
J. E. B. STUART

VI. The Wilderness—and Yellow Tavern

BY CAPTAIN JOHN W. THOMASON, JR.

(The last instalment of the biography of the beau sabreur of the South. As we go to press Captain Thomason is on the high seas on his way to duty on the Asiatic Station. Following the battle of Chancellorsville, where Stuart commanded the Second Corps after the wounding of Stonewall Jackson, as told in the chapters in the September SCRIBNER'S, came the battle of Fleetwood Heights, a fierce cavalry struggle foreshadowing the emerging superiority of the Northern horse. During the next two weeks, Lee moved his army across into Maryland, then into Pennsylvania. Hooker, conforming, moved into Maryland. On July 25 Stuart with less than half the cavalry of the army, was detached by Lee's order and rode around Hooker, crossing the Potomac just above Washington and moving on York, Pa., where he was to rendezvous with Ewell's corps. He drew two of the three Yankee cavalry divisions after him. Meantime, Hooker was replaced by Meade, and on July 1 Meade and Lee drifted into battle near Gettysburg. Stuart rejoined at noon on July 2, and fought an inconclusive cavalry action with Pleasanton on July 3. On July 4 Lee retired from Gettysburg, and Stuart covered the retreat of the Confederates into Virginia. The Bristoe campaign in the autumn of '63 accomplished nothing. The spectacular Dahlgren raid in February of '64 was equally futile. In the spring opened the Wilderness Campaign, with Grant in command of the Northern army. When the Federal cavalry next took the field, it, too, had a new commander, Major-General Philip Sheridan, whose star rises as Stuart's sets.—The Editors)

THE winter of 1863-1864 set in. Cavalry Headquarters were east of Hanover Court House, at a camp called The Wigwam—Stuart's choice of names was always outside the ordinary. You may have noticed some of them—Camp Qui Vive—Camp Pelham—Camp Chickamauga—Camp No Camp. The official records, between the middle of November, when Meade went away from Mine Run to seek his own winter lodgings, and the first part of May, offer little in the way of incident, except the Dahlgren Raid. It may be noted that, from now on, it is the Yankees who are raiding; Grant is going to follow Lee too hard, and hold him too close, from the Rapidan to the Petersburg lines, for many detachments, and he sends Stuart away no more.

Still, there are the newspapers, and the letters, and the contemporary memoirs, from which something of the scene may be reconstructed.

Except for the lack of food and clothes, winter was not such a bad season, the army thought. Infantry and artillery were snug enough, and even cavalry enjoyed the luxury of permanent bases, and the volume, if not the ardor, of their toils diminished. And the Confederate soldier was learning to do without food and clothes, to an astonishing degree. He kept well and, on the whole, cheerful with very little, and some Federal officers who saw rebel prisoners taken in small operations during the winter—notably Colonel Lyman of Meade's staff—say that they were the hairiest, most weather-beaten, and mus-

cular set of fellows imaginable—like wolves of the forest, Colonel Lyman decides.

Jeb Stuart's letters run from grave to gay. Flora Stuart is expecting a baby, and the General writes his lady all manner of loving, anxious things, about her health, and her dress—she is not, on any account, to wear black, he insists, no matter who dies—and about her spirits, which she must maintain high and cheerful. Regarding this last he scolds her, gently: "There is an old lady here, Mrs. —, who danced a jig with my great uncle (Sam Pannill), at my mother's wedding. She wears a turban and is an elegant old lady. Major Venable remarked the other day that she is never so happy as when she is miserable. It reminds me of my darling, when she will insist on looking on the dark side in preference to the bright. . . . Have you heard the words of *When This Cruel War is Over*? Captain Blackford has written *The Cavalier Glee*. . . ."

There was singing, around Cavalry Headquarters, but not so much of it, you fear. Sweeney is dead of pneumonia in the winter-time. Fitz Lee has a minstrel troupe, jolly black faces, who travel through the army area and put on shows, and the revivalists are among the troops again. Another letter to Flora gives a hint as to cavalry activities: "Venable is getting a great name as a staff officer. He obeys my injunction: 'Cry aloud, spare not, show my people their transgressions. . . .' I think I will make Cooke [John Esten Cooke, novelist, and Ordnance officer of the Cavalry Corps] write my reports when he comes back, I am so behind on them. I have brigade reviews every day. . . . Saw Ewell's whole corps under arms the other day . . . every General and Colonel in the infantry appears to have his wife along. . . . When will you be on my Maryland

again? . . ." This Maryland was a fine horse, a gift to the General, and about the only mount he had that was gentle enough for his wife to ride when she visited him. This winter Maryland takes the glanders, and has to be sent away. Virginia dies with distemper. Cavalry loses a great many animals, and the officers are, as usual, frantic over the remount question. No hope of horses from Texas now: the Yankees patrol the Mississippi.

