

**MOSBY'S WAR
REMINISCENCES,
STUART'S
CAVALRY CAMPAIGNS**

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Mosby's war reminiscences, Stuart's cavalry campaigns by John S. Mosby

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JOHN S. MOSBY

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Mosby's
War Reminiscences

Stuart's
Cavalry Campaigns

By
JOHN S. MOSBY



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1898

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MOSBY'S WAR REMINISCENCES.

CHAPTER I.

“Rebellion!

How many a spirit born to bless,
Hath sunk beneath that withering name,
Whom but a day's — an hour's — success
Had wafted to eternal fame.” — *Tom Moore.*

IN April, 1861, I was attending court at Abingdon, Va., when I met a person who had just stepped out of the telegraph office, who informed me that tremendous tidings were passing over the wires. Going in, I inquired of the operator what it was, who told me that Lincoln had issued a proclamation calling out troops. Fort Sumter had fallen two days before. The public mind was already strained to a high pitch of excitement, and it required only a spark to produce an explosion. The indignation aroused by the President's proclamation spread like fire on a prairie, and the laws became silent in the midst of arms. People of every age, sex, and condition were borne away on the tide of excited feeling that swept over the land.

The home of Gov. John B. Floyd, who had resigned as secretary of war under Buchanan, was at Abingdon. I went to his house and told him the news. He immediately issued a call to arms, which resounded like the roll of Ziska's drum among the mountains of southwestern Virginia. Many of the most influential families in that region were descendants of the men who had fought under Morgan and Campbell at Eutaw Springs and King's Mountain. Their military spirit was inflamed by stirring appeals to the memories of the deeds their sires had done. Women, too, came forward to inspire men with a spirit of heroic self-sacrifice, and a devotion that rivalled the maidens of Carthage and Saragossa.

All the pride and affection that Virginians had felt in the traditions of the government which their ancestors had made, and the great inheritance which they had bequeathed, were lost in the overpowering sentiment of sympathy with the people who were threatened with invasion. It is a mistake to suppose that the Virginia people went to war in obedience to any decree of their State, commanding them to go. On the contrary, the people were in a state of armed revolution before the State had acted in its corporate capacity. I went along with the flood like everybody else. A few individuals here and there attempted to breast the storm of passion, and ap-

peared like Virgil's ship-wrecked mariners, "Rari nantes in surgite vasto." Their fate did not encourage others to follow their example, and all that they did was to serve "like ocean wrecks to illuminate the storm." In anticipation of these events, a cavalry company had for some months been in process of organization, which I had joined as a private. This company — known as the Washington Mounted Rifles — was immediately called together by its commanding officer, Capt. William E. Jones. Capt. Jones was a graduate of West Point, and had resigned some years before from the United States army. He was a stern disciplinarian, and devoted to duty. Under a rugged manner and impracticable temper he had a heart that beat with warm impulses. To his inferiors in rank he was just and kind, but too much inclined to cross the wishes and criticise the orders of his superiors. He had been a classmate of Stonewall Jackson at the military academy, and related to me many anecdotes of Jackson's piety, as well as his eccentricities. He was a hard swearer; and a few days after the battle of Bull Run he told me that he was at Jackson's headquarters, and Jackson got very much provoked at something a soldier had done, when Jones said, "Jackson, let me cuss him for you." He fell in battle with Gen. Hunter, in the valley of Virginia, in June, 1864. We went into barracks at Abingdon, and began drilling.