

# PARTISAN LIFE

WITH

## COL. JOHN S. MOSBY.

BY

MAJOR JOHN SCOTT,  
*Of Fauquier, late C.S.A.*

AUTHOR OF "THE LOST PRINCIPLE" AND "LETTERS TO AN OFFICER IN  
THE ARMY."

*With* Portraits and Engravings on Wood.

"Historic truth ought to be no less sacred than religion."  
NAPOLEON III., *Life of Cesar.*

"There is game in every bush if we will beat for it."  
SIR ISAAC NEWTON.

JOHN SINGLETON MOSBY.



NEW YORK:

HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,

FRANKLIN SQUARE.

1867.

condition which was readily agreed to by the medical gentleman, and speedily complied with by the authorities at Washington.

---

## CHAPTER XVI.

### ADVENTURES BETWEEN THE LINES OF THE OPPOSING ARMIES.

Upper Fauquier, July 30th, 1863.

DEAR PERCY,—I take my pen to-day to give you a rapid survey of our operations from the time that the Confederate army crossed the Potomac until the time that the Rappahannock again became the dividing line of the hostile armies. It forms a novel and interesting chapter in Mosby's military life, and shows how fertile he is in expedients when pressed by difficulties.

After failing to connect with Stuart, Mosby returned to Middleburg, where he collected about thirty men, and crossed into the Valley for the purpose of joining General Lee in Pennsylvania. He struck for Mercersburg, where he understood a portion of the Southern army could be found, but, on reaching that place, discovered that it had moved. Finding himself in a hostile country with a mere squad of soldiers, and ignorant of the position of Lee's army, Mosby determined to return to Virginia, but brought with him about three hundred beef cattle, which he turned over to the Confederate States commissary at Winchester. At that point he heard of the defeat of our army at Gettysburg.

From Winchester Mosby visited Richmond on official business, and on his return appointed a meeting for his command at Rector's Cross-roads. But the advance-guard of General Meade having reached that point, he was compelled to change the rendezvous to Rectortown,

where he collected about thirty men. In order to reach the rear of the invading army, he made a detour by way of the Plains, and camped that night in sight of the 11th Corps, which was about Mountsville, in Loudoun County. On his way to this point he met Bush Underwood who, with two men, had captured at Benton's Ford of Goose Creek a lieutenant colonel, a major, and an orderly.

Early the next morning Mosby captured three heavily-laden sutler-wagons and forty-five prisoners, and while thus engaged fell in with General Carl Schurz, who was riding out, and chased him with hot speed into his camp.

The next day the horses were divided among the men, and the prisoners were put in charge of Tom Lake, with a detail of five men, to be conducted to Culpepper Courthouse—a task of no little difficulty when we remember that the country through which Lake had to pass was occupied by hostile troops.

These results got the citizens (who are chiefly Quakers) into trouble, for the next morning the Yankees, infuriated, sent out and arrested many of those living in the vicinity. A very ludicrous occurrence happened in this connection, for several of Mosby's men who had ingratiated themselves with the Friends were captured along with them. But the boys all got Quaker hats and Quaker coats, and it was laughable in the extreme to hear them, with sanctimonious looks, *theeing* and *thouing* the Yankees. But it all passed off well, for the Quakers were soon turned loose, having found no difficulty in establishing their innocence.

Two days later Mosby started from "Camp Spindle," which he had established in the Bull Run Mountain since the occupation of Fauquier and Loudoun by the Northern army, and returned to its rear. Near Circleville he came in sight of nine wagons prepared to forage

among the Quakers, and such was the feeling of security that no guard had been deemed necessary for their protection. The wagons were captured and set on fire, and with fifty-six horses and mules and twenty prisoners Mosby returned to the Bull Run Mountain. This affair got the Quakers again into trouble, and another order was issued for their arrest.

Mosby next began to operate farther to the front of Meade's army, between Salem and the Plains. As he was marching from his mountain fastness to the latter place, he captured two cavalry-men loaded with the spoils of a poultry-yard. By them he was informed that a large number of mules had been turned to pasture near the Plains, guarded by forty artillerists. Upon these he made a swoop, and, in full view of the enemy's camp, carried off mules and guard to his mountain rendezvous, laughing at the infantry who were sent in pursuit of him.

The untiring partisan returned in the evening, and, concealing his command in the woods, took with him Fount Beattie and Norman Smith to a hill-top, and presently saw two officers ride out from camp. When they had advanced far enough for him to get in their rear he charged them, and for three miles the exciting chase continued. With bloody spurs, the bare-headed officers made for a wood at the extremity of a lane into which they had entered. But as they approached it they came upon two ladies, who, appreciating the situation, drew up their horses to witness the sport. As Mosby and his two companions passed them, they cheered with waving handkerchiefs, and pointed out the direction which the fugitives had taken. The race was then soon brought to a close, and the two Federals were taken to the Bull Run Mountain, from the crest of which could be plainly seen the Northern army camped in the Plains below.

