania, General French who commanded at Harper's Ferry caused his pontoon at Williamsport to be destroyed. General French seemed to be satisfied with this, and withdrew. As far as Mr. Hebron knew there was nothing to prevent Lee from recrossing at Williamsport if he wished.

"The river is booming," said Bob. "If Meade moves promptly, I think he can capture Lee's whole army. I must see what is going on across the river from Williamsport. How far is it?"

Mr. Hebron told him but added, "It will be dangerous. The main road from Winchester to Williamsport swarms with rebels. You strike it after you follow the river road here a few miles."

"We must risk it," replied Bob. "It will soon be dark, then we can follow the river road as far as the main road, and then take to the woods and hills."

"You are likely to run into scouting parties on this road," said Mr. Hebron.

"If we do we can hear them before they see us," replied Bob. "I must ask Mrs. Hebron to put us up a lunch with plenty of that delicious ham. In the

morning we may be where it won't be safe to ask for anything to eat."

"That I will," said Mrs. Hebron, and she put them up enough to last for two or three meals. Bob insisted on paying for this over the earnest protests of both the Hebrons.

As soon as it was dark the boys started. Mr. Hebron watched them until they disappeared in the gloom, saying to his wife, "They are plucky fellows, but I am afraid they are going to their death."

The boys made good time. Jim with every sense alert would say long before Bob could hear anything, "Horsemen coming!" It was easy to avoid them by laying down in the brush a short distance from the road. Once a squad of cavalry passed, their sabers clanking, but whether Union or Confederate, the boys could not tell.

"We are getting along splendidly," said Bob after two or three hours' travel. "We must be near the intersection of the roads."

"Halt! Who comes thar?" came a sharp challenge.

"Scouts from down the river," promptly answered Bob.

"Advance and give the countersign."

"How can we'uns hev the countersign when we'uns hev been tryin' to find out what the Yanks air doin' at Harper's Ferry?" pettishly answered Bob.

"Stand whar yo' air. Corporal of the guard!"

Instead of standing the boys sunk to the ground and began to crawl silently away.

"Hello!" cried the guard. "I can't see yo'. Whar are yo'?"

There was no answer, and the guard fired his gun. This was what the boys wanted. They sprang to their feet and ran like deers.

"What's up?" cried the corporal rushing up with several soldiers.

The sentinel explained he had halted two men who claimed to be scouts but were without the countersign. "I told them to stand still, and called yo'," he said. "Then all of a sudden I couldn't see them no moah. I challenged again and received no answer so I fired. I'm suah I heard them running away."

"This must be looked into," said the corporal, and a general alarm was given. A company of cavalry was sent down the road with orders to arrest everyone they met. But nothing came of the search.

Bob and Jim ran but a short distance, then left the road, and climbing a fence, crossed a field to a wooded hill which they began to ascend as fast as the darkness would admit.

"I believe we are safe," said Bob, as he paused, panting from the efforts of the run and climb. "I propose we camp here until it is light."

"Agreed," answered Jim. "I wish I had had a shot at that blamed sentinel."

"It would not have done," answered Bob. "Now they will think we were only prowlers or thieves, and will not make an extensive search."

The boys tried to get a little rest, one watching while the other slept. Nothing disturbed them during the night, and at the first streak of dawn they were up and, thanks to Mrs. Hebron, partook of an ample breakfast.

As soon as it was light enough the boys saw they were on a ridge, the highest point of which was about a mile to their north.

“We will try and make that,” said Bob.

The ridge was woody and rocky and afforded an excellent screen for them. They made their way slowly and carefully, so at no time could they be observed from below.

At length the point was reached, and both boys uttered an exclamation of surprise. The main road from Williamsport to Winchester was in full view and it was crowded with immense trains.

“It’s lucky we were halted when we were or we would have run into a regular hornet’s nest,” said Bob.

The Potomac and Williamsport could be seen in the distance. Bob had his glass, and made a long and careful survey. Two old flat boats were all he could see by which the rebels were crossing the river, and the rushing waters of the swollen stream made their passage a slow one.

A large train of ambulances and wagons stood on the bank of the river, and from these the wounded were being carried to the flat boats.

Far behind on the hills Bob could catch sight of soldiers digging like mad. Lee was entrenching.

Bob groaned. “Not a Federal soldier here to oppose their crossing the river,” he exclaimed. “Not a cannon do I hear to tell that Meade is on their trail. It makes me sick. Jim, we may as well go back. We can do nothing now. Our commanders must be sleeping.”

Bob was not the only one sick at heart. Back

in Washington President Lincoln was experiencing the same feeling.¹

"Reckon we can do nothin'," growled Jim. "Lee is goin' to git away, suah fire."

The boys took a last long look and then turned with heavy hearts to retrace their steps.

They had nearly reached the place where they ascended the ridge when Bob said, "There goes a company of cavalry down the road we came on, and there is a couple of officers looking up here. I'm afraid they've seen us, and that cavalry is going to try and cut us off."

"The river is on our side," replied Jim, "if they try that game we will make for it and swim," exclaimed Jim.

¹ On the evening of July 6, President Lincoln wrote to General Halleck: "I have left the telegraph office a good deal dissatisfied. You know I do not like the phrase in order No. 68, I believe, 'Drive the invader from our soil.' Since then I have seen a dispatch from General French saying that the enemy is crossing his wounded over the river in flats without saying why he does not stop it or even intimating a thought that it ought to be stopped. Still later another dispatch from General Pleasonton by directions of General Meade to General French stating that the main army is halted because it is believed the rebels are concentrating 'on the road towards Hagerstown beyond Fairfield,' and is not to move until it is ascertained that the rebels intend to evacuate Cumberland Valley.

"These things all seem to me to be connected with a purpose to cover Baltimore and Washington and to get the enemy across the river again without a further collision, and they do not appear connected with a purpose to prevent his crossing and to destroy him. I do fear the former purpose is acted upon and the latter rejected.

"If you are satisfied the latter purpose is entertained and is judiciously pursued I am content. If you are not so satisfied, please look to it."

The boys did not have to do that. They had not been seen. In about an hour the cavalry came riding back. They had been scouting along the river to see if there were any of the Yankees on their side.

The boys dared not take to the road so they kept to the ridge until it ended abruptly. There were woods on one side of the road and the boys took to them, but it was slow work making their way through the brush and bushes.

“Jim, I’ve a mind to try the road,” exclaimed Bob. “I’ve seen no one on it for some time.”

Jim was more than willing so they made their way to the road. They found it far easier traveling, and made rapid progress.

“Bob, I don’t believe it’s much farther to Mr. Hebron’s,” said Jim. “Say, this has been a bum scout. Only got shot at once an’ I was lookin’ for a red-hot time.”

“I have found out what I wanted to know, and it hasn’t pleased me a bit,” answered Bob. “I wanted to find out if anything was being done to keep Lee from crossing the river, and a pretty mess we found. I wouldn’t mind a little excitement myself just to keep from having the blues. Hello! Here comes a horseman.” The boys dodged into the bushes which grew by the side of the road.

The horseman approached at a rapid rate.

“Jim,” whispered Bob, “it’s a rebel officer, and all alone. Let’s capture him. That will give us some excitement.”

“Just the thing,” whispered Jim.

There was no time to lose. The officer was nearly abreast of them.

The boys sprang out. "Halt! Throw up your hands!" came the command sharp and crisp.

Astonished beyond measure, the officer drew rein and his hand shot down to his revolver.

"Hands up or you're a dead man," hissed Jim.

The officer saw the carbine leveled on him, and with a curse his hands went up.

"There, that's better," said Bob blandly. "Now, you will oblige us by dismounting."

The officer did so with ill grace.

"Jim, go through his pockets while I keep him covered."

"D— it," cried the officer. "To be captured by such scum as you, and right in our own lines. I'd rather be shot."

"All right, we kin accommodate yo'," drawled Jim. "Bob, let him hev it."

"Let's see first whether he is worth killing or not. He looks to me more like a peacock than a soldier."

The officer stamped and roared. He had an arrogant and insolent bearing, and wore a flashy uniform.

"You fellows look like low-down guerrillas, poor white trash. God! That I should have to submit to this," he groaned.

Jim took from his pockets several papers and quite a number of personal things, including a fine watch.

"Give him back everything but the papers, Jim. Show him we're not quite as lowlived as he thinks," said Bob.

The officer was now looking at them intently. "Now, I know who you are," he cried. "You are the boy scouts who gave us so much trouble in the

Shenandoah Valley. You are the fellows who shot Colonel Hardcastle and stole his horse."

"Major Hardcastle," corrected Bob. "Nothing like being exact. Give my compliments to the major and tell him that horse is a dandy. I have him now."

"He is Colonel Hardcastle now," snapped the prisoner. "What a joke he will have on me after this. I have often heard him say he would give ten years of his life if he could get hold of you. I think he would give twenty now for among those papers you have taken is a dispatch from him to General Lee."

"That is better than I hoped," said Bob. "I must see."

He hastily ran through the papers and found the dispatch. It read:

According to orders I have the bank of the Potomac carefully patrolled nearly to Harper's Ferry. There are no Yankees of any number north of that place. My scouts report that General French is at Hagerstown, and he shows no sign of trying to prevent our crossing at Williamsport. In fact the way seems entirely clear for a safe crossing into Virginia. The only thing we have to fear is that Meade may attack before the army is able to cross owing to the flood in the Potomac, which I am now happy to say is subsiding.

COLONEL E. G. HARDCASTLE,
C. S. A.

"Colonel Hardcastle seems to be well posted," said Bob as he finished reading the dispatch. "I only wish I had him instead of you. Now what to do with you is the question."

"Better parole me," said the lieutenant.

"How long would you keep your parole?" asked Bob. "It would not be worth a cent. I am not an officer. I have no power to give parole."

"Well, you would not dare to shoot me, for that would be murder," said the lieutenant, scornfully.

This roused Jim's ire. "Bob, say the word and I'll plug him. I'll show him whether we dare shoot him or not."

"No, Jim, that won't do," replied Bob. "I had rather let him go, but I think we had better take him with us."

The countenance of the lieutenant fell. "I'll not stir a step," he cried.

"You won't!" cried Jim. "Then you'll rot heah in the road. Now march!" He gave the lieutenant a thrust with the muzzle of his carbine which made him winch.

"Better go quietly," said Bob. "We do not want to be rough, but we will be if necessary. By all the rules of warfare we have a right to shoot you if you try to escape or refuse to accompany us."

The lieutenant concluded it was the part of wisdom to go.

"What shall we do with the horse? Shoot him?" asked Jim.

"No, the report of the gun would be heard. Let him go. Now for the boat, the quicker, the better."

They carefully avoided the house of Mr. Hebron, fearing to bring suspicion upon him.

They found the boat as they had left it. In making preparations to embark the boys laid their carbines on a rock, as the current was strong and they

had difficulty in holding the boat for the lieutenant to get in.

"Now climb in quick," said Bob to him.

The lieutenant thought he saw his chance to escape and instead of stepping into the boat sprang and snatched one of the carbines, giving the other a kick which sent it into the river.

Quick as he was, Jim was quicker. He let go the boat and in a flash drew his revolver from his bosom and fired.

The lieutenant gave a convulsive start and plunged from the rock into the river.

"Bob, we be gettin' mighty keerless," said Jim as he replaced his smoking revolver in his bosom.

"Terrible!" moaned Bob, whose eyes were fixed on the lieutenant. He struggled feebly for a moment, then went under and the swift current bore him away.

"Yes, it was a close shave," answered Jim. "In a half second more he would have got us."

"I don't mean that, Jim. I mean the fate of the lieutenant. He was a brave man in spite of his fine feathers. I wish we had let him go."

Jim looked his astonishment. "Bob, what do yo' mean? I saved yo' life. Do yo' mean I did wrong in killing that cuss? That I ought to hev let him shoot us both?"

"No, Jim, I mean no such thing. You did right in shooting. What I mean is I wish we had not brought him with us; that we should have let him go and then this horrible thing would not have happened. I can see his body yet struggling in the water."

Jim whistled. "Bob, I can't understand yo' sometimes. Now I hev no sympathy for that feller. It was all his fault. He tried to kill us, an' I got him first."

"I understand all of that, Jim, and bless you for what you did. Yet I wish we had not tried to bring him along."

"We don't feel so in the mountings," said Jim. "When we shoot a man thar who is tryin' to git a drop on us, we feel mighty good over it. It's the law of the mountings. Parson Screacham said it was the Bible, 'A tooth for a tooth.'"

"Well, Jim, let it go," said Bob wearily. "Let us go."

"An' two good carbines gone too," sputtered Jim, as he took the oars.

The boys had to row up stream and it was hard work, but at last they made the landing and as far as they knew they had not been observed from the other shore.

Old Mr. Watkins hobbled to meet them. "Glad to see you, boys," he cried. "What did you find out?"

"Only that General French is doing nothing to keep the rebels from crossing the river," replied Bob. "We must be going. Here is ten dollars for your trouble, and if any inquiries are ever made about us it will be best for you to forget that any such fellows as we ever visited you."

"I am powerful forgetful," replied the old man with a grin.

"I wonder what will happen when they find that lieutenant's horse?" said Jim as they rode away.

“There will be some excitement, I suppose,” answered Bob.

And there was excitement, good and plenty. It was well for the boys that they got away as soon as they did, for they had not been gone an hour when the banks of the Potomac swarmed with soldiers looking for the lieutenant. The mystery of his disappearance was never solved, although some maintained that the two unknown men who had claimed to be scouts the night before and then could not be found might have something to do with it.

The boys rode for some time in silence. It was hard for Bob to keep his thoughts from the young lieutenant.

At last Jim asked, “Whar be we goin’ now, Bob?”

“Hagerstown,” answered Bob. “I believe our army will be concentrated at or near there.”

Bob was right. Meade was careful to keep his army between Lee and Baltimore.

President Lincoln at last ordered Meade to attack Lee, and he moved to do so. There was some cannonading and skirmishing, but the waters of the Potomac having subsided, Lee slipped across the river on the night of the fourteenth and his whole army was once more on the soil of Virginia.

Lee’s army had been whipped, but not conquered. The hearts of his men were undaunted, their arms strong. Rivers of blood were yet to be shed before that army laid down its arms.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT HAPPENED IN WINCHESTER

IT WAS in Winchester that Robert Hunter was living with his uncle, Honorable Howard Clayton, at the outbreak of the war. Mr. Clayton had become a general in the Confederate army and Robert, owing to his Union proclivities, had been accused of being a spy, and had to flee for his life. Then he had fallen in with the mountain boy, James Kidder.

Mr. Somers, the father of Agnes, was Mr. Clayton's near neighbor in Winchester and the two families were very intimate. Mrs. Somers owned a large plantation near Staunton, and the family made it their residence during the summer. It was from there that Agnes had been abducted.

When Jim Kidder found and rescued Agnes and brought her to Winchester it was only when Ewell's cannon was thundering around the city, and that night the Federal army had to flee leaving no time for Bob to talk to her.

Great was the rejoicing in Winchester when the Confederate army came marching through and greater still when they heard that Lee was sweeping through Pennsylvania. Harrisburg, Philadelphia, perhaps New York, would soon fall before his invincible army. The war would soon be over—the South victorious.

When Mr. and Mrs. Somers heard of Agnes' rescue they came rushing to Winchester, and tender was the meeting between parents and child. When they heard her story they resolved to say as little about it as possible, but when people learned that Agnes said she did not know who her abductor was, and that she had been rescued by Jim Kidder, they began to shake their heads and tongues began to wag. It was only in a covert manner, however, for Mr. Somers was a prominent man, and it was known that General Clayton would defend the good name of Agnes as he would that of his own daughter.

Agnes, however, noticed a certain coolness towards her which at first she could not understand, and this was not all. She received a letter from her betrothed, General Monroe, demanding that she explain certain things.

Then came the defeat of Lee at Gettysburg, and Winchester was once more in mourning. And Agnes learned of the death of her intended husband, killed while gallantly leading his brigade in that great charge of Pickett's.

At last Lee's army came marching back through Winchester. They were received with outstretched arms, but with it was the sickening thought that they were coming back defeated.

General Clayton was received with wild demonstrations, for he was the hero of Winchester, the highest officer in the Confederate army from that city. His division had won the highest praise from the lips of his beloved commander.

That night Mr. and Mrs. Somers and Agnes came to the home of General Clayton to hear him tell of

the great battle. They listened with breathless attention as he told how the battle might have been won.

Besides the Somers' there was present General Crampton, the betrothed husband of Helen Clayton, the general's only child. When Agnes saw how happy Helen was that her beloved had been spared, she realized more her own sorrow, and her tears flowed afresh.

General Clayton noticed, and going to her, stroked her beautiful hair, saying, "Don't feel too badly, my dear child. With the sorrow there is a great glory to comfort you. Think how he died. He fell the nearest of all to the enemy in that glorious charge. When time dulls the sharp agony you now feel, you will rejoice that he was to have been your husband, and it will be a constant joy to you through life. Often the memory of the dead is more precious than the presence of the living."

General Clayton resumed his seat and then suddenly remarked, "To me the death of General Monroe is peculiarly sad, for it was before Clayton's division that he fell."

Agnes Somers gave a start, and gasped, "What do you mean, General Clayton? General Hunter was killed at Fredericksburg. You, yourself, wrote us of it."

"So I did, Agnes," replied the general, "but it was a mistake. It was thought he had been fatally shot in the head, but it proved that the ball had struck the cheek bone and glanced down into the neck. It was extracted, and General Hunter is alive and well."

Agnes rose and stretching out her arms to her father, sobbed, "Take me home! Take me home! Clive Monroe and Clayton Hunter fighting each other! It is horrible! Horrible!" She would have fallen, if her father had not caught her.

When she had gone General Clayton remarked, "Poor child, the excitement and her sorrow have been too much for her. It is sad to think General Monroe was killed fighting against my nephew's command. It has proved a sorrowful thing that my sister Virginia married a cursed northerner. It is sadder, however, to think of Robert than Clayton, for Clayton is an honorable foe and making a great name for himself, while Robert— It makes me shudder when I think of what may be his fate."

"It is strange what effect the name of Clayton has on Agnes," said Mrs. Clayton. "Helen, you remember when we received the letter announcing his death, she fainted. Could there have been anything between them? Helen, you should know."

"Agnes has assured me many times that Cousin Clayton never spoke a word of love to her, much less asked her to marry him," answered Helen. "But that something happened I am certain. You remember Clayton left suddenly the day Mr. Somers was hurt. He was to have stayed until after the holidays. He has never been here since, always had some excuse, and that was four years ago."

"Words need not be spoken to tell of love," said Mrs. Clayton. "But as none of the Somers family have ever said anything of the matter, I do not know as we should discuss it."

"To change the conversation," said General Clay-

ton, "I see that Colonel Kincaid is in the city. Now that General Monroe has been killed I wonder if when the proper time has elapsed he will not renew his suit for Agnes' hand."

"Agnes will never have anything to do with Colonel Kincaid," replied Helen.

"Don't be so sure," dryly answered the general. "Girls often change their minds."

Colonel Kincaid's home was near Winchester and he had been an ardent suitor of Agnes' for years but without success.

He was now in a fever of doubt as to whether Agnes really believed he had been instrumental in her abduction. From what Jim had said at the farm house, he was afraid she did. He must devise some means of disabusing her mind of that thought. Now that General Monroe was dead, he believed there was still hope. He carefully considered many schemes, and at last decided to call on her. This was a bold move considering the insult he had given her at the ball in Richmond. If he could obtain a hearing he believed he could destroy any thought that Agnes might have that he was instrumental in her abduction.

So, dressed in his smartest uniform—and he was a splendid looking officer—he boldly rang the doorbell at the Somers' residence. The door was opened by a colored woman who knew the colonel. "Why, Kernel Kincaid, is dis yo'?" she cried. "It's bin a long time since yo' was heah."

"Is Miss Agnes at home?" asked the colonel curtly.

"Yes sah, she be at home. The massa and mis-sus be away."

This was better than the colonel had hoped. "See here, Chloe," he cried. "Tell Miss Agnes a gentleman is here to see her, but don't tell her who it is." He slipped a dollar into her hand.

"Tank yo', Massa," said the woman, grinning.

It was not long before Agnes entered the room. When she saw the colonel she stopped short, a wave of anger sweeping over her face.

"How dare you?" she cried, pointing to the door.

Instead of going Colonel Kincaid bowed with the upmost humility and said, "Miss Somers, I cannot go until I humbly beg your pardon for my conduct at the ball in Richmond. I was beside myself, insane, I did not know what I was doing. It was only after I left that I realized the enormity of my offense. I fully expected you would denounce me, and that Colonel Monroe would shoot me like a cur as I deserved. But in the goodness of your heart you kept still. How bitterly I have repented of my act you can never know. You chose the better man. In his death your loss can never be filled. As for me I have only two things to live for: first, to serve my country; second, to find who was responsible for your abduction. How you must have suffered. I thought I had found a clue, but the one I thought held the secret was killed at Gettysburg. Still I shall never give up until the matter is solved. This secret I believe is held by Jim Kidder. I shall never trouble you more, but I shall never cease to love you. Farewell."

He bowed himself out leaving Agnes stupefied, not knowing what to think. Were her suspicions all wrong?

She resolved to confide in Helen Clayton.

Helen listened to her story and said, "Agnes, why did you not tell me this before? From what you have said General Monroe must have had an inkling that something was wrong. Yet, as you say, if you had told there would have been blood shed. Perhaps it was best that you did as you did. But Agnes, I must tell you. Your reputation is suffering. Your story of your abduction is so strange. Because you were found by Jim Kidder some think Robert had something to do with it; others that you really ran away with Colonel Kincaid, and Jim Kidder happened to discover your retreat while the colonel was away on a raid, and that your story of being imprisoned against your wish is all false."

"Oh! Helen, what shall I do?" cried Agnes bursting into tears. "I knew something was wrong, but I had no idea it was so bad."

"Confide everything to father," replied Helen. "He will know best."

General Clayton listened with a grave face. "The mystery grows," he said. "It is well you told me instead of your father of what happened in Richmond. He is beginning to hear that you are being talked about, and is furious. He would shoot Colonel Kincaid on sight, and then there would be trouble, serious trouble, for the colonel is a popular officer, and so far there is no evidence against him. There is no doubt, Agnes, but what Colonel Kincaid is desperately in love with you, and means you no harm except to make you his wife."

"He said he would never trouble me any more," sobbed Agnes.

“But he also said he would never cease to love you. Don't you see that he hopes in time you will cease to mourn for General Monroe, and that his love for you will be rewarded? I will tell you something I heard just now on the street. It was that Colonel Kincaid had made a young lieutenant whom he overheard make a slighting remark about you, get down on his knees and apologize. The only thing to do is to put this thing in the hands of the secret service and try to have them ferret out the mystery of your abduction.”

This Colonel Clayton did and after some weeks received the following report:

After the most careful research concerning the abduction of Miss Agnes Somers will report as follows: At first our suspicion was directed towards Colonel Wythe Kincaid, although he is a most gallant officer and stands high in the estimation of his superior officers. He frankly acknowledges that he was an ardent suitor for the hand of Miss Somers, but that she preferred General Monroe and that he bowed to her decision as a gentleman should. We find that at the time Miss Somers was abducted Colonel Kincaid was absent with General Imboden on a raid, and on his return was one of the most active in searching for her.

We also find that General Clayton and Mr. Somers are close neighbors in Winchester, and that the two families are and always have been very intimate; that Robert Hunter, nephew of General Clayton, lived with him as one of the family, and that said Robert Hunter turned out to be a notorious Yankee scout and spy, causing General Clayton untold grief; that this Robert Hunter and Miss Somers were very intimate, and that many think the boy, although young, was deeply in

love with Miss Somers, and that when he found she was engaged to General (then Colonel) Monroe, he laid plans to abduct her. But how? It is known that he was in Washington at the time of her disappearance.

Associated with Robert Hunter as a scout and spy is one James Kidder, a mountain boy. This Kidder is not only daring but cunning as a fox, and has caused our forces in West Virginia much trouble.

A few weeks before Miss Somers disappeared, Kidder left Washington where he had been with Robert Hunter, and returned to West Virginia.

There was in the regiment commanded by Colonel Kincaid a lieutenant by the name of Simeon Jenkins. He bore a poor reputation, but as a soldier was brave. It seems that just before the Imboden raid Lieutenant Jenkins asked Colonel Kincaid to take three or four men and go on a secret expedition to see if they could capture a notorious guerrilla who was giving much trouble by harassing Confederate citizens.

The permission was given and he had not returned at the time Colonel Kincaid was ordered on the raid. He returned while the Colonel was away, and he and his men were very reticent as to where they had been.

The night the cabin in which Miss Somers had been confined burned, two of the soldiers who had been with Jenkins on his expedition disappeared. Two charred bodies were found in the ruins of the cabin which were supposed to be the bodies of these soldiers.

It was further found that Jenkins was a native of the same county in West Virginia that James Kidder was. The supposition is that they knew each other.

Unfortunately Lieutenant Jenkins was killed at Gettysburg, so the research as far as he is concerned is at an end.

Now to unravel the skein. Robert Hunter inherited much wealth. Although not yet of age he has always

been furnished as much money as he wished by his brother, General Clayton Hunter of the Union army.

The conclusion is that while in Washington Robert Hunter and James Kidder concocted the scheme of kidnapping Miss Somers, knowing she would be at her father's plantation. Kidder was furnished with plenty of money to carry out the scheme. It was just such an adventure as he would glory in. With his knowledge of the mountains and acquaintance with guerrillas he was able to enter our lines, seek out Lieutenant Jenkins and bribe him to undertake the venture.

If Kidder had not known where Miss Somers was concealed there was not one chance in a million that he would have discovered her by accident.

Quite a large sum of Federal money was found on the body of Jenkins.

Just about the time Kidder should appear with Miss Somers, Robert Hunter broke relations with his brother in Washington, and returned to Winchester and was there when Kidder and Miss Somers appeared. But General Early had already attacked the place and Hunter had to flee without hardly speaking to Miss Somers.

The only weak spot in this chain of evidence is this: If Hunter had Miss Somers abducted why did he have her returned to her home in Winchester?

The conclusion is he either became frightened or wished to throw the suspicion on Colonel Kincaid, whom he hated with a mortal hatred, as it was Kincaid, when a captain, who arrested him as a spy.

Taking all things together we have little hesitancy in saying that Miss Somers was abducted through the instrumentality of Robert Hunter.

"Well," said the general when he finished reading it, "here is a case of circumstantial evidence with a vengeance. So they think Robert was at the bottom

of it all. I believe they are right." He was ready to believe anything of Robert.

When Agnes was shown the report there was an explosion. "Nothing can make me believe Jim Kidder played any such part," she cried, her eyes flashing. "Rough and uncouth as he is, that boy is pure gold."

"To think, Father," said Helen, "that you are inclined to believe that foolish report. I am ashamed of you. It is a weak report."

"Many a man has been hung on evidence not half so strong," retorted the general. "Robert Hunter is capable of doing anything. Why was I given such a nephew?" And he groaned.

"Father, think how he saved me from Black Dan," cried Helen. "You would have had no daughter now if it had not been for Robert."

"I know, I know," said General Clayton, "and that makes it all the harder. To think that one day he may be hung—my sister's child hung." With faltering steps General Clayton left the room.

Both girls turned pale, and then sobbed as if their hearts would break. They believed that such a fate would in all probability come to Robert sooner or later.

CHAPTER V

RAIDING THE ENEMY'S CAMP

A MONTH after the battle of Gettysburg the two armies were facing each other once more along the banks of the Rappahannock. All the blood that had been shed had, so far as the situation of the two armies was concerned, been for naught. But the North had been saved from invasion, and the supposed invincible army of Lee had been defeated.

General Meade advanced his army as far as Culpeper Court House, learning that General Lee had sent Longstreet's Corps to the assistance of General Bragg who was preparing to drive General Rosecrans out of Chattanooga. After the battle of Chickamauga the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps were detached from the Army of the Potomac and sent to the aid of Rosecrans. Thus both General Meade and General Lee found themselves with diminished armies.

Bob and Jim, safely nested in a tree whose thick foliage concealed them from the enemy, sat looking across the Rappahannock.

The pickets along the river would once in a while take a shot at each other to vary the monotony of the watching.

"This heah do beat all," said Jim. "Heah these

two armies are just whar they were two years ago. Never lick the rebs this way."

"Remember how we licked them at Gettysburg," said Bob.

"What did it amount to?" Jim growled. "They get away an' heah they be before us jest as sassy as ever."

Bob was watching the opposite bank of the river through his glass. "Jim," he said, "there is a reb behind that big tree that stands a few rods back of the river. He is kind of careless in exposing himself. Reckon the boys along the bank can't see him."

Jim looked and replied, "That's so. Believe I'll take a crack at him. Been so long since I shot a reb I hev most forgotten how. Mighty long shot but I believe I can scare him anyway."

Jim took careful aim and fired. The soldier dropped his gun, clutched his right arm and staggered back out of sight.

"Winged him all right," chuckled Jim.

But the smoke of Jim's carbine was seen, and it brought a swift response. A storm of balls swept through the top of the tree cutting the leaves and branches around. The boys hastily made their way down just in time to escape another volley which swept the tree.

"You surely stirred them up, Jim," said Bob, "and we got down just in time. I don't believe I'd have been so fortunate this time. Look here." His clothing had been cut in three different places.

"Must hev had a spite at yo'. Didn't touch me," replied Jim.

“Didn’t? Better look at the crown of your hat,” laughed Bob.

Jim took off his hat. A big hole had been torn through the crown.

“Blame me! If I don’t get a new hat for that, an’ from a reb too,” said Jim.

The next day the boys decided to go up the river and try and find a place where they could get across. There were rumors that Lee was contemplating a movement of some sort and they would try and find out what it was.

Keeping up the river they passed beyond the flanks of the two armies and then had only to guard against scouting parties, but all fords across the river were strongly guarded.

They found one place where the river was thickly wooded on both sides.

“Here is the place to cross,” said Bob. “But we will have to wait until night.”

“I reckon if we cross heah we’ll hev to swim,” replied Jim.

“That’s just what we will do,” said Bob, and he began gathering several old limbs of trees that lay on the ground.

“What be yo’ goin’ to do with them?” asked Jim. “Crazy enough to build a fire?”

“Not quite, Jim. They are for a little raft on which we will put our guns and clothes, and keep them dry.”

Jim whistled. “I never thought of that.”

Bob now looked for some long vines and when night came they carried the logs down to the river and bound them together with the vines. Then strip-

ping, they placed their clothes and carbines on the little raft and pushed off. The river was not wide and they were soon across.

As they dressed Bob said, "This is a heap better than wearing wet clothes, and our rations are dry."

"Yo' be a general, Bob," Jim replied.

The boys now made their way back from the river a short distance and concluded to camp for the night. They could see the gleam of a camp fire some distance up the river but they passed the night undisturbed.

They started as soon as it was light enough to see, making their way cautiously through the woods. After going some two miles they came to an open country and on a plantation some half a mile away saw a squadron of cavalry camping.

"That is the force that is guarding the ford across the river," said Bob. "See, they are falling in and in a hurry. Wonder what is up."

Soon about half the force rode away. Bob carefully examined the camp through his glasses and said, "Jim, I think we'll wait here a while and see what happens."

"Can't find out much waitin' heah," Jim replied.

"Wait and see," said Bob.

In about an hour the same number of men who had left the camp came riding in. "They are not the same men," said Bob. "Oh! I see. These fellows have been on guard, and the ones who went away relieved them. See! They are unsaddling their horses. Jim, I have a plan."

"What is it?"

"I have been carefully watching the camp and

think there is no danger. They are taking little precaution. In all probability they have a camp guard or two and that is all. The men who have been on guard will lie around and sleep. The officers seem to be quartered in the farm house which is about a quarter of a mile from the camp. I think we can lie here until night, and then sneak up to the house and see if we can learn anything."

The boys, snugly hidden in a thicket, passed the day anxiously waiting for the night which came at last. As soon as it was dark they sallied forth, making a detour so as to come up at the back of the house. Avoiding the barn, where they could hear horses trampling and see the dim form of a guard pacing his beat, they crawled to the house.

Bob had noticed that a luxuriant vine grew at one end of the porch, and to this the boys crept and found secure shelter.

The officers inside were talking and laughing and seemed to be having a merry time. But the boys could only now and then catch a word.

"Jim, I'm afraid we've had all our trouble for nothing," whispered Bob.

"It 'pears like it. I can't make out a thing they be sayin'."

Just then the sound of a horse's hoofs was heard and a horseman came galloping up to the door.

"Is Major Collins there?" he called. There was a noise of pushing chairs in the room and the door opened and a voice said, "I am Major Collins. What is it?"

"A dispatch, Major," said the courier saluting. "Anything doing here?"

"No, all is quiet," answered the major, as the courier sped away.

Stepping to the open door through which the light was streaming the major opened the dispatch.

"What is it, Major," cried the officers. "Anything secret?"

"No. General Lee says the enemy seems to be preparing for some movement. They must know that Longstreet has been dispatched to the aid of Bragg by this time, and Meade may strike. We are to redouble our vigilance, and if the enemy advance in force we are to fall back to the Rapidan. Captain Morris, see that the pickets are reinforced along the river, and tell them to keep a sharp lookout."

Captain Morris saluted, called for an orderly to bring his horse, and soon galloped away on his mission. The rest of the officers returned to the house and began to discuss loudly what would happen if Meade did advance.

"Jim, I reckon we have heard all we will," whispered Bob. "Now for a getaway."

Silently they crept away, and when they thought they were far enough from the house, rose to their feet and started away on a swift walk. But they were not yet out of trouble. An officer who was returning from the camp heard them coming and stepped behind a tree to see who was approaching in such haste. The boys almost ran into him.

"Halt!" ordered the officer. "Who are you and where have you been?"

"Two — two — sojers — jes — jes out on a lark," stammered Bob, acting as if he were drunk. "Had a good — good time. Did, didn't we, Jim?"

"You are drunk and absent without leave," said the officer. "Come with me."

"Don't—don't want to go. Will fight befoh we'uns go. Won't we'uns, Jim?" hiccoughed Bob.

"Will eh!" said the officer drawing his revolver. "Now, come quick before I put a hole in you."

"All—all right. Don't want to be shot," mumbled Bob, and as he turned to go he stumbled against the officer nearly knocking him down. Before he could recover Jim had unslung his carbine and struck him a terrific blow on the head. The officer sank to the ground without a moan, but in falling his revolver was discharged.

"Now for it," cried Bob, dashing away in the darkness.

Soon they heard a cry of surprise, then rapid shots from a revolver. Another officer had heard the revolver shot, and running to find out the trouble had fallen over the body of the first officer. On arising he fired his revolver several times to give the alarm.

The whole camp was soon in an uproar. The fallen officer was found to be dead, his skull crushed in. By his side lay his revolver, one chamber empty.

"Did you see anyone?" demanded Major Collins of the officer who had given the alarm.

"No, but I am sure I heard someone running away. In fact it sounded like two."

"Which way did they run?" excitedly asked the major.

"Towards the river."

"There's treachery here," shouted the major. "It seems we're not safe even in our own camp. Order every man to the river. Let every foot of its banks

be patrolled. This is either men trying to desert, or Yankee spies who have managed to creep through our lines and commit murder right in our midst."

"They will be after us like wolves," panted Bob as they heard the tumult in the camp.

In a short time they heard a company of cavalry come thundering down the road. As they drew near Bob said, "One side of the road and let them pass." They ran a short distance back from the road and lay down, and the cavalry passed unaware that their prey was so near.

Bob and Jim returned to the road but had not gone far when they heard another company coming.

"They'll picket the river as thick as flies," cried Bob, "but we must get through someway."

"Git through or die fightin'," replied Jim.

The river was about a mile from the camp and the boys knew they must now be near it, and halted to get breath and decide what to do. As they did so they heard an officer shout, "Deploy up and down the river. A company has gone to the ford above and another one below. Be vigilant and let no one escape."

"Bob, what had we bettah do?" asked Jim. "They suah be hot after us."

"The boldest way is the best way," answered Bob. "They will think we have taken to the woods and there is where they will look, Jim. They will not expect us to come right up behind them. It is dark and we can be right among them before they know it, and they may take us for some of their men. We will watch our chance and make a dive for the river. Ten to one they will not hit us, but we will have to swim for it."

Bold as this was the boys decided it was the thing to do, and carelessly walked forward and were soon among the horses which had been left picketed. Among them they walked, unnoticed by the men who had been left to guard the horses except to have one of them call to them, "Hurry up, boys, or you will be too late. Hope you catch the villains."

"Give ten dollars to git a crack at them," replied Jim.

As Bob expected they found a line of men strung along the bank of the river so closely that it would be impossible to get through unnoticed. He knew if they tried to take places in that line they would be questioned.

"Lie down," he whispered to Jim. Lying flat the boys made their way down the bank hoping to find a place where they could make a break. They had managed to creep some little distance when Bob took hold of a shrub to pull himself along. The shrub proved to be dry, and snapped.

"Who is there?" challenged the sentry. There was no answer. Before the sentry could challenge again, an officer called, "What is it, Ames?"

"I heard a dry twig snap as if someone had stepped on it, but I have heard nothing since."

"Keep your eyes and ears open and I will investigate," answered the officer.

It was now or never for the boys to get away. The sentry stood between them and the river. Bob could just see his dim form. He raised his carbine and fired and the way was clear.

"Now!" cried Bob and both the boys made a dash, over the bank and plunged into the water.

With one hand they held their carbines over their heads. The excitement on the bank was intense, officers shouted and men yelled. One guard cried, "I see them. They are swimming the river." He fired. Others now saw them and the balls fell thick and fast, but none took effect and the boys were soon safely across. Shaking themselves like dogs they plunged into the woods. Dripping wet, their teeth chattering, they made their way through the brush.

"Didn't think that water was so cold," grumbled Bob. "I'm shaking all over."

"Bosh! that's nothing," replied Jim. "I've swam the rivers in West Virginia full of floating ice. Think I did it once when yo' was with me."

"I remember," said Bob. "Our clothes froze on us like boards, and if we hadn't got to a house we would have frozen to death. Jim, let's try and find the road. These woods are abominable, and we can't go fast enough to get up circulation. I don't believe any of the rebs will try and cross the river."

"Reckon they won't," replied Jim. "Listen to that." The sound of rapid firing had just commenced. A scouting party of Federal cavalry had heard the sounds of the guns fired at the boys, and thinking the Confederates were trying to cross the river rode down to investigate, and now the two parties were engaged in firing at each other across the river, which proved more exciting than dangerous.

Bob and Jim were soon among friends and the cavalymen gathered around them remarking on their bedraggled appearance, and listening with surprise to their story.

"Are you the boys that brought General Kilpatrick the news of that train we captured at Monterey?" asked the captain.

"We are," answered Bob.

"Shake!" cried the captain, extending his hand. "I was a little inclined to doubt your story at first, but I don't now."

"Glad I'm not put down in the Ananias Club," laughed Bob, "although there is a heap of lying going on about the war. To read the papers one would think that every man in both the Union and Confederate armies had been killed long ago. But we must get to General Meade, as we have a report to make."

"Of course you will want mounts," said the captain.

"Yes, but I prefer to take the stirrup and run by the side of mine until I get my blood circulating and I become kind of dried off," replied Bob.

The horses were brought and the boys ran by their sides until their clothes were partially dried and their bodies began to tingle with warmth.

No time was lost in reporting to General Meade. "So Longstreet has gone for sure," he said. "I heard such a rumor but doubted it. Thank you, boys, but don't be too daring or you will go out some day and never come back. Whether General Lee will refuse battle or not I'll soon find out."

The next day General Meade ordered an advance but Lee refused battle and retired behind the Rapidan. General Meade advanced as far as Culpeper and some of his cavalry even crossed the Rapidan. He now made preparations to force Lee to battle, when

he received unexpected notice that the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps were to be transferred west to aid Rosecrans, who was penned up in Chattanooga. This deprived Meade of nearly one-third of his army. He would now do well if he could keep what he had gained.

CHAPTER VI

CUSTER'S GALLANT CHARGE

BOB and Jim stood on the summit of Slaughter Mountain. It was there they had stood more than a year ago. At that time Pope's army was in the same position that Meade's was now. Then came the battle of Cedar Run, the retreat back, Jackson's wonderful flank movements, and the great victory of the Confederates at Manassas.

"Jim, do you remember how we stood here and watched that great cloud of dust arising from the south and concluded to stay, and when we woke up in the morning found we were surrounded by Jackson's army?" asked Bob. "I sometimes think the same scenes will be repeated."

"I reckon I do remember," replied Jim with a shiver, for some of his old superstition had come back to him. "What do you mean, Bob, by saying the same things will come again? Jackson be dead."

"I mean that Lee may advance as he did then, and drive Meade clear back to Washington, as he did Pope."

"What makes yo' think so?"

"Because nearly one-third of Meade's army has been sent away, and that fact is known to Lee before this. He is a general that believes in striking and striking hard. Now is his opportunity."

"But I heard yo' say that Longstreet has been sent away from Lee, so it's a stand-off."

"So it looks, but you and I know that the Confederate troops are on the move, that there is something going on. We have found out that much in our scouts."

"We sure hev. The varmints seem mighty uneasy."

"And what is more," continued Bob, "I believe Lee is concentrating his army at Madison Court House. He is going to try and flank Meade on the right as Jackson flanked Pope. I am going to try and find out. We will scout in the direction of Madison Court House."

The country was mountainous and wooded and afforded good opportunities for concealment. The boys were between the armies and had to be vigilant. Roads had to be avoided for the scouting parties of the enemy were numerous.

"The rebs are mighty thick," said Jim as from the rocky summit of a mountain they were looking over the country. Bob was using his glass and replied, "Lee has his whole front well protected. He is careful to see that we cannot detect what he is up to. Jim, we must make that low mountain that lies to the northwest. I believe from there we can get a view of the main road leading to Madison Court House from the south."

How to reach the mountain was the question for there was a valley between them and it.

Making their way down the mountain by crouching behind rocks, crawling over open places and taking refuge of every tree and thicket, they succeeded in reaching the edge of the valley.

“It will never do to try and cross this valley in the daylight,” said Bob. “We shall have to wait until night.”

So they waited concealed in a tangle of brush.

When darkness came they succeeded in crossing the valley, although several times they passed so close to soldiers they could hear them talking.

Slowly they made their way about half way up the mountain and there concluded to wait until day, for they knew not what might meet them on the top.

As soon as the light came they made their breakfast out of some hard crackers and raw bacon they had with them, and were about to start when they heard voices. Hiding among the rocks they let a squad of soldiers pass. From the few words they caught they knew the men had been on top of the mountain during the night, and were now returning to their quarters.

“It’s fortunate we stopped when we did,” whispered Bob. “If we had gone on up we would have run right into those fellows.”

The mountain was covered with a thick scrub so they had little fear of being seen and soon reached the top. Bob could not help uttering an exclamation of delight.

On the west there was spread out a broad valley, rich and fertile. Great fields of corn lay in shock; cattle grazed in meadows browned by the autumn frosts. The rough hand of war had not yet touched that valley. The mountain sloped down to the road which ran winding through the valley, and what pleased the boys, its side was covered with the same thick scrub as was the opposite side up which they

had come. This would enable them to reach the road unobserved. They could see a long column of infantry marching northward.

"They be on the move, suah," said Jim. "Wonder whar they be goin'?"

"I would give a good deal to find out," answered Bob. "That's what we're here for. Now how can we do it?"

Jim took a good look and said, "We could get down to that road if it'd do us any good."

"It might. But there's no use trying to do that until that infantry passes."

As they were waiting Bob asked, "Jim, do you remember that scout we took down towards Gordonsville just before the battle of Cedar Run?"

Jim laughed. "I reckon I do. That was the time we stopped Judge Cadwalader. Some gal, that darter of his, but she only had eyes for yo', Bob. It do beat all how the gals take to yo'."

"Well, Jim, the plantation of the judge lies somewhere in this valley, closer to Madison than we are. Wouldn't it be rich if we should run into the judge and the lovely Clarissa? If we do I'll stand back and give you a clear field."

"Tank yo'," said Jim dryly, "but no highfalutin' gals fer me. One mountain gal is worth a dozen of them."

As the road was now clear of travelers, the boys made their way cautiously down the mountain side and established themselves in a thick clump of bushes which grew close to the road. Here the boys let several pass without stopping them, as they did not appear promising subjects for investigation.

Bob was scanning the road to the north through his glass when he suddenly cried, "Jim, there is one of those lumbering coaches coming and it looks like the outfit of Judge Cadwalader. Wouldn't it be a go if it were he?"

Jim chuckled. "Give a dollar if it is."

"If it is we'll stop him sure," said Bob. "The judge is a rare old fellow to get information from."

The coach came nearer. "It is the judge," excitedly exclaimed Bob. "Now for it!"

The coach came abreast and the boys sprang out with leveled carbines.

"Halt!" they cried.

The colored coachman drew up with a jerk and nearly fell from his seat from fear.

"What now?" cried the voice of the judge.

"Get out of there and that quick," ordered Bob, jerking open the door and thrusting in the muzzle of his carbine.

There was a shrill scream from the lips of Clarissa and an oath from the lips of a dapper Confederate lieutenant who sat by her side. He reached as if to grasp the butt of a revolver which was in a holster by his side.

"None of that," cried Bob. "Out of there! Hold up your hands."

Jim was giving the same commands to Judge Cadwalader. Both men got out with uplifted hands, and Bob told Jim to relieve the lieutenant of his pistol. Jim did so, throwing it in the bushes. Clarissa continued to emit shrill screams. This was a holdup in earnest, and she forgot her desire to meet a high-wayman.

Bob turned to her and bowing said, "Do not be alarmed, Miss Cadwalader. If the men behave themselves you will not be harmed.

Clarissa forgot to scream and gazed a moment in astonishment, then cried, "Robert Hunter! Pa, it's Robert Hunter."

"I am Robert Hunter," replied Bob bowing. "What can I do for you?"

"I thought you were a gentleman," gasped the girl.

"So I am, and a gallant lover. It was my great desire to see you again that caused me to turn highwayman. But who is this?" he asked turning to the lieutenant. "A lover? If so I am tempted to shoot him out of pure jealousy."

"That is Cousin Caddie Robinson," pouted Clarissa, "and don't you harm him."

"Surely not," laughed Bob. "I have heard of him. He is the brave young man who so nobly defended you girls when attacked by Black Dan. Glad to make your acquaintance, Lieutenant Robinson. Now, Jim, go through their pockets and see what you can find."

"Common highwaymen," sputtered the judge.

Jim did as told and brought forth a variety of articles. Bob looked them over and among those belonging to the judge found a letter. He opened it and as he read his face lighted. "Jim, give them back the rest of the things. This is all we want. Gentlemen, you can resume your seats in the carriage. I thank you for your courtesy."

"Curse you, you robber," hissed the judge as he clambered back into his seat. He realized now that

his life was not in danger, and he gave vent to his feelings. "Go on!" he shouted to the coachman.

"Jim, shoot that coachman if he dare start until we tell him to," ordered Bob.

"I—I not goin' to start, Massa," cried the frightened negro as he saw the muzzle of Jim's carbine pointed at him.

"Miss Cadwalader, if our visit has frightened you I most humbly beg your pardon," said Bob, taking off his hat and making a sweeping bow. "To see your fair face again has been one of my greatest desires. When this cruel war is over I hope to visit you and win from you the smiles my heart desires."

"Don't you dare make love to my daughter, you villain," roared the judge, his face a livid purple.

"Cruel parent! It is ever so," sighed Bob. Then suddenly he cried, "I see a squad of cavalry coming. I must tear myself away, but may we meet again. Farewell!" Bob threw her a kiss and he and Jim dove into the bushes and were gone.

The cavalry came up and asked the trouble.

As well as the anger of the judge would permit, he told the story.

"You say one of them was Robert Hunter?" cried the major. "Did he learn anything from you or the lieutenant?"

"Not a thing," pompously replied the judge. "Although both the lieutenant and I were threatened with death if we did not tell what we knew neither of us said a word. If we had had half a chance we would have fought them, but we were taken by surprise and their carbines were in our faces before we knew what was up. Be assured they learned nothing from

us." The judge discreetly kept silent about the letter.

"The daring of those spies in coming so far into our lines and stopping you here on this road which is constantly being traveled by our troops is beyond measure," said the major. "You say they have just left?"

"Yes, not more than five minutes ago. They can't be far up the mountain."

"It would be worth a coloneley to me if I could capture them," exclaimed the major. "I'll try."

He hurriedly gave some orders and fifty of the cavalrymen dismounted and under a captain began to climb the mountain, another fifty turned and began to ride swiftly for a pass through which they could reach the other side of the mountain, hoping to cut the boys off.

The judge ordered the coachman to drive on, a much chagrined man.

"Isn't he splendid?" murmured Clarissa, clasping her hands and rolling up her eyes.

"Who is splendid?" snapped the judge.

"Why, Robert Hunter."

"Shut your fool mouth, or I'll put you in a convent," thundered the judge.

It was a silent party that rode on. Lieutenant Robinson was the picture of misery. The allusion Bob had made to his conduct at the picnic party when Black Dan attacked them had cut him to the heart.¹ Lieutenant Robinson had outgrown his cowardice to some extent, and was really a commendable officer.

¹ See *The Boy Scouts of the Shenandoah*.

Although the boys were chased like wild beasts, and once escaped amid a shower of bullets, they reached the Union lines in safety. The letter which Bob took from the judge read as follows:

DEAR JUDGE:

You are needed at home at once to see about the provisions and forage promised to the army. Some great movement is on foot. I do not know what, for you know such things are kept secret, but from what I see, I believe Lee is moving to strike Meade on the flank and rear as Jackson did Pope last year. All of Ewell's corps is here. The soldiers seem to know what is up, and are crazy to start. They seem to think it will be as easy to take care of Meade as it was of Pope.

Hurry up, for the provisions and forage must be provided at once.

Your friend,

W. B. GOODMAN.

The letter was placed in the hands of General Meade. "I have heard rumors of such a move," he said as he read it. "And this although not from a military officer seems to confirm it. So Lee is to take advantage of the withdrawal of the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps, is he?"

Both the boys were warmly congratulated by the general and he assured them their services would be amply rewarded.

General Meade at once made arrangements for the withdrawal of his army and he did not make them a moment too soon.

Ewell, by a swift movement, tried to cut off the retreat by swinging around the right. Swarms of cavalymen seemed to spring from everywhere. Lee,

moving light, could move much more rapidly than Meade could with his heavy trains. It was a fight from the beginning.

"This looks serious," said Bob. He and Jim had just come in with news that a large body of cavalry was moving around the right, seemingly trying to gain the rear and cut off part of the army.

The sound of cannon told that the rear guard of the army was fighting furiously to hold back the enemy pressing on them, and now both flanks were threatened.

The Rappahannock at Brandy Station was reached. The cavalry was fighting on the flank to prevent the enemy from capturing the crossing. If Lee could do this all Meade's army that had not crossed would be at his mercy.

The plains around Brandy Station were bare of obstruction and now there was enacted one of the grandest panoramas seen during the war. Visible to the eye were thousands of cavalymen. Sabers were flashing, cannon roaring, squadrons wheeling and charging. Those who looked upon the scene that day will never forget it.¹

¹ An officer engaged in the battle writes: "It was seen that we were not only flanked on both right and left, and closely pressed in the rear, but right across the road we desired to travel we were confronted by a strong force—that we were surrounded.

"In this engagement nearly the whole cavalry force of the armies of the Potomac and of Virginia confronted each other, and having a splendid field undoubtedly exhibited the most magnificent display ever witnessed on this continent. Had it not been for the well-known fact that the rebels were heavily supported by infantry or had the rebels displayed more ardor for the offensive, it might have resulted in one of the most bloody cavalry fights in history."

