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BY G. W. CALLAHAN. CAMBRIDGE, Md.---SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1834. WHOLE NO. 499.

TERMS:

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THE GENTLE RECRUIT.

[CONTINUED.]

JACKSON'S NARRATIVE.

"By what secret and irresistible influence I am impelled to make a confident of you, I know not. It is true, that, from the moment when we first met, you have appeared to feel an interest in my favor; nor have I forgotten the kind and generous manner in which you warned me of the consequences of the rash step which I was about to take; neither has your marked delicacy of conduct, since I came as a prisoner immediately under your command, escaped by observation. But these things furnish no rational reason why I should disclose my shame to you; they would rather lead me, were I master of my own actions, to conceal it. I am not, however, master of my own actions. There is a curse upon me—a terrible and deadly curse, which operates at all moments of my sleeping and waking existence,—which has reduced me to what I am—a common soldier,—which has driven me to the commission of a crime, bringing a debasing punishment in its train which compels me, in spite of strenuous exertions to the contrary, to stand forward as a witness against myself, and which will never cease to work upon my heart, and to shape out the tenor of my movements, till that heart cease to beat, and those limbs be incapable of motion.

"I am the son, the only son, nay the only child, of a gentleman of proud lineage and considerable fortune, in the north of England. His name it would little interest you to be told; and doomed as I am to be the publisher of my own disgrace, I will not bring disgrace upon others by repeating it. Let it suffice to mention, that the estate to which I was once heir, came into the family at the Conquest, and that it has descended in lineal succession, from father to son, from its first possessor, to him—who does not now hold it.

"Of the manner in which my early years were spent, I entertain but a vague and indistinct recollection. I remember something, indeed, of a lovely and amiable woman, to whom I was taught by those about me to look to as my mother. I remember, or rather I fancy that I remember, how she used to take me on her knee, and cover my cheek with kisses, whilst tears rolled down her own; and either memory, or the report of others, when heard, or where repeated, I know not—presents me with an occasional picture of the same beautiful woman, pining like one broken-hearted, and fading in her youth. Observe, that I do not assert these things as facts; they may be mere illusions of my own disordered fancy; in all probability they are so; yet to me they are at this moment as clear and palpable as the scene of my arrest on a recent occasion, or our late conference on the quarter-deck. Whether they be realities or dreams, is, however, a matter of no moment. My mother died long before I had attained sufficient age to value her good qualities, or to miss her attentions; and I was left, when little more than an infant, to the care of my father.

"I know not how to trust myself in drawing a picture of the only parent whom I have ever known. That he was kind in his manner towards me, I cannot venture to say; at least his kindness was not so displayed as to win upon the attachment of a boy naturally warm-hearted, or to make me forget that I had sometimes seen my mother weep, when he and she and I were alone together. It is true that few days past, few at least during which he was disengaged, without my seeing him. Occasionally, too, he would bring me a toy; and when I was old enough to ride he gave me a pony, on which I was permitted to scamper wherever I chose, provided only I returned home before dark. Yet was his manner uniformly cold and austere; I cannot recall to my recollection so much as one kiss from his lips; and as to a God bless you!—the expression never escaped him. No, no, no! it was not in blessng that he took the name of God in his mouth;—it was for a far more tremendous and more certain purpose.

