



## The Clansman

*Thomas Dixon Jr. , Thomas D. Clark (Introduction)*

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

# The Clansman

*Thomas Dixon Jr. , Thomas D. Clark (Introduction)*

## **The Clansman** Thomas Dixon Jr. , Thomas D. Clark (Introduction)

The year was 1865. With the close of the Civil War, there began for the South, an era of even greater turmoil. In *The Clansman*, his controversial 1905 novel, later the basis of the motion picture *The Birth of a Nation*, Thomas Dixon, describes the social, political, and economic disintegration that plagued the South during Reconstruction, depicting the rise of the Ku Klux Klan and the reactions of two families to racial conflict. This study in social history was alternatively praised and damned by contemporary critics. As historian Thomas D. Clark notes in his introduction, the novel "opened wider a vein of racial hatred which was to poison further an age already in social and political upheaval. Dixon had in fact given voice in his novel to one of the most powerful latent forces in the social and political mind of the South." For modern readers, *The Clansman* probes the roots of the racial violence that still haunts our society.

## **The Clansman Details**

Date : Published December 31st 1970 by University Press of Kentucky (first published 1905)

ISBN : 9780813101262

Author : Thomas Dixon Jr. , Thomas D. Clark (Introduction)

Format : Paperback 374 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, Military History, Civil War, Classics, Race, American, Southern, Academic, School, Novels, Adult Fiction, War

 [Download The Clansman ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Clansman ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online The Clansman Thomas Dixon Jr. , Thomas D. Clark (Introduction)**

---

## From Reader Review The Clansman for online ebook

### Anthony says

July 10, 2013

A review by Anthony T. Riggio of *The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan* by Thomas Dixon Jr.

This is an historical novel by a Southerner attempting to justify the need and rise of the Klu Klux Klan written in 1905, forty years after the Civil War. His story revolves around some of the truly unintended consequences of reconstruction, hijacked by vindictive Northern politicians and greedy profiteers.

Several reviewers brand the author a "vile racist" and a "White Supremacist". I believe these sobriquets are unfair and the reviewers are looking at the actions through the lenses of modern day understandings.

I believe the purpose of Thomas Dixon's novel was to communicate an idea of the perceptions of many Southerners which have impacted on the total assimilation of Blacks even until today. That there are racist feelings by both Whites and Blacks stemming from Slavery and then Reconstruction is manifest today. The Story "The Clansman" gives only a glimpse of the feelings of the Whites who were formally in control and the struggles with real and imaginary views of abuses of those agents of Reconstruction.

I believe to brand this book and its author as racist is a disservice to History. What was or was perceived is, and it may disturb some sensitive types who want to view the relations between Whites and Blacks as continually strident and without solution.

I purchased this book from Amazon for my Kindle and believe it is a compelling story.

---

### Peyton Smith says

The quintessential piece of Lost Cause propaganda. This novel is full of racial stereotypes and overt prejudices against "the North." The only thing that offers this book merit is that it stands as a perfect glimpse into the mind of a Southerner in the early 1900s... But, if you want that your time would be better spent reading Faulkner.

---

### Thara says

Chill out, I'm reading it for class.

---

### Richard Epstein says

If it weren't for Thomas Dixon, Jr., Josh wouldn't have to keep teaching "Birth of a Nation." We were not spared even by Dixon's passing through the opal gates of death.

## Hunter says

The book that spawned the movie that revitalized the Ku Klux Klan? Yeah, it's more callous and racist than you might think. I also found it poorly paced and written, but I'm not going to act as though it's possible for me to be objective about this novel.

---

## Karla says

One of my first, and still favorite, silent films is *The Birth of a Nation*, and I read this book for HS Freshman English class after I saw the movie. My enthusiasm for silent movies probably went way over those kids' heads and they no doubt thought me an out-and-out racist. Hah.

Just as the movie is a rip-roaring melodrama with an overall atrocious sentiment, so is the novel. It really is a perfect book to get into the mindset of the die-hard Lost Cause movement that got a major shot in the arm when Griffith's movie was made 10 years later and made KKK chapters flourish throughout all of America in the 1920s.

This one is due for a re-read, because I don't recall much about it apart from the very OTT prose and the "scientific discovery" of the identity of Flora's rapist.

---

## Werner says

Note, Oct. 9, 2018: I edited this slightly just now, only to clarify what comments brought this book to mind to review it; in the original review, that was very ambiguous. (I was new to Goodreads at the time, and hadn't had much experience in reviewing for this site!)

