

# THE COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT.

I have sworn upon the Altar of God, eternal hostility to every form of Tyranny over the Mind of Man.—Thomas Jefferson

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## MISCELLANEOUS.

From the Democratic Review, for September.

### ANECDOTES OF GENERAL JACKSON.

BY ARMS KENDALL.

Public men often suffer great wrong in reference as well to their private as their public character and conduct, from the misrepresentations of their political adversaries frequently aggravated by personal animosities. Individuals of a party who mean to be honest, and would not in a word or thought intentionally do injustice to a human being, often believe, with a too ready credulity, the assertions of party presses, political leaders and personal enemies, thereby becoming accomplices in the infliction of injuries at which their own consciences, if properly instructed, would revolt with horror.

The opinions imbibed by a large portion of mankind in reference to the temper and conduct of General Jackson in his personal relations, furnish a striking illustration of these truths. Multitudes there are, both in the United States and other countries, who, having received their impressions without due consideration, from presses and persons opposed to him, believe that distinguished man to be reckless of religious faith, if not of moral obligation, ferocious to temper, and in all the relations of life a tyrant. Such individuals will learn with astonishment, that this picture is all the reverse of truth; that the tone of Gen. Jackson's mind during his Presidency was decidedly devout; that no man could be more kind and indulgent in all his private relations; and that if he be censurable on this score, it is for too much forbearance. With what pain he found himself compelled to give up his favorable opinion of old friends, and with what tenacity he clung to them, in many cases, after every body else pronounced them venal and treacherous, was witnessed by those who were intimate with him during his administration. But without touching at present upon any thing connected with his political course, I propose to give in the present and in some succeeding papers a few authentic anecdotes which will tend to correct the erroneous opinions entertained by many as to his religious impressions and imputed violence of temper.

Those who sat down with Gen. Jackson at his private table to break bread, know with what fervor he uniformly invoked the blessings of Heaven upon the repast provided by its bounty. A stranger could not witness the scene without according to the venerable man before him, who thus bowed his grey head in humble supplication to the Giver of all good, a heart sincerely religious.

All will remember, that toward the close of his administration the General was attacked by a bleeding at the lungs which threatened to be fatal. Nor will it be forgotten, that some of the party presses attributed this attack to a violent fit of passion, in the paroxysms of which they said he had ruptured a blood vessel. What a contrast the real scene presented, I had an opportunity to learn from the mouth of an eye witness. The cruel fabrication had reached the members of the President's family, and from the

lips of Mrs. Jackson, the lady of the General's adopted son, rendered unusually eloquent by the indignation which lighted up her beautiful face, I heard the following narrative:

'Father,' said she, 'is in the habit, every night before he goes to bed, of calling me to read to him a chapter in the Bible. On that night, having finished his business, he called me in to perform that service. I read to him as usual, and having finished the chapter, received from him an affectionate good night and retired to my bed chamber, which was in an adjoining room. He then called the servant who usually attended on him in his chamber, and was undressing.— Suddenly he called me, and entering the room I found him bleeding at the mouth.— What produced the attack I know not; but certain it is, that so far from indulging in any outbreaks of temper, his mind was calm and devotional, seeking to close the business of the day by communion with heaven.

The practice of reading or listening to a chapter of Holy Writ and sending up fervent aspirations to heaven every night before he retired to rest, Gen. Jackson brought with him into the Presidency. No man had a deeper sense of dependence on the Giver of all good, or a more sincere and earnest desire to avail himself of the wisdom which comes from on high, in the discharge of his arduous duties. But it cannot be doubted, that in his devotional fervor there was mingled a holy and never dying affection for his departed wife, whose presence was, in his susceptible imagination, as necessary an incident of Heaven as that of the angels.

A portrait of this dear object of his earthly affections hung in his chamber.— 'Is that a good likeness?' said a lady in my presence. 'Pretty good,' said he, 'but not so good as this,' taking a miniature from his bosom.

On another occasion, calling upon him on some urgent business, I was invited into his bed chamber. I found him too ill to see up. The curtains in front of his bed were open, and he lay with his head somewhat elevated on a full pillow. Opposite the foot of his bed, nearly touching the post, stood a little table, and on it was the miniature of Mrs. Jackson leaning against a small Bible and a Prayer Book which had been hers. It was evidently so placed that he might, as he lay, gaze upon the shadow of those loved features which had enraptured his youthful heart, and contemplate those virtues which, in old age, and even death, rendered them dear to the bosom of the hero and statesman beyond any other earthly object.

I was not then so thoroughly acquainted with Gen. Jackson as I afterwards became; but witnessing this scene, I said to myself *this must be a good man*. None other could entertain so deep, so abiding an affection for a departed companion, however cherished while living. Love like this is all good, all heavenly, all divine, as nearly as anything on earth possibly can be; it cannot dwell in a bad heart; it cannot assimilate with a perverted mind.

