

**ALTSHELER  
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THE SCOUTS OF  
STONEWALL: THE STORY  
OF THE GREAT VALLEY  
CAMPAIGN

Joseph Altsheler

**The Scouts of Stonewall: The Story  
of the Great Valley Campaign**

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# Joseph A. Altsheler

## The Scouts of Stonewall: The Story of the Great Valley Campaign

### CHAPTER I. IN THE VALLEY

A young officer in dingy Confederate gray rode slowly on a powerful bay horse through a forest of oak. It was a noble woodland, clear of undergrowth, the fine trees standing in rows, like those of a park. They were bare of leaves but the winter had been mild so far, and a carpet of short grass, yet green, covered the ground. To the rider's right flowed a small river of clear water, one of the beautiful streams of the great Virginia valleys.

Harry Kenton threw his head back a little and drew deep breaths of the cool, crisp air. The light wind had the touch of life in it. As the cool puffs blew upon him and filled his lungs his chest expanded and his strong pulses beat more strongly. But a boy in years, he had already done a man's work, and he had been through those deeps of passion and despair which war alone brings.

A year spent in the open and with few nights under roof had enlarged Harry Kenton's frame and had colored his face a deep red. His great ancestor, Henry Ware, had been very fair, and Harry, like him, became scarlet of cheek under the beat of wind and rain.

Had anyone with a discerning eye been there, to see, he would have called this youth one of the finest types of the South that rode forth so boldly to war. He sat his saddle with the ease and grace that come only of long practice, and he controlled his horse with the slightest touch of the rein. The open, frank face showed hate of nobody, although the soul behind it was devoted without any reserve to the cause for which he fought.

Harry was on scout duty. Although an officer on the staff of Colonel Talbot, commander of the Invincibles, originally a South Carolina regiment, he had developed so much skill in forest and field, he had such acuteness of eye and ear, that he was sent often to seek the camps of the enemy or to discover his plans. His friends said that these forest powers were inherited, that they came from some far-away ancestor who had spent his life in the wilderness, and Harry knew that what they said was true.

Despite the peaceful aspect of the forest and the lack of human presence save his own, he rode now on an errand that was full of danger. The Union camp must lie on the other side of that little river, not many miles farther on, and he might meet, at any moment, the pickets of the foe. He meant to take the uttermost risk, but he had no notion of being captured. He would suffer anything, any chance, rather than that. He had lately come into contact with a man who had breathed into him the fire and spirit belonging to legendary heroes. To this man, short of words and plain of dress, nothing was impossible, and Harry caught from him not merely the belief, but the conviction also.

Late in the autumn the Invincibles, who had suffered severely at Bull Run and afterward had been cut down greatly in several small actions in the mountains, had been transferred to the command of Stonewall Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley. Disease and the hospital had reduced the regiment to less than three hundred, but their spirits were as high as ever. Their ranks were renewed partly with Virginians. Colonel Talbot and Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire had recovered from small wounds, and St. Clair and Langdon were whole and as hard as iron. After a period of waiting they were now longing for action.

There was some complaint among the Invincibles when they were detached from the main army to the service of Jackson, but Harry did not share in it. When he heard of the order he remembered that dread afternoon at Bull Run, when all seemed lost, and the most vivid of his memories was the

calm figure riding back and forth just beyond the pines among which he stood, and gathering for a fresh charge the stern ranks of his men who were to turn almost sure defeat into absolutely sure victory. The picture of the man in the heart of that red glare among the showers of bullets had been burned so deeply into Harry's memory that he could call it up, almost as vivid as life itself at any time. Surely that was a leader to follow, and he, at least, would wish to ride where Stonewall led.

But action did not come as soon as he had expected. Jackson was held by commands from Richmond. The great army of the South waited, because the great army of the North, under McClellan, also waited and temporized while the autumn was passing fast.

But Jackson, while held in the bonds of orders, did not sleep. The most active youth of his command rode day and night toward the northern end of the valley, where the forces of the Union were gathering. The movements of Banks and Kelly and the other Northern commanders were watched continually by keen eyes trained in the southern forests. Slim striplings passed in the night through the little towns, and the people, intensely loyal to the South, gave them the news of everything.

Harry had seen the whole autumn pass and winter come, and the war, save for a fitful skirmish now and then, stood at a pause in the valley. Yet he rode incessantly, both with the others and alone, on scouting duty. He knew every square mile of the country over a wide range, and he had passed whole nights in the forest, when hail or snow was whistling by. But these had been few. Mostly mild winds blew and the hoofs of his horse fell on green turf.

Harry was intensely alert now. He was far from his command, and he knew that he must see and hear everything or he would soon be in the hands of the enemy. He rode on rather slowly, and amid continued silence. He saw on his left a white house with green shutters and a portico. But the shutters were closed tightly and no smoke rose from the chimneys. Although house and grounds showed no touch of harm, they seemed to bear the brand of desolation. The owners had fled, knowing that the sinister march of war would pass here.

Harry's mood changed suddenly from gladness to depression. The desolate house brought home to him the terrible nature of war. It meant destruction, wounds and death, and they were all the worse because it was a nation divided against itself, people of the same blood and the same traditions fighting one another.

But youth cannot stay gloomy long, and his spirits presently flowed back. There was too much tang and life in that crisp wind from the west for his body to droop, and a lad could not be sad long, with brilliant sunshine around him and that shining little river before him.

The thrill of high adventure shot up from his soul. He had ceased to hate the Northern soldiers, if he had ever hated them at all. Now they were merely brave opponents, with whom he contended, and success demanded of either skill, daring and energy to the utmost degree. He was resolved not to fail in any of these qualities.

He left the desolate house a mile behind, and then the river curved a little. The woods on the farther shore came down in dense masses to the edge of the stream, and despite the lack of foliage Harry could not see far into them. The strong, inherited instincts leaped up. His nostrils expanded and a warning note was sounded somewhere in the back of his brain.

He turned his horse to the left and entered the forest on his own side of the river. They were ancient trees that he rode among, with many drooping and twisted boughs, and he was concealed well, although he could yet see from his covert the river and the forest on the other shore.

The song of a trumpet suddenly came from the deep woodland across the shining stream. It was a musical song, mellow and triumphant on every key, and the forest and hills on either shore gave it back, soft and beautiful on its dying echoes. It seemed to Harry that the volume of sound, rounded and full, must come from a trumpet of pure gold. He had read the old romances of the Round Table, and for the moment his head was full of them. Some knight in the thicket was sending forth a challenge to him.

But Harry gave no answering defiance. Now the medieval glow was gone, and he was modern and watchful to the core. He had felt instinctively that it was a trumpet of the foe, and the Northern trumpets were not likely to sing there in Virginia unless many Northern horsemen rode together.

Then he saw their arms glinting among the trees, the brilliant beams of the sun dancing on the polished steel of saber hilt and rifle barrel. A minute more, and three hundred Union horsemen emerged from the forest and rode, in beautiful order, down to the edge of the stream.

Harry regarded them with an admiration which was touched by no hate. They were heavily built, strong young men, riding powerful horses, and it was easy for anyone to see that they had been drilled long and well. Their clothes and arms were in perfect order, every horse had been tended as if it were to be entered in a ring for a prize. It was his thought that they were not really enemies, but worthy foes. That ancient spirit of the tournament, where men strove for the sake of striving, came to him again.

The Union horsemen rode along the edge of the stream a little space, and then plunged into a ford. The water rose to their saddle skirts, but they preserved their even line and Harry still admired. When all were on his own shore the golden trumpet sang merrily again, and they turned the heads of their horses southward.

Harry rode deeper into the ancient wood. They might throw out scouts or skirmishers and he had no mind to be taken. It was his belief that they came from Romney, where a Northern army had gathered in great force and would eventually march toward Jackson at Winchester. But whatever their errand, here was something for him to watch, and he meant to know what they intended.

The Northern troop, youths also, the average of their age not much more than twenty, rode briskly along the edge of the little river, which was a shining one for them, too, as well as Harry. They knew that no enemy in force was near, and they did not suspect that a single horseman followed, keeping in the edge of the woods, his eyes missing nothing that they did.

As for themselves, they were in the open now and the brilliant sunshine quickened their blood. Some of them had been at Bull Run, but the sting of that day was going with time. They were now in powerful force at the head of the great Virginia valleys, and they would sweep down them with such impact that nothing could stand before them. The trumpet sang its mellow triumphant note again, and from across a far range of hills came its like, a low mellow note, faint, almost an echo, but a certain reply. It was the answer from another troop of their men who rode on a parallel line several miles away.

The lone lad in the edge of the forest heard the distant note also, but he gave it no heed. His eyes were always for the troop before him. He had already learned from Stonewall Jackson that you cannot do two things at once, but the one thing that you do you must do with all your might.

The troop presently left the river and entered the fields from which the crops had been reaped long since. When the horsemen came to a fence twelve men dismounted and threw down enough panels for the others to ride through without breaking their formation. Everything was done with order and precision. Harry could not keep from admiring. It was not often that he saw so early in the war troops who were drilled so beautifully, and who marched so well together.

Harry always kept on the far side of the fields, and as the fences were of rails with stakes and riders he was able by bending very low in the saddle to keep hidden behind them. Nevertheless it was delicate work. He was sure that if seen he could escape to the forest through the speed of his horse. But he did not want to be driven off. He wished to follow that troop to its ultimate destination.

Another mile or two and the Union force bore away to the right, entering the forest and following a road, where the men rode in files, six abreast. They did not make much noise, beyond the steady beating of the hoofs, but they did not seem to seek concealment. Harry made the obvious deduction that they thought themselves too far beyond the range of the Southern scouts to be noticed. He felt a thrill of satisfaction, because he was there and he had seen them.

He rode in the forest parallel with the troop and at a distance of about four hundred yards. There was scattered undergrowth, enough to hide him, but not enough to conceal those three hundred men who rode in close files along a well-used road.

Harry soon saw the forest thinning ahead of him and then the trumpet sang its mellow, golden note again. From a point perhaps a mile ahead came a reply, also the musical call of the trumpet. Not an echo, but the voice of a second trumpet, and now Harry knew that another force was coming to join the first. All his pulses began to beat hard, not with nervousness, but with intense eagerness to know what was afoot. Evidently it must be something of importance or strong bodies of Union cavalry would not be meeting in the woods in this manner.

After the reply neither trumpet sounded again, and the troop that Harry was following stopped while yet in the woods. He rode his horse behind a tall and dense clump of bushes, where, well hidden, he could yet see all that might happen, and waited.

He heard in a few minutes the beat of many hoofs upon the hard road, advancing with the precision and regularity of trained cavalry. He saw the head of a column emerge upon the road and an officer ride forward to meet the commander of the first troop. They exchanged a few words and then the united force rode southward through the open woods, with the watchful lad always hanging on their rear.

Harry judged that the new troop numbered about five hundred men, and eight hundred cavalry would not march on any mere scouting expedition. His opinion that this was a ride of importance now became a conviction, and he hardened his purpose to follow them to the end, no matter what the risk.

It was now about noon, and the sun became warm despite the December day. The turf softened under the rays and the Union cavalry left an immense wide trail through the forest. It was impossible to miss it, and Harry, careful not to ride into an ambush of rear guard pickets, dropped back a little, and also kept slightly to the left of the great trail. He could not see the soldiers now, but occasionally he heard the deep sound of so many hoofs sinking into the soft turf. Beyond that turfy sigh no sound from the marching men came to him.

The Union troop halted about two o'clock in the afternoon, and the men ate cold food from the knapsacks. They also rested a full hour, and Harry, watching from a distance, felt sure that their lack of hurry indicated a night attack of some kind. They had altered their course slightly, twice, and when they started anew they did so a third time.

Now their purpose occurred suddenly to Harry. It came in a flash of intuition, and he did not again doubt it for a moment. The head of the column was pointed straight toward a tiny village in which food and ammunition for Stonewall Jackson were stored. The place did not have more than a dozen houses, but one of them was a huge tobacco barn stuffed with powder, lead, medicines, which were already worth their weight in gold in the Confederacy, and other invaluable supplies. It had been planned to begin their removal on the morrow to the Southern camp at Winchester, but it would be too late unless he intervened.

