PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF THE WAR.

BY A VIRGINIAN.

[Sixth Paper.]

THE VALLEY OF THE SHENANDOAH.—BANKS'S RETREAT.

March 26. — Pleasant. Well, instead of Fredericksburg here we are again at Strasburg, as stupid and dirty a village as may be found in this beautiful Valley. My appreciation of the locality has perhaps been exaggerated by a cup of rye coffee I got at the tavern this morning, which, to borrow the wit of a comrade, has set my temper away—yet if I looked through the glowing medium of pure Mocha I can not imagine I could see any thing favorable in Strasburg. In this state of mind I met Colonel Brodhead, our Chief of Cavalry, and accepted a polite invitation to share his lodgings and mess, with the assurance of pure Government Java ad libitum. Brodhead is a handsome little fellow, amiable, sociable, and conversable. He is from Detroit, has seen some service in the Mexican war, and has latterly been in Congress from Michigan. His views of the war are entirely national, and we can discuss it freely and fully without misunderstanding.

March 27. — Bright and temperate. I received orders this morning to reconnoitre the road to Front Royal; but while I waited for my cavalry escort news came from the front that the enemy were advancing in force from the direction of Woodstock, and that an attack was expected momentarily. Colonel Gordon’s Brigade moved out to support Sullivan, who commanded the advanced posts. I applied for permission to go out with the troops, but the reconnaissance to Front Royal was considered important, and the alarm at the front had subsided. After mid-day my escort reported an independent troop of cavalry about eighty men, commanded by a Captain M——. Lieutenant Daniels, of the Michigan Regiment, got leave to accompany me as a volunteer aid.
Crossing the North fork of the Shenandoah, two miles from Strasburg, we took the road around the butts of the Fort Mountains, running parallel with and generally in sight of the Manassas Gap Railroad. As we approached a station-house, about four miles east of Strasburg, our advance reported that it was occupied by a picket-guard of the enemy. Captain M—— proposed that we should capture them. Although my orders were simply to reconnoitre the roads, I considered that I was acting in accordance with them by removing any impediment in the way of their fulfilment.

I therefore divided the troop into two companies, and ordered M—— to dash forward with one, while I followed slowly, holding the other in reserve, to support or extricate him in case of failure. He started with a "whoop-e! come on, boys!" followed at full speed by his company. At the same time my reserves broke ranks, and, putting spurs to their horses, scamped after their Captain, screeching like Comanches. Their yells drowned my commands, expostulations, and reproaches, and I was fain to spur up and follow the mob. The occupants of the station-house received the advance with two or three shots from their carbines, when a parley took place, and it was discovered they were our own men, belonging to the First Michigan Cavalry.

This dénouement was followed by a general gabbling and guffawing which continued for at least fifteen minutes. By dint of repeated orders I at length got my troop in motion again, fully satisfied that whatever praises might be bestowed on their valor no reliance could be placed on their discipline.

Passing Passage Creek, which flows from the Fortsmouth, we at length arrived at Richardson’s, on the bluff, overlooking the South River or main stream of the Shenandoah. The bridges had been destroyed, and the stream reported impassable by fording. I found a negro man, however, who seemed to know more than he was willing to tell me in the presence of white people, and furnished him the apology for doing what he secretly desired, by threatening him with instant death if he did not show me the ford. Nothing loth he mounted a cavalry horse and led the way, M——, Daniels, and myself, with about a dozen of the command, following. The crossing was rough, tortuous, and deep, the water sweeping over the backs of the smaller horses, and bringing some to a swim. The majority of the company declined to follow us over, replying to their Captain’s remonstrances, that they “didn’t want to get water in their boots.”

Pursuing the road, we presently reached the summit of a hill which commanded a view of the village of Front Royal, two miles distant, and also the Blue Ridge and Luray Valley for many miles around. Having only a dozen men with me I hesitated about going farther, when a countryman informed us that Front Royal was occupied by a company of rebel cavalry engaged in impressing recruits for Jackson’s army. I was disgusted and angry at the conduct of my troopers, and in this state of mind determined to push on with the squad at command. Understanding my intentions Captain M—— sent back a messenger to the recreants who had tarried on the other side of the river. The courier rode back at speed, and delivered his message
in this wise: "Hello, boys! Cap says come over; there's going to be some fun." At the prospect of "some fun" the vagabonds mounted and dashed in, boots and all. The squad under my command had reached the outskirts of the village when, looking back, I saw my heroes trooping over the hill behind. As there seemed to be a line of gray-coats forming across the further terminus of the street I waited until our column closed up, and then moved forward at a walk with carbines advanced. My Captain desired to order another flourishing charge, but I forbade it peremptorily, explaining to him that my theory in regard to cavalry (volunteer cavalry especially) was, that it should be carefully trained to execute all its manoeuvres at a walk, rarely using the trot, and never indulging in a gallop until the troop had earned the name of "Veterans" by using the sabre in half a dozen engagements, and capturing one or two batteries at a trot.

Arrived at the angle of the street we found our line of gray-coats to be nothing more than a crowd of unarmed citizens collected to witness our entrée. They answered all questions with civility, and asked us to dismount and drink. This courtesy I was obliged to decline as the day was far spent, and I felt indisposed to risk the discipline of my cavalry. Having obtained satisfactory information in regard to the various roads and bridges in the vicinity, I countermarched the column and started back to head-quarters. Meanwhile the petticoated inhabitants had recovered from the tremor incident to the first appearance of "Yanks" in their village, and, thronging the doors and windows, honored us with their curious regards. Indeed, several cambric handkerchiefs waved salutes, which were cheerily responded to by our men. Others answered our bows with a colder and more constrained civility. We left the village as quietly as we had entered, and I flattered myself that our visit had left an agreeable impression. Instead of the wild marauders they had been led to expect, uncouth and horrible, plundering, outraging, and murdering, regardless of age or sex, we had shown ourselves cool, considerate, and courteous; our fellows were well-dressed, well-armed, and by no means ill-looking. I complimented the men on their good conduct, and took the opportunity to impress them with the idea that, while hard looks, hard words, and hard knocks were for our armed enemies, we should invariably accord to our unarmed fellow-citizens kindness, forbearance, and protection; most especially should brave men be considerate of that charming sex, who, in spite of politics, we were all bound to love and honor.

FIRST TROOPER (interrupting). "A red-headed gal made a mouth at me, she did!"

"Silence!" shouted the Captain.

"Don't take that to heart, my friend; perhaps she had a lover in the rebel service:"

"'Twas but the tender fierceness of the dove,
Pecking the hand that hovers o'er its mate."

SECOND TROOPER. "The woman that screeched at me had a voice more like a linn-hawk—"

(Laughter.)

Forward! March!*

Recessing the South River at Weston's mill I stopped at Richardson's to see some ladies who were desirous of obtaining passes through our lines. One of them I was personally acquainted with, and knew she had two brothers in the Union service. I therefore gave her a recommendation to the nearest Provost Marshal or Post Commander, having no authority myself to grant passes.

It was growing late, and throwing forward an advanced-guard of a dozen men I again got my troop in motion, recommending silence and precaution against surprise.

Our route lay through a wooded region, crossed and entered by numerous side-paths and roads leading from the secluded mountains lying immediately south of it, all in full possession of the enemy. We were liable to be surprised and cut off at every turn, and if overpowered, had no means of retreat except by tumbling over the bluffs and swimming the swollen river, which ran parallel with our road to the right. Had Ashley been as enterprising as he might have been this road would have been dangerous. My recommendation of silence and alertness were followed by a gabbling, rollicking march of a mile or so, accompanied by the occasional discharge of a carbine or pistol.

Pushing forward with the hope of reaching our pickets before dark, I presently found myself, with Lieutenant Daniels and a brace of or-

* I was enlightened on this subject some weeks after by reading a letter captured by one of our scouts. It was written by a young lady of Front Royal to her brother or lover in the Confederate service, and ran as follows:

"We have been awfully dull since you left us, and had no excitement until last Thursday, when it was reported that the Yankees were coming. You can of course imagine our distress and terror. We hid every thing we thought they might be tempted to steal, and got ready to leave in case they burned the town. Late in the afternoon about a hundred of their cavalry came sneaking into town, and, after stopping in the street a short time, sneaked out again as they came. They seemed to be scared half to death, and were all the while looking up at the windows as if they expected somebody was going to shoot at them. They did not steal any thing nor disturb any body while they were in town, because they were too cowardly, I reckon. They say they behaved respectfully along the road, and shot Mr. Richardson's negro man because the faithful creature refused to show them the ford. I have not heard whether he is dead or not. They were going to burn Weston's mill, but when they found he was one of their kind they let him off. As I was accidentially passing by the window one of them had the impudence to bow to me, but I gave him a look that I reckon he will remember.

"Would you believe it that S— and the —'s waved their handkerchiefs to them. They now profess that they were badly frightened, and did it to save their horses from being burned. For my part I thought they were the meanest, cowardly, hang-dog-looking crowd I ever saw, and did not ride like these boys in gray. I hope this will be the last we will ever see of them."
derlies, out of sight and hearing of the column. I send an orderly back to hasten their movements. He overtook me in the course of the next half hour with the report that the troop had halted outright, and said they were waiting for Cap, who had stopped for supper at some country-house. We pushed forward rapidly, and at length overtook the advance-guard, riding with them into Strasburg, where we arrived about nine o'clock at night. I called at headquarters, and reported the information acquired by the reconnaissance while taking a cup of tea with the General.

March 28.—I have been occupied this morning in writing out a report of yesterday's reconnaissance, with sketches of the roads and adjacent topography. Our present position is one which can be made untenable by a very inferior force of the enemy. Both our flanks and our communications are open to assault and extirpation at any time, and almost without risk by an active partisan force. Ashby's cavalry, however, has neither dash nor discipline, and is inferior to ours, weak and unformed as that is. The General tells me he has telegraphed for a regiment of Vermont cavalry now lying at Poolesville, in Maryland. Brodhead reports our present effective force at seven hundred and thirty men only.

March 29.—Clouds and rain. There is a good deal of sickness developing among our troops, chargeable to the cold water of this locality. Shields's Division, while under Lander's command, was much abused, it is said, by exposure and fatigues from which they ought to have been protected. The consequence is, they have about a thousand bad cases in the hospitals. In carrying on war the art of preserving is more important even than that of destroying.

The General says the enemy is falling back along his whole line behind the Rappahannock and Rapidan. Jackson is reported to be lying behind Woodstock, and he thinks of attacking him. I approve most heartily of the suggestion, but doubt whether Jackson will await an attack. Why does not our force in Western Virginia close in upon Staunton at once? Our outposts report that they have heard cannon apparently in a southwesterly direction from Woodstock. If Rosecrans's command is at Mooresfield this may be the sound of his advance. In the east we occupy Warrenton Junction. Why should we lie here?

We hear that Secretaries Seward and Stanton are in Winchester, on a visit to the field of the late battle.

March 30.—It is raining, and everything covered with an icy coating of sleet. The General called with a map which he wished corrected and improved. He mentioned that Fremont was in Wheeling, having been assigned to command in Western Virginia. He will have a force of about thirty thousand men. I suggested that he should march via Lewisburg in Greenbrier, Lexington in Rockbridge, to Salem, on the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, holding that road, threatening Lynchburg, and, indeed, all the interior railroad lines of the Confederacy. We should push on to Staunton, and be ready to co-operate with or join Fremont in case of necessity. Our position on the Virginia and Tennessee Road, menacing or occupying Lynchburg, turns the James River line completely, and necessitates the abandonment of Richmond.

The General has determined on a forward movement, but finds himself opposed by most of his officers. It is urged that with a lengthened line of communication the army can not be supplied. Our position becomes more exposed as we advance, and from the nature of the country more easily turned. Should we meet with disaster so far from our base it would be ruinous and irretrievable. It was argued, on the other hand, that by remaining at Strasburg we were wasting men and means to no purpose. With a superior force at our disposal, we were simply standing on the defensive on an indefensible line. For the rest we could live on the country, as we should have been doing all along, thereby lightening the expenses of our Government and using the resources of the enemy. I can not see the propriety of holding our forces scattered from Fredericksburg to the Kanawha. But our column, eighty thousand strong, can take Staunton with its own weight. There is nothing that we know of to hinder us. The advance is ordered for to-morrow morning.

April 1.—Fair. The troops were in motion by early dawn this morning. The Staff did not get off until ten o'clock. As we approached Woodstock Ashby's guns opened from a hill south of the town. Lieutenant-Colonel Daum placed a section of Parrott guns in position to drive them off. Meanwhile Brodhead went charging up the turnpike at the head of the cavalry, and, as usual, got the better of Daum's shells. Fortunately nobody was hurt, but there were some narrow escapes, and the Colonel came back furious, declaring if it occurred again he would turn his column upon the guns. Woodstock has a pleasanter aspect than Strasburg, and as we swept through the streets appeared thronged with women and children who had come out to gaze.