I had never seen Mrs. Jackson; but from that moment I pronounced her a superior woman. None but a woman of surpassing virtues could so fix the affections of such a man. None other could maintain such a mind, amid the enjoyment of glory, the gratification of ambition, the cares of state, and never ceasing excitements sufficient to overpower and swallow up the kindly affections of ordinary men. None other could occupy, in life and in death, so broad a space in the remembrance and affections of one who in devotion to his country never had a superior. And I could not but regret that she had not lived, not so much to enjoy a signal triumph over her own and her husband's traducers, as to comfort, advise, and sustain her devoted companion in the midst of never ceasing toils and vexations, the heartlessness of false friends, and the assaults of unrelenting enemies.

Who that visited the president's house during General Jackson's administration does not remember Jemmy O'Neal, the Irish door keeper? Jemmy was kind hearted but blunt in his manner; so much on some occasions as to appear rude if not insulting. Often one might ring the bell time after time, and no Jemmy make his appearance. There was a particular cause for Jemmy's apparent rudeness and occasional absence.

Calling one day upon business, I rang the bell repeatedly, but no doorkeeper appeared. As I had done before under like circumstances, I opened the door and walked up stairs to the President's office. There I found the General and Major Donelson. Presently the bell rang again, again and again. 'Where can Jemmy be?' said the General. 'Drunk, most likely,' replied Major Donelson. I then stated that I had not been able to raise him, though I had rung until I was tired, and that this was not the first occasion Major Donelson then observed, that this difficulty was now of almost daily recurrence; that he had on several occasions, found Jemmy in his room wholly unable to get to the door; that when not so disabled, his conduct towards visitors was often, from his peculiar situation, anything but polite or respectful, and he expressed his opinion in very decided terms, that a more suitable person should be entrusted with that duty. 'Well, well,' said the General, 'we cannot bear it any longer; tell Jemmy he must find a home elsewhere.'

Again and again I called, and Jemmy still presented his rubicund face at the door, often in a plight not befitting his station.— 'How is this?' said I to Major Donelson. 'I heard the General tell you that Jemmy must be discharged.' 'Yes,' said the major, 'and that was the third time I had received such an order; but on each occasion Jemmy waited on the general in person was exceedingly sorry for his fault, shed tears of repentance in abundance, promised to behave better in future if he could be forgiven this once, and never desisted until he obtained a promise that he should be tried a while longer.

And whoever was familiar at the White House, will remember Jemmy's red face and bluff voice at the door down to the end of General Jackson's administration, ever and anon repeating his fault, and as often by unfeigned repentance and distress, extorting forgiveness from his kind hearted master.

Can such traits of character belong to a tyrant or a bad man? All that is good in human nature answers, no.

It is generally known to the friends of Gen. Jackson, that he has committed all his papers, &c. to the hands of Mr. Kendall, from whose able hand a biography worthy of the subject may be expected at no very distant day. In the mean time, the readers of the Democratic Review will have the benefit of some portions of these authentic materials, for the illustration of some of the most interesting passages in the life of the great and good old man.—Ed. D. R.

### TAKING A FOOL'S ADVICE.

A baronet of the last century, whose mansion was in Yorkshire, was supposed to be dead, when the following conversation took place between his jester or fool, and one of his servants:

Servant—Our master is gone.

Fool—Ah, whither is he gone?

Servant—To heaven I hope.

Fool—To heaven! no that he has not I am sure.

Servant—Why so?

Fool—Why, because heaven is a great way off, and when my master was going a long journey, he used for some time to talk about and prepare for it, but I never heard him speak of heaven or make any preparation for going he cannot therefore be gone thither.

The Baronet however, recovered, and this conversation being told him, he was so struck by it, that he immediately began to prepare for his journey to that country; 'from whose bourne no traveller returns.'

### THE NUN'S DOOM.

BY H. SYMMES.

Near the town of Asperitia in the romantic land of Spain, stands a large square dark looking house, with nothing to relieve the barrenness of the high walls, but a few holes with gratings, and which bears the appearance rather of loopholes than windows. It is scarce strong enough to be a prison, nor does it resemble a convent, from the absence of steeple. The superstructure, which is in reality however, a nunnery crowns an eminence at the centre of the town. There is something so gloomy about the tower—something so full of vague and awful mystery, that I shuddered involuntarily when I beheld it, and when sometime afterwards, I came to learn one of the deeds which those gloomy walls had witnessed, I was almost tempted to believe in supernatural influences, so vague and chill had been the emotion of horror which I felt on beholding that antique building for the first time. The story was related to me by an old lady, who in her youth had been an inmate of this convent for many years. Never shall I forget the tone and gesture with which she spoke as follows:

There was a lady in our convent, who, during the two years that had elapsed since her arrival, had scarcely exchanged a word with any of the other nuns. She remained constantly secluded in her cell, excepting when summoned by the tolling of the bell to join in the devotions of the community in the choir. She was shunned and avoided by most of the nuns, who generally supposed some terrible crime oppressed her conscience for a calm and gloomy despair, upon her pale brow, and gave a wild, yet melancholy expression to her beautiful and dignified features. Her figure was lofty and noble, but emaciated by sufferings.— Her prayers and religious duties were repeated and performed with unusual fervor.