The reports are on the General's mind until along in February, 1864. He says he hates to write reports, but the testimony of his adjutant, McClellan, is that he wrote his own in every instance—and they all sound like him. I have a scrap of paper that was among his effects. It is dated 28 January, 1864, and on it he started some official writing or other, then lost interest, and inked out what he had set down. He drew some elegant capitals, shaded and illuminated with delicate pen-strokes, and drew a rudimentary little house. Then, after several false starts, and with much interlineation and erasure—you imagine his great beard brushing the paper as he bent to it—he got this verse out of himself:

"While Mars with his stentorian voice
Chimes in with dire discordant noise,
Sweet woman in angelic guise
Gives hope and bids us fear despise.

The Maid of Saragossa still
Breathes in our cause her dauntless will
Beyond Potomac's rockbound shore
Her touch bids southern cannon roar. . . ."

After which, refreshed and relieved, you imagine him returning to the Gettysburg report. Colonel Marshal, of Lee's staff, says he was very late with that report, and had to be asked for it repeatedly, from which Colonel Marshal concludes that he felt guilty about it. But the report shows no such feeling: It is straightforward: "In obedience to such

and such orders, I did so and so—" No excuses, no complaints, nothing controversial. The file of reports for the actions of the Army of Northern Virginia contains some very lively writing, and very few of the generals failed to state, in their accounts of each action, how the writer—had his advice been followed—had General — on his flank, met his responsibilities, had this happened, or that—would have won the war. You find nothing of this in Stuart's papers. Once in a great while, to his wife, or to his brother, he expresses himself, but in the army I am sure that he was an influence for harmony.

Toward the end of the winter the baby came, and they named her Virginia Pelham Stuart, a war-name, gallant as a cavalry sabre. Perhaps the General saw her three times or so, before the opening of the Wilderness Campaign. Flora Stuart could not come up to Orange, and the General could take little leave of absence from the front.

There is one record of such a leave, however, spent, in January, in Richmond. His brother, William Alexander, came on from Saltville, where he administered the salt-works of the army, to see Jeb Stuart, and brought along his son Henry, eleven years old. Across a long lifetime, more crowded with event than the lives of most men, the gentleman who was that boy, Henry, remembers Uncle James, seen for the last time in the Confederate capital—Uncle James, standing among other generals in the parlor of the Ballard House, taller and more magnificent, to Henry's opinion, than any man on earth. Next day he and his father, walking, met Uncle James on the street, and William Alexander, who was a man of affairs, began to talk of important matters, while Hen-

ry admired the sword of Uncle James and the fringed ends of his silken sash. And Uncle James said, "No, before we go into that there is something I must attend to first." And he addresses young Henry with the gravest politeness and concern; begged, and solemnly considered, his ideas on refreshment at that time of the day, and conducted him forthwith to Pizzinni's Palace of Sweets, a very elegant establishment of old Richmond. In Pizzinni's he ordered for young Henry everything that a boy's heart could wish, or his stomach yearn for. And when young Henry couldn't eat any more, he filled his pockets and loaded his arms. And he remembers, does young Henry, that Uncle James was the first man in his life who talked to him as an equal, as a man among men himself. And went home on the cars next day, sobbing from a broken heart, because he couldn't get across a horse and ride with Uncle James to fight the Yankees.

When spring approached, Jeb Stuart had, through careful husbandry and extraordinary exertions, 8,000 sabres in the divisions of Hampton and Fitz Lee. Among them were boys of fourteen and sixteen, whose mothers write him letters—which he scrupulously answers, in his own handwriting.

Here is one of those letters, that hangs, framed, in a room in Georgia, never having been out of the possession of the family which received it. The young cavalryman in question had entered the service at the age of fourteen, and being adjudged a little youthful for the rigors of the ranks, was serving as courier at Cavalry Headquarters, and his mother wanted the General, please, to keep an eye on him, which is the fashion of mothers.

"Hd Qts Cav Corps A. N. Va.

"Feb'y 25th, 1864.

"My Dear Madam,

"You need have no apprehensions about your son Jacquelin, who is still with Major Fitzhugh, and has won golden opinions from all who know him.

"If it should be in my power to assist him, be assured that it will be cheerfully done.

I have the honor to be

very Respectfully

yours

J E B Stuart."

Besides these, there were a few old men, and a saving backbone of the veterans, the unkillables, hardened and war-wise. Eight thousand sabres, and the Horse Artillery. The Confederacy is running down.