At Narrow Passage Creek, two miles beyond Woodstock, our skirmishers drove off the enemy, who were trying to burn the turnpike bridge. There was some firing between the adverse batteries, but nothing of importance. The bridge was saved, and we pushed on. About two hundred yards beyond is the Narrow Passage—a natural causeway with precipitous sides, formed by the near approximation of the Shenandoah River and Passage Creek—a tributary. This causeway is about fifty yards in length, and just wide enough to admit of the passage of the Valley turnpike, which crosses it. The streams appear on either side as if endeavoring to meet, but hindered by a barrier of solid limestone rock sixty or eighty feet in height.
From the summit of the next ridge overlooking the village of Edinburgh we saw two lofty pillars of smoke, indicating the destruction of other bridges in front. The view from this ridge is extensive and beautiful.

Our advanced skirmishers already occupied Edinburgh, and were exchanging shots with the enemy on the south side of Stony Creek. The batteries from the opposing hills were also roaring in a manner that sounded like work. Entering the village we passed the body of a soldier killed by a fragment of shell, which cracked his skull as if it had been a cocoa-nut, throwing out the brain in an unbroken mass, with its lobes and membranes perfect. This man belonged to the Twenty-ninth Pennsylvania Infantry, and was quietly taking his lunch, seated behind a high hill, and apparently covered from the fire. A shell thrown at the battery above burst in the air, and this was his unexpected death-warrant.

The turnpike bridge over Stony Creek had been effectually destroyed, and our lines were consequently established on the northern bank of the stream. After satisfying himself that the position was a suitable one the General returned to Woodstock.

April 2.—Clouds. The head-quarter offices are established in the court-house. The General examined the premises with much interest, commenting on its smoke-begrimed and weather-stained walls; its brick floors, steeped with tobacco; the uncouth, ill-wrought forms of its architecture; its lumbering, unpainted pine presses, containing papers and records; its totality of quaintness, inconvenience, and dirt, characteristic of Virginia court-houses. He at length observed that these old buildings had turned out many strong men in their day. I had been familiar with these old court-rooms and clerk-offices from childhood, and had long remained under the belief that dusty cobweb hangings and a carpeting of dirt and tobacco-spit were their normal furniture. A visit to Massachusetts taught me that it was possible to transact public business and administer justice without these accessories. Then the question arose whether the material surroundings could in any manner affect the administration; whether the advocate's reasoning was less clear or his oratory less impressive by reason of these dingy walls; whether the judicial ermine was more likely to be soiled by the surrounding dirt, or whether a handsome chair and prevailing neatness would insure its purity. We concluded that these things were merely matters of taste and habit, incidental differences between a lazy and thriftless people and one that is thriving and progressive; characteristic indications, but in no way influencing the intellectual or sentimental qualities.

While we discussed these questions two prisoners were brought in for examination. One was a Lieutenant Duff, of Ashby's cavalry, a Marylander, who had visited a farmer's house to get some apple-jack and see the ladies, and thus fell into the hands of our scouts. He told me that it was he who had captured my friend Luce. He was on picket-duty near Millwood, when a resident of the locality informed him that a Federal engineer was surveying the Berryville road, and without an escort. He laid in wait for him with his squad, and presently Luce came riding along, absorbed as usual in his note-book and compass. The Lieutenant advanced and demanded his sword. Luce,
whose official position was not clearly understood by our men, was often annoyed by sentinels and subalterns on outpost duty, and supposing the interruption to be of the usual character, replied to the demand by fiercely asking:

“What regiment do you belong to, Sir?”

“To Ashby’s Cavalry,” replied the Lieutenant.

“The devil!” exclaimed Luce, clapping his hand to his pistol. The Lieutenant’s pistol was already cocked and bearing on him, the squad showed itself, and my plucky friend was forced to surrender himself and command, which consisted of the topographical baggage-wagon and Henshaw the teamster. The prisoners were relieved of their equipments and all superfluous clothing, and then sent back to Harrisonburg; and, as I have since learned, they suffered a good deal from cold and short rations. An incident occurred here which resulted in some amelioration of Luce’s condition. He was confined in the court-house, with a mob of other prisoners of all varieties of character and opinions. There were Yankee soldiers, Rebel guard-house birds, deserters, and Union men all jumbled together. Luce’s generous sympathies had been excited by the condition of an aged prisoner, arrested on suspicion of Unionism, and forced to march with their gang until he was ready to faint from exhaustion. Their meals, scant and far between, were served by a stout Negro man, who distributed the chunks of corn-bread and bits of fried meat with a domineering arrogance which showed that the character of the African is as likely to be spoiled by official position as that of the white man. There had been nothing served that day, and as the burly steward entered the guard-room with a large dripping pan filled with fried meat there was a general murmur of gratification among the prisoners. The ordinarily meek and modest old Union man, half frantic with hunger, stepped forward and snatched a piece of meat as it passed. The insolent black rebuked him with a torrent of abuse, concluding by a cuff which sent the old man reeling against the wall. At the sight of this cruel indignity Luce boiled over, and rushing at the brutal official, gave him a blow and a kick which sent him tumbling down a flight of steps accompanied by his greasy viands and clattering pans. The guard-house roared with applause. The guard outside, alarmed at these unusual sights and sounds, rushed to arms, thinking there was a revolt among the prisoners. The drums beat the long roll, the officers ran to their posts; but seeing no attempt on the part of the prisoners to escape, at length concluded to enter the room to learn the cause of the confusion. Luce meanwhile had time to reflect on the rashness of his conduct, and, perceiving the hubbub it had raised, expected nothing less than instant death. He folded his arms and summoned up his spirit to meet it with becoming fortitude. The entrance of the guard quelled for a moment the merri-ment of the prisoners. The affair was explained to the officer, who took the generous view of it. Luce was applauded; the negro steward rebuked; and the meritram was renewed.

“The Yankee kicked the nigger—hurrah! that’s a good joke. The Yankee kicked the nigger down stairs!”

The political solemness seemed to tickle everybody’s fancy. The guard laughed and hurrahed. “A Yankee kicked the nigger down stairs!” a capital joke. The Yank was voted a spirited and liberal-minded fellow, and the prisoners shouldn’t lose their breakfast for his spunky act. A subscription was opened among the guard, and the pan, refilled with meat and corn-bread, was sent in to them. From this moment my friend found favor in the eyes of his captors. He was a clever artist. They furnished him with paper and pencils, and he sketched their portraits, for which they paid him as they could. He thereby found solace in his confinement, and raised money to refit his clothing and procure other little comforts grateful to a prisoner. He was shortly afterward sent to Richmond, and confined at Belle Isle, I think.

Before closing the subject I may be permitted to relate another anecdote illustrating one of the finest characters I have ever known. Some time after this I met Henshaw, the teamster, who had been exchanged. I questioned him in regard to their imprisonment at Richmond. Luce, who was not only an artist but an ingenious mechanic, passed a great part of his time planning an escape. Henshaw was his confidant, and was to be his companion. With that patient ingenuity which a prison-life frequently develops, he found the material and privacy to make himself a false face. His scheme was nearly complete. The prisoners were numerous, and guard-duty carelessly performed. In the universality of rags and dirt costume had lost all significance. By changing his face the prisoner might easily elude the guards and get into the country. Things began to tighten up, however, and it presently became manifest that their scheme required a forged pass. Mechanically nothing would have been easier to Luce, who was an accomplished penman; but a word that was coupled with dishonor shocked him in the utterance.

“I can not condescend to forge,” said he, “even if it were to save my life.”

“Why, Captain,” quoth the literal teamster, “you have spent a great deal of time and pains trying to deceive your enemies by forging a face, and I don’t see that you will add to the immor-ality by forging a pass, which you can do in a minute.”

“Perhaps it is all dishonorable,” replied my friend. “I think it will be better to wait quietly until we are exchanged.”

The long-cherished object of their labor and their hopes was sadly consigned to the flames, and the plan of escape abandoned.

For the next two weeks we lay at Woodstock, doing nothing, with but few incidents to enliven the dullness. There was the usual
amount of reconnoitering, skirmishing along the front, and foraging. The country afforded ample supplies, which were obtained with comparative ease. Our cavalry had been strengthened by the arrival of the Vermont Regiment, under Colonel Holliday, an officer of the Regular Army. General Hatch had also arrived, and had been assigned to the command of the whole cavalry. The spirit and discipline of this new force gave us entire predominance over the enemy in our front. Ashby’s vagabonds were beaten whenever encountered. A Lieutenant Greenfield, of the Michigan Regiment (I believe), one morning captured an entire company of them—sixty men with all their officers. Deserters and refugees were streaming in upon us, sometimes in gangs of a dozen or twenty together. These informed us that hundreds of their comrades would follow them if they could be assured of deliverance and good treatment. Citizen refugees represented that the rebellion was ebbing in every place; that the people only wanted assurance of protection by the United States Government to induce them to repudiate the Confederacy openly, and turn their vengeance on the leaders who had deluded and betrayed them into their present unhappy position. Jackson’s main force, it was said, lay between Rude’s Hill and Harrisonburg, not more than six or seven thousand strong, demoralized, deserting, and drinking whisky furiously. The weight of their stores and their heavy guns had been sent back to Waynesboro, on the Virginia Central Railroad. They were evidently prepared for a retrograde as soon as we advanced.

In proof of the material character of this disaffection we had positive information that a body of Union men and refugees from conscription had fortified a position near Swift Run Gap, in the Blue Ridge, and were holding their own by force of arms, fighting and praying for the arrival of the National troops. This party, I understood, was headed by a Dr. Edward Gearring. They were armed with squirrel-rifles and ordinary shot-guns, and held within their lines a small grist-mill, which furnished them supplies. Jackson sent a regiment to dislodge them, which succeeded in getting temporary possession of the mill, but was finally driven off. He then sent a brigade with a section of artillery. The cannon frightened the mountaineers, and the force dispersed, a portion surrendering to the rebels and others escaping into the Union lines. We had at head-quarters a Dr. Gillespie, from Honeyville, in Page County, who had been arrested and imprisoned at Culpepper Court House, to be tried for loyalty to his country. He managed to escape, and arrived safely within our lines in front of Washington, from whence he was sent to the column of the Shenandoah, with the expectation that his knowledge of the country would be of service. Gillespie, who was a gentleman of intelligence and education, confirmed all that we had been told of the moral condition of this portion of the Confederacy. The majority of the people were only waiting to be assured of their safety to welcome us with open arms. Upon the first reverse the army, composed of unwilling conscripts or volunteers, wearied with hard work and short rations, would disintegrate or mutiny. In addition to all this the news from the West was glorious and decisive. Grant had fought a great battle at Pittsburg Landing. General Sidney Johnston was dead, and the rebel army of the West defeated with great slaughter. Island Number Ten, with stores, artillery, and prisoners, had also fallen into our hands. Yet in face of an enemy discouraged by defeat and disaster, demoralized by a consciousness of the material and moral weakness of its cause, what is it that has paralyzed so fatally the National power in Virginia?

We have news from McClellan at Yorktown. He says Joe Johnston confronts him with a large force, sustained by strong fortifications. His tone is not confident, but rather complaining that part of his command has been taken from him. He says, however, he will do the best he can. Perhaps this is only a modest manner of expressing himself, but a modest appreciation of his own powers is not a strong point in the character of a military commander. Confidence of success does much to insure success; a boast often engages a man to perform great deeds; at games of chance the millionaire generally wins, because he can afford to play boldly. The United States, with its vast resources, is playing this great game like a poor devil who is staking his last dime, and stands trembling lest he should lose his dinner. Why is McDowell, with forty thousand men, doing nothing on the Rappahannock? Why is Fremont, with thirty thousand, doing worse than nothing in Western Virginia? Why rest we here all the day idle?

Since we arrived at Woodstock I had continued to lodge and mess with Colonel Brodhead, in whom I found pleasant companionship. We discussed war, politics, and society with great unanimity of opinion, thereby lightening those hours of tiresome repose which hang most heavily on a soldier’s hands. When not engaged in other duties we made frequent reconnaissances of the lines from Edinburgh to Columbia furnace. In these rides we found some material for the improvement of our maps, but met with no adventure worthy of record. On one occasion, while walking in the fields near Woodstock, I saw a column of flame and smoke suddenly leap up to a height of several hundred feet, its top spreading and rolling over in beautifully voluminous clouds until it took the form of an immense white mushroom. This exhibition was followed by a deep-toned report which shook the earth, and then a series of minor explosions resembling the rattle of a bunch of Chinese crackers magnified. This pyrotechnical display was caused by a stray spark from a bivouac fire which exploded one of our caissons passing at the moment. The speed at which the horses went up the turnpike was
have arranged to take my mare with me. Brodhead left for Detroit this morning.

April 18, Wednesday.—Taking leave of my friends, I mounted for my journey to Harper's Ferry. On calling at head-quarters I received my written orders from Adjutant Copeland, and again mounted to depart. As I turned to take leave of an acquaintance an orderly handed me a note from Major Perkins. He was confined to his room by sickness, and desired to see me. He had sent for me to urge me not to leave the column, and presented reasons that were both friendly and flattering, and I agreed to delay my departure at least for some days. Thus, instead of riding northward, I turned my horse's head in the opposite direction; and, halting at the Narrow Passage, sought to calm my troubled mind by sketching the ruined railroad-bridge which spanned that romantic gorge.

