CHAPTER IV

Recollections of Jalapa — General Harney and the Seminoles — White Sulphur Springs and its Patrons before the War — The Ashby Brothers — Ordered to West Point as Instructor — Sports and Jokes of the Officers' Mess — Anecdotes of McClellan, Fitz John Porter, and Others — Shooting and Other Excursions

ON my daily visits to Johnston I passed a residence with deep, iron-barred windows. As I went feebly by one day on the arm of a friend, Lieutenant Coppee, I heard a sweet, sympathetic voice murmur, "Pobre teniente!" ("Poor lieutenant!"); and, turning, I saw a beautiful young girl, a perfect vision of female loveliness and sympathy. She was a blonde, with exquisite features, blue eyes, and curling golden hair. I passed and repassed there daily, and, after that, always received a smile and a bow from her, but our acquaintance never progressed farther. I learned from an American physician, who had lived twenty years in Jalapa, that she was the favorite daughter of Santa Anna, who, though he had never married her mother, had richly endowed this child, whom any gentleman in Jalapa would gladly have made his wife. If she be alive now, she must be sixty years old, and not so attractive and lovable as she was when I last saw her.

My recollections of Jalapa are the most agreeable of any I retain of Mexico. We were elegantly lodged and cared for, and I received much kind attention from the general officers, who called to see how I was getting on

and to say kind things to me. Amongst them was General Benet Riley, who had risen from a private soldier to his present rank for repeated acts of gallantry. He was a man of great stature and fine martial bearing, but entirely free from any ostentation. He had the proverbial humor of his race, and, having lost a part of his palate, his voice was quite remarkable and added zest to his narrations. He told me that he had been a shoemaker before he enlisted in the last war, and that after he acquired the rank of General, a fellow came to him one day and proposed to get up a coat of arms for him. He "damned him" — told him to "Clear out; because, sir, I never had a coat of any kind till I was twenty-one years old."

Generals Twiggs and Harney of the Dragoons, and Sumner as well, were all men of great stature and fine physique. It was quite remarkable that our dragoons should have included so many men of extraordinary size and weight. In other countries this arm of the service seeks light and active men. When Charley May was married, his groomsmen were his handsome brother Julian, Sacket, and several others, all six feet and over. An English officer, who was present at the marriage, said to May, "I understand you gentlemen are all of the light dragoons. I would like very much to see your heavies, don't you know."

General Harney, a native of Louisiana, was a very remarkable man. Of strong convictions and extraordinary physical powers, he made his presence felt by all sorts of people. While serving as Captain of Dragoons in Florida, he and his company were surprised in their camp one night by the Seminoles, and all but himself were murdered as they slept. They were under their mosquito nets when the Indians crept upon them. Two Indians were appointed to kill each man, and took their

places on either side of him. At the signal, all struck and killed, save those assigned to Harney, who, finding themselves too far removed from the company's stores, deserted their post, that they might be sure of securing their share of the plunder. Harney, aroused by the outcry, sprang from his bed, accoutred as he was, and fled. He was six feet two inches tall and his legs were well proportioned, and no Indian was able to run with him. He took the route for the nearest station, some forty miles distant, through the Everglades, where he arrived safely. He immediately got together a considerable force, and succeeded in defeating and capturing a majority of the band which had attacked him. He told me he hanged all of his prisoners, because the Indians had a great and superstitious horror of hanging; for they believe that no man's soul will be received into the happy hunting grounds that does not pass through the throat, which is impossible when that route is closed by a rope; it must seek another road of exit, and all such souls are rejected at the gates of Paradise. He said a fine moral effect was produced upon the Indians by this method of execution.

Early in June I was ordered out of the country to report when well enough for recruiting service. We went down to Vera Cruz in a mule litter, the most delightful of all the modes of travelling I have ever attempted. An old paymaster, Major Hammond, and I had the litter to ourselves. We had pillows and lay *vis-à-vis* on a great mattress. Our light baggage was in with us, and our books and lunch, and our pistols made us feel safe. We reached Vera Cruz at midday of a broiling June morning. The yellow fever was raging, and as we passed the churches, the whole interior seemed occupied by the cots of the sick. It was a relief, indeed, to get aboard a comfortable steamer and breathe the fresh sea breeze. In those days wounded men were rarely seen in our country; therefore, I was an object of interest in Virginia, where I received more than my meed of praise, for I was again complimented in orders and promoted, and the good people of Fredericksburg gave me a beautiful sword, and the lovely Virginia girls carved my chicken for me at dinner and were good to me generally.

