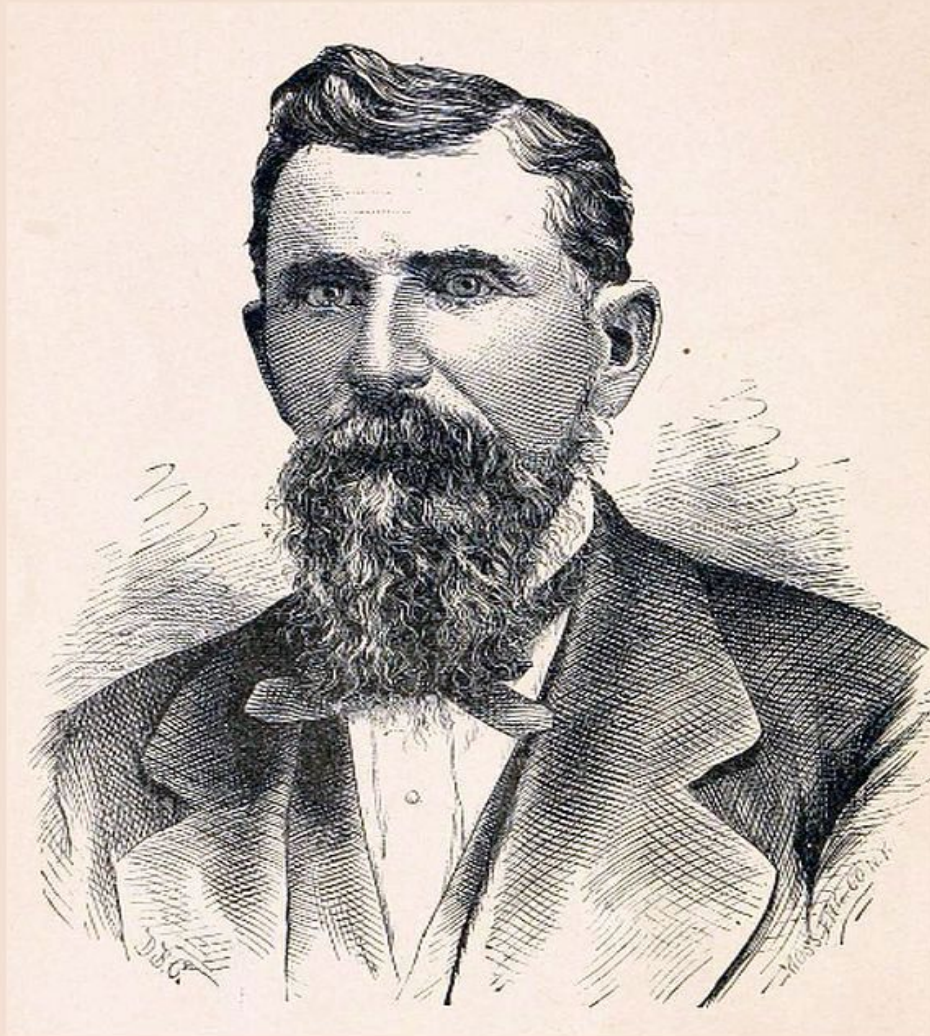


**HIRAM A. GRAVES**



**ANDREW JACKSON  
POTTER**

**THE FIGHTING PARSON OF  
THE TEXAN FRONTIER**

Andrew Jackson Potter

*The fighting parson of the  
Texan frontier*

HIRAM ATWILL GRAVES

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## **PREFACE.**

FEELING a deep interest in the present and future welfare of the youth of this age, and especially of those of our own American Republic, we most respectfully dedicate this little volume to them—showing an eminence attained from the most obscure sphere of life.

No humbleness of birth, no depth of poverty, no degraded condition, no severity of hardships, no height of difficulties, and no array of living opponents, present insuperable barriers to a stable reform, and the ultimate acquisition of virtue and honor, where there is a decisive will and unfailing energy, coupled with faith in the favorable results of a just enterprise, managed agreeable to the law of right and justice. Will, inspired with the might of Faith, removes mountainous obstacles, and reaches the goal of victory.

AUTHOR.