How seldom do we find a man capable of rightly using or enjoying even that modicum of independence which circumstances, society, and government allows him! How seldom is it that those who, by the fatal favor of fortune, are freed from the ordinary necessities and responsibilities of life, are found in the ranks of usefulness or honor! How surely does that man become a drone and vexation in society, an intolerable burden to himself, and dies "as the fool dieth!" Happier he whose way of life is hedged in with thorny circumstance; who is early taught to feel the saddle of responsibility on his back, and the bit of necessity in his mouth. His strength is spent in earnest labor, and he will die in the midst of honorable achievement.

"Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt."

I remember in happier days, when friends and fortune were at my elbow—when peace, prosperity, and honor were the birthright of my native land—I used to repeat that awful sentence with an involuntary shudder. But now, tossed on this fathomless ocean of events—groping amidst storms and darkness—the words have a comfortable significance, and there is a sense of friendliness in the grasp of the unseen hand—Lead on, dark Fate, you have a willing follower!

Returning to my quarters after dark I learned that General Banks and Staff had moved toward Edinburgh. I overtook and rode with them to General Shields's quarters in that village. There is to be a forward movement in the morning, and Shields's division is to lead the advance. I was introduced to a brace of young Irish officers, attached to Shields's Staff, and just returned from the Italian wars. They seemed to be well-educated, gallant youths, and I had someagreeable conversation with them. The arrangements for the march having been concluded we rode back to Woodstock.

April 17.—Bright and pleasant. Awaking this morning at the usual time, I found the General and Staff had been gone two hours. I got breakfast and rode forward at a trot. Beyond Edinburgh I overtook several brigades of infantry en route. The lofty columns of smoke which
rose in front showed that the enemy was on the alert and at his usual work. Just before entering Mount Jackson I overtook Major Crane of the Third Minnesota and rode with him. There were several dead horses lying beside the highway, indicating that the cavalry had been engaged. At this village the finished part of the Manassas Gap railroad terminates. A number of cars and engines, a quantity of stores and material, with the depot buildings and offices, were all ablaze. Three buildings, recently built for military hospitals, were left unburned.

Pushing rapidly through the village I overtook the General and Staff on the bluffs overlooking the north fork of Shenandoah River, which here traverses the Valley from west to east. Opposite, about a mile distant, was Rude's Hill, its summit crowned by the enemy's guns. The bridge over this stream was saved by the activity of the Vermont cavalry. It had been prepared for destruction, which was thought so important that Ashby had remained to superintend it in person. At the approach of our vanguard the fagots were ignited. A squad of the First Vermont charged through flames and smoke, dispersing the enemy on the other side and capturing two men and a tall, robust officer with black whiskers, whom they took for Ashby. As the prisoners rode by, one of our officers exultingly pointed him out to me as the rebel Colonel. I was sorry to be forced to throw a damper over his exultation. Ashby is a small man, very dark, with rather hard features and a heavy beard. The prisoner was a very large, showy man, clear complexion, and rather handsome face, like an Irishman, which I believe he was. Ashby was actually present in the mêlée, and had his horse shot. The animal had strength enough to carry his rider out of danger, and then fell dead by the road-side. After this exploit the brave Vermonters turned upon the fire, which they extinguished by carrying water from the river in their horses' nose-bags. Thus the bridge was saved.

The aspect of this country justifies all my boastful praises. The broad meadows carpeted with velvet green and watered by crystal streams; the rock-crested mountains overhanging the river, and bordering the valley on either side in long perspective ravines, vanishing in the distance in a haze of delicate blue; all combine to form a picture of marvelous beauty. The General seems enraptured with the country, and continues to remark it even amidst the excitement of the pursuit. As they mount the ridge whole regiments will halt and burst spontaneously into shouts of admiration. There is a significance in all this which we will discuss when more at leisure.

Our marching column had closed up, and the troops lay repose between Mount Jackson and the river, concealed from the enemy's view. We were trying another flank movement to catch Ashby, or whomsoever might choose to fall into our net. A column about six thousand strong had started from Woodstock by the back road running along the base of the North Mountain. A cross-road entered the Valley turnpike above the village of New Market, by which a force could be thrown upon the rear of an adversary occupying Rude's Hill, thus turning a position which would be unassailable in front. Jackson's main army was doubtless out of danger before this. The force visible was apparently nothing more than a mounted rear-guard under Ashby. He had been trying the range of his guns upon us as usual, and we placed several pieces in position to return his fire, hop-
ing to amuse him until our flanking column got in his rear. Our Chief of Artillery, Lieutenant-Colonel Daum, more intent on the exhibition of his special arm than mindful of the more comprehensive plan, took a battery around a bend of the river, and obtaining an advantageous cross-fire on Rude's Hill, he opened with such zeal and accuracy that the enemy limbered up in haste and retired.

Our force, about ten thousand men of all arms, then crossed the bridge, and, deploying on the level ground, marched in order of battle across the meadows and up Rude's Hill, halting on the summit. This was the most imposing military exhibition I had seen during the campaign. The Staff followed over, and from the hill enjoyed the view, looking back toward Mount Jackson, and embracing the magnificent estates of Charles Moore, Rude, Steambergen, and Meems. Riding among the enemy's recently deserted encampments, I was impressed with the wretchedness of their provision and equipment.

They seemed to have no tents, but found a very good substitute in their sheds of bark and branches, which, in a country plentifully wooded, can be constructed in nearly the same time that it requires to unload and pitch a canvas-tent. Among the debris of clothes, equipment, and cooking utensils I never saw an article that I supposed any human would take the trouble to gather up. The very hogs that visited these localities in hopes of spoils went away whining with disappointment. In one of the sheds I found a lump of bread—the only thing resembling commissary stores which had been abandoned. I tried to hack off a portable specimen with my sabre, but after some detriment to the steel I gave it up. It is possible this poor devil had been trying to invent a composition which might answer indifferently for commissary or ordnance purposes. Artillery would be terribly effective with such missiles at short range.

We reached New Market about sunset, and took quarters in the house of a Doctor Rice, at the northern extremity of the village. Here we learned that Jackson's main army had moved southward at double-quick, about ten o'clock in the forenoon. The main body of Ashby's force had followed at three in the afternoon, leaving about fifty men and three guns on the bluff to watch and retard our movement. This forlorn hope of a rear-guard had just passed through the village, exchanging pistol-shots with our advance. Our flanking movement was a failure. We heard nothing from it until ten o'clock at night, when a messenger arrived informing the General that the column had reached the river about a mile to the westward, but would not be able to cross until daylight. We are consoled by the assurance that it could have accomplished nothing more if it had come up to time. Our crafty opponent is not to be caught with such chaff.

The news from McClellan is not encouraging.

April 18.—Bright and balmy spring weather. Walked about the village with Colonel Clarke. Found a youth, of Pocahontas County, who brings information from Richmond and elsewhere. He says there is a strong Union feeling in Richmond, repressed only by military power, while in the rural districts the people are ready to revolt against the enforcement of the conscription. They would do all these things and more, I do not doubt, if they had leaders, but they have none.

Fort Pulaski, on the Savannah River, has fallen before the superior fire and weight of our artillery. This determines the fate of all similar strong-holds held by the rebellion.

On the street we saw a native eight-year-old boy in rebel gray uniform drilling a squad of our six-footers. The joke seemed to please the citizens vastly. I also overheard a shocked sergeant boasting that the rebel women freely acknowledged that our men were better-looking than the graybacks.

April 19.—Warm and raining. The General started to reconnoitre the turnpike road leading over the mountain toward Luray. At Smith's Creek we saw a regiment sheltered from the rain under gum blankets stretched over frames made of fence-rails. These cloths, enveloping the soldiers' baggage, supply the place of knapsacks. As a knapsack on the march and a shelter during repose they must be well adapted for light campaigning, and will doubtless be introduced. We crossed the range of the Peak- ed Mountains by an admirable stone road, and descending on the opposite side into the Luray Valley, crossed the main or South Branch of Shenandoah at the White House Bridge. There was a small settlement on the further bank, where we halted and requested some refreshment. We were directed to a comfortable country-house a short distance down the stream, where we were well received and promised a meal as soon as the women could prepare something. We waited an hour, and nothing appearing I went to the kitchen to see what was the cause of the delay. I found our pretty hostess up to her elbows in cooking: pans, ovens, skillets, and coffee-pots all fizzing, stewing, and baking to the extent of their capacity. The results of which, as they were consecutively turned out, being instantaneously swallowed by several dozen of our lantern-jawed, blue-bellied Yanks, who stood ravenous about the kitchen and adjacencies.

I represented the enormity of this proceeding to the lady, and endeavored to impress upon her the vast difference between the appetites of a major-general and that of a knapsack-bearing private. As some of the boys were likely and pliable, and our hostess tender-hearted and little versed in the secrets of the military hierarchy, my remonstrances were useless; she couldn't bear to refuse any thing to a hungry man; so I was obliged to seize a couple of dishes at the sabre's point and carry them into the house myself.
Returning to New Market we left the main road for a short distance to look at the body of a man who had been killed by our skirmishers as we came over. Riding for several hundred yards through a tall dark forest, we came at length to a cleared space, in the midst of which stood a small cottage of logs and clap-boards. Stretched on the green-sward near the gate of this poor dwelling lay the dead man. The body was that of a beardless boy, whose clear white face and scrupulously-clean clothes showed that he had never seen camps nor campaigning. He had probably mounted this morning to seek his first military adventure; and those soft, evenly-knit yarn socks, the white shirt, and neatly-trimmmed regimentals of gray jeans, looked as if they had just left the hands of a careful mother or loving sister. His career was short. He had ridden up to the house with a companion to make some inquiries about the Yankee forces. He had not spoken a dozen words when a Minié ball whizzed through his brain. His companion fled, and presently the Yankee soldiers came up, and taking his horse, arms, and boots, left him where he fell. The woodman had straightened the corpse, and was gone to get a neighbor to assist in burying it. This was told us by a shuddering girl about ten years old that our troopers had found in the cottage alone. She spoke to us in a whisper, with her face persistently turned away from the pale horror that lay at the gate, with white hands crossed on its breast and its crushed head glued to the grass by a mass of clotted blood. The General was visibly affected by the scene, and we all rode away in silence.

On arriving at head-quarters we found some prisoners, deserters, and refugees, sent by the Provost Marshal for examination. One of these was a personal acquaintance, and verified the statement made by one of our scouts some time ago. This scout, named Taggart, wishing to gain instruction of these enemy forces and movements, pretended to desert, and, escaping through our lines, delivered himself up to one of Ashby’s picket-guard. He was taken to the chief, and by plausible representations induced him to believe there was serious disaffection among the National troops, especially the cavalry, and promised, furthermore, that, upon assurance of good treatment, he could bring over the whole company to which he belonged. Ashby took him to Jackson, whom he stuffed with the same stories, answering all questions in regard to the numbers and intentions of the opposing army with frankness of manner and with just sufficient regard to truth to avoid exciting suspicion of intentional deception in the minds of those whom he knew were generally quite well informed on these subjects. His stories and promises were too flattering to be rejected. His McClellan saddle and equipments were much admired and coveted. Officers of all grades had it buckled on their horses and rode around to try the seat. His boots were remarked, and measured over and over again. The hope of acquiring a whole company of such boots and saddles overcame all scruples and suspicions. He was allowed to return to the Federal camp, and nightly arrangements made for some time to receive the promised company of deserters. At length the pleasing illusion faded away, and it was acknowledged that he had Yankeeed the whole of them, from the General down.

From other refugees and deserters we learn that Jackson has left the Valley turnpike at Harrisonburg, and is moving eastward on the road to Gordonsville by way of Swift Run Gap. This information is most important if true, and must be immediately looked into.

April 20.—Raining. Gangs of refugees and deserters bring positive confirmation of yesterday’s report. Some from the Irish Battalion say that Jackson’s destination is Gordonsville. It is also reported that the Federal troops occupy Staunton. This is doubtless premature, but Fremont’s advance under Milroy should be near there at this time. This manoeuvre of Jackson’s toward Gordonsville develops painfully the unfortunate location of the National forces in Northern and Western Virginia. A fine army of seventy thousand men is distributed on a line of more than two hundred miles in extent, in detached bodies under different chiefs, separated by long distances, deep rivers, and chains of mountains, rendering mutual support or concert of action impossible. Most of these troops entirely out of the sphere of decisive action, held by a mere shadow of an enemy in front, are lying still, devouring the country around them, or groping their way forward without any definite aims or objects; generally on the defensive before an enemy contemptible in numbers when compared with the aggregate whole, yet who, with the advantage of interior lines, may concentrate a superior force upon either of the columns and overwhelm it. Banks’s column, which has shown a disposition to be active, and has, at least, eagerly sought battle, is now clearly brought to a halt and is on the wrong line. Jackson, lying at Swift Run Gap, forbids our advance in this direction. Backed up by Gordonsville and Richmond, with free railroad transportation, he may overwhelm us at any time. His position is a continual menace to us even where we are. If we assail him we must first cross a deep and rapid river, doubtless to find him in a strong position and reinforced to an uncertain extent. Fremont informs us that the force lately in his front has fallen back. We hear the same from McDowell. This indicates a concentration of the enemy’s whole power at Richmond, or it may more nearly concern us here. Why don’t we concentrate? Why don’t Fremont join us, and, crossing the Blue Ridge to McDowell, precipitate our combined power upon Gordonsville, and consecutively upon Richmond from the north? If there are reasons why this should not be done I have never heard them.

