

"The New South"
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May E. Griffing

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The New South

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The New South! What a study is this New Southland of ours! Mushroomlike, but faintly seen one evening, but grown overnight into a full sized beneficial article. This New South is a New South in every sense of the word, built under new conditions, looked at in a new light, new institutions, character and principles must be painfully yet faithfully remodeled. It is a South most radically different from that of 1860. Many of the changes are for the better, a few for the worse.

To have a true insight into the New South, we must see what was done in 1860 to cause the remodeling of the old. We will view the terrible devastation of the Civil war and thus

see the check, the sundriance placed upon its growth and development

Nothing could be more pitiable than the utter ruin and desolation of the proud planters and "gentlemen" of the South. Not merely the haughty planter was ruined, but the merchants having no trade had scattered to the four corners of the earth; shopkeepers closed their doors or barely existed on the contraband of war. The hope and pride of the South, the dashing chivalrous young men had gone to die on the battlefields or in the military prisons of the South. If by any circumstance they came back, they returned to plantations either in semi-ruin or to those whose devastations had been awful and complete; or perhaps they

came to a city, Charleston for example, where the big forbidding mansions glowered at them through their great unsightly black eyes and having the stamp of decay and delapidation throughout their entire appearance.

Old men must work like slaves to pay the writs which the sheriff served upon them. One noble old gentleman exclaimed haughtily "General Sherman has said that he would like to bring every Southern woman to the wash-tub. He shall never bring my daughters to the wash tub for I will do the washing myself." And he did. His hands, so soft that a bridle rein chafed them painfully, did the family washing, followed the plough, made the garden, and heroically attempted to cut wood.

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Everything went into confederate securities and when the war was over there was absolutely nothing left. Famine and suffering beyond computation existed throughout the land. Wealthy planters subsisted on corn-bread — when they could get it — if not they lived on cow-peas. Not only the rich, but the poor as well, were stripped of their all. Some of them carefully hoarded imaginary money but what was their astonishment to discover that it all amounted to nothing whatever.

Some of the House reports give accounts of disastrous conditions of the railways. In some places they were almost entirely destroyed leaving only the road bed and iron rails. Every bridge and trestle was destroyed, cross-ties rotten, station buildings burned, water-tanks gone, ditches filled up.

and track enveloped in weeds and bushes. The labor system was scattered and demoralized and how was the work to be done?

The whites suffered far more than the negroes. It was a common sight to see women and children, formerly of good circumstances go begging for food from door to door. Women, widows with large families would walk fifteen miles or more to beg a little mite of food from the distributing station to take home to their starving children. Only a little could be given to each family so that there would be sufficient food to give to those who were literally dying of hunger. It was said that there were 35,000 men, women and children in the counties of Georgia immediately surrounding Atlanta who were dependent upon the United States Government for

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support and preservation from death by hunger. Bad crops on account of drought in 1865 together with scarcity of hands caused by the desertion of slaves only augmented the already terrible conditions.

Confiscation frauds were something that occurred but which everyone regrets. After the armies of Generals Lee, Johnston and Taylor had surrendered and disbanded, General Canby issued a military order requiring all persons who had sold cotton to the Confederate States to surrender the same to the United States authorities under pain of having their property confiscated to make good any failure to deliver. The country was suddenly filled with United States Treasury agents or persons claiming to be such, some with and others without authority to take possession of cotton. Frequent changes

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were made in Treasury agents. As fast as one would fill his pockets another would appear and be equally anxious to slide the money in his pockets. The same cotton was seized as often as two or three times.

These agents would be backed by military forces and they thus obtained most of the plunder just how much is difficult to estimate, but probably about $\frac{1}{10}$ was turned in.

A tax in kind upon all provisions raised by planters and farmers had been levied by the Congress of the Confederate States. After the war, the collection of this tax in kind was enforced by the United States military orders in this part of the country. Sometimes these were collected without the owner's even being invited to see the corn measured.

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The agents appointed to collect Confederate cotton, would seize it and keep perhaps $\frac{1}{4}$ th, $\frac{1}{3}$ rd or even $\frac{1}{2}$ the proceeds. In calling upon the cavalry to support them, they caused the country to lose what confidence they had in the North and spread over the whole country a sense of great alarm and anxiety.

