



A Diary from Dixie: a Lady's Account of the Confederacy During the American Civil War

Mary Boykin Chesnut

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A singular view from a remarkable woman

This is a famous book. Any source work is worthy and accounts of the American Civil War from the female perspective are not so numerous, so all of them should be valued. Nevertheless, there is an inevitable order to everything and Mary Chesnut's diary is of the highest rank. Undoubtedly Mary Chesnut viewed the events of her time from a position of privilege. She was, in many respects, the archetypal southern lady. She was born on a South Carolina plantation, the daughter of a U. S Senator. She was highly educated, spoke several languages and married a U. S. Senator who became a Brigadier-General in the Confederate Army. Her family connections meant she knew the principal characters of her time well. They included Jefferson Davis, John Bell Hood, Wade Hampton and many other important figures and their families in Confederate society, government and the military. She was in a position to travel to the field of engagement. Yet despite all these advantages, Mary Chesnut still exceptional and that was entirely due to her character and intellect. She was a strong minded, passionate woman in advance of her time and was disinclined to accept anything at face value-including the basic tenants upon which her new country was founded. She was an able authoress and has left posterity a vibrant, intimate, thoughtful, detailed, personable and entertaining chronicle of her life and times. This is essential Civil War reading and highly recommended.

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