The Mexican War was a fine experience for our troops. It was actively pressed, by Taylor and Scott, from May, 1846, to September, 1847, and was a series of victories without check, until the capital was captured and peace was made. From first to last, we had 100,000 men enrolled in our armies, but at no time were over 14,000 engaged in any battle. After the siege of Vera Cruz, Scott's army was much reduced by the expiration of the terms of service of the volunteers, so that he entered the great valley of Mexico with only 9000 men, and received no reinforcements until after the city was taken. By the terms of the treaty of peace, we received from Mexico the vast territory embraced in California, New Mexico, and Arizona, and a full surrender of the disputed territory of Texas, which lies between the Rio Grande and the Nueces. In a spirit of fairness unusual in conquered nations, we gave Mexico $10,000,000 as conscience money. Some years ago when Mr. Hayes was preparing to invade Mexico, the newspapers of that country admonished us that we had to pay Mexico $10,000,000 to stop the last war, and we had better be careful how we again aroused their wrath.

So long a period had elapsed since our last war with Great Britain that a whole generation had passed away, and few of our people had ever seen a wounded soldier, and much interest and kindness were shown to such as

reached home. While on my homeward journey, I was detained a day in Louisville. I was at the Galt House, and had occasion to go to a dry-goods store near by for a silk handkerchief for my broken arm. I was followed and overtaken by a kind-hearted Kentuckian, who with much interest asked, "Is it true that you were wounded at the battle of Cerro Gordo?"

"Yes."

"Well, sir, do you ever drink anything?"

"Yes."

"Well, come, please, and take a drink with me." He conducted me into the bar-room of the Galt House and said to the bar-keeper, "Let him have the best you have in the house, no matter what it costs." This was but a faint indication of what was in store for the wounded officers homeward bound.

A rumor of my death had preceded me, and there was great apprehension among my friends lest my mother should hear it before better tidings came. Fortunately, she was spared this pain, for I was her only child and she was a widow. The doctors thought the White Sulphur a fine place for a young soldier with a wounded arm, and there we went for the season and were very happy together.

One day a party of us were playing whist in the bachelors' quarters in Fredericksburg. It was very warm and we had laid aside our coats, when in walked a committee of the citizens of Fredericksburg appointed to present me a handsome sword. Captain William Lewis Herndon, afterwards the hero of the *Central America*, was of the party. The sword was presented with an appropriate speech, and finding myself quite unequal to reply to it, I invited the committee to be seated while I composed a note of appreciation and gratitude. This, with the assistance of Lewis Herndon, was happily accomplished.

There was no railroad to the White Sulphur in those days, but it was, nevertheless, the favorite summer resort with the best class of Southern people. The long journeys over bad roads made four-in-hand teams a necessity, as were baggage-wagons and a retinue of servants and saddle horses. Judges Brooke, Brokenborough, and Robinson, Jerome Bonaparte, of Baltimore, and his brilliant wife, General Wade Hampton, Colonel Singleton, of South Carolina, and Dick Taylor formed the usual coterie every summer. The Hamptons and Singletons built their own spacious summer residences. There were many complaints of the fare, which was considered poor and insufficient, but the dignified proprietor, Mr. Caldwell, consoled his guests by assuring them they paid nothing for their dinners, but only for the wonderful sulphur water which he had discovered about the beginning of the century. During the height of the season one day the crowded dining-room was appalled by a loud cry of "Murder!" Steward and servants rushed to the victim, who assured them he could get nothing to eat and was dying of starvation. That young man was served well and promptly ever after.

Writing of the White Sulphur, I am reminded of the Ashby brothers. Turner Ashby was one of the most loved of the devoted men of Virginia. He came of a family famed for their expertness in all manly exercises. They were the famed horsemen of the country. Their birthplace and home was in that Piedmont region which had been noted for generations of bold riders, and which was for four years the battle-field of the great armies of the South and North. Turner Ashby and his younger brother Dick were the pride of all that hard-riding countryside. They were devoted to each other and beloved by all. Turner was not tall, but was powerful

and active. He was swarthy as a Spaniard, with a gentle, modest bearing and as brave a heart as ever beat. Men and women alike trusted and respected him. One day a great mountaineer, such as are commonly to be found in that region of Virginia, came into the railroad store under his charge and began to bully the youthful clerk, charging him with being dishonest. Turner Ashby had come to the boy's aid when he heard the wanton insult, and in a moment leaped across the counter, knocked the bully down, and administered such a thrashing as he had never before experienced.

