

The Guns of Shiloh
A Story of the Great Western
Campaign
Book 2

by Joseph A. Altsheler



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Principal Characters in *The Guns of Shiloh*

Harry Kenton, A Lad Who Fights on the Southern Side.

Dick Mason, Cousin of Harry Kenton, Who Fights on the Northern Side.

Colonel George Kenton, Father of Harry Kenton.

Mrs. Mason, Mother of Dick Mason.

Colonel Arthur Winchester, Dick Mason's Regimental Commander.

Alan Hertford, A Northern Cavalry Leader.

Daniel Whitley, A Northern Sergeant and Veteran of the Plains.

George Warner, A Vermont Youth Who Loves Mathematics.

Frank Pennington, A Nebraska Youth, Friend of Dick Mason.

Bill Skelly, Mountaineer and Guerrilla.

Tom Slade, A Guerrilla Chief.

Sam Jarvis, The Singing Mountaineer.

Ike Simmons, Jarvis' Nephew.

Aunt "Suse," A Centenarian and Prophetess.

Bill Petty, A Mountaineer and Guide.

John Newcomb, A Pennsylvania Colonel.

John Markham, A Northern Officer.

Historical Characters in *The Guns of Shiloh*

Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States.

Jefferson Davis, President of the Southern Confederacy.

U. S. Grant, Northern Commander.

Stonewall Jackson, Southern General.

Albert Sidney Johnston, Southern General.

Don Carlos Buell, Northern General.

W. T. Sherman, Northern General.

P. G. T. Beauregard, Southern General.

James A. Garfield, Northern General, afterwards President of the United States.

And many others

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Chapter 1

In Flight

Dick Mason, caught in the press of a beaten army, fell back slowly with his comrades toward a ford of Bull Run. The first great battle of the Civil War had been fought and lost. Lost, after it had been won! Young as he was, Dick knew that fortune had been with the North until the very closing hour. He did not yet know how it had been done. He did not know how the Northern charges had broken in vain on the ranks of Stonewall Jackson's men. He did not know how the fresh Southern troops from the Valley of Virginia had hurled themselves so fiercely on the Union flank. But he did know that his army had been defeated and was retreating on the capital.

Cannon still thundered to right and left, and now and then showers of bursting shell sprayed over the heads of the tired and gloomy soldiers. Dick, thoughtful and scholarly, was in the depths of a bitterness and despair reached by few of those around him. The Union, the Republic, had appealed to him as the most glorious of experiments. He could not bear to see it broken up for any cause whatever. It had been founded with too much blood, and suffering, and labor to be dissolved in a day on a Virginia battlefield.

But the army that had almost grasped victory was retreating, and the camp followers, the spectators who had come out to see an easy triumph, and some of the raw recruits were running. A youth near Dick cried that the rebels fifty thousand strong with a hundred guns were hot upon their heels. A short, powerful

man, with a voice like the roar of thunder, bade him hush or he would feel a rifle barrel across his back. Dick had noticed this man, a sergeant named Whitley, who had shown singular courage and coolness throughout the battle, and he crowded closer to him for companionship. The man observed the action and looked at him with blue eyes that twinkled out of a face almost black with the sun.

“Don’t take it so hard, my boy,” he said. “This battle’s lost, but there are others that won’t be. Most of the men were raw, but they did some mighty good fightin’, while the regulars an’ the cavalry are coverin’ the retreat. Beauregard’s army is not goin’ to sweep us off the face of the earth.”

His words brought cheer to Dick, but it lasted only a moment. He was to see many dark days, but this perhaps was the darkest of his life. His heart beat painfully and his face was a brown mask of mingled dust, sweat, and burned gunpowder. The thunder of the Southern cannon behind them filled him with humiliation. Every bone in him ached after such fierce exertion, and his eyes were dim with the flare of cannon and rifles and the rolling clouds of dust. He was scarcely conscious that the thick and powerful sergeant had moved up by his side and had put a helping hand under his arm.

“Here we are at the ford!” cried Whitley. “Into it, my lad! Ah, how good the water feels!”