April 21.—Continuous rain. The water-
courses are all roaring, which precludes the idea of military operations for some days. I found entertainment in reading Olmstead's "Cotton Kingdom." Its pictures of life in the Cotton States are doubtless accurate as far as they go; but they, almost without exception, represent the evils and vices of the slavery system. A series of observations, made in a similar temper, of any country or state of society, may present a picture quite as shadowy.

"For who would hear the whips and scorns of time, The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely, The pangs of despoiled love, the law's delay, The insolence of office, and the spurns That patient merit of the unworthy takes, When he himself might his quietus make" by going to some blessed El Dorado where none of these evils are found?

Perhaps the greatest evils that afflict society are those produced by the attempts of well-intentioned but ignorant zealots to manage and mend that which they can not control and do not understand.

April 22.—Alternate clouds and sunshine. I was quite ill to-day, and called in Doctor King of the Staff, whose skill and kind attention have afforded me partial relief.

I had up to date managed to get along without a body servant, holding the place open for my man Adam, of topographical memory. As the advance of our army guaranteed the quiet of the border counties, Adam, doubtless satisfied with his military experiences, has found it more pleasant and profitable to remain with his family in Martinsburg. There are always idle negroes enough hanging around head-quarters, and I had but to express the wish to engage a servant when one presented himself. John had belonged to a man named Richardson, who kept the hotel at Strasburg. His elder brother had taken service with one of the officers, and John had followed in the train of the army hitherto without employment. He is, to use a current phrase in Virginia, "a likely boy," quiet and well-mannered, but too modest and slow, I fear, to hold his own among our head-quarters bummers. I will try him.

While on the subject of servants, I must notice the General's valet de chambre. Frank is a Saint Domingo Frenchman, black as the ace of spades. He speaks imperfect English, and in his service is quiet, attentive, and polite, and quite French and aristocratic in his deportment toward the other servants. The General tells a pleasant story on Frank, which contains a most pointed illustration of the diversity of character and ideas existing in the world. While the army lay at Frederick City last winter several balls were given to the officers. On one of these occasions Frank was in the cloak-room looking after the General's wrappings. Wine had been flowing freely, and the valet had the misfortune to get into a difficulty with some of the officers. He presently presented himself before his chief all trembling and ashen with rage. "General! General! I have received a blow; an officer has struck me; my God, Sir! what am I to do?" The General examined the contusion upon the negro's cheek, and kindly expressed his regret at the affair. "But what am I to do?" reiterated the excited valet. "I think," replied the General, in good faith, "you had better put some grease on it." "Grease!" shrieked the ebony Frenchman, "grease hell! It is satisfaction I want!"

April 24.—I am still ailing and unable to go out. The view from my window is rather peculiar this morning. Bright green fields, full blooming peach and plum trees all draped in snow. Our signal men on the Peaked Mountain report Jackson's force encamped on the slopes of the Blue Ridge across the road to Stannardsville. Our cavalry have scoured the country nine miles beyond Harrisonburg.
April 26.—Damp and cloudy. Warm rains have melted the snow; all the streams are swollen, and we hear of the destruction of our bridges in every direction. Hatch, with his cavalry, is on his way to Staunton, expecting to join Milroy, of Fremont’s command, who is coming through Buffalo Gap. There is a great panic at Staunton from all accounts.

April 27, Sunday.—Bright and pleasant. I was so much better to-day that I rode with the General to Harrisonburg, eighteen miles. Hatch, it seems, got no further than Mount Crawford, where he was arrested by the high-water.

April 28, Monday.—Pleasant. This place seems much improved since I last visited it. We have a brigade and some cavalry here. The cavalry has been skirmishing with the enemy near Conrad’s Bridge, and took some prisoners. Of the aged Union citizens seized by Jackson, and inhumanly dragged from their homes, two died of fatigue and exposure, and are buried here. These graves are marked “Job Throckmorton and —— Martin, Union men.” We have news of the capture of New Orleans by our forces.

In the afternoon rode back to New Market. Instead of improving, as I hoped, I find the ride has exhausted me terribly.

April 30.—Clouds. I was ordered with Captain Scheffler to inspect our outposts in the Luray Valley. We crossed the mountain to the Columbia Bridge over the Shenandoah. Here we found Lieutenant-Colonel Foster with the Thirteenth Indiana Infantry, a section of artillery, and a squadron of cavalry. The enemy had made no demonstrations in his vicinity, and the position being naturally strong he felt confident that he could hold it in case of attack. The position at the White House Bridge, on the direct road to Luray, was equally satisfactory. Returning, we stopped at a house for dinner, and passed a merry hour with several young ladies of the neighborhood, stanch Unionists, whose father and brother were in the United States service. Descending the Mountain toward New Market we met the First Virginia Regiment of Infantry, formerly Colonel Kelley’s regiment at Philippi, now commanded by Colonel Thoburn. It was on the march to reinforce the post at the Columbia Bridge, and was as effective a body of men in appearance as I ever saw. It commenced raining heavily as we descended, and I returned to quarters feeling sick and chilly. An hour after I went to bed quite ill.

May 1.—It rained all day, and I did not leave my bed. The General informs me that the desired movements, looking to a concentration on the enemy’s flank at Yorktown and Richmond, are about being consummated.

General Abercrombie, with his Brigade, who led the march of our Division across the Ridge previous to the battle of Kernstown, had never rejoined us. He was now in communication with McDowell. Fremont was closing in upon us from the West. There would presently be a concentration of forces, then decisive action. This is encouraging.

May 6.—Bright and cool. There is still no abatement in my illness, which is assuming a typhoid form.

Colonel Brodhead has arrived from the North, bringing papers with particulars of the evacuation of Yorktown. The enemy abandoned their works during the night, leaving over a hundred heavy guns, with ordnance stores and other materials. This seems the beginning of the end. What next? Yet in the midst of our exultation we receive orders to fall back to Strasburg. Shields, it seems, has been commissioned a Major-General, and is to be withdrawn to hold Frederickburg with his veteran Division, which contains three-fifths of the numerical strength of this column. Banks’s Division, reduced by the absence of Abercrombie’s command, by the usual wastage of sickness and furloughs, will show but little over seven thousand men. With this force he is to hold the Valley at Strasburg. While victory crowns our arms, east and west, we are doomed to a shameful retrograde—fleeing like the wrecked when no man pursueth. Instead of concentration, dispersion seems to be the favorite strategic idea that governs our military councils at Washington. Milroy is operating against Staunton with a brigade or a weak division alone, the main force of that Department being still at Moorefield. Our signal men on the mountain inform us that Jackson’s column seems to be moving toward Staunton. A large additional force is encamped on the Gordonsville Road, where it ascends the Ridge, said to be Ewell’s Corps, fourteen thousand strong, brought up from Gordonsville. Refuges and deserters inform us that Edward Johnson, with four thousand men, is in Staunton. This is the force which for a time lay in front of Fremont.

May 10.—Bright and cool. General Hatch has reconnoitered the country three miles beyond Harrisonburg without discovering an enemy. He tells me that, several days ago, two companies of our cavalry, riding toward Harrisonburg, met a squadron of the enemy and charged them, sword in hand. Their onset was gallantly met by the rebels, who were quickly overthrown and routed, losing ten men killed outright, with an equal number of wounded and prisoners. Our loss was but two killed. This is the first instance, on this theatre, of a determined collision with the sabre between two bodies of cavalry, and the result proves, what I have always maintained, that the Southern horsemen can not stand before ours in a charge.

May 11.—Pleasant. There have been some ugly cases of bushwhacking recently. Day before yesterday several of our troopers went out to search for milk. Calling at a house occupied by several women they were directed to a neighboring house, the road to which passed near a barn. As they rode by they were fired on from the barn, losing two men killed. As this was scarcely a hundred paces from the
house it is scarcely presumable that the women were not in complicity with the murderers. They were arrested, and orders given to burn their house and barn—which were countermanded. Colonel Gordon, of the Second Massachusetts, informs us that a messenger belonging to his regiment was shot near Mount Jackson by an assassin concealed in the woods. Such acts are truly deplorable, as they will tend to give the war a vindictive and ferocious character, which it has not exhibited heretofore.

I felt so much better that I ordered my horse and rode out to Colonel Brodhead's quarters, where I dined. After dinner we received information from head-quarters of the evacuation of Norfolk and Portsmouth by the enemy, and the accompanying suicide of the Merrimac. Wool marched into Norfolk with five thousand men. The cavalry band was ordered out, and played "Hail Columbia" and "The Dragon is Dead." We hear music and cheering from all quarters: the rejoicing is general.

May 12.—Bright and mild. Three young men—one a Frenchman, and two Italians—were sent in from our outpost at Columbian Bridge. They present themselves as deserters from Ewell's camp at Swift Run Gap, and confirm our previous information in regard to the forces there. These fellows volunteered in the service of the United States at the commencement of the war; but the organization in which they served being disbanded, and not being able to obtain such positions as they desired, they went South and offered themselves to the Confederacy. They were recommended to positions under Beanregard in the West, but preferred service in the Valley, and in consequence were sent up to Ewell. It is probable he gave them a cold reception, or they otherwise found the rebel service not particularly inviting. They deserted yesterday, and offer themselves again to our side. The moral sense of these adventurers is rather too loose even for mere soldiers of fortune. They obtain no credit at head-quarters, and the General sends them to Washington under guard.

Our retrograde movement commenced this morning. Shields has departed with his Division by way of the Luray Valley and Front Royal to join M'Dowell. The Staff took the road to Woodstock late in the forenoon, I taking a seat in the General's ambulance in the capacity of invalid.

En route we passed the marching column, horse, foot, artillery, and baggage, all encumbered with various spoils, dogs, cats, herds of cattle, sheep, niggers, and refugees in abundance. Arriving at Woodstock we reoccupied our quarters in the court-house. After dinner Captain Abert called to report, and I returned with him to the Topographical Encampment, pleasantly located in a grass-grown street of the village.

I remained to tea, and spent a pleasant hour, recalling past campaigns and former friends. The Captain had a somewhat original and very convenient adjunct to his mess chest. This was a large-covered wicker basket, accommodating a game cock and half a dozen hens. On the march the basket was swung to the bows of his baggage wagon. In camp it was lowered and opened, allowing its inmates the freedom of the common, where the hens scratched and chantecler exercised himself in chivalric combat with any neighboring rooster that showed his crest. His lusty challenge was also often useful in developing the localities of fowls hidden from our foragers. In the matter of fresh eggs the basket resembled the famous cruise of the widow of Zarephath.

May 13.—Bright and warm. I resumed my seat in the ambulance with the General, and we started for Strasburg. In passing the troops and baggage trains we suffered extremely from the suffocating clouds of dust and debilitating heat. We found head-quarters fixed at a brick house on the turnpike, about half a mile north of Strasburg. One of the most agreeable circumstances connected with the location is that the town is entirely out of view. We found Captain Collis here with his company of Zouaves, who resumed their rôle of body-guard.

During the following week I find nothing recorded worthy of note. I continued to suffer so much from physical exhaustion and consequent mental depression that I took very little interest in what was passing around me. The weather was hot, damp, and debilitating, while the sudden and unexpected change of our attitude from offensive to defensive seemed to have affected every body's spirits. There was a general collapse.

The General alone, with that calm and patient persistence which characterizes him, set about the task of distributing his weakened force along a line hopelessly indefensible. The Valley at this point is about eighteen miles in width. Between the North Mountain on the west, and the Blue Ridge, its eastern boundary, arises a double chain of lofty parallel ridges called the Fort Mountains. This sporadic upheaval commences on a line with Strasburg and continues for thirty miles to the southward, disappearing as abruptly as it rises at a point opposite Harrisonburg. The great Valley is thus divided into three parallel valleys, separated from each other by mountain barriers generally impassable, and only traversed at distant intervals by narrow and difficult roads. These divisions are again subdivided by the deep and usually unfordable streams of the North and South forks of the Shenandoah, and by Passage Creek and some minor ridges of the Fort Mountains. North of Strasburg runs Cedar Creek; rising behind the Little North Mountain, it flows eastward until it joins the North Fork of Shenandoah, and with that river forming a line to the base of the Blue Ridge, running square across and at right angles with the mountains, valleys, and streams before described. Behind and north of this line, in the direction of Winchester, the Valley shows an undulating plain of alternate field and forest,
with a width of twenty-five miles unbroken by any important hills or water-courses. Southward of this river line, between it and the butts of the Fort Mountains, and at right angles with all this intricate topography, this natural system of covered approaches, lies the line of the Manassas Gap Railroad, which had been put in running order, and which we were ordered to protect.

