

# THE MINSTRELS LAST NIGHT.

## GOOD SHOW BEFORE A GREAT HOUSE.

A Captivating Bill Which Was Well Presented—The Singing and Other Special Features—An Oration to Dixie and Its Author.

The opera house was packed last night, upstairs and down and from end to end, with all sorts and conditions of men. The appearance of Al Field's Minstrels was the occasion of the gathering, which was by all odds the largest of the season. The entertainment was capital. There were so many good features that they cannot be enumerated. The colloquies were bright; the wit fresh. The music was delightful—no number in it better than "Crowned With the Tempest," from Ermant. All cannot be mentioned but it would be wrong to omit reference to the bass solo of Mr. Norton, "A Hundred Fathoms Deep." The clog work of Mr. Rowe was very fine and the horizontal bar performances of the Patterson Brothers perhaps the best ever seen here. Field and Donnelly were the special attractions and did all their work well. The burlesque on the circus started out to be the funniest thing of the evening but was too much protracted and dragged toward the end. When Mr. Emmett was introduced and "Dixie" was given, its venerable author joining in the chorus, the audience did everything except take the roof off the house.

It seems almost unfortunate that the giving of negro minstrelsy has been surrounded by so many new accessories—features which are incongruous when considered in connection with the main idea—but evidently all these things are nicely introduced to meet a popular demand, and a more generally delighted audience than that of last night never, perhaps, passed out of the Charlotte opera house.

### THE AUTHOR OF DIXIE.

Daniel Emmett was born of Southern parentage, his father being a Virginian and his mother a Marylander, though he, himself, was born in Mt. Vernon, Knox county, Ohio, on the 29th of October, 1815, consequently is now in his 81st year. He is a hale, hearty and sprightly old man, as much so as if he were but 60.

His father was a blacksmith, and he, when a lad, worked the "bellows." He picked up music between study times, and was known throughout his section as the best fiddler going. "Once upon a time," as the story goes, the manager of a theatrical company, who was passing through the town where Mr. Emmett's father lived, heard that the boy, young Dan, played remarkably well on the fiddle. He went to see Mr. Emmett in regard to the boy, as he wanted him to join his company. Mr. Emmett referred him to young Dan. The boy told the manager he could not play well enough to play with a company, but the manager insisted, so Dan went with him. He traveled with the company for several years and then joined the circus. He was with different circuses for 23 years, traveling north and south of the "nation's road," Mason and Dixon's line.

### ORIGIN OF DIXIE.

After leaving the circus, Dan Emmett found himself with Bryant's Minstrels in New York. He was employed to manage the music and compose catchy songs and negro songs. One Saturday night as he was going home from the performance, Jerrie Bryant overtook him and said: "Dan, I want you to compose a new walk 'round; something that will catch the crowd, that the boys on the street can catch and whistle right off—something with a chorus." "The next day was Sunday," said "Uncle Dan." "It rained very hard and I stayed in doors. I thought of the new song that Jerrie wanted, and putting my thoughts to words and music, "Dixie" was the result. It was sung the next night in Bryant's Minstrels and took like wildfire. Everybody sang it. That was in the summer of 1859. I sang it then every night until the opera house was closed. When the house was re-opened the song was again taken up. It was sung during the war and the Yankee bands picked it up. They brought the tune South, and from the sentiment it at once became the Confederate national song. It was played and sung for over a year North before the South ever heard it.

"How did you happen to call it 'Dixie,' Mr. Emmett?" asked the OBERLYER. "Did it in some way get its name from Mason and Dixon's line?"

"Well, when we boys would go back North with the circus, after a winter South, we used often to say, 'I wish I was back in Dixon's land'—meaning south of the national road—and from that we got to calling the South 'Dixie;' so that was the way the piece got its name."

The old man was living quietly at his home at Mt. Vernon when Mr. Field hunted him up and secured him for one of his attractions. Mr. Emmett at the time he wrote "Dixie" was employed by the week with Bryant's Minstrels, and he got no pay for the song. He has never realized a cent from it.

### EMMETT'S AUTOGRAPHS.

Mr. Emmett left two autographs in Charlotte—one for Mrs. Morehead; the other with the OBERLYER's city editor. Although in his 81st year, his hand is steady and his chirography clear and plain. The autographs will be treasured with the memory of "Dixie."

Mr. Emmett spent an hour in the city editor's room yesterday. He is exceedingly interesting, and the OBERLYER esteemed it a privilege and honor to have the author of "Dixie," the song of the Southland, under its roof. He is tenderly cared for by Mr. Field and the boys—exponents of the minstrelsy of before and after the war.

### DIXIE.

I wish I was in de land ob cotton,  
'T'immon seed and sandy bottom.

Look away, look away, look away, Dixie land!

In Dixie land whar I was born in,  
Early on one frosty mornin'.

Look away, look away, away, Dixie land!

### CHORUS.

Den I wish I was in Dixie, hooray, hooray!  
In Dixie's land we'll take our stand.

To lib and die in Dixie,  
Away, away, away down south in Dixie!

Away, away, away down south in Dixie!

Old missus marry Will de weaver,  
William was a gay deceaver;

Look away, look away, look away, Dixie land!

When he put his arm around 'er,  
He look as fierce as a forty-pounder.

Look away, look away, away, Dixie land!

His face was as sharp as a butcher's cleaver,  
But dat did not seem to greab 'er;

Look away, look away, look away, Dixie land!

Old missus acted de fooliest part,  
And died for a man dat broke her heart.

Look away, look away, away Dixie land!

Now here's health to de next old missus,  
An' all de gals dat want to kiss us.

Look away, look away, look away Dixie land!

But if you want to drive 'way sorrow,  
Come and hear dis song to-morrow.

Look away, look away, away, Dixie land!

Dar's buckwheat-cakes an' Injun batter,  
Makes you fat or a little fatter,

Look away, look away, look away, Dixie land!

Den how it down an' scratch your grabble,  
To Dixie's land I'm bound to trabble.

Look away, look away, away, Dixie land!