

CHAPTER II.

On the morning of the 16th, Steuart's Brigade took up its line of march in the direction of Smithfield, where it arrived about dusk, and went into camp for the night.

The next morning the march was resumed and led in the direction of the Potomac, much to the joy of the exiled sons of Maryland, who at last began to entertain the belief that they would soon once more tread the soil of their native State. Nor were they deceived or disappointed. The column crossed the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad at Kerneysville, and in the afternoon went into camp within three miles of Shepherdstown, pretty well used up from the effects of the heat.

The camp of the Second Maryland was not far from the beautiful residence of the Honorable Alexander H. Boteler, and during their first evening several of the command visited this estimable family, and spent a few delightful hours. Mr. Boteler was from home in the service of his country, and Mrs. Boteler and her family had been subjected to many indignities at the hands of the Federal vandals who had infested the neighborhood for some time prior to the arrival of the Confederates, as had also the family of Honorable Edmund J. Lee, a near neighbor, and a relative of the great chieftain who was now about to invade the enemy's country. Alas! it was not many weeks after that both these beautiful homes were burned to the ground with all their contents by General Hunter. In retaliation for these deeds of vandalism, and some others equally as atrocious, General Early destroyed the town of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, during the following summer.

On the afternoon of June 18 the troops were once more put in motion, and took the road leading to Shepherdstown, through which beautiful town they passed amid the joyous shouts of its inhabitants. About two miles below Shepherdstown Boteler's ford of the Potomac was reached, and the men plunged into the water, nearly waist deep, and made for the Maryland shore. It was an indescribable scene, as thousands struggled through the water, singing and shouting in the excess of their joy. Poor fellows, very many of them were never to return. When the men of the Second Maryland once more stood upon their native soil they could not restrain their feelings, and many were moved to tears, whilst others acted as though they had lost their reason. As for General Steuart, Quartermaster John E. Howard afterward declared he turned seventeen double somersaults before he ceased, and then stood on his head for five minutes, all the while whistling "Maryland, My Maryland."