A comment I made on another Goodreads thread sparked a good discussion about the misguided ways some writers treat the subject of rape. That brought to mind this piece of dreck, which I read back at a time when I had much more morbid curiosity in my reading tastes than I do now (obviously, I read an older edition). Dixon was a vile racist; in this novel, the Klan are portrayed as heroes, and virtually all of the black characters are depicted in a highly derogatory fashion --the one exception being a former slave who's presented favorably only because he's very loyal to his ex-master. (Margaret Mitchell, who wrote *Gone With the Wind*, was a closeted fan of Dixon, as her correspondence with him reveals --that doesn't constitute much of a recommendation for her novel either!) On top of this, he had no more talent for writing fiction than I would have for doing brain surgery; the book is a morass of cardboard characters, unrealistic dialogue, wildly improbable plot developments (one is a particular howler) and grotesque liberties with history.

What reminded me of this book in the context of the discussion alluded to above is the fact that Dixon presents suicide as an appropriate and even morally obligatory response by the rape victim to the experience (on the theory that she's hopelessly "defiled" by it anyway). Granted, this doesn't exactly "trivialize" rape, as some readers felt that some writers do; but on a scale of 1-10 for constructive and intelligent responses, this one ranks as about a minus 7,863! :-( The publisher who re-printed this crap owes an apology to the trees destroyed for the paper.

## Therese says

You can't just...review The Clansman. You can't apply the perfectly lovely star system provided by Goodreads that indicates your pleasure taken, your appreciation of the literary craft. The Clansman has craft and provides intrigue but...dude, it's a story of how necessary it was to organize the Ku Klux Klan to keep post-Civil War white folks from being brutalized by bitter Northern conquerors and their black lackeys.

The Klan are the good guys in this story. What are we supposed to do with THIS?

I'm going to tell you about this story, because it WAS well written enough that I not only fell into the plot, but understood the politics Dixon was trying to lay out for the common man to understand. That's actually quite a feat, I hate politics.

Dixon gives us a cast (the "romance" part) of white folks, both Yankees and Rebels. All are honorable and kind. The Yankee smart strong nurse who doesn't care whose side of the war her patients were on, since the war just ended we're ALL Americans again. The genteel, dignified but strong as steel Southern belles who remain gracious and godly in their tattered dresses. Brave good-natured young soldiers from both sides, all of whom are someone's human brother or son. Dixon (who was, among other things, a preacher) establishes that he is capable of empathy and values virtue, which makes the rest of his story all the more shocking.

The villain of the piece is a Senator named Stoneman. He hates the South for their treachery and will do anything to see them punished. His friend President Abraham Lincoln, tells him to chill out. He says he has not "conquered" the South, but he has reclaimed his own nation. They will not be punished, they will be enveloped back into the American fold as prodigal sons.

Stoneman (and this is where it get's trippy...cuz Stoneman's a total asshole) demands the Black Man have rights, all the rights and more, of the white men. Lincoln says that's impossible. Two races have never lived peacefully, one always conquers the other. Lincoln says without slavery to hold the social ranks in place, he intends to deport the black folks back to tropical climates and help them colonize their own new homes. Which makes the Great Emancipator sound like a racist douche, right? But it's true, historically. Lincoln wasn't particularly anti-slavery. He just suspected black folks and white folks could never get along on equal footing.

Doesn't matter what Lincoln thought, cuz he gets killed and Stoneman gets his way. Then our story gets ugly. Reconstruction, the period of brutal treatment of the South following the War, begins.

Reconstruction seems to be an attempt to defile the corpse of an already dead land. Taxes are high enough to starve the survivors of this war ground. Black men are given the vote but white Southerners are traitors and cannot have it. Black men are given positions of authority over their former masters, and counseled that they are just as good as white men and to act like it.

Which is right and good and true...but not in Dixon's world! How can these black people be put in authority, he asks. This is a horrible and cruel farce. Dixon points out that African slaves were taken from a continent rich in gold and diamonds the Africans never found or used them. That Africans never even figured out how to invent the wheel, much less any innovation or invention to add to the world. He posited that through biology or God's will or whatever, they simply were NOT as advanced as the other races on our planet. Not their fault, but they can't be on equal footing with white people. They biologically just cannot.