The maintenance of this road was advantageous, insomuch as it gave us a shorter and more direct line of transportation for supplies. But as we were in the midst of a fertile and well-provided country, and our old line through Winchester had answered for an army nearly thrice as numerous as ours, this advantage seemed scarcely sufficient to justify the hazards of our present location. To give details. Our head-quarters and main force lay at Strasburg, covering the Valley turnpike and the railroad bridge over the North Fork, about one mile distant. We had an open line on our right of four or five miles in extent, traversed by two roads, convenient for turning our right flank, besides any number of secluded parallel passages beyond the Little North Mountain, adapted for the same manoeuvre. We must have a strong detachment at Front Royal to watch the road and bridges at that point, separated from the main command by twelve miles' distance, and two rivers traversed by light trestle-work bridges liable to be swept away by every rise of the waters, which, as our experience had taught, might be expected at any time. Cut off by rivers and mountains from support or retreat, this force was open to attack in front or on either flank by way of the Luray Valley.

We must next keep a detachment to protect Passage Creek bridge at Buckton, nearly midway between Strasburg and Front Royal. This secluded position was hemmed in by rivers and hills, and open to attack by way of the Big Fort Valley road, the Little Fort Valley road, and liable to be cut off by way of Luray or the main Valley. This disposition was essential to the protection of the railroad, and thus posted our whole line was liable to be turned at any time, or each of the detachments might be isolated and destroyed, as best suited the enemy's designs and means of carrying them out. Our only hope of escape from destruction was based on the chance that the enemy might be so hard pressed in other directions that he could not spare the force to assail us.

General Banks well comprehended the insecurity of his position, and, as I understood, sent a staff-officer to Washington to make the proper representations on the subject.

Meanwhile we had been informed of the attack on Milroy at McDowell, and his subsequent retreat, relieving Staunton from present apprehension. We also hear of the failure of our gun-boats at Fort Darling, and altogether the hopes of a speedy triumph of our arms are not so flattering as they have been during the past fortnight. Our more thoughtful officers say the enemy is concentrating all his power on Richmond in the East and Corinth in the West, yielding minor advantages to insure success on decisive points.

May 19, Monday.—Bright and warm. I rode out this morning with the General and Staff to visit General Hatch's camp in the direction of Woodstock. This is the first time I have been on horseback for three weeks. My mare, wanting her usual exercise, had become so skittish and playful that I was unable to manage her, and I presently became so exhausted that I asked leave to return. After dinner I accompanied the General to Front Royal, traveling by rail. I found some acquaintances here among the citizens and got an invitation to tea, where, with the savory dishes and agreeable conversation, I passed a pleasant hour. We returned to Strasburg about sunset.

May 21, Wednesday.—Clouds. Brigadier-Generals Greene and Crawford have reported for duty. Colonel Tompkins takes the command of the Vermont cavalry regiment, vacated by the recent death of Colonel Holliday. This is the same officer who, at the head of a squadron of dragoons, made such a spirited dash through Fairfax Court House last summer.

A great deal of the General's time is occupied in giving audience to complainants from the surrounding country, who will be satisfied with nothing less than an interview with the Commander-in-Chief. The affair is too important to be communicated to the subordinates of the Staff, and most frequently runs in this wise:

Enter countryman, and is presented to the General, with whom he shakes hands. "General, I am a good Union man, and am come to tell you how your soldiers are behaving."

General. "How am I to know you are a Union man?" Everybody who wants a horse returned, or claims damages of the United States Government for any loss whatever, is a good Union man, at least until his claim is secured. What have you done for your Government?"

Countryman. "Why, General, you know Swartz: he can tell you I'm all right, and never voted for nothing—"

General. "How should I know Swartz? Tell me what is the matter."

Countryman. "Why, General, you see my wife's been a plantin' of a garden, and the soldiers have burned the fence, every rail of it, and have took every thing that was in the garden, and I would like to have a guard—"

General. "The mischief is all done it seems, what good would a guard do if they have already destroyed everything?"

Countryman. "Why, you see most of the things ain't grewed yet, and if you stay here long I won't raise a vegetable—"

General (to an aid-de-camp). "Please attend to this man's case."

The Yankees of this command seem disposed to poke fun at me in regard to these specimens of Anglo-Norman chivalry, both male and fe-
male, that daily haunt our head-quarters, and thus arise frequent discussions and expressions of opinion in regard to Northern and Southern society. Colonel B—like many others I have met, had always been a Northern Democrat. In view of the social and political evils patent in his section, he had been an ally of the Southern party at Washington and an acquiescent believer in Southern pretensions. Indignant and alarmed at the attack upon the nationality he had taken up arms in its defense, yet he had entered upon the campaign more in sorrow than in anger. When he crossed the Potomac at the head of his regiment he experienced sentiments like those attributed to the troops of Brennus on entering the Senate Chamber of the ancient Romans. As he heard the names and saw the localities belonging to history, he was filled with a species of awe as if in the actual presence of the venerable shades of those "simple great ones gone," the national Virginians of the past.

By this time he was cured of all that "omne ignotum pro magnifico est"—an interior view of the whitened sepulchre had changed respect into contempt and disgust. He now saw through the petty demagogues and impostors who had been so long trading on the reputation of the men of Seventy-six. The South was a pretentious humbug socially, financially, and politically.

Major C——, who had been a political ex-
tremist on the Northern side of the question, had also modified his views on several points. He was not so fully assured of the infallibility of the negro as formerly. He was astonished as well as disgusted at the dirt and ignorance he saw around him. The prisoners he examined were objects of mingled contempt and compassion. Then the seedy beggars that thronged head-quarters, the snuff-eating, slip-shod women, the rough heads of men all filled with aristocratic pretension. Could this be the people who had maintained such position in the country, and had for so many years predominated over the wealthy, educated, refined, and free people of the Northern States? He was both astonished and ashamed to believe it.

Captain B—— rather liked a little social pretension, it had always seemed a harmless vanity, calculated to make people liberal in their hospitality, and serving to soften the harshness of Democratic manners. For his part he always took off his hat to people's parlor idols, and even condescended to burn a little tobacco under the nose of any gentleman's pocket watch when politely requested; but when these family weaknesses were elevated to the importance of matters of state—when a man's ridiculous presumption or his wife's silliness were continually thrown into one's face as an apology for treason—politeness ceased to be a virtue. When Gessler hangs his insolent cap in the marketplace, he would side with Tell—when Nebuchadnezzar sets up his foolish image on the plain and demands obedience, he would follow Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego if needs be, even into the bowels of the fiery furnace.

These are the opinions which I continually hear expressed by intelligent and liberal-minded men, and which present appearances would seem to justify. Yet those who were acquainted with and can recall Virginia society in happier days, can scarcely imagine how great the change which the war has made in the appearance and character of the people. Her leaders already perceive they have made a fatal mistake; her people now understand how miserably they have been duped; yet both feel themselves committed beyond the possibility of retrieval. Their pride of opinion prohibits the abandonment of a position in which their ruin is assured, whether the bad cause in which they are involved wins or loses. A people squirming under the consciousness of blunders and necessities so fatal, overtaxed and wasted in maintaining a struggle so gigantic and unequal, is not in a condition to be criticised socially, morally, or materially. There is no subject more generally incomprehensible to a superficial observer.
or more vexatiously elusive of philosophical analysis, than the social distinctions which are found in all organized societies often in direct opposition to circumstances, logic, and positive legislation. So strong, indeed, is this vanity in the human heart that it bends both reason and religion to its sway; so deep that it undermines philosophy; so subtle that the finest woven net of law can not hold it; so protean in the shapes it assumes, that wit and satire find therein the theme of infinite jest; so tenacious of life, that ages of meanness and misery can not eradicate it; so exacting that fortune, friendship, and life itself are readily yielded to its demands; so despicable that honor, decency, and sacred love of country are lightly bartered for its empty pretensions. Scatter a handful of British dirt in any part of the earth, however remote from the parent isle, however unprofitous the climate or barren the soil, and a plentiful crop of volunteer aristocracy will presently sprout, sufficiently resembling the great original plant to excite a deal of envy and admiration in its locality, and even obtain a certain recognition from Old England herself, who pronounces it "quite astonishing for a new country." Thus, in spite of the equalizing poverty and misery of our early settlements—in spite of our boasted Democratic institutions and the hostile legislation of five generations—the patriarchal rudiment, hardy and irrepressible as wild garlic, still germinates and spreads its aroma throughout the United States. In the Northern States we have a social aristocracy far more elegant in its habits of life, more cultivated in its tastes and refined in manners, more elevated in its humanities, more jealous in its exclusiveness, than any class to be found at the South. But this patrician society at the North maintains its life within a limited and subordinate sphere. It is fashionable, luxurious, artistic, philosophic, scholastic, but not political. In the conduct of the Government and the great enterprises of the country it has neither control nor influence. It is completely overshadowed by the power, wealth, and ability of the great working-people of the country, the representatives of Republican Liberty and Equality, who control the Government of their own choosing, administer the laws of their own making, and tolerate every thing that is not strong enough to excite their jealousy. In the South the reverse is the case. Here the dominant class of slaveholding landed proprietors wields all the power of the State, political, social, financial, moral, and religious. Its interests frame the laws, its opinions govern society. There is no "people" in the South to thwart its policy or question its authority. The negro is its unreasoning chattle; the mean white man its dependent and retainer; the middling class of shop-keepers and merchants its subservient admirers and imitators; the expounders of the laws, human and divine, its partisans and partipicators. With the forms and phraseology of a Democracy this class has the tastes, habits, opinions, and authority of a feudal Aristocracy.

Those who expect to find among the Southern gentry that propriety of manner, that nicety of dress, that familiarity with polite observance, that acquaintance with the elegant arts and lighter social accomplishments, the Oriental luxury of equipage and living, the palatial residences that pertain to Northern society, will be greatly disappointed. Where these things are found at the South they are exotic and exceptional, not characteristic. The true Southerner is rural and squirely in his tastes and manners. He takes delight in horses, dogs, guns, and all exciting sports, including games of chance, narcotic stimulants, and politics. He scorns the arts of the petit-nateur and the ostentation of the parvenu, and affects a republican simplicity in his style of living. He is social, hospitable, and brave; opinionated, overbearing, and easily provoked to violence. In his deportment he exhibits a certain dignified confidence, derived from the consciousness of power. Like the centurion of Capernaum, he has been accustomed to say to his servant, "Do this, and he doeth it;" and to his neighbor, "Think this, and he thinketh it," with a servility as ready and unquestioning.

While, on the one hand, the championship of free thought, free speech, and free government has been generally accorded to Massachusetts, public opinion, with singular unanimity, has allowed to Virginia the prestige once enjoyed by the aristocratic tribe of Koreishites in Arabia, which claimed the exclusive privilege of furnishing all the warriors, statesmen, gentlemen, and office-holders of that country. The eldest born among her sisters, and more intimate in her relations with the mother country, it may be presumed that, during the century and a half of her colonial tutelage, Virginia imbibed more
of her parent's aristocratic milk than any other State. The memory of her early supremacy has never left her. The long catalogue of illustrious names which she has furnished to our national history has served to increase this local pride. As early as 1788 M. Brissot de Warville makes the following observation: "The towns in Virginia are but small. This may be said even of Richmond with its capitol. This capitol turns the heads of the Virginians; they imagine that from this, like the Romans of old, they shall one day give the law to the whole North." The continued predominance on the national arena of her trained and confidant politicians over the frequently unskilful and timid representatives of the Northern people has added confirmation to these flattering pretensions. In consequence, all the ambition and ability of the State has concentrated upon this one idea. Let Massachusetts potter with her button factories, her cod-fisheries, her weak literature, and ideologicist conceits. Political and social empire belongs to Virginia. The land, the gown, and the sword were alone considered worthy of her chosen sons. Manual labor, the mechanic arts, trade, and commerce were despised; the fine arts, literature, and science neglected. The real political code of the Virginian was not that of Jefferson, which was always on his lips, but that of the "Son of Sirach," which was engraved on his heart:

"The wisdom of the learned man cometh by opportunity of leisure, and he that hath little business shall become wise. How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plow, and that glorifieth in the goad, that driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labors, and whose talk is of ballocks? So every carpenter and work-master that laboreth night and day: and they that cut and grave seal, and are diligent to make great variety, and give themselves to counterfeit imagery, and watch to finish a work. The smith also sitting by the anvil and considering the iron work; the noise of the hammer and anvil be ever in his ears, and his eyes still look upon the pattern of the thing that he maketh. So doth the potter, sitting at his work and turning the wheel about with his feet. All these trust in their hands, and every one is wise in his work; without these can not a city be inhabited, and they shall not dwell where they will, nor go up and down. They shall not be sought for in public council, nor sit high in the congregation; they shall not sit on the judge's seat, nor understand the sentence of judgment; they can not declare justice or judgment, and they shall not be found where parables are spoken."

And the Virginian adds: "Neither can they know how to interpret the Constitution of the United States nor to direct its policy."

Meanwhile, the world continued to move while Virginia continued to stand still; contented with her acknowledged supremacy, she desired nothing more than the quiet enjoyment of her honors.

