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FARNSWORTH WRIGHT, Editor



WEIRD TALES ISSUED 1st OF EACH MONTH



"That power can sweep armies away for us."

The Valley Was Still

By MANLY WADE WELLMAN

*A Federal army division lay in windrows in that weird valley,
not dead nor yet asleep—an eery tale of the
American Civil War*

WIND touched the pines on the ridge, and stirred the thicker forest on the hills opposite; but the grassy valley between, with its red and

white houses at the bottom, was as still as a painted backdrop in a theater. Not even a grasshopper sang in it.

Two cavalymen sat their mounts at the

edge of the pines. The one in the torn butternut blouse hawked and spat, and the sound was strangely loud at the brink of that silence.

"I'd reckoned the Yanks was down in that there little town," he said. "Channow, it's called. Joe, you look like a Yank yourself in them clothes."

His mate, who wore half-weathered blue, did not appear complimented. The garments had been stripped from an outraged sergeant of Pennsylvania Lancers, taken prisoner at the Seven Days. They fitted their new wearer's lean body nicely, except across the shoulders. His boots were likewise trophies of war—from the Second Manassas, where the Union Army had learned that lightning can strike twice in the same place; and his saddle-cloth, with its U. S. stamp, had also been unwillingly furnished by the Federal army. But the gray horse had come from his father's Virginia farm, and had lived through a year of fierce fighting and fiercer toil. The rider's name was Joseph Paradine, and he had recently declined, with thanks, the offer of General J. E. B. Stuart to recommend him for a commission.

He preferred to serve as a common trooper. He was a chivalric idealist, and a peerless scout.

"You'd better steal some Yankee blues yourself, Dager," he advised. "Those homespun pants would drop off of you if you stood up in your stirrups. . . . Yes, the enemy's expected to take up a position in Channow Valley. But if he had done so, we'd have run into his videttes by now, and that town would be as noisy as a county fair."

He rode from among the pines and into the open on the lower slope.

"You're plumb exposin' yourself, Joe," warned Dager anxiously.

"And I'm going to expose myself more," returned Paradine, his eyes on the valley. "We've been told to find the Yankees, es-

tablish their whereabouts. Then our people will tackle them." He spoke with the confidence of triumph that in the summer of 1862 possessed Confederates who had driven the Union's bravest and best all through Virginia. "I'm going all the way down."

"There'll be Yanks hidin'," suggested Dager pessimistically. "They'll plug you plumb full of lead."

"If they do," called Paradine, "ride back and tell the boys, because then you'll know the Yankees actually are in Channow." He put his horse to the slope, feeling actually happy at the thought that he might suffer for the sake of his cause. It is worthy of repetition that he was a chivalric idealist.

Dager, quite as brave but more practical, bode where he was. Paradine, riding downhill, passed out of reach of any more warnings.

PARADINE'S eyes were kept on the village as he descended deep into silence as into water. He had never known such silence, not even at the frequent prayings of his very devout regiment. It made him nervous, a different nervousness from the tingling elation brought by battle thunders, and it fairly daunted his seasoned and intelligent horse. The beast tossed its head, sniffed, danced precariously, and had to be urged to the slope's foot and the trail that ran there.

From the bottom of the slope, the village was a scant two miles away. Its chimneys did not smoke, nor did its trees stir in the windless air. Nor was there sign or motion upon its streets and among its houses of red brick and white wood—no enemy soldiers, or anything else.

Was this a trap? But Paradine smiled at the thought of a whole Yankee brigade or more, lying low to capture one lone Southerner.

More likely they thought him a friend,

wearing blue as he did; but why silence in that case, either?

He determined to make noise. If there were hostile forces in and among the houses of Channow, he would draw their attention, perhaps their musket fire. Spurring the gray so that it whickered and plunged, he forced it to canter at an angle toward the nearest houses. At the same time he drew his saber, whetted to a razor-edge contrary to regulations, and waved it over his head. He gave the rebel yell, high and fierce.

"*Yee-hee!*"

Paradine's voice was a strong one, and it could ring from end to end of a brigade in line; but, even as he yelled, that yell perished—dropped from his lips, as though cut away.

He could not have been heard ten yards. Had his throat dried up? Then, suddenly, he knew. There was no echo here, for all the ridge lay behind, and the hills in front to the north. Even the galloping hoofs of the gray sounded muffled, as if in cotton. Strange . . . there was no response to his defiance.