There are mulattoes in this book and they are the worst. They are haughty and smooth, manipulative with the intelligence of their white ancestors clashing with the bestial nature of their black ancestors. (Dixon doesn't dwell on how these mulattoes came to be born in the first place, but in the history he's created it was most certainly the work of devious slave women seducing their masters, probably with witchcraft. Statistical records that seem to indicate a lot of raped fourteen year old girls don't make an appearance. There is no indication that there ever was such a thing as a cruel slave-owner.) And the fully black ex-slaves, who are now uniformed soldiers carrying the guns white men are not allowed to have...they are described in the harshest physical terms I've ever read...deformed, bloated apes, purple engorged lips and cro-magnon brows and their own peculiar awful smell. Dixon just oozes hate.

He also makes it clear that the Yankees don't actually care one bit about the welfare of black people. They just want to humiliate and punish The South, and the best way to do that is give control to the ex-slaves, who they know will run amok like children and drive an already defeated people into the ground. Every governmental office in some states was filled by a Freedman, whom, Dixon notes, was usually illiterate, power-drunk, and completely ignorant of how his job was supposed to be done.

Then the book gives us a new character, the sweetest and most adored teenage girl in the whole village, and her loving mother. They, like all the other Southerners we meet, have maintained genial Southern warmth and dignity despite their shoddy clothes and hungry bellies. So of course that young girl is brutally gang raped by her father's old slaves. The next morning the mother and daughter work together to clean up all evidence of the attack and leap off a cliff together, sparing the daughter a lifetime of misery and, allowing her to die with her name unbesmirched.

Well, that tears it. Enter the Clan...which stars all the beloved characters of the story in one way or another, who've been secretly gathering strength as the indignities against them grow to unbearable proportion.

The men ride to avenge. They will no longer be terrorized by the angry animals seeking revenge on the masters who treated them with benevolence, the masters who were following Biblical law regarding slaves, the masters who thought of them as "family." All the bad black men are killed or scared out of office and out of town. They meekly and with cringingly written duplicity happily go back to declaring themselves "simple niggers." The south didn't rise again. Well, Coca-cola is based in Atlanta so that's something.

So what do we do with a book like The Clansman?

If you want to understand the world, and be wise, I think you have to really understand the people you disagree with. People rarely do things because they are evil, or even stupid. They have REASONS. They think they are good, and right, and they have evidence for their beliefs.

The Clansman takes you to a place you won't be able to find anywhere else. Where someone of education and historical knowledge and close experience (Dixon was born just before the War ended and grew up during Reconstruction), tells you why they think the way they do. How thoughts that are stomach turning ignorance to us today, could be reasonably believed then.

This is propaganda, of course. There is only one side told here. But, that's when you realize, right or wrong, you've grown up only hearing one side as well. We just never considered there WAS another side to "is the Klan a good thing?" "Was the South nice in the days of slavery?" "Did ex-slaves ever do anything wrong?" The answer is automatically...who cares?

And that's a fair enough answer. The evil of it all can obliterate the desire to understand deeper. But, if you truly want to know how people could hate another race so viciously, how racial animosity on both sides can still run at full boil 150 years after the end of slavery...this book is a good start. This is raw and uncensored, unapologetic information, perhaps recon from the enemy camp. But it is legitimate knowledge. Though I

can't blame you if you don't have the stomach for it.

\* I listened to this via public domain audiobook. It was narrated by a pleasant voiced older southern woman, probably not a professional actor, named Michele Fry. She was somehow absolutely perfect. She kept an amazing neutrality, without being dull, as she told such an alarming and upsetting story.

---

## **Erin says**

America is under Negro reign, violence and chaos is everywhere. No one respects law & order anymore. The streets aren't safe for white women and white men can no longer support their families. The country needs a savior. It needs strong Aryan men who love their country and will fight to make it great again.

America needs The Ku Klux Klan.

The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan, is one of the most racist books ever written. I first became aware of this book after watching the silent film The Birth of a Nation, in which the KKK is presented as brave heroes and American patriots. The author Rev. Thomas Dixon was a respected author, statesman and speaker in his day. Rev. Dixon claimed to not be a racist, he said he was a Nationalist and a patriot. He believed in America first policies, he believed that Negroes didn't belong in this country because they were slow-witted and prone to great violence. He feared that the acceptance of Negroes and immigrants into this country would destroy the "True American" heritage.

I went into this book expecting to be angered by the racism and outraged. Instead I found it funny. It was so over the top racist. The descriptions of Black people in this book were cartoonish. Every black man in this book had big red lips, big flat noses, big ape-like feet and they all smelled like the jungle. Black men spent their days drunk, fighting and raping innocent sweet white maidens. Also black women used Voodoo to rape white men and poison children.

