

## ANDREW JACKSON.

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ANDREW JACKSON, one of the men whose good fortune it has been to leave an indelible mark on American history, was born on March 15, 1767, almost on the dividing line separating the western portions of what were then the English colonies of North and South Carolina. Like so many of the men who played a leading part in settling and raising to power the West and Southwest, he belonged to that stern and virile race, the Presbyterian Irish. During the middle decades of the eighteenth century the most important of the swarms of immigrants who came to America were these so-called Scotch-Irish. At that time they were more bitterly hostile to England than the Celtic-Irish themselves, and they and their sons and grandsons were enthusiastic supporters of the Patriot party during our Revolution.

Jackson himself was too young to take any part in the revolution as a soldier; but his kin-people and their friends fought and suffered for the American cause, and young Andrew helped them as well as a resolute, hardy boy might. The fortunes of the war in the Southern States were very various, and during one period of disaster the Royal troops over-ran the county where Jackson's family lived and treated the inhabitants with much brutality, as was too often the custom among both Whigs and Tories in those days though neither side ever began to behave with such brutality as did the English and Irish in Ireland, in 1798, or the French and other nations of Continental Europe at the same time. The Jacksons themselves were among those who were thus ill-treated. Young Andrew was struck by a British officer, with a sword, for refusing to pull off his boots, when made captive with other American militia after an unsuccessful fight. The sword scarred both his head and the hand with which he sought to ward the blow, and Jackson, as implacable in enmity as he was persistent in friendship, never forgot nor forgave the injury, and never cherished any save feelings of hostility toward the na-

tion of the officer who inflicted it. After being thus captured he was for some time imprisoned, and was not released until famine and fever had brought him almost to death's door.

After the close of the war he resided for some years in western North Carolina. He grew up a tall, spare young man, of fiery, resolute temper and high animal spirits, fond of all athletic sports and of horse-racing and cock-fighting and games of chance. His physical prowess and hot courage rendered him a most redoubtable foe, and there were few bullies of the neighborhood who did not shun an encounter with him. His early mental training was received at an "old-field" school; afterward he went to a log "academy" of somewhat more pretentious character. As he approached years of maturity he studied, and began the practice of, law.

When twenty-one years old he made up his mind to better his fortune by removing to what was then the far West, and accordingly he journeyed through the wilderness to Nashville, Tennessee. Nashville was at that time a straggling village of rude log huts planted down in the midst of the beautiful forest country of middle Tennessee. It had scarcely grown beyond the stockade stage, and was even yet at times in mortal dread of Indian attack. Small bodies of savages harrassed the outskirts, killing stragglers and driving off horses, and also infested the trails which led from the town southward to Natches, northward to Kentucky, or eastward to the older settled country along the head waters of the Clinch and Holston.

Jackson had precisely the qualities fitted to render him a man of mark in this turbulent backwoods community. The Indian fighters, game hunters, and frontier farmers who made up the population had many faults and shortcomings; but they were, after all, essentially a manly race, and they respected the young lawyer both for his indomitable courage and physical prowess, and for the resolute determination with which he stood

by his friends and upheld the cause of order—as order was understood in that place and at that time. When Tennessee was made a state, in 1796, Jackson was elected as its first Congressman, and shortly afterward as one of its senators. He took little part in the proceedings while a member of the national legislature. In the backwoods, love of freedom tended to confound itself with lawlessness, and the Federalist party had comparatively few supporters. Jackson himself was a radical Democrat in his feelings at this time, and he carried his party spirit so far as to refuse to take part in any measure designed to recognize the wisdom and beneficence of Washington's administration. In after years it is not likely that even Jackson, little prone though he was to feel regret for any thing he had done, cared to remember his attitude of sullen hostility to the founder of the Federal Government.

In 1798 Jackson returned to live in Tennessee, being made a Judge of the Supreme Court of the State. He had already become a man of so much prominence as to be thrown into hostile collision with Governor Sevier, the famous Indian fighter and backwoods warrior, who was then easily first in the affections of the Tennesseans. Duels and street fights were at that time the recognized methods whereby gentlemen expressed their discontent with one another, and Sevier and Jackson indulged in several abortive scuffles; but as a matter of fact, each had such a reputation as a fighter that the other was a little bit cautious in pushing him to extremities, and their difficulties were finally patched up. This was not always the result in Jackson's duels however, notably in one which he fought with a man named Dickenson. Dickenson was a crack shot and got the first fire, wounding Jackson severely in the body. The latter however made no sign of having been hit, and, firing back with the utmost steadiness, inflicted a mortal wound on his foe.

When Jackson was but twenty-four years old he married Mrs. Rachael Robards, the daughter of one of the old Nashville pioneers, Donaldson. Mrs. Robards' husband was living at the time, and being of a very jealous nature and having had many quarrels with his wife, was striving to obtain a divorce. Both Jackson and Mrs. Robards thought the divorce had been obtained, and it was not until they had been married for some time that they learned that such was not the case;

and as a matter of fact it was not granted for two years afterward. Jackson was devoted to the wife whom he married under these rather inauspicious circumstances, and to the day of her death treated her with the most loving and tender kindness and respect. The peculiar circumstances of their marriage made him extremely sensitive to the least reflection upon it. It was the one subject to which no man dared allude, save with all possible respect, in his presence, or at any time when there was a chance of the allusion being brought to his ears.

During the first decade of the present century he tilled a plantation and kept a small store for a living, having taken up his home at the Hermitage, outside of Nashville, his house being then merely a large log cabin two stories high with a piazza and a huge, roaring fire-place. He remained, however, one of the leading spirits of Tennessee, and the war of 1812 brought him at once into national prominence.

