

PREFACE.

THE cause for which General Jackson fought and died, has been overthrown. But it is believed that this fact has not diminished the affectionate reverence for his memory, and interest in his exploits, felt by those who labored with him in that cause. On the contrary, they regard the events which have occurred since his lamented death, as farther evidences of his genius and prowess. Although he who undertakes to write the history of an acknowledged failure usually has a hopeless and discouraging topic, yet the lustre of Jackson's exploits and character is too bright to be dimmed, even by disaster: and his is universally admitted, by his friends and foes, to be a name so spotless that it shines independent of the cause with which he was connected.

My chief motive for supplying this customary exordium to my book, is the wish to answer the natural question in the reader's mind, what right I suppose myself to have, to claim qualification for the task I have assumed. My answer is, that it has been entrusted to me by the widow and family of General Jackson, supported by the urgency of his successor in command, Lieutenant-General Ewell, of his venerable pastor, and of many other friends, in, and out of the army. One advantage for my work, I may claim, which brings far more of responsibility than of credit to me, in the possession of the fullest collection of materials. The correspondence of General Jackson with his family, his pastor, and his most prominent friends in public life, has been in my hands, together with copies of all the important official papers on file in the War Department of the late Confederate Government. I have had the advantage of the fullest illustrations of the battle-fields and the

theatre of war where General Jackson acted, from the topographical department of the same government, and from careful personal inspection. It was also my privilege to enjoy his friendship, although not under his orders, during the campaign of Manassa's, in 1861; and to serve next his person, as chief of his Staff, during the memorable campaigns of the Valley and the Chickahominy, in 1862. So that I had personal knowledge of the events on which the structure of his military fame was first reared.

My prime object has been to portray and vindicate his Christian character, that his countrymen may possess it as a precious example, and may honor that God in it, whom he so delighted to honor. It is for this purpose that the attempt was made so carefully to explain and defend his action, as citizen and soldier, in recent events. Next, it was desired to unfold his military genius, as displayed in his campaigns. The prominent characteristic of General Jackson was his scrupulous truthfulness. This Life has been written under the profound impression, that no quality could be so appropriate as this, in the narrative which seeks to commemorate his noble character. Hence, the most laborious pains have been taken to verify every fact, and to give the story in its sober accuracy, and with impartial justice to all. I am well aware that perfection is not the privilege of man, in any of his works; and hence I must be prepared to be convinced, by the criticisms of others, that I have not been wholly successful in this aim. But I trust I have been so far successful, as to receive credit for right intentions. And especially would I declare, that in relating the share borne by General Jackson's comrades and subordinates in his campaigns, I have been actuated by a cordial and friendly desire to do justice to all. If I shall seem to any to have done less than this, it will be my misfortune, and not my intention.

If my story presents the hero without any of those *bizarre* traits, which the popular fancy loves to find in its especial favorites, it is hoped that the picture will be, for this reason, more symmetrical, and if not so startling, more pleasing to every cultivated mind. The reader may at least have the satisfaction of knowing that it is the correct picture, save that no pencil can do justice to his

devoted patriotism, his diligence, his courage, and the sanctity of his morals.

The reader will note a certain polemic tone in the discussions which attend the narrative ; and while strict truthfulness has been studied, candid expression has been given to the feelings natural to a participant in the recent struggle. The explanation is, in part, this : that the whole work was written before the termination of the contest ; the first portion, containing all the controversial matter, was published in Great Britain more than a year ago, and has been circulated in that country and this ; and the remainder of the biography was in process of publication when the Confederate armies surrendered. The *animus* of my book will not appear strange to any one who remembers, that when it was published, my fellow-citizens were universally engaged in a strenuous war against the United States, and I was myself in the military commission of the Confederate States. The question may be asked, Does not the termination of that contest by the complete submission of the South, point out the propriety of modifying the tone of the work ? After a careful consideration of this question, I have been constrained to believe, that it was best to leave my original work substantially untouched. As has been stated, the first eight chapters, containing all that is most controversial, had been irrevocably given to the public, many months before the end of the war. To attempt to recall and suppress it now, would appear rather a foolish scrupulosity than sound wisdom. Nor would this course be consistent with the interests of literature. It has been often said, that cotemporaries cannot write impartial histories of their own times, because of their too lively sympathy with the passions which agitate the actors. It is more certainly true, that if cotemporaries do not write, with such partiality or impartiality as they may, it will be impossible for any other historian in posterity, to write a truthful narrative. None but eye-witnesses and actors can contribute the facts, which are to be the materials of future history. And their facts are esteemed by the philosophic and judicial compiler of the subsequent age, as scarcely more important than their *animus*. He wishes to know, not only what men did, but how they felt,—how the events transpiring

affected them, — from what impulses and views they acted. While he does not blindly adopt the passions of either party, it is these which enable him to reproduce the very complexion and color of the times he describes. Hence, it is for the interests of historic truth that those who describe cotemporary events, should give candid expression to the emotions of their times.