"At an age as early as is usual in like cases, I was sent to a preparatory school, from whence I was in due time removed to Eton. Here, in the society of lads of my own standing, several happy years were spent, so happy indeed, that the impression which they have left upon my mind, can be erased only by death. Strange to say, however, the vacations, which brought to others so many anticipations of delight, were always hailed by me with sorrow. I had no home; that is to say, no home which I loved; for though I delighted in field sports, and the means of gratifying that propensity were abundantly within my reach, there was something in the air of ———, which invariably chilled me when I drew near it. The truth is, that I did not and could not love my father. I feared him; he was a man to be feared:—cold, austere, formal; proud of his family, equally proud of his own attainments; of a temper not irritable, in the ordinary acceptation of that term, yet easily offended, and ignorant how to forgive: such a man even his own son could not love, however much he might reverence, or rather dread him. Besides, my father was one of those whom no arguments, no entreaties, no motives, even of self-interest, could divert from the course which he had once made up his mind to pursue. Let him set his heart upon any object, and the whole world, were it offered in exchange, could not purchase his relinquishment of that object; difficulties, should such occur, only served to goad him to farther exertions. Nor was it in essentials only that this unbending temperament displayed itself; it reached even to the most minute details of domestic life; it operated even in his distribution of his own time, and had full influence over my proceedings, which dared not take a direction in the slightest degree at variance from the channel which he had marked out for them. Between my father and myself there was not so much as the pretence of confidence. He never consulted me in any thing, whether relating to myself or others; he never spoke to me of family matters, ancient or modern; and he gave me no encouragement to communicate my feelings to him with the freedom which a son should always experience in the presence of his father. On the contrary, the little intercourse that passed between us, was uniformly distant and chilling,—like that which is sometimes kept up by a guardian towards his ward, provided no ties of blood bind them one to another, but bearing no semblance whatever to that free communion of soul, mind, and feeling, which, if it exist any where, might be expected to exist between a parent and a child.

"In the society of such a man, it was impossible that I could find any enjoyment, and to his society I was, when at home, almost exclusively confined; for the peculiarities of my father's temper were such, that few of his neighbors kept up with him more than a distant or formal acquaintance. Once or twice a year a stately dinner was prepared, at which some half dozen country gentlemen would make their appearance; but these meetings always passed off heavily at the time, and they led to no familiar intercourse afterwards. Indeed, my father was manifestly neither loved nor courted by any one. His very servants and tenants avoided him as often as they could; and when that was impossible, they stood before him in undisguised alarm. Whence all this arose I am unable even to conjecture, for of his early history I never heard a syllable; and unless something more extraordinary occurred in his youth than took place since my memory serves, there was certainly no adequate reason for it.

I had removed from Eton, after going through the regular course, and had kept a few terms at Cambridge, when that event befell, upon which the whole of my future fortunes were doomed to turn.

"It was on a beautiful evening in June, that with feelings widely different from those which I could have wished to experience, I found myself approaching the place of my nativity. There were no pleasing recollections associated with that lonely and desolate mansion. Its great empty halls, and half-furnished apartments, through which the voice of mirth and revelry never echoed, its long passages and dreary corridors, where the sound of a footstep would have startled had it reached the ear, rose with no very agreeable colors before my view; and when I considered that amid this solitude the whole of a tedious summer must be passed, I could not avoid shuddering at the prospect. I was in this mood when a sudden stopping of the horses induced me to sit forward in the chaise for the purpose of ascertaining the cause. There was no possibility of mistaking the principal objects about me. I recognised at once the beech grove that skirted the park, and the commencement of the long avenue which led up to the mansion; but in minuter details a change had occurred, which set all my surmises and calculations at defiance. The lodge, which, when I last entered it, was more than half unroofed and in ruins, presented now the appearance of a neat and comfortable cottage; it was newly thatched, glazed and whitewashed, and a spot of ground tastefully laid out in cultivation lay behind it. In like manner the pillars and gates had undergone a thorough repair; the palings seemed to have been lately renewed; and the very grass and weeds which used to overgrow the drive had all disappeared. Instead of the slatternly dame, likewise, by whom I was accustomed to be met here, a pretty country girl, about ten or twelve years old, threw open the gate, and dropped a curtesy as the chaise rolled through, with the grace of one accustomed to the office. I need scarcely say that all this excited in me no little amazement; but if I experienced surprise at the aspect of things in themselves so unimportant, my astonishment increased tenfold, when other and still greater changes appeared.