The Yankees believed that "to the victor belong the spoils." With this idea they appropriated unto themselves the best of everything they could find, lived in the most spacious mansions, resided in the best of hotels, took the finest of libraries for their own, thus creating hostility towards themselves, but more especially towards the Government whose name they used to cover their confiscations. The hate which the Southern man engendered not only toward the Northern armies and carpet baggers, but toward the whole North

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and the Government, was of such great magnitude and intensity that it has taken all these years of overtures of the sensible Northern man, to wipe it out of existence.

The Negroes had discovered that the prejudices of color was not, as they expected, merely confined to the Southern white men, but that the North was as bad as the South. They found that the Negroes, like the white people must work to earn comfortable homes; that their Northern deliverers had not made homes for them and provided provisions for them; that their former masters had as a rule, ceased to care for them and some believed that their last state was worse than the first. Needless to say that the abolition of slavery was and is a thoroughly wise movement and is so regarded by most sensible people. The negroes however, having no one

to care for them or reprimand them, returned (in some places) partly to barbarism. They spent most of their time going to funerals, religious howlings, in thieving and "conjuring". Winters would come cold, rainy and cheerless and the negroes (a majority) were unhoused, wretchedly clothed and crowding the streets, too lazy and careless of the future to contract for work during the summer.

This has given us a glimpse of the South's awful condition at the close of the Civil war. View it now. The beautiful spacious mansions are not kept up in the stately elegant style as of yore. Perhaps the owner lives in a nearby cottage, perhaps in part of the big residence, possibly lies buried on the hillside. The family however is probably working, fighting their way through

the world by the aid of sturdy character and strength of will.

The people adjusted themselves to their new relations, and began work that spoke of determination in every energetic stroke. Various branches of business, manufacturing interests revived by local self Government. Railroads were repaired. Extreme hardships developed a wise frugality and talent for economic management hitherto unknown. Credit never was maintained just after the Civil war. As late as 1875 a prominent House in Atlanta Georgia telegraphed to New York asking the price of sugar. The reply was simply "We do not sell South." Today the same establishment sells all through the South and is glad of the opportunity to do so.

There is a contentment in speculation in the South in marked contrast with the North. Therefore there are not many quick fortunes and quick ruins there.

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The South is more prosperous in a financial way than at any time since the Civil war. The current cotton crop is estimated at six and a half million bales. Cereals are being more widely sown which indicates an increasing appreciation of diversified crops and with a still wider practice of this plan will surely come better returns for the planter. Some improvements in stock-breeding and considerable increase in the raising of blooded cattle, are items of interest to be noted. Formerly the great majority of notes were negotiated at $1\frac{1}{2}\%$ a month and now it is 7% ^{per annum} and choice loans 6. State municipal and railroad bonds which were then sunk low in disfavor and distrust are now marked up in range of liberal premiums. Of State bonds those of the Carolinas, Georgia and Alabama are the best, while those of Virginia, Tennessee and Louisiana are not as good. Augusta has made

a recent issue of bonds bearing $4\frac{1}{2}\%$ which were readily sold at par. Nearly all previous issues are bearing 6% none a lower rate, but they command sufficient premium in open market today to justify the great reduction of interest on the late issue.

Turn to the manufacturing South. This present industrial south is not a new creation but a revival. Before the war, even in the day of Washington, iron manufactures were being made profitable. In 1860 the South had 987 more miles of railroad than the New England and Middle States. In 1860 the wealth of the South had exceeded the combined wealth of the New England and Middle States by \$750,000,000 but in 1870 we find the conditions reversed and the wealth of these States exceeding the wealth of the South by \$10,800,000,000. We thus see that the industrial progress ceased, practically altogether and did not change until about 1880.

By 1890 the industrial revival is in evident progress and by 1900 the South has entered upon one of the most remarkable periods of economic development to be found in the history of modern civilization. The cotton mills predominate and when we speak of the manufacturing South our mind flies always to the cotton mills and well it might. In those years from 1880 till 1890, the capital invested in cotton manufactories at the South increased from nearly \$22,000,000 to nearly \$113,000,000 and the number of establishments had increased from 180 to 412 and in 1904 the cotton mill establishments had reached a total of over 900. This astonishing development is due to many causes, partly due to the truth that lies in the adage that "the mills must come to the cotton"; to the South's vast store of available and inexpensive fuels; her ample water powers; her attractive and easy climate; but chiefly due to her supply of tractable and cheap labor.

