

**LIFE IN DIXIE
DURING THE WAR.
1863-1864-1865**

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Life in Dixie During the War. 1863-1864-1865 by Mary A. H. Gay

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MARY A. H. GAY

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1863-1864-1865.

MARY A. H. GAY.

ATLANTA, GA.
CONSTITUTION JOB OFFICE
1892.

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INTRODUCTION.

I am asked to write a few words of introduction to these reminiscences of a lady who, in the pleasant afternoon of a life devoted to deeds of mercy and charity, turns fondly and sympathetically to the past. But there is nothing to be said. What word of mine could add to the interest that inheres in this unpretentious record of a troubled and bloody period? The chronicle speaks for itself, especially to those who remember something of those wonderful days of war. It has the charm and the distinction of absolute verity, a quality for which we may look in vain in more elaborate and ambitious publications. Here, indeed, is one of the sources from which history must get its supplies, and it is informed with a simplicity which history can never hope to attain.

We have here reproduced in these records, with a faithfulness that is amazing, the spirit of those dark days that are no more. Tragedy shakes hands with what seems to be trivial, and the commonplaces of every day life seem to move forward with the gray battalions that went forth to war.

It is a gentle, a faithful and a tender hand that guides the pen—a soul nerved to sacrifice that tells the tale. For the rest, let the records speak for themselves.

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS.

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PREFACE.

By way of preface to "Life in Dixie During the War," I scarcely know what to say. I have long felt that it was the duty of the South to bequeath to posterity the traditions of that period; for if we do it not ourselves they will be swallowed up in oblivion. Entertaining this opinion, I have essayed the task of an individual effort, and hope that others may follow my example.

No woman who has seen what I have seen, and felt what I have felt, would be apt to write with less asperity; and yet, now that we have come back to the United States, and mean to stay in it, let the provocation to depart be what it may, I would not put into practice an iota of the war-time feeling. In thus expressing myself I am sure I represent every Christian in my own beautiful Southland.

There was one for whom these sketches would have had a special interest. An inspiring motive for writing them was that they would be read by my nephew, Thomas H. Stokes, of Atlanta, the only child of the brother so often mentioned. But, ere he had had more than a glimpse of them, he was called away by an Inscrutable Providence, in his pure and beautiful young manhood, as we trust, to a Land of Peace more in keeping with his noble, true and tender heart than earth, with its sin and strife. "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God."

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LIFE IN DIXIE DURING THE WAR.

CHAPTER I.

Coming home from Camp Chase—The faithful servant's gift—A glimpse of Confederate braves.

"A LETTER from Marse Thomie," said our mail-carrier, Toby, as he got in speaking distance on his return from the post-office.

"What makes you think so?" I said, excitedly.

"I know his hand-write, and this is it," he said, selecting a letter from a large package and handing it to me. The very first glimpse of the superscription assured me of the correctness of his confident assertion.

The letter was addressed to our mother, and bore a United States postage stamp, and the beloved signature of her only son, Thomas J. Stokes. A thrill of gratitude and joy filled our hearts too full for utterance, as we read:

"MY DEAR MOTHER: I have learned that the soldiers of the 10th Texas Infantry will be exchanged for United States troops very soon, perhaps to-morrow; and then, what happiness will be mine! I can