

CHAPTER XXII.

ANDREW JACKSON.

Early Life—Services in the Revolution—First Battle—Captured at Waxhaw Meeting-House—Refusal to clean the Officer's Boots—Marriage with Mrs. Roberts—Career as Senator—Commander-in-Chief during the Indian War—Services in the Creek War—Refusal to obey Orders—Dinner of Acorns—In the War of 1812—Battle of New Orleans—Governor of Florida—President—Second Term—Attempt to Assassinate—General Character—Death—Bed—Closing Remarks.

THIS remarkable man was born in Union county, North Carolina, in 1767. His father, who had emigrated from the north of Ireland a few years previously, had died a few days before the birth of Andrew, and his mother had to endure the sadness of widowhood, the care of three young children, and the trials of poverty at once. She was a woman of brave and noble character, and, although her brother gave her a home, it is said that she earned with her own hands, principally by spinning, the money she required for the education of her children.

She was especially ambitious for her youngest son, and aimed to give him such an education as would fit him for the ministry. To this end she sent him for a time to an academy in the Waxhaw settlement, of which Dr. Humphries, a clergyman, was master. It is also said that he attended Queen's College. But Andrew

was not a studious boy. He was never an educated man, nor fond of books. He learned to read, to write, to cipher, and very little more. His character was that of a wild, reckless, frolicsome, but good-hearted boy. He was fond of all active sports, running, leaping, etc. He was by no means averse to fighting, but he preferred frolic.

In May, 1780, the English general Tarleton, with three hundred cavalymen, fell on a detachment of militia in the Waxhaw settlement, killing one hundred and thirteen of them, and wounding one hundred and fifty. The latter were carried into the church and the houses of the settlement, and for many days Mrs. Jackson and her sons were among the devoted attendants of the wounded men. At this time Andrew was a boy of thirteen, and although he witnessed some of the severe fighting of the war, he of course took no active part in it. But as he grew older, without joining the militia he joined the small parties that went on retaliatory enterprises through the country. While engaged in one of these he was taken prisoner. While so held an English officer desired him to clean his riding-boots. Andrew refused, and the enraged officer aimed a blow at the youth with his sword. The boy received two deep gashes, one on his head and one on his hand, and his memory of the outrage was strong years afterwards.

In 1781, his mother, hearing of the sufferings of the prisoners on board the prison-ships at Charleston, went there to act as nurse. She contracted ship-fever and died of it, leaving Andrew a very poor and dependent orphan at the age of fifteen. He was then suffering from a low fever, which had lasted some time. When health returned he went to Charleston, and afterwards

Permission was granted, but the letter did not reach Jackson until six months later. Meanwhile Nichols, the English officer in command, prepared to move on Mobile, then an insignificant village of about 150 houses, deriving its importance from its position at the head of the bay. When General Jackson went thither to defend it, he decided that the point of attack and defence would be at what was then known as Fort Bowyer (afterwards Fort Morgan), a deserted and half-ruined fortification about thirty miles from the city. This he manned with a small garrison, and held until Mobile was secured and the English fleet had withdrawn from the bay. The struggle between the British and Americans now shifted to the neighborhood of New Orleans. A fleet had been sent to capture this city, and it was evident that the contest for its possession would be a desperate one. All the means of defence at Jackson's disposal consisted of about 3,000 troops in the city, 4,000 within fifteen days' march, eight armed vessels, and a small garrison of regular troops at Fort St. Philip. Opposed to him was a force of nearly 20,000 men, and fifty ships, carrying 1,000 guns. During the ensuing two months the bay was the scene of numerous contests, and the Delta surrounding New Orleans was fought over through its whole extent. At length, on the 8th of January, occurred what is known as the battle of New Orleans, in which Jackson exhibited a high degree of generalship, as well as of the iron obstinacy and courage which was his chief characteristic. The battle was a fierce one, and resulted in an overwhelming victory for the Americans. The decisive struggle of the day occupied only twenty-five minutes. Its results were, on the



British side: 700 killed; 1,400 wounded, and 500 prisoners. The American loss was in this wonderful charge only eight killed and thirteen wounded.

