

DIXIE

Yes, I was reared a dixie-ite in country almost out of sight. A place where thorns and thistles grow to hedge the way where'er you go. There summer sun is just so hot that we hung up a water-pot under some shady green-leaf tree where every passer-by might see, or cooled our water in a bag to quench our thirst lest we should fag.

In place so rugged and so rough - red sand-hills and some blackrock stuff - we dixie-ites could scarcely live for lack of wholesome food to give our bodies proper nourishment to keep us free from discontent.

Our clothing, not the very best, was sometimes nothing but a jest. The shoes that oft bedecked our feet should scarce be seen upon the street; some raw-hide shoes, not leather tan were often worn by some poor man. Oft rabbit skins were worn for caps instead of splendid Stetson hats, and colored shirts of dockroot hue were worn instead of navy-blue. The girls such colored dresses wore with little pride when feet were sore.

One barefoot girl, a pretty lass, quite often by our door would pass. These homespun girls so very clever quite often boyish hearts would sever. We'd take them to the dances gay - for tickets, squash or pumpkins pay - and we would dance quadrills and reel until the morning stars appeal for quick return unto our homes where we would go with sighs and moans, and hopeful wait another night when we could dance in former plight.

In daytime when the sun was hot, we fumed and worried quite a lot. For great ambitions seldom go where everything is heated so. Sometimes we'd rest out in the shade, and often Cayuse horses trade. And then we'd drink a little wine to nerve us up and make us shine in splendid hopeful wonderment why we should suffer discontent.

Quite oft the chills our frames would shake until it seemed the earth would quake. Then raging fever would set in until our minds a perfect din would wander 'round to and fro all up and down the earth would go. But we would dose the large and small with quinine pills, a dose for all, and then in silent sweet repose we'd settle down in peaceful doze.

In early days our very lives had much concern o'er Indian drives. Both swift of foot and horses fleet, they'd steal our cattle, beef to eat, and with much gusto and bravado drive them across the Colorado. And if perchance we followed them, we might not meet our friends again. For this ungainly, loathesome race had no regard for man or place. Oft at night these tribes would wander all o'er the country seeking plunder. At times they'd slay a trusty brother, to wring the heart of some fond mother. And then young boys and older men would quickly arm and follow them; retake the horses and the cattle; deal death to them in open battle. Heroic men in Indian fight ne'er faltered when the cause was right.

But Indian tribes soon suffered route and peaceful times then came about. Then smaller towns that suffered so, in peaceful times began to grow. Then vegetation, fruit and farm took on a splendid, graceful charm. Began our Dixie land to leaven, put on appearance more like heaven. To shady groves we could retreat and there the watermelon eat. And eat fine grapes and peaches too while with our fans the flies we'd shoo. And touch the hands of pretty girls all dolled up with pretty curls. And we would to the dances go and lisp and dance all in a row. And speak soft nonsense to each other, to make the girls with blushes smother. Oh, that's the time a dixie-ite could eat and drink and dance all night.

DIXIE (Continued)

We raised some cotton and some corn from almost time when we were born. We planted grapes and raised the peach on vine and tree that all could reach. We raised some cattle and some sheep and dug some ore from mountains steep. We spun and wove like busy bee, produced some silk from mulberry tree, then scattered, some, to other places where we might share in other graces. And whether wrong or whether right, in Dixie we have given our might.

We trod the paths that others do, sometimes quite fast and others slow. But great experience did we gain, the most of which we still retain. To many of us came the time when we should seek another clime, so many of us bid adieu to good old Dixie firm and true.

The Dixie country cast a spell and did it wisely, did it well. The Dixie-ite has tempted fate in town and city, church and state, repeatedly and often when he makes his way with other men with such success as makes us wonder if Brigham did make any blunder in calling us to that hot section where we might get the right infection. No doubt we sometimes feel as though back to that Dixie land we'd go. We feel much like a tender child that yearns for home and mother's smile, and often frets and weeps and stows because he can no longer choose familiar things he once had lost and can't regain at any cost. He often weeps for things now gone he can no longer look upon.

Well, it was home no matter how the sun did shine or wind did blow. No matter how the prickly heat would scourge our backs and make us beat our way into some shady nook to bathe our brow in flowing brook and eat the watermelon sweet and grapes that none on earth could beat. Oh boy! if I were back again forevermore I'd not complain. That Brigham Young in all his glory sent us down there to tell this story.

- Levi N. Harmon.