You remember the Wilderness, rolling like a sea from the forks of the Rapahannock down, southeasterly, to Spottsylvania. This spring of '64, the dogwood flowers in it, and the violets bloom, and the wild life follows its obscure affairs, as it did last year, when Stonewall Jackson was marching, and all the other years. Spring is always spring, and the heart lifts at the end of winter, but this year, over the green leaves and the new grass, there played a menace, like a chilly wind. Last year, the Confederacy was attacking, carrying the war to the enemy. This year—Stonewall Jackson's grave is turning green in Lexington, so many graves are green, and the gray ranks are growing thin, and the army that looked always to attack must stand now and fight for its existence. From the west comes only bad news, and from the coasts, where the blockade strangles, one by one, the seaports, comes only disaster. No hope, now, of a military decision—perhaps, if we can kill enough of them, they will falter and negotiate . . . but

we have killed so many, and they keep coming on. . . .

Jeb Stuart, watching the Rapidan, his gray pickets at every ford, is hopeful; writes his brother that he thinks the chances of the Confederacy are as good as they ever were, if we learn from our mistakes and make the most of our resources—but he was always hopeful. Some 60,000 zealots in the ranks, the gray army of Lee, are hopeful; but they are infatuated people, possessed of a dream, and there are no more where they came from, and there will be no more like them when they are gone. And as for General Lee, if he is not hopeful, he keeps it to himself, and shows the same calm front that he invariably presents to victory and to calamity. It is May again, and they stand up to meet the war.

Over yonder, across the Rapidan, around Culpeper, where Stuart's cavalry horses grazed fat last year before they went to Gettysburg, is the Army of the Potomac, under a new man, Grant. He has come out of the West, with the habit of winning, and he has studied the matter with his pale cold eyes and his simple, clear-thinking brain behind them. . . . Here are a lot of people who have been fighting back and forth for three years. They are still fighting, but they must be mighty tired, and their stuff is wearing out. We've been fighting, too, and had no luck at this end, but there are more of us than there are of them, and we can outlast them, that way. Now, the thing we've got to do, to whip them, is to go where they are, and fight, and keep on fighting until we've used them up. No use talking about Richmond—about anything else at all—there's Lee's army, yonder. Break it down, and then you'll have it all in your hand—Richmond and the whole con-

cern. . . . He saw the war, and I think he saw it as simply as that—from the Red River to the Atlantic, from the Potomac to the Gulf. Already he has sheared away much of the Confederacy, opened the Mississippi, cleared the border States in the West. He plans for the whole war—not for any battle, or any one campaign. He has Sherman in his right hand and Meade in his left. Then there are little generals: Thomas, Sigel, Butler. And the blockade. Himself, he is Lieutenant-General and Commander-in-Chief, and he elects to go with Meade's army, in Virginia.

North of the Rapidan, he has a hundred thousand men, the Army of the Potomac, restored and vastly cheered since Gettysburg. He has a fine cavalry corps, nearly 13,000, under another new man—Sheridan; and the cavalry are armed with Spencer carbines, breech-loading repeaters. He is going to cross the Rapidan, pass through the Wilderness, and bring Lee to battle on the other side. He rather expects that he will have to fight Lee for the river crossings, but the important battle will be in the open, on the way to Richmond, when Lee tries to interpose.

The gray army, 60,000, has not yet concentrated; bad supply, and the worn-out country had forced Lee to wide dispersion through the winter. Longstreet has come back from his adventures in Tennessee—from Chickamauga and Knoxville; and two of his divisions are down at Gordonsville, and the third, Pickett's, at Petersburg. Ewell's Corps is on the Rapidan, above Mine Run, and A. P. Hill's is farther west, toward Orange Court House. Lee's Headquarters are at Orange, and so are the Headquarters of the Cavalry Corps. All of them have come through a lean winter, but they are good soldiers, and they have seen much war, and they will fight. On

2 May, it is related, Lee went with his corps commanders to the top of Clarke's Mountain, and they swept with their glasses the rolling land toward Culpeper and the camps of Grant. Lee thinks that Grant will cross at Ely's Ford—signs are plenty, that he will move soon—and he is not going to oppose the crossing. But—when he gets into the Wilderness—where the thickets mask his artillery, and entangle his heavy corps of infantry, then we will hit him! Longstreet; old Ewell with his crutch; slim, red-bearded A. P. Hill; Jeb Stuart with his cavalry swagger—they stand, and look at the country spread out like a map beneath them. Perhaps they think of Stonewall Jackson, who was with them the last time they gathered here, before Second Manassas. And they do not know yet, but the signs are that Grant, yonder, is not like John Pope. . . .

Facing east, and a little north from Clarke's Mountain, you see two roads, that run straight from Orange Court House to Fredericksburg. The first is the Orange Turnpike. A little south, and parallel, is the other, the Orange Plank Road: you remember them from Chancellorsville, which stands just west of where the highways meet. This side of Chancellorsville is spread the mat of the Wilderness, reticent and wide, but you know that down through it, on the diagonal, from Germanna and from Ely's Ford, pass the Germanna Plank Road and the Brock Road, intersecting the Turnpike and the Orange Plank, and leading toward Spottsylvania. Lee, you conceive, points, and talks quietly.