The news of this great victory delighted the whole nation. Illuminations and rejoicings took place in all the large cities. Soon afterwards a treaty of peace was signed at Ghent, and a messenger was despatched from Washington to General Jackson. The victor of New Orleans became the idol of the whole country. After some months of rest at the Hermitage he set out for Washington. He made the journey on horseback, and it was a triumphal progress. In Washington he was feted and flattered. Banquets were given in his honor, and a few months later he was appointed Governor of Florida.

As governor, Jackson displayed a certain harshness and prejudice against the Spaniards and the British. His temper was much soured by chronic ill health, and he himself appears to have perceived that civil service was hardly his appropriate field of action. He retired willingly from the governorship, and prepared to spend the rest of his days peacefully at the Hermitage. He was now fifty-four years of age, and he had never displayed any political ambition. But his great popularity, especially in the southwest, suggested him as a candidate for the presidency, and he was nominated as such in the political campaign of 1824. Mr. Adams was, however, the successful candidate. In 1828 Jackson was again proposed for the presidency, and was elected. During the time between his election and his inauguration his wife died, to the great and lasting grief of the general. This bereavement exercised a

saddening influence on him, and it is said that he was never quite the same man afterward.

It is to be regretted that Jackson, distinguished soldier as he was, introduced into political life a principle which obtains in war. "To the victor belong the spoils," is a saying attributed to him, and he proceeded to carry it out by immediately removing from offices numbers of employes whose only offence was that they were not his political friends or supporters. Thus he inaugurated the detestable system of rotation in office, and of removing experienced officers of the government to make way for his own friends, which has since become such a crying evil that the best efforts of American statesmen are now directed to its reform. In one month Jackson removed more office-holders than the previous presidents had done during their whole administrations. But General Jackson was a popular president, and in 1832 he received an overwhelming majority vote for re-election. During this administration occurred the first attempt of disaffected Southerners to establish the doctrine of "States' rights." The Nullification party, as it was called, was promptly reduced to submission by the determined action of the president. During the debates on the subject Webster was distinguished as the Northern leader, and Calhoun as the Southern. Jackson declared that the moment a nullification ordinance was passed Calhoun should be arrested and tried for high treason. He also prepared to call out an armed force to resist the nullifiers. In 1833 he wrote: "Nullification is dead. . . . The next pretext will be the negro or the slavery question."

In January, 1835, an attempt was made to assassinate the president by an Englishman named Lawrence.

This man had heard the enemies of Jackson make the assertion that the president had ruined the country, and, having been a long time out of employment, had brooded over the statement until he became crazy. The pistol missed fire, and the lunatic, after due inquiry, was placed in an asylum.

At seventy years of age Jackson retired from the presidency, and for some years lived the peaceful life of a planter on his estate. But he suffered much from ill health, as indeed he had done during the greater part of his life. His lungs had become diseased, and dropsical symptoms showed themselves. He bore intense pain with heroic fortitude. During the year 1844 he joined the church. Release from his sufferings came to him June 8, 1845. His death created a singular regret. Many who had been repelled by his arrogant and violent character did justice to his nobler qualities after his death. He was unquestionably a man of immense power—a born leader of men. It was said of him that if he entered any assembly of men and tidings of danger reached them an hour after, they would unanimously choose him to command them. His vices were those of his time, and were controlled and counterbalanced by many virtues.

to Salisbury, where he entered as a student the law office of Mr. Spruce McCay. Here he remained two years, but he does not appear to have been a very close student. "He was a roaring, rollicking, horse-racing, card-playing, mischievous fellow," is the testimony of one of those who knew him best. But no very profound study was required for law in those days, and the young man, being duly qualified to practice, removed to Nashville, and was immediately successful. Merchants who could not collect their debts came to him, and in less than a month he had issued seventy writs to delinquent debtors. In the four terms of 1794 Jackson was employed as counsel in 228 cases. His practice involved an extensive series of horseback rides; and more than one adventure with Indians took place while making his journeys from one settlement to another. While in Nashville he boarded with a Mrs. Donelson, whose daughter, Mrs. Robards, lived with her. The husband of the latter, a man of morose and quarrelsome temper, had left his wife and returned to his former home in Kentucky. Soon after he began proceedings for a divorce, and news was brought to the settlement that a divorce had been granted. Jackson then offered his hand to Mrs. Robards, and they were married. Two years later it was found that the divorce had been legally incomplete at the time of the marriage, and on ascertaining this, Jackson had the ceremony performed again. The peculiar circumstances of the marriage made Jackson sensitive. Devotedly attached to his wife, any imputation on her good name infuriated him, and some of the violent quarrels of his after life arose from some real or fancied insult to her.

