



Secessionists and Other Scoundrels: Selections from Parson Brownlow's Book

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"Readers will find Brownlow unique, above all, but as entertaining as he is sometimes thrillingly loathsome, full of great energy and rhetorical skill and rambunctiousness in the tradition of the tall tale vernacular writers of the time."-David Madden, Director of the United States Civil War Center

East Tennessee newspaper editor and Methodist preacher William G. "Parson" Brownlow, a man of fervent principles and combative temperament, gained fame during the secession crisis as a staunch, outspoken southern unionist. Unlike most southern unionists, however, Brownlow refused to renounce his loyalty to the Union after the Civil War broke out. He continued to write editorial tirades against the Confederacy until forcibly silenced by southern authorities. Arrested, jailed, and ultimately banished to the North, Brownlow continued his war of words against the Confederacy through speaking tours and through the publication in 1862 of *Sketches of the Rise, Progress, and Decline of Secession; with a Narrative of Personal Adventures Among the Rebels*-a best-selling but ill-organized hodgepodge of his editorials, speeches, letters, and commentary. *Secessionists and Other Scoundrels*, a collection of selected excerpts from Brownlow's original, offers an accessible and powerful explication of the parson's unionism and a moving narrative of his travails under Confederate rule, without sacrificing the vitriolic prose and scathing wit for which he was celebrated-and denounced.

In these pages the inimitable parson is at his best. By turns sarcastic, angry, high-minded, informative, compassionate, and droll, he forthrightly proclaims his convictions and excoriates his foes. Every sentence exemplifies the motto that adorned the masthead of his newspaper, the *Knoxville Whig*: "Cry aloud and spare not." In an informative introduction, editor Stephen V. Ash places the excerpts in context by sketching Brownlow's career, summarizing his historical significance, and discussing the history of the book itself. Civil War scholars and enthusiasts will welcome "Secessionists and Other Scoundrels" as an exciting and entertaining opportunity to be reintroduced to one of the era's most colorful and controversial characters.

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