That was more surprising still. If there were no enemy troops, what about the people of the town? Paradine felt his brown neck-hair, which needed cutting badly, rise and stiffen. Something sinister lay yonder, and warned him away. But he had ridden into this valley to gather intelligence for his officers. He could not turn back, and respect himself thereafter, as a gentleman and a soldier. Has it been noted that Paradine was a chivalric idealist?

But his horse, whatever its blood and character, lacked such selfless devotion to the cause of State's Rights. It faltered in its gallop, tried first to turn back, and then to throw Paradine. He cursed it feelingly, fought it with bit, knee and spur, and finally pulled up and dismounted. He drew the reins forward over the tossing gray

head, thrust his left arm through the loop, and with his left hand drew the big cap-and-ball revolver from his holster. Thus ready, with shot or saber, he proceeded on foot, and the gray followed him protestingly.

"Come on," he scolded, very loudly—he was sick of the silence. "I don't know what I'm getting into here. If I have to retreat, it won't be on foot."

Half a mile more, at a brisk walk. A quarter-mile beyond that, more slowly; for still there was no sound or movement from the village. Then the trail joined a wagon track, and Paradine came to the foot of the single street of Channow.

He looked along it, and came to an abrupt halt.

The street, with its shaded yards on either side, was littered with slack blue lumps, each the size of a human body.

The Yankee army, or its advance guard, was there—but fallen and stony still.

"Dead!" muttered Paradine, under his breath.

But who could have killed them? Not his comrades, who had not known where the enemy was. Plague, then? But the most withering plague takes hours, at least, and these had plainly fallen all in the same instant.

PARADINE studied the scene. Here had been a proper entry of a strange settlement—first a patrol, watchful and suspicious; then a larger advance party, in two single files, each file hugging one side of the street with eyes and weapons commanding the other side; and, finally, the main body—men, horses and guns, with a baggage train—all as it should be; but now prone and still, like tin soldiers strewn on a floor after a game.

The house at the foot of the street had a hitching-post, cast from iron to represent a Negro boy with a ring in one lifted hand. To that ring Paradine tethered the now

almost unmanageable gray. He heard a throbbing roll, as of drums, which he identified as the blood beating in his ears. The saber-hilt was slippery with the sweat of his palm.

He knew that he was afraid, and did not relish the knowledge. Stubbornly he turned his boot-toes forward, and approached the fallen ranks of the enemy. The drums in his ears beat a cadence for his lone march.

He reached and stood over the nearest of the bodies. A blue-bloused infantryman this, melted over on his face, his hands slack upon the musket lying crosswise beneath him. The peaked forage cap had fallen from rumpled, bright hair. The cheek, what Paradine could see of it, was as downy as a peach. Only a kid, young to die; but was he dead?

There was no sign of a wound. Too, a certain waxy finality was lacking in that slumped posture. Paradine extended the point of his saber and gingerly prodded a sun-reddened wrist.

No response. Paradine increased the pressure. A red drop appeared under the point, and grew. Paradine scowled. The boy could bleed. He must be alive, after all.

"Wake up, Yankee," said Joseph Paradine, and stirred the blue flank with his foot. The flesh yielded, but did not stir otherwise. He turned the body over. A vacant pink face stared up out of eyes that were fixed, but bright. Not death—and not sleep.

Paradine had seen men in a swoon who looked like that. Yet even swooners breathed, and there was not a hair's line of motion under the dimmed brass buttons.

"Funny," thought Paradine, not meaning that he was amused. He walked on, because there was nothing left to do. Just beyond that first fallen lad lay the rest of the patrol, still in the diamond-shaped formation they must have held when awake

and erect. One man lay at the right side of the street, another opposite him at the left. The corporal was in the center and, to his rear, another private.

The corporal was, or had been, an excitable man. His hands clutched his musket firmly, his lips drew back from gritted teeth, his eyes were narrow instead of staring. A bit of awareness seemed to remain upon the set, stubbly face. Paradine forbore to prod him with the saber, but stooped and twitched up an eyelid. It snapped back into its squint. The corporal, too, lived but did not move.

"Wake up," Paradine urged him, as he had urged the boy. "You aren't dead." He straightened up, and stared at the more distant and numerous blue bodies in their fallen ranks. "None of you are dead!" he protested at the top of his lungs, unable to beat down his hysteria. "Wake up, Yankees!"

He was pleading with them to rise, even though he would be doomed if they did.

"*Yee-hee!*" he yelled. "You're all my prisoners! Up on your feet!"