If he did not intervene! He, a boy, riding alone through the forest, to defeat the energies of so many men, equipped splendidly! The Confederacy was almost wholly agricultural, and was able to produce few such supplies of its own. Nor could it obtain them in great quantities from Europe as the Northern navy was drawing its belt of steel about the Southern coasts. That huge tobacco barn contained a treasure beyond price, and Harry was resolved to save it.

He did not yet know how he would save it, but he felt that he would. All the courage of those border ancestors who won every new day of life as the prize of skill and courage sprang up in him. It was no vain heritage. Happy chance must aid those who trusted, and, taking a deep curve to the left, he galloped through the woods. His horse comparatively fresh after easy riding, went many miles without showing any signs of weariness.

The boy knew the country well, and it was the object of his circuit to take him ahead of the Union troop and to the village which held a small guard of perhaps two hundred men. If the happy

chance in which he trusted should fail him after all, these men could carry off a part of the supplies, and the rest could be destroyed to keep them from falling into Northern hands.

He gave his horse a little breathing space and then galloped harder than ever, reckoning that he would reach the village in another hour. He turned from the woods into one of the narrow roads between farms, just wide enough for wagons, and increased his speed.

The afternoon sun was declining, filling the west with dusky gold, and Harry still rode at a great pace along the rough road, wondering all the while what would be the nature of the lucky chance, in which he was trusting so firmly. Lower sank the sun and the broad band of dusky gold was narrowing before the advance of the twilight. The village was not now more than two miles away, and the road dipped down before him. Sounds like that made by the force behind him, the rattle of arms, the creak of leather and the beat of hoofs, came suddenly to his ears.

Harry halted abruptly and reined his horse into some bushes beside the road. Then he heard the sounds more plainly. They were made by cavalry, riding slowly. The great pulses in his throat leaped in quick alarm. Was it possible that they had sent a portion of their force swiftly by another route, and that it was now between him and the village?

He listened again and with every faculty strained. The cavalymen were riding toward him and they could not be a part of the Union force. Then they must be of his own South. Surely this was the happy chance of which he had dreamed! Again the great pulses leaped, but with a different emotion.

Scorning every risk, he reined his horse back into the road and rode straight forward. The heads of men were just topping the rise, and a few moments later they and the horses they bestrode came into full view. It was a thankful thrill that shot through him now. The sun, almost sunk, sent a last golden shower across them and disclosed the dingy gray of their uniforms and the lean, tanned faces.

Uttering a shout of joy and holding up a hand to show that he was a friend, Harry galloped forward. A young man at the head of the troop, a captain by his uniform, and evidently the leader, gave the signal to his men to stop, and received the boy who came alone.

“Who are you?” he asked.

“I’m Harry Kenton, a lieutenant in the army of Stonewall Jackson, and an aide on the staff of Colonel Leonidas Talbot, colonel of the regiment known as the Invincibles.”

“I’ve heard of that regiment. South Carolinians at first, but now mostly Virginians.”

“The Virginians filled up the gaps that were made on the battlefield.”

Harry spoke proudly, and the young captain smiled. The boy regarded him with increasing interest. Somehow he was reminded of Jeb Stuart, although this man was younger, not having passed his boyhood long.

It was evident that he was tall. Thick, yellow curls showed from under the edge of his cap. His face, like Harry’s, had turned red before wind and rain. His dress was a marvel, made of the finest gray without a spot or stain. A sash of light blue silk encircled his waist, and the costly gray cloak thrown back a little from his shoulders revealed a silk lining of the same delicate blue tint. His gauntlets were made of the finest buckskin, and a gold-hilted small sword swung from his sash.

“A dandy,” thought Harry, “but the bravest of the brave, for all that.”

“My name’s Sherburne, Captain Philip Sherburne,” said the young leader. “I’m from the Valley of Virginia, and so are my men. We belong to Stonewall Jackson’s army, too, but we’ve been away most of the time on scouting duty. That’s the reason you don’t know us. We’re going toward Winchester, after another of our fruitless rides.”

“But it won’t be fruitless this time!” exclaimed Harry, eagerly. “A Union force of nearly a thousand men is on its way to destroy the stores at the village, the stores that were to be moved to a safer place to-morrow!”

“How do you know?”

“I’ve seen ‘em. I was behind ‘em at first and followed ‘em for a long time before I guessed their purpose. Then I curved about ‘em, galloped through the woods, and rode on here, hoping for the lucky chance that has come with you.”

Harry, as he spoke, saw the eyes of the young captain leap and flame, and he knew he was in the presence of one of those knightly souls, thrown up so often in the war, most often by the border States. They were youths who rode forth to battle in the spirit of high romance.

“You ask us to go back to the village and help defend the stores?” said Philip Sherburne.

“That’s just what I do ask—and expect.”

“Of course. We’d have done it without the asking, and glad of it. What a chance for us, as well as for you!”

He turned and faced his men. The golden glow of the sun was gone now, but a silver tint from the twilight touched his face. Harry saw there the blaze of the knightly spirit that craved adventure.

“Men,” he said in clear, happy tones, “we’ve ridden for days and days in quests that brought nothing. Now the enemy is at hand, nearly a thousand strong, and means to destroy our stores. There are two hundred of you and there are two hundred more guarding the stores. If there’s a single one among you who says he must ride on to Winchester, let him hold up his hand.”

Not a hand was raised, and the bold young captain laughed.

“I don’t need to put the other side of the question,” he said to Harry. “They’re as eager as I am to scorch the faces of the Yankees.”

The order was given to turn and ride. The “men,” not one of whom was over twenty-five, obeyed it eagerly, and galloped for the village, every heart throbbing with the desire for action. They were all from the rich farms in the valleys. Splendid horsemen, fine marksmen, and alive with youth and courage, no deed was too great for them. Harry was proud to ride with them, and he told more of the story to Sherburne as they covered the short distance to the village.

“Old Jack would order us to do just what we’re doing,” said Sherburne. “He wants his officers to obey orders, but he wants them to think, too.”

Harry saw his eyes flash again, and something in his own mind answered to the spirit of adventure which burned so brightly in this young man. He looked over the troop, and as far as he could see the faces of all were flushed with the same hope. He knew with sudden certainty that the Union forces would never take that warehouse and its precious contents. These were the very flower of that cavalry of the South destined to become so famous.

“You know the village?” said Sherburne to Harry.

“Yes, I passed there last night.”

“What defense has it?”

“About two hundred men. They are strangers to the region, drawn from the Tidewater country, and I don’t think they’re as good as most of General Jackson’s men.”

“Lack of discipline, you think?”

“Yes, but the material is fine.”

“All right. Then we’ll see that they acquire discipline. Nothing like the enemy’s fire to teach men what war is.”

They were riding at good speed toward the village, while they talked, and Harry had become at once the friend and lieutenant of young Captain Sherburne. His manner was so pleasant, so intimate, so full of charm, that he did not have the power or the will to resist it.

They soon saw Hertford, a village so little that it was not able to put itself on the map. It stood on the crest of a low hill, and the tobacco barn was about as large as all the other buildings combined. The twilight had now merged into night, but there was a bright sky and plenty of stars, and they saw well.

Captain Sherburne stopped his troop at a distance of three or four hundred yards, while they were still under cover of the forest.

“What’s the name of the commander there?” he asked.

“McGee,” Harry replied. “Means well, but rather obstinate.”

“That’s the way with most of these untrained men. We mustn’t risk being shot up by those whom we’ve come to help. Lasley, give them a call from the bugle. Make it low and soft though. We don’t want those behind us to hear it.”

Lasley, a boy no older than Harry, rode forward a dozen yards in front of the troop, put his bugle to his lips and blew a soft, warning call. Harry had been stirred by the first sound of a hostile trumpet hours before, and now this, the note of a friend, thrilled him again. He gazed intently at the village, knowing that the pickets would be on watch, and presently he saw men appear at the edge of the hill just in front of the great warehouse. They were the pickets, beyond a doubt, because the silver starshine glinted along the blades of their bayonets.

The bugler gave one more call. It was a soft and pleasing sound. It said very plainly that the one who blew and those with him were friends. Two men in uniform joined the pickets beside the warehouse, and looked toward the point whence the note of the bugle came.

“Forward!” said Captain Philip Sherburne, himself leading the way, Harry by his side. The troops, wheeling back into the road and marching by fours in perfect order, rode straight toward the village.

“Who comes?” was the stern hail.

“A troop of Stonewall Jackson’s cavalry to help you,” replied Sherburne. “You are about to be attacked by a Northern division eight hundred strong.”

“Who says so?” came the question in a tone tinged with unbelief, and Harry knew that it was the stubborn and dogmatic McGee who spoke.

“Lieutenant Harry Kenton of the Invincibles, one of Stonewall Jackson’s best regiments, has seen them. You know him; he was here yesterday.”

As he spoke, Captain Sherburne sprang from his horse and pointed to Harry.

“You remember me, Captain McGee,” said Harry. “I stopped with you a minute yesterday. I rode on a scouting expedition, and I have seen the Union force myself. It outnumbers us at least two to one, but we’ll have the advantage of the defense.”

“Yes, I know you,” said McGee, his heavy and strong, but not very intelligent face, brightening a little. “But it’s a great responsibility I’ve got here. We ought to have had more troops to defend such valuable stores. I’ve got two hundred men, captain, and I should say that you’ve about the same.”

It was then that Captain Philip Sherburne showed his knightly character, speaking words that made Harry’s admiration of him immense.

“I haven’t any men, Captain McGee,” he said, “but you have four hundred, and I’ll help my commander as much as I can.”

McGee’s eyes gleamed. Harry saw that while not of alert mind he was nevertheless a gentleman.

“We work together, Captain Sherburne,” he said gratefully, “and I thank God you’ve come. What splendid men you have!”

Captain Sherburne’s eyes gleamed also. This troop of his was his pride, and he sought always to keep it bright and sharp like a polished sword blade.

“Whatever you wish, Captain McGee. But it will take us all to repel the enemy. Kenton here, who saw them well, says they have a fine, disciplined force.”

The men now dismounted and led their horses to a little grove just in the rear of the warehouse, where they were tethered under the guard of the villagers, all red-hot partisans of the South. Then the four hundred men, armed with rifles and carbines, disposed themselves about the warehouse, the bulk of them watching the road along which the attacking force was almost sure to come.

Harry took his place with Sherburne, and once more he was compelled to admire the young captain’s tact and charm of manner. He directed everything by example and suggestion, but all the while he made the heavy Captain McGee think that he himself was doing it.

Sherburne and Harry walked down the road a little distance.

“Aren’t you glad to be here, Kenton?” asked the captain in a somewhat whimsical tone.

“I’m glad to help, of course.”

“Yes, but there’s more. When I came to war I came to fight. And if we save the stores look how we’ll stand in Old Jack’s mind. Lord, Kenton, but he’s a queer man! You’d never take any notice of him, if you didn’t know who he was, but I’d rather have one flash of approval from those solemn eyes of his than whole dictionaries of praise from all the other generals I know.”

“I saw him at Bull Run, when he saved the day.”

“So did I. The regiment that I was with didn’t come up until near the close, but our baptism of battle was pretty thorough, all the same. Hark! did you think you heard anything, Kenton?”

Harry listened attentively.

“Yes, I hear something,” he replied. “It’s very soft, but I should say that it’s the distant beat of hoofs.”

“And of many hoofs.”

“So I think.”

“Then it’s our friends of the North, coming to take what we want to keep. A few minutes more, Kenton, and they’ll be here.”

They slipped back toward the warehouse, and Harry’s heart began to throb heavily. He knew that Sherburne’s words would soon come true.

## CHAPTER II. THE FOOT CAVALRY

Captain Sherburne told Captain McGee that the invaders were coming, and there was a stir in the ranks of the defenders. The cavalymen, disciplined and eager, said nothing, but merely moved a little in order to see better along the road over which the enemy was advancing. The original defenders, who were infantry, talked in whispers, despite commands, and exchanged doubts and apprehensions.

Harry walked up and down in front of the warehouse with Captain Sherburne, and both watched the road.

“If we only had a little artillery, just a light gun or two,” said Sherburne, “we’d give ‘em such a surprise that they’d never get over it.”

“But we haven’t got it.”

“No, we haven’t, but maybe rifles and carbines will serve.”

The hoofbeats were fast growing louder, and Harry knew that the head of the Northern column would appear in a minute or two. Every light in the warehouse or about it and all in the village had been extinguished, but the moonlight was clear and more stars had come into the full sky.