The source of this labor lies in the ignorant whites. The negro is practically omitted, partly because of the inadaptability of the negro to the long hours and sustained labor of the factory system; to the desire of the Southerners upon sentimental reasons to employ whites; but chiefly because of the difficulties encountered in employing the two different races, and as a white is stronger and more useful than the black, the better race is employed.

Of the white people the children are chosen because of their nimble fingers; quickness in learning the trade, and they require less pay. The children particularly of the Piedmont district, being brought up to work on the farm doing heavy work are willing and anxious to work in the factories at first as the task seems easier than that to which they have become accustomed. Soon it grows

tedious and wretchedly monotonous and they long to leave this high walled prison. Thus the children work while the father with his awkward fingers is idle, the mother working unless there is a little margin left, when she drops out of the line of bread-winners. It has been estimated that in the Piedmont district, 60% of the operatives were under 16 years of age. In a certain locality in Alabama nearly 90% were under 16 and in the South as a whole the per cent under 16 was 25.7. No man would be permitted to operate his farm with that labor for ten days.

Laws are being passed but far too slowly to prohibit the offenders from accomplishing the blighting of thousands of little lives. This is the worst phase of the "new" the prosperous manufacturing South. When that is remedied a great cloud will be lifted which has been casting its dark shadow over the manufacturing South for many years.

From the manufacturers point of view it can be stated that the business is successful and beneficial. For instance, view the mills of Augusta. They are large, numerous and flourishing, some of them having a record of marvellous profit to their stockholders and all combining in a history of sufficient prosperity to prove the success of cotton spinning in the South. "The factories of Augusta involve several millions of money, give employment to nearly 5,000 operatives, disburse through their pay rolls at least a million dollars annually and turn out a yearly product amounting almost to the total of their aggregate capital. Nearly all rail road and other corporate properties are untrammelled by excessive fixed charges, and have only such liabilities as are commensurate with their earning capacity. Most of the cities are free from burdensome debt and restricted by State law from increasing their obligations beyond a

Conservative limit based upon the value of taxable property."

Thus we see manufacturing from a manufacturing standpoint. The wealth is increased certainly and possibly we should not too freely criticize the methods.

We will look at the South from a Literary standpoint. Had it not been for her statesmen, the South would have been regarded as an intellectual barren. Washington, Jackson, Randolph, Jefferson, Clay, Marshall, Calhoun, Madison, Hayne, Benton, Polk, Davis, contributed nothing to Literature but their oratory, their deep thinking and commanding appearance have aided, not only the South, but aided and strengthened this whole broad country of ours. From the founding of the Republic the whole energy of these states was demanded by a tremendous Constitutional struggle. To every aspiring man of ability politics offered quick and enticing honors. The people exacted public service of all men. Politics thus became

the only road to distinction. The genius of the South also inclined more to the excitement of the Senate Chamber than to the quieter and more laborious pursuit of letters.

That is one explanation of the lack of good literature produced by the South. A coloured woman in writing to a Science magazine offers another explanation. She thinks that the South^{erner} has such a narrow mind and impervious bigotry that he is incapable of higher, nobler thoughts. Professor Woodberry of Columbia University says that the South is uncritical. There was never a place there for minorities of opinion and still less for individual protest, for germinating reforms, for frank expression of a view differing from that of a community. This narrow mindedness is thus one reason for their little amount of literature and broad thinking. The negro question forms such a complete topic of their thought and conversation that freedom

of thought is impossible.

Accepting whatever explanation we will, it is an undisputed fact that the contributions to the best literature by Southern writers, have been very few.

Rutledge Rutherford finds that the health conditions of the South are improving but improving too slowly for the nation's good. New Orleans has been lifted from its previous filth and mosquito breeding condition to a comparatively clean and healthful Southern City. This has not been accomplished without considerable expense either. On account of the river and the city being on the same level and in some places actually a foot or more below sea level, the sewerage and drainage systems are expensive and difficult to establish. This excellent condition, developed by patient labor is unfortunately not typical of all Southern cities. Memphis, Chattanooga, Knoxville and Atlanta and Little Rock are some of the Southern cities whose regard for beauty and cleanliness is of minor importance to railroad legislation and state politics which are only of

interest to a certain class of people.