It was upon this scene that Bob came. He was acting as a volunteer orderly for General Meade during the retreat and was bearing a dispatch to General Pleasonton, commander-in-chief of the cavalry.

Just before he reached where the fighting was heaviest he saw to his dismay a large body of Confederate cavalry bearing down on the road. In a moment they would be across it. He had to make a wide detour to avoid them, and then only escaped amid a shower of bullets.

General Pleasonton had just come up and joined General Custer when Bob dashed up, his horse covered with foam, and handed him a dispatch. Pleasonton had just said to Custer, "General, I would give ten years of my life if I could say to the boys, 'Go in.' I know we could whip them if we only had the cavalry to fight."

As the general was reading the dispatch, Bob said to Custer, "General, you are surrounded. There is a large force directly in your rear."

"Hear that, General?" cried Custer. "We are surrounded. There is a large force directly in our rear."

"How is that?" asked Pleasonton. "How did you hear?"

"The orderly here brings the news."

General Pleasonton turned eagerly to Bob, and Bob told him what he had seen.

"What are we to do, Custer?" asked Pleasonton.

"Cut our way through," coolly replied Custer.

"My Michigan boys can, if any force can."

"Then go," cried Pleasonton.

Custer, his face aflame, his long hair flying in the wind galloped for his brigade, and Bob followed him.

Quickly Custer formed his brigade. The soldiers saw what was before them. Their sabers flashed in the sunlight, and with compressed lips they awaited the order to charge.

Custer ordered the band to play "Yankee Doodle," and amid the strains of "Yankee Doodle Do, Yankee Doodle Dandy," the order was given to charge.

With a wild cheer the brigade swept forward. The rebels saw them thundering down upon them, saw their flashing sabers and heard their wild cheers. It was more than flesh and blood could stand. They broke and ran.

The way was open. Bob cheered until he was so hoarse he could cheer no more.

All the army and trains were now across the Rappahannock, and General Meade gave orders for the army to retreat as rapidly as possible and concentrate at Centerville.¹

Both armies were now rushing to reach Bristoe. It fell to the Second Corps, in which the division of General Hunter was, to guard the rear.

After the crossing of the Rappahannock Bob found his brother, for he always wished to be with him in time of battle.

"Clayt, what are the orders?" he asked as he rode up.

"To guard the crossing of Cedar Run at Auburn until the rest of the army crosses," was the answer.

"You will have your hands full," replied Bob. "I

¹ Time proved that this order was a mistake. If Meade had ordered the army to concentrate at Bristoe instead of at Centerville, he could have fought a battle with the advantage all in his favor.

have been reconnoitering and besides the cavalry, two heavy trains of infantry will reach Auburn about as soon as you do."

So it proved. General Hunter and his force, at times nearly surrounded, beat the enemy off, and the crossing was made safely.

It was for Bristoe that General Lee was really making, hoping there to cut the Federal army in twain and secure a great victory.

For the third time the fields of Manassas were to echo with the thunder of battle; for the third time was the thirsty soil to drink the blood of heroes.

On the Second Corps that guarded the crossing of Broad Run, Lee threw his infantry. The crucial point was held by Hunter's division which met the rebel charge and drove it back in confusion.

But a rebel battery continued to pour shot into the ranks of the Federals.

"Go tell Colonel Freeman to charge that battery," General Hunter told Bob, who was acting as one of his aides.

Away went Bob on his mission.

"General Hunter's orders are to charge that battery," Bob said to the colonel.

"Just been waiting for that order," responded the colonel. "We are ready."

The order was given and the charge made. Like an avalanche the men swept over the battery, capturing not only it, but also five hundred prisoners.

When the prisoners were brought back Bob recognized in the young captain of the battery, Clay Martin, a cadet he had known at the Virginia Institute.

"Hello, Clay, glad to see you," he exclaimed, extending his hand. At first Martin did not recognize him, but when he did he scowled and said, "So it is you, Hunter. Excuse me, I did not know you at first. I cannot return your salutations by saying I am glad to see you. I might be if the situation was reversed."

"The fortunes of war, Clay," replied Bob, "and you will have a better chance of getting home alive. My chance is not overbright. Good luck to you."

So the two who had once been friendly parted. One to face the fortunes of war, the other the monotony of prison life.

The thoughts of Bob were not pleasant as the army fell back from Bristoe to Centerville. He was traveling over the same ground where was fought the battle of Bull Run. Again he saw the fearful panic, the disgraceful rout. Then came the battle of Manassas, and once more the army was sent back in disastrous defeat to the fortifications around Washington. Now again they were traveling the same road.

"Will it ever end?" he sighed, and his heart became as lead.¹

¹The Union army loss during the retreat was 2,292, over one-half was in the cavalry. The loss in the Confederate army was fully as great, if not greater.

CHAPTER VII

A FIGHT WITH MOSBY

BOB and Jim stood in front of General Hunter's tent at Centerville. As far as the eye could see stretched the white tents of the Union army.

"Bob, this is the place where that pesky general wouldn't go to help yo' brother, isn't it?" asked Jim.

"The same," replied Bob.

"Whew! That was a fight we got into. That was all of a year ago."

"More than that, Jim, and lots' of things have happened since then."

"An' the army now be back to whar it was then," continued Jim.

"Only that time we got clear back to Washington," said Bob.

"I don't see that we be whippin' the rebs very fast," replied Jim contemptuously. "More than a year gone, same old place."

"Remember Antietam and Gettysburg, Jim."

"What good did they do if we be back in the same old place? I tell yo', Bob, I be discouraged."

Bob felt much the same way, but he did not say so. Instead he said, "Jim, let's take a scout, and we will feel better. They say Lee is falling back."

"Hello! What is that? Bugles sounding to fall in. Reckon Meade is going to follow up Lee."

So it proved. Meade was to follow up Lee's returning army.

The boys were soon on their horses and away. As they reached Bull Run a heavy rain began to fall, but rain was nothing to the boys and they kept on.

After crossing Bull Run, Bob said, "Jim, we will turn north. If we go straight on we will run plumb into them, but by riding north a few miles, then turning west, we may get on their flank and find out if they are really running away or trying to draw our army on."

So the boys turned and rode north some ten miles before turning west. Night had closed in and the rain was still falling heavily. Coming to rather a pretentious looking farm house they concluded to stop and see if they could not stay all night. The owner, a man about sixty, hesitated, and then asked who they were.

"Confederate scouts," answered Bob.

"Some of Mosby's men?" asked the man.

"No, we be scoutin' for General Ewell, but why did yo' ask if we'uns be Mosby's men? Is he around heah?"

Bob always talked like an uneducated native when he passed himself off as a Confederate.

The man looked at them sharply and said, "Some of Mosby's men were heah yesterday. They said Lee was fallin' back, but if yo' are Confederates yo' shouldn't be afraid of Mosby."

"We'uns be not afraid of Mosby. We'uns would like to meet him. Mosby be a great man," answered Bob.

"Reckon yo' can stay if yo' put up in a nigger

shanty. The niggers have all run away since Lincoln declared them free."

The man took the boys to where there were two deserted shacks, both roughly made of logs.

"Yo' can put yo' hosses in one of them and take the other," said the man.

Thankful that their horses would be out of the storm, the boys soon had them stabled and gave them some rough fodder, for which Bob paid the man, giving him a fifty-cent shin plaster.

Bob noticed that the man looked the horses over very carefully, especially as to their trappings.

There was a fire place in the other cabin, and the boys built a fire out of the rubbish lying around and stood before it drying their clothing.

"This be some like it," said Jim. "But Bob, that man can be watched."

"Think so, Jim."

"I do. Thar be something in the way he looked over our horses I don't like. Bet yo' he don't believe we be rebs."

If Jim had heard what the man said when he returned to the house he would have known they had cause to distrust him.

The only inmates of the house was the man, his wife, and a slatternly girl about twenty years of age.

"Betty," the man said to his wife, "them fellows be no Confeds, they be Yanks. I know by their hosses."

"Lots of Mosby's men have Yank hosses and things," replied his wife.

"I know, but these fellows' outfits are all Yankee.

I wish I could get news to Newland. Some of Mosby's men are thar tonight. Maybe Mosby himself."

"It be storming awful hard," replied the woman, an' if yo' go, if these fellows be Yanks, they might mistreat Liz and me. We would be unprotected."

"I'll go, Dad," spoke up the girl. "I'm not afraid."

"No, Liz, it won't do," answered her father. "The storm is too bad. Mercy! Hear that!" After a vivid flash of lightning had come a terrific peal of thunder. "No, you stay right heah. Maybe we can get word to Newland in the morning. Don't believe Mosby would turn out in this storm for only two Yanks. If it clears up by morning you can go, Liz, and I'll manage some way to keep the Yanks heah until yo' get back."

"All right, Dad. I'll be off bright and early."

Listening to the storm, Bob said, "Jim, we are fortunate to have this shelter."

"Don't know about that," drawled Jim. "One thing suah, I am going to keep an eye on them horses. Yo' can sleep, but I am goin' to keep watch."

"I'll take my turn," replied Bob.

"If I get sleepy I'll wake yo'," answered Jim.

Although Jim kept vigilant watch, even going out to look at the horses several times, he could discover nothing wrong. During the latter part of the night the storm died away, and Jim began to feel a little sleepy. "Reckon I'll wake Bob," he yawned.

He did so. "'Most day, Bob," he said. "I'll take a short nap if yo' don't care."

"Anything happen, Jim?"

"Not a thing, but keep a sharp lookout," replied Jim, lying down.

After taking a look at the horses and finding them all right, Bob returned to the cabin feeling at ease.

Just as the first signs of dawn appeared in the east he sprang to his feet. He was sure he heard the beat of a horse's hoofs. He rushed to the door but could see nothing. He was sure though he heard a door close in the house.

Awaking Jim, Bob told him.

"Suah yo' heard a hoss?" asked Jim.

"Quite sure."

Jim went out and returned in a few minutes. "There's a light in the house," he said. "They be stirrin' early."

The boys concluded it would be the part of wisdom to get away as quickly as possible.

"It will not do to sneak off," said Bob. "As Mr. Atkins is up I'll go tell him we have decided to make an early start."

Bob knocked at the door. It was opened by Mr. Atkins, fully dressed. He seemed much surprised to see Bob. "Not going?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Bob. "We want to reach Lee's army as soon as possible. We thank you very much for your hospitality."

"You can't go without your breakfast," said Mr. Atkins. "I got up early on purpose. The old woman is just starting it. It will be ready by the time it is fully light. Give your horses a good feed; they will travel all the better for it. I can't do too much for scouts of General Lee."

The boys concluded it would do no harm to wait until daylight as the rain had swollen the streams, and made travel difficult.

It seemed to Bob that Mrs. Atkins was very slow in getting breakfast, but at last she announced that it was ready.

Bob asked where the young lady of the house was.

Mrs. Atkins hesitated a moment, then said, "Liz is powerful skeered of a thunder storm and was awake almost all last night so we thought we'd let her sleep late this morning."

The breakfast was all the boys could wish, and Mr. Atkins seemed desirous of keeping them at the table as long as possible.

"Your hospitality is beyond measure, Mr. Atkins," said Bob, "and I trust you will allow me to recompense you."

"Not a cent, not a cent," replied Mr. Atkins.

Jim had gone out to see about the horses, and now Bob heard him give a shrill whistle and then call. He rushed to the door to see coming full speed down the road the girl Liz and five men.

"You told me your daughter was asleep, you old scoundrel," thundered Bob. "I've a mind to shoot you."

"Nothin' to be afraid of," growled Mr. Atkins. "They are only Mosby's men. In fact I'm one myself. As you are Confeds——"

Bob waited to hear no more, but made a run for their cabin where their carbines were. Jim had anticipated him and met him with both carbines. He handed Bob his and raised the other. There was a sharp crack and Mr. Atkins fell from the steps where he was standing.

"That pays the old hypocrite," said Jim, as both boys ran for the cabin where the horses were stabled.

Before they reached it balls began to fall around them. They slammed the door shut and for a time were safe.

The cabin had but one small window which was on one side of the door. The boys moved the horses to a corner of the cabin where if a shot came through the door or window it could not hit them.

"We be in a trap suah," said Jim. "Thar is no way to get out but by the door and if we show a nose they will pot us."

"So it seems, Jim. But if it comes to the worst we can sell our lives dearly. One thing, the old cabin is so water soaked they will have a hard time burning us out."

Now and then a ball would come through the door or window. One narrowly missed Bob.

"We will have to see what the scamps are doing," said Bob. Looking around he noticed that the floor was made of heavy planks. Ripping up one of these the boys managed to place it about two inches above the window sill. This gave them a place to look through and have their heads protected.

"I'll see how close watch they are keeping," said Bob. Placing his hat on a stick he raised it above the plank. A ball ripped through the crown.

Jim was watching through the opening and soon his carbine cracked, followed by a shrill scream.

"Reckon one of them fellers has a broken arm," Jim said. "Served him right. Teach him to be more keerful."

It certainly made the four left more careful, for they kept well covered and contented themselves by occasionally firing a ball through door or window.

Jim suddenly cried, "Thar goes that pesky gal again," and was about to fire, when he turned to Bob, and said, "Bob, what do yo' think? I came near shootin' at that gal. Blamed if I didn't. Ought to be ashamed—a mountaineer shootin' at a gal."

Bob saw the girl galloping away. "Jim, that girl is going for more help. We'll soon have Mosby's whole band on us."

"Can't help it. Couldn't shoot a gal to save our necks. Bob, yo' wouldn't hev me, would yo'?" As Jim asked him Bob saw a look in his eyes he had never seen before. It was as if Bob had wanted him to commit a sacrilege.

"Give me your hand, Jim," cried Bob. "I've always heard that whatever a mountaineer might do, he always held the lives and honor of women sacred. Jim, you are a true knight. Not to save our lives would I have you harm that girl. If we die we'll do it without the blood of a woman on our hands."

After the girl left it became very quiet. But to see if the guerrillas were keeping close watch Bob took off his coat and stuffing one sleeve with straw exposed it at a window. In an instant two balls passed through the sleeve.

"Those fellows are certainly keeping close watch and they are good shots," exclaimed Bob. "Jim, if we ever get out of here we have to do it before that girl gets back with the gang. But how?"

"Couldn't we climb up and make a hole through the roof?" asked Jim.

"And make mighty fine marks when we got on the roof," said Bob. "Still if we can't find a better way we will try it."

Bob made a careful survey of the cabin. When he got to the place where they had taken the plank from the floor to make the barricade at the window, he cried, "Jim, I've found it."

"Found what?"

"A way to get out. Quit your watching for a moment and come here."

The floor was laid on sleepers and between the floor and the ground was a space of nearly a foot. What was better a little light showed from the outside.

"Great! It won't be much work to dig out," cried Jim.

The boys hastily tore up another plank, to give them room.

"We will have to leave the horses," said Bob. "If we are seen the guerrillas can easily run us down."

Jim thought a moment, then exclaimed, "Bob, I see a way. I don't believe we'll have to leave the hosses."

"Take them out through the hole we dig?" asked Bob.

"Now, Bob, don't make fun of me. Thar be only four of them fellers out thar. Now while I dig a hole you keep their attention by shootin'. They'll think we be preparin' to make a run for it. When I get the hole dug I'll crawl out and try to make a sneak on them. If I kin, then some of them fellers will be dead guerrillas. Yo' hev the hosses ready and if yo' hear me yell yo' bust that door quicker than lightening and bring them out."

Bob grasped Jim's hand and wrung it until he winced. "Jim, you have often said I ought to have

been a general," he cried, "but you are the one who should be the general."

"Shucks!" said Jim. "Yo' would hev thought of it."

It did not take Jim long to make a hole large enough for him to crawl through. Then the two boys opened fire in the places where they knew their besiegers were hidden. The guerrillas were not slow in replying, and for a time a little fusillade was kept up.

"They will surely know there are two of us here now," said Bob.

"But thar won't be long," said Jim, as he fell back. "Keep her up, Bob."

Jim carefully loaded his carbine, saw that his revolver that he always carried in his bosom was all right, and then disappeared through the hole so quietly Bob hardly knew when he left.

The horses had been prepared so all Bob had to do was to watch and fire at the little clouds of smoke which sprang from the guerrillas' guns when they fired.

To Bob seconds seemed almost hours. Would Jim get away unseen and take the guerrillas by surprise? In his desire to see he became so careless that a ball tore through the crown of his hat.

Suddenly there rang out the sharp crack of Jim's carbine, then another in quick succession, then a couple of shots and cries of alarm. Then came Jim's cry, "Quick, Bob!"

Bob threw open the door and led the horses out.

"Got two," explained Jim. "The other two ran into the house."

Before the boys could mount there came the shouts of men and the trampling of horses. Looking, they saw Mosby at the head of thirty or forty men bearing down on them. Springing into their saddles they were away, the balls whistling around them.

“Don’t halt! After them!” cried Mosby. “Two or three men stay with me while I see what has happened here.”

All but Mosby and two of his men dashed on.

“Don’t let them git away! Don’t let them git away!” shouted the girl, who had just ridden up, her horse foaming and her hair streaming.

Meantime the two guerrillas who had taken refuge in the house came out and faced their leader trembling.

“Where are the rest? I understood there were five of you,” demanded Mosby.

“Two dead, one wounded,” they answered.

“Do you mean to tell me that two men—no, Lizzie Atkins tells me they were boys—did all this? What were you doing?”

“They took refuge in that old cabin,” answered one of the men. “We thought they couldn’t get out, and we could hold them until you came. They shot Atkins just as we came. Thar must hev been a third who sneaked up on us.”

“Third nothing!” roared Mosby. “Only two rode away.”

“I can’t understand it,” whined the man.

“Perhaps an investigation will explain,” said Mosby.

Together they went to the cabin and the torn-up floor and tunnel explained all.



The boys saw the guerillas were getting ready to attack from all sides

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The soldiers could only stare in amazement.

“Do you see that?” asked Mosby in a tone of contempt. “You only watched the front of the cabin. I ought to hang you. Get out! I don’t want two such idiots in my command.”

The two soldiers slunk away. Mosby’s contempt was almost harder to bear than death.

The boys had but a short start and they saw that the chase was to be a hot one. While their horses were good, the horses of Mosby’s men were equally as good. In fact Mosby’s men rode the finest horses in Virginia.

They soon gained on the boys, and the bullets began to whistle around them.

“We’ll hev to stop this,” exclaimed Jim. He unslung his carbine and turning around took careful aim at the foremost pursuer, and fired. The man lurched forward clinging to his horse’s neck.

When a second of the pursuers had fallen before Jim’s unerring aim the enemy became more careful, and kept at a proper distance. But they soon came to a more open country and the guerrillas began to spread out. Bob saw they were getting ready to attack from all sides.

The boys were now on familiar ground. Bull Run was but a short distance ahead. Oh! If they could only reach it. The foe was pressing closely on their flanks. Urging their horses on they reached the stream. It was a roaring torrent, banks full, overflowing. The heavy rain of the night before had raised the stream to an unusual height.

Without checking speed the boys urged their horses into the stream, but being tired the horses

were unable to breast the current and were swept down stream.

“Leave the horses! Swim!” cried Bob as he swung himself free from his horse.

The channel of the Run is not a wide one and the boys were soon in water where it had overflowed its banks. Here taking refuge behind some driftwood that had lodged in the brush along the bank they shouted taunting remarks across the stream at their pursuers, who had no intention of facing the roaring torrent, and soon rode away in disgust.

“Two good horses gone, carbines lost and we as wet as drowned rats. Fine ending to a scout,” said Jim.

“No, Jim, the horses are not lost. Look!” cried Bob.

About half a mile below them the horses could be seen wading through the back water and they were soon safe on dry land.

“They made it after all,” said Bob. “But they would never have done it with us on their backs.”

It was only a few moments' work for the boys to get their horses, and wet and shivering, for the day was cold, they mounted and rode towards Centerville.

CHAPTER VIII

SAVING A FORAGE TRAIN

“**W**HAT has happened?” cried General Hunter. It was late in the afternoon and the boys presented a sorry spectacle as, wet and bedraggled, they dismounted. Their horses stood with lowered heads looking as dejected as their disconsolate riders.

“Lots,” replied Bob. “Can I get any dry clothes? We’re hungry, too.”

It was not until dry clothes had been supplied and their hunger appeased that Bob told his story.

“Bob, why will you take such risks?” asked his brother. “The best thing I can do is to have you confined until the war is over.”

“I promise to behave until the next time,” said Bob with a long face. “In fact I am ashamed of myself. Jim gets all the honor of this scout. He got away with four or five of Mosby’s men. There are no bouquets coming to me. But did I understand you to say that Lee is falling back?”

“Yes. We have orders to start in pursuit in the morning. Meade is in hopes that he can force Lee to give battle.”

“Is Lee across Bull Run?”

“Yes, why do you ask?”

“Because if he is, he is safe,” replied Bob. “It

will be two or three days before the army will be able to cross. The Run is a roaring torrent, and of course all the bridges are destroyed. If Meade wished to fight why did he run clear back to Centerville? Why didn't he concentrate his army at Bristoe where you gave Ewell a drubbing?"

The general held up a warning finger. "None of that, my boy," he warned.

That night Bob got a lecture which he remembered for a long time. "Bob, when you and I are alone I talk to you as I feel, for I know you can be trusted, but this evening you seemed to forget."

"I know, Clayt. I'm sorry. But this blamed retreat makes me so mad. Just think of being clear back to Centerville, and we had such a splendid chance to whip them at Bristoe."

"I know," replied the general gloomily. "Bob, do you know what ails this army?"

"Don't know as I do. It is a fine army, always has been. It must be the fault of the generals."

"Now you have it, Bob, and the failure of the generals can mostly be attributed to one thing."

"What's that, lukewarmness?" asked Bob. "I've heard it charged that the hearts of some of our generals were not in this war."

"That may be the case with a few, and politics has also played a part," replied the general, "but the great cause has been that so many of our generals from McClellan down believed they were fighting nearly twice as many of the enemy as they really were. This belief has made them over-timid, over-cautious, it has paralyzed our movements. It has had its effect on Meade since the battle of Gettysburg.

Now, Bob, I've said enough, but it will enable you to understand the cause of many of our reverses."¹

"I reckon Clayt is right," thought Bob. "I've a mind to turn spy in earnest, and try and find out how strong Lee's army really is."

Bob thought better of this. He knew there was no way he could get at the facts.

Meade moved in the morning, but he found Bull Run a raging torrent, and before the water went down Lee was well out of the way. Before many days the two armies were back in their old positions, Meade along the Rappahannock and Lee along the Rapidan.

"Well, here we are, back on the old stamping ground," Bob said to his brother. "Clayt, I've a mind to go back to West Virginia. There may be no big battle fought up there but there's always something doing, and the mountains afford such splendid opportunities for scouting."

"Be patient, Bob. I think Meade contemplates a move soon. He is rather chagrined that Lee slipped back without a battle."

"All right. In the meantime I think Jim and I will look a little after Mosby. Both of us are sore over that cold bath he made us take in Bull Run. Made both of us get new carbines, too."

"Mosby is giving us a great deal of trouble," replied the general, "but look out or he will get you."

¹ A notable example of this belief was in Halleck's so-called siege of Corinth. For a month Halleck figuratively sweat blood at the sound of every cannon shot and would cry, "Don't bring on a battle! Don't bring on a battle!" All under the belief that the Confederate army was double his own. Yet he had nearly 100,000 men to the Confederates' 45,000.

He came mighty near it, you know. Where will you look for him?"

"Back in the rear of course. That is where Mosby operates. Didn't you hear of that raid he just made at Ammendale?"

"No, I'd not heard of it," replied the general. "But you may go, Bob, if your heart is set on it."

When Bob told Jim what he intended to do Jim was delighted.

"I jest want to get another shot at them fellers," he exclaimed.

The boys believed they could locate Mosby quicker by going afoot. They would not be so liable to capture, as it was not easy to conceal a horse. They went back as far as Manassas, where they made preparations for their scout.

As they expected to lie in the woods they each took three days' rations and a rubber and a woolen blanket.

"That Mosby is a slick feller," said Jim. "I wish we could catch him."

"Not much show for that," replied Bob, "but we may get some of his men."

The boys now started north, keeping well in the woods. They soon ran into a body of Federal cavalry, who halted them, thinking they were guerrillas.

"Not this time," said Bob laughing. "We are Union scouts."

"What are you doing here?" asked the captain in command.

"Looking for Mosby," replied Bob.

"Looking for Mosby!" roared the captain laughing. "Well, that beats me. You two boys looking

for Mosby. What will you do with him when you catch him?"

"Put him in a cage and exhibit him," answered Bob without a smile.

"Look here," said the captain a little nettled. "Do you know that we are looking for Mosby, and it's like looking for a needle in a straw stack. How do you suppose that you two boys can capture him? Are you crazy? If there's any cage business it'll be you boys that are caged. Who are you anyway?"

"I'm known as Bob Jones, but my right name is Robert Hunter, and this is my pal, Jim Kidder."

"Robert Hunter, the brother of General Hunter?" cried the captain.

"The same."

"I've heard of you. Pardon me for my roughness. You boys are wonders, but I hardly think you can capture Mosby. Better give it up. That is, by yourselves. Come with us."

"Thank you," replied Bob, "but we would rather go it alone. To tell you the truth we have no idea we can capture Mosby, but we hope to find out some of his plans and give warning. Perhaps we can bag two or three of his men."

"Give it up," said the captain. "As I told you we have been looking for him, and we are going back with two less men than we started with. They would straggle, and I suppose Mosby got them."

"Jim and I never give up a job we undertake," replied Bob with a smile. "Come on, Jim." The two boys disappeared in the woods.

"Well I'll be—," exclaimed the captain looking after them.

The boys had not gone a mile when they came to a place where they could oversee the road for some distance. Near by was a house.

“Wonder if we could find out anything at that house?” said Bob.

“Easy,” said Jim. “I think I see horsemen coming down the road now.”

So it proved. A squad of horsemen appeared and when they reached the house most of them dismounted and disappeared, but there were two who remained on their horses and seemed to be under guard.

Bob focused his glass on the group and exclaimed excitedly, “Jim, they are Mosby’s men, and those two on the horses are our men, prisoners. I bet they are the two the captain spoke of. Can’t we rescue them?”

“Thar be only six of the guerrillas,” said Jim. “If we can’t git away with them we are no good.”

“That’s what I think,” replied Bob.

There was a clear field between the boys and the house, but brush had been allowed to grow along the fence, and screened by this the boys made their way until they got within about two hundred yards of the house.

Four of the guerrillas had gone in the house, one was guarding the prisoners, and the other was fussing with the saddle of his horse.

“Jim, take the one guarding the prisoners, and I’ll take the other,” said Bob.

Both boys fired at the same time. The guard crumpled up and fell to the ground; the other one fell against his horse, and then both went down together.

“Run for it,” shouted Bob to the prisoners, who sat as if dumfounded.

The men in the house hearing the firing came rushing out, but a ball from Jim’s carbine struck the door-frame and they dodged back.

“Run, I tell you,” Bob shouted to the prisoners.

The men wheeled their horses and Bob now saw that they were tied to two of the guerrillas’ horses. “So much the better, we’ll have them,” he thought.

“Halt when you get out of gunshot,” he called to the men. “Now, Jim, after them.”

The boys started on a run. The guerrillas came pouring out of the house and fired, but their shots went wild. A bullet from Jim’s carbine came so close they ran to cover.

The prisoners had done as Bob told them and waited for the boys at a little distance. To untie the horses and mount took but a moment.

“Now we must ride for it,” said Bob.

But they were not pursued. The guerrillas had had enough of it.

It was evening when the boys proudly rode into Manassas, and among the first they met was the captain of the company of cavalry they had met in the morning. Bob saluted and said, “Captain, here are the two men you lost.”

For a moment the captain could only stare, then grasping Bob’s hand he wrung it until Bob winced.

After resting a day or two the boys started off again. This time they went farther and for three or four days nothing of consequence happened. They sighted two parties of guerrillas, but they were so many it would have been madness to attack them.

One evening they came to where two roads crossed, the sides of one was covered with thick bushes, a capital place for hiding.

"Jim, this seems like a good place to stop. We might hear something," said Bob.

The boys crept down in the gathering darkness, and were soon encamped in a secure hiding place, so close to the road they would be able to hear and see everything that happened.

An hour passed, then the trampling of horses was heard and soon a number of horsemen rode into view. They halted at the crossroads.

"Heah is the place of our rendezvous," one said.

The boys gathered from the scraps of conversation they heard that a train was to be attacked.

"Soon another party of about twenty men rode up. "How is it, boys?" called their leader.

"We're waiting to hear from Mosby," was the answer.

Some moments passed, then a single horseman came riding at a rapid rate. "Yo' boys all heah?" he cried as he rode up. "Mosby be waitin' fo' yo'. A fat train jest left Gainsville for Warrenton. The attack will be near New Baltimore. Come, thar's no time to lose."

"Another fat train to pluck," shouted the guerrillas as they rode away.

Bob knew that New Baltimore was nearly ten miles away. They were afoot. The guerrillas could go five miles to their one. "Jim, we must save that train if we can," he cried.

"Don't see how we can, but we'll try," answered Jim.

The boys started down the road the guerrillas had taken, traveling as fast as they could.

"Jim, we'll have to hold up," gasped Bob. "We'll wind ourselves. How I wish we had our horses."

"Wishin' won't bring them," puffed Jim.

Five miles were passed.

"Hark! I hear horses," Jim suddenly exclaimed.

The boys halted. A troop of cavalry was surely coming. Were they friends or foes?

The boys took refuge in a clump of bushes by the side of the road and soon the cavalry appeared.

"They be Yankees," whispered Jim.

"Halt!" cried Bob.

The cavalrymen astonished at the command drew rein and the boys could hear the click of guns being cocked.

"Who are you?" came the question.

"Friends. Who is in command?"

"Captain Ransom. He is ahead."

"I must see him at once."

By this time the whole troop had become aware that something was wrong, and Captain Ransom came riding back.

"Why have you halted?" he demanded in an angry tone.

"These two boys halted us," replied a sergeant.

"They want to see you."

"Boys! Where are they?" cried the captain.

"Here!" replied Bob.

"Who are you and what do you want?"

"We are Union scouts."

"My stars! If it's not those boys again," cried the captain. "What is it, boys?"

Bob hurriedly explained what they had heard. The captain swore and said, "I've been looking for those fellows for three days and all I've succeeded in doing is to capture a few horses and catch a glimpse of a few men as they took to the woods. Here they have been organizing under my very nose. It will be a miracle if we save that train. It is at least five miles to where the attack will take place. Mosby's whole force could slip past us without our knowing it. But there is no time to lose."

A couple of the captured horses were given to the boys, and at a full gallop the troop started to the rescue. The headlong pace was kept up until they reached the place where Bob thought the train would be attacked. Captain Ransom ordered a halt.

The faint reports of rifle shots were heard in the distance

"They are at it! Forward, boys!" shouted the captain.

There were only a few shots heard at which Bob wondered, for he knew the train must be guarded.

The train was a long one and both front and rear were well guarded. Mosby with his usual cunning had struck the train in the center. They had unhitched the teams from some fifty of the wagons, capturing the teamsters, who were mostly negroes.

"Get the horses away as quickly as possible," ordered Mosby to one of his lieutenants. "I'll remain with some of the men and burn the wagons."

Mosby had no time for just then the cavalry came up. His men were on the alert and as the cavalry came they fled, the darkness hiding them.

When Captain Ransom found how matters stood

he ordered a pursuit, and succeeded in recapturing most of the horses and mules, but the guerrillas aided by the darkness escaped with their prisoners.

The boys had saved a most valuable train for the government and for a time were the heroes of the hour.

Bob decided he had had enough of scouting for the present, and would visit his brother and see what the army was doing.

General Hunter listened to the story of their exploits with great interest.

"It seems as if there should be some way of capturing that man Mosby," said the general. "He is raiding our rear continually and is giving us a great deal of trouble. As daring as your exploit was, boys, I doubt if it equals what two of Mosby's men did the other day."

"What was that?" asked Bob.

"With Union overcoats on they boldly rode past our pickets and captured six soldiers who were engaged in guarding cattle within eight hundred yards of General Meade's headquarters, and got away with their prisoners."

"What's that?" cried Jim. "Two men capture six, and get away with them."

"That is what they did," replied the general.

Jim dashed his carbine on the ground and cried wrathfully, "Bob, let's quit scoutin'. What's the use of scoutin' for such blamed cowards?"

"Easy, Jim. The men were taken by surprise, and were without arms," said the general.

"Don't care. They were cowards," sputtered Jim.

"Clayt, give me one hundred such men as Jim and

I will wager I will have Mosby within a week," said Bob.

"I believe you could do it, but where would you get a hundred men like Jim? The government would merely laugh at your offer."

"Bob," Jim said, "let's us ride into the rebel lines and capture some prisoners. Can't hev any blamed rebs outdo us."

Bob laughed and shook his head. "Conditions are different," he replied. "We are in an enemy's country. Our foes are all around us. Mosby's men are among friends. It is impossible for us to do what those two men did. But, Jim, I confess there was gross carelessness somewhere. Why were those men allowed to pass the pickets without challenge?"

"Because some fellers hev no sense," growled Jim. "Bob, I can't get over those two fellers beatin' us."

"Jim, you have done twenty things just as daring as those two men did," replied Bob. "Forget it."

But it was a long time before Jim forgot it.

The boys were thinking of taking another scout in the rear when the general said, "Wait boys, we may need you in the front. If I mistake not Meade is going to move."

"What! Attack Lee?" asked Bob.

"Yes, from orders received, I am almost sure of it," replied the general.

General Hunter was right. General Meade, smarting because Lee had escaped from Pennsylvania with his army intact, and that he then had the audacity to advance and drive the Federals clear back to Centerville, now resolved to strike a blow himself. Why he did not strike it before his army reached Center-

ville and while he had Lee out of his entrenchments is something known only to himself.

Having completed his plans Meade crossed the Rapidan, Lee falling back to a line along Mine Run.

When Bob and Jim became certain Meade was to move they made preparations for a scout.

"Where now?" asked General Hunter.

"Going to beat Meade across the Rapidan," answered Bob with a laugh.

"Be careful," said the general looking grave.

"The fact is Jim has not been himself since you told of those two rebs capturing six men so close to Meade's headquarters," said Bob. "He hates to be outdone."

"Bob, you're not going to try and enter the rebel lines, are you?" cried the general aghast.

"Don't worry. I'll hold Jim in. Hope Meade will give Lee a good thrashing. Good-bye," and the boys were gone.

The general shook his head sadly. "God grant they may return," he murmured.

The boys, by keeping to where the woods were thickest and making their way through tangled thickets, managed to elude the enemy's pickets and get close to their main line. Here Bob climbed a tree in order to get a better view through his glass.

"What do you see?" asked Jim.

"No unusual stir," replied Bob. "Reckon they are not on to Meade's movement yet. Don't seem to be a large force in front. We must be on the flank of Lee's army. If Meade were here he could walk right over them, and turn their position."

Bob lowered his glass to rest his eyes, and as he

did so scanned the forest in front of him. What he saw caused him to start. A squad of rebels were breaking their way through the forest. Jim caught sight of them at the same time and called in a low voice, "Bob, Bob, come down."

Bob dropped from limb to limb like a monkey, and was on the ground in a moment.

The ground descended from this spot and the boys, bending low, ran back and saw no more of the party.

"Reckon we may as well go back," said Bob. "We've seen about all we can."

"And not a thing to show," sputtered Jim.

"We are not through yet," replied Bob. "Remember the roads are all picketed in our front and there is no knowing what we may run into."

Cautiously making their way through the forest they came to a road which they hoped to find unguarded, but they found it heavily picketed.

"They were not here when we came," whispered Bob. "Lee must begin to suspect something. We will have to keep to the woods."

This they did but keeping as close to the road as they dared. As it was beginning to grow dark they reached a portion of the road that seemed to be unguarded and concluded they had got beyond the rebel lines and that it would be safe to take the road. Just as they reached the road they heard the sound of horses and dodged back into the bushes just as six cavalymen rode in sight.

Jim was all excitement. "Let's capture them," he whispered.

"It's dangerous," replied Bob.

"Bob, be yo' goin' to let them go?" asked Jim.

“No, Jim, we’ll try it.”

A young lieutenant was in command and as they drew nearer the boys heard him say, “That was a mean trap we got in. Wonder what the captain will say when I report the loss of three men.”

“They could have got away if they’d had the grit to run like we did,” said one of the men.

“Halt! Throw up your hands,” came a sharp order.

There was an exclamation of surprise, and the lieutenant reached for his revolver. Jim fired and the lieutenant tumbled from his horse. The men thinking the road was lined with the enemy threw up their hands.

“Steady, boys!” cried Bob. “They have surrendered. Jim, disarm them.”

Jim did so while Bob kept up a string of talk as if talking to his men.

When Jim had them all disarmed Bob came out of the bushes.

The men looked their disgust when they found they had been captured by two boys.

One of the prisoners had quite a severe wound through the arm.

How to get them away was a problem, but Bob soon solved it. Commanding two of the men to mount, he said to Jim, “You take the lieutenant’s horse and ride behind these two with your revolver cocked. If they make the slightest move to escape shoot them.”

“Trust me for that,” said Jim.

“Now you other two men mount and ride behind Jim. I’ll take the wounded man’s horse, and bring

up the rear. As for you," he said to the wounded man, "I will leave you here. As you can walk you can easily get back."

Bob and Jim had no trouble in bringing in their prisoners, one of them confiding to the boys that he was glad he was captured as he was sick of the war.

"General," said Jim as they rode up to General Hunter's headquarters, "them two rebs hev'n't got much over Bob and me. We didn't take these fellers near General Lee's headquarters, but we got them just the same."

"Jim, I shall ask that you be promoted," answered the general.

Bob lost no time in reporting to General Meade that if a blow was quickly struck where he had viewed the rebel works the line could be turned.

General Meade also learned valuable information as to the position of Lee's army from the prisoner who said he was sick of the war.

General Meade at once put his army into motion but the whole movement was ruined by the slowness of General French who commanded the Third Corps.

After fighting a spirited engagement with the Third Corps, Lee fell back in his strongly entrenched line along Mine Run. General Meade was in favor of storming this line but his generals reported against it, and so baffled and disgusted Meade fell back to his old line along the Rappahannock, and the army went into winter quarters.¹

¹ The loss of General Meade's army in what is known as the Mine Run campaign was 1,600.

CHAPTER IX

JIM GETS ARRESTED

“**S**O THIS is the end of it,” said Jim.

The two boys were sitting in General Hunter’s headquarters.

“Yes, there will be nothing doing of importance until the opening of the spring campaign,” replied Bob.

“An’ that will be three or four months,” yawned Jim. “Bob, I can’t stand loafin’ that long around this camp. I hev a mind to go back to West Virginia. Thar will be something doin’ thar.”

“Not much except fighting guerrillas now that General Averell is back from his raid,” answered Bob. “Jim, we need a rest. I’ve some news to tell you. I’ve been talking with Clayt. He has a leave of absence and is going back to our old home in Connecticut. He wants me to go with him and says he would like to have you come too. Let’s go. It will be something new for you. On our way back again we can take in Winchester and then we will decide what to do.”

After some persuading Jim consented and a couple of days afterwards the boys were on their way north.

General Hunter was given a warm welcome in his native city for the citizens were all very proud of him. Many of Robert’s deeds were known, and he

came in for a big share of the honor which was not to his liking, for he was loath to speak of his exploits.

Jim was like a cat in a strange garret. He would have none of the hero business, but he was keen to observe everything.

One day Jim happened to wander into a place where a windy individual was giving his views of the war.

"This war should stop!" he cried, smiting his hands together. "Abe Lincoln is an ignorant old baboon. What are we fighting for—to free the niggers who are better off as they were. I say any man that fights to free the niggers is no better than a nigger himself."

"What's that you say?" cried Jim stalking up to the man.¹

"I said anyone that fights for the niggers is no better than a nigger," replied the man.

"Who be fightin' fer the niggers?" asked Jim.

"Who? Who?" sneered the fellow. "Every blamed sneak who fights for old Abe Lincoln."

Jim's sinewy arm shot out and the fellow lay on the floor.

There was an uproar. "Go for him! Get him! A d— spy," shouted the crowd.

Jim backed to the door and drew his revolver. "Come on, yo' cowardly hounds," he said.

The crowd fell back. Then one of them said, "Jo Walkins, you are a constable, arrest him."

"In the name of the law I command you to give up that pistol and submit to arrest," faltered Jo.

¹ To tell a poor white of the South that he is no better than a negro is one of the greatest insults you can offer him.

“Come and get it,” replied Jim turning his pistol on the constable who tried to take refuge behind a portly individual.

Bob happened to be passing and noticing the commotion looked in through a window. Seeing Jim standing with his pistol in his hand he sprang through the door exclaiming, “Jim, what does this mean? What is the trouble?”

A babel of voices arose. “The savage threatened to shoot us all,” some one yelled.

Just then a policeman arrived, and there was a demand for Jim’s arrest.

“A moment, officer,” said Bob. “Let’s hear what this is all about.”

The policeman knew Bob and readily consented.

“Now Jim, just what happened?” asked Bob.

Jim told his story.

“Where is the fellow you hit?” asked Bob.

“It was Jed Perkins,” said one pointing to a man who with trembling hands was trying to wipe the blood from his face.

“Jed, let’s hear your story,” said the policeman. “What did you do?”

“I didn’t do a thing,” whined Jed. “I was just talking and that boy up and hit me.”

“What did you say to him that caused him to hit you?”

“Not a thing—not a thing. I wasn’t talking to him.”

“Did you say what he says you did?”

“I—I was talking about the war. I might have said something like that.”

There was a twinkle in the eyes of the policeman

as he turned to Bob and said, "I am afraid I will have to arrest your friend as he not only struck a man who was not threatening him but drew a deadly weapon."

"Very well," replied Bob. "Jim, you are under arrest. Go quietly. It will not be more than a fine and I will pay it."

"Jed Perkins, you come too," said the policeman. "Not only you but all who were in this store at the time."

"I don't want to go," whined Perkins. "Look at my face."

"I don't care whether you want to come or not. You come as a witness, you and the rest."

So all that were in the store had to go, Perkins, who was the proprietor grumbling that he would lose trade.

It became noised about what was going on, and by the time the police court was reached there was a crowd that filled the court room to its capacity.

"Why, what is this Policeman Smith?" asked the judge who had just finished a case. "Has there been a riot?"

"Almost one, Judge, but not serious," laughed the policeman. "This young man is accused by Jed Perkins of assaulting him and then drawing a deadly weapon. The prisoner is a stranger, but he is a friend of young Hunter."

"Perkins, take the witness stand," said the judge, "and tell us why the prisoner struck you."

"Just for nothing, Judge. I was talking, and the prisoner there struck me. Hit me a good one."

"So I see," said the judge with a smile. One of

Perkins' eyes was closed in deep mourning, and his nose was swollen to twice its size.

"What did you say to so anger the prisoner?"

"Nothing, nothing to him. I—I was talking about the war. You know, Judge, I don't like the war. I think it is all uncalled for. I have a right to my opinion as a free American citizen."

"I see," blandly replied the judge. "What did you say? The exact words."

"I—I can't remember, Judge, but it was something about this war being fought just to free the niggers."

"Then the preservation of the Union is nothing to you?" asked the judge with some asperity.

"The South has a right to go if she wants to. That is my opinion, Judge."

"Prisoner, did you strike this man?" asked the judge turning to Jim.

"I did, yo' Honor," replied Jim.

"Can you tell me the exact words he used which caused you to strike him?"

"I kin, yo' Honor." Jim repeated them.

A scowl passed over the judge's face. He had a boy in the army.

"Mr. Perkins, is that what you said?" he asked.

"Something like it, Judge, something like it. I don't just remember."

"Then you consider our brave boys who are fighting at the front as lower than the negro slaves, that they should be thought less of?" The judge's voice was hard as steel.

"Not that way. I didn't mean it that way," cried Mr. Perkins, now thoroughly alarmed.

“Jedidiah Perkins, I know you,” resumed the judge. “Your store is a meeting place for every sneaking copperhead in the place. It is there that they meet to revile the government, to stab in the dark, to do all you dare to aid our enemies. I honor the brave Southerner who believes he is right and fights like a man for that right, but you cowardly curs who have not the courage to fight for either side and who, like assassins, stab in the dark I have only contempt for. You contaminate the air of this court room.”

Then turning to Jim he said, “You plead guilty to striking this man?”

“Yes, yo’ Honor.”

“James Kidder, stand up and receive your sentence.”

Jim arose looking as if he expected to be shot.

“James Kidder, you have pled guilty to breaking a law of this commonwealth. It is law that no man can take judgment in his own hands. It makes no difference how insulting you consider his remarks to you, you had, under the law no right to assault him. Therefore I fine you one cent and costs, and I take great pleasure in remitting the fine. Give me, your hand, young man, and if you ever hear Perkins slandering our brave soldiers again, hit him once for me.”

A shout went up that shook the whole building, and men thronged around Jim to grasp his hand and call him a good fellow.

Jim himself could hardly understand what it all meant, and even after Bob had thoroughly explained to him, he was still in the fog, and said law was too

much for him. "As fer judges," he said, "I have always been scared of them, but say, that judge was suah fine."

Bob agreed that he was.

CHAPTER X

A BATTLE WITH GUERRILLAS

“JIM, as there is no possibility of the army moving this winter, suppose on our way back we take in Cumberland and see what General Kelley is doing. There is always something exciting on a small scale going on in northern Virginia.” Thus spoke Bob as the boys were on their way back to the front.

“Just what I was thinkin’ of, Bob. The Army of the Potomac is no place for us now,” replied Jim.

So to Cumberland the boys went.

General Kelley welcomed his old scouts heartily.

“I am more than glad to see you, boys,” he said.

“I am having a hard time keeping the railroad open. It is a fight clear from the Ohio River to Harper’s Ferry.”

“I read that you have been having quite an exciting time in West Virginia—Averell’s raid,” said Bob.

“Yes, Averell is just back,” replied the general.

“He made a wonderful raid. Went close to Salem, destroyed some fifteen miles of the Virginia Railroad, and burned thousands of dollars worth of commissary stores. He got back to Beverly with small loss.”

“Wish I could have been with him,” said Bob.

“But, General, what is the situation south? I would like to visit Winchester.”

The general shook his head. "Bob," he replied, "the country is overrun with guerrillas and small detachments of Confederate cavalry. Our troops are mostly along the railroad, protecting it."

"I think Jim and I will try to make Winchester all the same, General," said Bob. "We may learn something of value, and I want to see how the folks in the old place are getting along."

"You boys always learn something," said the general. "The wonder to me is that you have not been caught and hung long ago. I only hope if you go that you will come back safe."

Outfitting themselves well, for the weather was now cold, the boys started. It was very dangerous to travel, for the forests were denuded of foliage, and they could be tracked easily in the snow. But on the other hand the cold kept the guerrillas from going on many raids. There were also a great many Union men scattered through northern Virginia, men who kept quiet, but whose hearts were true to the old flag. General Kelley had a list of these men. "You can see the list, boys," said the general, "but make no record of it except in your minds. If you made a record and it was captured these men's lives would be forfeited."

Bob saw the reason in this and read the list to Jim. Between them they believed they could remember most of the names.

Shortly after they crossed the Potomac the boys stopped at a lonely farm house on the hill. The farmer, who gave his name as Erastus Stevens, received them in a manner that showed they were very unwelcome guests. When they asked if they could stay all night he made many excuses, saying his wife

was not well and they had little food. If they would go on about three miles farther they would come to Esquire Snap's where he had no doubt they would find accommodations.

Bob took Mr. Stevens aside and said, "I know you think we are guerrillas and have come to spy on you, but we are Union scouts. We have your name from General Kelley as a true Union man."

Mr. Stevens' whole manner changed. "I am glad to see you," he exclaimed, "but now more than ever I beg you to go on. The fact is I am under suspicion. A short time before you came two guerrillas rode up here and asked me many questions, and I noticed they took a careful survey of the surroundings. They may come tonight. If they should and found you here it would be all up with you as well as with me."

"If they do come tonight, it may be well for you that we are here," said Bob. "It would take quite a bunch of guerrillas to get away with Jim and me. We are well armed."

With many misgivings Mr. Stevens told them they could stay. They were given a very good supper and then shown to a bed in the loft of the house.

The boys took a careful survey of their surroundings. The loft had two small windows, the back one opening onto a leanto which served as a kitchen.

"That's a good place to slide out of if there is trouble," said Jim.

The boys did not really expect trouble as the night was cold. This did not prevent them, however, from carefully looking over their arms, and sleeping fully dressed with the exception of their shoes.

Near midnight there came a trampling of horses, and a hoarse demand for Mr. Stevens to open the door.

The boys were up in a twinkling and slipping on their shoes, raised the window and were soon on the leanto. To get to the ground was then easy.

In the meantime things at the front of the house had progressed rapidly.

"Who is thar?" asked Mr. Stevens.

"We'uns will show yo', yo' d— old traitor," was the answer. The door was smashed in and Mr. Stevens seized.

"We'uns be onto yo'," cried the leader of the gang. "We'uns hev been watchin' yo' for some time and now we'uns hev yo' good and plenty. It was you who sent General Kelley word that got Jeff Stoddard and his men captured. Take him out and string him up, boys. Then we'll burn the place."

Amid the screams of Mrs. Stevens and two children, Mr. Stevens was dragged out of doors.

Now the unexpected happened. The boys came around the house just as Mr. Stevens was dragged out. They opened fire and as the range was short the result was awful. There were shrieks of terror and groans of agony. Five of the guerrillas had not dismounted and wheeling their horses fled into the darkness. Only two of those on the ground got away.

The battle was over almost as soon as it commenced. Not a shot had been fired at the boys. Mr. Stevens stood as if stupified. At his feet lay one of the guerrillas with a rope in his hand. When he finally realized what had happened he fell on his knees and

cried, "Oh, Lord, I thank Thee." A moment more and he was clasped in the arms of his wife, and his children were sobbing over him.

Then Mrs. Stevens turned and clasping Jim in her arms began kissing him. Poor Jim! it was worse for him than the battle. Struggling out of her arms he exclaimed, "Oh shucks! it's nothing to fuss over."

By this time the children were on Jim and one of them, a girl about fourteen threw her arms about his neck and insisted on hugging and kissing him.

"Bob, call them off," he cried, "or I'll never rescue anyone else."

Order was restored, and it was found that four of the guerrillas had been killed and three were seriously wounded. Half of the gang had been wiped out.

"Mr. Stevens, you will have to get away from here," said Bob. "In the morning they will come and take terrible revenge if you are here. Have you any conveyance?"

"I have an old wagon and an older mule," he answered. "My horses have been stolen."

"Here are five fine horses the guerrillas left. We must hurry. You and Jim take the two best and harness them to your wagon. In the meantime I will see to the wounded."

With the help of Mrs. Stevens the wounded men were carried into the house and Bob bound up their wounds as best he could, but he saw one of them had but a short time to live.

By this time Mr. Stevens and Jim had the wagon ready. They had had trouble with the harness but had managed to tie and splice it so they thought it would hold.

“Put what bedding and clothes you can in the wagon,” said Bob. “We shall have to leave the rest. Hurry.”

In a short time they were away, Mr. Stevens driving and Bob and Jim on two of the guerrillas' horses accompanying them.

They traveled all night and all the next forenoon, then to the great relief of the boys they fell in with a scouting party of Federal cavalry.

The cavalry could hardly believe that the two boys had routed a dozen guerrillas, killing and wounding half of them.

“We had all the advantage,” said Bob. “They did not know how many of us there were.” Then turning to Mr. Stevens he said, “You keep all of these horses and sell those you do not need. Everything that you own will be wiped out.”