“We can see well enough for a fight,” murmured Captain Sherburne.

Everybody could hear the hoofbeats now, and again there was a stir in the ranks of the defenders. The dark line appeared in the road three or four hundred yards away and then, as the horsemen emerged into the open, they deployed rapidly by companies. They, too, were trained men, and keen eyes among their officers caught sight of the armed dark line before the warehouse. The voice of the trumpet suddenly pealed forth again, and now it was loud and menacing.

“It’s the charge!” cried Sherburne, “and I can see that they’re all you said, Kenton! A magnificent body, truly! Ready, men! Ready! For God’s sake don’t fire too soon! Wait for the word! Wait for the word!”

He was all the leader now, and in the excitement of the moment McGee did not notice it. The superior mind, the one keen to see and to act, was in control.

“Here, Kenton!” cried Sherburne, “hold back these recruits! My own men will do exactly as I say!”

Harry ran along the infantry line, and here and there he knocked down rifles which were raised already, although the enemy was yet three hundred yards away. But he saw a figure in front of the charging horsemen wave a sword. Then the trumpet blew another call, short but fierce and menacing, and the ground thundered as nearly a thousand horsemen swept forward, uttering a tremendous shout, their sabers flashing in the moonlight.

Harry felt a moment of admiration and then another moment of pity. These men, charging so grandly, did not know that the defenders had been reinforced. Nor did they know that they rode straight to what was swift and sudden death for many of them.

It was hard to stand steady and not pull the trigger, while that line of flashing steel galloped upon them, but the dismounted cavalymen looked to their leader for commands, and the officer held the infantry. Harry’s moment of admiration and pity passed. These were soldiers coming to defeat and destroy, and it was his business to help prevent it. His own pulse of battle began to beat hard.

That front of steel, spread wide across the open, was within two hundred yards now! Then a hundred and fifty! Then a hundred! Then less, and fierce and sharp like the crack of a rifle came Captain Sherburne’s command: “Fire!”

Four hundred rifles leaped to the shoulder and four hundred fingers pressed trigger so close together that four hundred rifles sang together as one. The charge halted in its tracks. The entire front rank was shot away. Horses and men went down together, and the horses uttered neighs of pain, far more terrific than the groans of the wounded men. Many of them, riderless, galloped up and down between the lines.

But the splendid horsemen behind came on again, after the momentary stop. Half of them armed with short carbines sent a volley at the defenders, who were shoving in cartridges in frantic haste, and the swordsmen galloped straight upon the Virginians.

Harry saw a great saber flashing directly in his face. It was wielded by a man on a powerful horse that seemed wild with the battle fever. The horse, at the moment, was more terrible than his rider. His mouth was dripping with foam, and his lips were curled back from his cruel, white teeth. His eyes, large and shot with blood, were like those of some huge, carnivorous animal.

The boy recoiled, more in fear of the horse than of the saber, and snatching a heavy pistol from his belt, fired directly at the great foam-flecked head. The horse crashed down, but his rider sprang clear and retreated into the smoke. Almost at the same instant the defenders had fired the second volley, and the charge was beaten back from their very faces.

The Southerners at the war's opening had the advantage of an almost universal familiarity with the rifle, and now they used it well. Sherburne's two hundred men, always cool and steady, fired like trained marksmen, and the others did almost as well. Most of them had new rifles, using cartridges, and no cavalry on earth could stand before such a fire.

Harry again saw the flashing sabers more than once, and there was a vast turmoil of fire and smoke in front of him, but in a few minutes the trumpet sounded again, loud and clear over the crash of battle, and now it was calling to the men to come back.

The two forces broke apart. The horsemen, save for the wounded and dead, retreated to the forest, and the defenders, victorious for the present, fired no more, while the wounded, who could, crawled away to shelter. They reloaded their rifles and at first there was no exultation. They barely had time to think of anything. The impact had been so terrible and there had been such a blaze of firing that they were yet in a daze, and scarcely realized what had happened.

"Down, men! Down!" cried Captain Sherburne, as he ran along the line. "They'll open fire from the wood!"

All the defenders threw themselves upon the ground and lay there, much less exposed and also concealed partly. One edge of the wood ran within two hundred yards of the warehouse, and presently the Northern soldiers, hidden behind the trees at that point, opened a heavy rifle fire. Bullets whistled over the heads of the defenders, and kept up a constant patter upon the walls of the warehouse, but did little damage.

A few of the men in gray had been killed, and all the wounded were taken inside the warehouse, into which the great tobacco barn had been turned. Two competent surgeons attended to them by the light of candles, while the garrison outside lay still and waiting under the heavy fire.

"A waste of lead," said Sherburne to Harry. "They reckon, perhaps, that we're all recruits, and will be frightened into retreat or surrender."

"If we had those guns now we could clear out the woods in short order," said Harry.

"And if they had 'em they could soon blow up this barn, everything in it and a lot of us at the same time. So we are more than even on the matter of the lack of guns."

The fire from the wood died in about fifteen minutes and was succeeded by a long and trying silence. The light of the moon deepened, and silvered the faces of the dead lying in the open. All the survivors of the attack were hidden, but the defenders knew that they were yet in the forest.

"Kenton," said Captain Sherburne, "you know the way to General Jackson's camp at Winchester."

"I've been over it a dozen times."

"Then you must mount and ride. This force is sitting down before us for a siege, and it probably has pickets about the village, but you must get through somehow. Bring help! The Yankees are likely to send back for help, too, but we've got to win here."

"I'm off in five minutes," said Harry, "and I'll come with a brigade by dawn."

“I believe you will,” said Sherburne. “But get to Old Jack! Get there! If you can only reach him, we’re saved! He may not have any horsemen at hand, but his foot cavalry can march nearly as fast! Lord, how Stonewall Jackson can cover ground!”

Their hands met in the hearty grasp of a friendship which was already old and firm, and Harry, without looking back, slipped into the wood, where the men from the village were watching over the horses. Sherburne had told him to take any horse he needed, but he chose his own, convinced that he had no equal, slipped into the saddle, and rode to the edge of the wood.

“There’s a creek just back of us; you can see the water shining through the break in the trees,” said a man who kept the village store. “The timber’s pretty thick along it, and you’d best keep in its shelter. Here, you Tom, show him the way.”

A boy of fourteen stepped up to the horse’s head.

“My son,” said the storekeeper. “He knows every inch of the ground.”

But Harry waved him back.

“No,” he said. “I’ll be shot at, and the boy on foot can’t escape. I’ll find my way through. No, I tell you he must not go!”

He almost pushed back the boy who was eager for the task, rode out of the wood which was on the slope of the hill away from the point of attack, and gained the fringe of timber along the creek. It was about fifty yards from cover to cover, but he believed he had not been seen, as neither shout nor shot followed him.

Yet the Union pickets could not be far away. He had seen enough to know that the besiegers were disciplined men led by able officers and they would certainly make a cordon about the whole Southern position.

He rode his horse into a dense clump of trees and paused to listen. He heard nothing but the faint murmur of the creek, and the occasional rustle of dry branches as puffs of wind passed. He dismounted for the sake of caution and silence as far as possible, and led his horse down the fringe of trees, always keeping well under cover.

Another hundred yards and he stopped again to listen. All those old inherited instincts and senses leaped into life. He was, for the moment, the pioneer lad, seeking to detect the ambush of his foe. Now, his acute ears caught the hostile sound. It was low, merely the footsteps of a man, steadily walking back and forth.

Harry peeped from his covert and saw a Union sentinel not far away, pacing his beat, rifle on shoulder, the point of the bayonet tipped with silver flame from the moon. And he saw further on another sentinel, and then another, all silent and watchful. He knew that the circle about the defense was complete.

He could have escaped easily through the line, had he been willing to leave his horse, and for a few moments he was sorely tempted to do so, but he recalled that time was more precious than jewels. If he ever got beyond the line of pickets he must go and go fast.

He was three or four hundred yards from the village and no one had yet observed him, but he did not believe that he could go much farther undetected. Some one was bound to hear the heavy footsteps of the horse.

The creek shallowed presently and the banks became very low. Then Harry decided suddenly upon his course. He would put everything to the touch and win or lose in one wild dash. Springing upon the back of his horse, he raked him with the spur and put him straight at the creek. The startled animal was across in two jumps, and then Harry sent him racing across the fields. He heard two or three shouts and several shots, but fortunately none touched him or his mount, and, not looking back, he continually urged the horse to greater speed.

Bending low he heard the distant sound of hoofbeats behind him, but they soon died away. Then he entered a belt of forest, and when he passed out on the other side no pursuit could be seen.

But he did not slacken speed. He knew that all Sherburne had said about Stonewall Jackson was true. He would forgive no dallying by the way. He demanded of every man his uttermost.

He turned from the unfenced field into the road, and rode at a full gallop toward Winchester. The cold wind swept past and his spirits rose high. Every pulse was beating with exultation. It was he who had brought the warning to the defenders of the stores. It was he who had brought Sherburne's troop to help beat off the attack, and now it was he who, bursting through the ring of steel, was riding to Jackson and sure relief.

His horse seemed to share his triumph. He ran on and on without a swerve or jar. Once he stretched out his long head, and uttered a shrill neigh. The sound died in far echoes, and then followed only the rapid beat of his hoofs on the hard road.

Harry knew that there was no longer any danger to him from the enemy, and he resolved now not to go to his own colonel, but to ride straight to the tent of Jackson himself.

The night had never grown dark. Moon and stars still shed an abundant light for the flying horseman, and presently he caught fleeting glimpses through the trees of roofs that belonged to Winchester. Then two men in gray spring into the road, and, leveling their rifles, gave him the command to stop.

"I'm Lieutenant Kenton of the Invincibles," he cried, "and I come for help. A strong force of the Yankees is besieging Hertford, and four hundred of our men are defending it. There is no time to waste! They must have help there before dawn, or everything is lost! Which way is General Jackson's tent?"

"In that field on the hillock!" replied one of the men, pointing two or three hundred yards away.

Harry raced toward the tent, which rose in modest size out of the darkness, and sprang to the ground, when his horse reached it. A single sentinel, rifle across his arms, was standing before it, but the flap was thrown back and a light was burning inside.

"I'm a messenger for General Jackson!" cried Harry. "I've news that can't wait!"

The sentinel hesitated a moment, but a figure within stepped to the door of the tent and Harry for the first time was face to face with Stonewall Jackson. He had seen him often near or far, but now he stood before him, and was to speak with him.

Jackson was dressed fully and the fine wrinkles of thought showed on his brow, as if he had intended to study and plan the night through. He was a tallish man, with good features cut clearly, high brow, short brown beard and ruddy complexion. His uniform was quite plain and his appearance was not imposing, but his eyes of deep blue regarded the boy keenly.

"I'm Lieutenant Kenton, sir, of Colonel Talbot's Invincibles," replied Harry to the question which was not spoken, but which nevertheless was asked. "Our arsenal at Hertford is besieged by a strong force of the enemy, a force that is likely to be increased heavily by dawn. Luckily Captain Sherburne and his troop of valley Virginians came up in time to help, and I have slipped through the besieging lines to bring more aid."

Harry had touched his cap as he spoke and now he stood in silence while the blue eyes looked him through.

"I know you. I've observed you," said Jackson in calm, even tones, showing not a trace of excitement. "I did not think that the Federal troops would make a movement so soon, but we will meet it. A brigade will march in half an hour."

"Don't I go with it?" exclaimed Harry pleadingly. "You know, I brought the news, sir!"

"You do. Your regiment will form part of the brigade. Rejoin Colonel Talbot at once. The Invincibles, with you as guide, shall lead the way. You have done well, Lieutenant Kenton."

Harry flushed with pride at the brief words of praise, which meant so much coming from Stonewall Jackson, and saluting again hurried to his immediate command. Already the messengers were flying to the different regiments, bidding them to be up and march at once.

The Invincibles were upon their feet in fifteen minutes, fully clothed and armed, and ready for the road. The cavalry were not available that night, and the brigade would march on foot save for the officers. Harry was back on his horse, and St. Clair and Langdon were beside him. The colonels, Talbot and St. Hilaire, sat on their horses at the head of the Invincibles, the first regiment.

