



Incidents and Anecdotes of the Civil War (Classic Reprint)

Admiral Porter

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On my way I had to pass the house of a distinguished Southern gentleman whom I knew well and for whom I entertained a high regard. I had always heard him discuss the questions at issue between the North and South in the most dispassionate manner, whatever may have been his course in Congress. There were a dozen carriages standing before the door, and the house was all ablaze with lights, making the interior look cheerful enough, while a drizzling rain rendered everything gloomy without. Those were not the days of well-lighted streets and asphalt pavements. Washington was a city of muddy highways, and corporation moonlight was more frequent than convenient. As I entered the mansion the lady of the house, in bonnet and shawl, was descending the stairs. She was a magnificent woman, greatly esteemed in Washington society for her genial manner, and admired for her wit and intellect. Had she aspired to do so, this lady might have been the leader of fashion in the Federal capital, but I do not think her ambition ran in that direction. She had a small and select circle of friends, mostly Southern people, and chiefly affected politics. Her heart was fixed on what she called the emancipation of the South from Northern thralldom, and with her handsome person and dignified bearing she seemed worthy to occupy the loftiest position. As this lady saw me she exclaimed, Ah, captain for so she always called me I am so glad to see you !I want you to escort me to the White House. The horses are sick, and I am going to walk over. It is impossible for you to walk, I replied, through the rain and mud ;but there are ten or twelve hacks at the door, and I will press one of them into your service. So saying, I called a carriage, helped the lady in, and got in after her. I was under the impression, I said, as we started, that you were having a party at your house, seeing it so bri

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