



Four Years of Rebel Fight (Abridged, Annotated)

John Will Dyer

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When former Confederate sergeant John Dyer sat down to write this engaging memoir, his goal was to tell the story of the rank and file soldiers who were mostly anonymous. What he wrote was an often witty, sometimes sad, but very good history of his time in the Kentucky 1st Cavalry Regiment.

Through the entire war, Dyer and his comrades faced death by bullet, shell, and starvation, while managing to keep their spirits up in a losing cause. Of his former foes, he wrote:

I write this from a Southern standpoint, but I can assure my brother who wore the blue that he will find nothing in these pages derogatory to the reputation of a brave and true soldier.

The book is filled with plenty of thrilling action, and Dyer is very modest in his account of his own bravery. He was part of Jeff Davis' escort at the end of the war and was with him when Davis got the telegram of Lincoln's assassination. He also recounts sweet stories like this one:

"Immediately every voice on the boat joined in the singing, and, although the old song is full of pathos and susceptible of great effects, and I have heard it sung many times under all sorts of circumstances, I have never known it sung with so much feeling and effect as on that occasion. Men, with the tears streaming down their cheeks, rushed into each other's arms as brother to brother and I have often thought that heaven opened her gates and rejoiced at the sight. The captain, a grizzled old veteran, was standing on the roof, and, gulping down a sob, said to the pilot, 'Run her slow, Jim, don't land till the boys get over this.'"

Every memoir of the American Civil War provides us with another view of the catastrophe that changed the country forever.

For the first time, this long out-of-print volume is available as an affordable, well-formatted book for e-readers and smartphones.

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David Baxter:

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