The whole of the family connection were manly in their traits, and the women shared their pride. The boys had a sister, Dora. I well remember her as a belle of the White Sulphur. Tall, with flashing black eyes and gleaming ivory teeth, she was superb, resembling greatly that charming young Virginia matron, who is still remembered and loved in Richmond as Emma Gray, now Emma White of Norfolk. One day Dora Ashby was driving with young Herndon, — youngest brother of Captain William Lewis Herndon, — when they heard closing up behind them a clamorous uproar from a four-horse drag. The young fellows in it were all cousins or other kinsmen of Dora's, and demanded that she should give them the road. Their horses were almost running; Herndon put his own to their fastest trot and kept his place. Finally the drag pushed them hard and was about to pass them, when Herndon said, "Miss Dora, shall I give way to the boys?"

"If you do," she replied, "I will never ride with you again!" So Herndon plied the whip, and the pursuers and pursued came tearing through the woods, the buggy still leading, and the beautiful girl radiant with triumph. But, alas, the young rascals suddenly came to

a cut-off, and, whirling into it, reached the hotel a length or two ahead and won the race.

I used to meet the Ashbys in the summer at the White Sulphur. Every summer there were tournaments, at which good horses and good horsemen showed their power and skill. The Ashbys and the Greenes of Rappahannock and Stafford, their near kin, were always active in these. Turner Ashby used to ride his thoroughbred stallion at the ring without either saddle or bridle, and carried it, too! It was said the young fellows of Rappahannock would not let him enter for the prize unless he rode without saddle and bridle. Dick Ashby was one of the handsomest and most winsome men I ever knew. He was six feet in his stockings, straight as an Indian, handsome and gentle, and brave as the bravest. He entered the war as a captain in the cavalry regiment his brother Turner had raised and commanded. One of the earliest engagements of this command was a scouting affair upon the Potomac near Romney, in which Dick Ashby was killed while acting with heroic courage. His brother Turner came too late to rescue him, but found him lying where he had fallen. His body had been brutally mutilated. From that hour Turner Ashby was a changed man. A stern sorrow became his controlling motive, a deep purpose of vengeance possessed him, all his buoyancy and bright hopes of fame gave place to grief, and his brief and glorious career closed when Jackson defeated Banks and Frémont upon the same day. Ashby had dismounted his command, and sent his beautiful white stallion to the rear, and drawing his sword commanded the charge, when he fell dead, a bullet piercing his noble heart. Such were the Ashbys in peace and war! They were all gathered at my wedding; they are all gone now. Their first cousin, brave Wil-

liam Greene, colonel of the Forty-seventh Virginia, fell at Gaines Mill, dying as his cousin Turner had died only a few months before.

I was in the full enjoyment of the daily association with the charming society gathered at the White Sulphur, when orders came for me to report for duty at West Point. I was much disappointed, for my stay there as a cadet had not been a happy one, and I had no desire to return to the Academy; but on arriving there I was persuaded to remain and try the new duties and relations of an officer and professor. There were already some nice young fellows there, and presently there came from Mexico, McClellan, Franklin, Ruddy Clarke, Baldy Smith, G. W. Smith, Kirby Smith, and several others who had washed off the starch of the Academy in two years of war service, and thenceforth we had a very agreeable sojourn together. Our duties were congenial, and we had an excellent mess. The arrival of an old comrade of the war, or of a foreign officer, was enough to start the champagne corks popping; but we were not convivial alone in our pleasures, for we had several clubs where we resumed our riding and fencing and Spanish. We had a Shakespeare club, and a chess club, of which Professor Agnell was president; but best of all was the Napoleon Club. Professor Mahan was president of this, and gave out the Napoleon campaigns to be discussed by each member. Six weeks' time was allowed to prepare the paper. We had ample authorities, both French and English, at our disposal in the library, and worked diligently on our papers. The campaign of Waterloo, by Lieutenant B. S. Alexander, was considered one of the best discussions ever made of that notable defeat of Bonaparte. The campaign of Russia, by G. W. Smith, and of Wagram, by McClellan, showed

marked ability. I believe something of this sort has been introduced into the course of study for the cadets.

In this way we spent four years very profitably and happily at the Academy. Remembering how keenly I had felt the restrictions and surveillance of cadet life, I determined to spare those who fell under my charge as much as possible. One night while officer in charge, I came upon a young cadet asleep upon his post. He had leaned his musket against the stair rail, and was fast asleep. I knew it meant severe punishment for him, and he was such a delicate-looking lad my sympathies were aroused, so I wakened him. He was greatly alarmed. I said to him: "If I report this, you will probably be sent away from here in disgrace, your family will be mortified, and you will be seriously injured by it. If you will promise me never to allow it to happen again, I will take no further notice of it." Some years ago a well-known member of Congress invited me to dine with him, and at the table told of this experience with me at West Point. I had often vainly tried to recall the boy and his history, and now for the first time learned both.