"Yo're wastin' yore breath, son."

Paradine whirled like a top to face this sudden quiet rebuke.

A man stood in the front yard of a shabby house opposite, leaning on a picket fence. Paradine's first impression was of noble and vigorous old age, for a mighty cascade of white beard covered the speaker's chest, and his brow was fringed with thick cottony hair. But next moment Paradine saw that the brow was strangely narrow and sunken, that the mouth in the midst of its hoary ambush hung wryly slack, and that the eyes were bright but empty, like cheap imitation jewels.

The stranger moved slowly along the fence until he came to a gate. He pushed it creakily open, and moved across the dusty road toward Paradine. His body and legs were meager, even for an old man,

and he shook and shuffled as though extremely feeble. His clothing was a hodge-podge of filthy tatters.

At any rate, he was no soldier foe. Paradine holstered his revolver, and leaned on his saber. The bearded one came close, making slow circuit of two fallen soldiers that lay in his path. Close at hand, he appeared as tall and gaunt as a flagstaff, and his beard was a fluttering white flag, but not for truce.

"I spoke to 'em," he said, quietly but definitely, "an' they dozed off like they was drunk."

"You mean these troops?"

"Who else, son? They come marchin' from them hills to the north. The folks scattered outa here like rabbits—all but me. I waited. An'—I put these here Yanks to sleep."

HE REACHED under his veil of beard, apparently fumbling in the bosom of his ruined shirt. His brown old fork of a hand produced a dingy book, bound in gray paper.

"This does it," he said.

Paradine looked at the front cover. It bore the woodcut of an owl against a round moon.

The title was in black capitals:

JOHN GEORGE HOHMAN'S
POW-WOWS
OR
LONG LOST FRIEND

"Got it a long time back, from a Pennsylvany witch-man."

Paradine did not understand, and was not sure that he wanted to: He still wondered how so many fighting-men could lie stunned.

"I thought ye was a Yank, an' I'd missed ye somehow," the quiet old voice informed him. "That's a Yank sojer suit, hain't it? I was goin' to read ye some sleep words,

but ye give the yell, an' I knew ye was secesh."

Paradine made a gesture, as though to brush away a troublesome fly. He must investigate further. Up the street he walked, among the prone soldiers.

It took him half an hour to complete his survey, walking from end to end of that unconscious host. He saw infantry, men and officers sprawling together in slack comradeship; three batteries of Parrott guns, still coupled to their limbers, with horses slumped in their harness and riders and drivers fallen in the dust beneath the wheels; a body of cavalry—it should have been scouting out front, thought Paradine professionally—all down and still, like a whole parkful of equestrian statues overturned; wagons; and finally, last of the procession save for a prudently placed rear-guard, a little clutter of men in gold braid. He approached the oldest and stoutest of these, noting the two stars on the shoulder straps—a major general.

Paradine knelt, unbuttoned the frock coat, and felt in the pockets. Here were papers. The first he unfolded was the copy of an order:

General T. F. Kottler,
Commanding ——— Division, USA.

General:

You will move immediately, with your entire force, taking up a strong defensive position in the Channow Valley. . . .

This, then, was Kottler's Division. Paradine estimated the force as five thousand bluecoats, all veterans by the look of them, but nothing that his own comrades would have feared. He studied the wagon-train hungrily. It was packed with food and clothing, badly needed by the Confederacy. He would do well to get back and report his find. He turned, and saw that the old man with the white beard had followed him along the street.

"I reckon," he said to Paradine, in tones of mild reproach, "ye think I'm a-lyin' about puttin' these here Yanks to sleep."

Paradine smiled at him, as he might have smiled at an importunate child. "I didn't call you a liar," he temporized, "and the Yankees are certainly in dreamland. But I think there must be some natural explanation for——"

"Happen I kin show ye better'n tell ye," cut in the dotard. His paper-bound book was open in his scrawny hands. Stooping close to it, he began rapidly to mumble something. His voice suddenly rose, sounded almost young:

"Now, stand there till I tell ye to move!"

Paradine, standing, fought for explanations. What was happening to him could be believed, was even logical. Mesmerism, scholars called it, or a newer name, hypnotism.

As a boy he, Paradine, had amused himself by holding a hen's beak to the floor and drawing a chalk line therefrom. The hen could never move until he lifted it away from that mock tether. That was what now befell him, he was sure. His muscles were slack, or perhaps tense; he could not say by the feel. In any case, they were immovable. He could not move eye. He could not loosen grip on his saber-hilt. Yes, hypnotism. If only he rationalized it, he could break the spell.