Dick, despite those warning guns behind him, would have remained a while in Bull Run, luxuriating¹ in the stream, but the crowd of his comrades was pressing hard upon him, and he only had time to thrust his face into the water and to pour it over his neck, arms, and shoulders. But he was refreshed greatly. Some of the heat went out of his body, and his eyes and head ached less.

The retreat continued across the rolling hills. Dick saw everywhere arms and supplies thrown away by the fringe of a

1 To indulge oneself

beaten army, the men in the rear who saw and who spread the reports of panic and terror. But the regiments were forming again into a cohesive² force, and behind them the regulars and cavalry in firm array still challenged pursuit. Heavy firing was heard again under the horizon, and word came that the Southern cavalry had captured guns and wagons, but the main division maintained its slow retreat toward Washington.

Now the cool shadows were coming. The sun, which had shown as red as blood over the field that day, was sinking behind the hills. Its fiery rays ceased to burn the faces of the men. A soft healing breeze stirred the leaves and grass. The river of Bull Run and the field of Manassas were gone from sight, and the echo of the last cannon shot died solemnly on the Southern horizon. An hour later the brigade stopped in the wood, and the exhausted men threw themselves upon the ground. They were so tired that their bodies were in pain as if pricked with needles. The chagrin³ and disgrace of defeat were forgotten for the time in the overpowering desire for rest.

Dick had enlisted as a common soldier. There was no burden of maintaining order upon him, and he threw himself upon the ground by the side of his new friend, Sergeant Whitley. His breath came at first in gasps, but presently he felt better and sat up.

It was now full night, thrice blessed to them all, with the heat and dust gone and no enemy near. The young recruits had recovered their courage. The terrible scenes of the battle were hid from their eyes, and the cannon no longer menaced⁴ on the horizon. The sweet, soothing wind blew gently over the hills among which they lay, and the leaves rustled peacefully.

Fires were lighted, wagons with supplies arrived, and the

2 Being joined or held together

3 A feeling of embarrassment or humiliation

4 To threaten

men began to cook food while the surgeons moved here and there, binding up the wounds of the hurt. The pleasant odors of coffee and frying meat arose. Sergeant Whitley stood up and, by the moonlight and the fires, scanned the country about them with discerning⁵ eye. Dick looked at him with renewed interest. He was a man of middle years but with all the strength and elasticity of youth. Despite his thick coat of tan, he was naturally fair, and Dick noticed that his hands were the largest that he had ever seen on any human being. They seemed to the boy to have in them the power to strangle a bear. But the man was singularly⁶ mild and gentle in his manner.

“We’re about half way to Washington, I judge,” he said, “an’ I expect a lot of our camp followers and grass-green men are all the way there by now, tellin’ Abe Lincoln an’ everybody else that a hundred thousand rebels fell hard upon us on the plain of Manassas.”

He laughed deep down in his throat and Dick again drew courage and cheerfulness from one who had such a great store of both.

“How did it happen? Our defeat, I mean,” asked Dick. “I thought almost to the very last moment that we had the victory won.”

“Their reserves came an’ ours didn’t. But the boys did well. Lots worse than this will happen to us, an’ we’ll live to overcome it. I’ve been through a heap of hardships in my life, Dick, but I always remember that somebody else has been through worse. Let’s go down the hill. The boys have found a branch an’ are washin’ up.”

By “branch” he meant a brook, and Dick went with him gladly. They found a fine, clear stream, several feet broad and a foot deep, flowing swiftly between the slopes and probably

5 To perceive or detect

6 Rare or extraordinary

emptying miles further on into Bull Run. Already it was lined by hundreds of soldiers, mostly boys, who were bathing freely in its cool waters. Dick and the sergeant joined them and, with the sparkle of the current, fresh life and vigor flowed into their veins.

An officer took command, and when they had bathed their faces, necks, and arms abundantly, they were allowed to take off their shoes and socks and put their bruised and aching feet in the stream.

“It seems to me, sergeant, that this is pretty near to Heaven,” said Dick as he sat on the bank and let the water swish around his ankles.