## INTRODUCTION.

BIOGRAPHY is a history of the life and character of a particular individual, and is said to be of more intrinsic value to mankind than all more general narratives, as it brings to light the underlying motives which usually stimulate men to action, and connects more immediate results with their efficient causes. The faithful portrait of the life of a bad man, setting forth the baleful effects of a sinful and a vicious life, cannot fail to instruct and warn men of the hurtful results of sinful habits; while the truthful exhibit of a virtuous character, coupled with its gracious benefits to society, must of necessity be of inestimable value to society at large. The first furnishes a motive to deter from vice, the second presents an incentive to invite us to the ways of virtue. The man whose life is plainly sketched in this little volume gives us a specimen of both vicious and virtuous habits—his life having been a tripartite—*evil, good, ministerial*. His early years were passed in the haunts of vice, his after-life in the ministry of Jesus Christ. But in all the strange and crooked paths over which he traveled in boyhood and youth there was a manifest protective power about him from an occult superhuman force, sheltering and guiding unerringly to a certain ultimate, an event to be reached by intelligent design. Truly, there is a man for every place, and a place for each man, in all spheres of life; and each one needs a preparatory schooling for his respective field of action. Shakespeare said, "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will." But the Bible phrases it better than that: "A man's heart *deviseth* his way, but the Lord *directeth* his steps." "His ways are past finding out."



One thing, however, is certain, God chooses his own special agents from among mankind to carry out his gracious plans of saving men; but the initiatory training of those agents is often darkly mysterious and painfully severe, but suitable and certain in the end. How strange and wonderful the curriculum of the school of adverse fortune in which the little boy who was clad in "the coat of many colors" received his training for his eventful life! Yet Joseph piloted a nation's life through the terrible seven years of famine, and planted the germinal seeds of the world's future civilization in Judea's land. Marvelous indeed was the early life of the carol-singing boy of the sixteenth century. Little did Conrad Cotter dream that he was nursing the lion whose matured might should break the papal yoke from the neck of empires; nor did Gamaliel see in little "Saul of Tarsus" the miniature giant whose logical leverage must overturn the temples of paganism, and demolish the altars of ages, and erect Christianity on their scattered ruins. The schooling of those divinely - chosen agents was severe, but the end thereof was sure. The mother of little Andrew Jackson Potter, when in innocent glee he nestled on her maternal bosom, saw not the rough and thorny path his youthful feet should tread—the terrible *hardship-drill* 'twixt him and a day of glorious triumph; but all along the dangerous labyrinths through which his reckless young life led him a kind, unseen hand holds a protective shield over the head of her orphan child. The well-aimed arrow of the savage Indian falls harmless at his side, whizzes through the air, or pierces the heart of his comrade. What shall we call that shielding force? "Fate," "Destiny," or "Providence?" The cold-hearted skeptic replies, "Destiny," "Fate;" and scoffingly asks,

"When the loose mountain trembles from on high,  
Shall gravitation cease if you go by?"

No; truly, it need not "cease," but a divine angel may touch your will's secret springs that you may not "go by" till

the "great rock" has tumbled into the depths below.

We shall call it a Special Providence that safely guided the orphan boy through all the perilous vicissitudes narrated in the following pages—that kind and pitying Wisdom which numbers the hairs on the head of each one in the world, and sees with compassion the falling sparrow when leaden hail has crippled its wing. A man is to be qualified to plant Christianity all along the frontier-borders of Western Texas, where savage heathenism and *quasi* civilization meet and interlap. The erudite son of Gamaliel is not needed there, nor is the mild and loving John, nor a foreign-storming Apollos, among a non-reading, bookless population, but shrewd and recklessly brave. A man of themselves is wanted, gifted of nature and polished by grace, one skilled in all the tricks and arts of sin in frontier-life, and in all the modes of predatory border warfare—brave, generous, wise, pure, social, hospitable, zealous, and defiant in the face of the almost-impossible. "The All-seeing Eye" saw the rudiments of that essential character in Missouri's orphan child. Born on her early frontier, having inherited all the taste and genius for frontier-life, he continued in that school till his lesson was fully learned; and, after his regeneration, religion supplied all needed virtues for a grace-refined manhood.

## Chapter I.

ANDREW JACKSON POTTER was born in Chariton County, Missouri, April 3, 1830. He was the son of Joshua and Martha Potter, natives of Kentucky. Andrew's mother was his father's second wife, by whom he had seven children—four boys and three girls—Andrew being the third son. His father was in the British war of 1812, and he greatly admired the victorious hero of the battle at New Orleans (having been in that battle); hence the name of his hopeful son, "Andrew Jackson Potter."