I read The Clansman very fast. I just couldn't put it down. That doesn't mean it was well written but I just had to know how the KKK would save America from those evil jungle Niggers and their Yankee co-conspirators. I'm tempted to read the other 2 books in the series but I don't know if my brain or stomach can handle it.

No rec but I think about 30% of the country would really like it.

Available for free on Kindle

---

## **Patricia Dietz says**

The author of this book lived through the post-Civil War Reconstruction period in the south. Laying aside his personal hatred and profound contempt for blacks (if that's possible, as the book is full of it) a few things stood out for me. One was the extent to which, back in those days, women truly were the possessions of their male relatives to the point where their husbands, fathers or brothers would literally rather put a bullet through the woman's head than permit her to shame herself or the family by being a rape victim. The woman's value as a person in her own right, the right to exist apart from her role as wife or daughter or sister was almost nonexistent.

The other was the realization that the North was directly responsible for the creation of the Ku Klux Klan.

The wide-spread atrocities encouraged by the men put in control of local governments and the extensive post-war rape of the old south forced people with literally no other defense to organize and try to defend themselves. It was quite an eye opener. Once the ex-Confederate white man got the vote back--some political power and protection within the legal system--the original Klan was disbanded as no longer necessary. Pretty interesting stuff. In those circumstances, I'd have joined too!

Finally, if John Wilkes Boothe had not murdered President Lincoln, the Reconstruction would never have occurred to the terrible extent that it did, and very likely, in my opinion, the Klan would never have existed.

---

### **Shaun says**

This controversial novel by Thomas Dixon, written in 1905, tells a story of how a man, a county, a state and ultimately the southern people fought back against the North during the period of reconstruction. Following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, the North installs puppet "negro governments" in the southern states by granting negroes suffrage. This leads to chaos as "Now a negro electorate controlled the city government, and gangs of drunken negroes, its sovereign citizens, paraded the streets at night firing their muskets unchallenged and unmolested." This book was published as a warning to the North about what Dixon regarded as the dangers of granting the vote to non-whites. This book is actually the second installment of a trilogy. I've not read either of the other books. [The Leopard's Spots](#) is the first book. [The Traitor](#) is the third book.

This book has important historical significance because it gives insight to the now extremely unpopular post-Civil War southern point of view that might otherwise be lost to the ages. Anyone interested in US history should probably read this book if they are to understand the sentiments of Southerners during (and after) reconstruction.

Dixon can be a fairly engaging writer but this piece is rife with grammatical and historical and scientific inaccuracies. This book is a sentimental work. It appeals not to the reason of the readers, but to their emotions. Dixon portrays black people as living, breathing cartoon characters. The story gets ridiculous when he's writing about black people. But it's much better when he's writing about white people. Also, Dixon was under the impression that hypnosis could be used to force people to tell the truth even if they were unwilling. This was a popular misconception at the time. Hypnosis was shrouded in mystery. In fact, the term hypnosis only came in to popular use around 1880. But we now know that hypnosis doesn't work that way. Unfortunately, Dixon incorporates the use of hypnosis in to his story in such a way. This destroys the believability of the scene.

The story told by the book is a little bit scattered and rambling. The meat of the story, in a way, doesn't even really begin until the end of the book.

I recommend this book if you're interested in learning about the white southern perspective following the civil war. Most readers will probably be offended. As a story and as a work of literature, this novel is just ok. I wouldn't recommend reading it for the entertainment value. It is in the public domain and copies of it are available online.

---

### **Alexis Chateau says**

Racist. Boring. And rambling.

From this book I learned that vengeance is only acceptable when a White man on a horse carries it out. For a "flat footed Black hooligan" to carry it out against men who enslaved him for years is just wrong.

I've read a lot of other books written by Caucasians in this era and never came across anything like this. Memorable read, but not for the right reasons.

---

### **Matthew Hunter says**

I'm a film buff, so when I found out that D.W. Griffith's controversial *The Birth of a Nation* was based on Thomas Dixon Jr.'s novel *The Clansman*, the novel became a must-read for me.

The book and movie together are credited with a rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan, including in northern states like my parent's home of Indiana. The Northern Indiana Center for History reports that by 1924, less than 20 years after *The Clansman's* publication, Klan membership reached 30% of the state's white adult male population. Total Klan membership approached the six million mark! Heck, even the Klan's most recognizable symbol - the fire-drenched Latin cross - was taken from *The Clansman*, but not used by the original version of the clan. Now that's effective propaganda!