With five or six men Mosby then rode to Fishback's, almost within the purlieus of the Yankee camp. Here he found a dozen cavalry-men, mounted on officers' horses, and foraging for an officers' mess. These were added to his list of prisoners, and sent to join the captured officers.

I will now give you a personal adventure of Mosby's which happened about this time, which illustrates strikingly, I think, one of the remarkable traits of his character. With Fount Beattie he was one day asleep in a piece of woods a little above Hathaway's, when a party of Yankees came and searched the house for him. While they were thus occupied, one of the soldiers rode to the woods to look for horses that might there be concealed, and approached the sleepers. As he was leveling his pistol to shoot Mosby awoke, and, springing to his feet, wounded his assailant's horse in the head. He turned to fly, and, as he did so, the partisan chief lodged another bullet in his saddle. Before the searchers could be summoned to the spot, the Rangers were "over the hills and far away."

Meade's army now took position in the vicinity of Warrenton. While the movement was being made Mosby followed the various corps, and hung upon their rear. After the last corps had passed, a major, with thirty men, was sent back to look after him, but fell in with Norman Smith and another man near Mrs. Lewis's house, who were riding some distance in advance of their command, and chased them to the mountain. In the mean time Mosby rode up to inquire the news from Mrs. Lewis. She came out and implored him to save himself by instant flight, for the major, she said, had breakfasted under her roof, and had declared that if he captured Mosby he would hang him to the first tree. But our leader laughed at her fears. At this moment the Yankees were seen coming across the mountain toward

the house, and, as fortune determined, Mosby's command of eighteen men appeared on the scene at the same time. They were led instantly to the charge. Up the mountain-side they dashed, leaping over two stone fences which lay across their track. The Yankees broke and fled round and round the mountain, followed by the guerrillas, the fun equaling that of any fox-chase.

The boastful major who had so wrought upon the fears of Mrs. Lewis was caught squatting under a bush. Thirteen men and a lieutenant were also captured. But the lieutenant was the last caught, and not until he had several times made the circuit of the mountain, and, like Reynard when the mouthing dogs are at his heels, had struck out in the direction of a pine forest. Mosby, however, was upon his tracks, and, after the chase had continued thus for more than a mile, his horse, entirely spent, refused to proceed farther. The lieutenant was still fifty yards in advance, and had reached the top of a high hill, when his pursuer resorted to an expedient which succeeded well. He fired at the Yankee, shouting "halt!" The officer reined up, and rode back with his pistol down, Mosby thought, to fight. But it was to surrender.

The prisoner was mounted on a magnificent gray horse, and in the most piteous accent said,

"You won't take my horse, will you?"

"The devil I won't," replied his captor, "what do you suppose I was chasing you for?"

This gallant officer was a lieutenant of the 17th Pennsylvania Cavalry.

During the period of General Meade's advance through Loudoun and Fauquier, Mosby was entirely cut off from all communication with Lee's army, and was compelled by the enemy, who swarmed in every neighborhood, to abandon his usual haunts. He did not, however, as you

have seen, retire before them, but established his camp on the crest of the Bull Run Mountain, from which he descended like a mountain wolf and made daily forays upon the enemy. The amount of his captures during this period was one hundred and eighty-six prisoners, one hundred and twenty-three horses, twelve wagons, fifty sets of fine harness, arms, etc.

Encompassed as he was with enemies, a general belief prevailed that he and his band had been destroyed; but Stuart, who knew him better, said, "No, he'll turn up yet, right side up." And so it was.



## CHAPTER XVII.

"THE ICE-CREAM RAID."—MOSBY AMONG THE WAGON-TRAINS.

Upper Fauquier, September 1st, 1863.

DEAR PERCY,—As soon as the army of General Meade had taken a position around Warrenton Mosby broke up his camp on the Bull Run Mountain, again dispersed his men among the citizens, and resumed his warfare upon the enemy's communications. Meade's base of supply was now Alexandria, and Centreville, in the line of his communications, was occupied by a strong detachment of troops. With this object in view, Mosby, with twenty-six men, proceeded to the vicinity of Germantown, a group of hovels which stands, or rather stood, for it has since been destroyed by the Yankees, at the junction of the Little River and Warrenton Turnpikes. In a short distance of this place, on the road to Fairfax Court-house, he captured a sutler-wagon, accompanied by three men, which he sent to Germantown in charge of two of the Rangers to await his return.

At the Court-house several other sutler-wagons were found, and also several Yankee stores. One wagon was loaded with cavalry boots, others with a variety of merchandise suited to the use of the army, and one contained ice cream, which in the command has given its name to the raid.