"As I approached the house, I became at every step more and more aware, that a complete revolution must have taken place in my father's style of living. The lawn, of which my most remote recollection presented no other picture than of a rough and neglected plot of grass, was now mowed with the utmost care, and tastefully adorned at different points with clumps of flowering shrubs and ornamental evergreens. A light wire fence protected it from the approach of the sheep, which in former days were accustomed to browse up to the very windows; and a wicket composed of the same materials admitted us to a well-cleaned gravel walk, which extended in front of the main entrance. Then again, on looking up towards the house itself, I beheld that the shutters of every window were open, that the frames had been lately painted, and the glass universally repaired, and that an air of comfort was cast over the entire exterior, such as I had never seen it wear until now. By this time the carriage had stopped, and the postilion having rung the bell, the hall door was opened by a servant in a neat morning livery; who, though manifestly unacquainted with my name and circumstances, civilly requested me to walk in. I followed the lacquey, not like one entering his father's house, but like a stranger in a place unknown to him; and truly the aspect of every thing had undergone a revolution so complete, that I almost doubted whether the case were not really so.

"I was conducted through the entrance hall, in the furnishing and decoration of which I found it difficult to trace out any resemblance to the cheerless and uncomfortable vestibule so familiar to my early years. Every thing was changed: handsome mahogany chairs, marked with the family arms, had taken the place of the antique oaken benches which formerly stood here; a mosaic pavement had supplanted the slabs; marble tables stood here and there; and a stove of the newest construction held out a promise of warmth and comfort in the winter. Then, again, there were elegant folding doors, which cut off the outer from the inner hall,—a distinction which till of late had not been recognized;—and, if the garnishing of the outer compartment sufficed to excite my amazement, much more forcibly was that feeling roused by what I beheld in the inner. Rich carpets covered the floor: gilded lamps hung from the ceiling; and the great oaken staircase leading up to the lodging rooms, which began here, had received a polish, bright as the art of man could bestow upon it. But greater wonders than even these awaited me.

"We had by this time reached the door of the drawing-room, when the servant, as a preparatory step to throwing it open, demanded my name. I was so confounded that I could not contrive to stammer it out so as to be understood; and the man, mistaking my words, ushered me in under some appellation, the sound of which I have forgotten. I walked forward; but my surprise amounted to positive stupefaction, when there arose to meet me—not my father, but a lady, beautiful as an angel, young, elegant, graceful in every motion, with eyes that did not look, but speak—ay, sir, speak words—plain, intelligible words—dark, large, brilliant, surmounted with long lashes, which softened, whilst they took not away from, the variable expression of the orbs beneath them. But I must command myself—so let that pass.

"In what manner I received the salutation of the stranger, I cannot tell; only I remember, that when I made an effort to speak, my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth, and I stood like one rooted to the spot by some sudden spell, or frozen into stone. The lady seemed surprised at my emotion, I even fancied that she became alarmed, for she uttered something in a hurried tone, the purport of which I could not comprehend, and made a movement as if to retire; but before she could carry that resolution into effect, a door which communicated between the saloon and the library was thrown open, and my father entered. The sight of him recalled me instantly to my senses. I advanced to receive the hand which he held out; and in the next instant, the whole mystery around me was explained.

"'You are welcome home again, Charles,' said my father, with more than usual kindness in his tone: 'I dare say the aspect which things have assumed since you were last here, has caused you no little astonishment; yet I am willing to hope that astonishment is not the only feeling likely to be roused. Charlotte, my love,' continued he, turning to the lady, 'permit me to introduce to you my son, whom you will find, I trust, an agreeable companion at moments when I may be unable to enjoy your society. Charles, in this lady you see one who is entitled, by every tie of moral obligation, to your respect and affection. She has consented to make me the happiest of men: and she now stands towards you in the relation of a mother.'

"'A mother!' cried I, staggering back, as if struck by some sudden and deadly blow: 'A mother! Is this lady, then, your wife?'

"'Yes, sir,' replied my father, in his old tone of asperity; 'this lady is my wife. Is there any thing so very remarkable in that circumstance, as that you should not be able to comprehend it?'