That's exactly what *The Clansman* is - propaganda. I felt like weeping after finishing the read. The book's brutal. Blood-lust, race war, rape, civilizational collapse, assassination, n-word-a-palooza, suicide, etc. Here's how Dixon describes his work's significance in his opening note "To the Reader":

In the darkest hour of life of the South, when her wounded people lay helpless amid rags and ashes under the beak and talon of the Vulture, suddenly from the mists of the mountains appeared a white cloud the size of a man's hand. It grew until its mantle of mystery enfolded the stricken earth and sky. An "Invisible Empire" had risen from the field of Death and challenged the Visible to mortal combat.

How the young South, led by the reincarnated souls of the Clansmen of Old Scotland, went forth under this cover and against overwhelming odds, daring exile, imprisonment, and a felon's death, and saved the life of a people, forms one of the most dramatic chapters in the history of the Aryan race.

There you have it. If you want to understand the neo-confederate mind, or if you want to hear the impetus behind white nationalism today, then by all means read this 112-year-old work of historical fiction.

A very, very disturbing book. Read with caution.

---

### **Jason says**

(For the actual review, scroll down (it's clearly marked). I indulge myself with some family flim-flam and general history for a few paragraphs first, though it's all tangentially related to the book).

It took three days shy of two years, but I finally finished this. The reason it took so long is not due to it being a bad book (just look at the rating I gave it), but because I have a 1907 version that used to belong to my great-grandfather. I stumbled upon it as mama and I were purging her extensive book collection. As you likely know, the movie *The Birth of a Nation* was based on this novel and the subsequent play. Being a history man, I was thrilled to find this treasure, an actual artifact from the past, at my fingertips. Being prone

to fits of fantastic romantic nonsense, I saw this copy as precious, much more precious than any reprint could ever be. It was a part of family history.

I soon discovered that reading the way one would read any other book (laid back in a chair with it flipped open in my hand) would destroy it completely, and I set it aside after a few chapters until I could find a safer way to read it. Even holding it carefully seemed to be too much for it. I could've bought a new copy, but part of the charm was in reading an ancestor's copy. Actually, that was all of the charm. (This thing is hardly charming). The Writing Pig came to my rescue with a solution. WP is some old, pig-shaped cutting board we found somewhere ages ago that fits nicely on the arms of my chair, and we use it as a desk for writing notes, paying bills, and what not. It also makes a nice reading desk. I was able to set the book upon it and gingerly turn the pages without it falling to pieces. A friend thinks I'm nuts to be touching it at all, but like I said, reading a reprint to finish it would be no fun at all; it would lose all its specialness.

I began to wonder if great-granddaddy was a member of the KKK. You can't fairly judge someone by what they read. (My shelf includes this, Uncle Tom's Cabin, Mein Kampf, The Communist Manifesto, The Prince, Tao Te Ching, Holy Bible: King James Version, Heidi, The Poky Little Puppy, H. P. Lovecraft: Great Tales of Horror, To Kill a Mockingbird, and just what do you make of all that?) But it wouldn't be unusual for him to have been in it. He would've been 18 or 19 in 1907 (the age of natural hot-headedness), and 26/27 in 1915 when the Klan reformed. He was a rural southerner. He may have seen the movie and got caught up in the tide. It's estimated that as much as 15% of the eligible population (around six million male WASPs) were members of the second KKK in the late 1910's/early 1920's.

In 1925, 400,000 members held a parade in Washington, DC. The third KKK has never had more than 8,000 members at one time. 400K at one event! Hell, great-gramps might even be in the parade for all I know. Then again, it's just as possible that he wasn't even a member. The only fact I have is that he once owned this book. Does that make him racist? No, but I'm pretty sure he was anyway. Does me giving this five stars make me racist? Some people will think so, but I reckon there's nothing I can do about that.

Still, this is also the same great-grandfather who let a black kid (probably a preteen or early teenager) named Buttercup stay in the house for several months or a couple of years during the great depression, so who knows? The corner of the house where his bed was located is still referred to as Buttercup's room. I even slept in it sometimes when I was a kid before that section was walled-in and converted to an upstairs bathroom about 30 years ago. I believe a black kid living with whites in the rural south was a rarity back then, so this was rather forward thinking of my ancestors. I think Buttercup worked for food and lodging, and I know he and granddaddy (great gramps' son) rumbled a couple of times.