In the course of events Mr. Potter moved to Carroll County, and then to Clinton (now Gentry), on North Grand River, where Andrew spent most of his early boyhood. Clinton was then a border county, and the facilities for an education were quite meager; indeed, there were rarely any school privileges; and besides, his parents were too poor to afford even the rudiments of an education to their children. About three months was the whole term of little Andrew's tuition at school. He, however, continued to spell at private spare time, after leaving school, till he could read a little in an easy reading-book, but did not learn to write. His father died about 1840, when Andrew was in his tenth year. At that age he was turned out upon the cold charities of the world, an inexperienced boy, without any help, to earn his own living in the battles of life, his father's estate not leaving a sheltering home for those he left in the world. Being entirely without any resources, he was employed by a sportsman to ride horse-races. That employer learned his little employee three branches of his early education: the spelling-book, card-playing, and horse-racing. The most humiliating forms of vice generally hold dominion along the

border of all frontier countries contiguous to the regions of uncivilized and savage life. The three grand agencies of civilization—the school, the press, and pulpit—do not plant their combined influences far out on the border, where settlements are sparse, and life is not safe from the arrow and the tomahawk of the untutored savage. The reckless adventurer and the soldier must drive back the savage, and fix the central nucleus of communities, before the arts of peace and refinement go forward and erect their standards in the new fields "beyond." Usually, we believe, the preacher leads the van; then follow the school and the press. All along their pathway, as a golden zone, the virtues of Christian civilization shine. "Beyond" the dark clouds of vice spread their shadowy gloom. The avenues of sin are wide, ever open and easily found by the unsuspecting young, especially in border-life, where evil is not under the restraints which handicap it in the older states of society. Besides, the fascinating charms of romance are draped about a frontier-life to the young mind; and where a mother's advice is not heeded, in the absence of a father's restraint, the young heart will naturally incline to identify itself with a roaming, unstable mode of society.

The father of little Andrew was a frontiersman, and transmitted his border proclivities to his son. No law of our being is truer, surer than that we inherit the ruling elements of our ancestry. Children bred and born in the time of great wars inherit the worst factors in humanity, and those born on the spheres contiguous to savage life, where life itself is ever in a state of contest to maintain itself, early develop a pugnacious and aggressive disposition.

Born with these predispositions, and early environed by all the influences of semi-savage life, Andrew Potter easily ran into the mazes of sin in the outset of his career. Man, in his intellectual and moral make-up, is fashioned by his surroundings. All his ideas, all his emotions, are awaked

and stimulated to action by the outer world around him. On the *will's attitude to motives* turns his *accountability*, and the consciousness of guilt for evil-doing, and the self-approbation for acts of virtue. Society everywhere is responsible for the moral and intellectual character of its young people. The means, the temptations, and the aids to a thriftless, ignorant, and vicious course, are furnished them on their entering upon the stage of life. The dance-house, the theatric-hall, the race-turf, the bar-room, the gaming-saloon, and all other helps to worthless and dissolute habits, society stations on the way to entrap and ruin the rising generation. If the enlightening and refining agencies are supplied to the youth, society must provide them: schools of high and low grade, churches, and all the learned books, and clean periodicals of the modern press—these, with all other novel aids of science and art, society must afford its youth, to insure the greatest harvest of a high-typed humanity—that of intelligence and virtue.

Andrew's first decade on the earth having been passed amid the rude scenes of border-life, where men were daily armed with the deadly implements of predatory warfare, where and when schools and churches were little thought of, and having a natural inclination to combativeness toward an enemy, the disposition to fight early displayed itself in his youthful activities; yet there were other opposite, neutralizing elements in his germinal character, which ever held a balancing and a compromising force in his conduct in all his later manhood. A deep sense of the right, a gentle sympathy for the wronged and the oppressed, unfaltering truthfulness, an undying regard for order, and honor, and true generosity —these several traits constitute the foundation of his remarkable character, which is so clearly elucidated by his strange and eventful future. These early inborn principles, hallowed and made predominant by our divine Christianity, make up the marvels of his wonderful later career.

His mother was a communicant of the old Calvinist Baptist Church, and early impressed his young mind with a kind of general sentiment that there was such a thing as religion and the Church; but he formed no definite conceptions as to its nature and doctrines: so soon was he entirely inclosed by irreligious associations that he seldom heard it spoken of, and rarely ever thought of it himself; but when it intruded upon his reflections, it was soon dismissed as an inconceivable mystery, of which he could have no insight; yet he always felt that he was a sinner, having some undefinable interest in its unrealized facts. He formed no religious creed, nor indulged in any methods of skepticism. Up to the day of his conversion he was simply a bold, zealous man of sin, yielding to the strongest current of influences about him, and his heart's natural inclination; while the cry of reason was unheeded, and the voice of the underlying better elements of his nature was hushed amid the tumult and onward rush of the events of the day. Revenge, a fearful monster, seemed delightful to him, where he thought an enemy had designed, or had truly inflicted, a serious injury on his person or character, or that of his unfeigned friend. *Cowardice* and *cruelty* he literally *despised*, from childhood, and woe to the boy or man who displayed either in his presence along his march through the world. If he was fortunate to escape the pounding of his club, or mallet-like fist, he was sure to fall a victim to his keen-edged wit, or feel the smart of his poisoned satire. Fear had no place in his composition. Energy of force characterizes his entire life in sin and in religion. What he did, he did with energy; he was in *earnest* in the business activities of youth. He seemed to put new life into all things about him. When he ran a horse-race, it was a common saying, "That it did not matter about the speed of the horses: the one that little Potter rides is sure to win."

