

DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY FROM AMERICAN COUNCIL OF LEARNED SOCIETIES

SOUTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Aiken

n Providence, R. I., in *Gold Beater*, a drama produced at the National, Jan. 15, 1851. A man's Club, New York. Embrance, however, is Stowe's *Uncle Tom's* unsuccessful attempt ands, Aiken wrote his George C. Howard, Troy, N. Y., who be- of Eva and Topsy were is daughter, Cordelia, Aiken's cousin. Aiken George Shelby and of to, in his own version, Museum, Sept. 27, 1852, seen to Purdy's National 18, 1853, where it was times. This version was 1853-54, in Detroit in 58. When the play was at the Triangle Theatre, was based on Aiken's he novel closely in his sky, then taking Uncle finally to his death at he sentimental features ized, and little Eva is better world. Yet poor natic standpoint, it was forces in the abolition H. P. Phelps (*Players* dramatized a number r, including "The Gun "The Mystic Bride," -57. He also continued at Chatham Theatre in 56, his play of *The Old on of Ann S. Stephens's 1 on May 18, 1858, *The on of Deville; or The production at Barnum's v. 28, 1859. These seem *Tom's Cabin; or, Life Domestic Drama in Six Samuel French, New house fail to reveal any *Vas He a Woman? was tie. To Aiken have also *the Household Skeleton Pearl of the Points, a 1, *Chevalier, the French and *A New York Boy 72). He was acting in he Arch Street Theatre, 1861 was house dram-*******

alist at Barnum's Museum in New York. In 1862 he was associate manager of the Troy Theatre. Aiken retired from the stage in 1867 but continued writing fiction and making dramatizations, living in Brooklyn, N. Y., until 1875. He died in Jersey City, N. J.

[A brief notice of Aiken appears in T. Allston Brown's *Hist. of the Am. Stage* (1870), and another in F. C. Wemyss's *Chronology of the Am. Stage* (1852). A detailed account of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* appears in T. A. Brown's *Hist. of the N.Y. Stage* (1852), p. 315-16. The date of his death, given incorrectly by Brown, has been established by the Registrar of the Board of Health and Vital Statistics of Hudson County, N. J. Information has also been furnished by letters from Mrs. Cordelia Howard Macdonald, who created the part of Eva in 1854, and by Mrs. Viola Aiken Baker. Scattered references are also found in *Records of the N.Y. Stage*, by J. N. Ireland (1866). See also A. H. Quinn's *Hist. of the Am. Drama from the Beginning to the Civil War* (1923).]

A. H. Q.

AIKEN, WILLIAM (Jan. 28, 1806-Sept. 6, 1887), planter, statesman, philanthropist, was born in Charleston, S. C. At about the time that the Articles of Confederation were being replaced by the "more perfect" plan of union embodied in the Federal Constitution, William Aiken, Sr., a native of County Antrim, Ireland, settled in Charleston. He became a merchant, sat for several years in the state legislature, and at the time of his death (1831) was serving as the first president of the South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company and was said to be one of the wealthiest men in Charleston (*Charleston Mercury*, Mar. 7, 1831). He married Henrietta Wyatt, and William Aiken was his only son. The latter received his early education in the schools of Charleston (*In Memoriam William Aiken*, 1887). He then entered the South Carolina College from which he graduated in 1825. After a period of extensive travel he returned to Charleston, and on Feb. 3, 1831, married Harriett Lowndes (G. B. Chase, *Lowndes of South Carolina*, 1876, p. 23). The untimely death of his father as the result of an accident the next month brought him at once into the possession of a large fortune and considerable business responsibilities. Agriculture, however, held more attractions for him than commerce, and he was soon developing a great rice plantation on Johns Island, near Charleston, which through his careful and skilful management came to be a model of its kind. (For a description of this plantation as it appeared in 1850 see *DeBow's Review*, IX, 201 ff.)

Aiken's political career began in 1838, when he was sent to the lower house of the legislature by the parishes of St. Philip's and St. Michael's (city of Charleston). He was reelected in 1840, and two years later was elevated to the state Senate by the same constituency. In 1842, before the expira-

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tion of his term in the Senate, he was chosen governor by the legislature after three ineffectual ballots (*Charleston Courier*, Dec. 9, 1842). His administration (1842-44) was marked by no unusual incident, and his efforts were mainly directed toward the development of the economic interests of the state, particularly the railroads (see his annual messages in the *Journals of the Legislature*). After a short period of retirement from public life, he was induced in 1850 to offer for Congress (*Charleston Mercury*, Oct. 12, 1850).