There were not wanting those among her own people who perceived that where all are consumers and none producers the cask must in time run dry; that so stately and costly an edifice, based upon nothing more substantial than the slovenly labor and natural increase of barbarian serfs, could not be permanent; that a political and social system springing from this wretched muck must be unsound and corrupt. A state thus constituted must perish of encephalic hypertrophy, its body dwindling as its head swelled. But there was always a conclusive answer to these croakers; and it must be acknowledged that Virginia could boast of astonishing success in her specialties. Her soldiers and statesmen were always pre-eminent, her gentlemen admired, her placemen numerous and tenacious as barnacles; niggers were trumps, and she held a full hand.

To return to the social view of the question. The abolition of the law of entail, and the consequent division and subdivision of estates, was in time fatal to that most deeply-rooted and easily-pardoned of human vanities, the pride of ancestry. The results were here as elsewhere. As the wheel of fortune turned old families went down and new ones rose; estates changed hands. The hard-fisted overseer of one generation was the father of the following generation of patricians. The cobbler's son, educated to a liberal profession, might be the judge or statesman of his day. Yankee peddlers sneaked in, and purchased property and slaves. Strangers intermarried with the daughters of the land, and inherited estates. The patrician sentiment suffered in nowise from these changes. The new people were quickly imbued with the dominant opinion of the State—"Virginianized," as it was called—and novelty seemed even to impart fresh vigor to the stock; for just in proportion to the recency of their elevation and the humility of their origin do they boast of their aristocracy and their ancestry.

Another still more grievous cause of confusion in the social hierarchy arose from the eternal haranguing of the Virginia orators in praise of Democracy, and the improved facilities for communication with the outer world, which began to develop among the quondam lower classes, some dim conceptions of popular rights. These did not manifest themselves, as elsewhere, in the base desire to pull down the gentleman to a lower level; their admiration for the class was greater than their envy. Consequently rag, tag, and bobtail began to assert the doctrine of equality, as they understood it, by proclaiming themselves gentlemen, swaggering broad, drinking vile whisky, and talking vile politics; seeking at village groceries and excited gatherings of all kinds that insufflable wisdom which "cometh by opportunity of leisure," and putting on becoming airs in the presence of Yankees, North Carolinians, and others of the inferior tribes. Thus Virginia society, even before the war, had assumed the complexion of a muddled Aristo-Democracy, or a Dem-Aristocracy. As I never heard the Norman idea broached among her gentlemen of the Old School, I presume these later recruits of the patrician order, whose incongruities so bewilder our worthy officers, and excite the imaginations of our discriminating reporters, are the true descendants of the aforesaid Anglo-Norman chivalry. As ignorance, drunkenness, lewdness, brutality, and
highway robbery were among the prominent characteristics of these famous barons, the claim to descent may be admitted as plausible.

May 22, Thursday.—Bright and warm. The newspapers bring intelligence which, if reliable, indicates that the Campaign of Richmond must soon reach a crisis. The impression here is that the city will be evacuated by the enemy. I have been so much enfeebled by sickness that for several weeks I seem to have lost all interest in the military situation, especially in this Valley, where I would naturally feel most concerned. I am again mentally canvassing a transfer to the Grand Army, but my determination ebbs and flows with the changes of my physical condition. There seems indeed "no hope for gilded spurs" on this field—but how much less for me in the flaccid and enervating climate of the James River? Why, therefore, do I fret and strive against the irresistible decrees of Nature? To the iron sinews and bold, confident spirit of health belong the glories and rewards of war. Yet it irks me thus to rust away my life in a helplessness worse than captivity, while the loyal armies of my country are closing in to the death-struggle, and fair Virginia yet lies trapped under the foot of domineering treason.

Yesterday Hatch’s cavalry had a skirmish, driving the rebel pickets out of Woodstock, killing several, and capturing half a dozen at the Narrow Passage bridge. He sent them in to head-quarters, and I was commissioned to examine them. They were all simple country youths, who had entered the rebel service through ignorance or coercion. One of them, a boy about eighteen years of age, badly bruised by the falling of his horse, commenced crying bitterly when I called him into a separate room for examination. He had been persuaded to believe that the Yankees would shoot him if they caught him, and, under this terror, he would not have been taken alive if his horse had not fallen in the chase and caught his leg under him. Another, with trembling earnestness, asked "if we were really going to kill them?" I assured him of his life, and good treatment besides, at which he was overjoyed, and desired to take the oath of allegiance to the United States Government immediately. The intelligence obtained from these men was important. The whole power of the enemy had combined, and were at Harrisonburg, with their advance of cavalry and a battery at New Market. For the rest, there was a good deal of vagueness in the details they furnished, and they were not men of a class to know or surmise any comprehensive plans that might be afoot. They had told what they knew voluntarily and with evident truthfulness.

While at the Provost Marshal’s office a meagre, sickly person was brought in. He had been sojourning with some relatives in Virginia, where he had been ill of typhoid fever, and was now seeking a pass to go to Philadelphia, where he belonged. Since our retreat from Woodstock, he says, the worthy citizens of that village spend their time about the taverns and street corners, boasting of their defiant demeanors and impertinent speeches to the National officers during their occupancy of the place. I am sure I never saw a more tame and cringing set of knaves than they were.

May 23, Friday.—Clear and warm. The village and the camps are teeming with camp-followers of all characters and vocations. The hucksters, clothiers, sutlers, peddlers, and fancy storekeepers, chiefly engaged in selling contraband stimulants. Strolling-players, lecturers, barbers, traders in horse-flesh, professional abductors [not of the cavalry] of that respectable animal, refugees, spies, and Negroes of all ages, from the gray-haired sire and dame to the child that can barely run, homeless, wandering, and pitiable. The streets of the village remind one of Bunyan’s description of Vanity Fair. While I was undergoing the manipulation of a smart colored barber from Pittsburg I saw one of these sad wanderers from his native corn-fields enter the shop. The poor creature looked so dazed that I began to question him as to his business and birth-place. He was from Rockingham County, had a good master, and would have been content to have lived in servitude for the rest of his life; but the disorganizing influences of the war had reached even his humble dwelling, and the dread of being impressed into the service at Richmond, or sold into the cotton States, had induced him to run away when our army fell back. He had nothing to do and no place to stay, and was hoping to get back to his family in Rockingham somehow. The smart barber told him he had better go home at once. There were more niggers now at the North than were pleasant or profitable. Seeing the stage-coach about starting for Winchester and Harper’s Ferry, I gave the driver a note for my wife (to be left at Charlestown), requesting her to join me at Strasburg, and to bring some good wine, of which I was much in need.

I afterward met Colonel Brothhead, and stopped to tea with him. While at table his orderly told us that the rebels had taken Front Royal, burned the bridges, and destroyed the railroad. I hurried up to head-quarters, where I had from the clerks and orderlies confused reports of an attack both at Front Royal and Buckton. The General and aids had gone out. Colonel Clark and Major Copeland, the Adjutant-General, were absent on leave at the North and Washington. After a while a negro came in, who stated that he had left the scene of action about five o’clock; that Kenly was falling back, fighting desperately, having himself destroyed the bridges. Presently General Banks returned, with General Crawford and others. A dispatch was handed to him, which he read, and then retired to a private room with Crawford to consult. When they reappeared it was to send orders to all the commanders and chiefs of departments to load up the trains and prepare for a move. This caused a general stir.
Half an hour after an orderly handed the General another dispatch, which, being obscurely written in pencil, he asked me to decipher. It read substantially as follows:

"SECOND BRIDGE EAST OF STRASBURG, May 23, 7 o’clock p.m.

"GENERAL BANKS.—I was attacked this afternoon about four o’clock by three or four hundred cavalry and some infantry, who dashed upon me and attempted to burn the bridge. I have defended it successfully, with a loss of several killed and quite a number wounded. The enemy are close by, and will probably renew the attack in the morning. I would like to be reinforced.

"HUBBARD,
"Captain Commanding Post.

"Can you send me a surgeon immediately?"

The General observed, "There is a sensible, manly report." Orders were given to send a surgeon to the post forthwith. He then showed me the first report received. It was by telegraph from Winchester, given on the authority of a captain of the First Maryland Cavalry, who had escaped from Front Royal. He says that the whole force at that post is destroyed or taken. Colonel Kenley is dead, and all his field and staff officers captured. Jackson, at the head of twenty thousand, was marching on Winchester. He had seen as many as ten thousand already across the Shenandoah when he left the field. This was astounding. Hatch had reported every thing quiet in our immediate front as far as Woodstock. I did not think Jackson would move his whole force so far up as Winchester, with McDowell on one flank and Fremont on the other, in position to cut him off. I concluded, therefore, that the attack on Front Royal was only a raid to destroy the railroad and capture the garrison and stores at the post. The affair at Passage Creek was a co-operative attempt to isolate Front Royal from Strasburg, to prevent reinforcement, and render the prize more secure. This must be the whole design of the movement, and there it would end. Else why at this hour, half past ten at night, are our unguarded telegraph lines intact? Why have we not already heard of the enemy’s cavalry in our rear? Why has no mounted messenger or fugitive officer from a field only twelve miles distant brought us clear and reliable tidings of the fight? Why do we get the first and only information from Winchester, twenty-two miles distant from Front Royal, and eighteen from Strasburg? I expressed the decided opinion that this statement was a monstrous exaggeration, made by some one who left the field prematurely, and who had told this story as an apology for his haste. The officer in command at Winchester was ordered by telegraph to examine the person who brought this report more carefully. He replied that the statement was persistently repeated and maintained, I still insisted that it could not be true. The General, on the contrary, accepted it fully, and sent orders hastening the preparations for a move.

I thereupon proposed that a reconnaissance should be pushed across toward Front Royal by the roads on the northern bank of the river. Captain Collis, of the body-guard, volunteered to take half a dozen dragoons and make the desired reconnaissance. His offer was accepted, and he started immediately. I favored a reconnaissance in force, but on account of the intense darkness it was thought unadvisable to put a large body in motion. They could neither find their own way nor observe an enemy. Meanwhile another telegram arrived from Winchester, giving the statement of another refugee. A Major of the Fifth New York Volunteer Cavalry says that his command had been all killed, taken, or dispersed, while he had remained some time concealed near the scene of action. He had seen the rebel force which crossed the river, estimated at five or six thousand, again fall back on Front Royal. He had also overheard some mounted men saying they intended only to scour the country for a few miles around, and then fall back to the town. As this story accorded with my theory I preferred to believe it. The General then went to bed, leaving me in charge of the head-quarters’ office, desiring me to communicate the news received to the War Department at Washington, and to awaken him in case any important tidings arrived.

May 24, Saturday.—Clouds and rain. Soon after daylight this morning Captain Collis returned, reporting that he had seen the enemy in large force, with his baggage trains, moving toward Winchester on the Front Royal Road. As the country was hilly and generally covered with wood I thought he might easily have been deceived, and probably mistook a forage train with its guard for a large force. An orderly also came in, who stated that he had lost his way during the night, and had ridden for some distance with a rebel Staff officer, who boasted to him that Jackson and Ewell would certainly catch Banks, and be in Winchester the next day. As I had made up my mind not to believe anything I also laughed at this fellow’s story.

As soon as daylight was established a brigade of infantry, with artillery and cavalry, was ordered to move from Middletown by way of Cedarville to the fords opposite Front Royal. This force, after advancing about two miles, reported a large force of the enemy in their front. By ten o’clock A.M. all our trains were moving toward Winchester, their lines lengthened and impeded by the wagons of the numerous traders and refugees who had accumulated around Strasburg. At the same time volumes of flames and black smoke arising from the village announced the destruction of our extra army stores.

About half past ten the General and Staff took the road. Near Cedar Creek Bridge we saw our company of strolling players packing their trumpery in great haste and trepidation. Just as we were crossing the bridge we met one of our teamsters riding at full speed, hair flying, and eyes staring with terror. The General halted him, and was told that the head of the train had been seized by the enemy, who
was formed in line of battle across our road about a mile ahead. At the same time several field-officers rode by, confirming the tidings. This was a shock, as I had to this moment been obstinately incredulous in regard to the enemy’s being in force between us and Winchester. The present stampede seemed to establish the fact beyond a doubt. Indeed, I saw on the high ground near Middletown a body of men said to be the enemy’s forces. The Staff had been scattered on various duties, and I rode forward with the General alone. We met sutlers’ wagons, mounted teamsters, and buggers rushing frantically back toward Strasburg, while the regular army train stood still in the road, many of the teams deserted by their drivers. Rapidly summing up our position, I had manned myself for the crisis. I expected momentarily to hear the guns, and hoped that my fate would be what the French soldier calls “La belle morte,” sudden and out-right by ball or shell. There might be, perhaps, a chance of escape to the mountains westward. Surrender on any terms did not enter into my personal plans. Above all, I felt bitterly mortified at the total failure of my judgment, and filled with self-reproach at the thought that my obstinate and openly-expressed disbelief in the danger might have had some influence in delaying a movement upon which the safety of the army depended. The General’s countenance I perceived was grave, but resolute. As I rode beside him he observed, “It seems we were mistaken in our calculations.” Feeling this as a reproach for my persistent incredulity I only answered, “It seems so indeed.” There was nothing more to be said, and we rode on toward Middleston in silence. The troops which appeared at that point were our own infantry, and there we found the wagon-master raging like a lion among his cowardly subordinates, driving them back to their wagons with his heavy whip and oaths of the first magnitude.