But he remained motionless, as though he were the little iron figure to which his horse was tethered, yonder at the foot of the street.

The old man surveyed him with a flicker of shrewdness in those bright eyes that had seemed foolish.

"I used only half power. Happen ye kin still hear me. So listen:

"My name's Teague. I live down yon by the crick. I'm a witch-man, an' my pappy was a witch-man afore me. He was the seventh son of a seventh son—an' I was *his* seventh son. I know conjer stuff—

black an' white, forrard an' back'ard. It's my livin'.

"Folks in Channow make fun o' me, like they did o' my pappy when he was livin' but they buy my charms. Things to bring love or hate, if they hanker fer 'em. Cures fer sick hogs an' calves. Sayin's to drive away fever. All them things. I done it fer Channow folks all my life."

IT WAS a proud pronouncement, Paradine realized. Here was the man diligent in business, who could stand before kings. So might speak a statesman who had long served his constituency, or the editor of a paper that had built respectful traditions, or a doctor who had guarded a town's health for decades, or a blacksmith who took pride in his lifetime of skilled toil. This gaffer who called himself a witch-man considered that he had done service, and was entitled to respect and gratitude. The narrator went on, more grimly:

"Sometimes I been luffed at, an' told to mind my own bizness. Young 'uns has hooted, an' throwed stones. I coulda cursed 'em—but I didn't. Nossir. They's my friends an' neighbors—Channow folks. I kep' back evil from 'em."

The old figure straightened, the white beard jutted forward. An exultant note crept in.

"But when the Yanks come, an' everybody run afore 'em but me, I didn't have no scruples! Invaders! Tyrants! Thiev-in' skunks in blue!" Teague sounded like a recruiting officer for a Texas regiment. "I didn't owe them nothin'—an' here in the street I faced 'em. I dug out this here little book, an' I read the sleep words to 'em. See," and the old hands gestured sweepingly, "they sleep till I tell 'em to wake. *If* I ever tell 'em!"

Paradine had to believe this tale of occult patriotism. There was nothing else to believe in its place. The old man who

called himself Teague smiled twinklingly.

"Yo're secesh. Ye fight the Yanks. If ye'll be good, an' not gimme no argyments, blink yore left eye."

Power of blinking returned to that lid, and Paradine lowered it submissively.

"Now ye kin move again—I'll say the words."

He leafed through the book once more, and read out: "Ye horsemen an' footmen, conjered here at this time, ye may pass on in the name of . . ." Paradine did not catch the name, but it had a sound that chilled him. Next instant, motion was restored to his arms and legs. The blood tingled sharply in them, as if they had been asleep.

Teague offered him a hand, and Paradine took it. That hand was froggy cold and soft, for all its boniness.

"Arter this," decreed Teague, "do what I tell ye, or I'll read ye somethin' ye'll like less." And he held out the open book significantly.

Paradine saw the page—it bore the number 60 in one corner, and at its top was a heading in capitals: TO RELEASE SPELL-BOUND PERSONS. Beneath were the lines with which Teague had set him in motion again, and among them were smudged inky marks.

"You've crossed out some words," Paradine said at once.

"Yep. An' wrote in others." Teague held the book closer to him.

Paradine felt yet another chill, and beat down a desire to turn away. He spoke again, because he felt that he should.

"It's the name of God that you've cut out, Teague. Not once, but three times. Isn't that blasphemy? And you've written in——"

"The name of somebody else." Teague's beard ruffled into a grin. "Young feller, ye don't understand. This book was wrote full of the name of God. That name is good—fer some things. But fer curses an'

deaths an' overthrows, sech as this 'un—well, I changed the names an' spells by puttin' in that other name ye saw. An' it works fine." He grinned wider as he surveyed the tumbled thousands around them, then shut the book and put it away.

Paradine had been well educated. He had read Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*, at the University of Virginia, and some accounts of the New England witchcraft cases. He could grasp, though he had never been called upon to consider, the idea of an alliance with evil. All he could reply was:

"I don't see more than five thousand Yankees in this town. Our boys can whip that many and more, without any spells."

Teague shook his old head. "Come on, let's go an' set on them steps," he invited, pointing.

The two walked back down the street, entered a yard and dropped down upon a porch. The shady leaves above them hung as silent as chips of stone. Through the fence-pickets showed the blue lumps of quiet that had been a fighting division of Federals. There was no voice, except Teague's.