There were two other prominent principles running all through his whole career, both in his highest reach in sin,

and in his later religious life—that of sincere devotedness to a friend, and kind attentions to the suffering, either friends or foes. He was never known to desert a friend, even in the face of the extreme of peril, nor to turn away from a sufferer when his attentions were needful. In the palmy days of wickedness, his heart was moved at sight of human misery.

## Chapter II.

ABOUT six years of the young life of our juvenile hero were passed in the demoralizing practice of race-riding, gambling, and drinking: those periods in the life of a boy include the most vital of his formative state — from ten to his sixteenth year. Most young men have molded the shape of their manhood before they have passed their teens. If the main course of their life of evil habits is changed thereafter, it must be the result of some reformatory or regenerative force. The process of molding character must be commenced when all of its elemental parts are in a soft and pliable condition, as when the potter shapes the fashion of the vessel out of the yielding, miry clay. Instruction, restraint, and active training, are imperious to form the model of a good character. Instruction imparts ideas, restraint holds back from evil acts, and training is the practice of right deeds—all are needful in the education of the young, and must be undertaken from the cradle—no time is to be lost 'twixt the cradle and a matured manhood. Whoever may dare to risk the chances here, must do so at the serious peril of their dear child, and the hazard of their own sorrow.

A pebble in the streamlet scant

Has changed the course of many a river;

A dew-drop on the baby-plant

Has warped the giant oak forever. A multitude of little evil passions, tempers, thoughts, and acts of childhood and youth, mark out the channel of manhood, or give bent to all afterlife. Alas, for little Andrew! he had not the restraint of a father's discipline after he reached his tenth year, for then his father died. Just at the moment he most needed a



father's counsel and control, he was left fatherless, to drift out into the sinful world, a homeless and friendless stranger-boy, on a half-savage frontier, where little more than the most hurtful forms of vice were daily seen. What else could have been expected of an undisciplined boy of ten years, in such a state of things, but to see him plunge headlong into the open vortex? Any other course would have been unnatural.

O how terribly awful is the responsibility of wicked men, who, by their example, and sometimes by their invitations, entice and lead the orphan-boy, or giddy youth, into the foul haunts of dissipation!

We hope the reader will pardon us for making a digression just here, and pardon the immodesty of a personal reference to the writer of this narrative, as it is done to do good, by calling the attention of men of evil habits, who may chance to read these pages, to the danger, and their accountability, of leading the orphan-boy and the silly youth into the paths of ruin. Long years ago, in the city of Nashville, Tennessee, the writer of this book was an inexperienced boy, and boarded at a house where several men often met at night to take a game of cards. They were unmarried men, about forty years of age. The house was the bachelor's retreat. The premises generally constituted a modern Sodom. South Nashville now covers the domain, and the parties are now all gone from among the living save the corrugated-featured old man who penned this story. We had been to a Methodist Camp-meeting, and professed religion, and joined the Church, and began to read the Bible near the light on the small table on which they played their cards at night. Sometimes some of them would venture to ridicule religion — at one time they concluded their games with a mock prayer, one of them leading audibly. In the close of their sacrilegious devotions, the leader prayed for the little Methodist whose occupation placed him in their midst, saying that their evil example

might lead him astray. One of their number, who was a man of learning, saw that they had ventured too far. Meeting me in private, he said that as I was away from parental counsel, and among bad men, he was constrained to advise me. Said he: "I see that you are reading the Bible. I am known in the city as an infidel; but I say to you, my little son, stick to your Bible. I see men who read and follow the Scriptures make a mark in the world. I am a bad man—formed evil habits in early life. Read your Bible, and try to follow its precepts." That honest gambler's counsel has followed us through the vicissitudes of nearly a half-century.

Such advice might have been a godsend to young Potter at the threshold of his outset in life, on the border-plains of Missouri, when he first left the abode of his widowed and penniless mother. But instead of being persuaded not to follow the evil habits of sinful men, a sportsman employs him to ride races, and allows him to deal in cards, and to drink the dangerous beverage. Six years of his maturing youth, spent in such habits, among vicious society, at the grog-shops and race-courses, must have greatly weakened his good principles, and powerfully strengthened the bad tendencies of a depraved nature. It is not a matter of wonder that a boy of such training was inclined to stray deeper into a semi-savage life, when an opportunity opened up the way for him to leave his mother and kindred, and the scenes of his childhood, for the perils and hardships of war, and the privations and hazards of a thousand-miles trip across the desert-plains, infested by warlike Indian bands. The tenderest and the strongest attachments of childhood's heart cling to home—the natal-place, or the scenes of its earliest recollections — as those of the entwining vine grasp the twigs and branches of the tree about which it clammers. To detach them, is to sever and rend the most delicate, the purest sympathies of humanity. To become an orphan, is to have torn asunder all those