Here's something everyone should know about the Ku Klux Klan. There have been three of them. All of them purport white supremacy and engaged in terrorism, but there were differences between the three. The first one lasted five or so years in the late 1860's-early 1870's and was a response to Reconstruction. Ex-confederates were getting what some would consider their just desserts, but they weren't going to take it and formed an organization to fight back. Ideologically it was formed to fight Reconstruction. Though blacks were certainly a part of that, carpetbaggers and scalawags were also caught in the cross hairs. A lot of the murders and assassinations were committed against whites as well. Eventually the Klan disbanded due to federal push back of a military nature, and the harsher aspects of Reconstruction were fizzling, so the fight was no longer necessary.

The second KKK started in 1915 due to *Nation*. After reading this book, I can understand how it happened. This thing is masterfully put together, and would appeal to people who felt they were losing control of things which was the sentiment in the early 20th century after record immigrant influx. Pre Civil War immigration made a kind of stew, and flavors melded into each other as immigrants attempted to assimilate themselves into American society, though they still kept vestiges of their heritage. Beef, corn, butter beans, etc. all

carried the other flavors as well as that of the tomato base. Later immigration was more like a salad bowl. In cities separate communities were popping up. Chinatown, Italian boroughs, Irish, Eastern European centers, etc. You had your cukes next to your lettuce, next to your mushrooms, next to your croutons. Nothing was mixing anymore, and established people don't like that. This new incarnation wasn't fighting the government as much as trying to influence it, and they added Jews, Catholics, and a few other nationalities to the list of less-thans. In effect, it was nativist in nature. It also encompassed the entire country and not just the South, though more violence happened in the southern states. A Grand Dragon in Indiana getting caught raping and murdering a school teacher took the wind out of this KKK's sails, and it collapsed; members left in droves. A small group would keep it officially going through WWII, and small independent groups would claim the name in the 50s and 60s.

The third Klan came about in the 70's to fight the Civil Rights movement (which only took 90 years to show up after Reconstruction. More on that below). It's pretty much just a hate group. They don't stand "for" something as much as they're "against" non WASPs.

Also, they frequently appear on the Jerry Springer show, so how seriously can you take them?

## **BOOK REVIEW**

(view spoiler)

A lot of people won't be able to get past the racist aspect of the book. If you're one of those, then I suggest leaving it alone. I think everyone who can read something objectively should read this. It's important to remember history and to know certain things so they don't get repeated. If you're looking for Lost Cause propaganda to support your stance and justify your hate, then I guess this is a good book for you, but I'd rather you didn't read it. Try some more tolerant literature instead. (That's just me on my high horse.) Good prose? This book's got it. Dixon writes well, I won't gainsay it.

So there you have it. This book brought out a lot of conflicting emotions in me, so be prepared for quite a ride if you give it try.

---

### **Tiffany says**

Surprisingly, this wasn't a bad book (You don't have to agree with the sentiment to think a book is decently written). Dixon calls this a "historical romance of the Ku Klux Klan," and it definitely is written as a romance, with very flowery language and dialogue at times that is almost phony. The events were often overly melodramatic, too. That said, it was a page-turner for me. Flowery and melodramatic, yes, but decent story.

As I read the opening sections of this, I was surprised Dixon made Lincoln sound like such a good/nice guy. I would have thought a book written as a defense/explanation of the KKK would portray him as a villain.

I was reading at one point, thinking to myself, "Huh, nearly halfway through, and this is a pretty even-handed book. Pros and cons for both North and South. I'm surprised." But then not 10 minutes later, "drunken negroes," with their "onion-laden breath" and "African odour"... So nevermind about it being fair and even-handed. The way Dixon describes some of the black characters is also questionable. At times it's hard to tell whether he's being very descriptive about one particular character or if he's making generalizations about the physical and mental traits of \*all\* black people. ... But then we have the "negro odour" again and similar comments ("animal odour," "imaginary horrors of slavery," "laziness and incapacity of the negro"), and I think he's just racist (although, at the time this was written, that wasn't considered racist, etc. etc, cultural relativity and whatnot).

And for a "romance of the Ku Klux Klan," the Klan doesn't really come until towards the end. This is more about the aftermath of the Civil War and Reconstruction, not so much about the KKK. Yes, it's all tied together, but from the title and subtitle, I expected way more of the Klan in the story.

---