

## A Limey at Gettysburg: The Adventures of an Englishman during the American Civil War

**Eric B. Dennison**

**Robert T. Mitchell**

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*A Limey at Gettysburg is a sweet historical story told against the backdrop of an agonizing war.*

In Eric Dennison and Robert Mitchell's historical novel, *A Limey at Gettysburg*, a carefree Brit with a weakness for women finds adventure and drama during the American Civil War.

In 1861, Firth Brown's boss at *The Manchester Echo* sends him to Washington, DC to cover the onset of the Civil War. He writes articles from information that he gets from a Irishman in exchange for beer. He also courts Elizabeth, whose businessman father allows them to marry, so long as Firth does some secretive work for him. Firth goes to Philadelphia to hold up his end of the bargain and is caught up in his father-in-law's business scandals. He ends up in a hospital in Richmond, cared for by Angela, a nurse. He stays in Richmond for most of the duration of the war.

A story within a story, the novel sees Firth going by the name Frank English in Richmond, where he lives a whole new life. In Washington, his contacts are Union supporters; in Richmond, he's surrounded by Confederates. The text so covers both sides of the conflict as it confronts Firth's many facets. Details about Firth's love triangle and business dealings mix with details about battles and military leaders, resulting in intrigue.

Women carry the story, exemplifying dignity and cleverness. Elizabeth and Angela, for example, convince their parents of Firth's worth using their wits. Their strengths offset Firth's naïve nature, and his conscience builds because of them. Conversations move the narrative, particularly those between the women and Firth, which are full of smooth talk as the duos work their way out of compromising positions. Secondary characters include midwives, businesswomen, and friends who deliver pragmatic wisdom.

While romance is the book's primary concern, it involves action, too, mostly around the war. Firth's negotiations with his father-in-law see him fall victim to espionage and violence; his getaways are comical. He thinks on his feet, relies on British manners, and sometimes experiences luck.

The book moves fast across three years, utilizing short chapters whose descriptions center on what happens and who does it, leaving locations and means out of the picture. Relationships are central, even in historical scenes. Here, battles like Bull Run and Gettysburg matter most because of how Firth and those he loves are affected by them.

A sweet story told against the backdrop of an agonizing war, *A Limey at Gettysburg* is a fast, sometimes slapstick, historical novel.

MARI CARLSON (November 20, 2019)

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