Professor Dennis Mahan was one of the ablest of the faculty at West Point. He was a native of Norfolk, Virginia, and had not received a classical education. He told me he was so impressed by the disadvantage of not having studied Latin and Greek, that he had acquired them by hard work after he became a professor at West Point. His was considered a hard nature by the cadets, and he was given to saying sarcastic things in the section room; but I had reason to observe that he was grateful for benefits bestowed upon him, and capable of much real kindness. On one occasion, when a cadet, he made me the victim of his sarcasm. While reciting

upon the construction of fortifications, he asked me, "Mr. Maury, what is the height of the breast-height slope?"

"Five feet, sir," I replied.

With that cold manner with which he used to express his contempt for an ignorant cadet, he said, "If it were five feet, Mr. Maury, you could not shoot over it!" As I was only five feet three inches, at that time, this personal allusion was received with a suppressed giggle by my classmates, and for a long time I remembered it against him. Years afterward, he made up for it one night in the Napoleon Club, of which, as I have said, he was president. He came cordially up to me after I had finished reading my paper on the Italian campaign of 1796, grasped my hand with real pleasure, and said: "I congratulate you, Maury. You have discussed your subject in the very spirit of that Italian campaign." I could name many other things about him highly creditable to his warm and generous heart. Some time after the Civil War, at the age of seventy-five years, he lost his life by falling from a steamboat on the Hudson River.

As I recall these memories of my long life, it seems to me people were always glad when I did anything clever, with a sort of surprised gladness, as if they had never thought I could do it. To tell the truth, I was always surprised myself, and delighted in receiving praise, as I winced under censure and that carping criticism which is the refuge and habit of weak and ignorant natures. Fault-finding is the bane of discipline, while just praise is the very life and object of high endeavor. A true soldier strives and lives to win it. A martinet is an unhappy, worthless creature, wretched and mischievous, too. The only consolation is that he is more unhappy than he makes other people.

While the hills and swamps about West Point were fairly good shooting-ground for ruffled grouse (pheasants in Virginia, partridges in New York and Pennsylvania) and woodcock, all of the little mountain streams thereabouts had trout in them. One day, Fitz John Porter, McClellan, and I hired a boat to go a-fishing for perch on the Hudson. We lay at the mouth of a creek which emptied into the river a little more than a mile below the Point. Finding no perch, I sauntered up the creek, searching for trout. In a little over an hour I returned to my still unsuccessful companions with a good creel full of trout; there were over thirty in all, and several were over a foot long. A great sportsman named Warren, brother of General Warren, told me he took over a hundred out of that little stream one day. I met him once coming out of a woodcock swamp with thirty birds in his bag. He advised me not to go in, as he had bagged them all; but having nowhere else to go, I went in, and got eleven more. It was summer, and the birds were breeding. I saw a group of five, not yet feathered. The law should protect the summer birds.

Every winter we had several weeks of good sleighing. One day a party of us drove up to Newburg. While resting our horses there, and sipping something seasonable, one of us read aloud a funny trick of the famous wizard, Herr Alexander, and we unanimously resolved to play it off on Ruddy Clarke, who was always as ready to be the victim of a sell as we were to practise it upon him. At that time, Franklin and Ruddy Clarke occupied a tower room in the new barracks, with a chamber behind it, and it was our habit to adjourn over there for social enjoyment. Besides Ruddy and Franklin, were usually John M. Jones, Pull Hawes, Frank Clarke and Mac and I. So, after dinner, on our return from Newburg,

I told Ruddy that I would bet him a bottle of champagne that he might go into the other room, shut the door, and assume any position he chose, and I would tell, from our room, what his position was. After much doubting and questioning, he finally went into the darkened room, struck an attitude, and called out, "What position am I in?"

I replied, "In the position of a great ass." He looked it when he came out, amidst our laughter, into the light. We induced him, by adroit investigation, to describe to us his exact attitude. It was truly absurd for a professor.