The 2d of May passes, and the 3d: much activity over yonder in their camps, Stuart reports. After midnight, in the morning hours of the 4th, the cavalry pickets on the fords send gallopers: the Yankees are crossing, in force. . . .

Cavalry is brushed aside, and comes suddenly away, fighting from every thicket, hovering dangerously, and dashing in to sting—record the Federal officers—like hornets. Lee has the reports, and sends orders to his corps: come on at once. Longstreet, the farthest off, is alerted before noon, and is marching by 4 P. M. with forty-two miles to go. Hill, who is twenty-eight miles away, marches earlier, by the Plank Road. Ewell, who is the nearest, has to cover eighteen miles, by the Turnpike. Longstreet will come in behind Hill. The march is timed so that Hill and Ewell will go along abreast. You wonder why Lee did not, in the day of grace he had—the 3d of May—move his corps closer to each other. The 4th was a dangerous day for Grant, with his troops in column, and his extended trains, but he moved with energy and good engineering sense, and that night he was all across the Rapidan, and his advance had made twelve miles, to Wilderness Tavern. Five miles west of his bivouacs was Ewell, and thirteen miles southwest, Hill. Across his front was the screen of gray cavalry, which gave ground to the plunging Sheridan, but did not break. And all about him was the Wilderness.

Into the Wilderness, at dawn on the 5th, went Grant, and Ewell struck his flank where the Turnpike intersected the Brock Road. A little later in the morning, where the Plank Road passed across his front, at Parker's Store, on the Germanna Road, Stuart's troopers drew off, and the blue cavalry of the advance ran into A. P. Hill's Corps, Jeb Stuart himself guiding the head of the column. Grant had not expected to be attacked in the Wilderness, but he knew that Longstreet was away, and that he had only to contend with Ewell and Hill, and he turned resolutely to destroy them before Longstreet could come on the

field. Hancock, Warren, and Sedgwick, 72,000, formed line of battle to their right, and drove; Ewell and Hill, 40,000, put in all their strength, and the fight flamed for five miles through the Wilderness, on the left and the right of the roads that go to Fredericksburg.

If you had been on the ground that May morning, behind the centre of either army, you would have known little, save that a very great combat was raging. It was an infantry battle; hardly anywhere was there enough cleared space for the employment of the guns. You would have heard a crackling hell of musketry, rising and falling, running off for miles on either hand. Now you would catch the ordered, deep-chested shouting of the Federal soldiers; now the high, ardent yelling of the gray people. The Wilderness labored, and yielded up a shrieking tumult, and a long, low smoke of powder, and presently the dark, rolling smokes of burning timber. So the 5th passed, and Ewell did better than hold his own, but A. P. Hill, on the right, against whom Grant directed most of Meade's strength, held on, but hardly. The 6th dawned, and Hill was driven—and, at the last instant, with Hancock pressing through, exultant and shouting, Longstreet ground down upon his flank, and restored the battle, attacking violently, by the Brock Road and the unfinished railroad. Hancock was rolled up and driven in his turn. For a little while, there among the flaming thickets, it looked like disaster for another blue General, and Lee was very close to overwhelming victory. But Longstreet was shot by his own men as he rode ahead of them—much as Stonewall Jackson had been shot, last year, just a few miles from this place—and the opportunity passed. During the 7th the battle subsided, with little sputtering flames and a drift of smoke, as a fire

burns out. Grant was definitely checked. He had lost 18,000 men. Lee had held him, and gained local success, at the cost of 7,700 casualties—more than he could afford.

The night of the 7th, Jeb Stuart sent his wife a telegram, the last she is to receive from him out of battle:

"I am safe and well tonight—Saturday. We have beaten the enemy badly but he is not yet in full retreat." . . . This enemy is not going to retreat.

When the Wilderness battle joined, Jeb Stuart drew his cavalry to the Confederate right, and on the first day had hard fighting with Sheridan in the woods, dismounted action, in places where a squadron could not form. Rosser whipped Wilson, over at Todd's Tavern, and so alarmed the flank division of blue infantry—Barlow's, of Hancock—that Barlow drew in his left and stood inactive through the 6th, while Meade, fearing another Chancellorsville-thrust, vetoed Sheridan's plan for a massed cavalry drive around the Confederate right, and held out the blue squadrons to meet a possible emergency in his rear.