“Aren't you going to keep the horses you are riding?” asked Mr. Stevens.

“No, we have no use for horses just now,” replied Bob. “Good-bye.”

“Heavens! You two boys are not going back alone,” cried the captain commanding the cavalry.

“That is just what we are going to do, Captain,” replied Bob, with a smile. “We are used to it.”

“Who are you anyway?” asked the captain.

“We are known as Jim Kidder and Bob Jones. I am Bob Jones.”

“Men,” cried the captain, “these are the boys General Kelley never tires talking about. We have thought some of his stories rather fishy but now we'll believe anything.”

The cavalry crowded around the boys, and it was

hard for them to get away. At last with cries of "Good luck to you," following them they were on their way.

Near evening next day they reached a point from which they could see the Stevens' place. It was a smoking ruin. The guerrillas had been there.

While watching they saw a number of horsemen, among them some women pass along the road, and they wondered where they could all be going.

"Bob, instead of bunking somewhere tonight let's take the road," said Jim. "It will be a sight easier traveling and we can lay over tomorrow. We will make better time."

"I believe that's a good idea," replied Bob.

So when night came they took to the road. It was easy to avoid any traveler as they all went horseback and they could hear them coming.

They had made about three miles when they heard a horse coming behind them. They stepped to one side to let him pass and to their surprise the rider was challenged when about an hundred yards beyond them.

"That was a narrow escape," whispered Bob. "This road is picketed."

They had to circle around the guard and as they did so caught sight of a house all lighted up. Not only this but there was a big fire in the yard, and a number of men standing around it.

"I wonder what is up," whispered Bob. "Let's get in the rear of the house and creep nearer."

They did so and soon heard the wailing of women.

"Jim, they brought the bodies of those guerrillas here and are having a wake over them. That ex-

plains all those people we saw on the road today. Let's be going. I believe we will have a clear field now."

After keeping to the fields until they felt they had passed all the guards they took to the road once more and traveled there the rest of the night. When morning came they sought refuge in a straw stack in a near-by field and buried in its depth slept unmolested through the day.

When night came they once more took the road. They were now in a section of the country that they well knew and by morning were within six miles of Winchester. Near by lived an old man by the name of Bidwell. He was a taciturn old fellow and said little. He had a son in the Confederate army but Bob knew that he was Union clear through. He was let alone, for all knew his son was with the Confederates, and all the old fellow would say was that both the North and South were blamed fools to fight.

To Bidwell's the boys made their way, and got there just as he came out to look after his stock.

"Who be yo'?" he growled as the boys came up. "What do yo' want?"

Bob shoved back his cap and said, "Mr. Bidwell, don't you know me?"

"Robert Hunter, as I live," he cried. "Bob, yo' be in a dangerous place."

"Not when I have you to protect me," smiled Bob. "I want to get into Winchester and I want you to help me."

"Want to get me into trouble I suppose?" said Mr. Bidwell.

"No, I believe we can arrange it without causing you any trouble."

"Well yo' stay in the barn. It's best fer yo' not to be seen about the house," said Bidwell.

It was some time before Mr. Bidwell reappeared but when he did he brought them a steaming hot breakfast. "I reckon I hev it fixed," he said. "I am to take a load of fodder and some aigs to Winchester today. The boy who was goin' with me has sent word he's sick and can't come. I kin take one of yo'. The other will hev to stay here. But, Robert, won't they know yo'?"

"I think I can arrange that," replied Bob, "but I want a dozen of those eggs."

An old coon-skin cap pulled down and woolen muffler around his neck left little of Bob's face in sight, and what was visible was streaked with dirt.

Mr. Bidwell laughed. "Ike Shell who was goin' with me allers has a dirty face," he said.

Jim kicked about staying but there was no alternative. Mr. Bidwell said it would not do for him to take two.

They had no trouble in entering the city, and with a dozen eggs in a basket Bob started for the home of Rachel Keene, a maiden lady he knew, and boldly rapped on the door. It was opened by Rachel herself.

"Want to buy some good fresh aigs, laid yesterday?" whined Bob.

"I will see," answered Rachel. "There is a sick Confederate officer here, and he may wish some."

She came back in a moment and said she would take them. Bob saw she was not going to let him

in the house so he pushed back his cap and pulled down his muffler, looking her squarely in the face.

Rachel started back but quickly collecting herself said quietly, "Come into the kitchen and I will pay you."

Once into the kitchen and the door closed she said, "Robert, why did you come? Why jeopardize your safety and mine?"

"Rachel, I do not think my coming will harm you, and I will look out for myself. Tell me the news. What has happened since Early came?"

"A great deal," answered Rachel. "Everyone thought Lee would carry everything before him when he entered Pennsylvania. What an awful battle that was at Gettysburg! It was a dispirited army that came rushing back, but when Lee got back safely their spirits began to revive and now they say Lee's invasion of Pennsylvania was really a victory, for he inflicted worse loss on the Union forces than he received. Lee should never have been allowed to get back."

"So I think, Rachel. How about uncle's folks and Agnes Somers? You know Jim had just brought her in when I had to leave. I hardly had time to speak to her."

"They are all down at Staunton now so as to be near the general while the army is in winter quarters. Agnes' disappearance was a strange affair. Jim's finding her has made a great deal of talk. Perhaps you know more than I do."

"No, Rachel, I know only what Jim has told me."

"You know that General Monroe was killed at Gettysburg, don't you?"

"Yes, I know that."

"I tell you people did talk, and poor Agnes was nearly crazy. Some people said she repented of her promise to marry General Monroe, and ran away to marry Colonel Kincaid. Others claim that you had something to do with it."

"And I in Washington?" said Bob.

"Yes. Then on top of the talk came the news of General Monroe's death. It was hard on the girl. But Colonel Kincaid put an end to the talk."

"Colonel Kincaid put an end to the talk!" cried Bob. "How is that?"

"He claimed he had a clue as to who abducted Agnes, but that the man he depended on was killed at Gettysburg. He gave out that you had something to do with it, and now nearly everyone believes that you did. Colonel Kincaid publicly horsewhipped Tom Bowles whom he overheard make a slighting remark about Agnes, and swore he would challenge any man who spoke disparagingly about her. It put an end to all talk. That man is cunning. When the time comes he will make love to Agnes again, and he will have her father on his side."

"I am glad you told me this, Rachel. I'll bring that scoundrel to an account yet."

Then Bob told Rachel how he and Jim met Colonel Kincaid in Pennsylvania, and she laughed over the discomfiture of the colonel.

"Now, Rachel, I must be going," said Bob. "Tell me all you can think of. Everything of value that you have heard the Confederates say."

She told him all she considered of any value, and Bob started. There was someone passing as he went

out, and he called back, "I will bring yo' some more fresh aigs next week."

Bob had found out all he wished and as Mr. Bidwell was ready they started and made the return trip without any trouble.

Jim was in anything but good humor. He could see no good reason why he should not have gone.

"Don't take it so hard, Jim," said Bob. "There was not a thing you could have done."

"Jim, if yo' had gone yo' would hev spoiled the whole thing," said Mr. Bidwell. "They would never hev let me pass with two."

The boys concluded to start that night. To take the road in the daytime was impossible and a snow storm was starting in, which would make traveling through the woods and mountains anything but agreeable. After a hearty supper they set out.

Even traveling in the road was difficult for the storm became violent, but it had the effect of keeping even the guerrillas indoors.

Wearily the boys plodded their way through the snow and when morning came sought shelter in a secluded place in the forest where they built a fire to dry their clothes and made themselves as comfortable as possible.

The storm stopped during the day and when night came they again took the road. It was two days before they reached the place where they had the battle with the guerrillas.

They rested during the day in an abandoned cabin and as night was coming on again started out. "Wish we had our horses," grumbled Bob. "I am getting tired of walking."

“Why not capture some?” asked Jim. “I see this road has been traveled.”

“We can only capture from the enemy,” replied Bob. “It will not do to rob citizens.”

“Most everybody is an enemy in this heah country,” said Jim. “Thar someone is coming now.”

The boys stepped behind a bush heavily loaded with snow so it effectively concealed them, and soon three horsemen came in view. As they drew nearer the boys saw that they were heavily armed.

“Guerrillas as suah as shootin’,” whispered Jim. “Bob, let’s take them in.”

“I’m willing,” answered Bob.

The guerrillas came on laughing and talking.

“Halt! Throw up your hands!” came the order and Bob and Jim stepped from behind the bush, carbines at shoulder.

The surprised men could only do as commanded.

“Jim, disarm them,” said Bob.

Jim did so, and then Bob said in his most urbane tones, “Now will you gentlemen oblige me by dismounting?”

The guerrillas hesitated.

“Be quick,” snapped Bob, thrusting his carbine into the face of one.

The guerrillas threw themselves from their horses and were lined up by Jim.

“What deviltry are you fellows up to now?” asked Bob.

“Nothin’,” answered one. “We’uns was jest goin’ down to see a friend.”

“To serve him the same way you tried to serve Stevens?” demanded Bob.

At the name of Stevens the guerrillas started. "What do yo' know about Stevens?" asked one.

"We happened to be there," replied Bob.

"We'uns weren't there," cried one of the men quickly.

"Some got away," said Bob, "and I'm inclined to believe you are the ones. What would you have done to us if you had caught us that night?"

The guerrillas made no reply.

"I know," continued Bob. "You would have hung us. That being the case why shouldn't we shoot you?"

"Spare me," cried one. "I was not thar, even if Pete and Jim was. I hev a wife and three children."

"He was thar," cried Pete and Jim in the same breath, and they looked daggers at their companion.

"I reckon you were all there," said Bob. "A pretty bunch you are. You didn't intend to spare Mr. Stevens because he had a wife and three children."

"He peeped on us," whined one.

"Jim, what shall we do with these fellows?"

"Shoot the cusses by all means," drawled Jim taking aim at one.

All three fell on their knees begging for mercy.

"Get up," ordered Bob, kicking one. "We don't shoot men in cold blood as you do. As we can't take you with us we shall have to leave you, but you will have to walk. Jim, shoot the poorest horse."

This Jim did and the boys mounting the two others rode away leaving the guerrillas swearing wildly.

The boys rode all night, meeting a few horsemen who seemed no more anxious for interviews than the

boys were. In the morning the Potomac River was reached and they were challenged by a Federal picket on the other side. Stating who they were they forded the river and at last found rest at Hancock where they turned their horses over to the Federal authorities.

Bob saw Jim had something on his mind, and asked what it was.

"Bob, would yo' keer if I left yo' for a little time?" he asked.

"I would hate to part from you, Jim, but if you want to go, do so. I know it must be for some good reason. What is it?"

"It's like this," replied Jim, "I've not seen the old folks fo' a long time. Yo' know the last time I went I arrived jest in time to save them. I would powerfully like to see ma and pa again."

"Go by all means, Jim. When your visit is over rejoin me. I will be with my brother. Isn't it rather risky? I understand that that section of West Virginia is now not occupied by the Federals."

"I'll take the risk," replied Jim. "I know the mountings by heart."

So the two boys shook hands and parted.

CHAPTER XI

A CRY FOR VENGEANCE

JIM reported to General Kelley and told him what he intended doing.

“I don’t blame you for wishing to visit your parents, Jim,” said the general, “but it is a dangerous thing to do just now. The armies in Virginia are in winter quarters. Lee is not afraid of being attacked by Meade and he is sending large reinforcements this way. If possible they mean to cut the railroad. I would not go if I were you.”

“I’ll go if you’ll let me even if the whole of Lee’s army is between me and the old folks.”

“The same Jim,” said the general with a smile.

“Yes, you can go as far as I’m concerned.”¹

“Thank yo’, General.”

“May you come back safe. Learn all you can while you are gone.”

“That I will,” replied Jim.

Jim found there were no Union troops beyond Beverly and there they gave him a bad description of what was before him. Not only was the country full of guerrilla bands, but also bodies of Confederate cavalry.

¹ General Kelley was the first general that gave Jim a commission as scout, and during the first year of the war Jim did valiant service for the general in West Virginia.

Nothing could deter Jim. He would keep to the mountains and the weather was not too severe for him to sleep out in. Jim decided to discard his carbine, and trust to his navy revolver. This weapon would carry almost as far as the rifle, and he was a dead shot with it.

Once past the Federal outposts Jim took to the mountains. He needed no road or guide. Often in the valleys below him he would see bodies of Confederates moving, and at night would catch gleams of their camp fires. More than once he had to dodge guerrilla bands. Only once was he seen and chased but they might as well have tried to catch a deer.

It was nearing night when Jim came to his old home. His heart began to beat faster as he drew near the edge of his father's clearing, then as he caught sight of the place he stopped as if paralyzed. There was no house, no sign of a living creature.

Blackened ruins and a heap of ashes told him what had happened. But with the stoicism of a mountaineer he shed no tears, betrayed no signs of grief, but he cried, "As thar is a God in heaven I'll not rest until vengeance is mine."

Then remembering how Jackson had prayed before the battle of Cedar Run, he sank to his knees and raising his arms towards heaven, prayed, "Good Lord, heah me. Give me power to avenge dad and ma."

It was a short and dreadful prayer, but it came from Jim's heart.

Some three miles away lived a man named Heel whom Jim knew was a Union man, and a great friend of his father's. Towards his home Jim turned.

Jim found him feeding his stock in a little stable some distance from the house.

"This is lucky," he said. "I kin see him without goin' near the house."

At the sound of footsteps, Heel turned quickly.

"Howdy, Hank," said Jim gently.

Heel stared a moment, then gasped, "Jim Kidder! Come in heah, Jim, before anybody sees yo'." He grabbed Jim and shoving him into the stable shut the door.

"Why this secrecy?" asked Jim.

"Yo' life wouldn't be worth nothin' if it was known yo' was heah and mine wouldn't be if it was known I'd sheltered yo'. Know what's happened, Jim?"

"I've been to the old place and found it burned," replied Jim grimly. "Whar is dad and ma?"

"Dead! Murdered!"

"So I thought," said Jim quietly. "Tell me about it."

"It's a long story, Jim. Yo' know when yo' was heah before three or four fellers who lived around heah came up missin'."

"Yes, I remember," replied Jim.

"Well, they never came back an' the longer they stayed away the moah talk thar was. Yo' know yo' sent yo' dad some money and he got mighty wall fixed and it made some of the neighbors jealous, and at last it got noised about that yo' could tell somethin' about the missin' men. So Neal Moon, his brother, was one of the missin' men, and Zed Hanks, his wife's brother, was another of the missin', went nosing around and what did Neal find but a pistol that had belonged to his brother a short distance

from your dad's house. They accused yo' dad of knowing somethin' about the missin' men. Yo' dad got mad and told them to go or they would be among the missin' themselves."

"Jest like dad," said Jim.

"Wall they tried to get up a party to clean out yo' dad, but he had lots of friends and they found it wouldn't do. We found out what they did then afterwards. They went to Ike Mozingo an' told him yo' dad was a rank Yankee an' that he had a lot of money concealed in his house. So Ike came with his gang and killed both yo' ma and pa and burned the house. But he got three of them before they did it."

"Good fer dad!" exclaimed Jim.

"It made a lot of us mighty sore and we'uns were gettin' up a party to clean out Neal Moon and Zed Hanks when something happened that changed it all." Mr. Heel stopped.

"Go on. What happened?" asked Jim.

"Jim I hate to, but if yo' say so, I will."

"I say so. Go on."

"Wall, yo' know thar was a big brush heap back of the house, and when the house was burnt that caught fire and burned too. After that the dogs would go thar an' dig an' dig and at last they found—Jim, yo' know what they found."

"Yes, I know what they found," cried Jim. "Hank, when I came home that time I thought I'd surprise the folks so I crept up the back way and jest as I reached the house I heard ma screamin' awfully. I busted in the door and thar was dad and ma all tied and Ed Hanson was heating the ram-

rod of his gun red hot to burn dad's feet to make him tell whar his money was. I got them all."

"I believes yo', Jim, fer yo' allers was a truthful boy, an' yo' served them jest right. But folks said if the killin' had been on the square yo' wouldn't hev hid the bodies an' it changed the hull thing. Now not one of us dares say a word in favor of yo' dad. An' if they know yo' air back they'll hunt yo' like a wild animal. Get away as quick as yo' kin. I don't dare take yo' to the house, fer the old woman can't keep from talkin'."

"Yo' can bring me somethin' to eat, can't yo'?" Bring me good and plenty," said Jim.

"Yes, I'll bring yo' some after a while. Yo' air safe heah."

It was an hour or so before Mr. Heel appeared, but he not only brought a substantial meal but a large piece of bacon and a loaf of bread.

"This ought to last yo' fer some time, Jim," he said. "Now, what be yo' goin' to do?"

"Do!" cried Jim. "Hank Heel, there is a blood feud between Neal Moon, Zed Hanks, Ike Mazingo, an' me and I'm goin' to get them or they'll get me. So help me God! But I'll not get yo' into it. I'll be gone by mornin'."

Mr. Heel shook his head. "I'm thinkin', Jim, yo've taken a big job, but luck to yo'."

Just then Mrs. Heel was heard crossly asking why it took him so long to feed the dog, so he hastily went in.

In the morning when Mr. Heel came to feed his stock he was relieved to find Jim gone. Jim had slept in the stable until day was breaking and then

was on his way. He knew that Ike Mozingo lived about thirty miles to the south. Just where he was uncertain.

Jim that day was more like a wild beast on the track of its prey than a man. His eyes burned with a feverish heat, and he felt no fatigue. He sprang from rock to rock like a mountain goat, scaling cliffs he would not have thought of attempting in his saner moments. Only once did he stop that day. Then he built a small fire among some huge rocks and on a stick roasted some of the bacon Mr. Heel had given him. This with some of his bread he ate ravenously and then was up and on.

At last he knew he could not be far from where Mozingo lived and dangerous as it was he would have to inquire his way. So he came down into a valley, and soon reached a house before which lounged a long, lank mountaineer who eyed him suspiciously.

"Howdy," said Jim.

"Howdy," replied the man. "Stranger, may I ask who yo' be an' whar yo' be goin'?"

"I be Sam Ketcham from near Beverly an' I'd like to find out whar Ike Mozingo hangs out."

"What do yo' want of Ike?" asked the mountaineer, with a scowl. "These be suspicious times, stranger. A good many who has no good will fer Ike would like to know whar he hangs out."

"Ever hear of Sol Jumper?" asked Jim.

"Yes, he's a good one. He keeps the Yankees on the jump around Grafton."

"I'm one of Jumper's men. He's sent me with an important message to Ike. I must git to him as quickly as I kin."

“An’ what might the message be?” asked the man. “I’m one of Nat’s men an’ should know.”

“Why someone has peeped an’ give the Yankee commander at Beverly Ike’s layout, an’ they be organizin’ to take him in.”

“An’ who might the peeper be?” cried the man his eyes flashing with anger.

“I don’t know,” answered Jim.

The man gave Jim full directions where he could find Mozingo saying it was full ten miles by road but about half a mile farther on he would see a faint trail which lead over the mountain. That way it was not more than six miles.

“Much obliged,” said Jim starting off.

“Heah, come back,” called the man.

“What is it?” asked Jim turning around.

“What yo’ told me kinder took me off my feet,” answered the man. “I was goin’ to Mozingo in the mornin’ but cum back an’ get supper an’ I’ll go with yo’.”

“Can’t wait,” said Jim, starting again.

“Come back, I tell yo’,” yelled the man wrathfully.

Jim pretended not to hear him and kept on.

“Cum back if yo’ know what’s good fer yo’,” called the man.

Jim kept on.

“Something’s wrong. I was a fool to tell him what I did,” muttered the man. He rushed into the house and grabbed his rifle. Then remembering it wasn’t loaded he had to stop and load it. It only took him a moment but when he came out Jim had got beyond the clearing and was entering a wood.

Just beyond Jim was a turn in the road but in-

stead of taking it he crouched down behind a large rock standing by the side of the road. Looking back he could see the man coming with long strides.

Jim's eyes gleamed as he watched him. In a moment he was beside the rock and Jim heard him mutter, "I'll get him when I get to the turn."

There was a flash, a roar and the pursuer lay a huddled heap in the road.

Jim picked the body up and carried it behind a rock a short distance from the road, then picking up the rifle laid it beside the body. "Won't do for him to be found too soon," he thought.

Jim went on, keeping a sharp outlook for the trail up the mountain. He soon came to it and turned into it and none too soon, for two horsemen came up the road just after he turned in. They rode to the house where Jim had made his inquiries and stopping called. A woman came to the door, and they asked for her husband.

"Why, Chris took after a stranger," she said. "He stopped and wanted to know whar to find Ike Mozingo. Chris wanted him to stop but he wouldn't so Chris took his gun and started after him. Didn't yo'uns meet them?"

"No, they must hev took the trail. Hadn't we better go back?" said one.

"No, Chris is all right," replied the other. "Let's go on."

Darkness came before Jim cleared the mountain, but he kept the trail as if by instinct. Soon he descended the mountain, and could see lights gleaming from a house in the valley where he had been told he would find Mozingo.

Stealthily as an Indian, Jim crept up to the rear of the house. There were a number of horses hitched outside the house and from within came the rattle of dishes and sounds of laughter. Creeping to a window Jim peeped into the room. Mazingo and six or seven men sat at a table eating. In the center of the table was a jug of moonshine whiskey, and from the actions of the men they had been imbibing freely.

Jim recognized Mazingo, having met him during the first months of the war. Then he claimed to be a Union man, but he soon turned and became the head of a desperate gang of guerrillas, and so far all the efforts of the Federals to catch him had been in vain.

Jim's eyes gleamed when he saw him. For a moment he watched them, then raised his revolver and fired.

The guerrilla chief sprang up as if galvanized, then fell back. Two more reports came in quick succession and two more of the guerrillas tumbled from their chairs. The scene was indescribable. The table was overturned and food and dishes were everywhere. The lights were put out and the room was in darkness. The live guerrillas howled in terror as they threw themselves on the floor to avoid the rain of balls they expected to sweep the room.

"We surrender," they shouted. "Don't shoot any moah."

Jim fired one more shot in the room in the hope of hitting one of the groveling guerrillas. "Compliments of Jim Kidder," he shouted and then running to the nearest horse he cut the halter with one blow of his knife and springing in the saddle was away.

For a time the guerrillas lay in the darkness, then as no more shots came and they heard nothing one of the boldest crawled to the door and opened it. No foe was there and he cried that their enemies seemed to be gone. After a time something like order was restored. Candles were found and lighted. In the littered dining room lay the bodies of Mozingo and the two guerrillas. Another had been wounded by Jim's last shot. Some of the others had cut their hands badly on the broken dishes on the floor when they flung themselves down.

When after a search they could find no foe, and only one horse was missing they were forced to the conclusion that only one man had attacked them. Then someone remembered that shout of "Jim Kidder" and imprecations filled the air.

Jim rode swiftly away from the scene of his revenge. The horse proved to be a good one, and he had little fear of Mozingo's band. But many miles lay between him and safety and his vengeance was not yet complete.

When he had gone about five miles he overtook two horsemen who shouted asking him why he was in such haste.

"Can't stop," answered Jim. "Trouble at Mozingo's. Better go thar."

Jim rode with his revolver in his hand ready for trouble if he met it.

The two men decided to take Jim's advice and go to Mozingo's. When they arrived and told of the lone rider the guerrillas shouted, "It was Jim Kidder. Why didn't yo' shoot him?"

"How should we'uns know it was Jim Kidder?"

they asked. "Of course we'uns would hev shot him if we'uns had known."

In their hearts they were glad they had let him alone, for though there were two of them they had no stomach for a fight with Jim Kidder.

At last Jim came to the place where he had inquired the way to Mazingo's. A woman shouted to him as he passed, but Jim paid no attention. "Wanted to know what had become of her ole man, I suppose," he thought.

Once two men tried to stop him, but Jim cried, "Carrying dispatches. Can't stop."

At last Jim got to where he knew the country well. He was nearing his old home and was congratulating himself on his good fortune when he caught sight of a camp fire ahead and a voice rang out, "Halt! Who comes thar?"

"A friend," answered Jim, but wheeled his horse, and bending low over the saddle was off.

A shot rang out and then came the call, "Corporal of the guard!"

Jim heard a commotion and the hoarse voices of officers giving commands. "They'll be after me," he thought.

The mountains came down close to the road and Jim sprang from his horse and gave him a sharp prick on the flank with his knife. The horse went tearing down the road at a terrific pace.

Jim climbed the mountain a short distance and then taking refuge behind a rock waited.

Soon a squadron of cavalry went clattering by. "They'll have some chase to catch that hoss," he said.

Jim now tried to climb the mountain, but the night was so dark and the way so rough that he concluded to wait until morning. So finding a secluded place among the rocks he made himself as comfortable as possible and waited for dawn. He wished to make the top of the mountain before it was fully light.

Jim knew every foot of the mountain he was on. He had traveled it many times when a boy. Some five miles away lived Zed Hanks, one of the men responsible for the murder of his father and mother.

Jim gained the top of the mountain. From there he could see Hanks' home but he had to wait until dark to do anything so he found a good hiding place for the day. Once several hunters passed within a few yards of him, but he was not discovered.

As soon as it began to grow dark Jim descended the mountain and came onto Hanks tending to his cows. So stealthily had he approached that Hanks did not know of his presence until he spoke and said, "Howdy, Zed. Glad to see yo'."

Hanks turned, saw who it was and giving a scream turned to flee, but Jim's revolver spoke and Hanks sank to the ground.

Jim did not wait to learn the effects of his shot for he knew his aim had been true. "Now for Neal Moon," he muttered.

Moon lived some three miles away down the valley and Jim knew he must get there before the news of the shooting of Zed Hanks reached him. Just as he reached Moon's house he heard the clatter of horse's hoofs coming. There was no time to lose. He thundered on Moon's door.

“Who’s thar?” demanded Moon. “Want to knock the door down?”

“Alf Pond,” cried Jim, giving the name of Hanks’ nearest neighbor. “Open the door quick. Zed Hanks has been shot.”

Moon sprang to the door and lifted the bar, crying, “Zed shot! Who shot him?”

“I,” cried Jim and he fired.

The horse was now at the door so Jim quickly vanished in the darkness.

The horse was ridden by a girl about fourteen years of age. Her eyes were wild with fright and her hair flying. She rode without a saddle or bridle. When she saw Moon’s body and heard the shrieks of Mrs. Moon and the children she cried, “Too late,” and fell fainting to the ground.

Hanks had lived long enough to tell who shot him, and whisper to his daughter, “Jennie, ride quick to Moon’s or Jim will get thar ahead of yo’ and plug him too.”

Jim knew he would have to get away quickly. By morning the whole country would be aroused. He decided to leave the valley, cross the mountain at the foot of which was his old home, and gain the valley on the other side. The mountain on the west was a high and rugged one, and Jim believed that this gained his way would be clear to Beverly.

When he came to his old home he made his way to the pile of ashes and reverently picked up a handful and let them slowly trickle through his fingers. Then once more he sank to his knees and even as Miriam sang a song of thanksgiving over the destruction of the enemies of the Lord, so he sang, “Good

Lord, I thank Yo'. Yo' was suahly with me, or I couldn't hev done it."

Jim rose to his feet, a great peace in his heart. The murder of his parents had been wiped out, wiped out in blood.¹

Jim now began swiftly to climb the mountain over which ran a rough road. When he reached a point where he could see into the next valley he halted with an exclamation of surprise. The whole valley was lighted up with camp fires. At least a brigade of cavalry was in camp. Jim's escape had been blocked.

Then there came a trampling of horses and a squad of cavalry came riding up from the valley. They halted just before they reached Jim and he heard a voice say, "This is where I will establish the post. Sergeant, post your guard and bid them be on the alert. The Yankees may be riding down this way any time. This is the only decent road over the mountains."

As he spoke a horseman was heard coming from the opposite direction, riding at a furious pace. Jim slid into the darkness and listened. The rider was challenged and drew up. "Who be yo'?" demanded the rider.

"Confederate soldiers," was the answer. "Why are you in such a hurry?"

"I am Sol Griffin. Thar has been devil work in the valley on this side. Two men shot."

¹ The reader must not think Jim was a brutal assassin. At heart he was as gentle as a child. What he did he had been taught was right. It was the law of the mountains. Happily these feuds are growing less, but they have furnished the material for many a popular romance.

"Shot! By whom?" cried the officer in command.

"By Jim Kidder."

"Jim Kidder!" exclaimed the officer. "The Yankee scout and spy. Any more Yankees in the valley?"

"Not that I know of." He told them the story.

"How long ago did this happen?" asked the officer.

"Not over two hours."

"Boys, we must catch that devil," cried the officer. "He can't be far away." Then he said to Griffin, "You wait here. I will send two companies over into your valley and have every road and footpath picketed for ten miles around. That fellow must be caught. Sergeant, put every man on guard. Form a line across the mountains."

The officer then rode swiftly back to the camp, and in a short time a brigade of cavalry was riding to see that every avenue of escape was closed.

Jim knew he would have to move swiftly. "The safest way is back and not ahead," he muttered, and he rapidly retraced his steps for a distance, then turned into a trail which led along the top of the mountain. He knew every foot of that trail. If he had not he would not have dared to travel it in the darkness.

In his boyhood days Jim had discovered a cave so hidden by rocks that it might be passed a thousand times without discovery. It took him some time now to find it but at last he did, and crawling in among the rocks and squeezing through narrow places he was at last where he was sure no cavalry could ever find him, and throwing himself down was soon fast asleep.

There was great excitement through the valley and for miles around. Many believed that Jim had been secreted by someone until he had an opportunity to wreak his vengeance and everyone who had been friends of the Kidders was under suspicion. It looked for a time as if there would be civil war in the valley. None was under greater suspicion than Henry Heel.

But news came from below of the killing of Ike Mozingo, and it was clear that Jim had come from that way and stopped only long enough to wreak his vengeance on those instrumental in his parents' death.

Once in a while when by himself Mr. Heel would chuckle. "It was fortunate the old woman didn't see Jim," he thought. "She never could hev kept from tellin'."

After three days the search for Jim was given up. During that time he crept out several times only to find the search still going on. He ate what remained of his food on the first morning and during the balance of the time was obliged to go without any. At the end of the third day his hunger was so great he determined to escape that night.

"They will be lookin' for me all the way to Beverly," he thought, "so I'll go over the mountains to Petersburg. I know thar are Union troops thar."¹

It was a long trip but Jim thought it would be much safer as there was no one in that direction who knew him.

Jim came down into the valley near Heel's home but he dared not call on him again not wishing to

¹ Nōt the Petersburg near Richmond but a mountain town in West Virginia on the eastern side of the Alleghanies.

bring him deeper under suspicion. Still he must have food.

In the rear of the Heel home was a smoke house in which was kept ham and bacon. It was strongly built of logs and had a stout door but Jim thought he might be able to contrive some way to break in.

Waiting until he believed the family to be asleep he crept to the smoke house and found to his surprise that the door was unlocked. Wondering how Mr. Heel could have been so careless Jim took a good ham and crept out.

He would not have been so surprised if he could have seen Mr. Heel the next morning when he discovered the loss of the ham. He seemed to be much pleased and muttered, "I'm mighty glad I left this door open. I jest knew that boy was hidin' around."

So hungry was Jim that he cut off several slices of the ham and ate them while walking. Crossing the valley he went a short ways up the mountain and waited for daylight.

It took Jim four days to make the trip. 'Twice he dodged guerrilla bands, and once he was chased by Confederate cavalry. He was shot at three times for not answering when challenged when he ran into pickets in the dark. But at last footsore and half frozen he reached Petersburg.

After resting a few days Jim proceeded by the way of Romney to Cumberland.

"Back!" cried General Kelley. "I'm glad to see you. How did you find your parents?"

"Dad and ma have both been wiped out by Ike Mazingo an' his band of guerrillas an' the house burned," replied Jim his face showing no emotion.

“My poor boy,” said the general. “I wish I could avenge you. Mozingo’s gang has given us a great deal of trouble, but all efforts to capture him have failed.”

“He’ll not trouble yo’ any moah,” answered Jim. “I got him.”

“You got Mozingo?” cried the general. “Tell me about it.”

“Not much to tell,” replied Jim. “I found out where he hung out and shot him through the winder.”

Jim said no more nor did he tell of his other adventures, and General Kelley knowing the taciturnity of the mountaineers did not question him.

“Jim, can’t you stay with me now?” he asked. “I beat off an attempted raid on the railroad by General Fitzhugh Lee while you were gone. You could help me so much in finding out about these raids.”

“Thar’s no one I’d like to work under bettah than yo’,” replied Jim. “Yo’ hev allers used me white but I promised to go to Bob. Bob be all I hev now. All the Kidders hev been wiped out except me.” For the first time Jim’s voice trembled.

“Go, and both of you come back to me if you can,” replied the general kindly.

CHAPTER XII

KILPATRICK'S RAID

BOB was sitting in his brother's headquarters fretting and fuming. Mosby still continued his raiding with impunity. He eluded the Federals with the cunning of a fox.

"Mosby can be caught," declared Bob. "I cannot do it alone, but give me one hundred, yes, even fifty good men, and I will have him or break up his gang in a week."

"What's your plan, Bob?" laughed the general. "Perhaps I can get permission for you to try it."

"It's this," replied Bob. "Mosby generally operates with a few men, sometimes not over a dozen, rarely with more than a hundred. His field lately has been our right flank, clear in the rear of the army. One of his favorite stamping grounds is around Fairfax. My opinion is that nearly every farmer around belongs to his gang."

"Now I would choose fifty or a hundred good men and dress them as Confederates. They should be well armed and carry rations for five or six days. Then I would send out this force, accompanied by an equal force of cavalry. All my men would wear winter overcoats so none would mistrust that underneath were Confederate uniforms."

"With this force I would scour the country in the

region Mosby frequents. Of course all his men would be in hiding and we would catch none. But while looking for them I would pick out a good place to secrete my men. Then when night came the cavalry force would return taking the horses of my men with them. My men would be hidden in the place I selected, but not a reb would know that any had been left behind.

“I would have all the roads watched, all travel noticed, and it would not be long before I would know if there was any gathering, and if there was, well, you know what I would do.”

“Bob, I believe your plan is good,” cried the general. “I’ll lay it before the corps commander.”

The general did so, but nothing came of it. In fact the idea was rather scoffed at.

A few days later the general said, “Bob, a scouting party is going out today after Mosby. Do you wish to go?”

“Excuse me,” replied Bob yawning. “I haven’t the least desire to get into trouble.”

“Then you think this party will get into trouble?”

“It will, if it gets into anything, but in all probability they will return empty handed. Mosby never attacks unless he can do so by surprise, and so have an advantage.”

The next day the general said, “Bob, you remember that scouting party I told you was going out after Mosby yesterday?”

“Yes.”

“It’s well you didn’t wish to go with them,” said the general gravely. “They came to grief, or at least some of them did.”

"How is that?" asked Bob.

"It seems the party divided, some twenty or twenty-five going to Snickersville. Mosby saw his chance and killed some and captured the rest."

"It's enough to make a fellow swear," growled Bob. "But what can you expect?"

One day Bob was surprised by the appearance of Jim. He jumped up and grabbed him. "My! but I am glad to see you," he cried. "I've had no heart to scout since you left. Tell me all about your visit. How are the old folks?"

"Bob, don't ask me anything now. I'll tell yo' when we're alone sometime," replied Jim, his face darkening.

Bob asked nothing more then, and that night Jim told him the whole story. "Bob, yo' be all I've got left," he said with a sob in his voice.

"Jim, I'm awfully sorry for you," said Bob, "but you reaped a terrible vengeance. It's not for me to say whether you did right or wrong. But, Jim, old boy, as long as I live you'll have someone who will stand by you."

"I know yo' will," replied Jim. "Now, let's talk about something else."

A day or so later the boys were summoned to headquarters. They were told a force was being organized under General Kilpatrick to try and reach Richmond, capture the city, release the Federal prisoners held there, and then join Butler's army on the James.

As Kilpatrick's force was only to be four thousand, it seemed almost like madness to think he could accomplish all this. He was crazy to try, however,

and as it was claimed Richmond was garrisoned by a small force the plan seemed feasible.¹

When the boys heard that General Kilpatrick had asked for them to accompany him as scouts they were delighted.

"Boys, if you go," said General Hunter, "I must ask you to wear Federal uniforms. The expedition is a dangerous one and you may be taken prisoners. No mercy is shown to scouts or guides dressed as civilians. If captured you can report as belonging to my headquarters."

The boys reluctantly consented, and for the first time started out as Union soldiers.

General Kilpatrick started on his perilous trip from Stevensburg at seven in the evening on February twenty-eighth. The night was a beautiful one. A silvery moon rode through the sky and myriads of stars twinkled down on them as if bidding them God-speed. The soldiers were in the highest spirits, and rode as if going to a picnic.

Colonel Ulric Dahlgren with five hundred soldiers had the advance and Bob and Jim were with the advance guard.

"This is something like it," cried Jim. "Now for Richmond! We'll get Jeff Davis suah."

"Don't be too sure, Jim," replied Bob. "I'm thinking more of the poor prisoners we hope to release than I am of Jeff Davis. They say there are thousands of them cooped up on Belle Isle. They have no shelter from the weather and are starving and freezing."

¹The actual force starting on the expedition was 3,582 according to the report of General Kilpatrick.

The force made rapid progress and by eleven o'clock reached Ely's Ford across the Rapidan. Bob and Jim were riding a short distance in advance.

"Pickets ahead," whispered Bob, and the boys turned and rode back with the information to the officer in charge of the advance guard.

A charge was ordered and the pickets, taken entirely by surprise, surrendered. The post consisted of two officers and fifteen men.

The column reached Spottsylvania Court House without opposition, and there the force was divided. Colonel Dahlgren was to take his men and ride for Goodland, some twenty miles above Richmond on the James River. Here he was to cross the river and march down the south bank, striking the city from the south. This would put him in a position to liberate the prisoners on Belle Isle. Then his force, augmented by the prisoners, was to cross the bridge over the James and enter the city.

At the same time Kilpatrick with the main force was to attack the city from the north and east.

The time set for Dahlgren to make his attack was Tuesday morning, March first, at ten o'clock. Kilpatrick believed he would be before the city ready to attack at that time.

It will be seen that Dahlgren had much the most dangerous duty to perform. He was a young officer, only twenty-two. He had lost a leg in the service, and was accounted one of the bravest and most daring officers in the army. It was with Dahlgren that Bob and Jim went.

Kilpatrick proceeded with the main force on the direct road to Richmond. At Beaver Dam he struck

the Virginia Central Railroad, burned the station and tore up the track.

At Ashland he found his way disputed by a force of infantry and six pieces of artillery. Sending Major Hall with 450 men to attract their attention, he made a detour, crossed the South Arno three miles above Ashland and by ten o'clock Tuesday morning, the time set for Colonel Dahlgren to attack, was within five miles of Richmond.

Kilpatrick attacked the enemy's outposts and carried the first line of entrenchments, but he waited in vain for the sound of Dahlgren's guns. At one o'clock he decided to wait no longer and advanced.

His wait had given the enemy time to concentrate, and he met with such resistance that he withdrew.

As night came Kilpatrick decided to make one more attack, but instead he himself was fiercely attacked by the enemy, and in the darkness of the night a battle was fought in which Kilpatrick lost fifty men and one hundred horses. The enemy was forced back as far as Bottom Ridge, where Kilpatrick went into camp. Here in the morning he was attacked again by the enemy, but he drove them back and taking a good position waited to hear from Dahlgren. But hearing nothing he was forced to withdraw his force to safety.

He went into camp at Tunstall Station and was soon joined by Capt. J. F. B. Mitchell with two hundred and sixty of Dahlgren's men. Of Dahlgren himself and one hundred of his men there was no news.

We will now leave Kilpatrick and follow Dahlgren and the boys.

After leaving the main column Dahlgren marched

rapidly and met with little resistance. Darkness came and still the column pushed on until two o'clock in the morning. Then a halt was ordered, but at daybreak the column was again on the move.

The river was but a few miles farther on and Dahlgren called the boys and told them to scout ahead and see if they could not find someone who could tell them of a ford across the river. A negro would be the best to question as they were generally on the Union side.

The boys stopped at the houses they passed but met only with frightened looks and stammering answers that they knew nothing about the river. A few women, bolder than the rest, declared they would not tell if they knew.

One woman was standing on the porch as the boys rode up. Anger and amazement filled her face at the sight of a Yankee.

"Madam," said Bob, "can you tell anything about the river, or do you know of anyone who can?"

"Get out, you sneaking Yankee," she cried. "I'd rather cut your throat than tell you anything." Rushing into the house she slammed the door and locked it.

At length meeting a rather intelligent young negro Bob asked him if he knew anything of the river.

"Yes, Massa, I know all about it," he responded grinning. "Bin up and down it lots of times. Be yo' Yanks?"

"Yes. Do you know of any fords?"

"Yes, Massa, a fine ford. A bridge, too."

"You are just the fellow I want to see. Come with me," said Bob.

The negro hung back. "Don't want to cum," he whined.

"You come," commanded Bob, drawing his revolver.

"Good Lawd! Don't shoot. I'll cum," cried the negro.

Bob took the negro to Colonel Dahlgren. "Here, Colonel, is a man who says he knows all about the river, but he does not seem to wish to guide us."

Colonel Dahlgren questioned the negro sharply. "I think he is all right," he said. "Ride on with him ahead. If he tries to escape shoot him."

"Come on," said Bob. "Guide us to the river the nearest way."

"Massa, would yo' shoot me if I tried to get away?" asked the negro.

"Certainly. None of your tricks. Lead us right to that ford," said Bob.

As they neared the river the negro seemed troubled, but after a look at Bob's stern face, went on. When the river was reached instead of a ford the water was deep and there was no sign of a bridge.

"You scoundrel!" cried Bob. "I ought to shoot you."

"Don't shoot," cried the negro. "Thar was a ford heah. Fo' God thar was!"

Colonel Dahlgren rode up, wild with rage. He saw all his hopes dashed to the ground. "You liar," he cried to the negro. "You shall hang for this."

The negro fell to his knees. "Massa, don't hang me," he wailed. "I thought thar was a ford heah. I heard thar was."

"String him up," shouted the Colonel.

Bob turned his horse and rode away. He could not bear to be a witness to the scene.

With a heavy heart Colonel Dahlgren turned his face towards Richmond twenty miles away. No resistance was met until they came to within five miles of Richmond, when they came onto the outposts of the enemy. A charge sent them flying and the first line of entrenchments was carried, and two prisoners captured.

Now the resistance grew strong and as Dahlgren saw no hope of a farther advance he ordered a retreat.

“So near and yet so far,” groaned Bob. “Jim, we’ll not get Jeff Davis this time.”

Away to the east, clear beyond the city could be heard the faint boom of Kilpatrick’s guns.

“We must try to reach him!” exclaimed the colonel.

Darkness came and the woods seemed to swarm with the enemy. All that could be seen was the fitful flashes of their guns as they fired. The way was blocked.

“We must charge through them,” said the colonel, giving the order.

In that charge Bob and Jim were among the foremost. Bob felt a shock as his horse struck something and knew he had ridden over a man. Right and left the boys fired at the flashes of the guns of the foe.

The road now seemed clear. After marching a short way Colonel Dahlgren halted. He placed Captain Mitchell in charge of the rear guard, telling him to keep well closed up when they marched. The

colonel then rode away at the head of one hundred men.

Mitchell waited for some time, then receiving no orders became alarmed and sent out scouts. Nothing could be learned of Colonel Dahlgren. The column had become separated in the darkness. Someone had blundered.

Some time after Colonel Dahlgren had started he sent Bob back to see if the column was being kept well closed up. He returned with the startling intelligence that the rear guard was not with them.

"They cannot be far behind," said the colonel. "You and Kidder ride back, meet them and tell Captain Mitchell to hurry up."

Bob and Jim started, but had only ridden about a mile when they were challenged and then fired on. By the flashes of the guns they could see that there was a considerable force in front of them. Bullets were now whistling everywhere around them in a lively manner.

"Jim, let's get out of this," cried Bob. "There's no use going farther."

When the boys reported back to the colonel he was deeply moved. "I'm afraid Mitchell and all his men are captured," he exclaimed. "God help us! We must get through or die."

When Captain Mitchell found he was separated from the colonel he resolved to try and reach Hungary Station, where they had orders to unite if separated. After a series of exciting adventures in which he fought and dodged numerous bodies of the enemy he at length reach Kilpatrick at Tunstall Station with two hundred and sixty men, having lost sixty

on the way. He was forced to let go over two hundred prisoners he had captured.

Colonel Dahlgren's flight was one of the most remarkable that occurred during the war. That little band fought their way almost to safety. During the flight Bob and Jim rendered the most valuable aid. They became the heroes of the little band. The enemy pressing on the rear soon learned it was death to come within range of Jim's rifle, and Bob was next to him. If the enemy was in front it was Bob and Jim that led the charge. Fighting without rest they pressed on.

At Hanover Town they forced their way over the Pamunkey. At Aylett, at the crossing of the Matapony a superior force of the enemy appeared to oppose the crossing.

"Charge!" was the order. With wild yells the little band swept forward on the astonished foe and rode through them like a whirlwind. When it was over it was found the little force had captured more prisoners than they had men.

"That was glorious!" cried Bob, throwing up his hat.

"I shall always remember you, boys," said Colonel Dahlgren with feeling.

Night came and still they rode. They were near King and Queen Court House. A few more miles and safety.

Bob and Jim were in the rear as they were being closely followed. The night was dark and nothing was heard but the thud of the horses' hoofs, when suddenly from the front came a crash of musketry. Colonel Dahlgren fell, pierced by five balls, and three

of those in advance fell with him. Those who survived recoiled.

Then from front, rear and flank came the balls. There were tangled forests on the sides of the road through which no cavalry could escape in the darkness.

“Men,” cried Major Cooke, now in command, “we are nearly surrounded. There is but one way, abandon your horses and take to the woods. Every man for himself.”

Bob and Jim heard this order with heavy hearts. To abandon their faithful horses was to them like leaving loved ones. A great lump came into their throats as they patted their heads for the last time and bade them good-bye.

The dismounted men keeping together as much as possible began their flight, but the night was dark and progress slow.

“Jim, there is no use in trying to keep with the rest,” said Bob. “Our only hope is to keep to the woods and look out for ourselves. The whole band will be captured in the morning.”

So they were and without a struggle. But many like Bob and Jim had taken to the woods, and now began a man hunt in which the citizens of the country cheerfully joined. The fugitives were chased like beasts through the forests.

The country so swarmed with soldiers and citizens hunting the fleeing men that it seemed impossible that any could escape.

At the first dawn of day Bob and Jim sought a secure hiding place and remained quiet. So near were they to where the main body surrendered that

they could hear the exultant cries of the enemy. During the day several parties passed near them, but they were not discovered.

When night came the boys crept out.

“Whar shall we make for, Bob?” asked Jim.

“Gloucester Point. That’s nearest to us.”

“Be our men thar?”

“Yes, once there and we’re safe.”

It was almost impossible for the boys to make any progress through the woods in the darkness, so dangerous as it was, they decided to take to the road. They could avoid cavalry, but the road might be picketed.

“This is a heap better than the woods,” said Jim after they had traveled a short ways. Just then the sound of cavalry was heard and the boys darted to one side of the road and fell flat. The cavalry passed and they went on. Suddenly from in front came the sharp command, “Halt!” Instead of halting the boys turned and ran. The sentinel fired and there was a sharp demand, “What is it?”

“Challenged someone and he ran,” replied the sentinel.

A squad instantly started down the road but they found nothing.

“No use looking for anyone in the dark,” said an officer. “We’ll get up bright and early and scour the country. If it was a Yankee we’ll get him.”

The boys had quietly slipped out of the road and were debating what to do. “I believe we can slip around that post,” said Bob.

They did so, but it took some time. At length they came back to the road and traveled five or six miles

without interruption. Then they heard a body of cavalry approaching. They let them pass and had hardly done so when the cavalry was challenged.

"That's lucky," whispered Bob. "We'd have run right into that sentinel."

The boys once more left the road and as it was nearing morning decided not to try it again. Reaching a piece of woods they sat down to wait for light. When it came, they plunged into the forest and all went well for some time. Then from behind a clump of bushes five men stepped out.

"Stop, you blasted Yankees!" cried one.

Quick as a flash Jim raised his carbine and fired. So unexpected was this that the men fired wildly, then broke and ran, leaving the one Jim had shot groaning on the ground.

"See them go!" cried Jim. "Bob, if all the fellows after us are like this we won't have much trouble."

Bob spent a few minutes making the wounded man as comfortable as possible, telling him his comrades would soon be back after him. Leaving him they went some six or seven miles farther into the forest.

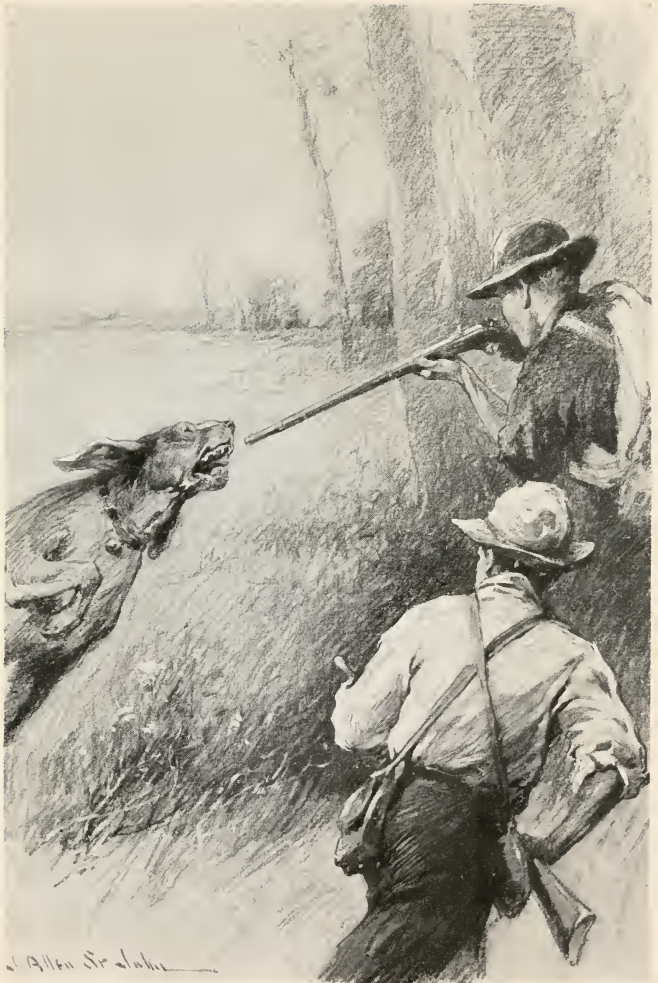
"What's that?" asked Jim suddenly.

The boys listened and the distant baying of hounds was heard.

"They be chasing us with dogs like we was niggers," said Jim.

The baying sounded nearer. "Let them come," said Bob, grimly. "We're ready for them."

They waited, each with his back against a tree. Soon the dogs broke cover, four great beasts. When they saw their prey they redoubled their baying and



The last dog Bob shot was so close he almost thrust his
carbine in the great mouth

bounded forward. It was short work. The last dog Bob shot was so close that he almost thrust the muzzle of his carbine in the great mouth of the monster.

"Four dogs less," said Jim as he kicked the body of one.

The boys began to feel the pangs of hunger and night was near at hand. They discovered a lonely cabin in a small clearing and determined to see if they could not get something to eat there.

Bob took off his soldier blouse and turning it so the gray lining showed boldly to the door. A woman answered his knock.

"We'uns hev bin lookin' fer the escaped Yanks," he said, "and kinder got lost. We'uns be powerfully hungry. Can't yo' give us something to eat?"