“What is it?” said Langdon to Harry. “Have you brought this night march upon us?”

“I have, and we’re going to strike the Yankees before dawn at Hertford,” replied Harry to both questions.

“I like the nights for rest,” said Langdon, “but it could be worse; I’ve had four hours’ sleep anyway.”

“You’ll have no more this night, that’s certain,” said St. Clair. “Look, General Jackson, himself, is going with us. See him climbing upon Little Sorrel! Lord pity the foot cavalry!”

General Jackson, mounted upon the sorrel horse destined to become so famous, rode to the head of the brigade, which was now in ranks, and beckoned to Harry.

“I’ve decided to attend to this affair myself, Lieutenant Kenton,” he said. “Keep by my side. You know the way. Be sure that you lead us right.”

His voice was not raised, but his words had an edge of steel. The cold blue eyes swept him with a single chilly glance and Harry felt the fear of God in his soul. Lead them right? His faculties could not fail with Stonewall Jackson by his side.

The general himself gave the word, the brigade swung into the broad road and it marched. It did not dawdle along. It marched, and it marched fast. It actually seemed to Harry after the first mile that it was running, running toward the enemy.

Not in vain had the infantry of Stonewall Jackson been called foot cavalry. Harry now for the first time saw men really march. The road spun behind them and the forest swept by. They were nearly all open-air Virginians, long of limb, deep of chest and great of muscle. There was no time for whispering among them, and the exchange of guesses about their destination. They needed every particle of air in their lungs for the terrible man who made them march as men had seldom marched before.

Jackson cast a grim eye on the long files that sank away in the darkness behind him.

“They march very well,” he said, “but they will do better with more practice. Ride to the rear, Lieutenant Kenton, and see if there are any stragglers. If you find any order them back into line and if they refuse to obey, shoot.”

Again his voice was not raised, but an electric current of fiery energy seemed to leap from this grave, somber man and to infuse itself through the veins of the lad to whom he gave the orders.

Harry saluted and, wheeling his horse, rode swiftly along the edge of the forest toward the rear. Now, the spirit of indomitable youth broke forth. Many in the columns were as young as he and some younger. In the earlier years of the war, and indeed, to the very close, there was little outward respect for rank among the citizen soldiers of either army. Harry was saluted with a running fire of chaff.

“Turn your horse’s head, young feller, the enemy ain’t that way. He’s in front.”

“He’s forgot his toothbrush, Bill, and he’s going back in a hurry to get it.”

“If I had a horse like that I’d ride him in the right direction.”

“Tell ‘em in Winchester that the foot cavalry are marchin’ a hundred miles an hour.”

Harry did not resent these comments. He merely flung back an occasional comment of his own and hurried on until he reached the rear. Then in the dusk of the road he found four or five men limping along, and ready when convenient to drop away in the darkness. Harry wasted no time. The fire in his blood that had come from Jackson was still burning. He snatched a pistol from his belt and, riding directly at them, cried:

“Forward and into the ranks at once, or I shoot!”

“But we are lame, sir!” cried one of the men. “See my foot is bleeding!”

He held up one foot and red drops were falling from the ragged shoe.

“It makes no difference,” cried Harry. “Barefooted men should be glad to march for Stonewall Jackson! One, two, three! Hurry, all of you, or I shoot!”

The men took one look at the flaming face, and broke into a run for the rear guard. Harry saw them in the ranks and then beat up the woods on either side of the road, but saw no more stragglers or deserters. Then he galloped through the edge of the forest and rejoined the general at the head of the command.

“Were they all marching?” asked Jackson.

“All but four, sir.”

“And the four?”

“They’re marching now, too.”

“Good. How far are we from the arsenal?”

“About eight miles, sir.”

“Isn’t it nearer nine?”

“I should say nearer eight, sir.”

“You should know, and at any rate we’ll soon see.”

Jackson did not speak to him again directly, evidently keeping him at his side now for sure guidance, but he continually sent other aides along the long lines to urge more speed. The men were panting, and, despite the cold of the winter night, beads of perspiration stood on every face. But Jackson was pitiless. He continually spurred them on, and now Harry knew with the certainty of fate that he would get there in time. He would reach Hertford before fresh Union troops could come. He was as infallible as fate.

There was no breath left for whispering in the ranks of Jackson’s men. Nothing was heard but the steady beat of marching feet, and now and then, the low command of an officer. But such commands were few. There were no more stragglers, and the chief himself rode at their head. They knew how to follow.

The moon faded and many of the stars went back into infinite space. A dusky film was drawn across the sky, and at a distance the fields and forest blended into one great shadow. Harry looked back at the brigade which wound in a long dark coil among the trees. He could not see faces of the men now, only the sinuous black shape of illimitable length that their solid lines made.

This long black shape moved fast, and occasionally it gave forth a sinister glitter, as stray moonbeams fell upon blade or bayonet. It seemed to Harry that there was something deadly and inevitable about it, and he began to feel sorry for the Union troops who were besieging the village and who did not know that Stonewall Jackson was coming.

He cast a sidelong glance at the leader. He rode, leaning a little further forward in the saddle than usual, and the wintry blue eyes gazed steadily before him. Harry knew that they missed nothing.

“You are sure that we are on the right road, Mr. Kenton?” said Jackson.

“Quite sure of it, sir.”

The general did not speak again for some time. Then, when he caught the faint glimmer of water through the dark, he said:

“This is the creek, is it not?”

“Yes, sir, and the Yankees can’t be more than a mile away.”

“And it’s a full hour until dawn. The reinforcements for the enemy cannot have come up. Lieutenant Kenton, I wish you to stay with me. I will have a messenger tell Colonel Talbot that for the present you are detached for my service.”

“Thank you, sir,” said Harry.

“Why?”

“I wish to see how you crumple up the enemy.”

The cold blue eyes gleamed for a moment. Harry more than guessed the depths of passion and resolve that lay behind the impenetrable mask of Jackson's face. He felt again the rays of the white, hot fire that burned in the great Virginian's soul.

A few hundred yards further and the brigade began to spread out in the dusk. Companies filed off to right and left, and in a few minutes came shots from the pickets, sounding wonderfully clear and sharp in the stillness of the night. Red dots from the rifle muzzles appeared here and there in the woods, and then Harry caught the glint of late starshine on the eaves of the warehouse.

Jackson drew his horse a little to one side of the road, and Harry, obedient to orders, followed him. A regiment massed directly behind them drew up close. Harry saw that it was his own Invincibles. There were Colonel Leonidas Talbot and Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire on horseback, looking very proud and eager. Further away were Langdon and St. Clair also mounted, but Harry could not see the expression on their faces.

"Tell Colonel Talbot to have the charge sounded and then to attack with all his might," said Jackson to his young aide.

Harry carried the order eagerly and rejoined the general at once. The drums of the Invincibles beat the charge, and on both sides of them the drums of other regiments played the same tune. Then the drum-beat was lost in that wild and thrilling shout, the rebel yell, more terrible than the war-whoop of the Indians, and the whole brigade rushed forward in a vast half-circle that enclosed the village between the two horns of the curve.

The scattered firing of the pickets was lost in the great shout of the South, and, by the time the Northern sentinels could give the alarm to their main body, the rush of Jackson's men was upon them, clearing out the woods and fields in a few instants and driving the Union horsemen in swift flight northward.

Harry kept close to his general. He saw a spark of fire shoot from the blue eye, and the nostrils expand. Then the mask became as impenetrable as ever. He let the reins fall on the neck of Little Sorrel, and watched his men as they swept into the open, passed the warehouse, and followed the enemy into the forest beyond.

But the bugles quickly sounded the recall. It was not Jackson's purpose to waste his men in frays which could produce little. The pursuing regiments returned reluctantly to the open where the inhabitants of the village were welcoming Jackson with great rejoicings. The encounter had been too swift and short to cause great loss, but all the stores were saved and Captain Sherburne and Captain McGee rode forward to salute their commander.

"You made a good defense," said Stonewall Jackson, crisply and briefly. "We begin the removal of the stores at once. Wagons will come up shortly for that purpose. Take your cavalry, Captain Sherburne, and scout the country. If they need sleep they can get it later when there is nothing else to do."

Captain Sherburne saluted and Harry saw his face flush with pride. The indomitable spirit of Jackson was communicated fast to all his men. The sentence to more work appealed to Sherburne with much greater force than the sentence of rest could have done. In a moment he and his men were off, searching the woods and fields in the direction of the Union camp.

"Ride back on the road, Lieutenant Kenton, and tell the wagons to hurry," said General Jackson to Harry. "Before I left Winchester I gave orders for them to follow, and we must not waste time here."

"Yes, sir," said Harry, as he turned and rode into the forest through which they had come. He, too, felt the same emotion that had made the face of Sherburne flush with pride. What were sleep and rest to a young soldier, following a man who carried victory in the hollow of his hand; not the victory of luck or chance, but the victory of forethought, of minute preparation, and of courage.

He galloped fast, and the hard road gave back the ring of steel shod hoofs. A silver streak showed in the eastern sky. The dawn was breaking. He increased his pace. The woods and fields

fled by. Then he heard the cracking of whips, and the sound of voices urging on reluctant animals. Another minute and the long line of wagons was in sight straining along the road.

“Hurry up!” cried Harry to the leader who drove, bareheaded.

“Has Old Jack finished the job?” asked the man.

“Yes.”

“How long did it take him?”

“About five minutes.”

“I win,” called the man to the second driver just behind him. “You ‘lowed it would take him ten minutes, but I said not more’n seven at the very furthest.”

The train broke into a trot, and Harry, turning his horse, rode by the side of the leader.

“How did you know that it would take General Jackson so little time to scatter the enemy?” the boy asked the man.

“‘Cause I know Old Jack.”

“But he has not yet done much in independent command.”

“No, but I’ve seen him gettin’ ready, an’ I’ve watched him. He sees everything, an’ he prays. I tell you he prays. I ain’t a prayin’ man myself. But when a man kneels down in the bushes an’ talks humble an’ respectful to his God, an’ then rises up an’ jumps at the enemy, it’s time for that enemy to run. I’d rather be attacked by the worst bully and desperado that ever lived than by a prayin’ man. You see, I want to live, an’ what chance have I got ag’in a man that’s not only not afraid to die, but that’s willin’ to die, an’ rather glad to die, knowin’ that he’s goin’ straight to Heaven an’ eternal joy? I tell you, young man, that unbelievers ain’t ever got any chance against believers; no, not in nothin’.”

“I believe you’re right.”

“Right! Of course I’m right! Why did Old Jack order these waggins to come along an’ get them stores? ‘Cause he believed he was goin’ to save ‘em. An’ mebbe he saved ‘em, ‘cause he believed he was goin’ to do it. It works both ways. Git up!”

The shout of “Git up!” was to his horses, which added a little more to their pace, and now Harry saw troops coming back to meet them and form an escort.

In half an hour they were at the village. Already the ammunition and supplies had been brought forth and were stacked, ready to be loaded on the wagons. General Jackson was everywhere, riding back and forth on his sorrel horse, directing the removal just as he had directed the march and the brief combat. His words were brief but always dynamic. He seemed insensible to weariness.

It was now full morning, wintry and clear. The small population of the village and people from the surrounding country, intensely Southern and surcharged with enthusiasm, were bringing hot coffee and hot breakfast for the troops. Jackson permitted them to eat and drink in relays. As many as could get at the task helped to load the wagons. Little compulsion was needed. Officers themselves toiled at boxes and casks. The spirit of Jackson had flowed into them all.

“I’ve gone into training,” said Langdon to Harry.

“Training? What kind of training, Tom?”

“I see that my days of play are over forever, and I’m practicing hard, so I can learn how to do without food, sleep or rest for months at a time.”

“It’s well you’re training,” interrupted St. Clair. “I foresee that you’re going to need all the practice you can get. Everything’s loaded in the wagons now, and I wager you my chances of promotion against one of our new Confederate dollar bills that we start inside of a minute.”

The word “minute” was scarcely out of his mouth, when Jackson gave the sharp order to march. Sherburne’s troop sprang to saddle and led the way, their bugler blowing a mellow salute to the morning and victory. Many whips cracked, and the wagons bearing the precious stores swung into line. Behind came the brigade, the foot cavalry. The breakfast and the loading of the wagons had not occupied more than half an hour. It was yet early morning when the whole force left the village and marched at a swift pace toward Winchester.