Late in the evening of the 7th, the miles of infantry fallen strangely quiet, Stuart lanced through, past the Federal left, and had a glimpse of Yankee wagon-trains moving east. The word went quickly back to Lee, who thought, and deduced: Grant is trying to turn my right: the next place is Spottsylvania. He sends Stuart with Fitz Lee's Division to stand across the way and slow those people down, and he draws off his battered infantry, and his lean columns go southeast through the Wilderness. Fitz Lee rides by forest roads on the direct line to Spottsylvania Court House: Sheridan, leading the blue advance, goes by the Brock Road, each stretching out an arm to feel the other as

they go. The Confederates have the shorter route. At daylight, on the 8th, Torbert of Sheridan's arrived, and finds Fitz Lee in position, and cavalry engages around the Court House, and Fitz Lee holds his ground, taking some loss, until R. H. Anderson, with Longstreet's infantry, comes up. Just a little later, Warren arrives to help Torbert, but the gray people are settled firmly, and the battle of Spottsylvania Court House builds up around them. Stuart takes position on Anderson's right, and finds space to put his Horse Artillery in the action. The country here is thick, but not so thick as the Wilderness back to the west. They relate that, this day, Stuart sat his horse for hours, at the edge of a clearing where his dismounted troopers joined Anderson's infantry. He was conspicuous, and the infantry officers beg him to come down: they don't want to see him killed, and besides, he is drawing fire. . . . Only one of his staff is with him, Major McClellan, and he has many messages for McClellan to take to Anderson, some of which, McClellan thinks, are idle and unnecessary, and he is wearing down his horse. All the General is doing, he decides, is sending him out of danger. Finally he says—returning to the place where Stuart sits, his eyes on the blue line firing yonder, and the pine twigs drifting down around him, and the bullets whining by—"General, my horse is weary, and you are exposing yourself, and you are alone. Let me stay here with you." Jeb Stuart smiles at him, and gives him another order to carry back.

Meantime, at Meade's Headquarters, General Philip Sheridan is angry and shouting. His cavalry has been dispersed on idle missions. His combinations have been broken up by the doddering schemes of Meade. He has not been al-

lowed to do anything. He tells Meade to go on and give his orders to the cavalry, direct—he, Sheridan, is out of it! Meade is conciliatory, but Sheridan will not be pacified. Give him a free hand, he says, and he will go off, draw Jeb Stuart after him, and whip him. Grant, listening, says: "Go ahead."

Sheridan moves fast. Such of the cavalry as is engaged is withdrawn. He forms a column of 12,000 men, Wilson, Torbert, Gregg, three divisions. He is going to ride toward Richmond, fight Stuart, if he can, and march to Butler, on the James River, where he will re-provision, and then return to the army. He concentrates between Spottsylvania and Fredericksburg, and Grant will neither see nor hear of him for eighteen days. Early on the 9th he moves clear of the flanks of the armies, to Hamilton's Crossing, then wheels south and marches by the Telegraph Road. Formed up in fours, his column is thirteen miles long, and he holds that formation, because he is far enough east to evade all but the extreme right fringe of Stuart's pickets. And he sets a level, unhurried pace, going mostly at a walk, a gait of confidence. Old troopers, who rode this way with Kilpatrick in February, are mightily impressed: Kilpatrick's progress was a process of headlong, killing rushes and unreasoned halts; Sheridan plods as steadily and as relentlessly as fate. The diminishing clangor of battle behind his right shoulder, Spottsylvania-way, tells him that Lee is fully occupied, and he is not going to manoeuvre—he is going to ride through. He has enough men to do it.

There were gray pickets near Massaponax Church, and these run to Stuart and report. Wickham's brigade of Fitz Lee is available, and Stuart sends it, while he makes quick arrangements to

withdraw the rest of Fitz Lee from the line, and to bring Hampton's Division from the left. Wickham rides hotly, and at Jarrald's Mill he overtakes rear-guard of Sheridan, and attacks it. He has about 1,000 sabres, and he makes a few prisoners, and upsets a regiment or two, but Sheridan's main body goes on, unhurried, and the blue rear-guard confines itself to holding him off. Below Jarrald's, where the Telegraph Road trends a little east, Sheridan turned due south, by the Groundsquirrel Road, by Chilesburg, toward the Virginia Central at Beaver Dam station. Close to Mitchell's Shop on this road his rear-guard selects good ground and stands, and Wickham's desperate charges recoil from it, with loss. Here Stuart joined in person, bringing General Fitz Lee and the brigades of Lomax and Gordon. Including Wickham, he has between 4,000 and 5,000 sabres. It was about dark on the 9th. Stuart sent Fitz Lee and two brigades to follow, and took Gordon and rode, himself, by the right of Sheridan's march, to Davenport's Bridge on the North Anna, and thence to Beaver Dam, where Sheridan's rear, with Fitz Lee hanging on, passed through, in the early morning. Sheridan did damage at Beaver Dam, to the railroad and a depot of stores, and liberated a long file of prisoners who were being taken to Richmond. He continued south, toward Negro Foot, and Stuart calculated that he was aiming for the Old Mountain Road, which runs from Louisa Court House to Richmond. He called Fitz Lee in, this morning of the 10th, for he now had a closer road to Richmond than the route Sheridan had chosen.