"My ol' man be out lookin' fer the Yanks," said the woman, and she gave him a corn dodger and a big chunk of bacon.

"Thank yo'," said Bob, backing away from the woman who was telling him that the Yanks ought to be hung.

The boys found a secluded hiding place and then went for the food. They took turns watching through the night, but were not disturbed. They started as soon as it was light but soon came to a more open country and had to be careful.

Soon on a road some distance from them they saw a body of cavalry. Bob watched them for a few moments, then cried, "Jim, we are safe. Those are our men."

It proved they had been sent from Gloucester to try to aid the escaping men. In all twenty of Colonel Dahlgren's men got safely into Gloucester.

When it became known in Richmond that General Kilpatrick had fallen back and Colonel Dahlgren had been killed the city went wild with joy.

There was at that time in Richmond a Colonel Hardcastle. He stood by the side of a general as the prisoners and captured horses were brought into the city. Suddenly he gave an exclamation and cried, "General, do you see that bay horse that soldier with a Yankee hat on is riding?"

"I do. It's a mighty fine horse, much too good for a private soldier. I reckon I'll put in a claim for that horse myself."

"No, you don't," said the colonel. "I can almost swear that is my horse. The one that was stolen from me in the Shenandoah Valley."

"I've heard of that scrape," laughed the general. "Captured by two spies, was he not?"

"Yes, and if that horse proves to be mine those spies must have been with Dahlgren. Call that soldier here."

The general did so and asked where he got the horse.

"It was captured from the enemy," was the reply. "Mine was shot so I took this one."

"Well you took a mighty good one. The colonel here says it is his horse stolen by the Yankees."

"It surely is my horse," said Colonel Hardcastle, who had been examining the horse carefully.

"Well, then, I suppose I'll have to relinquish all claims to him," laughed the general.

"But, General," said the colonel, "those spies must be among the prisoners. To get them is a wonderful thing. There is a price on their heads. One of them

is Robert Hunter, the notorious nephew of General Clayton. The one General Jackson offered a big reward for, dead or alive."

"I remember now," cried the general. "Halt the prisoners."

The prisoners were lined up and the officers asked if Colonel Dahlgren didn't have two scouts with him, not much more than boys.

"Yes, there were two such boys with the colonel."

"Are they with the prisoners?"

"We do not know," was the answer.

"Look and see."

The officers went carefully down the line scanning each prisoner, but reported that Bob and Jim were not among them. And each said under his breath, "And I'm glad of it."

"Colonel, they must have escaped with those that took to the woods," said the general.

"I'm afraid so," replied the colonel with a sigh. "I can assure you they will never be taken alive. If any get through safely they will be the ones."

In due time Kilpatrick and his men found their way back to the army. The raid had been a failure, but if Colonel Dahlgren had found a ford across the river the end might have been different. Even Richmond might have been captured.¹

¹ In this raid Kilpatrick lost 340 men and 563 horses. A lamentable incident of the raid was connected with Colonel Dahlgren. It was claimed that on his body was found an address to his soldiers, also an order in which they were exhorted if Richmond was captured to burn the hateful city and kill President Davis and his cabinet. When this was known the citizens of Richmond became terribly excited and demanded that every one of Dahlgren's party that had been taken prisoner be hung.

General Lee, true soldier that he was, refused, saying that as yet there was no proof that Dahlgren had acted under orders and that soldiers often did things that were highly disapproved. That if these orders were given by the sanction of General Meade and the approval of the Federal government it would be an entirely different matter.

Under a flag of truce Lee sent all the facts to General Meade, who thoroughly investigated and answered that he knew nothing of such an address or order. That General Kilpatrick knew nothing of it and that Colonel Dahlgren never gave such an address or order to his men as everyone testified, was proved. So the matter rested.

CHAPTER XIII

THE WILDERNESS

DURING the winter and spring of 1864 great changes took place in the Federal army. Grant was recalled from the west and placed in supreme command. No more was Halleck to sit in his swivel chair at Washington and dictate what was and was not to be done. His baneful dictation had at last come to an end.

Grant at once began to make preparations for a gigantic campaign embracing the whole country. For the first time the armies were to move in unison, one master mind at the head.

Along the Rappahannock was assembled a great army of one hundred and twenty-five thousand men. This army was to strike at Lee and be under the direct command of Grant.

Another army of one hundred thousand men was gathered around Chattanooga. This army was placed under the command of General W. T. Sherman. Its objective point was Atlanta.

Along the lower Mississippi was another army, known as the Army of the Gulf, under the command of General N. P. Banks. This army was to strike at Mobile. But owing to the clamor of the people west of the Mississippi, Grant reluctantly changed his plans and allowed Banks to make his famous and, as

it proved, disastrous campaign up the Red River, its object being the capture of Shreveport.¹

Another lesser army was to assemble in West Virginia and northern Virginia and move up the Shenandoah; its object the capture of Lynchburg. Then it was to turn east and join Grant before Richmond.

All these armies were to move as nearly as possible at the same time.

Bob and Jim did not get back from the raid on Richmond until the last of March. The next few weeks they put in quietly. They went out with the cavalry a few times in quest of Mosby. A few of his men would be captured, but Mosby with the majority of his men would elude them, and perhaps the very next day strike a sudden blow at a place where he was least expected.

Bob was disgusted. "They'll never catch him by sending out detachments of cavalry," he said. "They are too easily seen. Every citizen is his friend and no move can be made without his knowing it."

One day the boys were unexpectedly summoned to headquarters. They found that General Hunter had made a request that they be attached to his command as scouts during his raid up the Shenandoah Valley.

Jim was crazy with delight, but Bob was sorely puzzled. He knew the opportunities for scouting would be much greater with General David Hunter than if he remained with his brother. In fact the latter alternative would offer almost no chances for scouting, for the two armies would be in a death grapple and always close to each other. Bob knew the

¹ For a full history of the Red River campaign see *The Last Raid* in "The Young Missourians Series."

struggle would be a fearful one and for that reason wished to remain close to his brother.

“Jim, why don’t you go and let me stay?” he said. “You are better acquainted with the country than I am and would be as good as both of us.”

“No, I wouldn’t,” cried Jim. “I can’t go without yo’.”

At last he reluctantly consented, on Bob’s promising to join him as soon as possible.

General Clayton Hunter was greatly pleased with Bob’s resolution. “Now,” he said, “let me do as I have often wished to before, get you a commission as lieutenant. I will appoint you on my staff.”

“Thanks,” said Bob, “but I wish no commission as lieutenant. I have my appointment as a scout and can come and go as I please. I can dress as a civilian, a guerrilla, a Confederate soldier, or a Federal just as I please. Of course I know there is little scouting to be done so I wish to wear the uniform of a private and serve you as an orderly.”

With this General Hunter had to be content.

The parting between Bob and Jim was a reluctant one, but at length the boys shook hands and Jim started for West Virginia.

The day for the opening of the great campaign came, the fourth of May. Never was the Army of the Potomac in higher spirits. They had a new commander, one who had never known defeat. They could see only victory ahead, and marched as if going to a holiday gathering.¹

¹ On that same day General Sherman broke camp around Chattanooga and started for Atlanta. The author will never forget it. It was a glorious May day, all nature seemed to

The Union army crossed the Rapidan without trouble and in the thick of what was known as the Wilderness, Lee met them.

“What a place for a battle,” exclaimed Bob. He knew, for at one time he and Jim had gone through it. Little did he think then it would become the theater of one of the greatest battles of the war.

In places it was not possible to see more than five yards ahead. The soldiers struggling through the undergrowth would often be met with a volley from an unseen foe. To preserve order and form a line was almost impossible.

General Hunter’s division was not in advance, but soon the straggling fire of the skirmishers and then the roar of musketry told that the enemy had been met.

“Ride along the line, Bob, and see that it keeps well closed up,” cried the general. “It is impossible to see what is going on.”

Bob did as directed. The division was in the second line, a position that often tries a soldier’s courage more than in the fury of the fight, for he has to receive bullets without returning any.

“Lie down!” was the order, and every soldier lay flat on the ground.

Now the wounded came drifting back and then scattering soldiers who had fled. These were halted but so wild with fear were they that they would throw themselves on the ground and lie as if dead.

rejoice. As we turned our faces southward we laughed, sang and shouted for joy. One would have thought we were going to a picnic, but it was a picnic which lasted four months and from which many never returned.

Soon the whole line came rushing back. The charge had been repulsed. In pursuit came the cheering foe.

“Steady, men! Steady!” roared the officers. “Let the retreating line pass over you. Hold your fire until ordered, then fire and charge.”

On came the enemy, nearer and nearer. Would the order to fire ever come? At last it did. There was a sheet of flame and the whole line sprang to its feet and with wild cheers charged. The enemy was hurled back, the lost ground won and much more with it. For a time there was a lull in fighting on that part of the field.

“Well done, my brave boys! Well done!” cried General Hunter riding along the line.

“We’re the boys who can do it,” they shouted back.

For miles up and down the line could be heard the roar of the battle. Men would meet unexpectedly in the thick and fire in each other’s faces. There was but little artillery used. The nature of the ground would not permit it. The fight went on, the line twisting and turning like some enormous serpent.

Ground was gained, then lost and then gained again. All day the battle raged and when night came the weary soldiers threw themselves down where they had fought. All around them were the dead and wounded.

To hold the ground gained they built breastworks of logs, for they knew the foe would be on them in the morning.

“How has the battle gone?” asked Bob of his brother, who had just returned from a council of officers.

“Not as well as I hoped. We have gained ground but at a heavy cost. This is a fearful place in which to fight a battle. Nothing can be seen. The enemy will seem to retreat, then an unseen foe will rise and pour a dreadful fire right into the faces of our men. But like ourselves they have suffered. It is a murderous battle. I hope for better results tomorrow.”

Morning came and the battle was renewed. The line swung backwards and forwards, now advancing, now retreating.

In one of the backward movements Bob saw a little drummer boy among the last to retreat. Nor did he seem to be in a hurry. Now and then he would beat on his drum and glance back at the coming foe.

“He’ll never get back,” thought Bob. “It’s a pity, brave little fellow!”

The foremost rebels were nearly on him. “Surrender, you little Yankee devil,” cried an officer.

For answer the boy snatched up a musket lying by the side of a dead soldier and fired. The officer fell. The boy then ran, a piece of shell struck his drum, shattering it, but the boy reached the new line that had just been formed and was charging. The rebels were once more driven back.

Bob rode up to the boy crying, “You’re a little hero.” As the boy looked up at him Bob exclaimed in surprise, “Davy Caldwell, as I live.”

It was the boy he and Jim had left bound in the barn, the one who wished to be a drummer.

“Davy, how came you here?” he asked.

Davy’s eyes were swimming in tears. “They’ve spoiled my drum,” he said.

“Never mind the drum, Davy. You can get another. I’ll see that you do. I saw you shoot that officer. No one but a boy would have done that. Any soldier in your fix would have surrendered.”

“Did I kill him?” asked Davy.

“I don’t know, but he certainly fell. You’ve not told me how you came here.”

Davy said his father had at last consented for him to go as drummer in his uncle’s regiment.

“Here comes my brother, General Hunter,” said Bob. “I must tell him what you have done.”

When told General Hunter sprang from his horse and taking Davy’s hand said, “Davy, let me congratulate you. Not only shall you have the finest new drum I can find, but I’ll see that you are made a corporal.”

They left Davy swelling with pride.

General Hunter was true to his word. In due time Davy was made a corporal, the youngest corporal in the Union army.

The battle now raged with fury along the entire line. The breastworks of logs caught fire and the two lines fought on, a wall of fire between them. The ground was covered with leaves and the débris of years. This took fire and soon the flames were sweeping through the forest, vast clouds of smoke rolled up and uniting with the smoke of the battle, obscured the sun.

Where the fire was sweeping lay wounded men and soon their shrieks of agony were heard. Those who could sprang to the rescue, but the fierce flames drove them back.

Bob heard and springing from his horse wrapped

a handkerchief around his face, his hands were protected by gauntlets, and rushed to the rescue. Three times did Bob enter that burning furnace and bear a wounded soldier to a place of safety. Then there was no more need. The shrieks were no longer heard. The fire had done its work.

Bob, his clothes singed, his face smarting, for the first time in battle gave way to his feelings. Leaning his head against his horse he burst into tears. "Oh, my God!" he moaned. "The horror of it! Why should war be? Cursed be them that brought this war on us! The South must have been mad! Mad!"

Duty called him and soon he was again in the saddle, carrying orders regardless of the battle raging around him. All day the battle raged and there were many soldiers praying that day, not like Joshua that the sun would stand still, but that it would hasten its course.

Just before night a terrible din arose on the extreme right. The troops there had suffered greatly and their flank was in the air. General Gordon observed this and forming his men in a field which could not be seen on account of the thick woods, suddenly struck the rear of the right flank. The effect was indescribable. The men became panic-stricken, hundreds throwing away their arms and fleeing in terror. Troops tried to form to resist the danger, but the rush of the fugitives bore them down and back with them.

The two right divisions were a mob of fleeing men. It looked as though Chancellorsville was to be reenacted. But General Sedgwick was on the ground and the charge checked.

Two generals and nearly three thousand soldiers were captured in that fierce rush.

When the news was broken to Grant he took his cigar from his mouth and asked, "How is it now?"

"General Sedgwick is on the field and order has been restored. The line is now secure," was the answer.

"Then it is all right," replied Grant, and as if unconcerned he replaced his cigar in his mouth and lapsed into his usual silence.

Again darkness came and again the soldiers lay down where they had fought. For two days the two armies had fought and apparently neither had gained over the other.

In the morning Grant prepared to renew the battle, but he found only skirmishers before him. Lee, despairing of breaking Grant's lines, and satisfied with the damage he had done, had withdrawn to his strong fortifications along Mine Run.

Grant after feeling of Lee's line concluded it was entirely too strong to attempt to carry by storm, and decided to move on his left flank and try to seize Spottsylvania Court House, thus completely outflanking Lee.

Grant lost no time in putting his resolution in force and as soon as night came got his army in motion. It was at this time that Grant sent that famous message to Halleck, "I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer."

The Army of the Potomac had been roughly handled in the battle of the Wilderness. Its losses had been enormous, yet they had made no impression on Lee's army.

“Grant is no better than the others,” the soldiers began to say. “We are whipped.”

When orders came to march many cried, “It is the same old story — back to the Rappahannock.” There were many whose feet were leaden and hearts heavy as they marched away. But when they found they were marching south and not toward the Rappahannock their feelings changed. “We are not retreating,” they shouted. “We are flanking Lee.”

The battle of the Wilderness was over but as great a one was to come.¹

¹The battle of the Wilderness was one of the fiercest of the war. In many of the reports the battle of the Wilderness and of Spottsylvania are confounded. In the reports published by regiments in the Official Records the loss is stated as 2,246 killed, 12,037 wounded and 4,133 taken prisoners, a total of 17,666. In the same Record the loss at Spottsylvania is put at 18,899.

In a tabular statement published November first, when the whole loss was reckoned up to that date, the loss at the Wilderness is stated at 29,410 and at Spottsylvania at 10,381, making the losses in the two battles over three hundred more than in the first record.

The loss of the Confederate army is not known but owing to the nature of the fighting and the advantage possessed by the Confederates it was much less than the Federal.

It must be admitted that in the battle of the Wilderness the Federals got the worst of it but Lee's retreating to his entrenchments showed that he had given up all hopes of beating Grant in the open field. His most desperate efforts had failed to break Grant's line. Hereafter he was to fight on the defensive.

CHAPTER XIV

BOB JOINS SHERIDAN

AT THE commencement of the Wilderness campaign General Philip Sheridan, who had served with great distinction in the Army of the Cumberland, was called east and placed in command of the cavalry.

At the close of the battle of the Wilderness, Bob was summoned to headquarters. Here he learned that Grant had decided to send Sheridan on a raid to Richmond, not with the expectations that he would take the city, but to inflict all the damage he could and also to draw away the Confederate cavalry so that the immense trains of the army could be moved in safety.

It was known that Bob was not only a daring scout but that he had been with Kilpatrick on his raid and therefore knew something of the country to be traveled over. This scout was just what appealed to Bob, but he hated to leave his brother.

“Go,” said General Hunter. “I hate to have you leave, Bob, but I know that being an orderly is not to your taste, and also you will be more aid to your country with Sheridan than with me. If I am not mistaken Sheridan is going to make a great cavalry general. He has the dash and the courage. This won’t be as if you had gone to West Vir-

ginia. You will be where we can often see each other."

So Bob put on his old scouting clothes, and joined Sheridan.

During the campaign of the Wilderness the duty of the cavalry was to guard the immense trains of the army from the inroads of the Confederate cavalry. Heretofore the cavalry had ridden along by the train to protect it from attacks, but Sheridan did not believe in this. He thought it better to hunt out the enemy and attack them before they did the trains.

It was a fight from the beginning. At Furnace, Todd's Tavern and Piney Branch Church he met the enemy and defeated them. The cavalry was elated. Never before had they had such a leader. Not a wagon was lost, the train was not molested and when the army was out of the Wilderness, Sheridan received orders to proceed on his raid on Richmond.

On the morning of May ninth Bob reported and had his introduction to Sheridan. The general eyed him sharply and said, "You were with Kilpatrick, were one of his scouts?"

Bob replied that he was.

"They tell me," continued Sheridan, "that you have been scouting ever since the war commenced, and can be relied upon to be brave, cautious and reliable."

Bob blushed. "That must be for you to decide from my work," he replied modestly.

"Very well," said Sheridan. "You are young, but I shall put you at the head of my scouts."

Bob bowed. "You do me a great honor, General. I will do my best."

“I know you will. I know all about you, young man,” replied Sheridan. “Now I will introduce you to your men.”

Bob found himself at the head of about a dozen stalwart fellows who eyed him curiously when Sheridan told them he was to be their chief.

Sheridan started that evening with about as fine a body of cavalry as was ever gathered on this continent. Instead of taking a road that would bring him into contact with Confederate cavalry, Sheridan took a route which would lead him around the right wing of Lee's army. By doing this he was leaving the Confederate cavalry behind him.

Bob was surprised to find that Sheridan was marching his army all on one road, making a column thirteen miles long. Neither did he seem to be in a hurry, for all night long they marched at a walk.

Sheridan's worry was that the enemy would dispute the crossing of the Ny, Po, and Ta, three rivers that he would have to cross before he reached the North Anna.

Bob's instructions were to keep well in front and report if he found any considerable army of the enemy to dispute their progress.

The scouts scoured the country in front and once were fired on and had the good fortune to capture a prisoner who reported there was no force to dispute the crossing of the rivers. This pleased Sheridan immensely, and he pushed on more rapidly, and the crossing of the rivers was easily effected.

Bob now received orders to scout in the rear instead of the front of the column. It was not long before he reported, “Enemy in force approaching rapidly.”

Sheridan seemed pleased. "General Davies, you take the rear," he ordered. "Hold back the enemy all that is possible without endangering your men, but keep pretty well closed up with the main column. The longer Stuart keeps in the rear the better it will please me."

It is easy for a small determined rear guard to greatly retard the advance of a large force, and General Davies did his work well.

Sheridan crossed the North Anna without opposition. Stuart attacked him, but was driven back.

Custer's brigade was now ordered to Beaver Dam Station. Bob, knowing the road, was sent as guide. Since the visit of Kilpatrick the railroad had been repaired, and Lee was again using it as a depot of supplies.

Custer carried the place with a dash, and he found it much richer plucking than did Kilpatrick. Nearly four hundred Federal prisoners taken at the Wilderness and on their way to Richmond were released. Not only this but Custer destroyed two locomotives, one hundred cars, and ninety wagons. Nearly all of Lee's medical stores were destroyed and fifteen hundred thousand rations burned. It was a heavy blow to the Confederates. What was fully as good, plenty of forage was obtained for the now half-famished horses of the expedition.

Thoroughly refreshed, the start for Richmond was made. Bob with his scouts was once more in front. While scouting some distance to the right of the main column Bob discovered a large body of cavalry headed directly for Richmond. They were riding like mad.

This fact was reported and Sheridan said with a smile, "Stuart has discovered his mistake in following me up. He is now trying to get around me. He will do so, but with jaded horses."

Stuart made a further mistake by leaving part of his force to harass Sheridan's rear.

Before reaching Yellow Tavern, Bob had the good fortune to capture a prisoner who informed him that the whole of Stuart's force was at Yellow Tavern prepared to resist the further advance of the Federals.

The prisoner was taken to Sheridan, who questioned him sharply and then ordered an immediate attack.

It was a great cavalry battle and ended by the Confederates being totally defeated and driven pell-mell into the fortifications around Richmond. Yellow Tavern is only six miles from that city.

The Confederates suffered an irreparable loss, for their great cavalry leader, General J. E. B. Stuart, was mortally wounded.¹

The question with Sheridan now was whether to storm the city or not. It was important for him to know how strongly it was held.

"With your permission I will try and find out," said Bob.

"How?" asked Sheridan.

"I do not know yet, but I will find a way."

"Well go ahead," was the answer.

Among the scouts under Bob was a man about fifty years of age by the name of Joseph Kennedy.

¹ General Stuart was considered the greatest cavalry general of the Confederate army.

He was an illiterate Virginian, but as cunning as a fox and absolutely fearless. When in repose his face was as expressionless as a stone. He was the color of leather from exposure and he looked at least ten years older than he was. Despite his looks he was as active and wiry as a cat, and hardly knew what fatigue was.

Bob had heard him say that he had been in Richmond a dozen times since the war started, and that he could go again any time he wished. So to him he went and asked, "Do you think there would be any chance for you and I to get into Richmond tonight?"

Joe spat and said, "Mighty risky, Cap, but I reckon it could be did."

Although Bob had no commission the scouts under him persisted in calling him Cap.

"Then let's try it," said Bob.

As soon as night came they started, going west.

"Maybe we'uns will hev to leave our hosses," said Joe.

"Very well, if we have to," replied Bob.

They were on a lonely road and rode for five miles without interruption. Joe then halted and said, "Jest ahead thar's a main road leading into Richmond. If the rebs be getting reinforcements they be comin' that way. I think I heah the sound of hosses. Bettah hitch our hosses and see, but we'uns will get as near to that road as we kin."

Leading their horses they approached the main road as close as they dared, then leaving the horses crept forward. Cavalry was passing. "Do you think we'll be in time to help whip that devil, Sheridan?" they heard an officer ask.

For a few minutes they watched, then Joe pinched Bob's arm as a sign they should go back. When they reached the horses Joe said, "Cap, it's perfectly easy for we'uns to be in Richmond in a short time."

"How?" asked Bob.

"Jest by fallin' in with that cavalry. They'll not notice us in the dark. Easy as shootin'."

Bob believed the plan feasible. So mounting their horses they rode down to the road. The column had passed but there were stragglers still coming. They joined them and without any trouble rode into Richmond. No sooner were they in the suburbs than Joe whispered, "This way," and turned into a dark, unfrequented street.

The street was sparingly settled, and they soon came to a house so hidden away among trees that it almost seemed to be in a forest. Joe turned in among the trees, saying, "A friend of mine lives in this house. I lay here for a week once while half Richmond was lookin' fer me. We'uns had bettah not disturb my friend. I nevah call on him without I hev to, but we'uns will hev to leave the hosses heah."

They made their way on foot into the city, and found the streets crowded with soldiers and citizens. Not only were the citizens in a terrible fright, but they were bowed down with grief, their beloved general was dead. For the first time Bob learned that Stuart had been killed.

Once they were roughly accosted by a soldier who asked, "What be yo' fellers doin' heah? Why ben't yo' with the home guards?"

"Jest on the way to jine my company," replied Bob.

“Wall yo’ bettah be in a hurry,” replied the soldier. “We’uns be pickin’ up sich fellers as yo’.”

Arriving near the capitol they saw a great assembly. Hundreds of women were in the crowd, wringing their hands and weeping, and crying that the Yankees would be there in the morning.

The mayor was speaking, trying to quell their fears. “My good people,” he cried, “go home. There is not a particle of danger. There are more than twenty thousand soldiers and home guards to man the fortifications. I hope Sheridan will attack in the morning, for if he does, his force will be annihilated. We have the men, the guns, and the cannon. If he does not attack we will move out and attack him. Not one of the accursed Yankees will ever return. So go home and sleep quietly.”

The mayor’s words seemed to quiet the crowd, and they began to disperse. “It’s time to be going,” whispered Bob to Joe, and they quietly withdrew.

Once they narrowly escaped being arrested by a guard, but Joe, who was posted, told where they belonged, and they were allowed to go on their way unmolested.

Coming to where their horses were Joe said, “Cap, I’ve heard enough to know we’uns kin never get away on hosses. We’uns will hev to leave them.”

“Then let’s take off the saddles and bridles and turn them loose,” said Bob. “Leaving them here might bring suspicion on your friend.”

So the horses were turned loose, and the saddles and bridles hidden in a pile of brush.

Joe now struck out, avoiding streets and keeping as much as possible in the woods. At length he halted

and whispered, "Must be near the breastworks. We'uns must be keerful."

Creeping up they could dimly see the forms of sleeping men. On top of the works a sentinel was pacing back and forth.

"Down this way a little," whispered Joe.

They crept down a little farther and found a place where the works were unoccupied. It seemed that the works were guarded by companies placed just so far apart. Now they were between two of the companies.

Like snakes they crawled over the works and then breathed easier.

"Other works yet," whispered Joe, "but I reckon we'uns kin get through. I know a place."

So he did. A ditch along the bottom of a ravine, and creeping along the bottom of this they were soon outside all fortifications.

"Joe, how far are we from where we left Sheridan?" asked Bob.

"I reckon about ten miles."

"I'm afraid we can't make it by morning even if we have good luck," groaned Bob.

They were now on a road which Joe said would take them to Lynchburg.

"Hark! I hear horses coming this way," suddenly exclaimed Bob.

They stepped to one side of the road and hid behind a bush. As the horsemen approached Bob whispered, "Joe, there are only two. Let's stop them."

With revolvers in hand they waited and as the men came abreast of them sprang out, shouting, "Halt!"

The men obediently dismounted and were disarmed.

"Who are you?" demanded Bob.

"Couriers from Hampton," was the reply.

"I doubt it," said Bob. "I believe you are Yankees in disguise. Whar air your dispatches?"

One fumbled in his pocket and presented an envelope. Bob took it and placing it in his pocket said, "No use trying to read here in the dark. I think it is all right, but our business is more urgent than yours. We'll have to take your horses."

Bob and Joe leaped into the saddles and with a good-bye were away, leaving two couriers standing in amazement by the road. At last one managed to say, "Yanks!" and he finished with an exclamation which we can hardly repeat.

Bob and Joe met with no further trouble until they were halted by Federal pickets.

Day was just beginning to dawn as they rode up to Sheridan's headquarters. The camp was already astir.

"News for the general," said Bob to the guard.

Sheridan was eating his breakfast, but gave orders for Bob to be admitted.

"What is it?" he asked. "Where have you been?"

"In Richmond," replied Bob in a tone that would indicate that he had done nothing remarkable.

"Richmond!" cried the general incredulously. "What do you mean?"

"Just what I said. Here is a dispatch we took away from a courier on our way back."

The general tore the envelope open. Its contents proved to be a dispatch from Wade Hampton to Gen-

eral Stuart telling him he was hurrying all the reinforcements possible to his aid.

Bob now gave the general a hasty sketch of what he had heard and seen.

“There is no use trying to take the place, General,” he added. “There are too many men there.”

The general thanked Bob warmly and then said, “It’s true then that General Stuart was killed. Some of the prisoners reported he was, but I could hardly believe it. A great general has fallen. Peace to his soul.”

Sheridan now decided to withdraw from before the city. In the battle at Yellow Tavern he had captured a battery and a number of prisoners. The real object of the raid, to draw the Confederate cavalry away from Lee and thus assure the safety of the Federal train had been entirely successful.

No sooner did the Confederates find that Sheridan was withdrawing from before the city than they sallied out and attacked him. They were totally defeated and driven back into the city where they found refuge behind the breastworks.

Sheridan seemed to be in no hurry. He rather humorously reports, “After the battle for the rest of the day we collected our wounded, buried our dead, grazed our horses and read the Richmond papers, for two small newsboys with commendable enterprise had entered our lines and sold to the officers and men.”

Thinking that Sheridan would try to return directly to the Army of the Potomac the Confederates made every effort to intercept him, but Sheridan fooled them by marching through the White Oak

Swamp and striking the James River at Haxall's Landing. From there he turned north, crossed the Pamunkey Run at the White House and joined Grant's army near Cold Harbor. It had been a great raid. Sheridan was absent from the army for nineteen days.

His men had hardly had a breathing spell when they were ordered to secure a position at Cold Harbor.

Bob, who had reconnoitered the position, reported it strongly held by at least three or four thousand men, but nothing daunted, Sheridan attacked.

The battle raged until evening, neither side giving way. Then Custer with his invincible brigade made a charge and swept everything before him. The coveted position was won.

The infantry came up and it was fortified and three days later the disastrous battle of Cold Harbor was fought.

The result of this battle filled Robert with dismay. What had happened to his brother while he was gone? Dreadful battles had been fought. Bob asked and obtained a two days' leave of absence to visit his brother if alive, to find out the worst if he were not.

CHAPTER XV

SPOTTSYLVANIA AND COLD HARBOR

BOB found his brother had passed through the terrible battles unhurt, and each was overjoyed to find the other alive and well.

“You here,” cried the general when he saw Bob. “Thank God, you are safe! I hear you had a successful raid.”

“It was great!” exclaimed Bob. “I tell you Sheridan is some general. I’m glad I’m with him. But how about you, Clayt? You know for seventeen days we knew nothing of what was going on. Cold Harbor was dreadful.”

For a time General Hunter did not answer. Never had Bob seen him so dejected. At length pointing to his division lying in the trenches, he said, “Bob, there’s my division. Not half what I started with. My boys! My brave boys!” Tears came into his eyes and his emotions choked him.

“Is it as bad as that Clayt?” asked Bob. “Tell me all that’s happened since I left you.”

This is the story General Hunter told:

“Bob, you know when you left we were just starting to march from the Wilderness to Spottsylvania Court House. You know of the struggle in the Wilderness. Lee had failed to break our lines and drive us back, but he had struck a terrific blow. Now

secure in his fortifications he waited for Grant to attack.

“But Grant was too wily. No doubt Grant was surprised at the blow Lee had struck but he never thought of retreat, and so the move to Spottsylvania was commenced. If we could have reached Spottsylvania first, Lee’s army would have been cut off from Richmond, but Lee detected the movement and rushed his army southward to meet it.

“The night we marched was dark, the road poor and we were continually annoyed by a scattering fire from the brush which lined the road. Frequently we had to stop and brush the enemy aside.

“Lee having the shortest distance to travel, his advance reached Spottsylvania Court House a few hours before Grant’s did. They found a line of breastworks well manned, and all they could do was to wait for the rest of the army to come up.

“That day there was more or less fighting all along the line. Twice a portion of the army crossed the Ny, the first time to be driven back, the second time to be withdrawn after dark. The losses during the day were severe, but the loss of the enemy must have been as great.

“The next day was spent in feeling the enemy position, and it was decided to assault the enemy’s works in front of our corps where there was an abrupt turn in their entrenchments. Hancock made his preparations for the assault. What a general Hancock is! He is superb!

“My division was selected to make the main assault. I felt proud for I was told the reason we were selected was that we were thought to be one of

the best divisions in the army. But I knew it meant deadly work.

“That night full preparations were made. We were to assault at the dawn of day. There was to be no cheering, no drum beats, no noise of any kind. We were to run over their skirmish line without firing.

“As the day broke our movements were somewhat concealed by a fog. The whole division sprang forward as one man. Sweeping aside the few men in front of us we were on their works before they were aware of what was going on, and the works were captured before the defenders had time to rub the sleep from their eyes.

“Oh! It was glorious! Major-General Edward Johnson with nearly four thousand of his division and twenty pieces of artillery was in our hands.

“Taking so many prisoners naturally caused confusion in our lines and before we could form and advance on their second line the enemy was upon us in overwhelming force. Lying down behind the breastworks we had captured we resisted the charge.

“It is impossible to describe what now took place. In many places only the breastworks divided the two forces. Soldiers were dragged over the works by the hair of the head. The dead became so numerous that they had to be dragged back for the living to take their places. The crash of musketry was incessant. There was no lull, just a steady roar like Niagara. No less than five times during the day did Lee hurl his forces on us, only to have them driven back.

“The limbs of the trees were torn into ribbons by

the balls and hung in festoons swaying to and fro in the wind. An oak tree twenty inches in diameter was cut down by small balls, and fell with a crash into the Confederate lines, carrying death and dismay with it.

“It was not until dark that Lee gave up his attempt to drive us out, then he withdrew his forces and left us in possession of the field.¹

“The next day Lee’s line was found to be too strong to be stormed and Grant once more began his flanking movement. At South Anna, Pamunkey, and Totopotomac, battles were fought resulting favorably to our forces.

“At Cold Harbor the two armies again confronted each other. Grant now determined to make one more grand effort to break Lee’s line and ordered a general charge. You know the result of that charge. No such slaughter with such little results was ever seen before on this continent.”²

Bob had listened to his brother with varied feelings. While he felt proud of the bravery of the army he knew that so far the campaign had been a bitter disappointment.

¹ It is said that Lee’s army was never nearer destruction until the time he surrendered than it was at Spottsylvania.

² It is claimed that at Cold Harbor ten thousand men fell in eight minutes. Grant was bitterly attacked for ordering this charge, but he had as good reasons, even better than Lee had at Gettysburg in ordering the charge of Pickett.

Lee ordered that charge to make one last mighty effort to break the Federal line. Grant ordered the charge at Cold Harbor to break the line of Lee before he reached Richmond. Grant always regretted this charge. Those near to him claim he did not sleep for three nights. Thus it would appear that Grant was not the calloused general that so many of his enemies claimed he was.

“What do you think Grant will do now?” he asked.

“I think he will cross the James and attack Richmond from the south,” was the answer.

“Then you do not think Grant has any idea of withdrawing?”

“Withdrawing!” cried the general. “He has not commenced to fight yet. He will hold on like a bulldog. He will never let go until Richmond is his. I have seen enough of him to know this. Our losses are great but Lee has lost too, and our lines can be filled far easier than his.”

Grant did as General Hunter thought he would, moved the army across the James.

General Butler was in command at Fortress Monroe. Grant ordered him to threaten Richmond on the north side of the James, but in reality to move on and capture Petersburg.

Butler moved promptly and his cavalry captured the outer works around Petersburg, but finding the inner works strong they retired. He now lost several precious days and when he moved again it was to find Petersburg strongly held. Beauregard had rushed troops up from North Carolina.

The Confederates now came out and attacked Butler, who fell back to Bermuda Landing. His army was safe, but he was in a trap. As General Grant remarked, “was bottled up as tightly as if he was in a jug.”

Grant reinforced Butler and got him out of his trap and gave orders that Petersburg be taken at once.

General Butler orderd General W. F. Smith, who

had just come up with his command, to move on Petersburg without delay.

This was a complete surprise to the Confederates. Smith appeared before the city early in the morning but did not assault until near sundown, and then with only part of his force. He carried the lines for a distance of two and a half miles, captured fifteen cannon and three hundred prisoners. He then rested.

It was a bright moonlight night and there were no fortifications between Smith and the city. He could have walked right into the place. By morning the city had been strongly reinforced.

General Grant, bitterly disappointed, now moved his entire army over the river and besieged the city. It was a siege which lasted nine months, and the city only fell when the whole Confederacy fell.¹

¹ Up to the time that Grant crossed the James his entire loss since the beginning of the campaign was 54,751, nearly one-half of the number he started with. This shows the terrific character of the fighting.

General Lee never made any report of his losses. As he fought most of the time behind breastworks and chose his positions when he did attack, his loss was much less than General Grant's. Still his loss numbered tens of thousands, and it was a loss which he could not make up.

CHAPTER XVI

SAVED BY CUSTER

WHEN Grant after the battle of Cold Harbor decided to cross the James, Sheridan received orders to make a raid to Charlottesville, where it was expected he would meet General Hunter with his two divisions.

Sheridan started with two divisions. After reaching the North Anna it was a continual skirmish all the time. Bob and his scouts were very busy.

While scouting to the left of the column Bob encountered and charged a small party of the enemy and was fortunate in capturing two prisoners. One of them boastingly remarked, "Yo' fellers jest go on and yo' will catch hell."

"How's that?" asked Bob. "I am under the impression that it is you fellows who are getting the brimstone."

"Reckon you'll find Breckinridge with his division ahead," growled the man. He seemed to be unaware that he was giving Bob valuable information.

Bob sent the prisoners back, then called Joe Kennedy to come with him and started to find if the prisoner were telling the truth.

Slowly making their way through the woods they soon came to a place where they had a clear view across some fields of a road that ran parallel to the

one on which Sheridan was traveling. This road was crowded with infantry, marching rapidly. It was Breckinridge with his whole division rushing to the defense of Gordonsville.

Bob quickly bore Sheridan the news. It would not do to try and take Gordonsville now, so Sheridan resolved to strike the railroad at Trevilian, march around Gordonsville, and reach Charlottesville that way.

The stubborn resistance of the enemy told Sheridan there was a large force in his front. Three miles from Trevilian they met. The enemy were behind breastworks constructed in a dense woods. Now Sheridan showed what a general he was. Halting his men, he told Custer to take his brigade and ride around the flank of the enemy and try to gain the rear. Bob and his scouts were to pilot the way.

Bob with Joe Kennedy once more took to the woods. Joe seemed to know by instinct when there was danger ahead.

"Rebels ahead," he whispered once. So it proved, a whole division of them. It would not do for Custer to come this way, so they made their way to the right and came to an old road leading through the woods which seemed to be unguarded. Going on they soon became aware of another large force in front of them. For some reason an opening had been left between these two forces.

Bob turned back with the news and Custer instead of trying to ride around the army decided to dash through this opening and save much time. He did this and before the enemy recovered from their surprise he was in their rear, cutting and slashing.

After Bob and Joe gave Custer their news they attempted to regain their horses. Custer was well on his way and the two suddenly found themselves surrounded by the enemy. There was no way of escape, they were prisoners.

"Who are you?" asked the captain. "You are not in uniform."

"We are scouts," answered Bob.

"So! Some of Sheridan's cussed men, dressed to deceive. Sheridan is up to that. Well, he'll be short two scouts," cried the captain.

Just then a dapper lieutenant rode up and looking at Bob exclaimed, "Captain, I know that fellow. He is Robert Hunter, the noted spy. The one General Jackson offered a reward for. He's a slick one. Better string him up and be done with it."

"So you would hang me, would you, Lieutenant Robinson?" said Bob sarcastically. "You were not so brave when I had you a prisoner, quiet as a dove. What if I had shot you?"

"I am not a spy," cried the lieutenant angrily. "I am an honorable soldier. Captain, hang this fellow and be done with it. Do it quickly."

The lieutenant was shaking with fear lest Bob would give away the story of his cowardice when the picnic party was attacked by Black Dan.

"That is what I am about to do," replied the captain. "Lieutenant, get a strap. I'll give you the pleasure of superintending the job. I know it will be well done."

Bob's heart fell. He saw no means of escape. The end had come at last. He put his hand in his bosom and grasped the butt of the revolver resting

there. His captors had taken away his outside arms but had not taken trouble to search him.

"May God forgive me," murmured Bob as he slowly turned the muzzle of his revolver towards his heart.

Just then the colonel of the regiment came galloping up. "What are you doing here?" he cried angrily. "Don't you know the Yankees have gained our rear, and we have a fight ahead?"

"Colonel, here are two men whom Lieutenant Robinson says are spies. We shall hang them."

"Hang them!" roared the colonel. "I don't hang prisoners without a trial. Form your company, and that quickly."

Just then rapid firing broke out in the rear and wild cheers filled the air. Bob looked. Custer, at the head of his Michigan boys, was charging down, their sabers gleaming in the bright sunlight. They were on the rebels like a thunderbolt. Many were taken prisoners, others fled through the woods terror-stricken. Bob was free.

Sheridan had dismounted the rest of his command and was waiting to hear from Custer. No sooner did he hear the sound of firing than he ordered a charge on the breastworks which it turned out were held by Hampton's Legion. The cavalymen sprang to their feet and like veteran infantry charged the works. It was soon over. Hampton's men fled, only to find themselves in the hands of Custer in their rear. Hundreds were taken prisoners. The victory was complete.

When the battle was over Bob sought Custer and told of his narrow escape.

“An inch is as good as a mile,” laughed the general, “but I’m glad I was in time. That captain and lieutenant may be among the prisoners. Let’s look.”

Sure enough, huddled together in the midst of the prisoners were the captain and the lieutenant. The general ordered them brought before him. When they saw Bob they turned pale, not knowing just what to expect.

“So you were going to hang my scouts,” exclaimed Custer. “What have you to say for yourselves?”

Caddie stood trembling without a word, but the captain replied, “General, they were not in uniform. We have a right to hang as spies any who enter our lines in such clothing.”

“They were not in your lines,” thundered Custer. “They were with me, a part of my force and under my protection. Hunter, what do you say? Shall I order them hung?” As he asked this he gave Bob a sly wink.

Bob saw the general was in for some sport so he said, “General, I don’t see but what turn about would be fair play, especially for Lieutenant Robinson. He was very anxious to have me hung, wished to boss the job.”

“Very well,” replied the general, “take them and do what you wish with them.”

“Come on,” said Bob to the two men, “I’ll see if I can do as good a job as you expected to.”

All courage now fled from Lieutenant Robinson, and he fairly groveled in his terror as in piteous tones he plead for his life. The captain, though pale, was made of sterner material. “Hang me if you

will," he cried, "but for my life ten of your own will pay. We take prisoners as well as you. Go on with the job."

General Custer thinking the joke had gone far enough said, "Captain, your hand. You are a brave man. I don't hang prisoners. But let this be a lesson to you not to be too quick to hang prisoners taken from us." Then looking at Caddie he said, "This fellow is not worth hanging. Get him out of my sight."

"So you don't intend to hang me," said the captain to Robert, as they were leaving.

"No, we just wished to frighten you to repay you for intending to hang me," replied Bob. "But if you hadn't hung me if I had remained a prisoner I'd have been hung later anyway. Lieutenant Robinson was right. I am Robert Hunter. So I have no ill feelings against you. Hope you will enjoy your visit to the North.

"As for you," added Bob, turning to Lieutenant Robinson who was still trembling, "don't be afraid. Not a hair of your precious head shall be touched. If you live to get back give my regards to your charming cousin, Miss Cadwalader."

Lieutenant Robinson did not live to get back. He died a prisoner on Johnson Island as much from chagrin as anything, it was thought, for many of his fellow prisoners avoided him.

When the prisoners were all rounded up Sheridan found he had over five hundred. From them he learned that General Hunter was not in Charlottesville but was marching up the Shenandoah Valley on Lynchburg. It was impossible to capture Gordons-

ville now also, for it was defended by the whole of Breckinridge's division.

To reach Hunter would mean a long and dangerous journey, not only this but the prisoners would have to be freed and the wounded, of whom there were about five hundred, would have to be left behind. Sheridan was also running short of ammunition, so he concluded to return the way he had come. As it was, he was forced to leave ninety of his most severely wounded. To remove those who were able to stand the trip he was forced to seize every vehicle he could lay his hands on and horses to pull them. Hundreds of the enemy's wounded were left in the improvised hospitals.¹

The way of return was thorny. As if maddened by his victories the enemy made every effort to trap Sheridan. After thoroughly breaking up the railroad, Sheridan proposed to return by way of Mallory Ford over the North Anna. Torbert's division was sent to see if the way was clear.

Bob with his scouts suddenly ran into a large force and barely escaped with his life. As it was two of his scouts were wounded.

"A large force in front, General," Bob reported. Torbert at once attacked and the battle raged until dark when he withdrew, finding it impossible to break through the enemy's lines.

"No use in trying to go this way," Torbert reported.

¹ Sheridan says, "Nothing could exceed the cheerfulness of the wounded, hauled as they were in old buggies and ammunition wagons. I saw in the line of march men with wounded legs driving while those with a disabled arm with the other would whip up the horses."

Sheridan moved back on the road he had come as far as Ivyman's Store where he crossed over to the Catharpin Road, the one he wished to take by the Mallory Ford. This route led directly over the battle field of Spottsylvania. The field was silent. It was the bivouac of the dead.

As Bob gazed on the shattered forests, the brush mowed as with a giant scythe, he wondered how anyone could have gone through that storm and lived.

No trouble was experienced until near White House when Bob came dashing back with the startling news that that place was being attacked. At White House there was not only a large hospital, but a train of nine hundred wagons.

Sheridan rushed to the rescue. He found that White House was still safe but that the enemy occupied the bluff on the other side of the Pamunkey. The passage of the river was forced and the enemy driven away.

Sheridan found orders awaiting him at White House to break up the hospital and bring the train to Potomac. It was a perilous job. The enemy swarmed around them. Time and again was the train attacked but the enemy was always driven back.

During this time Bob and his scouts barely rested. They were here, there, everywhere, learning where the enemy were concentrating so they could be met. During this time Bob had many exciting adventures. No less than three times did he have his horse shot from under him and once only escaped capture by plunging into the forest where cavalry could not follow. In these conflicts he lost three of his scouts.

At last the train reached the James. Not a wagon

had been lost. It was a remarkable achievement and Sheridan's cavalry alone did it. They crossed the James weary and worn but found no rest there for orders were waiting for them to hurry to the relief of General Wilson who had made a raid on the South Railroad.

When Sheridan was ordered on his raid to Trevilian one division of the cavalry, that of General Wilson, was left behind with the army. With this division General Wilson was ordered to make a raid. At first he was very successful. He struck the railroad fifteen miles south of Petersburg and for thirty miles utterly destroyed it. When he reached the Roanoke he found he could go no farther and had to come back. He reached Reams Station in safety but there was met by an overwhelming force of the enemy, both infantry and cavalry.

Wilson had been told that on his return he would be met at Reams Station with a force of infantry. Although the sound of Wilson's guns could be heard on the left flank of Meade's army, no relief came.

Wilson was now fighting desperately. He was nearly surrounded. It looked as if his entire force would be captured. As a last resort he abandoned his artillery and train and struck through the forest.

When Sheridan read his orders to go to Wilson's relief he called Bob and told him to reach Wilson and tell him they were coming.

When Bob reached the left flank of the army the sound of the conflict at Reams Station was plainly heard. He pushed on not knowing what he would meet. He had only five men with him.

As he rode the sound of the cannonading ceased.

Had Wilson surrendered? Bob kept on. He soon discovered a squad of cavalry in front, evidently a guard to see if reinforcements were coming to Wilson. Bob saw them in time to turn and flee but he was followed by a shower of bullets. He now left the road and struck into the forest to try and circle around the enemy.

After going about three miles he became aware that there was a large body of troops breaking their way through the forest just ahead.

"Wait here until I find what troops are in front," he said to his men.

Dismounting Bob stole through the forest and soon caught sight of blue uniforms. "They are our men," he cried joyously and making his way back to his horse was soon among friends. He had fallen in with some of Wilson's fleeing force.

"Where is General Wilson?" he asked.

"Back in the rear," was the answer.

Bob found him. The general had been able to form a rear guard in some kind of order out of the general confusion, and with these he was holding back the enemy.

"What, you, Hunter!" cried the general. "What's the news? Has help come?"

"I come from General Sheridan," replied Bob. "He sent me to tell you he is coming. But he is in poor shape. He is just back from his raid."

"Then no infantry is coming?" asked the general.

"None that I know of."

"It is too late anyway," said the general sadly. "If I can only escape with the bulk of my men it is all I can hope."

"You can escape, General," cried Bob eagerly. "I have just ridden through the forest. There is no enemy before you."

"Thank God!" exclaimed the general. "It is bad enough as it is."¹

Bob rode back and met Sheridan. "Too late, General," he said, "but Wilson has escaped with the bulk of his command. They will come into our lines farther to the right." Sheridan turned back and went into camp to give his men a much needed rest. They had been in the saddle almost constantly for fifty-six days, had fought innumerable battles, marched hundreds of miles, torn up miles of railroads and destroyed property worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. Not only this but they had guarded Grant's immense trains and not a wagon had been lost. Over two thousand prisoners had fallen into their hands. Is it any wonder the cavalry were proud of their record? In doing all this their loss had been heavy.

¹ Besides his artillery and train which was small, General Wilson lost about nine hundred men, the majority of whom were taken prisoners.

CHAPTER XVII

THE CRATER

BOB felt the need of rest himself. In fact he had not known how tired and worn he was until he was in camp, the excitement over.

The first thing he did was to hunt up his brother.

“Back!” cried the general, grasping his hand. “I’ve been hearing great things of the cavalry. But, what is the matter, Bob? You look thin and worn.”

“I reckon you would be thin and worn if you had gone through what I have,” replied Bob, “but don’t worry. A few days rest will put me all right. How are things here?”

“You can see,” replied the general. “We are firmly entrenched and here we will stay until the end. Come what will, Grant will never let go his iron grip until he has Petersburg. I confess the campaign so far has not been what we hoped it would be. We should have had Petersburg at the start, and we would have had it if it had not been for the slowness of Butler and Smith, first Butler, then Smith.”

“How about the losses?” asked Bob.

They have been quite heavy ever since we crossed the James, but I believe we are giving as much as we are receiving now.¹

¹The Army of the Potomac published a full account of its losses up to November first and it amounted to 88,887,

When rested Bob went over the field time and time again. Both armies were strongly entrenched. At some places the breastworks were quite close to each other. Every day from morning to night was heard the thunder of cannon and the rattle of musketry.

One morning Bob was surprised to have his brother tell him that he had been transferred to the Sixth Corps, and that the corps was ordered back to Washington.

“Things have been going all wrong in the Shenandoah Valley and Northern Virginia,” said the general. “Early seems to be having his own way. The generals up there are quarreling. They seem to be afraid that one will get ahead of the other. But that’s not the only trouble. The awful loss this army has sustained has alarmed the whole country. The opposition press is vitriolic in regard to Lincoln and Grant. They are calling Grant a butcher. Then

a terrific loss which considering the weapons of that period showed desperate fighting.

Of this number 25,000 had been taken prisoner, a loss hard to account for. In the same time Grant had taken 15,000 prisoners. Thus his loss in prisoners was two-fifths greater than Lee’s.

One cannot help contrasting Grant’s losses with those of Sherman’s in the Atlantic campaign. In that campaign which lasted just about four months Sherman lost about 37,000 men, but he inflicted a loss on the enemy of at least 40,000. Much of that loss was owing to Hood’s attacks before Atlanta, every one of which was furiously repulsed, while Lee after the battle of the Wilderness fought entirely on the defensive.

Then owing to the character of the country Sherman was enabled to flank his enemy, a thing which Grant was unable to do. Lee had the shorter line and every time Grant tried to flank him he always found Lee before him in impregnable fortifications. With the Army of the Potomac it was always hard knocks, nothing else would win.

there is violent opposition in the North to the draft; riots and bloodshed. The situation looks squally. The high hopes I had in the spring are all blasted. If they let Grant alone he will take Richmond. But I'm afraid they won't let him alone."

"Is it as bad as that, Clayt? How does Grant take it?"

"He says nothing and holds on. I will know more about the situation when I get to Washington. I wish you could go with me."

"I would like to, but I must stay with Sheridan," replied Bob.

Bob was lonesome after his brother left but he kept his eyes open as to what was going on. "Grant will never assault these works," he thought. "He has lost too many already. He will gradually move to the left and try to cut the railroads leading into Richmond."

While there was no general battle Bob saw that the firing from the breastworks and rifle pits was taking a heavy toll each day.¹

Soon rumors began to get about that something surprising was to happen. What it was could not be found out, the secret was well kept. Bob by watching at last did find out, but he kept his mouth shut.