We learned here that the stampede had been caused by a dash made upon our ambulance train by about thirty rebel cavalry. In addition to our own sick we had in charge about a thousand invalids of Shields’s Division, which stretched our train of ambulances to an inordinate length and scattered the guard in charge of it. This squad of cavalry had rushed in suddenly from a side road, killed one of the sick, and captured some others who were following afoot. They were easily driven off; and Colonel Kneipe of the Forty-sixth Pennsylvania, with his regimental staff and orderlies, charged them, capturing one of their number.

An examination of this prisoner developed the fact that the cavalry on our flank belonged to Ewell’s Division, although, as far as he knew, not more than three or four companies were hovering near our column, and the main body of the enemy still lay at Front Royal. Meanwhile our communications with Winchester remained uninterrupted, and every thing was reported quiet in the direction of Woodstock.

This was puzzling, and I began to recur to my former opinion. It seemed impossible that Jackson, with the force attributed to him, having opened the campaign with so vigorous and successful a blow, should permit our weak column, encumbered with so much coveted and needful spoil, to walk away intact and at its leisure. So we moved on, leaving Captain Abert, of the Topographical Engineers, and Captain Collins, with his Zouaves, to burn the Cedar Creek bridge after the rear-guard had passed.

At Newtown there was another demonstration made upon our line of march by a body of cavalry coming in from the right. We opened upon them with a section of artillery and easily drove them out of sight into the woods. At the same time there was a good deal of firing heard in the direction of Middleston. A short time after this had ceased information was received that our column had been attacked at Middleston by the enemy’s cavalry with artillery, and that a portion of the baggage-train (about fifty wagons) and the rear-guard had been cut off.

Several mounted messengers had meanwhile been dispatched to Winchester with orders for the troops there to march out and support our advance. As none of these had returned it was surmised they might have been captured on the way by the enemy’s scouting parties. Colonel Brodhead was therefore ordered to push forward with his regiment, to scour the road, and communicate with the town at all hazards. This was about four o’clock in the afternoon. The day, which opened cloudy, had become clear and pleasant. We were within eight miles of Winchester, and had thus far seen no enemy except a light force of cavalry, which only menaced but dared not attack. I was utterly spent with fatigue and lack of sleep, so I pushed forward to Winchester alone, and on arriving met Colonel Brodhead. The Tenth Maine Infantry and two or three companies of the Proovest guard, the only troops in the town, were under arms and prepared to support us in case of need. The Colonel said the Winchester folks had been cooking dinners and baking cakes all day to feast Jackson and his army, whom they confidently expected. We laughed heartily at their fatuity. I did not think the main force of the enemy had advanced beyond Front Royal. Their cavalry was annoying our flank and rear, hoping to ease us of some of our superfluous baggage, and to clean out a few of our sutlers and perambulating whisky-merchants, which I thought would be advantageous to both parties. For the rest, I had been on duty all the previous night. I must have sleep and repose at all hazards. So I took a bed at the Taylor House, requesting the Colonel to send an orderly for me in case any thing should occur.

May 25, Sunday.—Bright and pleasant. I
awoke this morning with the consciousness of having enjoyed the most profound and refreshing sleep. As the house and streets seemed perfectly quiet I stretched and dozed again, and at length concluded to get up, take breakfast, and report at head-quarters to see whether the enemy still continued to annoy us. It was seven by the hotel clock when I went out; I had slept thirteen solid hours. I noticed some confusion about the house, and that there seemed to be no servants. I demanded breakfast of the landlord, who said, apologetically, that his negroes had all left, but they were trying to get something in the kitchen for us. I then inquired if there was any thing going on. He said there had been some cannonading on the hill toward Holliday’s Mill, but that had ceased and he had heard of no particulars. Presently some breakfast was served, and I sat down with two or three of our surgeons, one or two quarter-master’s assistants, and some non-commissioned army followers. None of these seemed to have the slightest idea that any thing important was going on, so that I took my rolls and coffee in that leisurely manner, and with that placidity of mind so especially recommended by writers on dietetics. As I was buttering my second roll a soldier entered and said to one of the officers, in a quiet, pleasant way, “Captain, they’ve driven our men off the hill.” I finished my roll, paid my bill, and, taking my sabre from the office where I had deposited it, went out to the stable to order my mare, intending to ride out toward Kernstown to join the Staff, which I supposed would be in that direction.

I was surprised to find the stable deserted, tenantless, except by my mare, who whimmed as I entered. To my great disgust I found her all harnessed as I had left her the evening before, and from this concealed she had neither been fed nor rubbed. At this moment the hostler entered, and I commenced abusing him for neglecting my animal. He protested that he had fed her, and called my attention to her clean, sleek condition to prove she had not been otherwise neglected. Who, then, had saddled her and tied her to the stall ready for mounting?

“You are my servant, I think, Sir, a black boy named John.”

“And where is John?”

“Don’t know, Sir. Think he is run off with all the rest of the niggers—gone toward Martinsburg.”

I was entirely bewildered, and led my steed to the stable-door preparatory to mounting. Across the way I saw a negro man with two or three women in the greatest trepidation, hustling some trunks and bundles into a light wagon. At this moment an officer, with whom I was acquainted, dashed by at speed, shouting as he passed, “Mount, Captain, mount and ride for your life, you have not a moment to spare; they are in the town!” The rattle of musketry in close proximity clinched this recommendation. I mounted and trotted along the street behind the Taylor Hotel and down the cross street that leads to Main by the Farmer’s Bank. A few infantry stragglers were hurrying along the sidewalks, at whom and myself a dozen or more shots were fired from windows and from behind fences.

On entering the main street I saw our troops moving at a quick step, and in some confusion, toward the Martinsburg road. The sidewalks were filled with stragglers, but the regiments kept their organization very fairly. Seeing Colonel Ruger’s Third Minnesota Regiment coming up by Taylor’s, I halted until it passed and then joined the Colonel. There was a sharp cracking of pistol-shots on every side from the houses and inclosures. Within six or eight paces of the Colonel and myself I observed a group of soldiers gathered to drink from the canteen of one who had just filled. As one of these men stooped to drink I heard a shot which appeared to come from the gate behind him, and only a few feet distant. The soldier clapped his hand to his side and fell into the gutter, where he lay struggling in the agonies of death. A short distance back I saw another man fall on the sidewalk, wounded, into the arms of a comrade—those around pointing up at the windows opposite, indicating that the shot had come from that quarter. An assistant surgeon showed me a bleeding wound in his horse’s buttock from a pistol-shot fired from a house on one of the side streets. This murderous fusillade was evidently kept up by occupants of the town unconnected with the rebel army, the vanguard of which could be seen at the other end of the street, at least three-quarters of a mile distant. As we hurried to see the troops well up, I saw Colonel Gordon of the Second Massachusetts, and asked him why it was we were in retreat. He told me Jackson was on our heels, with between twenty and thirty thousand men—that our rear-guard at Middletown had been cut off, and was in all probability captured. He had been closely pressed from Newtown to Winchester, and on several occasions had been obliged to throw his brigade into squares to resist the persistent attacks of cavalry.

This morning about daylight our army, not over five thousand strong of all arms, had formed in order of battle, and with artillery and skirmishers held the enemy for about four hours. Jackson manoeuvred and felt his way with great circumspection, remembering, no doubt, how severely he had burned his fingers in this neighborhood two months ago. One or two feeble attacks were easily repulsed, and with some loss to the enemy. At length, having apparently satisfied himself of our weakness, he displayed a line of battle, overlapping ours for half a mile on either flank and advanced slowly. Gordon says he counted twenty-seven battle-flags, representing as many regiments. At this exhibition of force several of our regiments faced about and left the field without orders. A general order to retreat speedily followed, and here we are.
As we mounted the little ridge, the northern terminus of the main street, the scene was animated and exciting in the highest degree. For a mile ahead the open country toward Martinsburg was covered with our fugitive stragglers; horse and foot soldiers, refugees and camp followers, all "gitting" in the most approved style. Pouring out of every avenue from the town, marched our organized infantry in four short columns, with artillery in the intervals, and a column of cavalry covering either flank. Looking back upon the town, great clouds of flame and smoke were seen arising from the burning warehouses, which contained the military stores we could not move for want of transportation. Hurrying up the long street trooped a few of our stragglers and wounded, hoping to escape the advancing tide of the enemy's forces, which might be seen pouring in at the southern extremity of the town like a muddy torrent with the sunlight glittering on its turbid waves. This panorama was essentially a moving one I did not dwell upon its grandeur, but, after one comprehensive glance, started down the Martinsburg road.

In an incredibly short time thereafter, as it appeared to me, I heard the crackle of musketry and the singing of bullets about my ears, and, looking back, saw the crest we had just left crowned by the enemy's infantry, who were hurrying up our rear-guard by a sharp fire. Presently a battery opened from the same point, and then for the first time I began to feel alarmed. At every shell that screamed and burst over their heads I could see our columns shake with a convulsive start, as of a single body. Their pace quickened, the number of stragglers increased, while knapsacks, overcoats, blankets, and even arms, were seen strung along the route. For several minutes it looked like the commencement of another Bull Run panic. But the rising terror was checked by a few sharp and animated words from the officers, and the troops again resumed their steady march. In the current of bums that rushed by me at this time I remarked a fellow mounted on a horse hastily cut from some vehicle, with the harness still hanging upon him. A cannon-shot had plowed a furrow along the animal's rump so deep that a stout man might have covered his arm in the wound. He was making good speed notwithstanding; and, to my surprise, I saw the same horse in Martinsburg in the afternoon, doing as well as the rest, his wound nicely dressed with a coating of dust. Several miles out I overtook General Crawford, who, with drawn sword, was endeavoring to arrest the tide of stragglers. I joined him with a will, and a few moments after General Banks and Staff rode up. The General congratulated me on my safety, having given me up for lost. With the assistance of the Staff and escort he succeeded in rallying a troop of loose cavalry and several hundred infantry of various organizations, many of whom had thrown away their arms. A battery was also put in position, which fired a few shots, sensibly checking the enemy's pursuit. At the same time the sound of the guns came near putting our newly-rallied battalion to flight again.

In the vicinity of Stephenson's Depôt we saw a body of cavalry approaching at full gallop from the direction of Charlestown. It was doubted for a moment lest the enemy was making an attempt upon our flank, but the loud cheers which hailed their arrival proved they were friends. Although these two companies made but a small addition to our numerical strength, their timely presence served to encourage the troops; and the long-continued and hearty cheering which followed their arrival had the effect, no doubt, of rendering the enemy's pursuit more cautious. Indeed, from this point all serious pursuit seemed to have ceased. Some cavalry, with a battery, hovered on our rear from Bunker's Hill; but, firing a few shots occasionally at long range, which served to drive up the stragglers, but scarcely hastened the march of the column. As we progressed this column was increased and encumbered by refugees from the surrounding country, who streamed in from every hamlet and cross-road, on foot, on horseback, and in every sort of vehicle known to the land. Among these were many respectable white citizens with their families, and such baggage as they could hastily collect. But the negroes were especially affluent. They had been told that, in revenge for their friendliness to the Yankee invaders, Jackson would kill them all when he came again. Whether they really believed this story in their cooler moments I doubt, but they had worked themselves into a general and irresistible panic. From the gray-haired sire to the apish pickaninnys at the breast they thronged our line of March, blocking the road with their carts and loads of plunder. Whether on foot, on horseback, or on wheels, each negro had a "grab" of personal baggage, variously bestowed in a meal-bag, a pillow-case, or an old pair of breeches tied at the legs. Bundles they had from the capacity of a red cotton handkerchief to the voluminous circumference of a bed-cover. I remarked a girl carrying a fat baby in her arms, with another toddling after holding to her skirt, a plain sun-bonnet on her head, and a straw-hat ornate with flowers and ribbons firmly gripped in her teeth. At every boom of the cannon this ebony column would leap as if struck by lightning. Down would go bundles, pillow-cases, bonnets, and babies, the proprietors starting at a full run, which continued until they were exhausted. Infants were not unfrequently abandoned by the way-side, where they lay squalling, until some soft-hearted soldier would gather up the little foundling and deposit it at the next house he passed. An uncommonly obese negro and a stout mulatto girl (her daughter, perhaps) were struggling and puffing along loaded with children in all the stages of infantile helplessness. There was some cannonading going on just as we passed.
them, and they seemed about to drop from exhaustion, and at the same time half frantic with terror; tears were rolling down their fat, dust-covered cheeks, leaving little channels of mud in their course. The whites of their eyes and their chattering teeth seemed actually to have grown whiter from fright.

"O Lord, masters, save us! Please don't leave us behind! They gwine to kill us—they gwine to kill us!" The very simplicity of the prayer was touching. The General ordered an artillery officer to give them seats on a caisson.