"Ye don't grasp what war means, young feller. Sure, the South is winnin' now—but to win, men must die. Powder must burn. An' the South hain't got men an' powder enough to keep it up."

If Paradine had never thought of that before, neither had his superiors, except possibly General Lee. Yet it was plainly true.

Teague extended the argument:

"But if every Yank army was put to sleep, fast's it got in reach—what then? How'd ye like to lead yore own army into Washington an' grab ole Abe Lincoln right outen the White House? How'd ye like to be the second greatest man o' the South?"

"Second greatest man?" echoed Paradine breathlessly, forgetting to fear. He was being tempted as few chivalric ideal-

ists can endure. "Second only to—Robert E. Lee!"

The name of his general trembled on his lips. It trembles to this day, on the lips of those who remember. But Teague only snickered, and combed his beard with fingers like skinny sticks.

"Ye don't ketch on yet. Second man, not to Lee, but to—me, Teague! Fer I'd be a-runnin' things!"

Paradine, who had seen and heard so much to amaze him during the past hour, had yet the capacity to gasp. His saber was between his knees, and his hands tightened on the hilt until the knuckles turned pale. Teague gave no sign. He went on:

"I hain't never got no respect here in Channow. Happen it's time I showed 'em what I can do." His eyes studied the windows of men he had caused to drop down like sickled wheat. Creases of proud triumph deepened around his eyes. "We'll do all the Yanks this way, son. Yore generals hain't never done nothing like it, have they?"

His generals—Paradine had seen them on occasion. Jackson, named Stonewall for invincibility, kneeling in unashamed public prayer; Jeb Stuart, with his plume and his brown beard, listening to the clang of Sweeney's banjo; Hood, who outcharged even his wild Texans; Polk blessing the soldiers in the dawn before battle, like a prophet of brave old days; and Lee, the gray knight, at whom Teague had laughed. No, they had never done anything like it. And, if they could, they would not.

"Teague," said Paradine, "this isn't right."

"Not right? Oh, I know what ye mean. Ye don't like them names I wrote into the *Pow-Wows*, do ye? But ain't everything fair in love an' war?"

TEAGUE laid a persuasive claw on the sleeve of Paradine's looted jacket. "Listen this oncet. Yore idee is to win with

sword an' gun. Mine's to win by conjurin'. Which is the quickest way? The easiest way? The only way?"

"To my way of thinking, the only way is by fair fight. God," pronounced Paradine, as stiffly as Leonidas Polk himself, "watches armies."

"An' so does somebody else," responded Teague. "Watches—an' listens. Happen he's listenin' this minit. Well, lad, I need a sojer to figger army things fer me. You joinin' me?"

Not only Teague waited for Paradine's answer. . . . The young trooper remembered, from *Pilgrim's Progress*, what sort of dealings might be fatal. Slowly he got to his feet.

"The South doesn't need that kind of help," he said flatly.

"Too late to back out," Teague told him.

"What do you mean?"

"The help's been asked fer already, son. An' it's been given. A contract, ye might call it. If the contract's broke—well, happen the other party'll get mad. They can be worse enemies 'n Yanks."

Teague, too, rose to his feet. "Too late," he said again. "That power can sweep armies away fer us. But if we say no—well, it's been roused up, it'll still sweep away armies—Southern armies. Ye think I shouldn't have started sech a thing? But I've started it. Can't turn back now."

Victory through evil—what would it become in the end? Faust's story told, and so did the legend of Gilles de Retz, and the play about Macbeth. But there was also the tale of the sorcerer's apprentice, and of what befell him when he tried to reject the force he had thoughtlessly evoked.

"What do you want me to do?" he asked, through lips that muddled the words.

"Good lad, I thought ye'd see sense. First off, I want yore name to the bargain. Then me 'n' you can lick the Yanks."

Lick the Yankees! Paradine remembered

a gayly profane catch-phrase of the Confederate camp: "Don't say Yankee, say damned Yankee." But what about a damned Confederacy? Teague spoke of the day of victory; what of the day of reckoning?

What payment would this ally ask in the end?

Again Faust popped into his mind. He imagined the Confederacy as a Faust among the nations, devil-lifted, devil-nurtured—and devil-doomed, by the connivance of one Joseph Paradine.

Better disaster, in the way of man's warfare.

The bargain was offered him for all the South. For all the South he must reject, completely and finally.