While his brigades assembled, and the men ate such scanty rations as they carried with them—flour and water, mixed to dough, and fried in bacon fat, or stuck on a ramrod and seared in the

fire—he rode to the house of Doctor Edmund Fountaine, near Beaver Dam, where his wife and little Jemmie and the baby were living. He had an hour with them, and he was not to see them again. He may have divined, now, that he was Sheridan's objective: it was not a raiding column, that strong blue force winding down over the hills. He would not waste his forces trying to save the railroad, or the bridges. It was perfectly evident that Sheridan was going to Richmond. Jeb Stuart has said good-by to Flora and to his children. You know that in his mind, when he turns his back and rides, he has unrolled his map of the country around Richmond, the hills and rivers that he knows so intimately. There is a line of hills at Yellow Tavern, where you can stand, facing north and west, and with a few men hold off many. Major McClellan, who has received Flora Stuart's parting injunction to take care of her General, is with him, and relates that he was thoughtful and quiet as they rode, talking of little personal things, of friends, and places that he loved. The rising sun is in his face; he will see one more sun, while his horse is under him, and his men behind, and his sword in his hand. He takes Fitz Lee, with Wickham, and Lomax, leaves Sheridan's trail, and goes southeast to Hanover Junction, twelve miles. Gordon is detailed to follow Sheridan's rear.

He reaches Hanover in the night, and proposes to keep on south, by the Telegraph Road. But Fitz Lee insists that his men and horses are spent, and Stuart grants rest until one o'clock the morning of the 11th, two hours or three. He sends Major McClellan with Fitz Lee; McClellan is not to close his eyes until he sees Fitz Lee's brigades in the saddle and on their way: then he is to report. With the rest of the staff, Jeb Stuart lies down under the stars and sleeps. Fitz Lee is

moving promptly, and tired McClellan reports back, sits down to rest while the horses are being saddled, and falls asleep himself. As they mount, one will awaken the Major, but Stuart says: "No. He was carrying orders while we were resting. Leave a courier to tell him to come on when his nap is out." McClellan catches up about dawn, at Ashland station, where a squadron of the 2d Virginia has just broken up a flank regiment of Sheridan's, who, captured blue troopers say, is coming from the northwest. Stuart is now ahead of him.

Down in this region, all the roads lead to Richmond. The Telegraph Road heads due south after you pass Ashland, and eight miles farther down, the Old Mountain Road comes in from the west at a place called Turner's. There the two roads, coalescing, become the Brook Turnpike, and Richmond is six miles away. Half a mile south of Turner's, and east of the turnpike, is the ancient hostelry called Yellow Tavern, so named, you assume, because it was painted yellow once. In 1864 it stood empty, and out of use, and desolate. It was on a ridge that ran northwest and southeast, draining, on the north side, into the Chickahominy. The region was one of old fields, and lines and clumps of timber. Just north of where the Brook Turnpike opened the ridge, and along the Telegraph Road that passed across the high ground, Stuart proposed to form.

McClellan says he had a moment of indecision. As the land lies, he can place himself astride the Richmond Road, the Brook Turnpike, or he can take up position along the Telegraph Road, so as to lie on the flank of Sheridan's thrust toward the capital. He has perhaps 3,200 men with him, a very light force for what he has to do. It would help if he knew whether Bragg, defending Richmond, was in condition to hold the city

gates. He sends McClellan galloping, to ascertain Bragg's dispositions; but it was hours before he heard from Bragg, and he made his own decision on the ground.

Richmond, you are told, has known since yesterday that Sheridan was riding, and has suffered sharp alarm. But early on the 11th, they have this despatch from Stuart, the last he ever sent:

Headquarters Ashland

May 11 6:30 am

To Gen Bragg:

General,—The enemy reached this point just before us, but was promptly whipped out, after a sharp fight, by Fitz Lee's advance, killing and capturing quite a number. Gen. Gordon is in the rear of the enemy. I intersect the road the enemy is marching on at Yellow Tavern, the head of the turnpike, six miles from Richmond. My men and horses are tired, hungry, and jaded, but *all right*.

J E B STUART.

The unquenchable soul of Jeb Stuart flames in the last sentence.

McClellan finds Bragg, a stolid man, serenely eating breakfast, and unperturbed. The city battalions, the old men, the boys, the pale clerks and the invalids, 3,000 or 4,000, are manning the Richmond fortifications, and Bragg has ordered up three veteran brigades from Petersburg, by the railroad. He has done all he can, says Bragg, but he thinks he can hold out. If there comes disaster, he just cannot help it. That is Bragg. McClellan starts back, runs into fighting on the Turnpike, and detours widely to the east, avoiding capture, and reporting to Stuart at about two in the afternoon.