"'No, sir, no—not exactly so,' said I, scarcely knowing what I said: 'but the intelligence has come upon me so suddenly—I knew not that any such step was in contemplation—that, in short, I know not what to say, except that your announcement has perfectly amazed me.'

"'I see no reason why it should produce that effect,' replied he: 'there is nothing so very startling in the fact, that a man who has spent twenty years in solitude should become weary of living alone, or that he should ally himself with one every way worthy of his esteem and affections.'

"This was spoken coldly and deliberately, with an emphasis of which I could not mistake the purport; yet I answered it by observing, that I had received no intimation of the intended change; and that his silence on such a subject surprised me more than the line of conduct which he had seen fit to pursue.

"'I was not aware,' replied he in a sarcastic tone, into which he knew well how to throw the very gall of bitterness, 'that I had ever given you cause to regard yourself as the arbiter of my destinies. I have not been in the habit of soliciting your advice on indifferent matters, and should scarcely think of desiring it on an occasion like the present. But enough of such discussion—I have told you how this lady and yourself are connected; it remains for you to behave towards her as that connection demands.'

"I had by this time recovered in some degree from my agitation, and turned towards my mother-in-law, with the intention of offering an apology for the strangeness of my behaviour. She trembled violently—whether from fear or mere embarrassment, it was, of course, impossible for me to tell; whilst her respiration appeared to go on with difficulty, and her color went and came like clouds over the face of the moon on a stormy night. By degrees, however, the awkwardness of manner inseparable from so extraordinary an introduction, departed. She recovered the calm and placid air which distinguished her when she rose to bid me welcome; and the ease which marked her gestures, as well as the readiness with which we entered into conversation, soon produced the happiest effect upon me. In five minutes every thing awkward in our first meeting was forgotten, and we behaved towards each other, as persons in our situation might be expected to behave.

"It was now that I found leisure to cast my eyes round upon the apartment in which we were sitting; and there, as well as elsewhere, I saw that a perfect revolution had occurred. The ancient cane-backed chairs and sofas had been displaced to make room for couches covered with the costliest silks; rose-wood tables, richly inlaid, were scattered here and there in elegant confusion; splendid pier glasses filled up the recesses, and curtains of the finest stuffs ornamented the windows; whilst even the paper upon the walls, as well as the painting on the roof and pannels, had all been renewed in the most expensive and brilliant manner. Nor was it in the saloon alone that the hand of improvement had been at work. There was not an apartment in the house, from the servants' hall to the nursery, which had not undergone some change; whilst all that were in any degree conspicuous, as well in the sleeping as in the living compartment, had been entirely refurnished. I cannot pretend to describe the effect which this change produced upon me. That it was for the better, I felt and acknowledged; yet, with the perverseness of human nature, there were moments when the absence of this or that long-remembered piece of lumber, stirred up in me a sensation, of which I did not imagine that a cause so trifling could have been productive. In like manner, it was with no ordinary pain that I observed, that, of the faces of the domestics who went and came about us, not one was familiar. The old servants, like the old furniture, had all been dismissed, to make way for others—more sightly, perhaps, and more submissive, but whether superior in the essentials of honesty and fidelity, might well be doubted. These things cut deeply. For the first day or two, indeed, the effect of them was such as to render me but little disposed to court the society either of my father or his bride; nor was it till I had been nearly a week at home, that the former thought fit to make me in any degree acquainted with the origin and progress of his new connection.