“It’s mighty good. There’s no denyin’ it, but we’ll move still a step nearer to Heaven when we get our share of that beef an’ coffee, which I now smell most appetizin’. Hard work gives a fellow a ragin’ appetite, an’ I reckon fightin’ is the hardest of all work. When I was a lumberman in Wisconsin I thought nothin’ could beat that, but I admit now that a big battle is more exhaustin’.”

“You’ve worked in the timber then?”

“From the time I was twelve years old ‘til three or four years ago. If I do say it myself, there wasn’t a man in all Wisconsin, or Michigan either, who could swing an axe harder or longer than I could. I guess you’ve noticed these hands of mine.”

He held them up, and they impressed Dick more than ever. They were great masses of bone and muscle fit for a giant.

“Paws, the boys used to call ‘em,” resumed Whitley with a pleased laugh. “I inherited big hands. Father had em an’ mother had ‘em, too. So mine were wonders when I was a boy, an’ when you add to that years an’ years with the axe, an’ with liftin’ an’ rollin’ big logs, I’ve got what I reckon is the strongest pair of hands in the United States. I can pull a horseshoe apart any time. Mighty useful they are, too, as I’m likely to show you often.”

The chance came very soon. A frightened horse, probably with the memory of the battle still lodged somewhere in his animal brain, broke his tether and came charging among the troops. Whitley made one leap, seized him by the bit in his mighty grasp, and hurled him back on his haunches, where he held him until fear was gone from him.

“It was partly strength and partly sleight⁷ of hand, a trick that I learned in the cavalry,” he said to Dick as they put on their shoes. “I got tired of lumberin’ an’ I wandered out west, where I served three years on horseback in the regular army, fightin’ the Indians. Good fighters they are, too. Mighty hard to put your hand on ‘em. Now they’re there an’ now they ain’t. Now you see ‘em before you, an’ then they’re behind you aimin’ a tomahawk at your head. They taught us a big lot that I guess we can use in this war. Come on, Dick, I guess them banquet halls are spread, an’ I know we’re ready.”

Not much order was preserved in the beaten brigade, which had become separated from the rest of the retreating army, but the spirits of all were rising and that, so Sergeant Whitley told Dick, was better just now than technical discipline. The Northern army had gone to Bull Run with ample supplies, and now they lacked for nothing. They ate long and well and drank great quantities of coffee. Then they put out the fires and resumed the march toward Washington.

They stopped again an hour or two after midnight and slept until morning. Dick lay on the bare ground under the boughs of a great oak tree. It was a quarter of an hour before sleep came, because his nervous system had received a tremendous wrench⁸ that day. He closed his eyes, and the battle passed again before them. He remembered, too, a lightning glimpse of a face, that of his cousin, Harry Kenton, seen but an instant and then gone.

7 A clever or skillful trick or deception

8 To pull at the feelings or emotions of

He tried to decide whether it was fancy or reality, and, while he was trying, he fell asleep and slept as one dead.

Dick was awakened early in the morning by Sergeant Whitley, who was now watching over him like an elder brother. The sun already rode high, and there was a great stir and movement, as the brigade was forming for its continued retreat on the capital. The boy's body was at first stiff and sore, but the elasticity of youth returned fast, and after a brief breakfast, he was fully restored.

Another hot day had dawned, but Dick reflected grimly that however hot it might be it could not be as hot as the day before had been. Scouts in the night had brought back reports that the Southern troops were on the northern side of Bull Run but not in great force, and a second battle was no longer feared. The flight could be continued without interruption over the hot Virginia fields.

Much of Dick's depression returned as they advanced under the blazing sun, but Whitley, who seemed insensible⁹ to either fatigue or gloom, soon cheered him up again.

"They talk about the Southerners comin' on an' takin' Washington," he said, "but don't you believe it. They haven't got the forces, an' while they won the victory I guess they're about as tired as we are. Our boys talk about a hundred thousand rebels jumpin' on 'em, an' some felt as if they was a million, but they weren't any more than we was, maybe not as many, an' when they are all stove-up¹⁰ themselves, how can they attack Washington in its fortifications! Don't be so troubled, boy. The Union ain't smashed up yet. Just recollect whenever it's dark that light's bound to come later on. What do you say to that, Long Legs?"