A tunnel was being dug in front of Burnside's corps. The plan was to blow up a fort in front and in the panic and confusion that would follow, a charge was to be made through the break and the city taken.

¹ What the toll was is given only in one instance. In the Confederate army General Bushrod Johnston in command of a division reported his loss in trench fighting every day to Lee for the month of July. During the month it amounted to above five hundred.

Soon it became generally known throughout the camp that a mine was being prepared.

Bob watched the mine with eager eyes. The time for the explosion was three-thirty Saturday morning, July 30. The troops were massed, all preparations made, and thousands waited in breathless attention.

The time came and there was no explosion. Minutes passed. What was the matter? The suspense became intense. Nearly an hour passed, an hour that told terribly on the nerves of the soldiers massed for the charge.

At last a brave soldier, Sergeant Reese of the Forty-eighth Pennsylvania, volunteered to enter the mine and find out the trouble. Let his name ever be honored.

Fearlessly he entered, although he knew the mine might explode at any moment and he be blown to atoms. He found the fuse was defective and had gone out. Who was responsible?

The fuse was repaired and again lighted and at four forty-five, an hour and a quarter after the time set for the explosion, there came a shock as of an earthquake. Eight thousand pounds of powder had exploded. A great mountain of earth suddenly rose in the air. In that mountain were cannon tossed upwards as if they were straws, and torn and mangled bodies that a moment before had been men. The earth fell back covering the living and the dead.

A moment of silence, silence more dreadful than the thunderous report, then the storming party rushed forward.

They came to where the mine had been and there halted. A great chasm three hundred feet long and

twenty-seven feet deep lay before them. The Confederate breastworks at each end of this chasm were deserted for at least three hundred yards. Those who held them had fled in terror. Instead of rushing through and around this chasm the men huddled before it. Someone had blundered.

At length an advance was made but it was too late, the enemy had recovered from their surprise and the ground in front was swept by balls. The soldiers in advance became disorganized, then a fleeing, fear-crazed mob that was being cut down by the hundreds.

The vast crater was filled with a struggling mob of humanity. It had become a charnel house. It was not until ten o'clock that all the soldiers were withdrawn from that fateful chasm. The move was a failure, and nearly four thousand soldiers had fallen.¹

¹ One cannot read the proceedings of the Court of Inquiry which followed without a feeling of indignation. It showed the jealousy which existed among the officers of the army.

General Meade and General Burnside were at loggerheads. The generals who commanded the charging columns disagreed. Some had no faith in the move. In many cases the orders of General Meade had been totally disregarded. Little had been done to remove barriers in front of the Federal breastworks so troops could readily advance to the charge.

It was found that Generals Ferrero and Leddie, whose divisions composed the storming force, instead of being with their commands where they could see and direct, were much of the time in a bomb-proof back of the Federal lines where they could see nothing, and where they sat drinking whiskey to compose their shattered nerves. Time and again while they were in the bomb-proof orders came for them to move their troops to the crest in front of the crater. But no move was made until a mandatory order came. Then it was too late to be of help and only added to the slaughter.

A Court of Inquiry was called and it found that General Burnside had disobeyed orders; that Generals Ferrero and

Gloom and despair settled on the army. What should have been one of the most glorious days in its history had proven a failure.

Bob had witnessed the whole battle, and when he saw the fatal mistakes he could scarcely restrain himself from seizing a flag and rushing into the thick of the fray. He watched the slaughter of the troops with tears running down his face.

The month of August came, the darkest, gloomiest of the year. The high hopes held at the beginning of the year had vanished. Every campaign which Grant had planned had failed or seemed to be on the point of failing. Even Sherman had been checked on his victorious career before Atlanta. Early, having driven Hunter from the Shenandoah Valley, was having things his own way.

The opposition to the war increased in the North to an alarming extent. In New York a mob held sway for two days, murdering colored men, women, and children.

Throughout the North there had arisen powerful secret societies, numbering at least half a million members, who bound together by the most solemn oaths, swore undying hostility to Lincoln and his prosecution of the war. The majority of these men were armed. Could they have been mobilized they would have formed a tremendous army in the rear.

Vallandigham had boldly returned from his en-

Leddie had sought shelter in a bomb-proof where they could neither see nor direct the movements and had failed to rush their men forward; that General Bliss remained behind and did not accompany his brigade into the battle. General O. B. Wilson was mildly reprimanded for not displaying sufficient energy.

forced exile in Canada, and defied the government to arrest him, saying he would be defended by thousands of men. Unfortunately his boast was true. In the latter part of August he came to Chicago as a delegate to the National Democratic Convention, and was talked of as its candidate for president.

No wonder the army and the whole North were depressed. No wonder Bob's heart began at last to fail.

Scarcely had the smoke of the battle of the Crater cleared away when an order came for Sheridan to go North and Bob was to go with him.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BATTLE OF NEW MARKET

JIM KIDDER parted from Bob with a heavy heart before the Wilderness campaign. He hardly knew how he could get along without him. "But I got along without him before I knew him and I will now," he muttered to himself.

Straightening up he cried, "I'll show Bob he can't get the start of me. I'll hev as much to brag about as he will when we see each other agin."

Jim felt better after his explosion, and in due time reported to General Kelley at Cumberland.

"I'm glad to see you, Jim," cried the general. "Where's Bob?"

"Bob wouldn't come," replied Jim gloomily. "He wanted to stay with his brother."

"Sorry, but it may be for the best," said General Kelley. "You did good work for me the first of the war and you will do as well now. Jim, there are going to be stirring times. General Sigel is to move up the valley from Harper's Ferry. Generals Averell and Crook from West Virginia are to move on the Virginia Central Railroad and after destroying that join Sigel in the Shenandoah Valley and move on Lynchburg. All will be under the command of General David Hunter. I don't know whether it is best for you to join Averell or go with

Sigel. I think you would prefer Averell for you know the mountains but I believe Sigel will need you the most. Averell has a number of good scouts."

"Then Sigel it is," replied Jim. "I'd rather go with Averell for I don't think much of Sigel, but if yo' say Sigel needs me moah I'll go with him."

"Good for you, Jim. But I think you'll like it all right for the two forces expect to join at Staunton."

Jim lost no time in reporting to Sigel at Harper's Ferry. He had a force of between five and six thousand all ready to move.

"I am glad to see you," said the general when Jim reported with his credentials from General Kelley. "I know of you and have work for you. I am anxious to know whether I am liable to meet any Confederate force before I can join forces with General Averell. So far my scouts report I will meet only cavalry, but I am doubtful. Can you find out?"

"I kin try," replied Jim.

The force had not been long on the march when Jim disappeared on one of his lonely scouts. He started towards Middletown, keeping well to the hills and forests.

On the way Jim sighted many bodies of cavalry but no infantry. Once on a hill side he came to a cabin before which an old man sat smoking. The man eyed him closely as he approached but did not move.

"Howdy. Fine day but blamed hot. Kin yo' tell me whar I kin get a drink of water?" asked Jim.

The old man pointed to a rock near by. A stream of water was gushing from under it and on a near-by bush hung a gourd.

Jim drank, then said, "That water is mighty good."

"Who be yo'?" asked the old man taking his pipe from his mouth.

"One of Mosby's men," answered Jim.

"One of Mosby's men," said the old man. "Why be yo' not with the rest? About twenty of them jest rode down the road thar in the valley. May be comin' back soon. If yo' be one of Mosby's men what air yo' doin' heah without yo' hoss?"

"I had orders to climb the ridge so I could see over into the next valley. Couldn't take my hoss. Heard thar was Yanks over thar."

"Yanks! Be they comin' agin? Cuss 'em!" cried the old man as he spat at a stone.

"Some say so but I didn't see any," replied Jim. "Got any grub yo' kin let a feller hev?"

The old man rose grumbling and went into the house, and soon came out with a corn pone.

"Thar," he said giving it to Jim, "that's all the old woman says she can spare yo'."

"Thank yo'," replied Jim taking the pone and starting down the hill. As soon as he got out of sight he turned and began to climb again. "Mosby's men," he muttered. "Wish Bob was with me and we'd give them a scare."

The hill was rough and heavily wooded and he stumbled along for a time in deep thought, then exclaimed, "I'll do it. They kin nevah ketch me in these woods. If those fellers cum back I'll show Mosby they kin be surprised as well as they kin surprise us."

Many of Mosby's exploits had aroused Jim's ire,

and he held quite a grudge against him. From where he was it was a long shot down to the road, but he knew his carbine would carry true that far. He secreted himself behind a rock where he had a good view of the road and waited.

Soon the squad the old man had spoken of came riding back. There were only twelve instead of twenty in the squad. Jim could hear them long before they rode into the space in front of his rocks. With hands steady and eyes gleaming he waited, and as the foremost rode into view there was a sharp report and the man plunged from his horse. Another shot, and one more horse was riderless.

The guerrillas thinking they had been ambushed dashed wildly down the road, and were soon hidden from view. Jim emptied his carbine to make them think there was a large party.

The frightened guerrillas had not ridden far when they met Mosby at the head of fifty men. He had heard that a small detachment of Federals was stationed near in a town where they could be easily captured, and was on his way for them.

"What has happened?" he asked the men. "You act as if you were frightened out of your wits."

"Yankees! Ambushed!" they gasped. "Thar must hev been quite a force fer their bullets cum like hail. Amos Getting and Ed Swayer be shot."

"Yankees here! Impossible!" cried Mosby.

The two riderless horses that had followed the men were mute witnesses that something had happened so Mosby made preparations to meet the enemy and sent scouts ahead.

They soon returned with the news that they had

found the bodies of the two guerrillas but saw no signs of an enemy.

"This is strange," said Mosby. "I could swear that no large body of Yankees could get here without my knowing it."

He now carefully advanced to where the bodies of the men had been found. "It can't be cavalry," he said. "It must have been a scouting party that has kept to the mountains but even then it's strange we should not have seen something of them."

"Old man Rankin lives up on the mountain a little ways frum heah," said one of the men. "He might know something."

They rode to Rankin's home. The old man still sat before the cabin smoking, and was surprised to see the large body of men approaching. He recognized Mosby and rising hobbled out to meet him.

"Howdy, Majah!" he cried. "Yo' do me honah to visit me. What kin I do fer yo'?"

"Have you seen any Yankees around here?" bluntly asked Mosby. "Tell the truth if you know what's good for you."

The old man surprised at the manner of Mosby cried, "Majah, I hev seen no Yanks. Why?"

"Have you seen anyone?" demanded Mosby.

"Yes, one of yo' men was heah a little while ago. Said he had been up the mounting to see if thar was any Yanks thar."

"One of my men!" exclaimed Mosby. "What did he look like? Tell me all he said."

Mr. Rankin did his best.

"Where did he go?" snapped Mosby.

"Down the road to the valley. Cum to think of it

I didn't see him after he went past that clump of bushes down thar."

"Did you hear any shooting?"

"No, but I be kind of deaf."

"You are sure there was but one?"

"That be all I see."

"Men, it's all plain to me," said Mosby. "This is the work of those two boy scouts we had trouble with down near Manassas. They are the fellows that killed five in that fight at the stable. No doubt the other one was hid so Rankin didn't see him."

"Thar must hev been moah than two," cried one of the party Jim had fired on. "I tell you the balls cum like hail."

"We'll see," said Mosby dryly.

Going back to where the attack had taken place a skirmish line was formed and they commenced to climb the mountain. They had not gone far when they came to the rock where Jim had been concealed, and there lay five empty cartridge shells.

"There's where your shower of balls came from," said Mosby. "Not much of a shower, was it? But I don't blame you for running. Those boys are dead shots. They would have killed you all if you hadn't run. I'd rather catch them than a Yankee general."

"Couldn't we'uns ketch them now?" asked one of the party.

Mosby laughed. "Just about as easy as the Yankees catch us," he answered.

Jim had lost no time in getting away after he fired his fatal shots. "Reckon that'll give Mosby something to think about," he chuckled. "Only wish Bob was heah."

Jim did not think he would be followed, but that did not prevent him from keeping a careful lookout in his rear. The day was drawing to a close and he saw that the mountain he was on was growing much less steep and less wooded so he decided to cross the valley as the mountains on the other side were much higher and more thickly wooded. When about half way down he saw a large body of cavalry coming and lay down behind a rock for them to pass. To him it seemed that there must be a brigade, it took them so long to pass.

“A heap of cavalry,” he said. “Thar must be something going on. But I’ve seen no infantry, and that’s what General Sigel wanted me to find out.”

An uninhabited half-ruined cabin stood among large trees across the road from where Jim lay. At the cabin the mountain curved making the valley much wider to the south. This had evidently once been a splendid farm.

After the cavalry passed a group of horsemen rode up from the south. They appeared to be officers. They rode up to the cabin and Jim could see some of them pointing to the open space south. They soon turned and rode back the way they had come.

Jim thought it was now safe to cross the road but just as he got to it he saw not only some of the cavalry that had passed coming back, but a large force coming from the south. To go back or forwards was to be seen. If he ran the cavalry could easily cut him off.

Perilous as his position was Jim did not get panic-stricken. “If I walk to that cabin,” he thought, “they will think I am one of their men.”

Jim reached the cabin, a storm-beaten door half open was swinging on one hinge. A party of cavalry had by this time galloped into the field. Jim dodged into the cabin. The floor was half rotten and gave beneath his feet. The whole place had a musty, rotting smell. Jim looked around. There was but one room and not a place that even a rat could hide, much less a man. Yes, there at one end was the chimney. It was very primitive, built of stones for a ways and then carried up by sticks plastered with mud.

Jim climbed the chimney for a short distance. By bracing his feet against one side and his back against the other he could sustain himself there for a time. If night would only come.

Jim could tell by the sounds that a large army was going into camp. They were swarming around the cabin putting up their tents. On one side of the cabin was an opening where a window once had been. One of the soldiers put his head in, but quickly withdrew it, "My! It smells rank in thar," he exclaimed.

Jim felt easier when he heard the remark. But he felt he could not keep his position much longer. Every muscle in his body was aching.

Darkness came at last and Jim began cautiously to make his way down the chimney. In his descent he loosened a piece of mud and it fell with a thud in the fireplace.

"What's that?" exclaimed a voice. "There must be someone in the old cabin."

"Rats probably," answered someone.

"Blessed be rats," thought Jim, and he gave a loud squeak.

"Rats it was," exclaimed the first voice.

Jim made the rest of his way down without difficulty, and creeping to the window looked out. A large tent had been put up under a tree close to the cabin. Back of the tent a fly was stretched and under it black cooks were busy preparing supper.

Jim sniffed. From the aroma it bid fair to be a good meal. "Wouldn't I like to hev some of that," he thought.

Jim decided that the headquarters of the general commanding must be in the tent. A guard was pacing before it and when supper was announced a large number of officers sat down to the improvised table, even the door of the old cabin had been torn off to form part of it.

Among the officers was a distinguished looking man to whom all the rest seemed to pay deference.

"My! He is a good looker," murmured Jim. He did not know he was looking at General Breckinridge, once vice president of the United States.

Supper ended the officers stood in a group discussing the situation. From their talk Jim concluded the army was moving to attack Sigel.

A couple of horsemen came dashing up and dismounting asked for General Breckinridge.

"Here!" cried the general. "Why it's my scouts, Gerard and Purcell. What's the news, boys?"

"Fine," was the answer. "Sigel is advancing and we have his army down almost to a man. He has between five and six thousand troops all told. There are six batteries. We have been in his camp and our figures are true."

"Good!" cried Breckinridge. "You shall be well rewarded for your diligence."

Turning to the group of officers about him Breckinridge slapped his thigh and exclaimed, "Gentlemen, we will have that Dutchman sure. Our forces number about eight thousand and Sigel's reputation is not that of a heavy fighter."

Jim surely had news for Sigel. He waited impatiently but at last the camp sank to rest. Crawling to the open door he looked out. He could faintly discern the sentinel in front of Breckinridge's headquarters. The soldiers were still up about the fly in the rear. It would not do to try and escape that way.

Watching until the sentinel's back was turned Jim slipped out and crawled to the north end of the cabin. By keeping close to the side of the building he was in complete darkness.

A number of soldiers were sitting around a smoldering camp fire near by. As Jim watched a sergeant rose and called, "Time to change guard, boys. Get a hustle on you."

The soldiers hastily fell in and marched away. Soon the guard that had been released marched in. It seemed to Jim that they would never get quiet. But at length all were asleep except a sentinel and the sergeant. The sergeant was nodding and the sentinel leaning on his gun apparently half asleep. Now was Jim's chance.

He crawled away from the cabin and was soon among the sleeping soldiers. He moved so closely to some that he almost touched them. At length he was out of the camp, and with a sigh of relief rose to his feet. He made his way to the mountain and painfully ascended a short distance among the rocks and

trees. "No use trying to go on," he grumbled. "I'll hev to wait for light." With his back to a rock and his carbine in his lap with his hand on the lock, he actually slept. But the slightest snapping of a twig or the faintest foot-fall would have awakened him.

At the first dawn of day Jim was up and on his way. Gaining the crest of the mountain he halted and looked back. The sun was now up and the valley spread out below him. The Confederate army was already on the move. With their arms flashing in the sunlight they were on their way to meet Sigel.

"I've got to beat them fellers," cried Jim as he started along the crest. It was a way of peril. There were others on the mountain and he had to dodge them. If he met a native he was a Confederate scout, and could not delay. Once he was chased by a small band of guerrillas but the fall of one of their members bade them to be more careful, and they were soon left behind.

When night came Jim boldly took the road. Fortunately the sky was overcast and he had no difficulty in avoiding anyone he heard coming.

The next day he met the advance of Sigel's army and made his report.

Sigel scowled when Jim told how Breckinridge declared he had that "Dutchman" now. Sigel had met with reverses and was well aware he did not stand high with the authorities. So he resolved to fight.

Although Sigel was out-numbered he knew that most of the force against him was cavalry, and as they would mostly fight dismounted, he did not consider them as efficient as infantry, and believed he had a fair chance of winning.

Imboden, with his cavalry, being ahead, met the advance of Sigel's army on the evening of May 14th. He attacked but was repulsed. Breckinridge now came up with the infantry so the advance fell back and on the fifteenth about two miles from New Market the two armies met.

Things were badly managed from the start. As usual Sigel showed little ability on the field. By night he was totally defeated and retreated leaving five pieces of artillery, all his dead, and many of his severely wounded on the field.

Jim witnessed the battle. As a scout he was not expected to go into battles. "These big battles be no good," Jim was wont to say. "A feller has no chance, can't use his wits. Scoutin' be good enough for me."

He watched this battle with rage and despair. Even he could see that the troops were badly handled.¹

Towards the close of the battle Jim saw something that interested him. In one place a charge of the enemy had been repulsed and a battalion was brought up to renew the charge. The new force looked like a regiment of boys and they wore uniforms that looked familiar to Jim and yet was unlike anything on the battle field. Then he remembered. It was the same uniform that Bob had worn when he first saw him in Winchester before the war.

Had Jim known that the battalion was composed

¹ General Sigel's loss in the battle was not large, about six hundred. From reports he must have inflicted a much heavier loss on the enemy than he received, as they speak of their heavy loss. No statement of the number of their loss is given except that of the cadets.

of cadets from the Virginia Military Institute at Lexington he would have been interested, and if he had known that Miles Somers, brother of Agnes, was one of them he would have been still more interested.

The cadets of the Virginia Institute had been formed into a battalion and, boys as they were, had been flung into the heat of the battle. Right bravely did they acquit themselves. In fact it was their charge that was one of the main factors in winning the fight. Of the small number engaged eight were killed and forty-four wounded. Among the mortally wounded was Miles Somers.

When the wounded were being transported to Staunton, Miles begged that he might be taken to his father's plantation a few miles south of that city. "I want to die at home," he moaned. His wish was granted.

Miles had been a wild boy and caused his father much trouble, choosing to associate with the most idle and dissolute boys in Winchester. At last Mr. Somers had decided to send him to the Virginia Military Institute to see if the strict discipline there would not do him good. It did and Miles became a bright and promising pupil. Mr. Somers was delighted, "Now I have a son I can be proud of," he would say. "Would he were a little older so he could serve his country."

Little did he think Miles would serve his country in the highest and noblest way, give his life for it.

When the news of the battle of New Market reached the Somers' home there was great rejoicing. Another victory had been gained. But when an ambulance drove up to their door and Miles, pale and

dying, was taken from it their joy was changed to bitter grief.

The surgeons could give Mr. Somers no hope. "It is only a question of a few hours, perhaps a few moments," they answered.

Mr. Somers was prostrated. His health was not good and he had given much of his wealth to the Confederacy. Now he was called upon to give his only son, a son on whom he had begun to build such hopes. "Yet I would not call him back," he cried. "He is giving his life for the Southland, that she may be free. But may the curse of God rest on those who murdered him."

More than ever did he feel the bitterest hatred against everything northern.

"Thank God I am at home," whispered Miles. "Is there no hope for me?"

When he looked at the faces of his father, mother and sister he knew the answer to that question. They turned away without words.

Miles now became restless. He acted as if there was something he wished to say and yet could not. At last as Agnes bent her tear-stained face over him he looked into her eyes and whispered, "Sister, let father and mother go out. I want to tell you something."

Agnes told her parents his request and they softly left the room.

"Agnes," whispered the dying boy. "I wish to tell you something that you must promise you will never tell anyone, above all father and mother."

Wondering at this request, Agnes promised.

"Agnes, Robert Hunter was innocent. We boys

put up a job on him." He told her all about the conspiracy.

"Dear brother, I have thought it all the time," answered Agnes. "Don't let it trouble you now. You are sorry."

"Yes," sobbed the boy. "I wish I could see Bob and ask his forgiveness."

"Then the good Lord will forgive you. Did Colonel Kincaid, their captain, know?"

"Yes, of course he knew. He was jealous because you went riding with Bob so much. Agnes, that is not all. He hired me to spy on you."

"Oh, Miles!"

"Just before you were stolen he wrote asking me if you ever went riding alone or was away from the house any evenings. I told him you frequently went to visit Aunt Hannah in the evening. It was on one of those visits that you were stolen. I'm certain he did it."

Agnes was horrified, "Miles, Miles, how could you do it?" she cried.

"Agnes, forgive me," sobbed Miles. "I can't die if you don't."

Agnes bent down and kissed him. "Don't feel so badly," she sobbed. "I forgive you. All is forgiven."

"You were always a good sister," whispered Miles. "And you won't tell father and mother?"

"No, but why?"

"Because I've been trying to be a good boy, and they were beginning to be so proud of me. Now, I want them to think well of me when I'm dead."

"I'll never, never tell," cried Agnes. "Oh, Miles,

I forgive you a thousand times, and I know Bob would if he were here."

"Now I can die content," whispered Miles with a look of joy on his face.

Agnes called her father and mother and they watched by his side till the end came.

When the first grief was over Agnes was asked what Miles had wished to tell her.

"Just a little secret between him and me," she answered. "It amounts to nothing now, but Miles did not wish me to tell it, so I promised not to do so."

With that explanation her parents were content, but the promise caused Agnes days of misery.

CHAPTER XIX

ON TO LYNCHBURG

GENERAL DAVID HUNTER had been made commander of the Department of West Virginia and Northern Virginia. At the time General Sigel was defeated at New Market General Hunter was in West Virginia organizing the forces of General Averell and General Crook, which were to cooperate with the movement up the valley.

When he heard of Sigel's defeat, General Hunter hurried to Harper's Ferry and organizing a force, started up the valley so as to reach Staunton as soon as Averell. The object of this campaign was the capture of Lynchburg.

Jim was now under the orders of General Hunter. He was a new commander to Jim but as he remarked, "I reckon he's no worse than some of the others."

In the meantime Breckinridge had been drawn back to Lynchburg for its protection, Lee fearing that Averell would attack that city from the west. This left Generals Jones and Imboden with only cavalry to protect the valley.

Hunter had little trouble in moving up the valley until he neared Staunton.

Jim was in his element. By keeping along the western side of the Alleghenies he could overlook the valley and see what was going on.

He made his way near Piedmont, dodging guerrillas and cavalry. He had noticed that all the cavalry seemed headed towards one point near Piedmont. Hiding himself behind some rocks on a mountain side he was trying to see what they were doing when he heard voices. Soon a number of soldiers appeared.

"I am almost certain I saw a man skulking here," said an officer.

"If yo' did we'uns will find him," replied a soldier.

They were coming directly towards the spot where Jim lay and there was nothing to do but run. This he did, dodging around behind the rocks and trees before the astonished soldiers could fire. When they did the volley was futile.

The chase was now on, but after two of the party had been wounded Jim was lost sight of.

"No use trying farther. We might as well chase a deer," said the captain, as he sat on a rock, puffing and blowing. "I don't think he'll trouble us any more. Lucky our forces were not yet combined so he could estimate our number. We may as well go back."

The captain was mistaken in what Jim would do. No sooner did he know that the chase was given up than he turned back. He headed for the same place but found a patrol had been placed there. Jim grinned, "That's one time Bob's theory wouldn't work," he said.

By crouching behind rocks and trees Jim gained a position about a mile from his old one. It was farther up the mountain, and not quite as good, but he could see very well. He did not believe the sharpest

eyes could find him there and he prepared to rest, as he always did when alone, his back against a rock and his carbine in his lap. He was not disturbed during the night and when morning came a great change had taken place. Thousands of Confederate troops had gathered during the night, and were busily engaged in fortifying a position.

“They intend to fight, suah,” said Jim. “General Hunter will soon have something to do.”

Jim now carefully noticed the position of the enemy and made a close calculation of their number. This done he crawled back until out of view and then started to take the news to Hunter.

For some time he met with no difficulties and was congratulating himself on his good fortune when he suddenly ran into a gang of guerrillas. They saw him about the same time he discovered them, and the chase was on.

Balls whizzed about Jim but he did not halt. He was distancing his pursuers when he suddenly came to a canyon. It was fully fifty feet deep and its sides precipitous. The guerrillas saw his dilemma and pressed forward with shouts of triumph.

Jim looked over the edge of the cliff and shuddered. To make that leap meant death, but better that than capture. He would shoot as many of his pursuers as possible, then leap. Just then his eye caught a tree growing in the canyon. It was a tall tree and one branch nearly reached to the side of the canyon. It was fully ten feet down. Could he jump and catch it? It was his only hope.

Running to the bank above the tree Jim measured the distance with his eye and hanging his carbine over

his shoulder, sprang into the air. His aim was true and he firmly grasped the branch. It cracked, then snapped under his weight. Its tough tendrils still clung to the tree and its breaking was really an advantage to Jim for as it slowly swung downwards it served to break his fall and brought him close to the body of the tree. A moment more and he was on the ground. The canyon was narrow and covered thickly with brush. Jim made his way across the canyon and found a cleft in which he could hide, and eventually make his way to the top.

When the guerrillas saw Jim make his leap they rushed forward expecting to see his mangled body at the bottom of the canyon. When they saw the broken limb of the tree and realized his escape they gave cries of rage and scattered up and down the top of the canyon hoping to catch sight of him.

Jim saw his opportunity and slowly made his way up the cleft. Just as he reached the top he was seen by one of the guerrillas who fired, but missed. Quick as a flash Jim wheeled and fired. The guerrilla was standing on the edge of the canyon and when Jim fired he sprang into the air and shot downwards.

"Reckon it's one of them lyin' at the bottom instead of me," muttered Jim as he dashed away among the rocks and trees.

Jim had no further trouble in reaching General Hunter. He gave him a description of the position of the Confederates so accurately that the general knew almost as well as if he had a map in front of him. He also gave him an estimate of the strength of the army.

"Now General," he concluded, "yo' hev the most

men, and if yo' don't whip them, blamed if I'll scout for yo' any moah!"

General Hunter laughed and said, "I'll whip them, my boy. Don't worry."

The Confederates had determined to fight to try and save Staunton. The place had been continually threatened for three years but never captured. All the towns in the valley below it had been ravaged by the cruel hand of war. Great armies had swept backwards and forwards over it. First one army and then the other held possession.

The armies met at Piedmont a few miles north of Staunton. The battle ended in the total defeat of the Confederates. The commanding officer, General W. E. Jones, was killed and over one thousand prisoners and several pieces of artillery taken.

The Confederates fled in dismay through Staunton. It was only the firm stand of the rear guard under Colonel Kincaid which saved the whole army from capture.

There was consternation in Staunton. Its time had come. Hundreds of the inhabitants packed what they could and fled southward with the army. Those who remained awaited with pale faces the coming of the Federals.

Private property was not molested, but all things that could be of use to the Confederate army were destroyed. Rich booty fell into the hands of General Hunter, nearly half a million dollars worth of commissary and ordnance stores.

At Staunton General Hunter was joined by the forces of Generals Averell and Crook. They had been very successful. General Crook had met the Con-

federate forces at Cloyd's Mountain and defeated them, taking General Jenkins, their commanding officer, with several hundred of his men prisoners after wounding him. The Virginia Central Railroad was reached and the great bridge over the New River which had been rebuilt after Averell destroyed it in December, was again burned.

In the retreat from Staunton the Confederate army had to pass the Somers' plantation. The family watched the fleeing army in consternation.

"It is all over," groaned Mr. Somers. "The Yankees will soon be here."

"Shall we fly or stay?" sobbed Mrs. Somers.

"Stay," replied Mr. Somers. "We stayed in Winchester when it was in possession of the Yankees and we can stay here."

All of the army except the rear guard had passed and Colonel Kincaid came galloping up. Agnes turned to go into the house, then thought better of it. Only she knew what Miles had confessed and she could not tell the others.

She met Colonel Kincaid with a smile and holding out her hand said, "Colonel Kincaid, I congratulate you. I fear if it had not been for you our entire army would have been captured."

The colonel bent low and kissed her hand.

He thought she had never looked so beautiful. Her sorrow over her brother's death had spiritualized her face. The colonel devoured her with his eyes. Agnes could not bear it, and turned and went into the house.

"Mr. Somers, surely you are not going to stay?" asked the colonel.

“Yes, I shall stay,” replied Mr. Somers. “I have learned that it is the deserted house that suffers. I do not fear for my wife and Agnes. We occupied our house in Winchester for months when the Yankees were there. I hate their presence. But I am a broken man. Since my son—” Mr. Somers broke down, his voice choked.

“I forgot,” cried the colonel. “My heart feels for you, but what a glorious death. That must be a consolation.”

“It is, but it cannot keep me from grieving over the loss of my only son.”

“And your daughter,” said the colonel, “how is she? I hardly had time to speak to her when she went in the house. She looked pale. Is she still mourning over the death of her lover?”

“I do not think she is mourning him now,” replied Mr. Somers slowly, “but the death of Miles has affected her greatly. He told her something before he died that seems to worry her, but she will not tell what it was.”

Colonel Kincaid was startled. Could it have been something about him? He resolved to make a bold move. “Mr. Somers,” he said, “you know how I felt about your daughter before she became engaged to General Monroe. I have the same affection still. I promised Agnes I would never trouble her again, never speak of my love, but can you blame me, now that General Monroe is dead, if I still indulge in a faint hope that as time passes she may relent and come to me?”

Mr. Somers grasped his hand, “Colonel, now that General Monroe is no more there is no one I would

rather see Agnes marry than you. I will try and bring her to her senses."

Just then sounds of rapid firing were heard and General Kincaid rode away, a smile of triumph on his face.

The rear guard had hardly disappeared when Jim came. Agnes met him with outstretched arms. "Oh, Jim!" she cried. "I'm so glad to see you."

She turned to her father saying, "Father, this is James Kidder, the boy who saved me. If it had not been for him you might have no daughter now."

Instead of greeting Jim Mr. Somers said scornfully, "Nonsense, Agnes, the scoundrel knew where you were all the time."

"What's that yo' say?" asked Jim.

"I say that the abduction of my daughter was a put-up job between you and Robert Hunter. Now get out of my sight, you villain," cried Mr. Somers.

"Yo' lie," cried Jim, advancing with clenched fists. Then realizing where he was, he turned to Agnes and said, "Yo' don't believe that, do yo'?"

"No, I don't, Jim. You are the bravest, truest boy——"

"Get in the house," roared Mr. Somers thoroughly beside himself.

Just then a colonel rode up and looked at the little group with surprise.

Mr. Somers collected himself and advancing to the colonel with outstretched hand, said, "Colonel, I am a Southerner, but I know how to treat gallant enemies. My house is open to you, not as an enemy but as a guest. But will you please order that ruffian from my premises? He has grossly insulted me."

“How is that?” asked the colonel turning on Jim in fury.

“I called him a liar and he is one,” exclaimed Jim.

“Arrest this fellow,” said the colonel to his orderly. Then suddenly recognizing Jim as General Hunter’s scout, exclaimed, “Hold on! I must look into this.”

Just then General Averell rode up, asking what the trouble was.

“The kernal thar ordered me arrested for callin’ Mr. Somers a liar,” explained Jim. “But he is one.”

Turning to Mr. Somers, General Averell asked if Jim had stated the cause of the disturbance.

“Substantially,” replied Mr. Somers. “I was furious because I recognized in him the one who was instrumental in kidnapping my daughter.”

General Averell smiled, “Mr. Somers, I happen to know something about that,” he said. “It was part of my force that found Jim and your daughter and brought them out. Hello! There is Lieutenant Martin. He was with the force that found them. Lieutenant Martin, come here.”

The lieutenant rode up.

“Lieutenant Martin, do you know this young lady?” asked Averell pointing to Agnes.

The lieutenant looked at her a moment, then cried, “Why, it’s Miss Somers.” He leaped from his horse and grasped her hand.

Agnes met him cordially. “I shall never forget your kindness on that ride through the mountains,” she said.

“That was some ride,” exclaimed the lieutenant. “My! How you have changed. You were a charming brunette then.”

“Walnut juice, pure walnut juice, I assure you,” replied Agnes.

The lieutenant could hardly tear himself from Agnes, but the Federals were leaving.

When he was gone Mr. Somers turned on Agnes in anger, “I suppose you will be wanting to marry that lieutenant next instead of Colonel Kincaid, one of the most gallant officers in the Confederate army,” he sneered.

Agnes made no reply. She saw her father was very angry and excited.

“I suppose,” he went on, “you can sit and hear your father called a liar and enjoy it.”

“Father, I am sorry Jim called you that,” said Agnes. “You were simply mistaken. Just think what General Averell and that lieutenant said.”

“They are the ones who are mistaken,” roared Mr. Somers. “When that cavalry found Jim he gave them a cock-and-bull story to save himself and they believed it. While you do not deserve it Colonel Kincaid is still willing to make you his wife. He will be made a general for his work here today, and if you have any regard for me you will marry him. I have a mind to compel you to.”

Oh! how Agnes longed to tell her father what Miles had said, but the dead face of her brother rose before her, and she said nothing. That night she shed many bitter tears for she knew unhappy days were ahead of her.

General Hunter turned east from Staunton, crossed the Blue Ridge and captured Lexington after a stubborn fight. Here the cadets from the Military Institute again fought bravely.

The college buildings were used as forts by the Confederates during the battle and after being taken they were all burned. The Institute which had educated so many officers for the Confederates was for a time to be no more.

“So this is whar Bob got his learnin’,” said Jim looking on the ruins. “Reckon he will be kinder sorry.”

At Lexington two hundred picked men were chosen to make a raid in the rear of Lynchburg. Jim went with them as scout. They were under the command of Lieutenant Grim. It was the twelfth of June that that little band started on its perilous journey.

Crossing Blue Ridge they struck the Charlottesville Railroad near Amherst and destroyed as much of the road as their limited time would allow. They then struck south and crossed the James a few miles below Lynchburg, then turned westwards.

Jim was on a horse and he scouted here, there, and everywhere, but none of the enemy were met. They little thought any of the Yankees were across the James.

“Never saw sich a country,” growled Jim. “Thought thar would be a lot of excitement and heah I hev’n’t met a feller worth pickin’ up. Nobody knows anything, jest skeered to death. Can’t learn anything about the troops in Lynchburg.”

When they struck Concordia Station on the South Side Railroad there was a little excitement. They captured two trains of cars heavily loaded. The trains were not guarded as the enemy thought there was no need of it. As they were setting fire to one of the cars a quartermaster who had been captured

cried with tears running down his face, "Thar be millions of dollars in that car."

"What!" cried Lieutenant Grim. "Millions of dollars in that car."

The quartermaster nodded, "Yes, millions of dollars."

"Don't burn that car," shouted Lieutenant Grim. Then turning to the quartermaster he asked, "What is that car loaded with, diamonds?"

"Confederate money and bonds," was the answer.

"Oh h—!" said the lieutenant turning away in disgust. "Why you blubbering idiot. I wouldn't give you a dollar greenback for the whole blooming carload."

The little detachment passed Lynchburg and crossing the James joined the right of Hunter's army which by that time was before the city.

"I couldn't learn a thing about what force thar is in the city," said Jim, as he reported to General Hunter.

"Neither can I," replied the general. "The prisoners, the negroes, and the citizens all tell different stories. My great desire is to find whether Early with his corps has reinforced the garrison. Many of those I have questioned say he has, and just as many say he has not. It is most disconcerting."

"I'll make one moah try," said Jim.

Jim took to the mountains to try and reach the railroad below the city. At last he reached a place where he could see the railroad. He lay watching for two hours and in that time no less than six trains passed, every one loaded with soldiers.

“Reckon General Hunter don’t get Lynchburg this time,” exclaimed Jim. “General Early has come suah.”

Now to get back quickly with the news. He came to a mountain trail and took it as travel was much swifter than on the rugged ground.

“Halt!” he heard someone shout. He turned and saw a cavalryman coming at him at full speed. Behind him were several others. Jim raised his carbine and the first man pitched from his horse. Jim did not wait for the others, but plunged into the woods.

Soon the sound of battle came to his ears. “Hunter be attackin’ suah,” he thought. “I must get thar quick.” He doubled his speed.

When Jim arrived the battle was raging. He made his report and General Hunter looked grave. “That is what I suspected,” he said. “The resistance is very strong. Everywhere I am met with an overwhelming force. I will have to go on until night. It will not do to withdraw now.”

General Hunter gave orders to keep up a semblance of battle but not to expose the troops any more than was necessary.

As soon as darkness came General Hunter gave the order to retreat. He had failed to take Lynchburg. It would not do to retreat down the valley. Early would be after him with his entire corps. So he took to the mountains. The way was long and arduous but he brought his army safely back to Charleston, and the weary soldiers found rest. They had marched hundreds of miles since the campaign began, had climbed mountains, forded rivers and fought innumerable engagements in almost every one of which

they had been successful. But Lynchburg, the great object of the campaign, had not been taken.¹

¹This campaign of General Hunter was a remarkable one in many respects. During the campaign he captured over two thousand prisoners, several trains of cars, as well as numerous baggage trains, and destroyed millions of dollars worth of property. His entire loss during the campaign was less than a thousand. The wear and tear of the campaign, however, was great. It lasted a month with no rest for either horse or man.

CHAPTER XX

THE ATTACK ON WASHINGTON

WHEN General Hunter retired from before Lynchburg and Jim knew he was to retreat through the mountains to Charleston, he said, "General, that be a long way and it will be a heap of time befo' yo' get around. Thar will be nothin' fer me to do. Spose yo' let me go, and I'll go down the valley to Martinsburg. Maybe I kin learn something."

"Jim, do you know what you are talking about?" cried the general. "We have no troops in the valley. The whole of the way will be among enemies."

"I know that, General, that's why I want to go, I kin get through easy by keepin' to the mountains."

"You can if anyone can," replied the general. "I don't know but it would be a good idea for you to go. Early surely will not follow me through the mountains with his infantry. He will either return to Richmond, or sweep down the valley. I believe he will do the latter. If he does there will be stirring times. By going you may learn something of his movements. Yes, you may go."

Jim, highly delighted, prepared for the journey, a journey that most would think suicidal. It was night when Jim took the road. He knew there were no Confederate troops in his front and all night he traveled. At dawn he took to the mountains.

Along in the afternoon he saw Confederate cavalry riding down the valley. "They be gettin' ahead of me," he exclaimed. Jim always thought aloud when alone.

That night Jim slept. In the afternoon he was near Staunton. He could look down on the plantation of the Somers. "How I would like to see that gal," he sighed. "I'm afraid she's goin' to see hard times. That dad of her's will marry her to Colonel Kincaid if he kin, blast his hide! My! but didn't she stand up fer me right to his face?"

He knew it would not do for him to visit the Somers' place, and went on. Soon he was where he could see Staunton. The place swarmed with soldiers. "They be makin' good time," said Jim. "They will beat me suah."

Jim's idea had been to cross the valley and gain the Blue Ridge, which would bring him near the Potomac, but when he saw the soldiers he decided to keep to the Alleghanies, passing near Petersburg, Moorefield and Romney and thus reach Cumberland.

He dodged numerous guerrilla bands, and had trouble only once. It was near Moorefield. He had stopped at a house to get something to eat. The owner, a crusty man about fifty, eyed him suspiciously. "Who be yo'?" he asked.

"I'm from Imboden's," Jim replied. "We followed Hunter most up to Charleston, but we'uns couldn't ketch him. I've cum through the mountains with dispatches for General Early. He must be somewhar in the valley."

"Early be givin' the Yanks fits," replied the man. "But what be your dispatches?"



Jim fired, and the fellow's revolver went clattering to the floor

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“They be heah,” said Jim slapping his breast, “and heah they stay until I see Early.”

Supper was announced. Jim set his carbine in a corner and was apparently unarmed. As he removed his cap Jim noticed that the man was eyeing him very closely. At last the meal was finished, and the man rising first walked to the side of the room where a heavy revolver hung against the wall. Suddenly he snatched it down and wheeling cried, “I know yo’, Jim Kidder, an’ I’ve got yo’.”

He spoke too soon. Jim had been watching him closely and as he reached for the revolver Jim’s hand flew to his bosom and as the man turned he fired. The fellow’s revolver went clattering to the floor. His right arm was broken near the shoulder. The man’s wife and children began screaming. The woman crying he was killed.

“Not killed,” replied Jim. “He would be a dead man if it wasn’t fer yo’ and the children. I couldn’t kill a man befo’ his family. But I ought to put a ball through your black heart,” he added, turning to the man, who stood holding his arm and groaning. “Whar did yo’ see me? Quick!” He raised his gun.

“In General Kelley’s camp,” moaned the man. “I was arrested as a guerrilla, but I swore I was a Union man an’ they let me go.”

Jim saw the woman eyeing the revolver as it lay on the floor, so he picked it up, remarking, “These little things should not be left around loose. Reckon I’ll keep it.” Then turning to the woman, “Better see to your man, he be bleedin’ powerfully.”

The man by this time was nearly fainting, so Jim helped him to a chair and drawing a cord from his

pocket bound it tightly around the arm above the wound. Then he helped the woman bind the arm up as best they could.

“Yo’ had bettah send fer a doctor as quick as yo’ kin,” said Jim. “Now I’ll be goin’, but I’ll help myself to enough of this food fo’ breakfast.”

Jim took a liberal supply and then said to the man, “Sorry I had to shoot yo’. Hope yo’ won’t lose that arm.”

There was a rifle hanging against the wall and Jim noticed the woman casting greedy eyes towards it. He took it down and saying to the woman, “Yo’ be an ungrateful piece,” smashed it against a tree, and went on his way.

“That she-cat would hev plugged me in the back befo’ I’d gone ten rods,” he muttered.

Jim was now on familiar ground, every trail was known to him. Along in the night he reached Romney, which was occupied by Federal troops. Here he took a needed rest, and then procuring a horse started for Cumberland.

He found the whole country in a state of great excitement. Early had swept down the valley as far as Martinsburg. General Sigel, whose headquarters were at Martinsburg, evacuated the place and fled to Harper’s Ferry, and gathering what troops he could took a position on Maryland Heights.

Early paid no attention to Sigel, but invaded Maryland with his entire force.

“Where did you come from, Jim?” asked General Kelley when he reported.

“You are wonderful,” he said when Jim told him. “General Hunter arrived safely at Charleston and

is on his way here with his entire army, but they will be too late to do any good."

"Whar is Early now?" asked Jim.

"The last news is that he has occupied Hagerstown and Frederick. The supposition is that he will turn south. He may even attack Washington. The report is that he has at least twenty-five thousand men. There are going to be some lively times."

"Whar is Sigel?" asked Jim.

"At Harper's Ferry. As far as Early is concerned Sigel is out of the race. If Baltimore or Washington are saved they will have to save themselves."

"General, it's a shame they let Early do as he pleases," cried Jim.

"Jim, most of the troops in this section, even those around Washington, have been sent to help Grant before Richmond. Early saw his chance. I understand though that Grant is sending some of the troops back. I know one division of the Sixth Corps has come back. I hope more will come."

"General, Bob may be comin' back. He said he would if he could," cried Jim. "I must be gettin' down thar."

"I wish both you and Bob were down there," said the general. "You would be able to find out more about what Early is doing than all the rest of the scouts together."

"I be goin'," exclaimed Jim. "How kin I go quickest?"

"The railroad is running nearly to Martinsburg," replied the general. "Better take that as far as it goes. I'll give you an order for a horse if you wish."

The general wrote the order and Jim left hurriedly

as a train was ready to start. It ran as far as the first station west of Martinsburg. Here Jim, learning that Early was moving south, got a horse and was once more on his way.

General Early had swept over northern Maryland without opposition. He had occupied Hagerstown and Frederick and had demanded a heavy tribute or the places would be destroyed. Frederick paid two hundred thousand dollars. General Early boasted that all this was paid in greenbacks. No southern money for him. He knew what was best, and did not despise the Lincoln green.

Early was well on his way south by the time Jim reached Frederick. So Jim rode rapidly in his wake. He was still dressed in his rough scouting clothes and everyone took him for a Confederate. Stragglers from Early's army were quite numerous and he met a few small scouting parties.

He represented himself as a courier carrying dispatches to Early. He was told that Early had put up at a certain house the night before and resolved to pay a visit to the same house.

Riding boldly up he inquired for the lady of the house. His rough appearance was not in his favor, and he was told she was too busy to see him.

"Tell her that it is important," replied Jim. "I am a courier from Virginia with dispatches for General Early."

The lady came hurrying to the door and Jim bowing said, "Lady, I understand General Early stayed heah last night. It is important that I find him as soon as possible. I have dispatches for him. Kin yo' tell me what route he took? I hear so many

rumors I don't know what to believe. Some say he is heading for Washington, others for Baltimore and still others that he is gittin' back into Virginia as soon as possible."

"General Early did not make me his confidante," replied the woman, "but from the talk of the officers I would say that Early is bound straight for Washington. They are in hopes he can take the city as they say Grant has denuded it of troops."

"Thanks!" said Jim, turning away.

"Just a moment," called the woman. "Any late news?"

"Glorious!" cried Jim. "General Hunter and his whole army have been captured in the mountains in Virginia. They were starvin' and had to give up."

"Fine!" exclaimed the woman, clapping her hands. "If Early captures Washington this war will soon be over. How I hate the Yankees. They have not left me a single slave."

Jim decided to ride straight for Washington, so he turned west to get close to the Potomac, thus avoiding Early's army. As he rode that day the sound of the guns at Monocacy came faintly to his ears.

There were but few troops to oppose Early. General Lew Wallace was in command at Baltimore. He gathered what troops he could, but they consisted of only three pitiful small brigades and three or four hundred cavalry. This small force he threw directly in front of Early along the Monocacy. The little army fought gallantly, but being overpowered by numbers had to flee, retreating toward Baltimore.

There was now nothing between Early and Washington.¹

Jim reported what he had heard and if any doubt had existed before there was none now. Early was aiming for the city.²

Every convalescent soldier and every able-bodied clerk was called to arms. In all some eight thousand were gathered, a feeble force to withstand Early.

The enemy appeared before Fort Stevens. A soldier standing on the parapet was wounded. President Lincoln was standing near him, a conspicuous mark. He almost had to be dragged down.

Help was coming, unknown to the trembling inhabitants. Grant, fearing that Early would do this very thing, had sent a division of the Sixth Corps for the defense of the city. They landed just as the guns at Fort Stevens began to thunder. With long swinging strides they marched through the city. What hurrahing, what cheering, what clapping of hands! The city was saved.

Early soon learned there were soldiers who could fight before him, and withdrew. He marched northwards, then turned into Virginia. He kept hold of Martinsburg and from there sent raiding parties into Maryland, to harass the country.

General McCausland with his brigade made a raid

¹ The Union loss in this battle was 1,294. Early says he lost between six and seven hundred, but General Gordon reports a loss of six hundred and ninety-eight in his one division. When Early retreated from the state he left nearly five hundred soldiers too severely wounded to be moved.

² A high Confederate officer says they really never thought they could take the city, but thought they might be able to dash through it, and perhaps capture Lincoln.

into Pennsylvania and reached Chambersburg, which he wantonly reduced to ashes.¹

When Early retreated Jim returned to the north to join General Hunter, who by this time had got his army around from West Virginia. He rendered valuable service by detecting raids in time to have the men driven back before they could inflict much damage.

When McCausland made his raid on Chambersburg Jim detected the movement, but not in time so sufficient troops could be gathered to check it. From a distance he saw Chambersburg given over to the flames. He heard the pitiful stories of the inhabitants and saw the bleeding fingers of women whose rings had been torn from them.

Many times he raised his carbine to shoot one of the men engaged in robbing some fleeing victim, but he always lowered it without firing, for he knew if one of McCausland's men was killed it would be laid to the inhabitants of the city and bring down a terrible revenge. So with his heart burning with rage he had to refrain.

He learned that McCausland intended to attack Cumberland on his way back, and hurried to warn General Kelley.

¹ General B. S. Johnson, who was in McCausland's command during this raid, in protesting as to what was done, says: "Every crime in the catalogue of infamy has been committed I believe except murder and rape. Highway robbery of watches and pocketbooks were of ordinary occurrence; the taking of breastpins, finger rings, and earrings. The torch was held in terror over a home until a ransom was paid, generally from one hundred and fifty dollars to seven hundred and fifty dollars.

General Kelley received the news grimly. "He has double the number of men I have," he said, "but we will give him a warm welcome.

McCausland came, but his reception was so warm that he was glad to retire. Moving eastwards he captured two trains of cars and took Hancock. Here were repeated the outrages that were committed in Chambersburg. From Hancock he turned back into Virginia.

"Can't something be done to that rebel?" Jim asked General Kelley. "It is a shame that these fellows are allowed to do as they please."

"My duties are only to guard the railroad," replied the general, "but McCausland has done great damage to the road. I believe I am entitled to follow and punish him if I can. Averell has just come in from West Virginia. His force is small but I'll send him after McCausland."

Jim heard this with joy. Averell was soon on the way. Down through Maryland to Romney and West Virginia McCausland was trailed and there the trail was lost. Jim was sent out to find which way he had gone. He knew every mountain path in this country and traveled alone by preference.

Making his way over the mountains he struck the road which led from Moorefield to Winchester. Near by was a house where the stable appeared to have been burned recently. He believed it would be safe to make inquiries there.

In the house he found two women, a mother and daughter, sitting disconsolate. They told a pitiful story. They were strong Confederates, two sons being in the Confederate army. They had two good

horses which a lieutenant in McCausland's command coveted. When they refused to give them up the lieutenant knocked the aged woman down, then threw the daughter into the stable and locking it set it on fire. The mother revived in time to save her daughter from burning to death.¹

Jim ground his teeth in rage. "The villains were not content with robbing and burning the homes of people in Pennsylvania," he cried. "They must do the same to their own people. Where is McCausland now?"

The women did not know.

Just then a horseman appeared coming from the direction of Moorefield. "He looks like a courier. I believe I'll take him in," said Jim.

The courier, much surprised, drew rein when halted.

"Who be yo' and what business hev yo' stoppin' me?" he yelled, taking Jim for one of his own side.