The South has also been the dumping ground for bad and adulterated foods. They depend upon the states to make the laws and but few states have awakened to the responsibility of making them. Louisiana, Kentucky and North Carolina might be mentioned as exceptions to the rule that "Southern States have no food laws." In several states they have one or more officers whose duty it is to inspect a certain article of food, for example, in Alabama an officer enforces the oleo margerine law, in Missouri, the dairy products only and in Arkansas, wine is considered the only article worthy of inspection.

Why is this, we may well ask. One very noticeable fact is that the Southerners keep to the old beaten tracks, voting as their father, enacting the same laws as their father and believing the same principles as their father. "Their father does the thinking for them" is a saying. Another reason is that the warmer southern atmosphere puts a feeling of drowsiness and

indifference in even the Northerner as he goes South.
 The greatest of all the problems with which the South has to deal, is the Negro problem. The Negro is different and the white man is different from year to year and in separate places they are different. Therefore in each locality the problem is a different one. Ultimately the problem is one — is the mutual social, industrial and political adjustment upon the same soil of two races between whom the difference in color is perhaps the most superficial of the distinctions which divide them." The national welfare is the larger context for every local problem; and while the Negro question finds its locality in the South, it must find its ultimate adjustment — if it ever receives adjustment — in the conscience, the wisdom, the knowledge, the patience, the courage of the Nation."

Slavery held the race in restraint. As the slaves had just come from the dark and barbarous Africa, but few tended to rise above the bonds of slavery, many fell below. Now that the restraint

is withdrawn the few are permitted to rise, but the larger number of weaker negroes fall — which is inevitable. Therefore the South is confronted with an upward and downward tendency. The failure of the mass must not obscure the achievements of the few. For achievement, however small is a demonstration of possibilities. The last Negro member of Congress in a speech delivered in the House Jan. 29, 1901, undertook to give the advance of his race in the thirty-two preceding years. "Since that time," he says, "we have reduced the illiteracy of the race at least 45%. We have written and published nearly 500 books. We have nearly 300 newspapers, three of which are dailies. We have now in practice over 2,000 lawyers and a corresponding number of doctors. We have accumulated over \$12,000,000 worth of school property and about \$40,000,000 of Church property. We have about 140,000 farms and homes valued at in the neighborhood of \$750,000,000, and personal property valued at about \$170,000,000. We have 32,000 teachers in the schools of the country. We have built, with the aid of our friends, about 20,000

Churches, and support 7 Colleges, 17 academies, 50 high schools, 5 law schools, 5 medical schools, and 25 theological seminaries. We have over 600,000 acres of land in the South alone." The speaker probably exaggerated a trifle as it is estimated that the white race furnished 95% of the money for the schools, and more for the Colleges; but nevertheless, the black race is not all ignorant by any means.

I will not depict the downward tendency of the race as it is too familiar with all. It is the happy prosperous negro which I will hold up to view as it is he who is overlooked in the railings of the press and police court. For the negro as he attains progress and is no more a loafer around the streets or fields, is unknown to the white race. They see nothing of him in the Negro schools or publishing companies. The white peoples side is known the world around but the Negroes side is husked and silent.

"The Negro monopolized so much of the thought of the South that now he is indelibly associated with it. He is

there, and there to stay, and when all new circumstances, new conditions and relations shall have worn themselves old and the South with the lapse of years shall have lost its present prefix, the Negro will be found fastened to her soil and fenced in by her borders. In politics he is a problem that will solve itself; socially he will never rise above his own level; morally he will continue to be guided by the impulses of his emotional nature and for their better direction let us look with hope to the probable results of his prospective education.

Probably no war in history has deprived the conquered of any more territory or worked more disastrous results than the Civil war. Yet in these thirty two years the South has recovered from the terrible effect and is now one of the most prosperous and influential portions of the civilized world. It has established thrift in city and country; restored comfort to homes from which culture and elegance never departed; built up prosperous industries; increased the healthfulness to a marked extent; battled

bravely and intelligently with the race problem,
abated the prejudice entertained by the
conquered towards the conqueror; braved
difficulties, contentions and controversies;
~~they~~ it has done this — and more, much
more. This restoration and advancement
has been accomplished only by the energy,
the courage, the perseverance, intelligence
and character of the South — the Old South.

May Griffing.