He spoke to a very tall and very thin youth who marched

9 Unfeeling

10 Smashed

about a half dozen feet away from them. The boy, who seemed to be about eighteen years of age, turned to them a face which was pale despite the Virginia sun. But it was the pallor¹¹ of indoor life, not of fear, as the countenance was good and strong, long, narrow, the chin pointed, the nose large and bridged like that of an old Roman, and the eyes full blue and slightly nearsighted. But there was a faint twinkle in those same nearsighted eyes as he replied in precise tones:

“According to all the experience of centuries and all the mathematical formulae that can be deduced therefrom, night is bound to be followed by day. We have been whipped by the rebels, but it follows with arithmetical certainty that if we keep on fighting long enough we will whip them in time. Let x equal time and y equal opportunity. Then when x and y come together we shall have x plus y which will equal success. Does my logic seem cogent¹² to you, Mr. Big Shoulders and Big Hands?”

Whitley stared at him in amazement and admiration.

“I haven’t heard so many big words in a long time,” he said, “an’ then, too, you bring ‘em out so nice an’ smooth, marchin’ in place as regular as a drilled troop.”

“I’ve been drilled too,” said the tall boy, smiling. “My name is George Warner, and I come from Vermont. I began teaching a district school when I was sixteen years old, and I would be teaching now, if it were not for the war. My specialty is mathematics. X equals the war, y equals me, and x plus y equals me in the war.”

“Your name is Warner, and you are from Vermont,” said Dick eagerly. “Why, there was a Warner who struck hard for independence at Bennington in the Revolution.”

“That’s my family,” replied the youth proudly. “Seth Warner delivered a mighty blow that helped to form this Union, and,

11 Abnormally pale complexion

12 Forcibly convincing

although I don't know much except to teach school, I'm going to put in a little one to help save it. X equalled the occasion, y equalled my willingness to meet it, and x plus y have brought me here."

Dick told who he and Whitley were, and he felt at once that he and this long and mathematical Vermont lad were going to be friends. Whitley also continued to look upon Warner with much favor.

"I respect anybody who can talk in mathematics as you do," he said. "Now with me I never know what x equals an' I never know what y equals, so if I was to get x an' y together they might land me about ten thousand miles from where I wanted to be. But a fellow can bend too much over books. That's what's the matter with them eyes of yours, which I notice always have to take two looks where I take only one."

"You are undoubtedly right," replied Warner. "My relatives told me that I needed some fresh air, and I am taking it, although the process is attended with certain risks from bullets, swords, bayonets, cannon balls, and shells. Still, I have made a very close mathematical calculation. At home there is the chance of disease as well as here. At home you may fall from a cliff, you may be drowned in a creek or river while bathing, a tree may fall on you, a horse may throw you and break your neck, or you may be caught in a winter storm and freeze to death. But even if none of these things happens to you, you will die some day anyhow. Now, my figures show me that the chance of death here in the war is only twenty-five per cent greater than it was at home, but physical activity and an open air continuously increase my life chances thirty-five per cent. So, I make a net life gain of ten per cent."

Whitley put his hand upon Warner's shoulder.

"Boy," he said, "you're wonderful. I can cheer up the lads by talkin' of the good things to come, but you can prove by

arithmetic, algebra an' every other kind of mathematics that they're bound to come. You're goin' to be worth a lot wherever you are."

"Thanks for your encomiums¹³. In any event we are gaining valuable experience. Back there on the field of Bull Run I was able to demonstrate by my own hearing and imagination that a hundred thousand rebels could fire a million bullets a minute, and every one of those million bullets filled with a mortal spite against me was seeking my own particular person."

Whitley gazed at him again with admiration.

"You've certainly got a wonderful fine big bag of words," he said, "an' whenever you need any you just reach in an' take out a few a foot long or so. But I reckon a lot of others felt the way you did, though they won't admit it now. Look, we're nearly to Washington now. See the dome of the Capitol over the trees there, an' I can catch glimpses of roofs too."