General Jackson beckoned to Harry.

“Ride with me,” he said. “I’ve notified Colonel Talbot that you are detached from his staff and will serve on mine.”

Although loath to leave his comrades Harry appreciated the favor and flushed with pleasure.

“Thank you, sir,” he said briefly.

Jackson nodded. He seemed to like the lack of effusive words. Harry knew that his general had not tasted food. Neither had he. He had actually forgotten it in his keenness for his work, and now he was proud of the fact. He was proud, too, of the comradeship of abstention that it gave him with Stonewall Jackson. As he rode in silence by the side of the great commander he made for himself an ideal. He would strive in his own youthful way to show the zeal, the courage and the untiring devotion that marked the general.

The sun, wintry but golden, rose higher and made fields and forest luminous. But few among Jackson’s men had time to notice the glory of the morning. It seemed to Harry that they were marching back almost as swiftly as they had come. Langdon was right and more. They were getting continuous practice not only in the art of living without food, sleep or rest, but also of going everywhere on a run instead of a walk. Those who survived it would be incomparable soldiers.

Winchester appeared and the people came forth rejoicing. Jackson gave orders for the disposition of the stores and then rode at once to a tent. He signalled to Harry also to dismount and enter. An orderly took the horses of both.

“Sit down at the table there,” said Jackson. “I want to dictate to you some orders.”

Harry sat down. He had forgotten to take off his cap and gloves, but he removed one gauntlet now, and picked up a pen which lay beside a little inkstand, a pad of coarse paper on the other side.

Jackson himself had not removed hat or gauntlets either, and the heavy cavalry cloak that he had worn on the ride remained flung over his shoulders. He dictated a brief order to his brigadiers, Loring, Edward Johnson, Garnett, the commander of the Stonewall Brigade, and Ashby, who led the cavalry, to prepare for a campaign and to see that everything was ready for a march in the morning.

Harry made copies of all the orders and sealed them.

“Deliver every one to the man to whom it is addressed,” said Jackson, “and then report to me. But be sure that you say nothing of their contents to anybody.”

The boy, still burning with zeal, hurried forth with the orders, delivered them all, and came back to the tent, where he found the general dictating to another aide. Jackson glanced at him and Harry, saluting, said:

“I have given all the orders, sir, to those for whom they were intended.”

“Very well,” said Jackson. “Wait and I shall have more messages for you to carry.”

He turned to the second aide, but seeming to remember something, looked at his watch.

“Have you had any breakfast, Mr. Kenton?” he said.

“No, sir.”

“Any sleep?”

“Yes, sir.”

“When?”

“I slept well, sir, night before last.”

Harry’s reply was given in all seriousness. Jackson smiled. The boy’s reply and his grave manner pleased him.

“I won’t give you any more orders just now,” he said. “Go out and get something to eat, but do not be gone longer than half an hour. You need sleep, too—but that can wait.”

“I shall be glad to carry your orders, sir, now. The food can wait, too. I am not hungry.”

Harry spoke respectfully. There was in truth an appealing note in his voice. Jackson gave him another and most searching glance.

“I think I chose well when I chose you,” he said. “But go, get your breakfast. It is not necessary to starve to death now. We may have a chance at that later.”

The faintest twinkle of grim humor appeared in his eyes and Harry, withdrawing, hastened at once to the Invincibles, where he knew he would have food and welcome in plenty.

St. Clair and Langdon greeted him with warmth and tried to learn from him what was on foot.

“There’s a great bustle,” said Langdon, “and I know something big is ahead. This is the last day of the Old Year, and I know that the New Year is going to open badly. I’ll bet you anything that before to-morrow morning is an hour old this whole army will be running hot-foot over the country, more afraid of Stonewall Jackson than of fifty thousand of the enemy.”

“But you’ve been in training for it,” said Harry with a laugh.

“So I have, but I don’t want to train too hard.”

Harry ate and drank and was back at General Jackson’s tent in twenty minutes. He had received a half hour but he was learning already to do better than was expected of him.

## CHAPTER III. STONEWALL JACKSON'S MARCH

Harry took some orders to brigadiers and colonels. He saw that concentration was going on rapidly and he shared the belief of his comrades that the army would march in the morning. He felt a new impulse of ambition and energy. It continually occurred to him that while he was doing much he might do more. He saw how his leader worked, with rapidity and precision, and without excitement, and he strove to imitate him.

The influence of Jackson was rapidly growing stronger upon the mind of the brilliant, sensitive boy, so susceptible to splendor of both thought and action. The general, not yet great to the world, but great already to those around him, dominated the mind of the boy. Harry was proud to serve him.

He saw that Jackson had taken no sleep, and he would take none either. Soon the question was forgotten, and he toiled all through the afternoon, glad to be at the heart of affairs so important.

Winchester was a sprightly little city, one of the best in the great valley, inhabited by cultivated people of old families, and Southern to the core. Harry and his young comrades had found a good welcome there. They had been in many houses and they had made many friends. The Virginians liked his bright face and manners. Now they could not fail to see that some great movement was afoot, and more than once his new friends asked him its nature, but he replied truthfully that he did not know. In the throb of great action Winchester disappeared from his thoughts. Every faculty was bent upon the plans of Jackson, whatever they might be.

The afternoon drew to a close and then the short winter twilight passed swiftly. The last night of the Old Year had come, and Harry was to enter at dawn upon one of the most vivid periods in the life of any boy that ever lived, a period paralleled perhaps only by that of the French lads who followed the young Bonaparte into the plains of Italy. Harry with all his dreams, arising from the enormous impression made upon him by Jackson, could not yet foresee what lay before him.

He was returning on foot from one of his shorter errands. He had ridden throughout the afternoon, but the time came when he thought the horse ought to rest, and with the coming of the twilight he had walked. He was not conscious of any weakness. His body, in a way, had become a mere mechanism. It worked, because the will acted upon it like a spring, but it was detached, separate from his mind. He took no more interest in it than he would in any other machine, which, when used up, could be cast aside, and be replaced with a new one.

He glanced at the camp, stretching through the darkness. Much fewer fires were burning than usual, and the men, warned to sleep while they could, had wrapped themselves already in their blankets. Then he entered the tent of Jackson with the reply to an order that he had taken to a brigadier.

The general stood by a wall of the tent, dictating to an aide who sat at the little table, and who wrote by the light of a small oil lamp. Harry saluted and gave him the reply. Jackson read it. As he read Harry staggered but recovered himself quickly. The overtaxed body was making a violent protest, and the vague feeling that he could throw away the old and used-up machine, and replace it with a new one was not true. He caught his breath sharply and his face was red with shame. He hoped that his general had not seen this lamentable weakness of his.

Jackson, after reading the reply, resumed his dictation. Harry was sure that the general had not seen. He had not noticed the weakness in an aide of his who should have no weakness at all! But Jackson had seen and in a few hours of contact he had read the brave, bright young soul of his aide. He finished the dictation and then turning to Harry, he said quietly:

“I can't think of anything more for you to do, Mr. Kenton, and I suppose you might as well rest. I shall do so myself in a half hour. You'll find blankets in the large tent just beyond mine. A half dozen of my aides sleep in it, but there are blankets enough for all and it's first come first served.”

Harry gave the usual military salute and withdrew. Outside the tent, the body that he had used so cruelly protested not only a second time but many times. It was in very fact and truth detached

from the will, because it no longer obeyed the will at all. His legs wobbled and bent like those of a paralytic, and his head fell forward through very weakness.

Luckily the tent was only a few yards away, and he managed to reach it and enter. It had a floor of planks and in the dark he saw three youths, a little older than himself, already sound asleep in their blankets. He promptly rolled himself in a pair, stretched his length against the cloth wall, and balmy sleep quickly came to make a complete reunion of the will and of the tired body which would be fresh again in the morning, because he was young and strong and recovered fast.

Harry slept hard all through the night and nature completed her task of restoring the worn fibers. He was roused shortly after dawn and the cooks were ready with breakfast for the army. He ate hungrily and when he would stop, one of his comrades who had slept with him in the tent told him to eat more.

“You need a lot to go on when you march with Jackson,” he said. “Besides, you won’t be certain where the next is coming from.”

“I’ve learned that already,” said Harry, as he took his advice.

A half hour later he was on his horse near Jackson, ready to receive his commands, and in the early hours of the New Year the army marched out of Winchester, the eager wishes of the whole population following it.

It was the brightest of winter mornings, almost like spring it seemed. The sky was a curving and solid sheet of sunlight, and the youths of the army were for the moment a great and happy family. They were marching to battle, wounds and death, but they were too young and too buoyant to think much about it.

Harry soon learned that they were going toward Bath and Hancock, two villages on the railway, both held by Northern troops. He surmised that Jackson would strike a sudden blow, surprise the garrisons, cut the railway, and then rush suddenly upon some greater force. A campaign in the middle of winter. It appealed to him as something brilliant and daring. The pulses which had beat hard so often lately began to beat hard again.

The army went swiftly across forest and fields. As the brigade had marched back the night before, so the whole army marched forward to-day. The fact that Jackson’s men always marched faster than other men was forced again upon Harry’s attention. He remembered from his reading an old comment of Napoleon’s referring to war that there were only two or three men in Europe who knew the value of time. Now he saw that at least one man in America knew its value, and knew it as fully as Napoleon ever did.

The day passed hour by hour and the army sped on, making only a short halt at noon for rest and food. Harry joined the Invincibles for a few moments and was received with warmth by Colonel Leonidas Talbot, Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire and all his old friends.

“I am sorry to lose you, Harry,” said Colonel Talbot, “but I am glad that you are on the immediate staff of General Jackson. It’s an honor. I feel already that we’re in the hands of a great general, and the feeling has gone through the whole army. There’s an end, so far as this force is concerned, to doubt and hesitation.”

“And we, the Southerners who are called the cavaliers, are led by a puritan,” said Lieutenant-Colonel St. Hilaire. “Because if there ever was a puritan, General Jackson is one.”

Harry passed on, intending to speak with his comrades, Langdon and St. Clair. He heard the young troops talking freely everywhere, never forgetting the fact that they were born free citizens as good as anybody, and never hesitating to comment, often in an unflattering way, upon their officers. Harry saw a boy who had just taken off his shoes and who was tenderly rubbing his feet.

“I never marched so fast before,” he said complainingly. “My feet are sore all over.”

“Put on your shoes an’ shut up,” said another boy. “Stonewall Jackson don’t care nothin’ about your feet. You’re here to fight.”

Harry walked on, but the words sank deep in his mind. It was an uneducated boy, probably from the hills, who had given the rebuke, but he saw that the character of Stonewall Jackson was already understood by the whole army, even to the youngest private. He found Langdon and St. Clair sitting together on a log. They were not tired, as they were mounted officers, but they were full of curiosity.

“What’s passing through Old Jack’s head?” asked Langdon, the irreverent and the cheerful.

“I don’t know, and I don’t suppose anybody will ever know all that’s passing there.”

“I’ll wager my year’s pay against a last year’s bird nest that he isn’t leading us away from the enemy.”

“He certainly isn’t doing that. We’re moving on two little towns, Bath and Hancock, but there must be bigger designs beyond.”

“This is New Year’s Day, as you know,” said St. Clair in his pleasant South Carolina drawl, “and I feel that Tom there is going to earn the year’s pay that he talks so glibly about wagering.”

“At any rate, Arthur,” said Langdon, “if we go into battle you’ll be dressed properly for it, and if you fall you’ll die in a gentleman’s uniform.”

St. Clair smiled, showing that he appreciated Langdon’s flippant comment. Harry glanced at him. His uniform was spotless, and it was pressed as neatly as if it had just come from the hands of a tailor. The gray jacket of fine cloth, with its rows of polished brass buttons, was buttoned as closely as that of a West Point cadet. He seemed to be in dress and manner a younger brother of the gallant Virginia captain, Philip Sherburne, and Harry admired him. A soldier who dressed well amid such trying obstacles was likely to be a soldier through and through. Harry was learning to read character from extraneous things, things that sometimes looked like trifles to others.

“I merely came over here to pass the time of day,” he said. “We start again in two or three minutes. Hark, there go the bugles, and I go with them!”

He ran back, sprang on his horse a few seconds before Jackson himself was in the saddle, and rode away again.