It may also be asked: Does not the duty of promoting mutual forbearance, and the restoration of good feeling between the sections lately at war, require the suppression of controverted opinions, and of accusations, which, however true, can now be urged with no good result? In answering this objection, I shall candidly acknowledge myself utterly sceptical, both by temperament and conviction, of that deceitful and glozing philosophy, by which it is dictated. There is no true and solid basis for public well-being, but rectitude. The truth, manfully spoken, can never be unwholesome. If the complaints of the conquered section are just, then they ought to be stated and discussed, until a stable foundation for peace, good government, good feeling, and prosperity, is laid in just and magnanimous treatment. If those complaints are unjust, still it is best that they be candidly stated, respectfully listened to, and calmly discussed, as long as they are sincerely entertained in the hearts of the sufferers: for only in this way can they be eradicated. It is to me simply incredible, that a people so shrewd and practical as those of the United States, should expect us to have discarded, through the logic of the sword merely, the convictions of a lifetime; or that they could be deceived by us, should we be base enough to assert it of ourselves. They know that the people of the South were conquered, and not convinced; and that the authority of the United States was accepted by us from necessity, and not from preference. Should they hear the Southern people now disclaiming and reprobating the principles which are unfolded in my book as the animating principles of General Jackson, they must inevitably remember, that this Southern people, three years ago, was unanimously applauding and inciting him in acting them out: so that it would be self-evident to our conquerors, that we were either traitorously false to our darling hero, then; or are equally false to them,

now. The people of the United States have too much shrewdness ever to suppose, that the sons of the Revolutionary sires who, as their comrades, assisted in winning liberty from the British Lion, and who have recently given new proofs of their undegenerate manhood, are spaniels, to be made affectionate by stripes. The people of the South went to war, because they sincerely believed (what their political fathers had taught them, with one voice, for two generations) that the doctrine of State-sovereignty for which they fought, was absolutely essential as the bulwark of the liberties of the people. They have been convinced by main force, that they are unable to save that doctrine. The only way to make them truly loyal again to the government of the United States, is to convince them by just treatment, that they went to war under a misapprehension, and that their liberties may still be securely and fully enjoyed under a consolidated government. It would be only a useless and degrading concealment, for the people of the South to profess a suppression of the honest convictions upon which they have lately acted, either at the dictate of deceit on their part, or of persecution on the part of their conquerors. For these reasons, it has appeared to me every way most manly and beneficial, to leave this explication and defence of General Jackson's resistance to the Federal Government, as it was written during the progress of the conflict. Its suppression would conceal nothing, and deceive nobody: its publication will give to subsequent generations a lively picture of the temper of the times.

But I am ready to add, with equal candor, that when I thus declare boldly the principles upon which the Virginians of 1861 acted, I do not intend to be understood as retracting that acquiescence in the result of the arbitrament of the sword, and that submission promised by me in common with almost the whole South. I have voluntarily sworn to obey the government of the United States, as at present established and expounded to us by force of arms. That oath it is my purpose to keep. The Federal agent who administered it to me taught me expressly that its obligation was of this extent, and no more: that it did not bind me to think or say the principles on which

I had acted were erroneous ; but to abstain, in future, from the assertion of them by force of arms.

It only remains to add a few words in explanation of the illustrations which accompany the text. It is earnestly recommended to the attentive reader, that he shall connect his perusal of the descriptive parts of the narrative with a careful study of the map of Virginia. This is so accessible to all Americans, that it was thought superfluous to burden this work with the expense of its insertion. A simple diagram is inserted, to facilitate the comprehension of each of the more important battles. These plates have been carefully prepared, from actual inspections and surveys, made by Confederate engineers ; but they are simplified by leaving out all except the most essential lines and features. The intelligent reader, even though not a military man, will readily apprehend, that the representation of the positions of brigades and divisions of troops in action, by lines upon a diagram, can only be approximately correct. The lines of ink are, of course, stationary ; the lines of troops in action are never long so. The relative position assigned to two divisions on the diagram may be a correct representation of their relation on the field of actual strife, for a fleeting moment only ; a minute more may have changed it. The diagram must, perforce, either contain both of two divisions at once, which in fact only occupied the field successively ; or it must suggest a still graver error, by the total omission of one of them. But if these obvious considerations are borne in mind, and the illustrations are studied in connection with the narrative, they will convey no mistake, and will be found to represent, with general correctness, the positions and movements of the Confederate troops.

ROBERT L. DABNEY.

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