Dick and George also saw the capital, and cheered by the sight, they marched at a swifter gait. Soon they turned into the main road, where the bulk of the army had already passed and saw swarms of stragglers ahead of them. Journalists and public men met them, and Dick now learned how the truth about Bull Run had come to the capital. The news of defeat had been the more bitter, because already they had been rejoicing there over success. As late as five o'clock in the afternoon the telegraph had informed Washington of victory. Then, after a long wait, had come the bitter despatch telling of defeat, and flying fugitives arriving in the night had exaggerated it tenfold.

The division to which Dick, Warner, and Whitley belonged marched over the Long Bridge and camped near the capital where they would remain until sent on further service. Dick now saw that the capital was in no danger. Troops were pouring into it by every train from the north and west. All they needed

13 A formal expression of lofty praise

was leadership and discipline. Bull Run had stung, but it did not daunt them, and they asked to be led again against the enemy. They heard that Lincoln had received the news of the defeat with great calmness and that he had spent most of a night in his office listening to the personal narratives of public men, who had gone forth to see the battle and who, at its conclusion, had left with great speed.

“Lots of people have laughed at Abe Lincoln an’ have called him only a rail-splitter,” said Whitley, “but I heard him two or three times, when he was campaignin’ in Illinois, an’ I tell you he’s a man.”

“He was born in my state,” said Dick, “and I mean to be proud of him. He’ll have support, too. Look how the country is standing by him!”

More than once in the succeeding days Dick Mason’s heart thrilled at the mighty response that came to the defeat of Bull Run. The stream of recruits pouring into the capital never ceased. He now saw men and many boys, too, like himself, from every state north of the Ohio River and from some south of it. Dan Whitley met old logging friends from Wisconsin whom he had not seen in years, and George Warner saw two pupils of his as old as himself.

Dick had inherited a sensitive temperament, one that responded quickly and truthfully to the events occurring about him, and he foresaw the beginning of a mighty struggle. Here in the capital, resolution was hardening into a fight to the finish, and he knew from his relatives when he left Kentucky that the South was equally determined. There was an apparent pause in hostilities, but he felt that the two sections were merely gathering their forces for a mightier conflict.

His comrades and he had little to do, and they had frequent leaves of absence. On one of them they saw a man of imposing appearance pass down Pennsylvania Avenue. He would have

caught the attention of anybody, owing to his great height and splendid head crowned with snow-white hair. He was old, but he walked as if he were one who had achieved greatly and was conscious of it.

“It’s Old Fuss and Feathers his very self,” said Whitley.

“General Scott. It can be no other,” said Dick, who had divined at once the man’s identity. His eyes followed the retreating figure with the greatest interest. This was the young hero of the War of 1812 and the great commander who had carried the brilliant campaign into the capital of Mexico. He had been the first commander-in-chief of the Northern army, and, foreseeing the great scale of the coming war, he had prepared a wide and cautious plan. But the public had sneered at him and had demanded instant action, the defeat at Bull Run being the result.

Dick felt pity for the man who was forced to bear a blame not his own and who was too old for another chance. But he knew that the present cloud would soon pass away and that he would be remembered as the man of Chippewa and Chapultepec.

“McClellan is already here to take his place,” said Whitley. “He’s the young fellow who has been winning successes in the western part of Virginia, an’ they say he has genius.”

Only a day or two later they saw McClellan walking down the same avenue with the President. Dick had never beheld a more striking contrast. The President was elderly, of great height, his head surmounted by a high silk hat which made him look yet taller, while his face was long, melancholy, and wrinkled deeply. His collar had wilted with the heat, and the tails of his long black coat flapped about his legs.

The general was clothed in a brilliant uniform. He was short and stocky, and his head scarcely passed the President’s shoulder. He was redolent¹⁴ of youth and self confidence. It showed in his

14 Smelling

quick, eager gestures and his emphatic manner. He attracted the two boys, but the sergeant shook his head somewhat solemnly.

“They say Scott was too old,” he said, “and now they’ve gone to the other end of it. McClellan’s too young to handle the great armies that are going into the field. I’m afraid he won’t be a match for them old veterans like Johnston and Lee.”

“Napoleon became famous all over the world when he was only twenty-six,” said Warner.

“That’s so,” retorted Whitley, “but I never heard of any other Napoleon. The breed began and quit with him.”