For the rest, while the troops regarded them with no especial favor, they gave them no wanton abuse that I observed. But the exigencies of a moving army are remorseless. At every rough point in the road we found the vehicles of these poor fugitives thrust aside, broken, and overturned, their goods scattered, and the family weeping in despair, or abandoning all and joining the trailing column of pedestrians. At Bunker's Hill I saw a cart laden with a negro family thrust off the causeway at the mill-dam to make way for a battery. They had got into water so deep that it ran into the body of the cart, and the man was wading up to his breast trying to lead his frightened horse to land. The dame sat upon the apex of their plunder, with an innumerable family of younglings hanging to her, reminding one of a female opossum with her litter hanging to her tail. I left without witnessing the dénouement of this scene, and must confess that among graver duties and anxieties I spent a thought or two as to the fate of the poor frightened creatures. That the humane reader may be relieved I will anticipate. As I was nearing Williamsport that night I passed a cart-load of negroes who were singing, merrily, "Jordan is a hard road to travel." Drawing near I recognized my quondam acquaintances of the mill-dam, and learned, to my satisfaction, that, "as near as they could count," none had been drowned or lost by the way.

At Martinsburg we found our baggage and supply train arrived and parked for rest and refreshment. Everything else was in a hubbub:

"While thronged the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispering with white lips, The foe! they come!
They come!"

There was a small Provost guard here, but neither soldiers nor civilians could give us any reliable information about any thing. The telegraph and railroad, as far as known, were both intact, but the operator had run off, carrying
his machinery, and all the rolling stock of the road had been withdrawn toward Harper's Ferry. It was but half past one in the afternoon when we arrived, and the General had expressed his intention of halting here until further developments. Captain Scheffer and myself were sent forward to select a position, and agreed upon the high ground to the north of the town.

Meanwhile the enemy's artillery was again heard in the opposite direction; but it created no uneasiness, as we had by this time ascertained we were followed only by a portion of his cavalry, which we did not consider dangerous. We were, however, mortified and alarmed at the non-appearance of a brigade of infantry commanded by Colonel Donnelly. This officer, it seems, without orders or the knowledge of the commander, had, at Bunker's Hill, left the turnpike upon which the army was moving, and led his brigade by a somewhat obscure parallel road, running several miles to the right.

As this route was but little, if any, longer than the main highway, Donnelly should have arrived in town as soon as we, whose march was impeded by carts and wagons of the flying population. We had been in town an hour, and still heard nothing from him. The Michigan Cavalry Regiment had been sent out on the back road to meet him, but after proceeding several miles met the enemy's cavalry advancing. The regiment returned about four o'clock, not having been able to obtain any information of the missing brigade.

Thus weakened, and without any reliable information in regard to the condition of things at Harper's Ferry, the General concluded to send his trains to Williamsport, and establish a position behind the Potomac, where he might the more securely rest, reft, and collect his stragglers. While our remaining infantry were pretty well knocked up and thinned out by the fatigue and straggling incident to a long retrograde march, we still had several regiments able to show a fighting front; our sixteen guns were all safe, and the cavalry full as strong and in as good condition as that of the enemy. All the men and material which might be classed among the impediments being now en route for Williamsport, we took position north of the town, determined to wait for Donnelly to the last moment. During our sojourn of five hours the loyal ladies of Martinsburg were incessant in their hospitable attentions, distributing coffee, tea, and more substantial refreshments to all who needed them. Of the male citizens a number had already taken service in our army, and many others joined our train of refugees.

Passing out toward the Williamsport road the General halted in front of a large stone warehouse used as a commissary dépôt and filled with valuable stores.

He was about to have the building and its contents destroyed, as usual, to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy. But it being represented to him that the house belonged to a loyal citizen he determined to spare it, and throwing open the doors, told the inhabitants to help themselves—an order which was obeyed without much hesitation or reluctance. As we moved slowly along the turnpike a messenger overtook us with the gratifying information that Colonel Donnelly, with his command intact, was at Opequon Bridge, two miles and a half to our right. He had lost his way, and wandered several miles out of the direct route.

I happened to be acquainted with a by-road which led to his position, and a squadron of cavalry was immediately dispatched to open communication and bring him back to the highway.

Leaving the General and Staff awaiting the arrival of the strayed brigade, I rode forward with orders to Colonel Gordon to halt and take position at Falling Waters until the other troops came up. I overtook him near Hainesville, the scene of Jackson's skirmish with Patterson's advance last summer. Gordon, who had been with Patterson in that campaign, recognized the ground, although now seen by starlight. He said any attempt to execute the order received would be futile. His brigade, which had kept its organization fairly during the day as long as there was any danger to be apprehended from an enemy, had, since it left Martinsburg, and with the approach of darkness, dissolved into a current of straggling individualities, moving in the same direction, and actuated by the common idea of reaching the terminus of their thirty-six miles' march.

I had begun to suffer seriously from exhaustion, when I proposed to Doctor King (the medical director), with whom I was riding, that we should halt at a way-side cottage and discuss the contents of my saddle-pockets, which had been filled by my kind friends in Martinsburg. A bottle of wine and some sandwiches were developed and disposed of, and we took the road again, refreshed and invigorated. Passing rapidly over the remaining distance we at length emerged from the wood overlooking the Potomac River at Williamsport. Here was a scene of animated and picturesque confusion. On the open slopes and along the margin of the river blazed a hundred camp-fires, illuminating a chaos of vehicles, animals, and human beings all jumbled in apparently inextricable entanglement. Here soldiers of all arms and organizations mixed with civilians, refugees, and negroes, of all ages and varieties. The ponderous army trains and batteries blocked up the highway in double and treble lines, while the lighter carts, wagons, buggies, and coaches were scattered far and wide where they could find a level or sheltered position.

Threading our way carefully through this multitude, at each moment I heard my name called with a cheery salute, for I was here among my own people—Virginians all—the loyal and the true; for, if the eastern and southern portions of the State had tamely submitted to being kicked into rebellion by the overbearing myr-
midons of the cotton oligarchy, Berkeley, my native county, had never bowed the knee to Baal. The stubborn and defiant spirit of her people had never quailed before either the political or military executors of treason. These, enraged at the persistent defiance of their cause, revenged themselves by a sobriquet representing in their vocabulary the concentrated essence of all opprobrium. They called Martinsburg "Little Massachusetts." Instead of feeling insulted, the citizens had sense enough to accept this compliment to their spirit, their patriotism, and their civilization. Martinsburg was at this time represented in the United States Navy by Commodore Charles Boardman, Commander N. B. Harrison, Surgeon F. M'Erry, and Midshipman Harry Pendleton, and had also furnished quite a number of officers, men, and officers of the army. Better than all, the elite of her society and lovely women wore the Union colors.

The closing scene of our occupation of Martinsburg to-day must not be forgotten. Late in the afternoon, when the last of our cavalry had left the town, it was perceived that the National flag which belonged to the citizens still floated from the tall flag-staff in the public square. The army was gone, and the men had followed the army, so the flag was left alone to hold the town against the enemy, who were waiting outside, and dared not enter until assured it was evacuated. Presently a mournful procession of women and children appeared moving toward the square, with bowed heads, wringing of hands, and tears.

Loosing the halyards they lowered the emblem of their hopes and pride, folding it with a solemn tenderness as though it were a shroud enwrapping the body of a dead friend. A boy on horseback receives the sacred charge from trembling hands, while eager voices bid him speed to save the flag from insult. Even at the moment, the rising dust-clouds give notice of the foe's advance. The bold urchin hugs the bunting with a nervous clasp, and digs his bare heels into his horse's ribs. They follow him with their hearts and eyes until he clears the limits of the town and disappears in the direction of Williamsport. The messenger reached the retreating army in safety.

On nearing the river bank I found our Chief Quarter-master, Captain Holabird, and his assistants, laboring with intelligent energy to effect the transportation of this motley mass of men and material to the Maryland shore. The river is here about four hundred yards wide, and fordable in ordinary stages of water. Tonight its current was swollen and rapid, quite beyond the usual fording point, although some of our dragoons who rode tall and strong horses had crossed over safely. Mr. Thayer Abert, of the Topographical Engineers, had with great skill and energy succeeded in stretching a cable from shore to shore, and rigging a flying ferry, which was now in full success, crossing the sick and wounded.

It worked admirably, but its capacities were necessarily so limited, in view of the vast accumulation on the Virginia shore, that we turned away hopelessly.

At the entrance of the fording there were several baggage wagons swamped, the water pouring over the tops of their wheels, while the teamsters and guards were cutting the harness and endeavoring to extricate the struggling and braying mules. This was not encouraging. Neither, as I circulated among the wagons and camp-fires on the bank, were any comfortable ideas suggested by the prospect of a damp and chilly bivouac. Here were thousands of men, women, and children, white and black, wandering like dreary souls on the shores of Styx, seeking a resting-place and finding none. Fortunately there was no panic among this crowd, and folks, seeing the impossibility of crossing, generally resigned themselves to necessity, providing such food and lodging for their families as could be had, or making up their minds to forego both until the dawn of a happier day. However, the situation was not accepted by all with equal patience and equanimity. There were growlings and complainings and cursings: loud and deep, murmurings and bewailings in shriller tones, but always from grown people. Here, as elsewhere, it seemed that true wisdom had been revealed unto babes rather than the "wise and prudent." These little bald-headed
sages, with one consent, had gone to sleep suck- 
ing their thumbs.

The experience of a life that has known many vicissitudes can suggest nothing better under the circumstances, and I would fain follow their example. Yet, alas! where is the tender and faithful mother upon whose breast we of the bronzed cheeks and grizzled beards may lay our heads, even for a little while, to forget our weariness and responsibilities?

These enfeebling and unsoldierly reflections were suddenly rebuked by a voice that recalled the war in all its grimness. A tall, broad- 
chested, hirsute, leather-lunged fellow rode up to a party huddled round a neighboring fire, and, with a preface of roaring blasphemies, thus addressed them: “Git up here, I say, ye d—d ignominious lazy hounds! Them mew-ils be a drouncling, and you a settin' here a-suckin' of yer thumbs!”

This discourse clearly indicated the wide difference between the duties of an old soldier and the proprieties of a juvenile civilian. So, shaking myself and stretching my stiffening limbs, I again approached the river bank. Seeing Colonel Gordon, with a group of officers around him, I proposed we should try the hazard of the river, and being well acquainted with the ford, offered to lead the way.

The proposal was favorably received; but I did not see fit, like Cassius, “to plunge in accounted as I was.” Distrusting the deep and powerful current, and the light weight of my mare, I prepared for all emergencies by unbuckling my sabre and revolver and hanging them to my saddle-bow. My heavy cavalry boots were also vacated and tied on behind. I was now light enough to try a buffet with the river on my own hook in case my monture was swept away. Calling on my friends to follow, I started down the bank, and was presently churning in an eddy among tangled waggons, harness, and dead mules. Reaching forward, my mare cleared these impediments by plunging into water which swept over her back and brought her to a swim for a short distance. At length she gained a footing, but so rocky and deep that at every step she wavered and stumbled, once going under until the water reached my arm-pits. Floundering along in this way I at length got to the middle of the river, when I perceived a dragoon, on a tall, strong horse, following me. I waited until he came abreast, and made the rest of the distance riding under the lee of his stout animal, which broke the force of the current. It was with feelings of great satisfaction that I heard the clatter of my mare’s hoofs in the shallow water on the Maryland side. There was a large beacon fire burning here to direct those who crossed by the ford. Looking back

I perceived my friends had not followed, so I rode directly to the hotel. The first man I met was Colonel Clarke, of the Staff, just from Washington. He told me that orders had been sent to M'Dowell and Fremont which would throw at once forty thousand men on Jackson’s rear. That was a soporific, and now “blessed be the man that invented sleep.”

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IF I WERE RICH.

If I were rich, like some folks I know,  
Who think themselves wondrously grand,  
First of all I would purchase a costly ring  
For my darling’s snow-white hand;  
A circle of gold for her fair young head,  
With jewels to twine in her hair,  
And a necklace of pearls for this queen of girls  
Round her swan-like throat to wear.

I would build her a bower in some sunny nook,  
Where no trace of gloom should come;  
There the birds would warble their sweetest lays,  
And the honey-bee would hum;  
The nightingale’s song would lull her to sleep  
In the night which is sacred to love,  
And at dawn of day her soul would awake  
With the voice of the wooing dove.

All round and over the fragrant porch  
Should the honey-suckle bloom,  
And about the casement the clambering rose  
Would scatter its sweet perfume;  
There she should dwell, this queen of girls,  
With a jewel in each little ear,  
And if wealth could save her across her face  
Never shadow of grief should appear.

If I were rich I would buy great ships,  
And send them over the sea,  
And close by the shore I would watch and wait  
Till my ships came home to me:  
Breadths of satin and shining silks,  
With plumes from the ostrich’s wing,  
And cloth of India, woven fine,  
My home-bound ships would bring.

If I were rich, then these attic walls  
Would blossom with tapestry gay;  
And the lingering hours, that so weary seem,  
Would speed on swift wings away.  
But alas for me, how often I fear,  
In these cold methodic times,  
That little of profit and little of praise  
Will come from my idle rhymes!