Often had I remarked, with feelings of commiseration, her wasted form thrown into an attitude of humble and earnest supplication; her pale, though beautiful features formed into an expression of the most poignant grief; her eyes raised to Heaven and dimmed by burning tears. Thus she would long remain, with her arms crossed upon her breast, and motionless as a statue with the exception of a convulsive quivering of her lips. Suddenly she would throw herself upon the ground in a paroxysm of despair, and sob aloud, pronouncing some inarticulate words, as if complaining of her total incapacity to quell the fearful tempest raised within her breast by the conflict of opposed and unconquerable feelings. Again would she strive to raise her heart to God; but in vain. She found no relief in prayers; and, in her utter hopelessness, finding that even 'Religion' could not mitigate her torments, she fell exhausted, and she extended her bosom and invoking death to put an end to her miserable and wretched existence.

Compassionating her sufferings, I essayed to offer her some consolation. She was moved by the sincere expression of my pity, and perceived that I also was unfortunate.

The similarity of our feelings and misfortunes instinctively drew us towards each other, and I soon gained her friendship and learnt the cause of her grief.

Her name was Amelia; she was the daughter of the Count B.—Her crime had been the forming of a strong attachment towards a young officer in the army, a man of strict honor and principle, but whose family and prospect were unfortunately beneath the notice of the proud Count of B.—, who would have thought himself disgraced by such an alliance. He forbid his daughter to speak, to her lover, or even to think of him, she entreated, he sternly repeated his commands and left her; he was disobeyed; the enraged count brought her to the convent, and forced her to take the veil, threatening, if she refused to cause the officer to be assassinated. This had deter-

mined her, and saved her lover's life at the sacrifice of her liberty and happiness. For two long years she had struggled ineffectually to forget, and to offer to the God to whom she had concentrated her existence, a heart pure and free from all worldly affections and regret. But, alas! never could she succeed in erasing from her heart the fond memory of her lover; which notwithstanding all our efforts to the contrary, continued to hold entire possession of her soul. His image haunted and pained her every where. It was in vain for her to seek consolation in prayer; her thoughts would still wander away from her God, and dwell upon her lover. And this constant conflict between love and religion—the fond recollections of the past lost to her forever, and the torments to which she imagined herself to be doomed for the future—was the canker which wore and wasted her form, and whithered her strength whilst the burning fever within her breast raged on unabated.

Months flew, and time but increased her sufferings; all hope had long deserted her. One day, she remained alone in the choir, after the termination of evening prayers; she was, as usual, imploring for mercy and relief. Her meditations were interrupted by hearing her name pronounced distinctly, though in a whisper. She listened and heard it again, she started, arose, and looked down into the church, and remained thrilled with emotion, supported by a pillar to which she clung, for she recognised by the gleam of light—yes—she could not be mistaken—she recognised her lover. Fearful of detection, he threw a letter into the choir, over the lattice-work, and disappeared.— She was weak enough to read it. It said that by her father's influence, he had been sent on board of a vessel which took him to Havana where he was appointed to a regiment. He had petitioned in vain for leave to return to Spain, and even for his discharge, from the service. Both had been refused. Unable to live without her, he had, at the last sacrificed every thing, even his honor, to seek her again. He had deserted, to find her on his arrival in Spain buried in a convent. He told her that it was impossible that God would accept of vows which force and fear alone had extorted from her—they could not be considered as binding. He conjured her, if she still loved him, to fly with him to a foreign land, to repay the sacrifice he had made for her by a similar sacrifice; and then they would pass the rest of their days in retirement, in peace and happiness.

He promised happiness, when nothing could exceed the wretchedness of her existence—when she felt that even death itself would be unable to erase him from her heart. Was it possible that she could refuse?

I assisted them in their flight, which was effected with the greater facility, as not the slightest suspicion was entertained of such an attempt being in contemplation. The anxiety of avoiding pursuit made them take to the mountains. Being unprovided with a guide they lost their way and wandered until the horse that bore them fell exhausted. They proceeded on foot, and having at last met with a shepherd, they persuaded him to guide them. They pursued their weary journey, and after walking all day and all night, their eyes were gladdened at the sight of the French frontier. A few minutes more, they would be safe! At this moment they perceived with horror a detachment of troops that had been despatched in their pursuit, upon the discovery of Amelia's escape being made known in the convent. They still strove to go on, straining every nerve, but their wearied limbs tottered beneath them. The troops came up, overtook and surrounded them. Amelia's lover driven to madness by disappointment, began to use his weapons furiously in her defence, but a bullet laid him dead at her feet. She then lost all recollection. Upon recovering her senses, Amelia found herself again in the convent. Before she should recollect her thoughts, and awaken from the