The general sent him on no missions for a while, and Harry rode in silence. Observant, as always, he noticed the long ridges of the mountains, showing blue in the distance, and the occasional glimmer of water in the valley. It was beautiful, this valley, and he did not wonder that the Virginians talked of it so much. He shared their wrath because the hostile Northern foot already pressed a portion, and he felt as much eagerness as they to drive away the invader.

He also saw pretty soon that the long lines of the mountains, so blue and beautiful against the shining sun, were losing their clear and vivid tints. The sky above them was turning to gray, and their crests were growing pale. Then a wind chill and sharp with the edge of winter began to blow down from the slopes. It had been merely playing at summer that morning and, before the first day of January 1862, closed, winter rushed down upon Virginia, bringing with it the fiercest and most sanguinary year the New World ever knew—save the one that followed it, and the one that followed that.

The temperature dropped many degrees in an hour. Just as the young troops of Grant, marching to Donelson, deceived by a warm morning had cast aside their heavy clothing to be chilled to the bone before the day was over, so the equally young troops of Jackson now suffered in the same way, and from the same lack of thought.

Most of their overcoats and cloaks were in the wagons, and there was no time to get them, because Jackson would not permit any delays. They shivered and grumbled under their breath. Nevertheless the army marched swiftly, while the dark clouds, laden with snow and cold, marched up with equal swiftness from the western horizon.

A winter campaign! It did not seem so glorious now to many of the boys who in the warmth and the sunshine had throbbed with the thought of it. They inquired once more about those wagons containing their overcoats and blankets, and they learned that they had followed easier roads, while the troops themselves were taking short cuts through the forests and across the fields. They might

be reunited at night, and they might not. It was not considered a matter of the first importance by Jackson.

Harry had been wise enough to retain his military cloak strapped to his saddle, and he wrapped it about his body, drawing the collar as high as he could. One of his gauntleted hands held the reins, and the other swung easily by his side. He would have given his cloak to some one of the shivering youths who marched on foot near him, but he knew that Jackson would not permit any such open breach of discipline.

The boy watched the leader who rode almost by his side. Jackson had put on his own cavalry cloak, but it was fastened by a single button at the top and it had blown open. He did not seem to notice the fact. Apparently he was oblivious of heat and cold alike, and rode on, bent a little forward in the saddle, his face the usual impenetrable mask. But Harry knew that the brain behind that brow never ceased to work, always thinking and planning, trying this combination and that, ready to make any sacrifice to do the work that was to be done.

The long shadows came, and the short day that had turned so cold was over, giving way to the night that was colder than the day. They were on the hills now and even the vigorous Jackson felt that it was time to stop until morning. The night had turned very dark, a fierce wind was blowing, and now and then a fine sift of snow as sharp as hail was blown against their faces.

The wagons with the heavy clothing, blankets and food had not come up, and perhaps would not arrive until the next day. Gloom as dark as the night itself began to spread among the young troops, but Jackson gave them little time for bemoaning their fate. Fires were quickly built from fallen wood. The men found warmth and a certain mental relief in gathering the wood itself. The officers, many of them boys themselves, shared in the work. They roamed through the forest dragging in fallen timber, and now and then, an old rail fence was taken panel by panel to join the general heap.

The fires presently began to crackle in the darkness, running in long, irregular lines, and the young soldiers crowded in groups about them. At the same time they ate the scanty rations they carried in their knapsacks, and wondered what had become of the wagons. Jackson sent detachments to seek his supply trains, but Harry knew that he would not wait for it in the morning. The horses drawing the heavy loads over the slippery roads would need rest as badly as the men, and Jackson would go on. If food was not there—well then his troops must march on empty stomachs.

Youth changes swiftly and the high spirits with which the soldiers had departed in the morning were gone. The night had become extremely cold. Fierce winds whistled down from the crests of the mountains and pierced their clothing with myriads of little icy darts. They crept closer and closer to the fire. Their faces burned while their backs froze, and the menacing wind, while it chilled them to the marrow with its breath, seemed to laugh at them in sinister fashion. They thought with many a lament of their warm quarters in Winchester.

Harry shared the common depression to a certain extent. He had recalled that morning how the young Napoleon started on his great campaign of Italy, and there had been in his mind some idea that it would be repeated in the Virginia valleys, but he recalled at night that the soldiers of the youthful Bonaparte had marched and fought in warm days in a sunny country. It was a different thing to conduct a great campaign, when the clouds heavy with snow were hovering around the mountain tops, and the mercury was hunting zero. He shivered and looked apprehensively into the chilly night. His apprehension was not for a human foe, but for the unbroken spirits of darkness and mystery that can cow us all.

No tents were pitched. Jackson shared the common lot, sitting by a fire with some of the higher officers, while three or four other young aides were near. The sifts of snow turned after a while into a fine but steady snow, which continued half an hour. The backs of the soldiers were covered with white, while their faces burned. Then there was a shuffling sound at every fire, as the men turned their backs to the blaze and their faces to the forest.

Harry watched General Jackson closely. He was sitting on a fallen log, which the soldiers had drawn near to one of the largest fires, and he was staring intently into the coals. He did not speak, nor did he seem to take any notice of those about him. Harry knew, too, that he was not seeing the coals, but the armies of the enemy on the other side of the cold mountain.

Jackson after a while beckoned to the young aides and he gave to every one in turn the same command.

“Mount and make a complete circuit of the army. Report to me whether all the pickets are watchful, and whether any signs of the enemy can be seen.”

Harry had tethered his horse in a little grove near by, where he might be sheltered as much as possible from the cold, and the faithful animal which had not tasted food that day, whimpered and rubbed his nose against his shoulder when he came.

“I’m sorry, old boy,” whispered Harry, “I’d give you food if I could, but since I can’t give you food I’ve got to give you more work.”

He put on the bridle, leaped into the saddle, which had been left on the horse’s back, and rode away on his mission. The password that night was “Manassas,” and Harry exchanged it with the pickets who curved in a great circle through the lone, cold forest. They were always glad to see him. They were alone, save when two of them met at the common end of a beat, and these youths of the South were friendly, liking to talk and to hear the news of others.

Toward the Northern segment of the circle he came to a young giant from the hills who was walking back and forth with the utmost vigor and shaking himself as if he would throw off the cold. His brown face brightened with pleasure when he saw Harry and exchanged the password.

“Two or three other officers have been by here ridin’ hosses,” he said in the voice of an equal speaking to his equal, “an’ they don’t fill me plum’ full o’ envy a-tall, a-tall. I guess a feller tonight kin keep warmer walkin’ on the ground than ridin’ on a hoss. What might your name be, Mr. Officer?”

“Kenton. I’m a lieutenant, at present on the staff of General Jackson. What is yours?”

“Seth Moore, an’ I’m always a private, but at present doin’ sentinel duty, but wishin’ I was at home in our double log house ‘tween the blankets.”

“Have you noticed anything, Seth?” asked Harry, not at all offended by the nature of his reply.

“I’ve seen some snow, an’ now an’ then the cold top of a mountain, an’—”

“An’ what, Seth?”

“Do you see that grove straight toward the north four or five hundred yards away?”

“Yes, but I can make nothing of it but a black blur. It’s too far away to tell the trunks of the trees apart.”

“It’s too fur fur me, too, an’ my eyes are good, but ten or fifteen minutes ago, leftenant, I thought I saw a shadder at the edge of the grove. It ‘peared to me that the shadder was like that of a horse with a man on it. After a while it went back among the trees an’ o’ course I lost it thar.”

“You feel quite sure you saw the shadow, Seth?”

“Yes, leftenant. I’m shore I ain’t mistook. I’ve hunted ‘coons an’ ‘possums at night too much to be mistook about shadders. I reckon, if I may say so, shadders is my specialty, me bein’ somethin’ o’ a night owl. As shore as I’m standin’ here, leftenant, and as shore as you’re settin’ there on your hoss, a mounted man come to the edge of that wood an’ stayed thar a while, watchin’ us. I’d have follered him, but I couldn’t leave my beat here, an’ you’re the first officer I’ve saw since. It may amount to nothin, an’ then again it mayn’t.”

“I’m glad you told me. I’ll go into the grove myself and see if anybody is there now.”

“Leftenant, if I was you I’d be mighty keerful. If it’s a spy it’ll be easy enough for him under the cover of the trees to shoot you in the open comin’ toward him.”

Harry knew that Jackson planned a surprise of some kind and Seth Moore’s words about the mounted man alarmed him. He did not doubt the accuracy of the young mountaineer’s eyesight, or

his coolness, and he resolved that he would not go back to headquarters until he knew more about that “shadow.” But Moore’s advice about caution was not to be unheeded.

“If you keep in the edge of our woods here,” said Moore, “an’ ride along a piece you’ll come to a little valley. Then you kin go up that an’ come into the grove over thar without being seed.”

“Good advice. I’ll take it.”

Harry loosened one of the pistols in his belt and rode cautiously through the wood as Seth Moore had suggested. The ground sloped rapidly, and soon he reached the narrow but deep little valley with a dense growth of trees and underbrush on either side. The valley led upward, and he came into the grove just as Moore had predicted.

This forest was of much wider extent than he had supposed. It stretched northward further than he could see, and, although it was devoid of undergrowth, it was very dark among the trees. He rode his horse behind the trunk of a great oak, and, pausing there, examined all the forest within eyesight.

He saw nothing but the long rows of tree trunks, white on the northern side with snow, and he heard nothing but the cold rustle of wind among boughs bare of branches. Yet he had full confidence in the words of Seth Moore. He could neither see him nor hear him, but he was sure that somebody besides himself was in the wood. Once more the soul and spirit of his great ancestor were poured into him, and for the moment he, too, was the wilderness rover, endowed with nerves preternaturally acute.

Hidden by the great tree trunks he listened attentively. His horse, oppressed by the cold and perhaps by the weariness of the day, was motionless and made no sound. He waited two or three minutes and then he was sure that he heard a slight noise, which he believed was made by the hoofs of a horse walking very slowly. Then he saw the shadow.

It was the dim figure of a man on horseback, moving very cautiously at some distance from Harry. He urged his own horse forward a little, and the shadow stopped instantly. Then he knew that he had been seen, and he sat motionless in the saddle for an instant or two, not knowing what to do.

After all, the man on horseback might be a friend. He might be some scout from a band of rangers, coming to join Jackson; and not yet sure that the army in the woods was his. Recovering from his indecision he rode forward a little and called:

“Who are you?”

The shadow made no reply, and horse and rider were motionless. They seemed for an instant to be phantoms, but then Harry knew that they were real. He was oppressed by a feeling of the weird and menacing. He would make the sinister figure move and his hand dropped toward his pistol belt.

“Stop, I can fire before you!” cried the figure sharply, and then Harry suddenly saw a pistol barrel gleaming across the stranger’s saddle bow.

Harry checked his hand, but he did not consider himself beaten by any means. He merely waited, wary and ready to seize his opportunity.

“I don’t want to shoot,” said the man in a clear voice, “and I won’t unless you make me. I’m no friend. I’m an enemy, that is, an official enemy, and I think it strange, Harry Kenton, almost the hand of fate, that you and I come face to face again under such circumstances.”

Harry stared, and then the light broke. Now he remembered both the voice and the figure.

“Shepard!” he exclaimed.

“It’s so. We’re engaged upon the same duty. I’ve just been inspecting the army of General Jackson, calculating its numbers, its equipment, and what it may do. Keep your hand away from that pistol. I might not hit you, but the chances are that I would. But as I said, I don’t want to shoot. It wouldn’t help our cause or me any to maim or kill you. Suppose we call it peace between us for this evening.”

“I agree to call it peace because I have to do it.”

Shepard laughed, and his laugh was not at all sarcastic or unpleasant.

“Why a rage to kill?” he said. “You and I, Harry Kenton, will find before this war is over that we’ll get quite enough of fighting in battles without seeking to make slaughter in between. Besides,

having met you several times, I've a friendly feeling for you. Now turn and ride back to your own lines and I'll go the other way."

The blood sprang into Harry's face and his heart beat hard. There was something dominating and powerful in the voice. It now had the tone of a man who spoke to one over whom he ruled. Yet he could do nothing. He saw that Shepard was alert and watchful. He felt instinctively that his foe would fire if he were forced to do so and that he would not miss. Then despite himself, he felt admiration for the man's skill and power, and a pronounced intellectual quality that he discovered in him.