"I'll show yo' mighty quick," replied Jim. "Climb down frum that horse and hold up your hands befo' I put a hole through yo'."

"Good heavens! A Yank!" gasped the fellow, dismounting in a hurry.

Jim searched him and found a dispatch. Perhaps for the first time in his life Jim bitterly regretted that he could not read. "Oh, if I had only learned like Bob," he groaned.

After a moment's thought he took a strap and firmly bound one of the hands of his captive to the stirrup of the saddle.

¹ For the truth of this statement see the report of General B. T. Johnson.

“What are yo’ goin’ to do?” asked the prisoner in surprise.

“Take yo’ with me,” replied Jim. “But I’m tired of walkin’ and thought I’d do the ridin’ and let yo’ do the walkin’.”

Jim started at a brisk trot. In a few minutes the prisoner gasped. “Are you trying to drag me to death?”

“Not as bad as that,” replied Jim, “but I’m goin’ to make yo’ do some travelin’.”

Jim was not cruel, and he soon slowed down, but at that the prisoner was made to go pretty fast. They met the advance of Averell’s force about half way between Romney and Moorefield. When the men saw how Jim was bringing in his prisoner they roared with laughter.

General Averell was found and Jim handed him the dispatch. He read it, saying, “This is a request from McCausland to General Early asking that certain supplies be sent him. It is dated at Moorefield, so McCausland must be there. He can’t be far off.”

“I’ll see,” said Jim, and rode away.

Jim rode his horse until he reached the road leading from Moorefield to Winchester. Then he secreted the horse in some thick brush and took a trail which led over the mountains and would bring him a few miles north of Moorefield.

Jim soon located the camp. There were two brigades in McCausland’s command, his own and that of General Bradley Johnson. The two brigades were camped about a mile apart, a small river between them.

Jim took careful note of the surroundings and the

best way to attack, and then hurried back to where he had left his horse. Mounting him he lost no time making his way back to Averell.

It was near night when Jim reached Averell. He had halted and was resting and feeding his horses. Jim made his report, and told of a road that would lead directly to the rear of Johnson's brigade.

When Averell heard how far he had to travel he decided to rest until midnight, which would bring him to the rebel camp just about daylight.

At five o'clock Averell was on the Confederate camp like a thunderbolt. Some of his troops reached the headquarters of General Johnson before that worthy was even aware that an attack was taking place. He and his staff were captured, but in the excitement Johnson escaped. His whole brigade broke and ran in a panic.

They were chased back across the river into McCausland's brigade. That general tried to make a stand but his troops were borne back by the rush of Johnson's men and soon the whole force was in flight, taking to the hills, thinking only of safety.

The victory was complete. Averell captured four hundred and twenty prisoners, nearly five hundred horses, three battle flags, and four pieces of artillery, all the enemy had. On the side of the Federals it was hardly a battle as the loss was none killed and only thirty-two wounded. Besides the prisoners the loss of the Confederates in killed and wounded was quite large.

"This is great! It pays somewhat for Chambersburg," shouted Jim. He had taken at least a dozen prisoners, one of them a colonel.

This victory was more than offset, however, by a defeat General Crook met at Kernstown near Winchester. With a loss of eleven hundred men he was driven clear back to Martinsburg.

For three years the valley of the Shenandoah had been to the Federals a valley of humiliation. Now from where Early was he could threaten Washington or raid Maryland and Pennsylvania at will.

General Grant was disgusted. The stupidity of some of the generals, the bickering and jealousy among them showed that something had to be done or his iron hold on Richmond would be broken by the misfortunes in the valley. Had he a general who could stem the tide, bring order out of chaos, and roll back the arrogant Early in disastrous defeat? He believed he had — Sheridan.

CHAPTER XXI

THE COMING OF SHERIDAN

ON THE fourth of August Sheridan took command of the army. General David Hunter was more than willing to let go. It was a task he did not crave.

With Sheridan came Bob. The two boys were overjoyed to see each other. Together they were now to scout for Sheridan. How much they had to tell each other. With the exception of Piedmont and the routing of McCausland Jim could tell only of defeats.

When Bob told of Sheridan and his wonderful raids, Jim's eyes glowed and he cried, "Be he sich a general as that, Bob?"

"Just such a general," replied Bob. "If we don't see things in this valley before long, I'm greatly mistaken. Sheridan never rests."

Bob was not mistaken. No sooner had Sheridan taken command than things began to hum. One of his first acts was the removal of General Sigel.¹

¹ General Sigel was a brave and patriotic German who had fled from Germany during the year 1848. He settled in St. Louis and at the beginning of the war raised a regiment and was appointed its colonel. It was through efforts of Generals Lyon and Sigel and Frank Blair that Missouri was saved to the Union. The Germans of St. Louis were intensely loyal and Sigel was their idol. "I vill go and fight mit Sigel," was their rallying cry. And they did go and fight. To

The boys were also pleased to find that they were with General Clayton Hunter again. The division he commanded was in the thickest of the battle of Monocacy and lost heavily.

"So you got whipped," said Bob when his brother was telling of the battle.

"Sorry to say we did," replied the general, "but it could not be helped. We were fortunate in getting off as well as we did."

"What do you think of the situation now?" asked Bob.

"I believe the worst is over," replied the general. "But it has been dreadful. The truth is when Grant got around before Petersburg he had lost half of his army. While he was losing of course Lee also was. Bob, I believe the next few months will see as heavy if not heavier fighting here in the valley of the Shenandoah than around Petersburg. Grant has his grip on Richmond and will not loose it. The only way Lee can force him to do so is by forcing the fighting here and make Grant send his men to defend Washington.

"You see how easy it was for Early to get to Washington. Only the coming of the Sixth Corps saved the city. Early will be largely reinforced, and

no other nationality does this nation owe more than to the Germans who at that time were citizens of this country. In reward for their loyalty and because Sigel was so popular with them, he was made a general and in time was given a high command. As a general he proved a dismal failure. It takes something more than bravery to make a good general. Sigel should have been removed long before he was. His removal ended his career in the army. He went to New York and was elected to high office in that city.

Grant will be obliged to send more of his troops here. The fate of Richmond may be decided here in this valley."

Subsequent events proved the general was nearly right.

About a week after Sheridan took command the boys were told that he would be pleased if they could learn what Early was doing, and the boys started out.

In the gray of the evening the boys lay on a hill which gave them a view of the valley. A short distance back of them was a strong Confederate picket post.

"I wonder what those fellers would think if they knew we crawled past them," chuckled Jim.

"They'd be up and after us," answered Bob. "But they don't know, so what's the use of worrying."

A long line of troops was moving south and after watching it a short time Bob said, "Say, Jim, Sheridan is mistaken. Early isn't going to make any stand at Winchester. He is retreating."

"Suah, Bob?" asked Jim.

"Yes, sure. They're going bag and baggage."

"Then we ought to git back and let Sheridan know," said Jim.

Getting back was not so easy. They had crawled past the picket post, but could they crawl back? Squirming along like snakes and crouching behind rocks and trees, the boys had nearly made their way past the picket line when they heard a noise behind them and saw a force almost on to them.

"We must run for it," exclaimed Bob. "Shoot the guards in front."

The boys jumped up and ran. The men in the rear fired and two of the guards fell.

"Good!" shouted Bob. "That saves us the trouble."

But they were not out of danger. Balls sang around them, one cut through the sleeve of Jim's blouse, though he did not know that until afterwards. The zipping of the balls only added to the speed of the boys and they were soon out of danger.

"Whew! We must hold up a little," panted Bob.

"I be moah than willin'," replied Jim, drawing in a long breath. "Gee! Look here," pointing to the sleeve of his blouse. "I didn't know they came that close."

They soon ran into a party of Mosby's guerrillas and put them to flight after a short combat.

"Them Mosby fellers don't fight unless they have a suah thing," sputtered Jim.

"They fight enough to take a heap of our men," replied Bob. "Just yell, 'Mosby,' and a lot of our men will run without firing a shot."

"Jest cowards!" said Jim. "It do make one mad to think of it."

"I feel that way myself sometimes," answered Bob. "But, Jim, we've got to hurry."

Hurry they did and made their report to Sheridan.

"So they are running, are they?" said that general. "Torbet should know. I sent him on a scout south of Winchester."

In the morning Torbert reported the same facts the boys had and Sheridan turned his army in pursuit.

“Jim, I’ve an idea Lee is sending reinforcements this way,” said Bob, “and that Early has retreated to meet them. Then he will turn and there’ll be lively times around here.”

“Can’t we find out, Bob?”

“It’s worth trying,” said Bob. “I’ll see.”

He did and the next day the boys were on their way south. This time they left their horses as the way was too dangerous for them to ride.

They made their way to Massanutton Ridge to a point where they had a view of both valleys, distant is true, but through his glass Bob was able to discern what was going on.

“Troops are coming down the Strasburg Valley,” he exclaimed. “Jim, we must try and find out who they are.”

“Let me see,” said Jim, taking the glass. After a long look he said, “They keep well closed up. Must be regular troops. Let me take a look at the Luray Valley.” He turned the glass on the other valley and exclaimed, “Bob, Mosby be attackin’ a forage train. The guards be runnin’ like scairt rabbits. Look for yo’self.”

Bob took a look and exclaimed, “Reckon you’re right, Jim. It’s a long ways off but it’s Mosby all right. As for those guards, it won’t be much loss if Mosby kills them. The train is not a large one either. So let them go. What we must do is to find out about these troops.”

“I’m willin’, but how air we goin’ to do it?”

“By going down the mountain and try and capture one of the men,” answered Bob.

Carefully making their way down the mountain

the boys took a position about a mile from the road on which the troops were marching.

"We may have to stay here until dark," said Bob. "Hello! They're going into camp. That's what I was wishing for."

Eagerly the boys watched the soldiers as they made camp. Pickets were thrown out and one post was established so close to the boys they could hear almost every word that was said.

"Sergeant," said the officer, placing the guard, "here is a path up the mountain. You are to post a sentinel on it and keep a strict watch. I do not apprehend any danger, but there may be some."

"I will see that it is well guarded, Lieutenant," replied the sergeant.

A sentinel was posted on the path some distance beyond the boys.

"Jim, that is the boy we must take in," whispered Bob.

Night came and the guards seemed wide awake, talking, laughing and cooking their supper. Soon the outside sentinel was relieved.

"We will have to wait until they get quiet," said Bob.

Again was the sentinel relieved before the outpost sank to rest. Even then there was one man on guard and the sergeant showed no signs of sleeping.

"What kin we do?" whispered Jim.

"Wait until it is nearly time for that sentinel to be relieved, then I'll show you," answered Bob.

Slowly the minutes passed. Jim began to be impatient and every little while would whisper, "Bob, isn't it nearly time?"

“Not yet,” was always the answer.

To Jim it seemed that ten hours had passed instead of less than two. At last Bob whispered, “Now, Jim, follow me and no noise. I hope to take that fellow in without any fuss, but if there is any difficulty you know what to do as well as I.”

Stealthily as a cat Bob worked his way towards the sentinel. Jim followed. Just before he reached the sentinel Bob rose and walked boldly forward.

“Halt! Who cums thar?” asked the startled sentinel.

“The relief,” answered Bob. “What’s the matter? You spoke as if scared.”

“Oh! I didn’t think it was quite time for the relief yet,” replied the sentinel.

By this time Bob was up to him and a revolver was thrust in his face, and Bob fiercely whispered, “A word or a sign and you are a dead man. Your gun.”

The sentinel let go his gun without a word.

“Put your hands on my shoulders and follow me,” ordered Bob. “Jim, you walk close behind and if he makes a noise stick him with your knife.”

In this manner they carefully made their way up the path. They had not gone far when they heard someone calling, “Sentinel, where are you?”

Then louder, “Sentinel!”

Jim placed his knife so the point touched the soldier’s back. “A sound and you’re a dead man,” he whispered.

The sentinel shivered and kept still.

“Heah be his gun, corporal,” a voice was heard to say.

“Ed Stubbs deserted,” cried the corporal. “I can

hardly believe it. I thought he was one of our best soldiers. Ed! Ed!" he called loudly, but no answer came. "I believe he has," he growled. "Who would have thought it? Well, there's no use trying to chase him tonight, but we'll get him in the morning. Able Rives, take his place."

There was little sleep on the picket post the remainder of the night, and as soon as it was light a strong force was sent up the mountain, but not a trace of the missing man could be found.

The boys kept on until they gained the summit of the mountain, then Bob asked, "What command did you belong to?"

"Forty-fifth Virginia, Kershaw's division, Longstreet's corps," was the answer.

"Any more of Longstreet's men coming?"

"I heard thar was another division to foller us, but I don't know."

Bob questioned him further but could learn little.

"Jim, what shall we do?" he asked. "We can't shoot this fellow in cold blood and we can't take him with us."

"Have to let him go then," said Jim. "Thar's no other way."

"Go then," said Bob to the man.

"Don't want to go," whined the man.

"Why?" asked Bob in surprise.

"Didn't yo' hear what that sergeant said? They'll take me fer a deserter."

"Not if you return of your own accord."

"Do yo' think I kin make them believe that I was taken off my post right under their noses. They'd think I'd repented and returned. That wouldn't save

me frum gettin' it. I know them. Let me go with yo'."

"All right, if you can keep up," said Bob. "But no tricks. Jim, you go ahead of him and I will follow."

It was slow work descending the mountain, but at length they struck a road and made rapid progress.

"Don't go so fast," said the man. "I marched all day."

"If you can't keep up you will have to drop behind," answered Bob. "We have no time to lose."

"Cavalry comin'," suddenly called Jim, dodging to one side of the road.

The prisoner dodged to the other side and as the cavalry came up yelled.

"You varmint!" shouted Jim, and fired.

The cavalry halted. "What is it?" a voice called. There was no reply. They dismounted and began searching and soon found the body of the soldier, shot through the head.

"This is mighty strange," said the lieutenant in charge of the squad.

"Perhaps he shot himself," said one of the men.

A further search revealed no weapon.

"We may as well go on," said the lieutenant. "Whoever shot him has gotten away. I will report it."

The next day when his company learned that the body of Ed Stubbs was found shot through the head the mystery of his disappearance was greater than ever. Why had he left his post? Who shot him? No one ever knew.

No sooner had Jim shot than the boys threw them-

selves on the ground and commenced to crawl away. When the cavalry began to beat about the bushes they rose to their feet and were soon far away.

"I only hope I hit that varmint," said Jim. "I reckon I did for thar wasn't another peep from him. Wonder what made him try to give us away when he refused to go back?"

"I think he thought if the cavalry found him with us they would believe his story," answered Bob.

"That must be it, but I'd feel better if I was suah I hit him."

"Never mind now," said Bob. "The thing for us to do is to get away."

They traveled all night and in the morning fell in with Averell's cavalry which was scouting up the valley.

"Mighty glad to see you, General," said Bob. "Have you two spare horses you can let us have? We wish to get to General Sheridan as quickly as possible. We have news."

"What is it? Anything secret?" asked Averell.

"No. At least one division of Longstreet's corps is coming, in fact is here. There may be another division on the way."

"If that's the case the quicker I get back the better," cried the general. He at once ordered a halt and turned his command back. He had captured a few horses and gave the boys the two best.

Thanking him the boys mounted and rode with all speed for Sheridan.

On hearing the news Sheridan looked grave and said, "If this is true I will have to move back, for it will give Early a good many more men than I have."

That night Sheridan received a message from Grant saying Kershaw's division of Longstreet's corps was on the way to reinforce Early.

"The only good place to make a stand is Halltown," said Sheridan. "I will order a retreat to there."

"Is Winchester still in our possession?" asked Bob.

"Yes, but it will be evacuated tomorrow."

"I would like to go there, General. I may be able to get news."

"Well, go, but you will have to hurry. Be careful. Mosby attacked a train a few miles from Winchester a few days ago."

Bob was surprised. This was the first he had heard of Mosby capturing a train. "Jim, that could not have been Mosby we saw," he exclaimed. Then he told Sheridan of the train they had seen captured.

As the army turned back the boys started for Winchester. As they neared the crossing of the Opequon they found the remnants of burnt wagons showing where Mosby had made his capture.

"That fool guard was asleep and let Mosby ride right in on them," said Jim. "They say Mosby took more prisoners than he had men."

"Well, Jim, there's no use making a fuss now," said Bob.

"The next time it will be just the same," sputtered Jim. "Why don't they ketch Mosby?"

When the boys reached Winchester they found the garrison all ready to leave. Bob lost no time in making his way to the home of Rachel Keene. He

found her standing in her door watching the cavalry riding past.

"You here, Robert!" she cried. "I've been looking for you ever since I heard you were with Sheridan. Come in."

No sooner were they in the house than Rachel asked, "Robert, why is Sheridan falling back? As soon as you get Winchester you fall back. One day the Yankees, the next the Confederates. It's hard on us."

"Early is receiving large reinforcements so Sheridan is forced to fall back. But don't worry, Rachel, we'll come again and when we do it'll be to stay. What's the news?"

"It's bad, Robert. Have you heard about Agnes?"

"No, what is it?"

"Her father is determined she shall marry General Kincaid. You know he was made a general for saving the army at Piedmont. Mr. Somers' health is very poor and he says he wishes to see Agnes married before he dies."

"Agnes will never marry that brute!" cried Bob.

"I don't know. She says she will not, but the poor girl is nearly crazy. Think what the pleadings of a sick father can do. Agnes is all that Mr. Somers has now that Miles is gone."

"Miles gone! What do you mean?"

"Didn't you hear that Miles was killed or rather mortally wounded at the battle of New Market? They took him home but he lived only a short time."

"Did he confess? Did he say anything?" cried Bob greatly excited.

“He told Agnes something but she will not tell what it was.”

“Is she here? If so I must see her. Poor girl! They still claim I had something to do with stealing her I suppose.”

“Yes, nearly everyone believes you did. General Kincaid boldly declares he knows it was you and that he will live to prove it. Agnes is not here. The family are still on the plantation.”

“The villain! I’ll make him swallow that some time.” Bob’s jaws came together with a snap.

“Rachel, how about the strength of Early’s army?”

“I should say about twenty-five thousand, certainly not less than twenty thousand,” replied Rachel. “You say more are coming?”

“Yes, at least five thousand,” answered Bob. “Good-bye, Rachel, I hope to see you again before long.”

He turned to go but had stayed too long. A squad of Confederate cavalry was coming down the street cheering.

A young man stood at the gate hurraing and motioning for them to hurry. As he turned towards the house Bob saw he limped badly and that it was Jim Collins. He had joined a guerrilla band, and in one of their raids been shot in the leg.

“Bob Hunter!” he cried, and turned to flee, but tripped and fell headlong, crying for mercy.

Bob whose hand had sought his revolver let it fall. He could not shoot a cripple, so instead he gave the fellow a kick and mounting his horse fled amid a storm of bullets.

CHAPTER XXII

GUERRILLA WARFARE

SHERIDAN'S army was now safe around Halltown. He had received reinforcements and believed he was strong enough to attack Early, but Grant would not hear of it. "Keep Early from attacking Washington and out of Maryland, and that is all I ask of you," he wrote. "If you should attack and be defeated the consequences would be serious."

Sheridan, inwardly raving, had to bide his time.

In the meantime Grant had taken Reams Station, which he held although the Confederates made a desperate attempt to retake it. This gave Grant the Southside Railroad, one of the main arteries leading into Richmond. Slowly but surely Grant was tightening his hold on Petersburg.

"Jim, while things are quiet let's take a scout to the south," said Bob. "Maybe we can find Mosby."

Jim, always ready for anything that promised excitement, was more than willing.

To decide was to act and they were soon on their way, crossing the Blue Ridge into Loudon County, as they heard that Mosby had gone that way.

"What do you see?" asked Jim one day as Bob looked for some time through his glasses at one spot. They were standing on a slight hill which gave them a good view of the surrounding country.

“I hardly know yet,” answered Bob. “Can you see that little hamlet in that grove way over there by that low hill. It must be at least four or five miles away.”

“I see kind of a blur,” answered Jim. “How do yo’ expect a feller to see four or five miles?”

“Beg pardon, Jim. I can’t see much myself. But something is going on over there. Whew! There’s a fire, and another, and another! They must be firing the place.”

“What’s that?” suddenly asked Jim pointing to a road about two miles away.

Bob leveled his glass on the road. “Mounted men, as I live!” he cried. “They are making for that hamlet. Jim, they are guerrillas. There must be a hundred of them. Our men must be burning that place, and those guerrillas are after them.”

Bob watched until the guerrillas gained the hamlet. It was too far to see what was going on, but Bob imagined he could hear the crack of guns and cries of the combatants.

“Jim, let’s go that way,” he suddenly exclaimed. “We can keep close to the woods and fence rows and get near enough to see what is going on. First I’ll take a good look around.”

He swept the horizon with his glass. “Jim, there’s another party of horsemen coming this way. If we hurry we can intercept them and see who they are.”

The boys hurried down the hill and across the fields to a road that the party must take if they were headed for the hamlet. Here they secreted themselves in some bushes to wait. It was scarcely five minutes before the head of the column appeared.

"It's Captain Washburn and his Independent Rangers," exclaimed Bob, stepping out into view.

A dozen rifles immediately covered him.

"I wouldn't shoot if I were you, Captain," he called, "but aren't you riding rather carelessly?"

"Bob Jones!" cried the captain. "What are you doing here?"

"Jim and I thought we'd take a little scout by ourselves," answered Bob. "There's something going on ahead that's too large for us to handle so we thought we'd hide and see who you were."

Bob then told all he'd seen and what he mistrusted.

"I'll bet it's Lieutenant Cummings and his party who fired that village," cried the captain. "Two of his men were murdered there last week, and he swore he'd have revenge."

"Do you know how many men Lieutenant Cummings had?" asked Bob.

"I believe about twenty."

"Then I'm afraid it's all up with them. There were at least a hundred guerrillas in the party we saw."

"How long ago was it?" asked the captain.

"Not over half an hour."

"I have only seventy-five men but they are a match for any hundred guerrillas. Forward, boys!"

"Going to leave us here?" asked Bob.

"Excuse me," replied the captain. "Bring a couple of those spare horses forward."

The horses were brought and Bob and Jim mounting, led the way. Just before they reached the hamlet they went through a piece of woods and here the captain ordered a halt while he and the boys went

forward to reconnoiter. From the edge of the woods the whole hamlet lay in view. Three houses had been burned and dead men were lying in the street, most of them stripped of their clothes. The guerrillas were shouting and running around the street. Many of them seemed to be drunk. No signs of prisoners could be seen.

Captain Washburn muttered a curse. "I believe they shot all their prisoners," he exclaimed.

"It looks like it," answered Bob. "Captain, they are taking no care. You can charge right through them."

"That's so. We must hurry back."

The ranks were formed and swept down on the guerrillas like a whirlwind. Surprised they made but feeble resistance, fleeing in all directions. The Federals were after them, cutting and shooting. The fight was soon over. Twenty of the guerrillas lay dead, half a dozen more were desperately wounded and fifteen had been taken prisoners.

They learned from a woman that it was as Captain Washburn had thought. The Federal prisoners had been shot for burning houses. In all over twenty bodies were found, most of them stripped and a few horribly mangled.

Captain Washburn flew into a terrible rage. "Shoot every prisoner," he cried. "Search the houses, and burn every one in which Federal clothes are found."

Bob turned to protest but saw it was useless. The soldiers were wild with rage and gladly carried out the captain's orders. Bob turned away. He could not bear to see the prisoners shot, to hear their unavailing cries for mercy.

Even Jim was moved. There was no blood feud between him and these men and they were not seeking his life. "Bob, let's be goin'. I don't want to stay heah," he said.

"A good haul," exclaimed Captain Washburn. "Lieutenant Cummings and his men have been revenged. You will go with us, won't you?"

"No, Captain, this has been your fight," replied Bob. "Jim and I have not finished our scout, so we will have to say good-bye."

"Don't you want to take the horses?" asked the captain.

"No, we have no use for them," answered Bob. "A horse is good only in large parties like yours."

The boys struck out for the mountains again. The road they had come on was little used and the boys believed it safe to travel.

They saw nothing until just before they reached the mountains when Jim exclaimed, "What's that lying in the road? Looks like a man."

"It is a man," replied Bob. "He must be dead or badly hurt. Be careful, Jim, there may be others about."

They stepped into the brush, but they could see no signs of anyone and decided it was safe to investigate.

The man proved to be one of the guerrillas, shot through the leg. He had bled so much he was just able to whisper. A small artery had been severed and only the coagulation of the blood had saved his life. Bob dressed the wound as best he could and asked where he lived.

"About half a mile beyond," was the answer.

“Jim, we ought not to let this man lie here,” said Bob. “Don’t you suppose we can carry him half a mile?”

“We kin try.”

Picking the man up tenderly they managed to carry him the half mile. They found his home to be a rather substantial one, the plantation lying at the foot of the mountain. As they approached the house a woman and three children came flying to meet them.

“What is it?” cried the woman. “Is he dead?”

Bob held her back. “Don’t excite him,” he said. “He is not dead, but badly hurt. Fix a bed and send for a doctor.

The woman ran into the house and when the boys entered they found a bed ready on which they laid the man. In the meantime the woman had sent one of the children, a boy about fifteen, for a doctor.

Bob examined the leg and finding it had not bled any more told the woman he thought the man would be all right and started to leave.

“Don’t go until the doctor comes,” the woman plead. “You were with him. How did it happen? His horse arrived home a few minutes before you did with its sides covered with blood.”

“We were not with him,” replied Bob, “but he must have been hurt in the fight at the village.”

“I told him not to go with those men,” sobbed the woman. “He has kept out of the war so far. He is fifty-five. Mosby’s men accused him of sympathizing with the Yankees so he went with them. Now you see what you have done.” She looked at him with blazing eyes.

"You are mistaken, madam," replied Bob. "We were not with Mosby. We are Union scouts. We came across your husband lying in the road. He must have fainted from loss of blood and fell from his horse. I bound up his wound as best I could and brought him here. If he lives you can thank us."

Just then the sound of horses coming up the road was heard. The woman looked at them a moment, then said, "If you are Union scouts your lives are not worth much. Get in here." She opened the door to a closet and the boys quickly went in, closing the door after them.

The woman went out and met half a dozen men who had ridden up. "Be quiet," she said. "My husband is here badly hurt. I've sent for Doc Bryerly."

"How did Dick get heah?" asked one of the men roughly. "I heard him yell he was hit."

"His horse brought him," replied the woman, whose name was Sutton.

"We'uns be blamed hungry. Can you git us something?" asked the man.

"If you wait long enough."

"Oh! We'uns will wait. We'uns hev orders to gather heah tonight. We'uns be sorry to hear Dick's hurt. Kin we'uns see him?"

"Wait until the doctor comes, and see what he says."

A girl about sixteen years of age hustled around getting supper for the men while her mother watched over her husband, who had fallen into a deep sleep.

Once Mrs. Sutton crept to the closet door and whispered, "You'll have to say in there until after these men go away."

Bob and Jim did not hear this with any degree of comfort for their quarters were cramped. They could hear the men outside boasting of the Yankees they had killed. "Yo' remember the little one," said one. "How he did beg me not to shoot him. I let him beg a while then took him plumb between the eyes." He gave a coarse laugh.

"They must hev took a lot of our men prisoners," said another. "Wonder what they did with them, shoot them as we did?"

"Shoot nothin'," said the first. "The Yanks ain't got grit enough to shoot prisoners."

The doctor came now, and the men crowded about him. "What's the news, Doc?" they asked. "How many of our men did they git?"

"About twenty," was the answer, "but they didn't need my care, all dead."

"The Yanks didn't shoot their prisoners, did they?" the men cried.

"Yes, just as you did. Out of my way. I am here to see Sutton." The doctor left them cursing.

Mr. Sutton was still sleeping. The doctor looked at the leg and asked, "Who dressed this wound?"

"I do not know. It was dressed when a couple of men brought him here," replied Mrs. Sutton.

"Humph! Didn't know Mosby had a man who could do such a job. Don't think I will disturb him. If he wakes give him this." He gave Mrs. Sutton a sedative powder. "I'll come and see him tomorrow. In the meantime keep the bandage wet with cold water.

The old doctor left but the guerrillas kept coming until at least fifty had gathered. At last Mosby

himself arrived. He was in a towering rage for he had lost nearly half his men. When he heard that the men taken prisoners had been shot his rage was doubled. "Washburn shall pay for this," he roared. "Hereafter not a man of his will I take alive."

Soon a couple of scouts came and reported that Washburn had gone in camp at Cowlett's. "His men are happy over their victory," they said, "and are inclined to be keerless. I believe we'uns kin take in the whole bunch."

Cowlett's was ten miles away. Mosby decided to attack them, and immediately after supper the gang started.

"Take no prisoners," the boys heard Mosby say. "Kill the last devil of them."

As soon as they had left Mrs. Sutton opened the door and told them they could come out. At first they were so stiff they could hardly move, but a little exercise made them all right.

Mrs. Sutton had supper ready for them. "I saved enough for you," she said with a smile, "but they nearly cleaned me out."

"Mrs. Sutton, why did you save anything for us?" asked Bob. "We are your enemies, yet you saved our lives and now give us food."

"I am a Northern woman, and my heart was never in this war," she replied. "I was an orphan and came down here as a governess. I met Mr. Sutton and married him. We have a nice little farm here and were happy until this war came. Our oldest son is in the Confederate army. I have kept still about my sentiments, but I have believed all the time the South was in the wrong. When you brought my husband

here and were so kind to him I resolved to help you if I could."

"For which we are very grateful," said Bob. "Where is this Cowlett?"

"It is about ten miles from here, by the road," replied the woman. "It is only five over the mountain, but the way is rough. Hush! Not a word. Here comes my boy. He is a redhot Southerner."

The boy who had gone for the doctor came in and looked in amazement at Bob and Jim. "I thought you-all had gone," he exclaimed.

"These are the men who brought your father here," replied his mother. "They stayed to help me."

"I think we had better go now, though," said Bob. "Mr. Sutton is resting easily. That powder in all probability will make him sleep all night and the doctor will be here in the morning."

"Very well," replied Mrs. Sutton, "but I would like you to stay if you could."

"We want to be at —" a warning look caused Bob to stop, and he added, "Leesburg."

It was now nine o'clock and the boys knew if they reached Cowlett's before Mosby's attack they would have to hurry, so bidding the Suttons good-bye they started, apparently towards Leesburg.

"Mother, I don't like the way those men act," said Steve. "Why didn't they go with Mosby? Where were they when Mosby was here? Did he see them? I don't believe they are Mosby's men."

"What makes you think so?" asked his mother.

"Are you sure Mosby saw them?"

"How should I know?" she asked. "I was with your father."

The boy looked at her and said, "Mother, I believe you are half Yank as father says. I'll ask Em."

The sister said she had been too busy cooking to notice anything. She did know but she knew her mother would not have hidden the boys without some good reason.

"I will find out," cried the boy in a passion, and before his mother could stop him he grabbed a rifle and was away.

Mrs. Sutton sank in a chair weeping. Her daughter came to her and putting her arm around her, said, "Don't cry, Mother. I know you put those boys in the closet, but I'll never tell."

Mrs. Sutton wiped her eyes, saying, "You are a good child, Emily. I hid those boys in the closet because they told me they were Union scouts. How could I give them up when they had saved your father's life?"

"You did just right," said her daughter kissing her. "We'll keep the secret."

Mrs. Sutton spent an anxious night sitting by her husband's side. She would start at every sound, thinking it was Steve, but he did not return until the next day and then he was very indignant.

"I believe you knew who those men were and hid them," he stormed.

"I know nothing about them," answered his mother calmly. "I asked no questions. They saved your father's life. That was enough for me."

"Well, I know who they are," retorted the boy. "They are Bob Hunter and Jim Kidder, two of the most daring scouts in the Yankee army. Why,

Mother, you would have received the thanks of Congress if you had given them up.”

“I’m glad I didn’t know who they were,” replied the mother. “But, Steve, I have good news for you. The doctor has been here and says your father will get well, and it was the way those boys did up his wound that saved his life. If I were you I would say nothing about those boys being here.”

“Well they served me a pretty mean trick,” sputtered Steve, “but I reckon it’s best to keep still. Mosby got all-firedly licked again this morning.”

When the boys left the Suttons they did not go far towards Leesburg, but soon turned into the road leading over the mountain to Cowlett’s. The night was dark and they were not quite sure they were on the right road. While they were discussing the road, Jim said, “Quiet! I hear someone kumin’.”

They listened. Someone was approaching softly, stopping every few feet to listen.

“Someone follerin’ us,” whispered Jim. “He’s seen our footprints and is tryin’ to ketch us. Let’s take him in.”

The boys waited, not making a sound. The footsteps came nearer, halted, then came on again. “I’m afraid I’ve lost them,” they heard someone mutter. Jim sprang and caught the intruder. There was a struggle but Jim held him fast.

“It’s a boy,” he said. Then, “Why, it’s Steve. What in the world be yo’ doin’ heah, Steve?”

“Following you,” blurted out Steve. “This is a fine way to go to Leesburg, isn’t it? Oh! I’m on to you.”

“Not so fast, my boy,” answered Jim. “We did

intend to go to Leesburg, but changed our minds and thought we'd go and help Mosby out. Want to go with us?"

Steve was nonplussed. These men were going to Mosby after all. Then why had they hid from him?

"Where were you when Mosby was at our house?" he asked.

"We were out lookin' for some 'arbs for your mother to put on your dad's leg. Didn't think we had crawled up the chimney, did yo'?"

"I didn't know what to think," answered Steve, "but I thought it mighty strange I didn't see anything of you until after the rest had gone."

"Wall, yo' see us now, so run on home."

"I want to go with you. I want to see a fight," said Steve doggedly.

"Come on then," answered Jim in a tone that sounded as if he was granting the request unwillingly. In reality he rejoiced for Steve would know the way.

"Yo' go ahead, Steve," he said. "Yo' know the road better than we do. Yo' will hev to hurry if yo' see that fight."

"Reckon yo' would never have got there this way," laughed Steve, feeling proud that he had been allowed to come with them. "You missed the trail."

He went back for some distance and then turned into a trail so indistinct that the boys had not noticed it. This led up the mountain and the boys were glad Steve was along for they never could have followed it in the dark. Steve was never at a loss.

"It's lucky we brought him along," Bob whispered to Jim.

The journey was a weary one but at length they neared Cowlett's. Steve was all excitement. He had heard the men talk of how and when they were going to attack and stopping said, "We don't want to go on any farther this way. We may run into them. Mosby is going to come in on the other side. We will have to circle around them."

"What time did you say Mosby was going to attack?" asked Bob.

"Just as it begins to get light," answered the boy.

Bob stepped behind a bush and lighting a match looked at his watch. "That will be in about an hour," he said. "Jim, come here a moment."

The two whispered a moment, then Bob said, "All right. That will be best."

They started on.

"Where are you going?" cried Steve, holding back. "I tell you if we go any farther this way we'll run right into the Yanks."

Jim suddenly seized Steve by the shoulder and thrusting a revolver against him, snarled, "A word out of you and you are a dead boy. Come right along. No fuss."

Steve was thoroughly scared and allowed himself to be led along without resistance.

Soon from in front of them came the sharp challenge, "Halt! Who comes there?"

"Friends without the countersign," answered Bob. "The two boys who were with you in the fight yesterday."

"Stand where you are," was the reply. "Corporal of the guard."

It was some time before the corporal came and

then he was growling as if awakened out of a sound sleep.

"What's the matter here?" he asked crossly.

"Two fellows without the countersign want to come in. They say they are the two boys who were with us in the fight yesterday."

"Oh! Those fellows that kicked because we shot the prisoners. Good fighters, but faint hearted. I'll see."

He started toward them, but suddenly stopped and raising his gun cried, "How is this? You said two, there are three."

"We have a prisoner," replied Bob.

The corporal was uncertain. "Sentinel, call the guard," he exclaimed.

The guard was called and the corporal said, "Now, you may advance. If I see another one we fire. Understand?"

"We understand perfectly," answered Bob, coming forward. Jim was fairly dragging Steve.

"Why your prisoner is only a boy," exclaimed the corporal.

"But an important one," answered Bob. "You are to be attacked within an hour. Lead us to Captain Washburn."

Astonished the corporal sent them with one of his men. The captain was in his tent asleep. A guard stood before the tent.

"Call the captain at once," said Bob.

"He gave orders not to be awakened unless something very important happened," said the guard.

"Well something very important will happen if you don't call him," said Bob.

“Captain, those two scouts that were with us yesterday are here and demand to see you at once,” called the sentinel.

“Can’t they wait?” asked the captain in a sleepy voice.

“No,” shouted Bob. “Get out as quick as you can, the quicker the better.”

It was not long before the captain appeared fully dressed and armed. “What is it, Hunter?” he asked.

Bob took him aside and explaining the situation, said, “If the boy with us tells the truth, and I think he does, the attack will come from the north.”

“The north!” exclaimed the captain. “There is a heavy woods on the north, no place for cavalry, and I have it only slightly guarded.”

“The very place,” replied Bob. “Dismounted men will come through the woods and be in your camp before you know it. Then when the confusion is greatest cavalry will charge down the road and where will you be?”

“I will have the assembly blown at once,” said the captain.

“Hold on, Captain, that will give the enemy notice that you are to move or have found out what is going on, and they will be on you at once. What you want is to surprise them instead of their surprising you. Arouse your men quietly but quickly. You know what to do better than I can tell you.”

The captain acted quickly. The men were aroused with orders to make no noise. The horses were saddled and about half of the men were sent dismounted to the north. Pickets were posted behind a fence

just at the edge of the woods. If the enemy advanced they were to fire and fall back to where the main force was lying behind another fence. To reach this fence the enemy would have to cross an open field. The main road leading in from the west was barricaded. All this was done so quietly that one would have thought the camp still asleep.

The first faint flush of dawn was beginning to show in the east when the pickets by the fence fired and came rushing back. After them came a line of yelling guerrillas, thinking only of an easy victory. As they neared the second fence there suddenly leaped up a line of fire and a storm of balls smote them in the face, causing them to halt and waver.

“Charge!” shouted Captain Washburn, and over the fence his men went. The guerrillas did not stand the charge but turned and fled back into the woods and soon the clatter of horses hoofs told they were getting away as quickly as their horses could carry them.

On the field lay six dead and a dozen wounded.

“A glorious victory!” cried Captain Washburn, clasping Bob’s hand. “But for you they would have got us. I will have to get out of here for I see Mosby has greatly augmented his force. They will be back on me before night.”

“Steve, you can go home, now,” said Bob. “What did you think of the fight?”

“You lied,” cried the boy. “You pretended to be Confederates and you’re low-lived Yankees.”

“I wouldn’t call names, Steve. If you do I might have to take you with us.”

Steve began to look frightened.

“Don’t worry, just so you behave yourself. Stay and have breakfast with us and then trot home.”

Steve wouldn’t stay for breakfast. He was glad enough to get away.

Captain Washburn and his company started for Leesburg, the boys accompanying them. The guerrillas followed them for some distance, but a few shots from Jim’s carbine bade them keep out of range and they soon gave up the pursuit.

From Leesburg the boys made their way up the river to Harper’s Ferry and were soon again with the army.

CHAPTER XXIII

GO IN

GENERAL SHERIDAN was in his quarters at Halltown pacing the floor like a caged lion. "Why will they not let me go in? I know I can whip Early," he exclaimed to his chief of staff.

"Early has as many if not more men than you, hasn't he?" asked the chief.

"The forces are about even, not much difference," answered Sheridan, "but I can whip him."

"Well convince General Grant of that fact and I think he will let you go in," said the officer.

"I'll keep Early mighty busy until Grant does let me go," cried Sheridan.

He did. The Union cavalry were here, there, everywhere, watching for a chance, and they usually found one. There was hardly a day but what prisoners were brought in, sometimes two or three hundred.

A couple of days after the boys had returned they went scouting with General McIntosh.

"Jim, let's try and reach the top of that hill," said Bob. "We may be able to see something from there."

Leaving their horses, they made their way through the woods, dodging a picket post of the enemy, and soon gained the top of the hill. One glance and Bob

exclaimed, "There is a regiment over there. They seem to be about to move. There are no other troops in sight. They can be taken in."

The boys turned to hurry back. In their haste they were careless and the pickets saw them and fired, but missed.

"General, there is a regiment of rebs behind that hill," cried Bob. "By sweeping around it you can take them in."

"Sure?" asked McIntosh.

"Yes, Jim and I were on top of that hill and saw them. You will have to hurry as they are getting ready to move."

Quickly McIntosh gave the order. Sweeping around the hill and riding over the pickets without halting they surprised the regiment and it surrendered without a struggle. It proved to be the Eighth South Carolina, nearly two hundred strong.

Among the prisoners Bob was surprised to see May Vance. He was now a captain.

"Hello, May," cried Bob. "Glad to see you. I see you recovered from that wound and are back in the army."

Captain Vance scowled. He looked worn and much older than when Bob saw him on the Peninsula. "I'm not overjoyed to see you," he answered. "I've always wanted to take you prisoner to pay you for that little skirmish we had. But here I am your prisoner again."

"Not mine, May. Here is General McIntosh. Let me introduce you."

"General, this is Captain Marion Vance of South Carolina. We were cadets together in the Virginia

Military Institute at the time South Carolina seceded. He went wild over it. Don't believe he feels as well now."

"We'll whip you yet," cried May. "Why don't you come out and fight? You don't dare."

"We came out in time to get you," replied the general. "Take him back, guards. Johnson Island will soon cool him off."

That evening Bob had quite a talk with May. He did not seem quite as confident about the South conquering as he had. "But if it comes to the worst we will die in the last ditch," he cried.

Before Bob left he brought May two good blankets. "Take them with you, May," he said. "You will winter on Johnson Island and it will be as cold as the dickens up there."

"Where is Johnson Island?" asked May.

"In Lake Erie, close to Sandusky. Good-bye, May. You will be a prisoner but you will pass a more comfortable winter than if you were in the army."¹

So insistent was Sheridan about moving that General Grant came clear to Charleston to see him. They talked the thing all over and Grant said, "Well, General, you seem so sure you can whip Early. Go in and do your best."

That was all Sheridan needed and he gave orders for his army to advance. The armies first met along the banks of the Opequon. The cavalry forced a passage across the stream and about three miles from

¹ After the war closed Bob received a letter from May Vance in which he said, "I believe the blankets you gave me saved my life. It was horribly cold up there."

Winchester the whole rebel army was met drawn up in battle array.

Bob as was his custom in battle acted as orderly for his brother. As it happened General Hunter's division faced that of General Clayton's, so uncle and nephew were once more opposed to each other.

"Clayt, I hope this battle won't turn out like Fredericksburg," said Bob.¹

"I may fall but we are going to win a victory today," replied the general.

"So all think," said Bob. "The army believes that Sheridan cannot be whipped."

"It's that confidence that will win the day," cried the general. "See how proudly the men march, not a straggler."

Here the fitful firing of the skirmishers showed that the battle had begun. Soon came the rattle of musketry and the roar of cannon. Thousands of men were grappled in deadly conflict. Back, back the enemy were driven.

"We are winning," cried the general. "But what is this?"

The Nineteenth Corps was on the right and they were seen fleeing in confusion. This opened a gap and the enemy poured through, striking General Hunter's right brigade on the flank and rear, and they too began to retreat. Was the battle to be lost when it was so nearly won!

General Hunter, sinking his spurs into his horse, dashed down to where the storm raged.

"Colonel, draw in your flank and face to the

¹ It was at Fredericksburg that it was thought that General Hunter was mortally wounded.

right," he called to the colonel commanding the brigade. The colonel looked for his aides. There were none present.

"I will take the order," cried Bob, and away he dashed.

The colonels commanding the two right regiments were frantically trying to stop the mad flight of their men.

"Change front, face to the right and give it to them," cried Bob.

The movement was made and a murderous flank fire poured into the ranks of the advancing enemy. The Nineteenth Corps rallied and returned to the fray.

"Forward!" cried the officers and the terrified foe was swept from the field. The victory had been won.

Through Winchester the stricken army fled, closely pursued by the Federals.

It was in the streets of Winchester that Bob met Jim. At the commencement of the battle Jim had requested that he be permitted to go with General Custer as that general with his dash had greatly pleased Jim.

"Infantry be too slow," said Jim. "If I hev to fight give me the cavalry."

As is usual the cavalry took the advance and when they came to Opequon, found the passage vigorously contested.

"That ford must be taken," cried Custer.

A charge was made but the cavalry was repulsed. Custer threw out a line of skirmishers afoot with orders to try and gain the banks of the stream and

keep down the sharpshooters while the cavalry crossed.

Now was Jim's opportunity. Giving his horse to a soldier to guard, he ran forward. When the balls began to whistle around him he threw himself on the ground and began crawling towards the stream. Other soldiers saw what he was doing and began to do the same.

Jim secured a position behind a rock near the ford and his first shot told.

Soon enough of the skirmishers gained the bank of the creek to open a hot fire. Under it the enemy fell back and the cavalry crossed. After them came the infantry. Lines were formed and the battle began.

"Jim, you did a fine thing," cried Custer. "I will remember this."

Three o'clock in the afternoon came and the enemy was giving way. Then Custer swept around the flank in the rear and charged. The rout became a panic. Hundreds of the enemy threw away their guns and fled, but Custer's men were among them, cutting and slashing. Jim was in his element. He had no saber but every time his carbine spoke a man fell.

"Don't shoot! I surrender," cried a husky lieutenant throwing down his sword.

"Well, if it isn't Lance Tompkins," exclaimed Jim. "How be yo', Lance? Hevn't seen you since the war began."

"Jim Kidder, as I live!" cried the lieutenant. "I might have known it was yo' by the way yo' shot."

"Get yo' men together," ordered Jim. "How many of yo' fellers be thar?"

"Must be a dozen of my company heah," replied Lieutenant Tompkins. He rallied them and Jim marched them back.

"General, heah be a lot of my friends that I found in bad company," said Jim as he presented his prisoners to Custer.

"Jim, did you take them all?" cried the general.

"Every blamed one of them. Half of them be boys I knew in West Virginia," answered Jim proudly.¹

"Gineral, I be tired of this 'ere army," spoke up one of the prisoners. "Won't yo' let me enlist in yo' army?"

"Good for yo', Hank," cried Jim. "General, I'll vouch for him. He's all right."

Right there Henry Bevins was made a Federal and proved himself a gallant soldier.

Bob learned that his aunt and cousin were at home but he had only time for a brief visit with them as the defeated army had to be pursued.

"Bob!" cried his cousin Helen, throwing her arms around him. "I don't care what they say I'll always stand by you, Yankee though you are."

"Thank you, Helen," replied Bob. "I hardly expected to find you here."

"We're tired of running back and forth," said Helen, "so decided to stay here. We have trespassed on the good nature of Mr. Somers too much."

"How is Agnes?" asked Bob.

Helen shook her head. "Her father is determined she shall marry General Kincaid. The poor girl is

¹ Custer claims he charged with only five hundred men and took seven hundred prisoners.

having a hard time. Mr. Somers is in poor health and says he wants to see Agnes settled before he dies."

"Agnes will die before she will marry him," said Bob.

"I don't know. The pressure is very strong," replied Helen. "Agnes thinks a great deal of her father and is really alarmed over his health."

There was no time for further talk. Bob did not wish to tell Helen his brother's division had fought her father's the day before, so he hastily said good-bye.

"Helen, I never have despaired of the success of our cause until today," said Mrs. Clayton after Bob had left. "I do now. I thought that Howard's division could never be broken, and to see them run as they did today—" She burst into tears.

There was no sleep for Mrs. Clayton that night. The cheers of the Federals kept ringing in her ears. She felt that never again would the Confederate flag wave over Winchester.

Sheridan gave the fleeing army no rest. Two days later he met them south of Winchester at Fisher's Hill. The place was a strong one and Early thought he could hold it. But the Confederates had become obsessed with fear of Sheridan's cavalry, and when the cry was raised that the cavalry had gained their rear a panic seized the whole army and they fled in disgraceful flight.

In this flight Sheridan took twelve pieces of artillery and several hundred prisoners with a loss of about five hundred.

Thus in less than a week Sheridan had fought two

pitched battles and taken thousands of prisoners and twenty pieces of artillery. He had gone in and won. In no great battle during the war had the cavalry done what they did at Opequon and Fisher's Hill. The cavalry was Sheridan's strong arm.

CHAPTER XXIV

FIRE AND SWORD

BOB and Jim were not in the battle of Fisher's Hill. General Sheridan had called them to him after the battle of Opequon and said, "I have heard what you boys were at yesterday, and while I admire your bravery and thank you for what you did, I want no more of it. Remember you are scouts. You are to get me news. Battle is no place for you. I give you the largest liberty, go where you please so you bring me news, but no more endangering of your lives in battle. You understand, I think."

"We understand, General," replied Bob. "Your order is a little hard for I have always been with my brother in battle."

"General Clayton can get along without you," snapped Sheridan. "Now go."

"What do you think of that?" asked Bob somewhat crestfallen.

"Reckon it's all right," replied Jim. "I never did think much of these fights, but I like to ride with Custer. There's the man for me!"

When Bob told his brother what Sheridan had said, Clayton laughed, "Good!" he cried. "I always like to have you with me, but I am always in a fever of anxiety lest you be shot. I'm glad Sheridan told you to keep out."

"I'll get in lots more danger keeping out," growled Bob. "Now I'll scout all the time, see if I don't."

"Bob!" cried the general, but Bob had gone. The general sighed. "The young scapegrace! I begin to think he bears a charmed life."

The battle of Fisher's Hill totally demoralized Early's army. If Averell's cavalry had done its duty nearly the whole army would have been captured. For this, Averell, not the cavalry, was to blame.

"What are we going to do now, Bob?" asked Jim.

"To Staunton," answered Bob. "The cavalry will be going that way. What I've heard about Agnes worries me and then I heard Sheridan give orders that I don't like though they may be necessary."

"What orders?" asked Jim.

"To destroy everything in the valley that man or beast could eat. He said the Shenandoah Valley has been the granary of the Confederacy for years and that he is going to make it so a crow would starve to death flying over it."

Jim whistled. "The valley suah has given us a heap of trouble," he answered. "I reckon the general is right."

To Bob the order was a disquieting one. To see the valley he so loved devastated was like receiving a blow in the face.

The boys started the day after the battle of Fisher's Hill. They each carried two navy revolvers but left their carbines. Their trip would be perilous for they were ahead of the cavalry, and might ride right into Early's army.

They were spared this however for Early retreated southwards instead of towards Staunton. The

country swarmed with guerrillas and parties of Confederate cavalry, and there would be plenty of opportunities for them to use their wits if not their weapons.

Jim had a rip in his trousers' leg through which a red bandage showed.

They had not ridden more than five miles when they ran into a small body of Confederate cavalry.

"Where now, boys?" asked the lieutenant in command.

"To Staunton," answered Bob. "Do yo' know Mister Somers who lives near thar?"

"I've heard of him," answered the lieutenant. "Why?"

"We'uns be from Winchester where his real home is and we'uns hev an important message for him."

"What of this fellow?" asked the lieutenant looking at Jim. "He seems to have been hurt."

"Yas," drawled Jim. "They plugged me in the leg but 'tain't much, no bones broke."

"Where did you get it?"

"With Mosby."

"Then you are Mosby's men. He don't come this far west generally."

"He has did a heap around Winchester and Charleston," answered Bob. "Heard about that train he took near Winchester?"

"Yes, I heard about that. What are the Yanks doing?"

"Yo'll find out quick enough," replied Bob. "They be comin' this way as fast as they kin come. That's why we'uns be in a hurry. We'uns want to warn Mr. Somers. They be goin' to arrest him as a spy."

“How do you know that?” cried the startled lieutenant.