tender endearments—it is to lose the magnet of central gravitation. To be fatherless and motherless, truly is to be homeless. Earth's vocabulary contains no words of sadder import than "orphan," "fatherless," "motherless." "The lone bird, forsaken of its mother," in its woodland home, is not so sad a thing as an orphan-child. Deep in the shady woods, made of little sticks and fibers, fastened among the waving leaflets, is the birdling's nest. In that leaf-bound house day and night sits the scanty-fledged baby-bird, chirping, chirping the long, long summer-day, till night spreads its dismal shades over the timbered solitudes, when despair, like the dark of forest-night, crushes the birdling's heart. Death, in pity, soon ends the forest-infant's grief. But, ah! the long years of the homeless orphan's sorrows! man has no art the grief-filled tale to tell.

But at the time indicated in our story little Andrew's mother still lived, and there are some untold facts associated with his earlier years which will throw some explanatory light on the apparent mystery of his seeming to readily forget all home and family affinities for the companionship of wicked strangers. Those facts too may set forth the folly of parents showing partiality among their children: such discriminations never end in good. Much evil happened to good old Jacob for partial regards to the son of his old age.

For several years Andrew was the youngest, and became the pet of his mother, which, as in the case of Joseph of olden fame, stimulated the other children to jealousy, and even to envy. So poor "Andy" was soon the scape-goat for bearing all the bad things of the rest of the children, and soon it was declared that he was the worst boy in all the neighborhood; and whether he was guilty or innocent of the charge, all the evil that was done was credited to "Andy." Once a minister visited his mother, when the usual amount of depravity was alleged against him. The minister, listening at the grave charges made upon the little

miniature man, put his hand on his head, and said: "You all may say what you please about Andy; he'll make a man some day; he'll make a mark in the world yet." That greatly elevated the spirit of the abused little man. Whether that minister was a guesser or a prophet, he guessed right that time. In Texas "Andy" has made a mark not to be erased. A lady once said to his mother: "Mrs. Potter, Andy is the handsomest child you have." That again stirred his manly little pride and self-respect to be something in the career of life. Meeds of praise are soothing to the spirit of childhood as well as of manhood, and often stimulate a laudable ambition to deserve and attain positions of usefulness in after-life. As the small dust on the balance determines its preponderance either up or down, so little words of censure or praise often determine man's eventful life. Encouraging applause for little meritorious deeds, fraught with an earnest prediction of future usefulness, are laid up in the memories of a boy, and often come as a giant to his help in the battles of life in long after-years—coming as a well-armed recruit: his failing energies take on new vigor, and, freshened with hope of success, he enters anew into the strife. But, on the other hand, frequent censures, accompanied with ill omens of prophesied evils as the sure events of a boy's future in this world, often discourage his hopes, and unnerve his energies in the hour of the greatest peril. But true merit and real demerit should be cautiously praised and wisely blamed in the life of a boy. But be careful lest you bestow too little on the one, and an undue share on the other. Amid all his wanderings in after-life Andrew did not forget these early accusations and evil predictions, on the one side, and those gentle epithets of approval and hopeful anticipations of his ultimate position in useful spheres, and in the darkest days of adverse fortune their memory shed a beam of hopeful light on the gloom which hovered about the heart. Sad recollections crowding memory's page, after the death of his father,

weakened and detached his fraternal affections from those who, through home-like jealousies and child-like envies, had piled on his name such an amount of deserved and undeserved criminations; and he looked to the domain of non-kindred for those little heart-communions which flourish not but in the rich garden of home-life. Thus the attractive forces which usually hold youth within the domain of home-influences were mainly broken loose, and "gravitation turned the other way." Those dissolving and disruptive germinal agencies in the boy-heart must have well-nigh neutralized the natural feeling of fraternal affection in the long years of his youthful, reckless career. In all the great catalogue of names which the fame of the ages has handed down to us, we read of but one Joseph who seemed to forget the cruelty of his brethren, save that "Man of Sorrows," who "never reviled again."