He was elected by a handsome majority, and took his seat in the House of Representatives on Dec. 1, 1851. He was returned without opposition to the Thirty-third and Thirty-fourth Congresses. He seldom took part in debate, but through his position on leading committees he exerted an important influence on legislation. His freedom from violent party and sectional bias and his reputation as a man of sterling character admitted him to the councils of all factions (see Howell Cobb's estimate of him in "The Correspondence of Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb," *American Historical Association Reports*, 1911, vol. II, pp. 358-59). Accordingly, after the House of the Thirty-fourth Congress had spent two months in futile efforts to elect a Speaker, Aiken was brought forward as a compromise candidate. The resolution by which his name was proposed met with so favorable a response that it appeared that he might be elected. On the following day, Feb. 2, 1856, it was agreed that, if after three further ballots no candidate had secured a majority, then on the fourth the member receiving the largest number of votes should be declared Speaker. No decision was reached on the first three ballots in spite of the fact that Aiken gained the solid support of the Democrats and the votes of most of the Southern Know-Nothings. The final ballot, the 133rd since the beginning of the contest, was then taken. The count stood: 103 for Nathaniel P. Banks, the Republican candidate; 100 for Aiken; and 11 for all others. An effort to have this decision thrown out on technical grounds was defeated by Aiken and others, and Banks was escorted to the chair by his defeated rival and two other members (*Congressional Globe*, 34 Cong., 1 Sess., pp. 334 ff.).

Aiken declined a fourth term in Congress and retired again to private life. He had steadfastly opposed disunion, and it was with regret and no little misgiving as to the consequences that he saw the Southern States secede from the Union in 1861. During the war which ensued, however, he contributed materially to the Southern cause by the donation of supplies and by making large subscriptions to Confederate loans. In June 1863 he was arrested by the federal authorities and taken

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to Washington, but was released on parole immediately upon his arrival. He was soon after elected to Congress by his old constituency, but was denied his seat by the action of the Northern members (J. S. Reynolds, *Reconstruction in South Carolina*, 1905, p. 20). He did not participate further in public life other than to perform the duties of trustee of the Peabody Educational Fund. His death occurred at Flat Rock, N. C., ten years after his state had resumed its normal position in the Union.

[The private papers of William Aiken were lost in a fire which destroyed his plantation home at Johns Island, and no biographical sketch has ever been written. An excellent obituary, however, was published in *The News and Courier* (Charleston, S. C.), Sept. 8, 1887. A portrait of him in later life, painted by John Stolle after a photograph, is in the possession of the Rhett family of Charleston. Yates Snowden's *Hist. of S. C.* (1920) contains a brief account of the genealogy of the Aiken family.]

J. H. E.

AIKENS, ANDREW JACKSON (Oct. 31, 1830-Jan. 22, 1909), editor, publisher, was born among the Vermont hills, in the town of Barnard, to parents of rugged ancestry. His father, Warren Aikens, was of Scotch descent, while his mother, Lydia, was directly descended from John Howland of the *Mayflower*. At the age of fifteen, he started his life career by becoming a printer's apprentice. After some experience as editor of country newspapers in Woodstock and Bennington, Vt., and North Adams, Mass., he was employed in Boston in the state printing office. In 1853, he became the special western correspondent of the *New York Evening Post*. During his travels in connection with this position, he made the acquaintance, in Milwaukee, of Editor Cramer of the *Wisconsin* (still issued as the *Evening Wisconsin*) and was persuaded to assist in editing that paper, an evening sheet which was, according to a contemporary, "noted for its enterprise and generally popular for its miscellaneous intelligence and family reading" (A. C. Wheeler, *The Chronicles of Milwaukee*, 1861, p. 287). It gave its influential support to the Union during the Civil War. Aikens became its business manager in 1857 and one of its proprietors in 1868, continuing his connection with it until his death.

His chief claim to remembrance, however, is due to the fact that the Western Newspaper Union of to-day, with a central office in Omaha and branch offices in thirty-seven cities throughout the United States, is the outgrowth of his genius. In 1864, the proprietors of the *Wisconsin*, under Aikens's leadership, devised a plan of co-operative advertising, an adaptation of the "patent insides" idea. They furnished a ready-print page, the new and financially successful feature of which was the columns of advertising matter. This made an