

Mrs. Julia Peterkin  
Fort Motte, South Carolina

Atlanta, Georgia  
August 14, 1936

Dear Mrs. Peterkin:

Thank you for your letter and the sound common sense advice it contained. I had no idea I would become a best seller, so of course was completely unprepared for the deluge of ladies' clubs who wished me to speak. However, from the very first invitation, I was determined that no one could or would make me speak, and I have held to that determination. I cannot understand the great American passion for being spoken to. I continue to marvel as the mail mounts up with requests. It is a side of the American nature I had never seen before. People seem to think that because an author can get a book published she can hop up on a minute's notice and make a forty-minute address, but, alas, this is not true in my case.

My husband and I had established a pattern of living that pleased us very much. It was a very quiet pattern, perhaps, but we liked it and we are determined to keep it. Perhaps when I am no longer a best seller we will find it easier to adhere to this pattern. I was glad to have your letter warning me off of the ladies' clubs and lion hunters, for while I personally felt that way, I was very glad to know that someone with a reputation as great as yours felt similarly. It gives me a great deal of comfort.

Forgive me for dictating this letter instead of writing to you. My eyes have finally given out on me and the doctor has ordered a long rest for them.

Mr. Thomas Dixon  
Raleigh, North Carolina

Atlanta, Georgia  
August 15, 1936

Dear Mr. Dixon:

Your letter of praise about "Gone With The Wind" was very exciting, and the news that you want to write a study of the book was even more exciting. . . .

I was practically raised on your books, and love them very much. For many years I have had you on my conscience, and I suppose I might as well confess it now. When I was eleven years old I decided that I would dramatize your book "The Traitor"<sup>1</sup>—and dramatize it I did in six acts. I played the part of Steve because none of the little boys in the neighborhood would lower themselves to play a part where they had to "kiss any

<sup>1</sup> *The Traitor: a Story of the Fall of the Invisible Empire* (New York, 1907).

little ol' girl." The clansmen were recruited from the small-fry of the neighborhood, their ages ranging from five to eight. They were dressed in shirts of their fathers, with the shirt tails bobbed off. I had my troubles with the clansmen as, after Act 2, they went on strike, demanding a ten cent wage instead of a five cent one. Then, too, just as I was about to be hanged, two of the clansmen had to go to the bathroom, necessitating a dreadful stage wait which made the audience scream with delight, but which mortified me intensely. My mother was out of town at the time. On her return, she and my father, a lawyer, gave me a long lecture on infringement of copy-rights. They gave me such a lecture that for years afterward I expected Mr. Thomas Dixon to sue me for a million dollars, and I have had a great respect for copy-rights ever since then.

Mr. Robert C. Taylor  
New York, New York

Atlanta, Georgia  
August 15, 1936

Dear Mr. Taylor:

I appreciated your letter about "Gone With The Wind" very much, and was very interested in your remarks about the troop movement before the battle of Chickamauga. I would like to write you at length upon this subject after reconsulting all my authorities. Unfortunately, at present, due to eye strain, I can neither read nor write, so I must pass that up.

However, I want to give this word of explanation. The whole book was written from the viewpoint of a person living at that time. There was no looking back from the present day—nor was there any historical perspective—and from the viewpoint of a person of that day Longstreet's troops really were "rushed."<sup>1</sup> I know this for I have talked to so many survivors of that era—both the soldiers who came down from Virginia and the civilians who stood in the depot in Atlanta watching the endless troop trains roll past. Invariably the words "rushed" or "hurried" or "raced" were used. Time and again, old ladies have told me, "I stood in the depot in my brightest dress so my husband would recognize me. I held up our baby, who he had never seen, but the trains went by so fast I never saw him, and he told me afterward he did not see me."

I am very glad to hear from anyone on the historic angle of this book, for I labored a long time over my background, and my bibliography runs into the thousands of volumes. I only wish, as I said before, that I was able at present to consult some of my authorities and cross sabers with you in this matter.

<sup>1</sup> GWTW, p. 278.