



REMINISCENCES OF A SOUTHERN HOSPITAL Phoebe Pember

Reminiscences of a Southern Hospital, by Its Matron

by Phoebe Yates Pember (1823 - 1913)

Phoebe Yates Pember served as a matron in the Confederate Chimborazo military hospital in Richmond, Virginia, during the Civil War, overseeing a dietary kitchen serving meals to 300 or more wounded soldiers daily. *Reminiscences of a Southern Hospital* is her vivid recounting of hospital life and of her tribulations (and personal growth) as a female administrator. To follow her from day one, when she is greeted with “ill-repressed disgust” that “one of them had come,” and she, herself, “could only understand that the position was one which dove-tailed the offices of housekeeper and cook” to the day when she as exerts control over the hospital’s “medicinal whiskey barrel” is to watch a woman find herself. Besides describing “daily scenes of pathos,” Pember gives a horrifying account of the prisoner exchange of November 1864 (“living and dead . . . not distinguishable”), and also of the evacuation and burning of Richmond in 1865. Her memoirs were serialized in *Cosmopolite* magazine in 1866, then reprinted in book form in 1879 under the title *A Southern Woman’s Story*. Pember was honored by the US Postal Service with a stamp in 1995.

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Read by Sue Anderson

Cover design by Kathryn Delaney



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