"Very well," he replied, "I'll turn and go back, but I want to tell you, Mr. Shepard, that while you have been estimating what General Jackson's army can do you must make that estimate high."

"I've already done so," called Shepard—Harry was riding away as he spoke. The boy at the edge of the wood looked back, but the shadow was already gone. He rode straight across the open and Seth Moore met him.

"Did you find anything?" the young mountaineer asked.

"Yes, there was a mounted man in a blue uniform, a spy, who has been watching, but he made off. You had good eyes, Seth, and I'm going to report this at once to General Jackson."

Harry knew that he was the bearer of an unpleasant message. General Jackson was relying upon surprise, and it would not please him to know that his movements were watched by an active and intelligent scout or spy. But the man had already shown his greatness by always insisting upon hearing the worst of everything.

He found the chief, still sitting before one of the fires and reported to him fully. Jackson listened without comment, but at the end he said to two of the brigadiers who were sitting with him:

"We march again at earliest dawn. We will not wait for the wagons."

Then he added to Harry:

"You've done good service. Join the sleepers, there."

He pointed to a group of young officers rolled in their blankets, and Harry obeyed quickly.

## CHAPTER IV. WAR AND WAITING

Harry slept like one dead, but he was awakened at dawn, and he rose yet heavy with sleep and somewhat stiff from the severe exertions of the day before. But it all came back in an instant, the army, the march, and the march yet to come.

They had but a scanty breakfast, the wagons not yet having come up, and in a half hour they started again. They grumbled mightily at first, because the day was bleak beyond words, heavy with clouds, and sharp with chill. The country seemed deserted and certainly that somber air was charged with no omens of victory.

But in spite of everything the spirits of the young troops began to rise. They took a pride in this defiance of nature as well as man. They could endure cold and hunger and weariness as they would endure battle, when it came. They went on thus three days, almost without food and shelter. Higher among the hills the snow sometimes beat upon them in a hurricane, and at night the winds howled as if they had come down fresh from the Arctic.

The spirits of the young troops, after rising, fell again, and their feet dragged. Jackson, always watching, noticed it. Beckoning to several of his staff, including Harry, he rode back along the lines, giving a word of praise here and two words of rebuke there. They came at last to an entire brigade, halted by the roadside, some of the men leaning against an old rail fence.

Jackson looked at the men and his face darkened. It was his own Stonewall Brigade, the one of which he was so proud, and which he had led in person into the war. Their commander was standing beside a tree, and riding up to him he demanded fiercely:

“What is the meaning of this? Why have you stopped?”

“I ordered a stop of a little while for the men to cook their rations,” replied General Garnett. Jackson’s face darkened yet further, and the blue eyes were menacing.

“There is no time for that,” he said sharply.

“But the men can’t go any farther without them. It’s impossible.”

“I never found anything impossible with this brigade.”

Jackson shot forth the words as if they were so many bullets, gave Garnett a scornful look and rode on. Harry followed him, as was his duty, but more slowly, and looked back. He saw a deep red flush show through Garnett’s sunburn. But the preparations for cooking were stopped abruptly. Within three minutes the Stonewall Brigade was in line again, marching resolutely over the frozen road. Garnett had recognized that the impossible was possible—at least where Jackson led.

Not many stragglers were found as they rode on toward the rear, but every regiment increased its speed at sight of the stern general. After circling around the rear he rode back toward the front, and he left Harry and several others to go more slowly along the flanks and report to him later.

When Harry was left alone he was saluted with the usual good-humored chaff by the soldiers who again demanded his horse of him, or asked him whether they were to fight or whether they were training to be foot-racers. Harry merely smiled, and he came presently to the Invincibles, who were trudging along stubbornly, with the officers riding on their flanks. Langdon was as cheerful as usual.

“Things have to come to their worst before they get better,” he said to Harry, “and I suppose we’ve about reached the worst. A sight of the enemy would be pleasant, even if it meant battle.”

“We’re marching on Bath,” said Harry, “and we ought to strike it to-night, though I’m afraid the Yankees have got warning of our coming.”

He was thinking of Shepard, who now loomed very large to him. The circumstances of their meetings were always so singular that this Northern scout and spy seemed to him to possess omniscience. Beyond a doubt he would notify every Northern garrison he could reach of Jackson’s coming.

Suddenly the band of South Carolinians, who were still left in the Invincibles, struck up a song:

“Ho, woodsmen of the mountain-side!  
Ho, dwellers in the vales!  
Ho, ye who by the chafing tide  
Have roughened in the gales!  
Leave barn and byre, leave kin and cot,  
Lay by the bloodless spade:  
Let desk and case and counter rot,  
And burn your books of trade!”

All the Invincibles caught the swing and rush of the verses, and regiments before them and behind them caught the time, too, if not the words. The chant rolled in a great thundering chorus through the wintry forest. It was solemn and majestic, and it quickened the blood of these youths who believed in the cause for which they fought, just as those on the other side believed in theirs.

“It was written by one of our own South Carolinians,” said St. Clair, with pride. “Now here goes the second verse! Lead off, there, Langdon! They’ll all catch it!”

“The despot roves your fairest lands;  
And till he flies or fears,  
Your fields must grow but armed bands  
Your sheaves be sheaves of spears:  
Give up to mildew and to rust  
The useless tools of gain  
And feed your country’s sacred dust  
With floods of crimson rain!”

Louder and louder swelled the chorus of ten thousand marching men. It was not possible for the officers to have stopped them had they wished to do so, and they did not wish it. Stonewall Jackson, who had read and studied much, knew that the power of simple songs was scarcely less than that of rifle and bayonet, and he willingly let them sing on. Now and then, a gleam came from the blue eyes in his tanned, bearded face.

Harry, sensitive and prone to enthusiasm, was flushed in every vein by the marching song. He seemed to himself to be endowed with a new life of vigor and energy. The invader trod the Southern land and they must rush upon him at once. He was eager for a sight of the blue masses which they would certainly overcome.

He returned to his place near the head of the column with the staff of the commander. Night was now close at hand, but Bath was still many miles away. It was colder than ever, but the wagons had not yet come up and there were no rations and tents. Only a few scraps of food were left in the knapsacks.

“Ride to Captain Sherburne,” said General Jackson to Harry, “and tell him to go forward with his men and reconnoiter.”

“May I go with him, sir?”

“Yes, and then report to me what he and his men find.”

Harry galloped gladly to the vanguard, where the gallant young captain and his troop were leading. These Virginians preserved their fine appearance. If they were weary they did not show it. They sat erect in their saddles and the last button on their uniforms was in place. Their polished spurs gleamed in the wintry sun.

They set off at a gallop, Harry riding by the side of Captain Sherburne. Blood again mounted high with the rapid motion and the sense of action. Soon they left the army behind, and, as the road

was narrow and shrouded in forest, they could see nothing of it. Its disappearance was as complete as if it had been swallowed up in a wilderness.

They rode straight toward Bath, but after two or three miles they slackened speed. Harry had told Sherburne of the presence of Shepard the night before, and the captain knew that they must be cautious.

Another mile, and at a signal from the captain the whole troop stopped. They heard hoofbeats on the road ahead of them, and the sound was coming in their direction.

“A strong force,” said Captain Sherburne.

“Probably larger than ours, if the hoofbeats mean anything,” said Harry.

“And Yankees, of course. Here they are!”

A strong detachment of cavalry suddenly rounded a curve in the road and swept into full view. Then the horsemen stopped in astonishment at the sight of the Confederate troop.

There was no possibility of either command mistaking the other for a friend, but Sherburne, despite his youth, had in him the instinct for quick perception and action which distinguished the great cavalry leaders of the South like Jeb Stuart, Turner Ashby and others. He drew his men back instantly somewhat in the shelter of the trees and received the Union fire first.

As Sherburne had expected, few of the Northern bullets struck home. Some knocked bark from the trees, others kicked up dirt from the frozen road, but most of them sang vainly through the empty air and passed far beyond. Now the Southerners sent their fire full into the Union ranks, and, at Sherburne’s shouted command, charged, with their leader at their head swinging his sword in glittering circles like some knight of old.

The Southern volley had brought down many horses and men, but the Northern force was double in numbers and many of the men carried new breech-loading rifles of the best make. While unused to horses and largely ignorant of the country, they had good officers and they stood firm. The Southern charge, meeting a second volley from the breech-loading rifles, broke upon their front.

Harry, almost by the side of Sherburne, felt the shock as they galloped into the battle smoke, and then he felt the Virginians reel. He heard around him the rapid crackle of rifles and pistols, sabers clashing together, the shouts of men, the terrible neighing of wounded horses, and then the two forces drew apart, leaving a sprinkling of dead and wounded between.

It was a half retreat by either, the two drawing back sixty or seventy yards apiece and then beginning a scattered and irregular fire from the rifles. But Sherburne, alert always, soon drew his men into the shelter of the woods, and attempted an attack on his enemy’s flank.

Some destruction was created in the Union ranks by the fire from the cover of the forest, but the officers of the opposing force showed skill, too. Harry had no doubt from the way the Northern troops were handled that at least two or three West Pointers were there. They quickly fell back into the forest on the other side of the road, and sent return volleys.

Harry heard the whistle and whizz of bullets all about them. Bark was clipped from trees and dry twigs fell. Yet little damage was done by either. The forest, although leafless, was dense, and trunks and low boughs afforded much shelter. Both ceased fire presently, seeming to realize at the same moment that nothing was being done, and hovered among the trees, each watching for what the other would try next.

Harry kept close to Captain Sherburne, whose face plainly showed signs of deep disgust. His heart was full of battle and he wished to get at the enemy. But prudence forbade another charge upon a force double his numbers and now sheltered by a wood. At this moment it was the boy beside him who was cooler than he.

“Captain Sherburne,” he suggested mildly, “didn’t General Jackson merely want to find out what was ahead of him? When the army comes up it will sweep this force out of its way.”

“That’s so,” agreed Sherburne reluctantly, “but if we retire they’ll claim a victory, and our men will be depressed by the suspicion of defeat.”

“But the Yankees are retiring already. Look, you can see them withdrawing! They were on the same business that we were, and it’s far more important for them to be sure that Jackson is advancing than it is for us to know that an enemy’s in front.”

“You’re right. We knew already that he was there, and we were watching to get him. It’s foolish for us to stay here, squabbling with a lot of obstinate Yankees. We’ll go back to Jackson as fast as we can. You’re a bright boy, Harry.”

He dropped a hand affectionately on Harry’s shoulder, then gave the order to the men and they turned their horses’ heads toward the army. At the same time they saw with their own eyes the complete withdrawal of the Union troops, and the proud Virginians were satisfied. It was no defeat. It was merely a parting by mutual consent, each moving at the same instant, that is, if the Yankees didn’t go first.

They galloped back over the frozen road, and Captain Sherburne admitted once more to himself the truth of Harry’s suggestion. Already the twilight was coming, and again it was heavy with clouds. In the east all the peaks and ridges were wrapped about with them, and the captain knew that they meant more snow. Heavy snow was the worst of all things for the advance of Jackson.

Captain Sherburne gave another signal to his men and they galloped faster. The hoofbeats of nearly two hundred horses rang hard on the frozen road, but with increased speed pulses throbbed faster and spirits rose. The average age of the troops was not over twenty, and youth thought much of action, little of consequences.

They saw in a half hour the heads of columns toiling up the slopes, and then Jackson riding on Little Sorrel, his shoulders bent forward slightly, the grave eyes showing that the great mind behind them was still at work, planning, planning, always planning. Their expression did not change when Sherburne, halting his horse before him, saluted respectfully.

“What did you find, Captain Sherburne?” he asked.

“The enemy, sir. We ran into a force of cavalry about four hundred strong.”

“And then?”

“We had a smart little skirmish with them, sir, and then both sides withdrew.”

“Undoubtedly they went to report to their people, as you have come to report to yours. It looks as if our attempt to surprise Bath might fail, but we’ll try to reach it to-night. Lieutenant Kenton, ride back and give the brigade commanders orders to hasten their march.”

He detached several others of his staff for the same duty, and in most cases wrote brief notes for them. Harry noticed how he took it for granted that one was always willing to do work, and yet more work. He himself had just ridden back from battle, and yet he was sent immediately on another errand. He noticed, too, how it set a new standard for everybody. This way Jackson had of expecting much was rapidly causing his men to offer much as a matter of course.