In the forenoon, as Sheridan approached from the northwest, it seemed to Stuart that, no matter what objective the enemy had, he could not move past him as long as he stood on the flank. He formed his brigades, Wickham on his

right and Lomax on his left, the left resting on the Telegraph Road, and the right extending along the high ground, facing west. A battery of the Horse Artillery was emplaced across the road, two guns in the road itself, and other batteries to either flank. Between ten and twelve noon the battle joined, Sheridan attacking in steady, ominous fashion, and the fighting running hottest along Wickham's front. Fitz Lee controlled the battle, his men dismounted, for the most part, with the ground favoring him; and he held well together. Sheridan's troops charged right up to him, broke into him in places, and, thrown out, came on again. They lapped around his flank, and gained the Brook Turnpike, but the main battle held to his front, and, charge and counter-charge, he drew and kept the weight of Sheridan's strength. Toward two o'clock there was a lull: the rearmost of Sheridan's divisions were getting into line, and the tired Confederates drew breath for another effort.

Jeb Stuart, resting under a tree behind his right, was cheered by the word McClellan brought: he had, he said, whipped them on his right; and, if the gray infantry came out from the city, he thought he would be in position to inflict heavy damage on Sheridan. He spoke with feeling of Colonel Pate of the 5th Virginia, just killed, leading a charge with extraordinary gallantry. For an hour or more, the fight settled into an exchange of musketry, with some artillery firing. But over yonder, Sheridan is up in person, studying the field. Stuart's right has proved very strong: he will try now a combined attack, mounted and dismounted, on the left, and he will put in all his men.

It followed that, about four o'clock, a terrific racket broke out along the front of Lomax. The blue dismounted

lines volleyed with their Spencers, and a strong mounted column, the Michigan regiments of Custer, broke from cover, took their losses, and overwhelmed the battery on the Telegraph Road. Lomax gave ground, and all of Stuart's left rolled back, 500 yards or so. At the first tumult, he was in the saddle and galloping to the point of danger, going so swiftly that McClellan cannot keep up, and outdistancing all of his staff but one or two couriers on fresh horses, who held in sight of him. There is trouble ahead; Major Howrigan, with the 1st Michigan, has sabred the gray gunners, and is breaking across the Telegraph Road. Right and left, the dismounted gray troopers are falling back, still firing, but their line is crumbling into little groups.

Jeb Stuart, gigantic in the smoke and dust on his tall horse, collects a handful of these, some eighty men, with Captain Dorsey. Howrigan's Michigan troopers thunder past them, on the road, and another regiment, the 7th Michigan, Major Granger, comes to support Howrigan. Jeb Stuart has his group shaken out into line, in time to fire into the flank of the charge as it went by to his left. A dust cloud goes with it, and at a little distance to the rear the dust cloud stops and swirls about: the 1st Virginia, mounted, has been flung at the Michigan troopers. There is shocking collision, men fight with pistols and sabres, and the blue squadrons stream back, broken. On their skirts run unhorsed troopers, and Jeb Stuart, his horse forced up into his firing-line, has his pistol out and shoots into the rout, calling to his men to stand steady, and give it to them!

Out in front, a sergeant in dusty blue, running back on foot, stops in his stride, points his Colt at the big officer on the horse, and fires one shot. Then he runs off into anonymity. Jeb Stuart sways in his saddle and his strong voice breaks.

His hat falls from his head. Some troopers look, and cry out: "Oh, the General! the General!" Captain Dorsey comes, catches the charger's bits, and leads him back a little way. The animal is restive, with the bullets that harrow the dust and whip past him, and the firm hand he knows weakened on his reins. He plunges, and Dorsey gets the General down, sends for a quieter horse, lifts the General to the saddle again, and tries to lead him away. They go, slowly, a few yards, but Jeb Stuart cannot hold himself up, any more. Captain Dorsey eases him to the ground, and they rest him against a tree, and he orders all of them back to the line, for the blue people are coming again. This order Dorsey says he can on no account obey; he has sent for General Fitz Lee and Doctor Fountaine and an ambulance, and he will stay until they come. Fitz Lee arrives and throws himself from his gray mare, and Jeb Stuart says, "Go ahead, old fellow: I know you'll do what is right." Some of the staff collect, Garnett, Venable, Hulihan. The ambulance is driven to him, under heavy fire, and they lift him into it. All but the surgeon and young Hulihan, and a trooper, Wheatley, who holds his head on his knees, he sends away, to their duties: "You need every man!" They untie his yellow sash, and look, and find him shot through the liver. There is great pain, and shock, but as they drive the ambulance off, he sees his men disordered, some leaving the field, and he lifts himself and calls to them, with a shadow of his battle-voice: "Go back! Go back, and do your duty as I have done mine, and our country will be safe! Go back! Go back! I had rather die than be whipped! . . ."