A suitable guard was detailed for these captures, while Mosby, with the rest of the command, proceeded to a wagon-camp one mile below the town. Near the camp the men were halted under cover of a hill, and Bush Underwood and Welt Hatcher were sent forward

to reconnoitre. They found the wagons without a guard, and the drivers all asleep except two—one a Dutchman, whom Hatcher treated in a very uncivil manner. They were drinking, and as he passed him Welt pulled the bottle out of the Dutchman's hand, an unwarrantable liberty for which he received a sound cursing. The wagons, twenty-nine in number, were soon captured, and, as they were laden with valuable stores, Mosby determined, contrary to his custom, to attempt to bring off the rich booty—a hazardous enterprise, with a large force of the enemy at Centreville, from which point parties could easily be sent out to intercept him, and with Union men straggling along the road to play the part of informers.

Having collected his prizes into one train, as he proceeded on his return, Joe Calvert, a brave and reliable man, was sent to the front to notify Mosby of the approach of any force in that direction. Mosby for a similar purpose remained in the rear. After advancing in this way up the Little River Turnpike for eight miles, an ambulance-train, guarded by twenty-five cavalry, was reported in his front. "All right," he remarked to Bob Gray, who communicated the information, "we will just take them too." At Mat Lee's, just as day was breaking, Mosby rode to the front for the purpose of attacking the ambulance escort, when he saw the flash of a pistol. With eight men, the amount of his available force, he dashed forward, and found that Joe Calvert had been attacked and driven back by a party stationed on the road, and that Bush Underwood, who had been the first to go to his support, had received a severe sabre-cut. The Yankees were then charged, routed, and hotly pursued to within a hundred yards of Mount Zion Church, when, lo! a regiment of cavalry appeared in line of battle across the road, and at once moved forward. It had marched, under command of Colonel Lowell, from Cen-

induced him to undertake the capture, but upon his arrival at the expected scene of action he found that it was impracticable. He then retired to the Opequon Creek, or rather river, at a point near "The Bower," the elegant and hospitable residence of Mr. Dandridge, where he left Richards, with twenty-five men with orders to capture the express train on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad the following night, and returned with the rest of the command to Fauquier.

Richards at once moved to a wood between Smithfield and the railroad, where he spent the rest of the day, and when night closed in proceeded to execute the orders of his chief at a point between Kearneysville and Duffield Station. The railroad was closely guarded, in consequence of the capture of an express train which had recently been made by Major Harry Gilmor, of distinguished reputation, and camp-fires were visible to the raiders on both sides of the road; but, being inexperienced in this branch of the Partisan service, Captain Richards only tore up the track upon which he was told the train would pass in moving westward, and then divided his command into boarding-parties. Soon the express from Baltimore came rushing and hissing along the route, but, to the inexpressible mortification of Captain Richards, passed safely by on the unobstructed track. The Rangers laughed heartily at his discomfiture, and uttered many a jest at his expense, for it was then clear enough that Captain Dolly's informer had put him on the wrong track.

On the 8th of June thirty-five picked men met Colonel Mosby at Rectortown, for the purpose of accompanying him to Alexandria, with the hope of capturing his excellency, Governor Pierpont, in the capital of his imperial domain. When they arrived at the Plains, they found a company of twelve Yankees who had just been brought in as prisoners. Capt. Julian Lee and Stenny Mason had

discovered them as they were passing between Hopewell Gap and the Bull Run Mountain, and, having procured the assistance of Bush Underwood and five of his comrades, had without difficulty effected their capture. The prisoners were sent to Piedmont, and Mosby, with his band, proceeded toward Alexandria.

About the middle of the next day they halted in a body of pine until within an hour of sundown, and during this interval the dispositions for the night were made. Two men had previously been sent off to procure a covered wagon, and have it in readiness at a designated point on the Telegraph Road, near Alexandria. Mosby, with his followers, was then to drive to the picket post, and, claiming admittance for a market-wagon, was to secure the picket, thus thrown off their guard. The way to the town being opened, the command, divided into three detachments, was to march in. The first, under Mosby, was to look after the governor; the second, with Captain Richards at its head, was to pay its respects to General Slough, who commanded the department; while the third, directed by the Reverend Sam Chapman, was to provide, from the government stables, horses for the use of the prisoners, and perhaps some for general distribution.

But the best conceived plans sometimes miscarry, and such was the fate of the one which I have just detailed. The guide lost his way in coming to the rendezvous, and, in consequence, it was too late to attempt the capture that night, for, if successfully accomplished, several hours of darkness would still be necessary to enable Mosby to elude the pursuit which would certainly be made. But this mishap only made him determine to postpone the hazardous adventure till the following night, and during the next day the command remained concealed in the wood, and were fed by friendly citizens. The hours were tedious, and the men began to dispose of the captured