"There was little in the story to interest me at the moment; there is still less that deserves record now. Charlotte Howard was an orphan, the pennyless niece of one of our neighbors, on whose bounty she absolutely depended. Having lately returned from school, she attracted my father's notice, during a visit which he happened to pay to her uncle; and, as he found her not more beautiful than amiable and accomplished, he made a tender of his hand. Charlotte was barely eighteen, my father forty-nine; but, to counterbalance this difference in their ages she was portionless, whilst he was understood to be immensely rich. My father did not state how much he owed to the lady's personal predilection, how much to the persuasions of her guardian: on that head, he wisely left me to judge for myself, but the result was, that about six weeks previous to the commencement of the long vacation, he led her, a weeping and bashful bride, to the altar. Yes; he used the word bashful, as if her reluctance were merely feigned—as if she, a girl, artless, innocent, gay, lovely, felt no more than the ordinary coyness of a maiden so situated, in giving her hand to one—But no matter. He admitted that she wept—he did not say how she wept—he did not even allude to the hot scalding tears of utter misery, whose fountain lies in the innermost soul, and which run over only when hope is blighted forever. No, no; I was encouraged to conjure up an image of modest dew-drops—of one or two tears cheated from the eye, more through the power of momentary excitement than by the influence of sorrow.—How different was all this from the truth!

"Well, the bride was carried off to the metropolis, where, amidst the gaiety of a London life, her first lessons in the duties of the married state were learned. In the meanwhile, all those changes in and about the park, which had so powerfully affected me, were wrought; and only one fortnight previous to my return, the happy pair took possession of their renovated mansion. Such is the substance of a conversation which I held with my father, on a certain day after dinner, to which I listened as to something neither very agreeable nor very interesting. How deeply did I deceive myself in regarding it as devoid of interest!

"I know not whence it arose, but I experienced towards my mother-in-law, about this time, a feeling which I could not describe, but which tempted me as much as possible to shun her company, particularly when no other persons chanced to be by. Not that I ever thought of her with aversion. To look upon that countenance, to behold the varied and glowing expression of those eyes, yet entertain towards the being whose eyes met mine, any thing in the most remote degree akin to aversion, was impossible. On the contrary, I never beheld her without admiration, the deepest, the most intense. I never listened to the music of her voice, without a delight such as no other sound in nature could produce. I never thought of her when absent, without a degree of interest painful indeed, but painful only from its excess. Yet I avoided her, as if there had been a pestilence in her breath, and a pollution in her touch. It was not often that I endeavored to account for this; but when I did, images arose, humiliating and distressing, of the sort of tie which had brought us acquainted, and held us together. I could not bear to think of her as my father's wife—as one whom I was bound to approach with deference, and look upon with respect; yet I felt that to regard her only as the beautiful and innocent girl, and to treat her like a sister or a friend, would at once displease the man to whom I was indebted for my being, and infringe, seriously and improperly, upon the usages of society. Many days, therefore, elapsed, ere we could be said to know more of each other's tastes and habits than was disclosed at the moment of our first introduction;—well would it have been for both, had this just and cautious reserve been persevered in.

"With his state of celibacy, my father had, it appeared, put off that morose and haughty humor which kept him at a distance from all his neighbors. Repeatedly, since their return from London, had the new-married couple thrown open their doors to gay parties, and the old walls had more than once rung again to the tones of singing and minstrelsy. So excellent a custom was not to be interrupted by the arrival of the heir of the lordship; on the contrary, I was given to understand, that, in honor of my visit, the entire neighborhood had been invited to an entertainment, which was to exceed in splendor and elegance every thing of the kind which had for many years taken place in this part of the country. With what absolute indifference I listened to the announcement! What was gaiety or splendor to me? I had become all at once the most humiliated and self-condemned of human beings. All the glories of an Eastern palace, had they been spread out before me, would have failed to excite any pleasurable emotion. Nay, I pined for the gloom which was now dispelled forever, and looked back with regret upon the very state of existence which was at once the source of my most serious repining.—What fickle creatures are we, even at the best! how little may our very tastes and desires be calculated upon!