“How do Mosby know a lot?” asked Bob. “But it was nothing to know about Mr. Somers. It was common talk in Winchester that he was to be arrested.”

A man now came tearing back. “Yanks coming!” he cried. The whole party turned and fled and the boys soon lost them.

“That was easy,” said Jim.

“It won’t always be so easy,” answered Bob. “Wait until we strike some guerrillas.”

They rode a number of miles without being questioned except as to what was the news and where they were going.

“This is a beautiful country,” said Bob. “The barns are full of grain and hay. Think of it all being destroyed. It’s too bad.”

“If it wasn’t destroyed it would all go to feed the rebels,” said Jim.

The news of Early’s defeat had already begun to be known through the country and the inhabitants were in a frenzy of excitement. “Were the Yankees coming?” was the question everyone asked the boys.

“They surely be comin’,” was Bob’s reply.

They met with no serious trouble until they were within ten miles of Staunton. Bob was telling Jim they would have to change their story and be from the mountains. “They would laugh at us here,” he said, “if we told them that Mr. Somers was to be arrested as a spy.”

“Better say we belong to Burkett’s gang, and be goin’ to Staunton on business,” replied Jim.

“Just the thing,” answered Bob. “Jim, do you see that mountain over there? That’s the one we were on when we saw Jackson’s army and learned he was to attack Monterey.”

“So it is,” said Jim. “Bob, them was brave old days. Don’t believe we’ll ever see the like again. What’s this?”

A squadron of cavalry was bearing down on them. A road leading to Monterey was close to them and Bob cried, “Jim, let’s get on that road quick.”

They spurred their horses and reached the road a little in advance of the cavalry.

The captain in command of the cavalry rode up and demanded sharply, “Who are you and where are you going?”

“We’uns be from a little north of Monterey,” answered Bob, “an’ we be goin’ to Staunton.”

“Why aren’t you both in the army?” asked the captain. “You’re old enough.”

“We’uns belong to Burkett’s gang,” answered Bob. “Jim, my pal thar, jist got shot in the leg so we’uns be goin’ to Staunton.”

“Capt, them fellers air lyin’,” shouted a soldier. “I belonged to Burkett’s gang for a while, and I never saw them befo’.”

“Well I have,” said the captain reaching for his revolver. “Take them boys. They are Robert Hun——”

He never finished the sentence. Jim’s revolver cracked and the captain fell from his horse. The boys turned and dashed up the Monterey road followed by a shower of bullets.

“Don’t mind me,” gasped the captain to a lieu-

tenant who had sprang from his horse to assist him. "Catch those fellows."

The lieutenant jumped on his horse and shouted, "Forward, boys! One hundred dollars to the man who catches or kills them."

If the boys had had the horses they had when they rode in Kilpatrick's raid on Richmond they would have laughed at the pursuit. Now it was different. Some of the cavalry had better horses than they and gained on them rapidly.

"Oh! If I only had my carbine," groaned Jim.

Bob's horse suddenly gave a jump and left Jim behind. He soon caught up and said, "Bob, yo' horse be hit in the flank."

"That's what made him jump so," answered Bob. "I hope the wound isn't serious."

He had time to say no more for two of their pursuers were nearly onto them. Both boys turned and fired. One of the men fell from his saddle, the other horse fell.

"That will hold them for a while," muttered Jim.

Just then Bob's horse stumbled and nearly fell, he staggered on a few feet then fell, not to rise.

"It's all over, Jim," said Bob. "The mountains!"

A mountain rose close to one side of the road and Jim springing from his horse plunged into the brush, Bob close behind him.

The cavalry came to Bob's fallen horse and paused a moment. It was a fatal pause for two revolvers cracked and two men fell. The others scattered in wildest confusion, but soon halted and dismounted.

"They're going to scour the mountain, Jim," cried Bob. "It's time for us to be moving."

The boys climbed rapidly and soon left their pursuers far behind.

Jim stooped and laughing said, "What's the use of hurrying so? Them fellers kin never ketch us."

"We're all right Jim, but we've lost our horses."

"The mountains be safer than the valley," answered Jim, "and if we need horses I reckon we kin pick some up."

The boys were on a spur of mountain that overlooked the valley and they could see the same body of cavalry that had chased them riding at full speed for Staunton. Bob looked through his glass and said, "Jim, those men are being chased by our cavalry. We are safe."

They lost no time in descending the mountain and joining the cavalry.

"Hello, where did you come from?" asked the colonel commanding.

"Got chased up that mountain," answered Bob. "Had my horse shot. We tried to get into Staunton before you."

"Well you missed it," said the colonel, "but you can come with us."

"Not unless you have two spare horses," said Bob. "The walking is poor."

"We have plenty of horses but you'll have to wait for saddles until we get to Staunton," was the reply.

In the meantime things had been happening in Staunton. When Mr. Somers heard the result of the battle of Piedmont he drove his stock up in the mountains so he lost but little.

The next few days were anxious ones, then came the news that Lynchburg was safe, and that Hunter

was retreating through the mountains. Early's army came riding down the valley and in front proudly rode General Kincaid.

Mr. Somers was sitting on the porch as he rode up. "A general!" he cried grasping Kincaid's hand. "Well I expected it. You have won it a dozen times. What is the news?"

"Thank you," replied the general. "The news is glorious. Hunter is getting back into Virginia as fast as he can. There will not be a Yankee in the valley in two weeks. We are going to sweep it clean."

"God grant it!" exclaimed Mr. Somers fervently.

General Kincaid looked at him sharply. "Mr. Somers, I was in hopes of finding you looking better," he exclaimed. "I'm sorry to see you are not. Brace up!"

"I feel I have not long to live," replied Mr. Somers wearily. "If I can only see the South free and Agnes happily married I shall die content."

"Have you said anything to her?" asked Kincaid eagerly.

"Yes, the girl seems obdurate but I still have hopes. I believe she will at last yield to my wishes. General, do not lose hope."

"Where is she?" asked Kincaid.

"She went to Glencoe Springs with Miss Hurlburt this morning. I am pasturing some of my stock up there. I wish she was here but of course you will stay."

"No, our orders are to move down the valley as rapidly as possible."

An orderly now rode up and saluting said, "General, General Early wishes to see you."

"Give my respects to your daughter," cried Kincaid as he mounted his horse.

When Agnes was told that Kincaid had been there and that he was now a general she simply said, "I am glad. I suppose he deserves it."

"Is that all?" asked her father angrily. "Agnes, I wish to see you after supper."

That evening Mr. Somers flatly told Agnes it was his desire that she marry General Kincaid at the earliest possible moment. "Can't you see, daughter, that I have not long to live?" he asked.

Agnes in an agony of tears threw her arms around her father. "Don't talk like that," she cried. "Father, I don't want to marry. You must live so I can take care of you."

"If you love me, Agnes, you will do as I ask. General Kincaid is a man any girl in Virginia could well be proud of getting. Agnes, promise me you will marry him."

"I can't! I can't," sobbed Agnes.

"You will marry him or you are no daughter of mine," cried her father. "Think of it until he comes again."

The days that followed were full of gloom for Agnes. If her father only knew all. Why had she promised Miles not to tell?

Early's campaign in the valley gave no time for love-making. General Kincaid was kept busy.

During the summer Mr. Somers gradually grew weaker. All could see that he had not long to live.

Then came the battles of Opequon and Fisher's Hill and the Federal cavalry came sweeping up the valley. With this cavalry came Bob and Jim.

At Staunton a number of saddles were captured and the boys soon had a fine outfit.

Sheridan's orders were beginning to be carried out. On every side barns and stacks of grain were blazing. Everything to sustain life was being destroyed.

Bob's first thought was of Mr. Somers. "Did the order reach beyond Staunton?" he asked the colonel of the regiment he was with.

"Staunton and vicinity," was the answer. "We will not go far beyond Staunton. The country south of Staunton has already been swept clean by the Confederates.

"Jim, let's get to Mr. Somers as quickly as we can," cried Bob. "We must save him if possible."

Just as they were starting General Wilson sent for them. With him they found a rough looking mountaineer. "Boys," said the general, "this is Mr. Perdue. He claims the guerrillas, McNeill with a gang of about thirty, are secreted back in the mountains about ten miles. That if I will let him have a force of about fifty men they can all be captured. It seems he has heard about you boys, and wishes you to go with them. What do you say?"

Bob did not like the looks of Mr. Perdue and Jim looked him all over and drawled, "Whar was you raised, Mister?"

Mr. Perdue had a glib tongue and told Jim all he wished to know.

Jim took Bob aside and said, "That feller suah knows about us and may be all right, but I don't like his looks. Why is it he wants us to go with him so badly? I tell yo', Bob, thar's something wrong."

"I'll talk with the general," said Bob.

The general was sure they were mistaken. "Perdue is well vouched for," he said. "He is all right. This McNeill is a desperate fellow. He has given us lots of trouble. It will be a big thing if we can capture him. If you are afraid to go I will let Captain Weaver go without you."

That settled it.

"Jim, we will have to go," said Bob. "It will never do to let the report get out that we have shown a yellow streak. We'll keep our eyes open."

"You be right," answered Jim. "We hev to go but you kin be suah I'll keep my eyes open."

Perdue was a cousin of Neal Mazingo, the guerrilla Jim shot for the murder of his parents. Perdue had always professed to be a Union man and had credentials as such. In fact he was a spy and many of the mishaps that had befallen the Federals were owing to information he had given. Unknown to Jim he had sworn to have revenge for his cousin's murder. When he learned that both Bob and Jim were in Staunton he began to lay plans to capture them.

McNeill was back in the mountains but instead of having thirty men he had seventy-five and Perdue thought he could easily capture fifty men. Another of McNeill's gang was in Staunton and Perdue lost no time in getting into communication with him. "Git back to McNeill as quick as yo' kin," he ordered. "I'm comin' to-night with fifty Yankees and with them will be Bob Hunter and Jim Kidder. I'll lead them into Black B'ar canyon. Hev McNeill ambush the canyon and we'uns kin gobble them all. I'm to hev the two boys to do with as I please."

"Yo' be a good one," grinned the fellow. "Mac will make short work of them fifty. I kin sneak out of Staunton without any trouble."

The Black Bear canyon was a narrow passage between two mountains, a capital place for an ambushade.

General Wilson had made all preparation for the raid, and Captain Weaver with his fifty men was ready.

Perdue did not wish to start until after dark. "It's only ten miles," he said, "and we'uns don't want to be seen."

"I understand," replied the general. "Perdue, if this raid is a success I will see that you are well paid."

"It'll be a success, General," replied Perdue with a grin.

General Wilson introduced the boys to Captain Weaver saying, "Captain, these are two of General Sheridan's scouts. You are to be guided much by what they say as they are accustomed to the mountains. They do not seem to have much confidence in Perdue, but I have examined his credentials well, and they seem to be all right."

Captain Weaver proved to be a young man about twenty-six or seven years of age, an alert, capable fellow but with a high estimation of himself. He looked Bob and Jim over superciliously and then asked, "What is the matter? Why don't you like Perdue?"

"Don't like his looks," blurted out Jim.

"Is that all?" laughed the captain. "I might say I didn't like your looks either, but that would

be nothing against you. That General Sheridan has chosen you as scouts is enough for me, and that General Wilson recommends Mr. Perdue is also enough recommendation. So forget the looks."

Jim said no more but Perdue who had been watching him asked, "Yo' and the captain had quite a talk. Don't you want to go?"

"Who said I didn't want to go?" snapped Jim.

"Now, don't git crusty. I meant no harm. The fact is I want yo' to go fo' I know yo' be a mighty good scout."

This reply mollified Jim. After all he might be mistaken, so he said, "It's all right, partner. You and I'll keep together."

They started at nine o'clock. For about five miles the road was good and they rode at a sharp trot, then they turned off on a rough mountain road and to ride faster than a walk was out of the question.

Bob, Jim and Perdue had the advance. Some four miles were passed, the only sound the clatter of their own horses' hoofs on the rocks. Then Perdue called a halt. Here a trail led down into a canyon. He explained if they kept along the road they would strike McNeill's camp in front and a surprise would be impossible. If they went through the canyon they would come up in the rear where there would be no guards. It was about three miles farther, but it was the only way the camp could be taken by surprise.

"Then through the canyon by all means," said the captain. "Boys, you and Perdue, take the advance."

During the halt Bob and Jim had held a hurried consultation. "Bob, I remember this place," said

Jim. "I was heah once with dad when I was about twelve. It's called B'ar Canyon cause in early days several b'ars was killed in it. If a b'ar was driven into the canyon and the other end guarded thar was no way he could git out. If we go into it the whole force can be captured. I tell yo' thar be foul work afoot."

"You think if we enter the canyon both ends will be closed to us?" asked Bob.

"That's just it," replied Jim.

"How far is it through the canyon, Jim?"

"About a mile and a half."

"Come on. What are you boys waiting for?" called the captain.

"Captain, Jim is not feeling well," answered Bob.

"We prefer to take the rear."

"What's that?" roared the captain. "Afraid are you?"

"Yes, Captain, we are afraid," said Bob, "and we feel we may be as useful in the rear as in front."

"Brave scouts, you are," sneered the captain.

A lieutenant spoke up, "Captain, to call these scouts cowards is folly. I know too well what they have done. Be assured they have a good reason for wishing to be in the rear. I will take the advance with Perdue."

"If that's the case I reckon I'll stay in the rear with the boys," said Perdue.

"No, you don't," said the captain. "You are the one who got us into this, and you'll go with Lieutenant Brannon. Brannon, take two good men with you. If there are any signs of treachery shoot Perdue."

“Captain, yo’ don’t suspect me of treachery, do yo’?” asked Perdue looking a much injured man.

“No, I don’t, but as commander of this expedition I have to be careful. These two boys are scouts for General Sheridan, and if they should report I was careless it would be all up with me. For some reason they want to be in the rear. What difference does it make? They’ll be with us. I ordered Lieutenant Brannon to shoot you at any signs of treachery for effect. I could see my men were getting shaky. You are all right, Perdue.”

“Thank you, Captain,” said Perdue. “You will hev no cause to complain, but see that them boys don’t lag.”

The rear was in charge of a Sergeant Claypool.

“Sergeant,” said Bob. “Jim and I are going to scout along the top of the defile for a short ways. If we find anything wrong we’ll soon catch up with you.”

“I don’t like the looks of the place myself,” said the sergeant.

“We’ll soon find out if anything’s wrong,” said Bob. “Keep your eyes open.”

The boys soon found out they could not ride their horses, so secreting them in a clump of bushes near the road, they made their way along on foot. They had not gone far when they were challenged.

“Perdue,” said Bob promptly. “The Yanks hev entered the canyon.”

Just then the hoot of an owl was heard.

“The signal!” cried a voice. “Up boys and close this end of the canyon. We’uns hev the Yanks now. How many be thar?”

"One hundred," answered Bob.

"Thunder! I thought yo' said yo' would only bring fifty."

"No trouble to manage a hundred," replied Bob.

The woods in front seemed to be alive with guerrillas.

"Fire! Fire!" whispered Bob. "Give them the whole five shots."

They did so and the panic among the guerrillas was fearful.

"That cursed Perdue is a traitor," cried one. "Boys, save yourselves."

A few scattering shots were fired at the boys but most of the guerrillas were in full flight imagining they were attacked by a large body of men. The boys did not cease firing as long as a shot came back. A few groans showed that several had been hit.

"Now to save the men!" cried Bob.

They rushed back for their horses but had trouble finding them in the dark. At last Jim shouted, "Heah they be, Bob."

At the sound of the first shot Captain Weaver had shouted, "Halt!" Then as the firing continued he cried, "Boys, we are in a trap. Lieutenant, shoot Perdue."

But at the sound of the first shot Perdue had cried, "The rear is attacked," and was off like a shot.

The lieutenant and his men fired but a cry of derision came back.

"Right about face and charge," shouted the captain dashing to the rear of his company. "Charge through anything and everything that you meet," he cried.

They met with no opposition and soon came to where the boys were.

"Halt!" cried Bob. "Captain Weaver, is that you?"

"Yes, this is Hunter, is it not?"

"No one else," cried Bob riding up, "Captain, are your men all safe?"

"I think so. What was the meaning of all that firing?"

"To keep the way open for a retreat," replied Bob. "Form your men to resist an attack. Don't you hear them coming up the ravine?"

The sound of galloping horses could be heard.

Quickly the captain formed his men across the canyon. "Hold your fire until I give the command," he ordered.

It was not until the head of the column was nearly on them that the captain gave the order. A flame of light sprang up along the line. Then came the order to charge. But the guerrillas were fleeing back quicker than they came.

When the chase was over McNeill who had received a slight wound through the arm asked, "Where is Perdue?"

"He was at my side when the firing came," responded one of the men, "and I saw him tumble from his horse. I reckon he was killed."

The wrath of McNeill was terrible, but all he could do was to try and rally his scattered men.

Several of the guerrillas had been killed and wounded and when Captain Weaver and his men examined the dead they found Perdue among them. He had paid for his treachery with his life.

Bob told how he and Jim had routed the party that was to close the end of the canyon. "Of course they imagined there was a large party," he said modestly.

Captain Weaver grasped Bob's hand and nearly wrung it off. "Boys, you have saved my entire command from capture," he said. "Attacked in front and rear there would have been no chance for us in that narrow canyon. I was a fool for not listening to you."

"No, you were not," answered Bob. "You had General Wilson's word that Perdue was all right. We only had our suspicion. This man Perdue has been fooling our generals for years. The killing of him was well worth the scout. You ought to be made a major."

"Thank you," replied the captain humbly. "What would you advise now?"

"If my advice is worth anything I would say get out of here as soon as you can."

The captain took the advice and the return to Staunton was made without trouble.

General Wilson was an astonished man when he heard the story.

"Boys, what can I do for you?" he cried. "Anything in reason will be granted."

"I have two requests to make, General," replied Bob. "The first is that you promote Captain Weaver. He deserves it."

"It shall be done," cried the general. "Now for the second."

"A planter by the name of Somers lives a few miles south of here. He is a rabid southern man

but he has a daughter to whom Jim and I owe our lives. A word from her would have hung us both and she kept still. Afterwards it caused her a great deal of trouble. For her sake I ask that his property escape the general destruction ordered by Sheridan."

The general looked grave, then suddenly asked, "Did you say he lived south of here?"

"Yes, several miles."

"My orders say at least as far as Staunton. It is in my hands whether we go south or not," said the general. "If not too late that request will be granted, but the truth is I sent Captain Townsend down that way last evening with an order to burn everything within a radius of six or eight miles. What did you say was this man's name?"

"Somers—Howard Somers," answered Bob.

"Colonel Blair, come here," the general called to his chief of staff. "What was that old rebel's name that I told Colonel Townsend to clean out? The one that had just shipped a thousand bushels of corn to the Confederate authorities at Richmond."

"Somers, I believe," answered the colonel. "Yes, Howard Somers, reported to be one of the worst rebels in this vicinity."

"I'm afraid it's too late," said the general turning to Bob, "but I will see what I can do."

The general hastily wrote an order and handed it to Bob. It told Colonel Townsend not to touch or destroy a thing on the Somers' plantation.

The boys lost no time in starting for the plantation. On the way they saw the smoke of many burning barns, and met soldiers driving before them large herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. As they came

in sight of the Somers' place Bob gave a groan. Not only the barn and out building were in flames but also the house.

"Jim, we are too late," he cried, "but why is the house burning? That is against orders."

As they drew near the boys saw that something unusual had happened. Under a tree two still forms were lying and over one two women were bending, sobbing. Several slaves with frightened faces were standing near, the women wailing at the top of their voices.

"There is Colonel Townsend," said Bob, and riding up to him, he saluted and handed him the general's order.

The colonel read it and said, "You are too late, Hunter. I wish this order had come earlier. Do you know the family?"

"Yes, intimately," replied Bob. "Jim and I owe our lives to the daughter. What has happened?"

"A great deal," said the colonel. "The truth is I feel all shaken up. My orders were to burn Mr. Somers' barn and confiscate all his live stock. I see this order rescinds that."

"General Wilson did so on my plea," replied Bob. "Why is the house burned?"

"I'm coming to that," answered the colonel. "I have no liking for such things so I gave Lieutenant Armstrong orders to see that the barns were burned and the live stock confiscated. He found Mr. Somers a sick man, and when he was informed what was to be done he became wild. I think he must have been seized with a sudden fit of insanity, for cursing everything Yankee he rushed to a bureau and snatched a

pistol and before he could be stopped shot the lieutenant. One of the soldiers shot him and then in their rage the soldiers fired the house. By the time I got here the house was destroyed, nothing could be saved.

“That is Mr. Somers’ body out there with his wife and daughter mourning over it. I have set a guard with orders that no one disturb them. I tell you this war is bad business. I have a wife and daughter.”

Bob was thunderstruck. “Colonel, we must speak to them,” he said. “They are my dearest friends and Jim rescued the girl from a fate worse than death. They will be glad to see us. We may do them some good.”

Colonel Townsend went with the boys and spoke a word to the guard and they were passed through.

Both women had their heads bowed and did not look up as the boys approached.

“Agnes,” whispered Bob.

There was no response.

“Agnes,” he said a little louder.

Surprised she looked up and gave a cry of, “Oh! Mother, it’s Bob.” Springing up she threw her arms around his neck and burst into a torrent of tears, the first she had shed that morning.

Mrs. Somers gazed at Bob with pitiful eyes and murmured something he did not understand. Then she pointed to the burning ruins of her home and the body of her husband and cried, “Do you call this war?”

Near by lay the other still figure covered with a rough soldier blanket and pointing to it Bob said, “He had a mother and sister up north. There will be weeping there. Yes, this is war.”

"Oh! this war! Weeping, weeping everywhere! Why is it?" she cried.

Bob did not answer but turning to Agnes said, "Agnes, here is Jim. You have not noticed him."

Agnes turned her tear-stained face to Jim and held out her hand.

Jim took it and tried to speak but had to drop it and turn away. Jim could shoot men but the agony of Agnes was more than he could bear.

When the women had become more composed Bob and Agnes had a long talk, and it was decided that she and her mother would return to Winchester.

"It is the only home we have now," said Agnes.

"You will find aunt and Helen there," replied Bob. "They owe you a great deal and you will be happier there than here."

Mr. Somers was buried in the family burial ground on the plantation and then as the army fell back Mrs. Somers and Agnes went with them. Agnes had much to tell Bob. "Poor papa has not been himself since Miles died," she said. "I believe he must have been crazy when he shot that lieutenant."

"Tell me about Miles," said Bob.

Agnes told what had happened. "Father was so proud of him," she said. "In fact we were all proud of him. He told me something before he died, Bob, but he made me promise never to tell."

"I can guess what it was," replied Bob, "but let us forget all that. Agnes, you are the only one who has had faith in me from the start. God bless you! Now tell me something of yourself."

Agnes looked at him with tears streaming from her eyes. "How can I, Bob, with father so recently

dead. But, Bob, you should know. Oh! Bob, I sometimes think I was the real cause of his death." Here she broke down.

Bob waited until she became calm, then said gently, "Tell me about it, Agnes."

Agnes told how determined her father was that she should marry General Kincaid. "The very morning he was killed when he heard the Yankees were once more in Staunton and were coming our way burning and destroying, he sent for me," she said, "and declared, 'Agnes, I have borne with you as long as I will. I had a talk with your mother last night and she believes you are in love with—' I cannot tell even you who he said, Bob,— 'and now you must marry General Kincaid.'

"I protested that I would rather die than marry him and he cried, 'You will marry him if I have to drag you to the altar.'

"I saw he was terribly excited and crept away. Then the soldiers came and fired the barn and father shot that lieutenant. Bob, was I the cause of father's death?"

"No," replied Bob. "No doubt your father was partially deranged. Don't talk about it anymore."

Agnes never forgot that ride back to Winchester. On every side were smoking ruins — the beautiful valley had become a valley of desolation.¹

¹ General Sheridan in his report says that there were two thousand barns burned, 71 grist mills and eight saw mills. There were captured and driven away ten thousand, nine hundred and eighteen beef cattle, twelve thousand sheep, fifteen thousand hogs and two hundred and fifty calves. All this was done that the valley of the Shenandoah would cease to be the granary from which the Confederate army drew its supplies.

CHAPTER XXV

CEDAR CREEK

MRS. CLAYTON was very much surprised to see a government ambulance stop at her door and Bob alight. For a moment her heart stood still. Had there been another battle, and her husband been killed, wounded or taken prisoner? She and Helen ran down the walk to the street, and in a moment four women were sobbing in each other's arms.

"What has happened, Julia?" asked Mrs. Clayton.

"My husband," sobbed Mrs. Somers unable to say more.

When the excitement had subsided Bob told his aunt the story. She was horrified. "Mr. Somers was always a passionate man," she said, "but a just one. His death will be a sad blow to your uncle. They were such great friends. Was everything destroyed, Robert?"

"Everything. Not only that but everything in the valley has been destroyed. It is awful."

"What more can we expect from the Yankee?" exclaimed Mrs. Clayton bitterly.

"I don't believe in such things, Aunt, but remember Chambersburg. The burning of Chambersburg was a wanton act but it is claimed the destruction of food in the valley is a military necessity. Aunt, it was fortunate you decided to stay in Winchester.

You will not want for food here, and it will not change hands again. The Confederates will never again hold it."

"They will!" cried Mrs. Clayton. "Early will whip that low-bred Irishman, Sheridan, yet."

"We'd better not discuss the war any further, Aunt Clara. I know you will be good to Mrs. Somers and Agnes. The death of her father has removed one sorrow from Agnes. The morning he was killed he told Agnes she should marry Kincaid if he had to drag her to the altar."

"She could do worse," replied his aunt. Her heart was filled with bitterness over the destruction of the valley, and the fact that Winchester was in possession of the Federals.

Before Bob left Winchester he paid a visit to Aunt Chloe, the old Somers slave who during all the war had remained faithful to her master and mistress, and had taken care of the Winchester home while they were at Staunton.

"What do I cah fo' Massa Linkum if he do say I be free," she would say. "I belong to Massa Somers. I nussed Missy Agnes and Massa Miles. I stay wid dem till I die." And she did.

Chloe had always liked Bob and was glad to see him. "Aunt Chloe, I want to make a bargain with you," said Bob. "One just between ourselves. No one else is to know it."

"What be dat?" asked Chloe. "Since yo' done turn Yankee, Massa Robert, I be supicious of yo'."

Bob laughed. "Now, Aunt Chloe, you won't go back on me, will you? I'm no more Yankee than I always was. I came to tell you what had happened

to the Somers. Mr. Somers is dead. They haven't a thing left. Of course they have some money but it is Confederate money and worth nothing. Mrs. Somers and Agnes are at my aunt's and will be here soon. Now I want to leave five hundred dollars here. I will put it in this desk drawer. Turn your back so you won't see me do it. Now, you can tell Mrs. Somers you found it there and that you saw no one put it in. They will think it is some that Mr. Somers put away. On your life never tell where this money came from."

"I see, Massa Robert," cried Aunt Chloe. "I make dem believe Massa put it thar. Bress yo' heart, Massa Robert. Since de Yankees had come no one will take dat ole Confed money."

Bob went away satisfied that Mrs. Somers and Agnes would not want during the winter.

After the valley had been devastated Sheridan drew back his army and established his line along Cedar Creek, some twenty miles south of Winchester.

Early advanced and took up his old position at Fisher's Hill. Since he had been defeated so completely and as all his supplies had to be drawn from Staunton, Sheridan had little fear of him. In fact he thought Early would soon be obliged to withdraw, so he took the opportunity of running down to Washington to see Grant who was to meet him there. In his absence the army was in command of General Wright of the Sixth Corps.

Sheridan felt the only danger was that Early might be suddenly reinforced from Richmond, and attack. To guard against this he called Bob and Jim to him and said, "Boys, I am going to ask you

to perform a dangerous service. Of course you can refuse if you wish."

"What is it?" asked Bob.

"That you enter the rebel lines and find out if Early is being reinforced."

Bob looked at Jim and asked, "What do you think?"

"Is that all we are to find out?" asked Jim.

"Yes, waste no time trying to find out anything further. That will be your object."

"I reckon we can try it," replied Jim. "I don't think it will be as dangerous as you think."

"Thank you, I knew I could depend on you," said the general. "Be careful, I don't wish you to fail. I'm going to Washington for a few days, and I hope to hear from you by the time I get back. When will you start?"

"Tonight," answered Bob.

"Good!" exclaimed the general shaking their hands and bidding them Godspeed.

As they left, Sheridan said to his chief of staff, "There go two boys who seem willing to try anything. They are starting on this journey as if it were no unusual occurrence, yet I am sending them into the lion's mouth."

"I often wonder that young Hunter is engaged in this business," replied the chief. "I've heard his brother, the general, has offered to get him a commission time and again, but he always refuses."

"I expect it is in the blood," replied the general, "but young Hunter was really forced in it. He is a nephew of General Clayton of the rebel army, and as his parents are dead he lived with his uncle. At

the outbreak of the war he was falsely accused of being a spy and General Jackson placed a price on his head. He fled to the mountains and fell in with Jim Kidder and took to scouting and spying in earnest."

"General, you seem to have his history down pat," laughed the chief. "Are you as well acquainted with the histories of all your officers?"

"I generally know something of a man before I appoint him on any particular work," replied Sheridan. "Want me to give you your history?"

The chief shrugged his shoulders. "Please don't," he said, "I might hear something I do not like."

It did not take the boys long to prepare for the journey. As it was cool at night they each took a woolen and a rubber blanket and food to last a week. They talked it over and concluded they had gone on many trips more dangerous than this one. It would not be necessary for them to mingle with Early's army to find out what Sheridan wished to know. If they could gain a position where they could see all who entered or left the camp it would be all they desired. To do this they would have to gain the rear of the enemy.

"Jim," said Bob, "I believe the best way is for us to pass around the left flank of the army and watch our chance to climb Massanutton Mountain. We can find a place on it where we will have a fine view of the valley. All Early's supplies come from Staunton, and if reinforcements come they must come that way."

"Gee! if the rebels try to turn this flank they'll suah have work," exclaimed Jim.

The boys had just waded the creek and were stumbling through the woods. Before them arose the mountain rocky and grim. They had passed beyond all the pickets and neither friend nor foe was to be seen.

"It is overcoming seemingly impossible things that make success in the army," answered Bob. "That this way is so apparently impossible may be the very reason that Early may try it. I do not believe that it is absolutely impossible, and yet I think Sheridan believes the danger is little, for did you not notice how much stronger the right of the army is picketed than the left?"

"Yes, I noticed it."

"There is where our weakness lies," continued Bob. "The very strength of the position makes the pickets careless. Jim, if our army is attacked it will be on the left flank."

As it was getting dark Jim asked, "Bob, hadn't we better git out of these woods and climb the mounting?"

"Not on your life!" replied Bob. "Remember that signal station on the mountain. We'll have to get miles beyond that before we try to gain a sight of the main valley. We might as well camp here as it is too dark to make any progress in these woods."

Wrapping themselves in their blankets they lay down by the side of a log, and feeling themselves secure were soon fast asleep. At the first break of day they were up and, partaking of a light breakfast, started out.

We will not follow them in all of their journey that day. It was one of toil and danger. They groped

through forests, crawled along fence rows, and hid among rocks, but always made progress.

Towards night Jim said, "Seems to me we air gettin' farther away from the valley. We must be near Luray Valley."

"We are, Jim," replied Bob. "I think we are far enough off now so we can begin to climb the mountain. We will have to make our way across to the main valley."

The boys turned and selecting a place where the mountain was thickly wooded, began to make their way up. They wished to reach the top before darkness came and were nearly there when they heard voices. Throwing themselves down they crawled forward foot by foot until they saw they were in front of a picket post.

"We will have to get around that," whispered Bob.

Going back a ways they made their way for a short distance along the side of the mountain, then again began to crawl up. It was now dark and objects could not be distinguished at any distance. They were about two hundred yards from the post. The soldiers now had a fire built and were getting supper.

The boys crawled past the post but it was so dark they concluded to camp for the night.

They made a bed between two rocks. One would watch while the other slept. They were not disturbed and at the first dawn of day were once more on their way. Along in the afternoon they reached a point where they had a view of the valley.

"We'll stay here," said Bob.

They soon found a place which suited them, a big

rock covered with vines and well concealed by bushes.

"This is a bully place," said Jim. "One could pass within six feet of us and be none the wiser."

"Just see what a view of the valley we get through this hole," replied Bob.

They lay here four days watching and waiting. Lumbering trains and small bodies of troops were continually passing and repassing, but there were no signs of any large body of troops.

"This be gettin' monotonous," said Jim stretching himself.

"The only thing we can do is wait," replied Bob, "but our rations are getting low. You're an awful eater, Jim, when there's nothing else to do."

"What kin a feller do heah but eat?" grumbled Jim. "How long be yo' goin' to stay, Bob?"

"At least two days more if nothing turns up."

Jim groaned. "Bob, the rations won't last that long."

"Then you'll have to go without," was the answer.

During this conversation Bob was scanning the valley through his glass. Suddenly he exclaimed, "Jim, I believe a large body of troops is coming, but it is cavalry."

Bob was right. Cavalry, at least a small brigade was coming and at its head rode an officer on whom Bob leveled his glass. "Jim, that's General Kincaid, I'm sure," he exclaimed.

Just behind the cavalry came infantry and by the way they marched it could be seen they were old and trained soldiers. They kept coming until dark and Bob knew at least a division had passed, six or seven thousand.

“Jim, we’ve found out what Sheridan wished to know,” said Bob.

“And I reckon there will be something doin’,” replied Jim. “Early isn’t whipped yet.”

The boys started back in the dark. It was slow traveling but the boys felt they must get to the camp as soon as possible. Their speed came near to being their undoing several times, but the evening of the next day found them at the foot of Massanutton, and near the Union lines.

Jim suddenly exclaimed, “Bob, look!”

Several high Confederate officers were coming along a narrow path, not wide enough for two to walk abreast. The boys hid themselves and watched. The men were pointing and talking very earnestly. At last they seemed satisfied and turned back.

“That means mischief,” said Bob. “Jim, we’re getting back none too soon.”

“It suah looks like it,” drawled Jim.

The boys forded the creek. There were no pickets on the other side nor did they meet any until they were near the Union lines when they were halted.

“Friends, without the countersign, Union scouts,” replied Bob.

The corporal of the guard was called, and they were allowed to pass after he asked a few questions.

“What do you think of that, Jim?” asked Bob. “Not one of those men knew us. They took our word. We could have got in just as easy if we had been rebs.”

“They’re takin’ it as easy as if thar weren’t a reb within a thousand miles,” replied Jim. “That be the trouble with our men, Bob. They don’t seem to

realize their responsibility. Wait until they've stayed awake as many nights as we hev, and they will begin to know."

They found Sheridan had not yet returned from Washington so made their way to General Wright to report.

"What is it, boys?" asked the general. "General Sheridan told me he had sent you on a scout."

"He sent us to find if Early was receiving reinforcements," answered Bob.

"Did you find out?"

"We did. Last night a small brigade of cavalry and a full division of infantry joined General Early," replied Bob.

General Wright started. "Are you sure?" he asked.

"Yes, General, Jim and I saw them."

"Saw them! Where?"

Bob had to give the general a short description of their trip.

"Well, I've heard you boys could go anywhere, and now I believe it," said the general.

"One thing more, General, and I believe it is more important than what I have told you," said Bob. He then told of seeing the officers on Massanutton. "General, they were looking for a road along the base of the mountain. They mean to attack us on our left flank, a flank that is known to be poorly guarded. All our cavalry is on the right flank."

"What! Attack us by coming around Massanutton," cried the general. "It is hardly possible for a man to come over the path you describe, much less artillery."

“They will not bring artillery,” replied Bob. “With our left flank routed and flying it will be easy for their entire army to advance. General, I would not be surprised to have an attack any time. One thing more, if you will excuse me, General. The pickets on our left are too careless. They feel too secure.”

“Thank you,” replied the general. “I will look into what you have said the first thing in the morning. I must confess I have thought the left flank secure, but you have made me feel doubtful. All you have told me is directly opposite from what I have been hearing. The general impression is that the enemy is retreating. I will find out in the morning. You may go now.”

True to his promise General Wright sent out two reconnoitering parties the next morning. They returned late in the afternoon with the news that not an enemy was in sight and that a force had come around Massanutton was all rot. From what they could see instead of the enemy attacking, they were getting out as fast as they could.

“I think those boys got their specs on wrong,” laughed an officer. “Those troops they saw were getting away instead of coming.”

The news that the enemy was retreating spread through the army. It gave them a feeling of security and made the pickets more careless than ever.

After the boys had made their report they sought the division of General Hunter where they found food and rest. It was very late when they awoke the next morning.

“Well, boys, I guess you have missed it this time,”

said the general as he greeted them. "The whole army is laughing over the report you made last night."

"Laughing!" cried Bob. "Has Wright done nothing?"

"He has sent out two parties but the general opinion is that they will find nothing."

"Wait and see," replied Bob.

They did wait and when the report came back there was a general laugh at their expense. Jim was fighting mad.

"Reckon they think we're fools," he cried. "Had our specs on wrong, did we? Them troops we saw were goin' not comin'! Oh shucks! I've a mind never to take another scout." He threw his hat on the ground in disgust.

"Easy, Jim," replied Bob. "Early may be retreating even if he did receive that reinforcement. Wait and see what happens. We can't buck a whole army."

"Bob, what do you really think?" asked Jim when they were alone.

"I wish Sheridan was here," replied Bob. "That those parties saw no enemies makes me believe more than ever that something is up. Of course Early would send no troops around Massanutton in broad daylight. I thought they would attack this morning but it seems they were not quite ready. Wait until tomorrow morning, Jim. They may think more of us."

That night the army slept in perfect security and while they slept the Confederates were busy. Single file General Gordon led his division along the rocky

base of Massanutton. Not a single soldier opposed his passage of the creek. In the darkness they crept close to the picket line. A few chosen men were sent forward to capture the sentinel.

The sentinel was found sitting on the ground with his back against a tree sound asleep. What was the use of keeping awake when the enemy was running away? In the rear the whole post was found asleep. They awoke to find themselves prisoners. Then post after post was captured.

The whole picket line of the Army of West Virginia had been captured, and not a gun fired. The army slept on unaware of danger. Just as day broke Gordon hurled his men on the Union camp, hardly awake. The first they knew the place was ringing with the rebel yell and bullets were plowing through their tents. Wildly the soldiers fled or yielded themselves prisoners. The Army of West Virginia was routed with hardly firing a shot.

The boys had just awakened when the sound of firing was heard.

"Jim, do you hear that?" cried Bob. "The attack has come."

Hurriedly the boys dressed. The Sixth Corps was in reserve. They could see nothing for a thick fog covered the ground. All was in confusion, bugles were blowing, officers shouting, the Sixth Corps was falling in line.

Back through the gloom the soldiers came running, many half dressed, more without arms. Nothing could stop them.

The Nineteenth Corps hastily formed their lines. Their position was good. Surely they could stop the

enemy. But no, panic seized them, and almost without firing a shot they broke and fled.

The fog lifted somewhat and Bob could see almost the entire army in flight, some regiments falling back fighting gallantly and others hopelessly broken, every man thinking only of his own safety.

“Oh, Jim! Jim! If they had only believed us!” he groaned.

“Gettin’ just what they deserve,” growled Jim. “Reckon they’re beginning to think our specs were all right after all.”

The whole army was pressed back some two or three miles. Here a line was formed and the enemy checked.

Between eleven and twelve o’clock Sheridan came on the field. He had arrived in Winchester the night before, and in the morning hearing the firing had made that wonderful ride from “Winchester twenty miles away.”

“Sheridan is here! Sheridan is here!” shouted Bob to his brother whose division was fighting desperately to hold the enemy back. Bob was once more acting as his brother’s orderly.

Yes, Sheridan was there and the sound of his voice was worth ten thousand men. All signs of panic ceased. Hundreds who had fled returned to their colors wildly cheering for Sheridan. Against the new line the enemy dashed in vain.

At three-thirty Sheridan ordered a general advance and the Confederate army was swept from the field. Now came Custer’s chance. He gained the rear of the flying army. Hundreds of wagons and prisoners and fifty-nine cannon were the trophies of

his victory. Of the cannon twenty-four were those that had been captured from the Federals that morning. Every piece was recovered and thirty-five more.

Early's army was hopelessly broken and fled in utter rout.

During the afternoon General Hunter received a ball through the arm. Bob begged him to leave the field but he would not hear of it until the victory was completely won. Then he fainted from loss of blood. It was dark when he opened his eyes and asked about the battle.¹

"Clayt, it was grand!" cried Bob. "Custer captured all their artillery. You must not talk any more. Do you know what I am going to do? Take you to Aunt Clara's. Not a word now."

The doctor came and gave the general an opiate and when he awoke he was in the house of his uncle, General Howard Clayton of Winchester.

¹ The battle of Cedar Creek was the most notable instance of the war where the presence of one man turned what seemed inevitable defeat into a glorious victory. "Sheridan twenty miles away" will never be forgotten as long as American history is read.

CHAPTER XXVI

TWO GENERALS—ONE GIRL

WHERE Custer made his gallant charge General Wythe Kincaid was found mortally wounded. He was brought back to the same hospital where General Hunter lay.

Bob, hearing that a Confederate general had been brought in badly wounded, went to see if it was anyone he knew. At first all the resentment he felt towards the man rushed to his mind, but when he looked at his pale face and heard he had not many hours to live, this resentment fled and he said to the surgeon, "I know him. May I speak to him?"

"It will do him no harm," replied the surgeon.

Bob asked gently, "Can I do anything for you? Have you any word you wish to send anyone?"

Kincaid opened his eyes and when he saw Bob, gasped, "So you have come to gloat over me. Well, take your fill."

"You are mistaken," replied Bob. "I am here to help you all I can, to bear any message you may wish to send. God knows I bear you no malice now."

Kincaid seemed to be having a struggle with himself, then whispered, "That paper I took from you, I knew it to be a fraud, yet I would have let you hang."

"That is past," replied Bob. "Don't think of it."

"I have tried to make people believe that it was you who abducted Miss Somers."

"And it was you who did it," said Bob. "General, they tell me you have not long to live. I freely forgive you. Make your peace with God."

Kincaid stared at him a moment, then raising his hands cried, "I did it because I loved her so. Oh! If I could only see her before I die."

Bob thought a moment, then said, "General, my brother is wounded. I am going to take him to my uncle's house in Winchester tonight. The ambulance will soon be here. If the surgeon will give me permission I will take you to Agnes."

"Oh! Take me," he moaned. "I cannot die in peace unless I see her."

"Take him by all means," said the surgeon, "but he may not live to get there."

It was past midnight when the two generals were placed in an ambulance and started on their way to Winchester, Bob and a young surgeon going with them.

General Hunter slept under the influence of an opiate, but General Kincaid kept whispering, "Doctor, aren't we almost there? For God's sake keep me alive until I get there."

It was well along in the forenoon when they reached General Clayton's residence. The news of the battle had preceded them, and the little city was wild with excitement.

Mrs. Clayton and Helen came rushing to the road with pale faces. "Is it Howard?" Mrs. Clayton whispered.

"No, I think uncle is safe," answered Bob. "It

is my brother. He is shot through the arm. The bone is not broken, but he would not give up until he had lost so much blood he fainted. The doctor says if he is kept quiet he will be all right in a month, so I brought him here. I thought it was time he was visiting you any way. He is asleep now. The doctor gave him a powerful opiate."

"Bring him right in," said Mrs. Clayton. "Why, it has been five years since Clayton was here."

"That's the reason I thought he ought to come now," relied Bob. "He'll be surprised when he wakes up. Good-bye."

"Why Bob, you're not going so quick?" cried his aunt.

"Yes, for a short time. I must hurry or he will not be alive when I get there. I mean General Kincaid. He is mortally wounded. I brought him in the same ambulance with Clayt."

"General Kincaid!" cried both women. "Where in the world are you taking him, Bob?"

"To Mrs. Somers. He said he could not die in peace unless he saw Agnes. It is something he wants to tell her. By the way, Aunt, he confessed to me that he knew that paper he took from me was a forgery."

"Bob, I have believed you were innocent ever since you rescued me from Black Dan, and told me you were not guilty," cried Helen.

"I know it, Helen. You have stuck to me like a good cousin. Now be kind to Clayton even if he is a Yankee general. I'll be back soon."

It had been a sorrowful homecoming for Mrs. Somers and Agnes. Everything about the house re-

minded them of Mr. Somers and Miles. Mrs. Somers sat down and wept while Agnes comforted her as best she could. Mrs. Somers turned to her for everything.

Agnes could not get the manner of her father's death out of her mind. She tried to make herself believe that only the soldiers were to blame. Why did they burn and destroy everything?

"Oh! Father, Father," she moaned, "forgive me if I was unfaithful to you."

Then the thought would come unbidden that his death had removed from her the fear of General Kincaid. With bitter tears she tried to push the thought from her.

"Mother," she said, "at least we are well provided for. There were thousands and thousands of dollars of Confederate money and bonds in the house and I saved it all."

The first rude shock came when Agnes went out to buy something. She came back weeping.

"What is it, child?" asked her mother.

"They will not take our money here," Agnes replied. "Even our best friends don't want it. They make the excuse that the Yankees will arrest them if they take it. I know better. The Yankees laugh and say it's not worth a dollar a bushel. Mother, I know what's the trouble. They think the South will lose, and the money never be redeemed. We are beggars."

"What dat yo' say?" asked Aunt Chloe, who had just come in.

"I said we are beggars, Chloe. Our money isn't worth anything."

“Just look, chile, whar yo’ fader put his money.”

Agnes looked. There was not only the five hundred that Bob had left but another five hundred that Chloe had saved.

“Aunt Chloe, where did you get all this money?” cried Agnes.

“Lan sake, chile! Do yo’ think yo’ fader keep me here all dis time without money? I tended to his business, I did, an’ dis is what I sabel. Ebber cent be yo’n, chile.”

Agnes clasped the old negress in her arms and kissed her crying, “Aunt Chloe, what should we do without you?”

“Dar, dar, honey,” exclaimed Aunt Chloe, “I nebber leab yo’.”

The day after the battle of Cedar Creek, Agnes heard the news and was telling it to her mother.

“Was it as bad as that?” cried Mrs. Somers.

“Yes, Mother, so they say. I have given up all hopes of the South winning.”

“Don’t say that, child,” cried Mrs. Somers.

“I must say it and sometimes think it will be best if we don’t win. It was an uncalled for war from the start. Why, Virginia held out to the last, she was just dragged into it.”

“Child! Child! What would your father say if he could hear you? The Yankees killed him. They destroyed everything we had, made us beggars. I hate them.”

“And they tell me,” said Agnes softly, “that the lieutenant whom father shot has an old mother weeping her eyes out for him. The war has made both North and South suffer.”

The sound of wheels was heard, and Agnes looked from a window.

“Mercy! An ambulance has stopped and Robert Hunter is with it. What can it mean?” She rushed out followed by her mother.

Bob touched his hat and said, “Mrs. Somers, you may think I have come on a strange mission, but General Kincaid is in this ambulance mortally wounded.”

Agnes gave a faint cry.

Bob went on, “He told me he could not die in peace unless he saw Agnes. So I have brought him. It is for you to say whether I shall bring him in or take him to the hospital.”

“Bring him in by all means,” replied Mrs. Somers.

The general was carefully taken from the ambulance and carried into the house and placed on a bed. The surgeon gave him a stimulant and whispered, “If you wish to say anything, you had better say it soon.”

The general smiled and said, “Thank you, Doctor. You have been very kind. I wish to see Mrs. Somers.”

She approached the bed with halting steps, making a sign for the others to leave the room.

General Kincaid looked up at her wistfully, saying, “I have no mother and I have indulged in the vain hopes of some day calling you by that name. That hope is past. I hear Mr. Somers is gone. He was the best friend I ever had. He gave his life for our beloved South as I am giving mine.

“I have an aged father down near Woodstock. He used to curse me for a scapegrace and a spendthrift,

but now he is proud of me. Will you see that I am taken there for burial? You will find money in a belt around me. That is all. Please send Agnes quickly. I feel myself going."

Agnes came weeping. He looked at her with hungry eyes. "Agnes," he whispered, "I have wronged you greatly. If you only knew."

"Don't," she said. "I know all. Miles told me."

"Told you it was I who had you kidnapped?" he asked in astonishment.

"He said he knew it must be you," she answered. "Don't talk of that now. I forgive you. Don't you wish me to call a minister?"

"No," he whispered. "I do not believe in death-bed repentances. As I lived so will I die. All I did, Agnes, was for love of you. I never meant to harm you, but I did mean to marry you even if I had to do so by force. Agnes, you don't know how I love you. Even now death would not be bitter if I thought I would have to live without you."

Agnes bowed her head, the tears flowing like rain. "I am not deserving of such love," she said. "But, General, if you love me as you say, do one thing for me. Clear Robert Hunter from the charge of being a spy at the beginning of the war, and of being instrumental in kidnapping me."

A look of the old fire flashed into the general's eyes, but it quickly faded and he moaned, "Do you really love Bob, Agnes? I thought so once, and that was the reason I hated him."

"No! No! Nothing like that. Bob and I have always been like brother and sister, nothing more."

"I have already confessed to him," whispered Kin-

caid. He suddenly partially raised himself and cried, "Agnes, Agnes, it is growing dark! I am dying! Kiss me!"

Agnes bent and pressed a kiss on his forehead.

A smile of tenderness came over his face and he closed his eyes never to open them again. The smile lingered and people wondered.

Bob returned immediately to his uncle's to find his brother still sleeping. He soon awoke, however, and looking around exclaimed, "Bob, where am I? This room looks natural but I can't place it."

"Can't you guess?" asked Bob.

The general shook his head. "I must be in a hospital in some private house. I feel weak but all right."

"You will be all right," replied Bob cheerfully. "You are weak because you have lost so much blood. If you had only gone back when you should, you would be walking around now."

"Bob, I couldn't go back with all those rebels pressing on us and our men fleeing. I seem to remember your telling me it was a victory."

"A glorious victory, Clayt. You are at Uncle Howard's. No wonder you didn't know the place, it's been so long since you were here."

"Is the house used as a hospital?" asked the general.

"No, Aunt Clara and Helen are both here. They did not leave after the battle of Opequon. I'll tell them you are awake."

Bob soon returned with his aunt and cousin, Mrs. Clayton bearing a bowl of broth.

"You naughty boy," she said kissing him. "Had

to be dragged here after all these years. Take some of this broth."

"Not until after I kiss him," said Helen.

"How beautiful you are, Helen," exclaimed Clayton. "If you were not my cousin I would fall in love with you right away."

"Well, after that you certainly may have your broth," laughed Helen.

The general took the broth with evident relish. "How good this tastes," he said. "I believe I could eat a porterhouse steak."

"Not yet awhile," replied his aunt.

Mrs. Clayton would not be satisfied until the family physician had been called in. He was an old gray-haired man who had known the general as a boy. He examined the wound carefully and said, "Why, you blamed Yankee, you are all right. Not a bone broken. A vein was cut. That was what made you bleed so much. If you had gone right to a surgeon you would be up now. As it is you will have to keep quiet until you regain your strength. Mrs. Clayton, you say you have given him some broth. You can give him something stronger, and in a couple of days he can have anything he wants. If this is my case I'll call again tomorrow."

"Yes, Doctor, it is your case," replied the general. "Our surgeons will have plenty to do."

"All right, then, but you want to be careful I don't poison you. I ought to."

"I'm not afraid. Even Aunt Clara has not scolded me."

"Wait until you get well, young man," said his aunt.

Now that all anxiety about his brother was settled, Bob said to his aunt, "I believe I'll step over to Mrs. Somers' and see if General Kincaid is still alive. By the way, Clayt don't know that Mrs. Somers and Agnes are in the city or that Mr. Somers is dead. Don't tell him. I want to spring a little surprise on him."

