

**PLEASANT WATERS: A  
STORY OF SOUTHERN  
LIFE AND CHARACTER**

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Pleasant Waters: A Story of Southern Life and Character by Graham Claytor

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BY

GRAHAM CLAYTOR.

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"Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,  
And fondly broods with milder care;  
Time but the impression deeper makes,  
As streams their channels deeper wear."

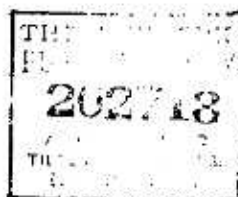
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# PLEASANT WATERS:

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## CHAPTER I.

MORE than a month after the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia upon the plains of Appomattox, General Joseph E. Johnston issued his final order to the little band of troops under his command in the Carolinas. Already the melancholy march of many a battle-scarred warrior had ended upon the threshold of a ruined and desolate home. And now the final order of this faithful general to his few faithful followers, terminating their official relations, was issued. All was over. Nothing remained to the disbanded troops but to obtain honorable discharges and to return to peaceful pursuits among their families and kindred.

It was with the weary weight of years of trial, and fatigue, and disappointment that the little army,

shattered, beaten, and beggared, made ready to return to ruined and beggarly homes.

It was near the middle of May. The foliage was already thick and green in Southern field and forest. The booming of cannon and the peal of musketry had ceased forever (let it be hoped) along Southern hill and valley. Brightly the sun shone that day, but it shone upon a land filled with a deep and solemn pathos.

The night following General Johnston's order, a lone soldier sat in his tent. His countenance was gloomy and dejected. And yet the soldier breathed a sigh of relief that the end had come. He had never faltered in his allegiance to the Southern cause. He had never lacked confidence in the great general under whom he so long fought. If need be, he was now ready to lay down his life for his country. But, whatever had been his zeal in time of war, now that the end had come, with promise of speedy restoration of peace, he was heartily glad. He loved his country too well and too wisely to witness with anything but pain the sacrifice of so many noble men and the desolation of so many beautiful homes. He would be as zealous in restoring tranquillity to his country as he had been dauntless in fighting her battles.

While the soldier was absorbed in these reflec-



tions, a man pushed aside the flap which served as a covering for the door of the tent, and quietly entered. For some moments he stood unnoticed.

Presently the soldier turned towards his visitor, and, looking up, recognized an old friend and comrade. He arose to greet him. The two men stood face to face. A blazing pine-knot cast its lurid glare around, plainly revealing the forms and features of the soldiers who stood with clasped hands under the torn and weather-beaten tent.

Pleasant Waters, the occupant of the tent, was tall and rather stout, but not large. By nature he was very erect, but from the fatigues incident to forced marches and field labor he was inclined to stoop. His general appearance, under more favorable circumstances, would impress the stranger as commanding, but to-night he seemed to labor under some great physical debility. His soldier's cap was removed, disclosing a well-shaped head with a suit of light sandy hair, which, contrary to his custom, had been allowed to grow until it almost covered his broad and massive brow. His soft gray eyes, accustomed, under excitement, to sparkle and flash with intelligence, wore a look of calm resignation, and a touch of sadness dwelt in their clear depth. His nose was of comely shape, his mouth rather large, but his lips were smooth and thin, and covered

a set of regular and well-preserved teeth. His complexion was ruddy, and hardened by long exposure.

Richard Bentley, the friend and comrade of Waters, was in many respects his opposite. Much larger in form, in fact almost portly, his was a robust constitution. The fatigues of war had not affected him, in so far, at least, as the rotundity of his figure was concerned. On the contrary, the boys all declared that he fattened on forced marches and guard duty. He was several years the senior of Waters, having already passed his thirtieth year. Light brown hair covered his handsomely-shaped head, and a pair of rich hazel eyes sparkled beneath his broad forehead. His nose and lips were indicative of firmness amounting almost to dogged determination. Physically he was every inch a man, but, in the language of the camp, he was a man "set in his ways." As usual with men of his type, he was strong and constant in his friendships, in his hates bitter and implacable, sometimes even to an unreasonable extent, but, withal, honest and true as steel.

"Well," said Waters, who was first to speak, "I suppose it's all over."

"Yes, yes," quickly responded Bentley. "This is the end of it; it's terrible—terrible! But it cannot be helped. I suppose on to-morrow we take our departure, and 'dream of battle-field no more.'"

"Have you fully determined upon your course?" inquired Waters. "Are you still bent on carrying out that foolish whim of yours?"

"Yes, I am. My mind is fully made up," replied Bentley, "and for that reason I am here to-night to talk with you about some matters of business which I wish to intrust to you. Let us go out in the open air. It's more pleasant than under this tent. Besides, we are not so likely to be disturbed."

Waters assented to his friend's wish. The two men walked together out into the balmy night. They sat down upon a fallen tree not far from the half-open tent. Countless stars pulsated in the unclouded depth of the sky above them. The camp-fires were burning luridly along the hills and in the valleys around them. Somewhere, afar off in the hills, sounded the notes of a bugle.

The warriors engaged in long and earnest conversation.

"And so, Waters," said Bentley,—and he spoke in quiet undertones. It was not his habit, but the hour, the place, the occasion, filled him with a feeling of sadness,—“you have decided to return at once to Virginia.”

"Why should I not?" earnestly responded Waters. "Why should I not? I stood by the old State in her