"The day of gala came in its course, and brought with it a crowd of guests of all ages, of both sexes, and of every rank—from the proud wearer of the earl's coronet, down to the simple commoner. Nothing could exceed the hospitable urbanity of my father; and the gentle attentions of his bride to all within her reach, were beyond measure gratifying. Then, again, as to the banquet—no luxury which earth, air or water could produce, was wanted. The choicest wines were passed round with exuberant liberality; a crowd of servants in rich liveries prevented every wish; and the glare of golden lamps was reflected back by a profusion of massive plate, under which the table and sideboards groaned. Next followed the dance, the conversazione, the promenade, relieved and interrupted from time to time by bursts of the most exquisite music, till every sense seemed deadened by the multiplied sources of enjoyment, with which it was not so much supplied as sated. And how was I affected by all this? I looked on with the vacant stare of a spectator at a show which he understands to be delusive and unreal. I appeared, indeed, to mingle, like the rest, in every amusement; I even gazed round upon the faces of my father's guests, seeking for one on which my eye might repose so much as for a moment. But I found none. Many fair countenances were there,—laughing, lively, happy countenances,—such as meet us in our dreams, when these are most pleasing, and leave a trace behind them when we awake. But before my eyes that night they passed like shadows. There was but one countenance on which I could endure to gaze—and that one was—my mother. Heaven! what a profanation of the term. Charlotte Howard, the dark eyed, lively girl of eighteen, my mother!—she, who was by two full years my junior,—who smiled upon me, not with the haughty glance of a superior, but with the mild beseeching look of one who saw my agitation, and would have calmed it had she possessed the power,—who seemed to court, not to demand my notice, as if she needed support from me, and would have taken it as a boon!—Could I think of her as my mother? No; I never beheld her in that light; I could not think of her in that fashion. I was cold and distant towards her, it is true—cold in my manner, distant in my address; but neither my coldness nor distance proceeded from that jealous aversion with which, as my step-mother, I might have been supposed to regard her. I shrank from her, because I already felt that I dared not trust myself near her;—yet my eyes followed her every movement, as if there were a spell upon them, which not all my efforts would suffice to break.

"At last she sat down to her harp. Though I had been upwards of a fortnight under the same roof with her, I had never yet heard her sing or play; for my father entertained no taste for music, and I did not presume to solicit that she would perform for my gratification. I was sitting at the moment alone in a distant corner of the saloon, pretending fatigue, which in reality I did not experience, that I might escape for a few minutes from the toil of making myself agreeable, or supporting a conversation in which I took no interest. Of all the objects in the passing pageant, I beheld but her alone; and when there was a call of silence, I held my very breath, lest its sound should interrupt it. How gracefully she stretched her fair round arm over the instrument!—with what a taste she swept the chords as a prelude to her song! and then striking a few bold notes by way of symphony, she raised her eyes as if to ask for inspiration from on high. In an instant her countenance was lighted up, and there burst from her a gush of sweet sounds, so mellow, so true, so plaintive, yet so powerful, that the most insensible could not listen without visible emotion. For me, I was entranced. All power of motion was taken away from me; I tried to draw near to her, but could not—I was spell-bound, as if by the voice of an angel.

"There was no instantaneous burst of applause when that sweet wild song ended. The effect produced by it was beyond the compass of words; it was felt, but could not be expressed. Men listened, as they are accustomed to do for the echo that follows notes which come to them over water, and they seemed disappointed when no echo was heard; but if an irresistible impulse checked them at first, a universal murmur of delight gave evidence, as soon as the charm had dissolved, that their silence arose from intensity of admiration, and that there is no tribute so pure, or so real, as that which cannot be expressed. Charlotte appeared distressed by the very plaudits which were intended to give her pleasure. She rose, blushing deeply, from her instrument, and made as if she intended to cross the saloon to a spot where a group of gay loungers were congregated together. At that instant her eye caught mine: what the expression of my gaze might be, I knew not; doubtless it was the same which had accompanied every glance that I cast upon her that night; but it produced a vivid, and, as I could not but observe, a painful effect upon her. Her color fled, and she grew pale as death; then again the blood rushed to her cheek with increased violence; her breathing became suddenly interrupted, and she staggered as if threatened with a fit. I saw her condition, and sprang forward to assist her; but before I could reach the spot her self-command had returned. 'I thank