In 1796 Jackson was elected to Congress, and two years later was appointed by the legislature to be a judge of the Supreme Court of the State. The salary attached to the office at that day was \$600 a year. It was considered the highest position in the State next to that of governor. A remarkable episode of Jackson's life at this period was his feud with Governor Sevier. It was a time of fighting; duels were of frequent occurrence, and rough-and-tumble fights between factions were not unknown. The curious quarrel between the governor and the judge lasted for years, and passed through every form of fighting, from wordy warfare to duels and faction fights, and finally sank into an exchange of abuse in newspaper columns. Another quarrel with a Mr. Dickinson did not end so harmlessly. Jackson shot Dickinson dead in a duel, and was severely wounded himself. Notwithstanding the turbulent character of Jackson in his dealings with the outside world, his home-life was singularly happy. His affection for his wife was tender and chivalrous. The only cloud on their happiness was the want of children, for this rough pioneer was exceedingly fond of children. He adopted the infant nephews of his wife, and treated them with fatherly affection.

At the beginning of the war of 1812 Jackson was living in retirement at the Hermitage, and was engaged somewhat extensively in farming. On the breaking out of hostilities he promptly offered his services, and the president accepted them. He was commissioned to command the forces from his own State. Two thousand troops were raised, and were ordered by the secretary of war to rendezvous at Natchez. It was then a formidable journey through a country which was almost a

wilderness. Having accomplished it, the disgust of general and soldiers may be imagined when they were informed soon after arriving at Natchez that the services of the corps were not needed, and that it was dismissed with the thanks of the government. They received no pay, no means of transport, no provision for the sick. Jackson was furious, but he determined to bring back his men to their own State. It was a march of 500 miles, and the difficulties and hardships encountered were severe. Jackson became a great favorite both with his men and with the country at large for his conduct on this otherwise fruitless expedition.

In August, 1813, a number of white settlers, alarmed by rumored movements among the Creek Indians, had collected within an enclosure known as Fort Mims, which was surrounded by a stockade and defended by a small force—about 240 men. The space enclosed was about an acre of land, and within this limit, including the soldiers, there were collected 553 persons, of whom about 100 were women and children. Here they remained unmolested for a month, and had begun to think that there was no ground for alarm. On the 30th of August, as the drum beat for dinner, the inmates of the fort assembled for the noonday meal, the men laying aside their weapons. In a ravine, only 400 yards from the fortress, 1,000 Creek warriors were concealed. The drum-beat was the signal for their attack. They swarmed across the space from the ravine, and in a few moments the enclosure was surrounded. The inmates, rushing to arms, fought desperately, even women and boys taking part in the conflict. About three o'clock fire broke out in the enclosure, and the

horrors of the scene are indescribable. The Indians poured into the fort, and by sunset of that day had massacred 400 of the 553 inmates. Not one woman or child escaped, and all that Indian brutality could suggest was inflicted on these unfortunates. Such was the massacre at Fort Mims.

It sent terror through all the Southern country, but was little regarded at the North, which was then fully occupied with the war with England. But the people of Tennessee, in nineteen days after the massacre, held a meeting to raise troops against the Indians, and appointed General Jackson to command them. For the next eight months the war against the Indians was carried on with all the daring courage common to the pioneers, quickened by the resentment excited by the Fort Mims massacre. The Indians fought with the savage courage of their race, but were gradually driven from the State. Large numbers of them took refuge in Florida, while others moved westward. Finally their chief, Weathersford, the son of a white man and a Seminole woman, and leader of the Indians at Fort Mims, surrendered to Jackson in person.

When peace was fully established with the Indians, Jackson was appointed to conduct the campaign against the English in the southwest. He rested from his labors only three weeks before entering on his new command. He was very much opposed to permitting the conquered Creeks to settle in Florida, and when he found that the English were in treaty with the Indians, and had actually enlisted great numbers of them in their service, he appealed to the secretary of war for permission to attack Pensacola and reduce Florida.