Aloud he said: "My name? Signed to something?"

"Right here'll do."

Once more Teague brought forth the *Pow-Wows* book which he had edited so strangely. "Here, son, on this back page—in blood."

Paradine bowed his head. It was to conceal the look in his eyes, and he hoped to look as though he acquiesced. He drew his saber, passed it to his left hand. Upon its tip he pressed his right forefinger. A spot of dull pain, and a drop of blood creeping forth, as had appeared on the wrist of the ensorcelled boy lying yonder among the Yankees in the street.

"That'll be enough to sign with," approved Teague.

He flattened out the book, exposing the rear flyleaf. Paradine extended his reddened forefinger. It stained the rough white paper.

"J for Joseph," dictated Teague. "Yep, like that——"

PARADINE galvanized into action. His bloody right hand seized the book, wrenching it from the trembling fingers. With the saber in his left hand, he struck.

A pretty stroke for even a practised swordsman; the honed edge of the steel found the shaggy side of Teague's scrawny neck. Paradine felt bone impeding his powerful drawing slash. Then he felt it no longer. The neck had sliced in two, and for a moment Teague's head hung free in the air, like a lantern on a wire.

The bright eyes fixed Paradine's, the mouth fell open in the midst of the beard, trying to speak a word that would not come. Then it fell, bounced like a ball, and rolled away. The headless trunk stood on braced feet, crumpling slowly. Paradine stepped away from it, and it collapsed upon the steps of the house.

Again there was utter silence in the town and valley of Channow. The blue soldiers did not budge where they lay. Paradine knew that he alone moved and breathed and saw—no, not entirely alone. His horse was tethered at the end of the street.

He flung away his saber and ran, ashamed no more of his dread. Reaching the gray, he found his fingers shaky, but he wrenched loose the knotted reins. Flinging himself into the saddle, he rode away across the level and up the slope.

The pines sighed gently, and that sound gave him comfort after so much soundlessness.

He dismounted, his knees swaying as though their tendons had been cut, and studied the earth. Here were the footprints of Dauger's horse. Here also was a cleft stick, and in it a folded scrap of paper, a note. He lifted it, and read the penciled scrawl:

Dear frend Joe, you ant com back so I left like you said to bring up the boys. I hope your alright & if the Yankies have got you well get you back.

L. Dauger.

His comrades were coming, then, with gun and sword. They expected to meet

Union soldiers. Paradine gazed back into the silence-brimmed valley, then at what he still held in his right hand. It was the *Pow-Wows* book, marked with a wet capital J in his own blood.

What had Teague insisted? The one whose name had been invoked would be fatally angry if his help were refused. But Paradine was going to refuse it.

He turned to Page 60. His voice was shaky, but he managed to read aloud:

"Ye horsemen and footmen, conjured here at this time, ye may pass on in the name of"—he faltered, but disregarded the ink-blotting, and the substituted names—"of Jesus Christ, and through the word of God."

Again he gulped, and finished. "Ye may now ride on and pass."

From under his feet burst a dry, startling thunder of sound, a partridge rising to the sky. Farther down the slope a crow took wing, cawing querulously. Wind wakened in the Channow Valley; Paradine saw the distant trees of the town stir with it. Then a confused din came to his ears, as though something besides wind was wakening.

After a moment he heard the notes of a bugle, shrill and tremulous, sounding an alarm.

Paradine struck fire, and built it up with

fallen twigs. Into the hottest heart of it he thrust Teague's book of charms. The flame gnawed eagerly at it, the pages crumpled and fanned and blackened with the heat. For a moment he saw, standing out among charred fragments, a blood-red J, his writing, as though it fought for life. Then it, too, was consumed, and there were only ashes. Before the last red tongue subsided, his ears picked up a faint rebel yell, and afar into the valley rode Confederate cavalry.

He put his gray to the gallop, got down the slope and joined his regiment before it reached the town. On the street a Union line was forming. There was hot, fierce fighting, such as had scattered and routed many a Northern force.

But, at the end of it, the Southerners ran like foxes before hounds, and those who escaped counted themselves lucky.

IN HIS later garrulous years, Joseph Paradine was apt to say that the war was lost, not at Antietam or Gettysburg, but at a little valley hamlet called Channow. Refusal of a certain alliance, he would insist, was the cause; that offered ally fought thenceforth against the South.

But nobody paid attention, except to laugh or to pity. So many veterans go crazy.