Having made the foregoing deflection and retrospect in the order and line of our consecutive narrative, to let in light upon the occult causes of developed character, we now return to our point of departure, to revel in the mazes of another six years' term in the life-daring events of our young hero. Here we find him just entering his sixteenth year, and becoming a soldier. Most of those six years are passed in great peril, while crossing and recrossing the great thousand-miles plains between Missouri and New Mexico and Arizona. In the six years he traversed these dreary, uncivilized regions, quite a number of times in the face of the untutored, unfriendly savage, making hair-breadth escapes from the air-piercing arrow and the hurled lance of the cruel warrior. The arrow shall not hurt thee, nor the pestilence harm thee, if God be with thee in the dangerous day.

### Chapter III.

IN the year 1846 a state of war existed between the United States and Mexico, and General Sterling Price was to march from Missouri to Mexico, operating in New Mexico and Santa Fe *en route*. Andrew, being now in his sixteenth year, volunteered to go on that perilous expedition. He entered Captain Slack's company, and moved forward to Fort Leavenworth, where the troops were inspected, and none but able-bodied men were received into service. Andrew, being so young, and too small a pattern of physical manhood to be admitted into ranks as a knapsacked soldier, was taken into the Quartermaster's Department as a teamster. About the first of September, 1846, a train of wagons, drawn by ox-teams, and laden with army supplies, left Fort Leavenworth for Santa Fe, Andrew driving a team. For meritorious conduct he was tendered an easier position, which he declined. Soon after entering the unpeopled plains, where the wild Indian roamed unrestrained by civilization's laws, they were unwise in not posting pickets to guard their camps from savage cruelty by night, and the wily foe approached their camp under cover of night, and fired upon them: one bullet, passing through the lapel of Andrew's coat, killed a man standing by his side; but picket-guards ever after prevented another night alarm. Winter threatening to set in upon them before they could reach Santa Fe, it was decided that they should travel the Bent Fort route instead of the Cimerone. The Bent Fort road passed through the Rattene Mountains, and was much the longest road, but afforded better timber, water, and grass—the Cimerone route leading over a vast arid desert. Their chosen way led

them up the Arkansas River, and before reaching Bent's Fort they were surrounded and overpowered by the Cheyenne Indians. It was a feat of Indian chicanery and duplicity. Pretending friendship, two of them came into the camp at early morn and took breakfast with the teamsters, and remained as friendly visitors. Teams were yoked and hitched to the wagons, and the train moved forward. Presently, two other Indians who were seated by the roadside, journeyed with the train; again, larger squads joined them, and then other larger bands, in friendly attitude, till a seeming friendly host was about them; then suddenly three hundred tattooed warriors rushed on the train. Their bows strung, they gave the doleful, diabolical war-whoop, and demanded a halt. There were only about forty teamsters, and they had about twenty old-time flint-lock muskets, and they were in the wagons; so there was no chance for a defense. One tall Indian drew a bow at a venture, and cried, "Wo! wo! Cheyenne shoot, by dam!" The front teamster, dropping his whip, ran back along the train, and each teamster in succession retreated till reaching the rear, where they all huddled together awaiting their destiny. For three hours of awful suspense they were held by the savage men of the plains, looking each moment for the work of slaughter to begin. Many of them dismounted and let their ponies loose to graze. From the manner in which they eyed Andrew, he thought it their intention to capture him and bear him off into the deep solitudes of the mountains, or the vast prairie-wilds, as he was a ruddy-looking lad. But Andrew did not exactly fancy that kind of a home, and keeping his eye on the best-looking pony, he intended to mount him and give them a race, if the work of massacre should begin. Young, and robust, and active, he could spring upon a pony as if he walked on India-rubber feet. Soon, however, it was ascertained that the intention of the savages was not to kill the men, but to lighten the wagons of their cargo. The chief made his men hold the

train at a stand-still, and, by signs and words, gave the wagon-master to understand that it was provisions he wanted, and not the men. The master tried to make a covenant-contract with the chief to give him a certain amount of meal and flour if he would leave, and never again infest his road. But the chief required more. At length a great cloud of dust was seen rising up in the rear, and the pent-up teamsters raised the distressing cry—to the wily Indian—"Soldiers! Soldiers! Soldiers!" The Indians soon accepted the master's terms, and, laden with their captured plunder, hastened away and were soon lost in the blue depths of their wilderness home. It was not the dust bestirred by the hurried tramp of advancing troops, but that of another wagon-train, of which the retreating Indians had no knowledge.