While Jackson was writing the notes to the brigadiers he looked up once or twice at the darkening skies. The great mass of clouds, charged with snow that had been hovering in the east, was now directly overhead. When he had finished the last note it was too dark for him to write any more without help of torch. As he handed the note to the aide who was to take it, a great flake of snow fell upon his hand.

Harry found that the brigades could move no faster. They were already toiling hard. The twilight had turned to night, and the clouds covered the whole circle of the heavens. The snow, slow at first, was soon falling fast. The soldiers brushed it off for a while, and then, feeling that it was no use, let it stay. Ten thousand men, white as if wrapped in winding sheets, marched through the mountains. Now and then, a thin trickle of red from a foot, encased in a shoe worn through, stained the snow.

The wind was not blowing, and the night, reinforced by the clouds, became very dark, save the gleam from the white covering of snow upon the earth. Torches began to flare along the line, and still Jackson marched. Harry knew what was in his mind. He wished to reach Bath that night and fall upon the enemy when he was not expected, even though that enemy had been told that Jackson

was coming. The commander in front, whoever he might be, certainly would expect no attack in the middle of the night and in a driving snowstorm.

But the fierce spirit of Jackson was forced to yield at last. His men, already the best marchers on the American continent, could go no farther. The order was given to camp. Harry more than guessed how bitter was the disappointment of his commander, and he shared it.

The men, half starved and often stiff with cold, sank down by the roadside. They no longer asked for the wagons containing their food and heavy clothing, because they no longer expected them. They passed from high spirits to a heavy apathy, and now they did not seem to care what happened. But the officers roused them up as much as possible, made them build fires with every piece of wood they could find, and then let them wrap themselves in their blankets and go to sleep—save for the sentinels.

All night long the snow beat on Jackson's army lying there among the mountains, and save for a few Union officers not far away, both North and South wondered what had become of it.

It was known at Washington and Richmond that Jackson had left Winchester, and then he had dropped into the dark. The eyes of the leaders at both capitals were fixed upon the greater armies of McClellan and Johnston, and Stonewall Jackson was not yet fully understood by either. Nevertheless, the gaunt and haggard President of the North began to feel anxiety about this Confederate leader who had disappeared with his army in the mountains of Northern Virginia.

The telegraph wires were not numerous then, but they were kept busy answering the question about Jackson. Banks and the other Union leaders in the valley sent reassuring replies. Jackson would not dare to attack them. They had nearly three times as many men as he, and it did not matter what had become of him. If he chose to come, the sooner he came, the sooner he would be annihilated. McClellan himself laughed at the fears about Jackson. He was preparing his own great army for a march on Richmond, one that would settle everything.

But the army of Jackson, nevertheless, rose from the snow the next morning, and marched straight on the Union garrison. The rising was made near Bath, and the army literally brushed the snow from itself before eating the half of a breakfast, and taking to the road again, Jackson, on Little Sorrel, leading them. Harry, as usual, rode near him.

Harry, despite exertions and hardships which would have overpowered him six months before, did not feel particularly hungry or weary that morning. No one in the army had caught more quickly than he the spirit of Stonewall Jackson. He could endure anything, and in another hour or two they would pass out of this wilderness of forest and snow, and attack the enemy. Bath was just ahead.

A thrill passed through the whole army. Everybody knew that Jackson was about to attack. While the first and reluctant sun of dawn was trying to pierce the heavy clouds, the regiments, spreading out to right and left to enclose Bath, began to march. Then the sun gave up its feeble attempts, the clouds closed in entirely, the wind began to blow hard, and with it came a blinding snow, and then a bitter hail.

Harry had been sent by Jackson to the right flank with orders and he was to remain there, unless it became necessary to inform the commander that some regiment was not doing its duty. But he found them all marching forward, and, falling in with the Invincibles, he marched with them. Yet it was impossible for the lines to retain cohesion or regularity, so fierce was the beat of the storm.

It was an alternation of blinding snow and of hail that fairly stung. Often the officers could not see the men thirty yards distant, and there was no way of knowing whether the army was marching forward in the complete half circle as planned. Regiments might draw apart, leaving wide gaps between, and no one would know it in all that hurricane.

Harry rode by the side of Colonel Leonidas Talbot and Lieutenant-Colonel Hector St. Hilaire, who were leading the Invincibles in person. Both had gray military cloaks drawn around them, but Harry saw that they were shivering with cold as they sat on their horses, with the snow accumulating

on their shoulders and on the saddles around them. In truth, the foot cavalry had rather the better of it, as the hard marching kept up the circulation.

“Not much like the roses of Charleston,” said Colonel Talbot, faintly smiling.

“But I’m glad to be here,” said Harry, “although I will admit, sir, that I did not expect a campaign to the North Pole.”

“Neither did I, but I’m prepared for anything now, under the commander that we have. Bear in mind, my young friend, that this is for your private ear only.”

“Of course, sir! What was that? Wasn’t it a rifle shot?”

“The report is faint, but it was certainly made by a rifle. And hark, there are others! We’ve evidently come upon their outposts! Confound this storm! It keeps us from seeing more than twenty yards in front of us!”

The scattered rifle fire continued, and the weary soldiers raised their heads which they had bent to shelter their eyes from the driving snow and hail. Pulses leaped up again, and blood sparkled. The whole army rushed forward. The roofs of houses came into view, and there was Bath.

But the firing had been merely that of a small rear guard, skirmishers who surrendered promptly. The garrison, warned doubtless by Shepard, and then the scouting troop, had escaped across the river, but Jackson’s wintry march was not wholly in vain. The fleeing Union troops had no time either to carry away or destroy the great stores of supplies, accumulated there for the winter, and the starving and freezing Southerners plunged at once into the midst of plenty, ample compensation to the young privates.

The population, ardently Southern, as everywhere in these Virginia towns, welcomed the army with wild enthusiasm. Officers and soldiers were taken into the houses, as many as Bath could hold, and enormous fires were built in the open spaces for the others. They also showed the way at once to the magazines, where the Union supplies were heaped up.

Harry, at the direction of his general, went with one of the detachments to seize these. Their first prize was an old but large storehouse, crammed full of the things they needed most. The tall mountain youth, Seth Moore, was one of his men, and he proved to be a prince of looters.

“Blankets! blankets!” cried Moore. “Here they are, hundreds of ‘em! An’ look at these barrels! Bacon! Beef! Crackers! An’ look at the piles of cheese! Oh, Lieutenant Kenton, how my mouth waters! Can’t I bite into one o’ them cheeses?”

“Not yet,” said Harry, whose own mouth was watering, too, “but you can, Seth, within ten minutes at the farthest. The whole army must bite at once.”

“That’s fa’r an’ squar’, but ain’t this richness! Cove oysters, cans an’ cans of ‘em, an’ how I love ‘em! An’ sardines, too, lots of ‘em! Why, I could bite right through the tin boxes to get at ‘em. An’ rice, an’ hominy, an’ bags o’ flour. Why, the North has been sendin’ whole train loads of things down here for us to eat!”

“And she has been sending more than that,” said Harry. “Here are five or six hundred fine breech-loading rifles, and hundreds of thousands of cartridges. She’s been sending us arms and ammunition with which to fight her!”

His boyish spirit burst forth. Even though an officer, he could not control them, and he was radiant as the looting Seth Moore himself. He went out to report the find and to take measures concerning it. On his way he met hundreds of the Southern youths who had already put on heavy blue overcoats found in the captured stores. The great revulsion had come. They were laughing and cheering and shaking the hands of one another. It was a huge picnic, all the more glorious because they had burst suddenly out of the storm and the icy wilderness.

But order was soon restored, and wrapped in warm clothing they feasted like civilized men, the great fires lighting up the whole town with a cheerful glow. Harry was summoned to new duties. He was also a new man. Warmth and food had doubled his vitality, and he was ready for any errand on which Jackson might send him.

While it was yet snowing, he rode with a half dozen troopers toward the Potomac. On the other side was a small town which also held a Union garrison. Scouting warily along the shores, Harry discovered that the garrison was still there. Evidently the enemy believed in the protection of the river, or many of their leaders could not yet wholly believe that Jackson and his army, making a forced march in the dead of winter, were at hand.

But he had no doubt that his general would attend to these obstinate men, and he rode back to Bath with the news. Jackson gave his worn troops a little more rest. They were permitted to spend all that day and night at Bath, luxuriating and renewing their strength and spirits.

Harry slept, for the first time in many nights, in a house, and he made the most of it, because he doubted whether he would have another such chance soon. Dawn found the army up and ready to march away from this place of delight.

They went up and down the Potomac three or four days, scattering or capturing small garrisons, taking fresh supplies and spreading consternation among the Union forces in Northern Virginia and Maryland. It was all done in the most bitter winter weather and amid storms of snow and hail. The roads were slippery with sleet, and often the cavalry were compelled to dismount and lead their horses long distances. There was little fighting because the Northern enemy was always in numbers too small to resist, but there was a great deal of hard riding and many captures.

News of Jackson's sloop began to filter through to both Richmond and Washington. In Richmond they wondered and rejoiced. In Washington they wondered, but did not rejoice. They had not expected there any blow to be struck in the dead of winter, and Lincoln demanded of his generals why they could not do as well. Distance and the vagueness of the news magnified Jackson's exploits and doubled his numbers. Eyes were turned with intense anxiety toward that desolate white expanse of snow and ice, in the midst of which he was operating.

Jackson finally turned his steps toward Romney, which had been the Union headquarters, and his men, exhausted and half starved, once more dragged themselves over the sleety roads. Winter offered a fresh obstacle at every turn. Even the spirits of Harry, who had borrowed so much from the courage of Jackson, sank somewhat. As they pulled themselves through the hills on their last stage toward Romney, he was walking. His horse had fallen three times that day on the ice, and was now too timid to carry his owner.

So Harry led him. The boy's face and hands were so much chapped and cracked with the cold that they bled at times. But he wasted no sympathy on himself. It was the common fate of the army. Jackson and his generals, themselves, suffered in the same way. Jackson was walking, too, for a while, leading his own horse.

Harry was sent back to bring up the Invincibles, as Romney was now close at hand, and there might be a fight. He found his old colonel and lieutenant-colonel walking over the ice. Both were thin, and were black under the eyes with privation and anxiety. These were not in appearance the men whom he had known in gay and sunny Charleston, though in spirit the same. They gave Harry a welcome and hoped that the enemy would wait for them in Romney.

"I don't think so," said Harry, "but I've orders for you from General Jackson to bring up the Invincibles as fast as possible."

"Tell General Jackson that we'll do our best," said Colonel Talbot, as he looked back at his withered column.

They seemed to Harry to be withered indeed, they were so gaunt with hardship and drawn up so much with cold. Many wore the blue Northern overcoats that they had captured at Bath, and more had tied up their throats and ears in the red woolen comforters of the day, procured at the towns through which they passed. They, too, were gaunt of cheek and black under the eye like their officers.

The Invincibles under urging increased their speed, but not much. Little reserve strength was left in them. Langdon and St. Clair, who had been sent along the line, returned to Colonel Talbot where Harry was still waiting.

“They’re not going as fast as a railroad train,” said Langdon in an aside to Harry, “but they’re doing their best. You can’t put in a well more than you can take out of it, and they’re marching now not on their strength, but their courage. Still, it might be worse. We might all be dead.”

“But we’re not dead, by a big margin, and I think we’ll make another haul at Romney.”

“But Old Jack won’t let us stay and enjoy it. I never saw a man so much in love with marching. The steeper the hills and mountains, the colder the day, the fiercer the sleet and snow, the better he likes it.”

“The fellow who said General Jackson didn’t care anything about our feet told the truth,” said St. Clair, thoughtfully. “The general is not a cruel man, but he thinks more of Virginia and the South, and our cause, than he does of us. If it were necessary to do so to win he’d sacrifice us to the last man and himself with us.”

“And never think twice before doing it. You’ve sized him up,” said Harry. The army poured into Romney and found no enemy. Again a garrison had escaped through the mountain snows when the news reached it that Jackson was at hand. But they found supplies of food, filled their empty stomachs, and as Langdon had foretold, quickly started anew in search of another enemy elsewhere.

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