He went heartily into the war from the first; was commissioned as a General, and took the field with a column of raw militia. The first campaign however, resulted in nothing. The insubordination and fickleness of the militia and the intrigues of rivals rendered all Jackson's efforts abortive. In 1813 he was back at Nashville, and together with two of his friends got involved in a by no means creditable affray with the Bentons, during the course of which he was severely wounded; but in the fall of that year the opportunity for distinction came, in the Creek war.

When the Creeks rose and opened the war with the terrible massacre at Fort Mimms, all Tennessee was at once thrown into a ferment of excitement. Troops were speedily raised for a campaign into the country of the hostile indians, the Red Sticks, as they were styled. The column which Jackson commanded, after suffering some vicissitudes of fortune, finally won the decisive battle of the Horse-shoe Bend, in which the defeated Creeks, after a desperate resistance, were butchered almost to a man. Immediately afterward, the hostile chief, Weathersford, galloped into Jackson's camp entirely alone and surrendered himself.

Jackson's name was now well known at Washington, and to him was allotted the defense of the Gulf Coast. With an army composed mainly of Tennesseans he marched southward to the Gulf, drove the Spaniards

from Pensacola and took his post at New Orleans, which was at that moment menaced by the attack of the most formidable British force sent to America during the war. During the next few days Jackson showed military talent of a very high order. With his raw troops he threw himself furiously on the British vanguard in a night attack, and handled it so roughly as to bring the whole forward movement of the enemy to a standstill until he had time to make preparations for a defense. When the British again advanced they found the American lines covered by strong earthworks, mounting a number of heavy guns and manned by the best marksmen of the Tennessee backwoods. They first attempted to batter down the earthworks with artillery, and were fairly beaten by the superior dexterity of the American gunners. Then, on January, 8, 1815, they attempted to carry the lines by assault and were repulsed with terrible slaughter, their commander in chief himself being among the slain. A few days afterward they disembarked, and almost at the same time the news of peace was brought.

Jackson's success was achieved against the best troops of all Europe, while his own soldiers were militia or raw regulars whom he himself had trained. He was almost the only commander who ever succeeded in making the backwoodsmen amenable to discipline, but they loved and admired him extremely, and feared him not a little—a fear by no means without foundation, as he, and he alone among backwoods commanders, summarily punished in various ways, even by death, those of his men who were guilty of any flagrant disobedience of orders or breach of discipline.

The battle of New Orleans at once made Jackson one of the heroes of the country. His military service was even yet not at an end, for in 1818 the Seminole war broke out and he was sent against these refractory Indians. After a few months of wearisome campaign he reduced them to order for the time being, and incidentally, with a characteristic contempt for the niceties of international law, captured one or two Spanish forts which he deemed to be on American territory, and hung off-hand a couple of Englishmen whom he found among the Spaniards, and whom he decided were spies.

At this time the political leadership of the country still remained in the hands of the

men who had helped at the foundation of the government. Virginia, and after her Massachusetts, were the two leading states. But there was a great feeling of unrest growing up in the country at large, and the rising tide of Democracy had long been chafing at the restraints imposed upon it by the old school politicians of the stamp of Madison, Monroe, Gallatin, and Adams. This rampant Democracy eagerly pitched upon Andrew Jackson as its fit champion and representative. The year 1824 saw the complete break up of the Jeffersonian Democracy, which had taken office in 1801. The presidency was scrambled for by four candidates, one of whom was Jackson. The friends of Adams, of Massachusetts, and the friends of Clay, of Kentucky, united, however, and elected the former, who put Clay into his Cabinet as Secretary of State. Jackson furiously denounced this as a corrupt bargain, with, so far as appears, little or no justification. He had been reluctant at first to be drawn into political contests, but once in, the joy of battle overcame him, and his desire to succeed and to humble his foes took strong hold upon him. His followers began to call themselves first Jackson men and then Democrats, while the supporters of Adams and Clay became known as Whigs. In 1828 the fight was between Jackson and Adams, and the defeat of the latter was complete, Jackson carrying the entire West, almost all the South, and most of the Middle States. In 1832 he was re-elected over Clay.

As President, Jackson did much good and much evil. He was wholly incapable of distinguishing between a public and a private foe. To him an enemy of his own was of necessity an enemy of the nation, and he followed both with inveterate hostility. He wrought the nation permanent harm by introducing the most virulent form of the "spoils" system of politics into national affairs, turning out his political opponents wholesale and supplying their places with men whose only virtue was their partisanship. As a natural result, the public service deteriorated largely in efficiency, and embezzlement and fraud in connection with the public moneys became more frequent than ever before or since. He also became involved in a savage war with the United States Bank, a war in which he was ultimately successful. He had much justice on his side in this contest, and the destruction of the bank was by

no means altogether to be regretted ; but he created a worse evil than he destroyed when he undertook to meddle with the finances and help out divers wild-cat State Banks. The tremendous commercial panic in 1837 was due in part to his wild financial policy, although there were other causes as potent in producing it. However, there was one point where Jackson did so well that a lover of the nation must needs forgive him much for its sake. At this time South Carolina had entered on a career of nullification and incipient secession. Jackson had many faults, but he was devotedly attached to the Union, and he had no thought of fear when it came to defending his country. By his resolute and defiant bearing and his fervent

championship of the Federal Government he over-awed the Disunionist party and staved off for thirty years the attempt at secession.

After leaving the presidency, in 1837, he retired to the Hermitage, where he lived peacefully and happily until 1845, dying on June 8th of that year. With the exception of Washington and Lincoln, no man has left a deeper mark on American history ; and though there is much in his career to condemn, yet all true lovers of America can unite in paying hearty respect to the memory of a man who was emphatically a true American, who served his country valiantly on the field of battle against a foreign foe, and who upheld with the most stanch devotion the cause of the great Federal Union.