But the soldiers crowding the capital had full confidence in “Little Mac,” as they had already begun to call him. Those off duty followed and cheered him and the President, until they entered the White House and disappeared within its doors. Dick and his friends were in the crowd that followed, although they did not join in the cheers, not because they lacked faith but because all three were thoughtful. Dick had soon discovered that Whitley, despite his lack of education, was an exceedingly observant man, with a clear and reasoning mind.

“It was a pair worth seeing,” said the sergeant, as they turned away, “but I looked a lot more at Old Abe than I did at ‘Little Mac.’ Did you ever think, boys, what it is to have a big war on your hands, with all sorts of men tellin’ you all sorts of things an’ tryin’ to pull you in all sorts of directions?”

“I had not thought of it before, but I will think of it now,” said Warner. “In any event, we are quite sure that the President has a great task before him. We hear that the South will soon have a quarter of a million troops in the field. Her position on the defensive is perhaps worth as many more men to her. Hence let x equal her troops, let y equal her defensive, and we have x plus y , which is equal to half a million men, the number we must have before we can meet the South on equal terms.”

“An’ to conquer her completely we’ll need nigh on to a

million,” said the sergeant.

Shrewd and penetrating as was Sergeant Whitley, he did not dream that before the giant struggle was over the South would have tripled her defensive quarter of a million and the North would almost have tripled her invading million.

A few days later their regiment marched out of the capital and joined the forces on the hills around Arlington, where they lay for many days, impatient but inactive. There was much movement in the west, and they heard of small battles in which victory and defeat were about equal. The boys had shown so much zeal and ability in learning soldierly duties that they were made orderlies by their colonel, John Newcomb, a taciturn¹⁵ Pennsylvanian and a rich miner, who had raised a regiment partly at his own expense and who showed a great zeal for the Union. He, too, was learning how to be a soldier, and he was not above asking advice now and then of a certain Sergeant Whitley who had the judgment to give it in the manner befitting one of his lowly rank.

The summer days passed slowly on. The heat was intense. The Virginia hills and plains fairly shimmered under the burning rays of the sun. But still they delayed. Congress had shown the greatest courage, meeting on the very day that the news of Bull Run had come and resolving to fight the war to a successful end, no matter what happened. But while McClellan was drilling and preparing, the public again began to call for action. “On to Richmond!” was the cry, but, despite it, the army did not yet move.

European newspapers came in, and, almost without exception, they sneered at the Northern troops and predicted the early dissolution of the Union. Monarchy and privileged classes everywhere rejoiced at the disaster threatening the great republic, and, now that it was safe to do so, did not hesitate to

15 Habitually untalkative

show their delight. Sensitive and proud of his country, Dick was cut to the quick, but Warner was more phlegmatic¹⁶.

“Let ‘em bark,” he said. “They bark because they dislike us, and they dislike us because they fear us. We threatened Privilege when our Revolution succeeded and the Republic was established. The fact of our existence was the threat, and the threat has increased with our years and growth. Europe is for the South, but the reason for it is one of the simplest problems in mathematics. Ten per cent of it is admiration for the Southern victory at Bull Run, and ninety per cent of it is hatred—at least by their ruling classes—of republican institutions and a wish to see them fall here.”

“I suspect you’re right,” said Dick, “and we’ll have to try all the harder to keep them from being a failure. Look, there goes our balloon!”

Every day, usually late in the afternoon, a captive balloon rose from the Northern camp, and officers with powerful glasses inspected the Southern position, watching for an advance or a new movement of any kind.

“I’m going up in it some day,” said Dick, confidently. “Colonel Newcomb has promised me that he will take me with him when his turn for the ascension¹⁷ comes.”

The chance was a week in coming, a tremendously long time it seemed to Dick, but it came at last. He climbed into the basket with Colonel Newcomb, two generals, and the aeronauts and sat very quietly in a corner. He felt an extraordinary thrill when the ropes were allowed to slide and the balloon was slowly going almost straight upward. The sensation was somewhat similar to that which shook him when he went into battle at Bull Run, but pride came to his rescue, and he soon forgot the physical tremor to watch the world that now rolled beneath them, a world that

16 Unemotional

17 To go up

they seemed to have left although the ropes always held.