We had a very jovial and humorous set of young officers stationed at the Academy for several years after the Mexican War, and great kindness of feeling prevailed. We played whist, dime points, and faro, and brag at the same moderate rate. It was noted that at faro we almost invariably broke the bank. One winter I was laid up for many weeks by an injury to my leg, received while riding, and my room, during all that time, was the gathering place after dinner. The card table was drawn up to my bed, and I played my hand till tired and sleepy. One night we were playing brag, and I becoming tired and drowsy, little Frank Clarke said he would play my hand for me while I slept. When I awoke, next morning, I found the greatest amount I had ever won at cards under my pillow. I reflected that it was a demoralizing amusement; that avarice, the basest of human passions, was its moving impulse; that often, at the card table, I observed some show of feeling that left an unpleasant remembrance against a comrade, and that none of us could afford to win or lose even a few dollars; so I ceased all play for money, and have been glad of it ever since.

During my stay at West Point as an instructor, Baldy Smith and I were room-mates, and occupied a cottage overlooking Kosciusko's Gardens. We were popular as "Subs," and our pupils used to manifest their appreciation of our efforts in their behalf by paying us long and frequent visits. Our sensations during these well-meant and oft-repeated calls may be best described in the language of a witty Frenchman who was invited to make a cruise on a man-of-war, and afterwards wrote of his experiences there. He said: "Sometimes I would dine with the captain in his cabin, sometimes with lieutenants in the wardroom, and sometimes with midshipmen in the steerage; and my recollections of the conversations of those midshipmen make my blood run cold to this day!"

No one seemed to have discovered the opportunities for good shooting, until I came along with my setters and pointers. These dogs were a great comfort to me and to my pupils; for they always accompanied me on my inspections, going before me, and giving due notice of my approach, and they were cherished accordingly by the cadets.

Captain Alden, Robert Coleman, Fitz John Porter, and I made several shooting excursions over the mountains into Orange County, where the Warwick Woodlands, famed by Frank Forrester, gave us fine sport. We took up our quarters with a plain farmer upon the turnpike, named Dickerman, who made us comfortable. He had a very handsome and cultivated daughter, who was not only the maid of all work, but who in the evenings, after our day's hunt was over, would entertain us in the parlor. She was an excellent musician, and an expert in the art of greasing and polishing our hunting-boots after a hard day's tramp through the mud.

Sometimes Porter and I would ride over to the home of Mr. Peter Townsend, and spend the night, returning next morning in time for our day's work. Mr. Townsend was a most agreeable country gentleman of New York, and had a vast establishment in Orange County. His wife and three daughters made up his household, and a charming family it was. Mrs. Townsend was very dignified and attractive, and her daughters were all bright, cordial, and handsome, and were great favorites with the young officers at West Point. One of them married General Meagher, the gallant commander of the most distinguished Federal brigade in the battle of Fredericksburg, that Irish brigade which charged, and charged again, Lee's line at Marye's Hill, until eye-witnesses have told me that they could walk along its whole front, and step every step upon the bodies of its dead. After their final repulse, a young soldier named Kirkland, a private in a South Carolina regiment, having obtained permission of his colonel, climbed over the famous stone wall, and, under heavy fire, went out upon the field, bearing canteens of water to the wounded, to all of which he ministered. Unhappily for his country, he did not survive the war; we cannot afford to lose the breed of such men. Another of Mr. Townsend's daughters married General Barlow of New York, a warm personal friend of General Dick Taylor, and a well-known gentleman of New York. I was the recipient of much graceful hospitality from Mr. Townsend's charming household, and time has not dimmed my remembrance of the many delightful hours for which I was their debtor.

CHAPTER V

The Rifles ordered to Oregon — Captain Stuart's Tragic Fate — Reminiscences of McClellan — His Capacity and Character illustrated — His Comments upon Foreign Campaigns — His Popularity with his Troops — A Criticism of the Crimean War — McClellan and Grant contrasted — Generals Franklin, Hancock, and Meade — Young Jerome Bonaparte

AMONG my friends of those far-away days was Captain Stuart, who was the son of an able editor of the Charleston *Mercury*, and was a great-nephew of Sir John Stuart, who won the battle of Maida and who at his death was the nearest survivor of the royal family of Stuart. He served with me in the Mounted Rifles, and was one of the most interesting characters I have ever known. Handsome, and gentle as a woman, no soldier of our army surpassed him in courage and daring, and after two years of active service the commanding general said in his report of the last battle of the Mexican War, "Lieutenant Stuart of the Rifles, leaping the ditch, was the first American to enter the city of Mexico."

When the Mexican War was ended, and after I was ordered to West Point, our regiment made ready for service in Oregon, marched across the great plains, and occupied for the ensuing four years that wild and unknown region where there were then only a few venturesome people of the American and British fur-trading companies. At the end of their term of service, the Rifles