Custer is re-formed and pressing, and the Yankees very nearly take the ambulance. But it gets away, somehow, by the roads to the east of the Turnpike, toward

Richmond. The doctor turns him over, as they jolt along, for fuller examination, and when they do this, he says to Hulihen, using his nickname, for he was fond of the young man: "Honey-bun, how do I look in the face?"

"General," replies Hulihen earnestly, "you are looking right well. You will be all right."

"Well," says Jeb Stuart, "I don't know how this will turn out, but if it is God's will that I shall die, I am ready. . . ."

He suffers much, and they try to give him brandy, but he will not have it: there is the promise he made to his mother, twenty years ago. . . . Late in the afternoon, they bring him to Doctor Brewer's house, the home of his sister-in-law, on East Grace Street in Richmond. The house is not there now, but they remember that it was a pleasant place, behind a low wall of red brick where yellow roses bloomed.

Up at Beaver Dam station, little more than twenty-five miles away, Flora Stuart will have a message, and make frantic haste. Sheridan has the direct roads; and the railroad, partly in his hands and partly free, runs no trains. She comes some distance by hand-car, some distance by wagon, with long detours to avoid the Yankees, making slow, frantic progress like a nightmare. Stuart knows that she is sent for, and you imagine him calculating distances and time and transportation as he lies. . . .

There is no question of his getting well; next day the surgeon tells him. Outside in the street, in the night of the 11th of May, and through the hot hours of the 12th, a crowd gathers, sobbing women, and men with stricken faces, and in the ears of all of them rolls the sound of battle, Fitz Lee now, and Sheridan, fighting, to the north. I know an old man, who, as a boy of eleven years, stood in that crowd, outside the house where

General Jeb Stuart lay dying. He remembers men and women weeping, and he remembers the roses, and once, he says, they made way for a tall, thin gentleman who went into the house, and presently came out, and they said, "That's the President! . . ."

Jefferson Davis took his hand, in there, and asked him how he felt. Easy, he said, but willing to die if God and his country felt that he had fulfilled his destiny and done his duty. Some of his staff get in from the battle: he talks to them kindly, between wracking paroxysms of pain: they hurt, those belly-wounds. He divides his horses among them, and gives directions, sends his gold spurs to Mrs. Lilie Lee of Shepherdstown, his sword to his son, all his other things to his wife. Then he orders them back to the fight, for the gun-fire on the Chickahominy rattles the windows: "Good-by now, Major. Fitz Lee will be needing you." Von Borcke, still an invalid, kneels by his bed, sobbing as frankly as a child. Jeb Stuart would like a song, and around him they sing

"Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me . . ."

he joining, in a weak voice. Toward evening, with the shutters drawn against the slanting sun, Doctor Brewer tells him that he will die very soon. He nods his head. "I am resigned, if it be God's will; but I would like to see my wife. . . . But God's will be done. . . ." He talks of little Flora, gone before him. The room darkens. He speaks once more; very low: "I am going fast now. . . . God's will be done. . . ."

When Flora Stuart came, after dark, they led her in to him. He was dead.

So, in the thirty-second year of his life, and in the fourth year of his country's independence, as he would say it, passed Jeb Stuart. All his life he was for-

tunate. It was given to him to toil greatly, and to enjoy greatly, to taste no little fame from the works of his hands, and to drink the best of the cup of living. He died while there was still a thread of hope for victory. He was spared the grinding agony of the nine months' siege, the bleak months that brought cul-

minating disasters, and the laying down of the swords, at Appomattox. He took his death-wound in the front of battle, as he wanted it, and he was granted some brief hours to press the hands of men who loved him, and to arrange himself in order, to report before the God of Battles, Whom he served.

THE END.



Spirit

BY MARIE DE L. WELCH

You are alone as the eagle is when clouds
muffle him, and the cold mists take his wings,
and the mountains are gone from him,—the high peaks
are less than the points of needles, and the lakes
smaller than polished buttons,—and the wind even
falls away and the air is thin for breathing
and the eagle is of the silence between earth and sun.

You are alone as the salmon is when salt
fails him and the sweet far waters draw him
to the source of rivers, to the snow; and cliffs
fall in the way of his leaping, and his blood dies
in the white torrents, in the windy waters;
and he is broken by impossible returning
and he is of the silence between rock and water.

You are alone as the seed is when the young rain
comes into the ground like a dream of light, and the ground
stirs, and the ground's darkness is uneasy;
when the whole seed is stretched, the root's trembling
thrusters into strength, and growing begins dimly,
and the seed is of the silence between light and darkness.

These are alone as you are when you strain
away from the likeness of things, and you abandon
the great comradeship, the safe sleeping; and danger
moves in the depth of your blood, and you accept
desire, you split the shell of safety
and you are of the silence between ever and now.