When Bob reached the house he learned that General Kincaid had already passed away. News of his death was sweeping through the city, and was received with sorrow. His infatuation for Agnes was known to all and his dying at her house caused all kinds of questions.

"These people will drive me crazy," Agnes said to Bob. "What can I tell them. They are even asking if we were engaged."

"Just refer them to me," replied Bob. "General Kincaid was a popular officer and I'll say as little as possible against him, but your reputation must be cleared. The mystery of your abduction must remain a mystery no longer. It's for your sake I ask you to let me clear it up. I also hear that General Kincaid asked to be buried on his father's plantation near Woodstock. Will you let me see to that?"

Agnes gladly gave her consent and Bob saw that everything was done. At the same time the following item appeared in the paper:

A MYSTERY NO LONGER

The mystery as to who abducted Miss Agnes Somers nearly two years ago is a mystery no longer. It has generally been believed that Robert Hunter, the well-

known Union scout, was at the bottom of it, but this has proven a mistake. Before his death General Kincaid confessed all. It was he who caused Miss Somers' abduction. It was well known that General Kincaid was deeply in love with Miss Somers and when she became engaged to General Monroe he grew desperate.

To General Kincaid's honor be it said he intended Miss Somers no harm. He had arranged it so she would be rescued by him, hoping by this way to win her gratitude and affection. His plans were frustrated by his being ordered away on a raid and before he could return Miss Somers' place of concealment was accidentally discovered by James Kidder, the well-known Union scout.

Miss Somers was in ignorance as to the identity of her abductor until General Kincaid confessed all on his deathbed and asked her forgiveness, which was freely given.

Thus is made plain Miss Somers' strange story of how carefully she was guarded while in captivity.

General Kincaid was one of our bravest officers and his death is universally lamented.

Miss Somers is to be congratulated that any doubt that some may have had as to the truth of her story no longer exists. She is in great sorrow over the recent death of her father, and has the sympathy of all.

When Bob showed Agnes this she smiled and said, "Bob, this is better than I could have done myself."

Agnes was surprised when some ladies who had not been able to see her when she passed them on the street, were among the first to call and assure her that they never had believed that anything was wrong, and how splendid it was that General Kincaid had cleared everything up.

"How he must have loved you. Agnes, if he had lived I believe you would have married him."

To this Agnes would say nothing.

After General Kincaid's body had been sent to his old home and things were again running in the accustomed way at the Somers' house, Bob said to Agnes, "Agnes, I have a little surprise for you. General Kincaid was not the only wounded soldier I brought in that night. I brought one other and auntie is taking care of him. He was shot through the arm and is getting along nicely. I want you to see him."

"Who is he?" asked Agnes.

"I'm not going to tell, but you know him."

"Can it be General Crampton? I thought he was at Richmond?"

"You will have to come and see," laughed Bob.

Agnes was soon ready. Mrs. Clayton and Helen welcomed her gladly.

"I have come to see your patient," she said. "Robert has excited my curiosity. He says I know him, but will not say who he is."

"So you do," cried Helen, "but I'll not tell you. You'll have to find out for yourself."

In the four days the general had been at his uncle's he had improved wonderfully. Old Doctor Bristow and he had become very chummy but they were continually quarreling over the war. The argument would always end by the doctor sputtering, "Blast you! I ought to have poisoned you at the start, and I may yet, you blamed Yankee."

The general would laugh and say, "Doc, I couldn't hire you to poison me."

When Bob and Agnes entered his room the general was sitting bolstered up in a chair, his left arm in a sling.

“Clayt, I’ve brought you a visitor,” said Bob. “I believe you know her, at any rate you’ve asked me enough about her.” Bob slipped from the room.

General Hunter turned pale, but collecting himself said, “Miss Somers, excuse my not rising. I am glad to see you. It has been, let me see, nearly five years since we met. It’s a wonder you have come to see me, Yankee as I am.” He said this rather bitterly.

Agnes was plainly confused, but managed to say, “General Hunter, you are mistaken. I did not know it was you I was brought to see, but I can truly say I am glad to see you and know that you are not dangerously hurt. As my presence is evidently not agreeable I will leave.”

“Agnes — Miss Somers — don’t go,” cried the general. “You know what your father charged me with. I asked if you believed that of me and you refused to answer. I had come to your house that day expecting to tell you of my love and ask you to be my wife. I was foolish enough to think my feelings were reciprocated. I was mistaken. I left your house a changed man, but I have never wished you anything but happiness. The bitterest part of this war to me is that your promised husband lost his life charging my division at Gettysburg. But the thought that you believed what your father charged has embittered my entire life. “I—”

“Stop!” cried Agnes. “I never thought you were such a man as it was charged you were. I did

not answer you that day because I seemed paralyzed. My tongue refused to move. The fierce anger of my father froze my blood. I tried to cry out, 'I don't believe it,' but I could not utter a word. You left at once and never came back to Winchester. When I became engaged to Clyde Monroe I thought you were dead, killed at Fredericksburg."

She stopped and burst into tears.

"Agnes! Agnes! Have I been mistaken all these years?" cried the general in a broken voice.

Just then Mrs. Clayton and Helen came into the room.

"What have you two been talking about?" they asked.

"Simply of old times," answered the general.

"Must have been very pleasant," said Mrs. Clayton, looking at Agnes sharply.

From that time the general and Agnes seemed to be simply good friends. It was noticed that he spent much of his time at the Somers' during his convalescence.

"Don't say anything. I believe it will turn out all right," said Bob to Helen.

"I don't know," said Helen. "Sometimes I think it will and sometimes I don't. I know it would never be if her father were alive. I don't blame him for not wanting her to marry a Yankee. I would not marry the best one living."

"Whoopee! Hear her talk!" shouted Bob. "That is because you are engaged to General Crampton. Why, Coz, if you weren't my cousin I believe I'd marry you myself."

"Take that, you young scapegrace!" cried Helen,

boxing his ears. Then she suddenly changed and cried, "Oh! Bob, how proud I'd be of you and Clayton if you had only been for the South. What will you do with us if you whip us, as I am beginning to be afraid you will? See what Sheridan has done to the valley." She burst into tears.

"Helen, we are going to whip, but don't be frightened," said Bob. "There will be no harsh terms. The South will be received as a returned prodigal and taken once more to our bosom."

Helen shook her head. "It can never be, Bob," she answered. "The bonds between the North and South are irrevocably broken."

"Wait and see," replied Bob.

CHAPTER XXVII

BOB MEETS CLARISSA ONCE MORE

THE battle of Cedar Creek made great changes in the valley of the Shenandoah. No more was it to be to the Federal army the valley of humiliation.

After a time Sheridan drew his army back near to Winchester. The valley had been so desolate that it was not worth while for either army to hold it. It became the battle ground between raiding parties of cavalry.

The Sixth and Nineteenth Corps were ordered back to reinforce the army before Petersburg, leaving only the Army of West Virginia and the cavalry with Sheridan to defend the valley.

General Hunter had so far recovered that when his command was ordered south he was able to go with it. Before he left he asked Agnes Somers to be his wife.

"Clayton, I love you," she replied, "but I do not think I shall ever marry." She told him of her promise to her father never to marry without his consent. "And although he is dead," she said, "I feel that my promise is still sacred, and I know he would never consent for me to marry you. Just see what your forces have done to the valley," she went on. "This war has not only taken my father and

brother, but it has beggared us. Our plantation is a waste. I hardly know how we are going to live. I am a poor girl. No, I cannot marry you. Please go and do not let me see you again."

"But you said you loved me," cried the general.

"That is the reason I cannot see you anymore," replied Agnes, bursting into tears. "Go! Go! Why wring my heart more?"

"Agnes, I will go, but that you love me is a ray of hope I take with me. When the war is over, if I am still alive, I shall come to you to see if you have not changed this cruel sentence. If I am killed my last thought will be of you. Good-bye."

Before she was aware of his intention he caught her in his arms and kissed her, and was gone.

Agnes hardly knew how she got back to her room. Throwing herself on her bed she sobbed wildly. "I do love him," she moaned, "but I can never marry him. My father, my brother, my devastated home all plead against him. Father, I did right in refusing him, did I not? I did as I promised you. But, oh! Father, pity me! Pity me!"

Bob was sorry to have his brother leave but felt sure he would be with him before long as there was so little going on in the valley.

The month of November passed without any engagement of much magnitude, but Bob and Jim were kept busy watching the movements of the Confederate cavalry, and more than once saved detachments of Federal cavalry from being cut off.

Mosby was also busy, and it fretted Jim that Sheridan did not clean him out. "It can be done, I know," he cried.

Bob thought the same thing, but it was not for them to tell Sheridan what to do.¹

In December General Sheridan decided to make a move against the enemy. General Torbert was ordered to take two divisions of cavalry and push through Chester Gap and strike the Virginia Central Railroad and Charlottesville or Gordonsville. At the same time General Custer was to take his division and strike up the valley for Staunton.

Custer's movement was a feint to try and draw troops away from in front of Torbert.

As the main movement was to be made by Torbert, Jim and Bob went with him.

The Federals had made a number of attempts to reach Gordonsville but had always failed.

General Torbert started from Winchester on December nineteenth in the midst of a cold rain. The next day this turned to sleet and snow.

"Jim, this is going to be a tough trip, but we are well fixed for it," said Bob.

"Reckon we kin stand it if the rest kin," replied Jim.

Both the boys had good horses and were accustomed to hardships.

The roads were fearful and rapid marching impossible. There was little trouble until they neared Madison Court House.

Bob and Jim were ahead and, in their rough cloth-

¹ In his report General Sheridan says: "I was at times annoyed by guerrilla bands, the most formidable of which was under a partisan chief by the name of Mosby. I had constantly refused to operate against these bands believing them to be substantially a benefit to me as they prevented straggling and kept my trains well closed up."

ing, could easily be taken for guerrillas. Just before they reached Madison two horsemen rode out of a crossroads and when they saw the boys turned to flee, but Bob yelled, "Hold on, fellers. What be yo' afraid of? We'uns be all right."

The men halted and let them come up, but they held their guns ready for instant use if necessary.

"Who be yo'?" asked one of them.

"Scouts or guerrillas, jest as yo' want to call us," answered Bob. "I see yo' be sojers. What command?"

"Jackson's," replied one of the men.

"Be he at Madison?" asked Bob. "Thar be a lot of Yanks comin' this way."

"Thar be! How many?"

"Don't know, but I reckon ten or twelve thousand."

"Jackson has only a small brigade," cried the men. "We'uns must tell him."

This conversation had thrown the men off their guard and they suddenly found themselves looking into the muzzles of the carbines.

"Reckon we'uns hev yo'," said Bob. "Hands up."

The men were disarmed and taken back and Bob told what they had said.

"If that is the case, Jackson will not stand," said General Torbert. "Charge right through the town."

Charge they did, Jackson making but a slight resistance. The only fruits of the flight were a dozen prisoners.

"Who lives in that house?" asked Bob of an old negro who stood with open mouth watching them. He

pointed to the most pretentious looking house in the village.

“Judge Cadwalader, Massa,” was the answer. “He has a mighty fine plantation a few miles frum heah, but he live heah winters.”

“Thank you, Uncle,” replied Bob, and riding up to Jim cried, “Jim, our old friend, Judge Cadwalader, lives in that house. Let’s call on him. No doubt he will be delighted to see us. You can entertain him while I talk to the lovely Clarissa. I am just dying to see her.”

“Sposen you talk to the jedge and let me entertain the gal,” answered Jim.

“Now, Jim, would you go back on me like that?” asked Bob in an injured tone.

Jim laughed. “You kin take her, Bob. I hev no use for sich high-flown gals as Clarissa.”

Judge Cadawalader had watched the flight of the Confederates through the village, and he was furious. “Why don’t they fight? They are cowards!” he roared. He brought his cane down so violently on the floor that it broke.

“Now, Father, see what you have done,” said Clarissa, who stood by a window watching. “No doubt there are so many of the Yankees our boys have no chance.”

Then she suddenly cried, “Father, those boys who stopped us twice are with the Yankees. They are coming here.”

“Don’t let them in,” yelled the judge. But Clarissa had already flown to the door and opening it cried, “Robert Hunter!”

“The same,” replied Bob, removing his cap and

bending low. "I was passing through your village and learning you resided here I could not forego the pleasure of meeting you again. How is your distinguished father, the judge?"

"Clarissa, show that intruder out and come here," shouted the judge.

"Judge Cadwalader," said Bob, stepping into the room where the judge sat. "I am astonished that you, a Virginia gentleman, should show such discourtesy to a visitor."

"You are no visitor, you are an intruder, sah," sputtered the judge, "a spy, a wretch, who stole Miss Somers."

"Ah, Judge! I see you have not been informed. General Kincaid was mortally wounded at Cedar Creek and before he died he confessed that he was the one who had Miss Somers abducted. He also confessed that he tried to have me convicted as a spy when he knew I was innocent. I did not come to quarrel with you but to tell your daughter that Miss Somers is well and safe in Winchester. I would also like to inquire about Lieutenant Robinson."

"All we know is that he was taken prisoner," replied Clarissa.

"Then I can give you some information. Before he was taken prisoner, I was taken. Lieutenant Robinson knew me and denounced me as a spy and demanded that I be hung at once. They were all ready to go ahead with the hanging when our cavalry charged and took him and about five hundred others prisoners."

"Did Caddie really want to hang you?" asked Clarissa in horror.

"He certainly did. To pay him off I pretended I was going to hang him with the same rope he had gotten to hang me. You ought to have heard him beg for his miserable life."

The judge said nothing. He well knew Caddie's reputation for bravery.

"Time to be goin'," sang out Jim, who had refused to come into the house.

"Judge, you have no more news to give me, have you?" asked Bob.

The judge scowled, "Only that the quicker you go the better I will be pleased."

"I hope you do not feel that way, Miss Cadwalader. We may meet again." Taking her hand he bent over it with all the courtesy of a knight of old, and pressed it to his lips.

"I don't care what you think," said Clarissa to her father when Bob had gone. "I think Robert Hunter is just lovely."

"Go to your room," thundered the judge.

Torbert met the first serious resistance at the crossing of the Rapidan. Bob and Jim scouted to the right to see if they could find a ford higher up.

When they came to a house Bob said they were scouts trying to get to Gordonsville, that the Yankees held the ford lower down and unless they could find another ford would have to swim, which they did not want to do in that weather.

"Thar is a ford a little ways up," answered the man, "not a very good one, but safe."

"Thank you," replied Bob.

The boys were not long in getting back with the news. A strong detachment was sent out under their

guidance and the ford found. The first thing the enemy knew they were attacked on the flank.

No sooner were their guns heard than General Torbert ordered a charge across the river and the enemy fled, leaving two cannon. The way to Gordonsville was open.

“Do you think you boys can find out how strongly Gordonsville is held?” asked General Torbert.

“We can try,” answered Bob. “We will certainly do our best.”

The boys left their horses and took to the woods.

“Jim, we want to go to the left and try and get in sight of the railroad from Richmond,” said Bob. “If reinforcements are coming they will come that way.”

To get there was no easy matter. The road was patrolled by cavalry, but at length they reached a spot where they could not only see the railroad but Gordonsville as well. They were on a hill not more than a hundred yards from a post of the enemy.

“Them fellers don’t keep a very strict watch or they’d hev seen us,” whispered Jim.

“All the better for us,” answered Bob, who was scanning the city through his glass. “They seem to be excited down there,” he said. “I reckon Torbert must be near.”

Just then the report of a cannon was heard, then another and another. Soon there was a rapid cannonade.

“Torbert is up,” whispered Bob. “As near as I can judge, he is about two miles from the city.”

The boys listened but the firing sounded no nearer. Then the sound of an approaching train was heard,

and three trains passed, one after another, each loaded with soldiers.

"Torbert don't get Gordonsville this time," said Bob. "There comes another train. We might as well go back and report."

They crawled back until some distance from the post, then rose to their feet and started to run. Their haste made them careless and they ran into a squad of six soldiers who were guarding a road at the foot of the hill. The soldiers had been placed since the boys climbed the hill and the meeting was entirely unexpected.

The soldiers took them for their men. "What yo' be running fo'?" yelled one.

"We'll have to fight," exclaimed Bob.

Both boys fired and two men fell. So unexpected was the fire that for a moment the remaining soldiers were dazed. This gave the boys the chance of getting in two more shots. The two soldiers that were left put spurs to their horses and fled towards Gordonsville.

"Now's our chance," said Bob. "There'll be a company after us directly."

Crossing the road the boys plunged into a woods and began to climb a hill. As they did so they heard the sound of galloping horses.

"Our only hope is to keep to the woods and hills," said Bob. "On open ground we'd have no chance with that cavalry. We must also go east and then turn and come up in the rear of our force. The country between us and Torbert will swarm with enemies."

"You be right, Bob, but it will make us late and

the general may charge with his entire force and get awfully whipped," answered Jim.

"It's the only thing we can do," replied Bob. "I don't hear much firing and am in hopes Torbert will hold off until we get back."

"Thar be a road ahead," whispered Jim.

A company of cavalry was riding rapidly up this road and the boys waited for them to pass before crossing. They saw no more of the enemy after this and just at dusk ran into a Federal scouting party. The captain knew them and asked their news.

"Our hopes of taking Gordonsville are all up," replied Bob. "Captain, you had better return. Have you two spare horses we can have? We wish to get to Torbert as quickly as possible."

The party had captured some horses and two of these were given to the boys and two men sent with them as guides.

"Tell the general I am on my way back," said the captain. "I'll not be over an hour later than you."

The boys did not spare their horses and within an hour they were with General Torbert.

"Then it's all up and the quicker I fall back the better," said the general when he had heard their story. "I don't believe I will be troubled in falling back, as infantry will not attempt to follow us."

"General, did you attempt to take the works? We heard cannonading," said Bob.

"Yes, but I found them so strongly held I fell back. I thought I'd not try again until I heard from you. As it is I have lost a hundred men."

That night Torbert fell back across the Rapidan.

The next night they marched through Madison Court House. Judge Cadwalader was elated.

“What did I tell you?” he cried to Clarissa. “Didn’t I say the Yankees would come back faster than they went? I bet they got a big whipping. That rascally Hunter may be showing up again. You get to your room and don’t show yourself. Do you hear?”

Clarissa went very unwillingly, but the judge was mistaken, Bob did not show up.

It was December twenty-eighth before the command got back to Winchester. They had been gone ten days and it had rained, sleeted, or snowed six days of the ten. The trip was a severe one on both men and horses. Torbert’s entire loss was one hundred and two men and two hundred and fifty-eight horses. He took thirty prisoners, but was compelled to parole them.

Custer had no better luck than Torbert. At Lacey Spring a few miles from Staunton he was suddenly attacked at three o’clock in the morning. The Confederates thought the command would be asleep and they would have an easy victory. To their surprise they found them awake, and withdrew after a short fight.

Custer called a council of his officers. “We can lick these fellows,” he said, “but what if we do? We have no rations and I have no transportation for even the few wounded I have.”

It was decided to fall back. Custer lost about fifty in that morning fight. He estimated the enemy’s loss at about a hundred, of which thirty-two were prisoners.

“Bob, I reckon our last movement was a failure,” said Jim, “not worth the men and horses it used up.”

“I believe you’re right, Jim. It was a mighty hard trip, but the failure is a small one. Just see what Sheridan has accomplished since he took command. No more are they trembling in Washington or moaning about an invasion of the North. The valley of the Shenandoah has been redeemed.”

“That’s so,” replied Jim. “Sheridan be a great general. I reckon we be goin’ to whip after all.”¹

¹ Sheridan’s Shenandoah campaign will always stand out as one of the greatest of the war. Without his victories in the valley Richmond could never have been taken. Sheridan reports that from the time he took command, August 4th, 1864, to March 1st, 1865, he fought nearly one hundred battles and skirmishes, in nearly every one of which he was successful. His entire loss during that period was 1,938 killed, 11,893 wounded and 3,121 missing; a total of 16,952.

During this time he captured and sent back 13,000 prisoners. Of the killed and wounded in the Confederate army we have no record. He captured no less than 101 pieces of artillery from Early. It became a joke in the Confederate army and when they saw any artillery being shipped to Early they would cry, “Thar goes moah cannon for Sheridan.”

CHAPTER XXVIII

ON TO RICHMOND

THE skies which were so dark for the Union in August, 1864, glowed bright with hope at the beginning of 1865. It did not take a prophet to see the end was approaching.

At the National Convention of a great political party in Chicago in August the war had been declared a failure, and a demand made that it be stopped and the South let go—the Union be forever dissolved.

The answer came in November when President Lincoln was reelected by a large majority.

Atlanta had been taken and Sherman had swept through Georgia from that city to the sea, and was now preparing for his wonderful march through the Carolinas.

Thomas had crushed Hood's army at Nashville.

Price had made his last raid into Missouri.

Grant had tightened his hold on Petersburg and captured Fort Fisher.

Lee must have seen that further resistance was useless but it was not for him to say peace. President Davis and the Confederate congress could not, or would not, see, so for three more months the war went on.

Since the return of Torbert the army had been

rather quiet around Winchester. The winter of 1864 and '65 was a hard one. Not only the mountains but the valleys were covered with snow.

During these quiet days Bob stayed with his aunt.

Spring appeared the last of February and the snow fast disappeared.

On the 25th of February Bob came rushing to Jim crying, "Great news! Great news!"

"What is it?" asked Jim.

"We move on the 27th."

"Blamed glad to heah it. I'm gettin' tired of layin' round. Whar be we goin'?"

"Don't know. I heard General Sheridan talking. He spoke about Lynchburg, and said he might join Sherman, who is coming up through the Carolinas. Whoop! The Confederacy is on its last leg!" Bob danced a jig.

It was indeed good news for the boys, for they were both tired of inaction.

"Going to leave you, Aunt," cried Bob, tearing into the house.

"Going to leave us!" exclaimed his aunt. "I hope you are not going on another of your dangerous expeditions."

"Don't know where I'm going. Sheridan is going to move. We are going south, may end up at Richmond."

Mrs. Clayton only moaned, "More fighting."

"It will not be for long, Aunt. Let me prophesy. You'll see uncle at home very soon."

"Then Lincoln is going to let the South go!" cried his aunt, her face beaming.

“Instead of that the Confederacy is going to collapse,” replied Bob. “Aunt, can’t you see the end is near? The old Union is going to be preserved.”

“The South will never give up,” said Mrs. Clayton. “The women will turn out and fight.”

“What’s this!” exclaimed Helen, who had just come in. “Are you two quarreling?”

“No,” replied Mrs. Clayton, “but Bob says Sheridan is going to move south and that it will be the last campaign, that the South is going to give up. I say the South will never give up.”

“Mother, I think Bob is right,” replied Helen. “I have seen it coming for a long time. I have fought against the belief, but it’s no use. All the blood that has been shed has been shed in vain.”

“Not in vain!” cried Bob. “The old Union will be preserved, the old flag will wave over a reunited country, and the time will come when you will be glad, though you cannot see it now. We are not fighting to conquer the South, but to restore the Union.” He kissed them both good-bye, then went to see Agnes.

Agnes had been crying, it was easy to see. She had not been herself since her return to Winchester. She was quieter, the death of her father was ever with her. She could not keep from her the thought that his death was her liberation. Except in regard to her marriage he had been a kind indulgent father, and that she could have such a thought distressed her keenly.

“Agnes, you’ve been crying,” exclaimed Bob.

“Bob, how can I help crying?”

“I know, but I have hoped——”

“Hoped what, Bob?”

“Hoped that you and Clayt would marry. There I have said it. Agnes, I love you as a sister, and I have always wanted you for one. Why don't you and Clayt love each other? I sometimes think you do.”

Agnes was strangely agitated. She was tempted to tell all, but that would bring in her father, so she said, “Boys have curious thoughts sometimes, but I do love you, Bob, as a brother. Now let's talk of something else.”

“I came to tell you that Sheridan is to move. The army starts south soon and I wanted to say farewell.”

Agnes turned pale. “When will this dreadful war end?” she cried.

“Very soon now. Something tells me this will be the last campaign. If I live when you see me again the war will be over. May God bless you. Dark as your skies look I am convinced you have a happy life before you.” He kissed her, and left.

On February 27 Sheridan moved south with a force of about ten thousand men, all cavalry. He expected Early to make a stand at or near Staunton, but he retreated to Waynesborough.

A problem was now before Sheridan. If he moved straight to Lynchburg, as his orders indicated, he would leave Early in his rear. He determined to turn aside and attack him at Waynesborough.

Early had boasted that he would hold Waynesborough. The Confederates were well posted as to the size of Sheridan's army.

In the march on Waynesborough Custer had the advance.

The place was found to be strongly fortified.

"See what you can find out about the enemy's position," said the general to Bob and Jim.

The boys were well acquainted with the country around Waynesborough and making their way through the woods and over the hills they gained a position where they could see the left flank of the enemy's line.

"See!" cried Bob. "Their flank instead of resting on the river is nearly a mile from it. A force can pass around it and come up in their rear. That thick woods will conceal the movement until we are on them."

"Why don't the fools draw back that flank and let it rest on the river?" asked Jim.

"You'll have to ask them," replied Bob. "Let's get back."

In returning they ran into two of the enemy's scouts and captured them easily as they had taken the boys for some of their own men.

While they were gone Custer had felt of the fortifications in his front and found them strongly manned. On hearing the report of the boys and sharply questioning the prisoners Custer resolved to assault at once.

Three regiments were detailed to go around through the woods under the guidance of Bob and Jim and gain the left flank. The moment their guns were heard Custer would charge.

Custer's boys waited with impatient hearts for the word to go. At last distant firing told that the left flank of the enemy had been struck.

"Charge!" was the order.



Custer's men swept over the rebel works like a whirlwind

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The men swept over the rebel works like a whirlwind. Taken entirely by surprise there was little resistance. They captured eleven pieces of artillery, two hundred loaded wagons, and sixteen hundred prisoners. Seldom was such a victory gained at such a small loss, for Custer had only nine men hit.

While this was going on Sheridan had scouts investigating the situation around Lynchburg. They reported that the city was being strongly reinforced by troops from Tennessee. Not only this but a whole division of infantry was on its way from Richmond. They also reported every bridge across the James with the exception of the one at Lynchburg had been destroyed.¹

Sheridan saw that it was impossible for him to cross the James as he had intended, but he could fulfil part of his instructions, which were to destroy the Virginia Central Railroad and the James River Canal. This done he would have to return to Winchester or try and join Grant before Petersburg.

Sheridan never liked to turn back, so, dangerous as it was, he resolved to join Grant. The capture of Waynesborough had given him possession of Rockford Gap through the Blue Ridge and the direct route to the railroad and the canal. Depleting his force by fifteen hundred men, he placed them under the command of Colonel J. L. Thompson with orders to take the prisoners back to Winchester. "And see that you do it," said Sheridan.

¹ At the beginning of this raid Sheridan had a company of thirty-five devoted scouts. Ten lost their lives during the raid. This shows the danger to which this branch of the service is exposed. The names of scouts are never given.

Colonel Thompson was viciously attacked by guerillas and at Mount Jackson General Rosier threw his whole command on him, but he got safely back with all his prisoners and thirty more he had taken from Rosier.

The mountains were still covered with snow and the roads were horrible, but Sheridan pushed on. For two days rain poured in torrents, but the men never murmured, covered with mud and wet to the skin they never stopped. Miles of railroad were torn up and the canal thoroughly destroyed. Charlottesville was reached and surrendered without a struggle. Forage and provisions were found in abundance around Charlottesville, and the command rested here two days.

General Custer was sent to capture Frederick Hall Station, which he did in such a dash that the telegraph station was captured with all of its dispatches. In looking them over Bob found one from General Early to Lee which stated he had two hundred cavalymen and was going to follow a detachment of Federals that was going to Goochland and attack them in the rear.

“Hurrah! We’ll have those fellows,” said Bob, showing the dispatch to Custer.

Custer lost no time in sending a regiment after them. After a ride of two hours the Confederates were sighted, charged, and captured.

Early escaped by dashing into a side road and swimming the South Anna. The next day he got into Richmond accompanied by a single orderly. His two staff officers and the five other orderlies had been taken prisoners. Thus of Early’s entire army there was left but one man.

At Columbia General Sheridan wrote a communication to General Grant, in fact two of them, and giving one to Bob and one to Jim told them to get through to Grant.

The notes were alike. They told Grant Sheridan was going to try and make White House and for him to have supplies there for the army when it arrived.

"Get through, boys, or die in the attempt," were Sheridan's orders.

"We had better cross the river and try and gain the rear of Grant's army," said Bob.

"Yes, that is the route I was going to tell you to take," replied Sheridan. "It is through the enemy's country but it is the safest. Avoid the main roads and the towns all you can. I have chosen you two boys because I believe you can make it if anyone can. If necessary separate."

As soon as night came the boys crossed the river in a boat and landed in the brush about a mile below the village. The soldiers who had rowed them over shook hands with them, saying, "Good luck, boys, but we wouldn't want your job."

"Don't worry, you'll see us again," replied Bob.

The boys groped their way through the bushes for about a mile before they came to a road.

"We'll have to take this road if we're going to make any progress," said Bob.

After a short time they came to a house in front of which two horses were hitched. From the house came the sound of talking and laughing.

"What's the use of walking if you can ride?" asked Bob. "These are soldiers' horses and we can get along faster on them."

Unhitching the horses they led them for a short distance, then mounted. Luck was with them and they rode an hour without mishap. When they reached the railroad they found a small station in which a feeble light was burning, but they walked their horses slowly past it and through the little hamlet without interruption.

After riding some four or five miles south they came to a road leading in the direction they wished to go and decided to take it. It was now near day.

"Shall we leave our horses or stick to them, Bob?" asked Jim.

"I've been thinking and I believe we'll stick to them," replied Bob. "I've decided what to say if we're questioned."

Just as the sun rose they struck a little village. Before one of the houses hung a sign reading "Claymore Inn."

"We'll stop here for breakfast and give our horses a feed," said Bob to Jim's astonishment.

The landlord was just up.

"Give us some breakfast and our horses a good feed," said Bob. "Be quick about it for we are in a great hurry." He spoke in a tone of authority.

"Whar be yo' from?" asked the landlord.

"Lynchburg."

"What's the news?"

"Order that breakfast, the best you have, and see to the horses. Then I'll tell you the news. I am Lieutenant Rogers of the Fourth Virginia," snapped Bob.

The landlord must have told he had distinguished guests for when he returned from his duties he was

accompanied by nearly every male resident of the village, mostly old men.

"Breakfast most ready an' we be dyin' to heah the news," said the landlord humbly.

"The news is bad enough," replied Bob. "Sheridan has captured Lynchburg. Some Yankees have crossed the river, torn up the railroad, and cut the telegraph wires. We are carrying dispatches to General Lee telling of the disaster."

The news caused great excitement and in the midst of the talk breakfast was announced. It consisted of fried chicken, cornbread and corn coffee, and Bob and Jim did justice to it.

"What is the charge?" asked Bob.

"Twenty dollars."

Bob threw down a twenty dollar Confederate bill and inquired about the roads and the quickest way to the Confederate lines.

"That was a whopper you told, Bob," said Jim as they galloped off, "and they'll soon find out different."

"Not until we are too far away for it to hurt us," laughed Bob. "That landlord gave me a fine description of the route. We'll have to change our story now. We must turn south."

Fortunately they were on a lonely road and met few people. They went south about ten miles when Bob said, "We'll ride east now. We must be beyond the Confederate lines. Now we will be couriers from General Hoke at Wilmington. Listen!"

The faint booming of heavy guns could be heard.

"All right!" shouted Bob. "Now straight north to our lines."

Just then a squadron of Confederate cavalry came out of a crossroad a short distance in their rear and an officer called for them to halt. Instead the boys put spurs to their horses, but they were tired and the cavalry gained on them rapidly.

"I'll hev to make them fellers a little more careful," said Jim as the bullets began singing around them. He unslung his carbine and fired at the nearest pursuer, who tumbled from his horse. It was not until three men had paid the penalty for their rashness that the pursuit was given up.

The booming of guns became more distinct and soon they saw a company of Federal cavalry.

"Jim, we're through and safe," said Bob.

Grant received them with surprise and insisted on hearing their entire story. Sheridan's success pleased him greatly.

"I'll see there are plenty of supplies for him at White House," he said. "I am mighty glad he is coming this way."

Sheridan had little trouble in getting through. He deceived Lee by a masterly move, and gained White House, where he found plenty of supplies. Here all danger ended. On March 27 with his whole command he joined Grant before Petersburg.¹

¹ This raid of Sheridan's was one of the most successful he ever made. It lasted just a month, most of the time the weather was fearful. Snow, rain, almost impassable roads, and swollen streams failed to stop him.

During the raid he captured 2,000 prisoners, 17 cannon and hundreds of wagons. He tore up forty miles of railroad and destroyed hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of supplies.

His entire loss was only one hundred.

Is it any wonder the country rang with his praise and that he was the idol of his command?

CHAPTER XXIX

APPOMATTOX

SHERIDAN'S coming was a relief to General Grant. It gave him some of the finest cavalry in the world, and enabled him to launch at once the movement he had been contemplating. For days he had been in agony for fear that Lee would slip out of Richmond and get away. It was Lee's army, not Richmond that Grant was after.

Sheridan's cavalry was allowed one day's rest and then was thrown on the left flank of the army with Sheridan in command of that flank. Then commenced that wonderful campaign which resulted in the capture of Lee's army.

Bob had only time to seek out his brother and shake hands and then he was away.

Sheridan on that campaign was like a raging lion, he knew no rest. Infantry was sent to his support with orders to obey him.

Two or three times General Meade interfered with Sheridan's arrangement, perhaps because other parts of the field required the presence of the troops, but General Meade's report does not do full justice to the part Sheridan played.

At Five Forks Sheridan gained his first great victory, the left of Lee's army was crushed and six thousand prisoners taken.

Lee had depleted his breastworks of troops to oppose Sheridan. Meade saw his opportunity, and ordered an assault on the Confederate works. The Sixth and Ninth Corps captured miles of entrenchments and took thousands of prisoners. Lee saw the end had come. He must evacuate or his whole army would be captured.

It was Sunday and President Davis was at church. An orderly entered and whispered something to the president and he at once rose and left the church.

That night both Richmond and Petersburg were evacuated, and in Richmond a never-to-be-forgotten scene was enacted. The populace went wild with excitement. The rear guard blew up the public works and fired the city in many places. A mob raged through the streets.

Lee tried to escape to the mountains of western Virginia and Tennessee where he could renew the battle, and now began a race between the armies. The Union army knew no rest, but pressed forward, men fell by the hundreds exhausted, but the rest kept on.

Sheridan's cavalry was everywhere, performing deeds of valor, fighting infantry as well as cavalry. His scouts seemed to be devoid of fear. Some even dressed themselves in Confederate uniforms and rode among the retreating rebels.

Bob secured a lieutenant's uniform, and wearing it rode boldly in the Confederate ranks.

At Sailor's Creek Ewell had his train in camp. The corps was nearly surrounded. Custer had gained their front and the Sixth Corps was coming up in the rear, many of the men were staggering from fatigue but still pressing on.

“Don’t give up,” cried General Hunter to his men. “We are ending the war. On! On!”

The men would cheer and press on.

Ewell thought he could save his train by taking a by-road. Bob was with this train and saw that it was about to move. “Don’t move this train; it’s against orders,” he cried to a general.

“Whose orders?” asked the general.

“General Kershaw’s,” answered Bob. He knew that Kershaw was one of Ewell’s division generals.

“Strange,” replied the general. “I happen to be General Kershaw.” Then turning to one of his aides he said, “Take this young man in charge. We will attend to him when we get out of this.”

Bob was caught. If he could not escape, death awaited him.

But the Sixth Corps was up and attacked in the rear while the gallant Custer charged the front. Ewell surrendered. The entire train and some five thousand prisoners were taken. With Ewell four other generals surrendered, among them General Kershaw, who surrendered to General Hunter.

Bob rode up to his brother and saluting said, “I see you have General Kershaw prisoner. I’m much obliged. He had me prisoner a short time ago, and I’m afraid he wouldn’t have used me as well as we will him.”

Bob had discarded his rebel uniform which his brother did not know he had been wearing. He asked him what he had been doing and turning to General Kershaw said, “General, this is my brother, how did you come to capture him?”

“Oh! he gave me orders to park my own train,”

replied General Kershaw. Then to Bob, "It's lucky for you, my boy, that we were taken."

At Appomattox the end came. By tremendous marching the Fifth Corps got in front. Lee, thinking only the cavalry was in front, formed his men for a last supreme effort. The cavalry fell back, disclosing the solid ranks of the infantry, and Lee with his army starving and two-thirds gone surrendered.

The end had come—the Union had been preserved.

Bob's first act was to look for his uncle. No division had put up a braver fight or maintained its organization better than General Clayton's. At a word from him they would have charged that line of infantry with all the bravery of old.

Bob found General Clayton sitting dejectedly among his staff. Going up to him Bob held out his hand and said, "How are you, Uncle Howard?"

General Clayton stared at him in amazement. He had not seen Bob since the battle of Bull Run, almost four years. There was little resemblance between the stalwart young man who stood before him and the boy he had seen on that field.

He grasped Bob's hand, exclaiming, "Robert, is it you? How you have grown. I am glad to see you but not this way. Thank God you have passed through this war safe. I care little what becomes of me."

"Uncle, don't talk like that," exclaimed Bob. "Think of Aunt Clara and Helen. Think of what must be done to build up the waste places. Who is more able to guide and direct than you? You will be in Congress again before you die."

General Clayton shook his head. "It cannot be," he replied. "We are a broken, conquered people, bankrupt and poverty stricken. I have my pockets full of money, yet not enough to get home with."

"Don't worry about that, Uncle Howard. I have plenty for both." Then wishing to take his uncle's mind from the surrender said, "Brother Clayton is here. Shall I not bring him to you?"

"Your brother is an honorable gentleman, Robert, a gallant soldier, but, you, Robert, a member of my own family, a spy, while pretending friendship for me. I can't get over it. You never can realize the agony you have caused me."

"Haven't you heard what General Kincaid confessed before he died?" cried Bob.

"No, what was it?"

"That I was no spy — that the whole thing was a frameup. He was jealous of me. He begged my pardon before he died. He also confessed that it was he who abducted Agnes Somers and tried to put it on me. He begged her pardon for that. He did those things for love of Agnes."

"If this is true I have wronged you deeply," said the general. "After you saved Helen nothing could make her believe you a spy. But what you did afterwards, Robert? What can you say to that?"

"I began scouting through desperation, a price was on my head. Once into it I enjoyed the game, but never was I in rebel uniform until yesterday, and then only for a short time. Let us forget all this now, Uncle. May I not bring Clayton to you?"

"Yes, bring him, I believe we have fought against each other many times."

"It was his division that repulsed your great charge at Gettysburg," replied Bob.

Bob quickly found his brother and brought him to the general. He never felt prouder of him than when he rode up, looking every inch a soldier.

Springing from his horse he grasped his uncle's hand, crying, "I'm more than glad to see you, Uncle Howard. You must be my guest until you go home. What has my scapegrace brother been telling you?"

"Something that pleases me greatly, that he did not play the spy while a member of my family," replied the general.

"Did you know that I am under everlasting obligations to you?" asked Clayton. "Aunt Clara and Helen took care of me after I was wounded at Cedar Creek. And what care I had!"

"It was your division that stopped the rout there and held us until Sheridan could re-form his army," cried General Clayton.

Almost before the two generals knew it they were chatting about the war, forgetting they were enemies.

At last the duty of paroling was done, and the army turned its face towards Richmond and Washington.

Bob did not stay for the Grand Review but accompanied his uncle home.

Jim elected to stay with Custer. He had been with him during the last exciting days and believed him next to Sheridan to be the greatest general in the army.

As the railroads were torn up General Clayton re-

turned home by way of Washington. He and Robert stood in Pennsylvania Avenue looking up at the capitol where General Clayton had spent so many of his days. Above it waved the old flag. The general gazed at it for some time, then turning to Bob exclaimed, "Robert, you said one day I would return here as a member of Congress. I think you are wrong. The war is over but stormy days for the South are not over. To reconstruct this country will take years. I fought secession, believing it was wrong. I went with my state believing she had a right to go if she chose. I now see my mistake. The doctrine that a state has a right to secede is dead, killed by the war. But the seeds of bitterness left by this war will bear fruit for years. Robert, I am going home, establish myself in my profession and eschew politics. What are you going to do?"

"Be a business man. I'm sick of war."

"A good decision," said the general. "Robert, I rather like the looks of the old flag up there after all. Let's go home."

CHAPTER XXX

WHAT PEACE BROUGHT

GENERAL CLAYTON was welcomed home with joy and tears. Winchester was proud of him and the splendid record he had made as a soldier, but the cause on which they had staked all was a failure.

Although all knew that the charge of being a spy against Robert was a false one they could not forgive him for the part he had played in the war, and he felt like a stranger in a strange land. He would be twenty-one in the fall and he resolved to go North then and become an active partner in the large business he and his brother owned. He had no regrets, made no excuses for what he had done. Instead he rejoiced that he had been able to do his bit. That the old flag still waved over the whole country was sufficient reward.

After earnest solicitation General Clayton accepted a loan from General Hunter large enough to enable him to reestablish himself in business. For years he was known as one of the most successful lawyers in the state, but he refused to go into politics, many times, refusing nominations to the highest positions in the gift of the state.

Helen Clayton married General Crampton in August. Robert's gift to the bride was a check for

five thousand dollars and General Hunter sent a check for an equal amount, but did not appear at the wedding.

“Robert, you are the best boy in the world,” cried Helen, throwing her arms around him. “But for you I would not be the happy bride I am today.”

Agnes Somers was a guest at the wedding and as she saw how happy Helen was her eyes filled with tears, was she putting as great a happiness from herself? There rested in her bosom a letter she had received but the day before and it read:

Agnes, I am now a private citizen. You and I are living under the same flag. I will not trouble you with words of love. Will you write and tell me if I may come, or if it can never be?
CLAYTON.

During the wedding that letter lay in her bosom burning—burning.

Agnes had not been the same to Robert since his return. She was cold to him, not at all the same girl.

“She is like the others,” he thought. “She despises me because I was a scout and spy.”

Agnes acted as bridesmaid and throughout the wedding Bob watched her closely. He saw she was distract, hardly herself, and more than once her eyes filled with tears. Mrs. Somers was far from well and after the wedding Robert walked home with her and Agnes. Mrs. Somers soon excused herself and left Agnes and Bob alone.

“Agnes, do you know I am going away?” asked Bob.

She opened her eyes in astonishment. “Going

away! Where? I did not know you thought of leaving."

"To Connecticut where our business is located. You know I will be twenty-one in October and I must fit myself to be one of the partners. Clayt says he relies on me. Then, Agnes, things have changed here in Winchester. While I am one of the people, I feel that I am not one of them. Their coldness is hard to bear, even you have grown cold. That is the hardest of all."

"I cold, Bob!" she cried.

"Yes, you must know it."

She burst into tears. "Robert, I did not mean to be cold, but I am in trouble, deep trouble."

"I know it, Agnes. I wish you would confide in me. Oh, Agnes, how I would like to help you."

She sobbed a moment, then said, "Robert, I will. I thought I could never confide in anyone but I will, the burden is too heavy to bear alone."

She drew forth General Hunter's letter and handed it to Robert.

"From Clayton," he cried reading it. "Agnes, what does it mean? Has he——"

"Stop!" said Agnes. "To understand you must have the whole story. You know when you came to Winchester a small boy Clayton often came to visit you. In fact he spent several summers here. You know how much we were together. It may be wicked in me to say it but you seemed more of a brother to me than Miles.

"There, don't interrupt. What a playmate Clayton was! He called me his little sweetheart. Others called me a tomboy. Those were happy times,

Robert, the happiest of my life. When I was thirteen I went off to school. Clayton went to Europe. We did not see each other for five years. Our childhood admiration for each other was forgotten.

“Then in the fall of 1859 he came. He said it was only for a short visit, two or three days, that he would come for a longer time during the holidays, so as to see you. You were at school and so never knew what happened.

“When Clayton first saw me he looked at me in astonishment, I was a young lady of eighteen. ‘So this is my little sweetheart,’ he said taking my hand. I saw he was impressed. So was I. I thought I had never seen a more manly man.

“He did not go at the end of two days, instead two weeks went by. I saw he loved me, and I loved him with all my heart. He had never spoken of his love but I knew he would and I was happy. My parents saw the growing attachment and made no objections. They knew Clayton Hunter was all a girl could wish. He had the blood of a Lee in his veins and you know that goes a long way in Virginia.

“One day, I remember it well, it was the sixteenth of October, he said, ‘Agnes, I am coming tomorrow for an early morning canter before breakfast. I have something particular to say to you.’ My heart fluttered, I knew what he would say.

“He came but just as we were going to start we heard a hubbub on the street and my father came rushing in. I never saw him so excited. ‘Harper’s Ferry has been attacked by the Northern abolitionists under John Brown,’ he shouted. ‘The arsenal has been captured, the village is in flames and hundreds

have been killed. They say the insurrection has been carefully planned. It will extend all over the South. We are to be given over to the lust and fury of our slaves.'

"Then for the first time he saw Clayton. 'You here?' he cried. 'Have you been hanging around for this, one of John Brown's agents? Out of my sight before I shoot you like a dog.'

"We were petrified by the news and father's charge against Clayton.

"'Mr. Somers,' he cried. 'This is awful news. You are excited and know not what you say. If Harper's Ferry has been attacked it is only by a few fanatics under the leadership of John Brown. Be assured the North is not in this.'

"'It is,' shouted my father. 'You and the whole North are only a pack of damnable abolitionists. Out of my sight before I forget myself.'

"Clayton turned to me. 'Agnes, do you believe this?' he asked.

"I was paralyzed — dumb.

"'Agnes, speak,' he begged. 'Tell me you do not believe it.'

"I tried to cry out I did not believe it but my tongue refused to move. I could not utter a sound. Such a look came over Clayton's face, first of pain and then of rage.

"He never gave me another look but turning to father said, 'I cannot think you believe what you say, but if you do, if you say I knew or had anything to do with this raid of John Brown's, or that the northern people knew of or approved of it you are a liar and I fling the insult in your face.'

“‘This to me,’ roared my father. ‘My pistol!’ he rushed to the desk where he kept his pistols but in his excitement tripped on a rug and fell, striking his head on the edge of the desk and cutting a fearful gash. He lay insensible, the blood gushing down his face.

“‘Call a doctor,’ Clayton said and left without another word. He left the city within an hour. I thought he would write but he never did. I tried to forget him but I could not so I then tried to comfort myself by thinking it would come out all right. When I heard he was killed at Fredericksburg I fainted. I never knew different until after Gettysburg.

“Thinking to end the persecutions of General Kincaid, and believing Clayton dead, I became engaged to General Monroe. He was a man in every way and worthy of the best love. I did him a wrong which nearly proved my undoing. When our engagement was announced in Richmond, General Kincaid insulted me grossly. I should have reported it, but I knew if I did there would be a duel so I kept still.

“Then I was abducted and you know all the rest. I never saw Clayton from that fatal morning until you brought me into his room at your aunt’s after he was wounded. Perhaps we both said things we would not have said, if we had not met so unexpectedly. I told Clayton what I have you and he renewed his suit. My heart said yes, but the promise I made my father rose before me so I refused him. He did not insist but said if he lived I would hear from him after the war. Now comes this letter. Oh, Robert, what shall I do?”

Robert had listened without interrupting. Now he said, "Agnes, I am more than glad you have told me this. I have always thought there was something between you and Clayt but of course never understood what the trouble was. I am not going to advise you, my opinion would not be unbiased for I have always wanted you for a sister. You have brooded over this until you have become morbid. Agnes, go to my uncle and tell him what you have told me. You know he and your father were great friends. I know he loves you as a daughter. He can advise you much better than I."

"I will do it, Robert, if you will come with me."

They went to the general's office the next day. He was already picking up a lucrative practice but was not busy when they entered. He greeted Agnes, saying, "It's not often I have so fair a client. What can I do for you?"

Poor Agnes hardly knew how to begin.

"She's come to you for advice, Uncle," said Bob. "She asked me but I did not feel competent to advise her so recommended you."

"What is it, child," he asked kindly. "I can see you are in trouble. Is it finances? No, if it were that Robert would have tended to it himself."

"Finances are bad enough," replied Agnes, "but it is not about them that I came."

"Tell him just as you told me, Agnes," said Bob.

It was hard work for Agnes to begin but in a broken voice she managed to tell her story, General Clayton listening with deep interest.

"So that was the reason Clayton left so suddenly that time," he remarked at her close. "That was

an exciting time, Agnes. Your father was not the only man that went wild. That he should have insulted Clayton, however, is strange. You say you love Clayton and your only reason for refusing him is your promise to your father?"

"Yes," she answered faintly.

"You've come to me not only as a friend, but to get my advice professionally?"

"General, I want you to advise me just as if I were your own daughter."

"My dear girl, you are almost the same as a daughter to me. God forbid I should advise my old friend's daughter to do anything wrong. Your father was one of the best friends I ever had. He was intensely loyal to the South and although he was a noble man, he hated anything northern. He believed slavery was a divine institution, that to oppose it was infidelity. This made him at times unreasonable.

"Do you think he thought you were in love with Clayton all these years?"

"Yes, that is the reason he was so anxious I should marry a Confederate."

"Will you abide by my decision?"

"I know you will advise me to do what you think is right," replied Agnes.

The general arose and taking Agnes' hand kissed her saying, "Telegraph to Clayton to come, and may you be happy."

He turned away with tears glistening in his eyes.

The wedding took place in October. The early frost had touched the leaves of the trees and the

forest glowed with all the colors of the rainbow. The wedding was a quiet one, but never was there a lovelier or happier bride. The struggle of years was over.

Bob's gift to the bride was the same as what he had given Helen, and as he gave her the check he kissed her saying, "Sister at last."

General Hunter presented his bride with a check for fifty thousand. As Agnes looked at it she said, "Why so large, Clayton? You have made me a rich woman."

"Darling," replied the happy bridegroom, "I was part of the force which devastated this beautiful valley and turned your mother's plantation into a waste. I give you this believing you will wish to use a large part of it in restoring your old home."

Agnes looked at him with swimming eyes and throwing her arms about him whispered, "Clayton, we were to spend our honeymoon in Europe, were we not?"

"Yes, why do you ask?"

"Don't let's go, now."

"Why, I thought you were crazy to go to Europe."

"So I was, but I have changed my mind. Let's go down to the plantation with this money and rebuild the place. We'll make it ten times more beautiful than it was. We'll call it 'Golden Oaks' from its magnificent grove of oak trees. What a splendid time we will have planning and building! Think of the rides we will have together." Agnes clapped her hands.

"It will be a glorious honeymoon," replied her happy husband.

Bob went north and became a part of the great manufacturing plant in which he was half owner, and in time became one of the great financial magnates of this country.

One word more and we are done. James Kidder was at Agnes' wedding and one of the happiest there. Bob urged him once more to go to school but he shook his head.

"No, Bob," he said. "I'm too old to larn and then my ways be not your ways anyhow. Bob, you're the best friend I ever had. We've faced death together a hundred times. You never went back on me but was allers true blue. I hate it but we must part. General Custer is a big man now in the regular army. He's goin' west to fight Injuns and has asked me to go with him as scout. I be goin'."

"It may be best, Jim," replied Bob. "There'll be many times when I'll think of you and long to be with you. Good-bye, old pard, the best pard a fellow ever had. God bless you."

They clasped hands and gazed into each others' eyes, and without another word parted. They never met again.

Jim went west, became a celebrated Indian scout, and fell with his beloved chief at the battle of Little Big Horn.