The man whom God has chosen for a special work in the world shall not fall a victim to natural or artificial agencies till that work is fulfilled, whether he be preacher or soldier. A thousand may perish by his side, and ten thousand fall by his right-hand; neither the flying arrow, nor fiery, whizzing ball, nor wasting pestilence, shall slay him till his divinely assigned mission has been finished. Who can doubt a special providence? Every *force* and *agency* in the universe is at the Divine disposal, to carry out his wise designs, and all his own unlimited, unoriginated energies. Sacred history gives us an analogous scene. Benhadad, King of Syria, had besieged Samaria, till the devastations of famine were about to force her to a surrender to Syria's victorious thousands; but as the victor king stretched out his hand to take the victor's prize, Victory turned her banners to the other side. Listen to the historic voice of ages: "For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host; and they said one to another, Lo, the King of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to come upon us." Here it is said that the



Lord had made the Syrian hosts to hear that noise: the tumultuous roar of hundreds of war-chariots and rushing steeds, hurrying to battle. Here the rushing, roaring winds must have made that battle-tumult, which put to flight the affrighted Syrian bands; but the distant, dusty clouds intimidate the brave Indian hosts, and send them on speedy retreat to the far-off mountains' sheltering shades. In the first instance, the angels of the winds, under divine control, cause the Syrian hosts to hear a storm-like roaring, by stirring the air into sudden commotions, or by special electric touches on the drum of the ear of each soldier in the great army, so that his bravery is instantly turned into cowardly fear and bewildering panic— driving each into half-crazed alarms, and causing them to leave all their tents, munitions, and commissaries, in their wild, precipitous flight, in the hands of their almost vanquished foes; and all that to fulfill God's predicted word by the mouth of his prophets, and to save the head of his faithful servant. But in the Indian defeat, the sight of a cloud of dust in the distance disarms them of their savage fury, and they haste away from imagined dangers. One single flight of arrows, and defenseless Andrew and all his helpless comrades would have fallen bleeding victims to their barbarous rage, and all that vast train would have fallen into their hands, to have been driven into the far-off desert solitudes. But no; a special protecting providence says, "Not so; do not hurt my chosen;" and instantly "the chariots of Israel," and ten thousand "horsemen thereof," are round about the object of divine protection.

Gentle reader, do you doubt a special providence? Then go to the rich bituminous plains on Sodom's ill-fated morn. Read the record. A special angel is sent to warn one man, God's servant, to flee the pending danger. He tells Lot to get out, for the day of doom had come. Look on the face of the distant horizon, as twilight's morning curtain fades into light. See that rising dark-blue cloud, spreading out its

wings over the widened plains. Look at the fierce flashes of lightning along its advancing front. Hear the fearful roar of hail and thunder, and the dread rush of warring storm-winds. Look, see its hurried sweep along the skies. It draws nigh the doomed cities. The affrighted mortals run to and fro in the streets; others, in tremulous fear, gaze at the terrible scene. But O look at each end of the storm-wing! see at each tip thereof a fiery-robed angel, holding in his hand an electric chain, curbing back the ranting storm-cloud, till something is done below. See, the lower angel takes hold on Lot, and says, "Haste, get away; I can do nothing till you are gone." Look, Lot hurries along; now he enters into Zoar, and the fiery-clad angels unloose their hold on the sulphuric tempest's wings. O see its rushing fury! hear the roar of its maddened winds. See the spiral dashes of streaming lightnings along the face of the rolling clouds. Look at the blazing, fiery hail pouring upon the cities, and the intervening plains, till all is in a world of flame. Soon the ruin is complete and the burning earth sinks down and entombs their ashes and cinders in a bitter liquid grave. So it is written, "The Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah *brimstone and fire.*" Surely, a special interposition of a gracious providence shielded Lot from that wholesale catastrophe which ruined Sodom. Some of our earnest readers may not question a special guiding providence over the good, while in the path of obedience, yet many honestly question a shielding agency over those whom God, in his purpose, may have chosen to useful stations, while they may still live in sin. That postulate brings the question in hand to a direct issue. We claim that young Andrew Potter was God's called agent to plant Christian civilization along the frontiers of Western Texas in the period of his mature manhood; and though his being exposed to the hazards of savage warfare was of his own choosing, and did lead him into much sin, suffering, and danger, yet the good and great Being did not see fit to do

violence to the decisions of his own free-will; he kindly preserved him from destruction in the hours of peril, with a view of his future obedience to the divine behest—though now in the path of disobedience; and, furthermore, the all-wise Being saw that he could and would cause his sad schooling in sin's rough and thorny road to result in fitting him the better for the sphere of his future operations as the agent of the gospel of peace. Therefore, Andrew Potter did not fall a bleeding victim to Indian cruelty in the day of danger. Jonah was the chosen of God; and though for disobedience the terrible monster engulfed him, yet a special providence spared his life, and brought him to do the bidding of the Lord in warning Nineveh of her impending danger. The ancient King of Egypt was raised up from the deaths sent on his kingdom, while very sinful and wicked, that he might be the medium of transmitting the name of Jehovah to after ages. Although Andrew Potter, in his young days of sin and exposure to such imminent peril, may not have been conscious of any design in himself, or even thought of any divine intentions in regard to him, yet the sequel shows that the all-seeing Eye was upon him, as his chosen minister.