Dick's gaze instinctively turned southward, where he knew the Confederate army lay. A vast and beautiful panorama spread in a semi-circle before him. The green of summer, the green that had been stained so fearfully at Bull Run, was gone. The grass was now brown from the great heats and the promise of autumn soon to come, but—from the height at least—it was a soft and mellow brown, and the dust was gone.

The hills rolled far away southward and under the horizon's rim. Narrow ribbons of silver here and there were the numerous brooks and creeks that cut the country. Groves, still heavy and dark with foliage, hung on the hills or filled some valley, like green in a bowl. Now and then, among clumps of trees, colonial houses with their pillared porticoes¹⁸ appeared.

It was a rare and beautiful scene, appealing with great force to Dick. There was nothing to tell of war save the Northern forces just beneath them, and he would not look down. But he did look back and saw the broad band of the Potomac and beyond it the white dome of the Capitol and the roof of Washington. But his gaze turned again to the South, where his absorbing interest lay, and once more he viewed the quiet country rolling away until it touched the horizon rim. The afternoon was growing late, and great terraces of red and gold were heaping above one another in the sky until they reached the zenith¹⁹.

"Try the glasses for a moment, Dick," said Colonel Newcomb, as he passed them to the boy.

Dick swept them across the South in a great semi-circle, and now new objects rose upon the surface of the earth. He saw distinctly the long chain of the Blue Ridge rising on the west, then blurring in the distance into a solid black rampart. In the south he saw a long curving line of rising blue plumes. It did

18 A porch with a roof supported by columns

19 The highest point

not need Colonel Newcomb to tell him that these were the campfires of the army that they had met on the field of Bull Run and that the Southern troops were now cooking their suppers.

No doubt his cousin Harry was there and perhaps others whom he knew. The fires seemed to Dick a defiance to the Union. Well, in view of their victory, the defiance was justified, and those fires might come nearer yet. Dick, catching the tone of older men who shared his views, had not believed at first that the rebellion would last long, but his opinion was changing fast, and the talk of wise Sergeant Whitley was helping much in that change.

While he yet looked through the glasses he saw a plume of white smoke coming swiftly towards the Southern fires. Then he remembered the two lines of railroad that met on the battlefield, giving it its other name, Manassas Junction, and he knew that the smoke came from an engine pulling cars loaded with supplies for their foes.

He whispered of the train as he handed the glasses back to Colonel Newcomb, and then the colonel and the generals alike made a long examination.

“Beauregard will certainly have an abundance of supplies,” said one of the generals. “I hear that arms and provisions are coming by every train from the South, and meanwhile we are making no advance.”

“We can’t advance yet,” said the other general emphatically. “McClellan is right in making elaborate preparations and long drills before moving upon the enemy. It was inexperience, and not want of courage, that beat us at Bull Run.”

“The Southerners had the same inexperience.”

“But they had the defensive. I hear that Tom Jackson saved them and that they have given him the name Stonewall, because he stood so firm. I was at West Point with him. An odd, awkward fellow, but one of the hardest students I have ever known. The

boys laughed at him when he first came, but they soon stopped. He had a funny way of studying, standing up with his book on a shelf, instead of sitting down at a desk. Said his brain moved better that way. I've heard that he walked part of the way from Virginia to reach West Point. I hear now, too, that he is very religious and always intends to pray before going into battle."

"That's a bad sign—for us," said the other general. "It's easy enough to sneer at praying men, but just you remember Cromwell. I'm a little shaky on my history, but I've an impression that when Cromwell, the Ironsides, old Praise-God-Barebones, and the rest knelt, said a few words to their God, sang a little, and advanced with their pikes, they went wherever they intended to go and that Prince Rupert and all the Cavaliers could not stop them."

"It is so," said the other gravely. "A man who believes thoroughly in his God, who is not afraid to die, and who, in fact, rather favors dying on the field is an awful foe to meet in battle."

"We may have some of the same on our side," said Colonel Newcomb. "We have at least a great Puritan population from which to draw."

One of the generals gave the signal, and the balloon was slowly pulled down. Dick, grateful for his experience, thanked Colonel Newcomb and rejoined his comrades.