## Chapter IV.

DURING the short stay of the train at Bent's Fort, Andrew was attacked by that dangerous disease, "camp-fever," and when the train moved on it was first decided to leave him there; but the assistant wagon-master had formed a great attachment to the young man, and agreed to yoke and hitch up his team each morning, and loose them at evening, and let the sick youth sit in the front of the wagon, and command his team, which would follow the train. In that way he set out with the train from Bent's Fort toward Santa Fe, a distance of three hundred miles. He soon began to mend. Winter set in on them severely in the ravines of the Rattene Mountains, and having frequently to lie by, it gave young Potter a good time to recruit his lost strength. The Indians having got part of their supplies, and on account of detentions in the mountains by ice and snow-storms, they had to be put on short rations. The cook was required to bake each one's cake separately, and as near the same size as possible, that there might be no grounds for complaining. But sometimes one might seem a little larger than the others, when those who were more selfish than generous would desire the cakes that seemed to be larger. Among the teamsters there was a certain large bony man, noted for his cross-grained selfishness, who formed a dislike to young Potter, who was a favorite with the most of the crowd. This ill-natured man always contended for the largest cake of bread. One evening Andrew came in from herding the oxen, tired and hungry, and told the cook to give him his rations, and he would eat his supper. The cook handed him the one the stingy man had fixed his eye on for himself, and just as Andrew took hold of it, the cruel, selfish

man knocked it from his hand, and it fell into small pieces in the sand. This brought on an encounter between them, and the stout man abused and bruised the boy's person. Andrew possessed a strong appetite for that bitter thing called *revenge*. That was the most objectionable trait early manifested in his character. It, being combined with his native combativeness, rendered him fearfully dangerous, when fully aroused to a sense of having been seriously wronged. He went off and whetted his butcher-knife sharp and keen, and when night came on he procured a seasoned oak wagon-standard. Being fully intent on revenge, he approached the camp-fire where his antagonist stood with his back toward him, and struck him with the standard, from the force of both hands, on the back of his head, when the large man fell into the fire. At the same time he drew his knife to finish him; but other parties staid the hand of the angry youth, and pulled the fallen man from the fire. He, however, soon became conscious, but was seriously hurt.

This affray caused quite a division and stir in the camp, and the little offender was imprisoned in a covered wagon near by, where he could hear all that was said about the row. He could hear himself called a "mean, low-bred boy," and that he ought to be made to know a boy's place, etc. That abuse only sharpened the boy's craving for revenge; so he found an old flint-lock musket in the wagon, raised the wagon-sheet, pointed it at the squad, and pulled trigger; but the powder flashed in the pan, only making a noise sufficient to scatter the crowd. That raised such an excitement in camp that it seemed that a general *mêlée* would ensue; but the wagon-master quelled it till the return of morn, when a consultation was held, and it was agreed that the master should rebuke the trespassing youth, and there it should end. Accordingly, the master said to him: "Andy, what did you strike that fellow so hard for? his head is nearly split open. You are a boy, and should keep in a

boy's place." Andrew replied: "If it is my misfortune to be a boy, that is no reason why I should be imposed on. A man should keep in a man's place." Here the trouble ended, and the train rolled on its tortuous way amid the wild Indian domain.

That rash act of our little hero—going behind his enemy to take his life—is the only seeming cowardly deed we find in the entire history of his life, from early boyhood to his latest manhood. As we have already stated, cowardice and cruelty he really despised from childhood; but in this single instance, the peculiar nature of the difficulty, and his strong love of revenge, got the better of his bravery. Being physically unable to measure strength with a giant-like man, he saw no way to get the better of him but to hit him a stealthy blow. There are surely palliating considerations connected with the affair: the ill-natured, selfish man and his cruel abuse of the boy were greatly to be censured; but the boy's conduct was rash and reckless, and cannot be approved by the strict rules of morals, and is at the same time a true development of that pugilistic character he ever displayed in after-life, till the day of his regeneration; and even then, when he deemed it needful, he did not hesitate to chastise men for injuries to others more than for self-defense.

The winter being severe, the train did not reach Santa Fe till some time in January, 1847. The army had already taken Santa Fe, but General Price enlisted the teamsters, and advanced on the Mexicans. Young Potter enlisted among the rest of his comrades, and at the close of that campaign he remained in the service of the United States Government till 1852. That part of the army to which he belonged operated in Arizona and New Mexico, and its duty obliged it to traverse the vast plains lying between Missouri and New Mexico, where thousands of savage Indian warriors roamed in quest of the scalp of the civilized pale-faced intruder. For five years he crossed and recrossed that