

Aunt Through Eastern North Carolina

THIRD LETTER.

BY COL. FRED A. OLDS.

It is a very pleasant sort of a thing on a fine May day, with the vegetation at its freshest and best, and after an agreeable shower of rain has made it all the fresher, to travel on any kind of conveyance, but there is an element of picturesque on a trip on one of the little railways, one of the kind which the late Legislature sought to foster, acting upon Governor Glenn's most kind suggestion.

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THE COTTON MILL SOUTH STRIKING CHANGES IN A DECADE

A Sort of "Farrow Revisited" Reflections of a Descending South Carolina—The Waning of the Cotton Industry—The Lack of Taste as Shown in the New South's Dwellings and Streets—Colors, Trees, Swamps and Sun—But the Big Thing is the Everywhere-Prevalent Proof of Prosperity—The Lulling Negro Group and the Yoked Oxen No Longer Seen—Nor Are There Signs of Race Antagonism or Restlessness—The "Problem" Absent.

This article, which is the first of a series of five, was written for The Boston Transcript by Rev. Dr. P. H. Goldsmith, minister of the First Church, Salem, Mass., and is reproduced by permission of the Transcript. Dr. Goldsmith is a South Carolinian by birth and recently visited his native State, after long absence, to investigate the conditions prevailing in the cotton mill settlements. His conclusions are interesting.

The fine purpose for which the anti-child labor committee was organized and the splendid campaign which it is carrying on in Southern cotton mills impelled me, a native of the South, to investigate conditions in those sections of the South where cotton mills are abundant. I wished to know something of the great industrial revolution, which had come over the South in the decade since I had really known that region and to make a judicious comparison with affairs and life in the North. My bases of comparison seem to me to be exceptional and my deductions may be more interesting and perhaps better worth while than the next man's. Fardon, then, a bit of autobiography. I was born in South Carolina and schooled there and in Kentucky; and in these two States and Tennessee I lived until 1891. Three years thereafter spent in Philadelphia and the remaining five and a fraction in Massachusetts, bring me to the present time. Furthermore, I confess to having spent a longer or shorter period of time in every Southern State except Florida, though during the last ten years my acquaintance with the South has been limited to a brief visit to South Carolina in 1901, and a trip from Maryland to Texas and return in 1905. Much of my life, therefore, has been spent in the North and I have been a practical stranger to the South for the last decade, a period of supreme moment in its industrial history.

THE PURPOSE OF THE SERIES.—In that time, through the medium of reports and opinions current in books and periodicals, I had learned somewhat of the changes going on and now I planned to spend some weeks in South Carolina and Georgia, studying cotton mills and the life of operatives in mill villages, general conditions, laws and conditions, prohibition, particularly in its bearing on the industrial situation, and finally the relations between the white people and the negroes in these two States. As I shall deal with these matters more in detail in subsequent articles, it is my purpose in the present one to record the general impressions and reflections which naturally came to me upon revisiting scenes and localities with which I was formerly familiar.

First let me say that the spring is the best season in which to visit the South. In the summer the heat is too great, in the autumn people are too busy as the exacting season for most visitors is just ahead, and, again, in the winter the most of the Southern country is at its ugliest. It is natural for the visitors to go there in the dead of winter, as it is a resort for those who seek to escape the rigors of a colder climate. Nevertheless, it is unfortunate, both for the visitors and for the South. No land is more forbidding in winter than the South, other than Florida, Louisiana and the blue grass regions of Kentucky and Tennessee.

Without doubt, the two-score days which follow upon the opening of spring are the most charming period for a visit to this part of the South. Tourists, however, go to the South for the climate, and not for the scenery, and they thus lose one of the best features of their trip.

THE APPELLING DESTRUCTION OF THE WOODS.—During my recent visit I was painfully reminded of the melting away of the South's forests. The southeastern States are rapidly being denuded of their timber. The whole aspect of the country is changing. A writer in World's Work, commenting on the resources of the Southern States, said:

"Altogether, the South's forest products are probably now yielding a gross (annual) income of \$700,000,000—more than any other single crop, cotton, and approximately twice as much as is obtained from all its mines and quarries." He further stated that the area of the standing forests of the South is seven-eighths of the forested area of the United States; and he estimated the standing timber at 700,000,000,000 board feet. He believed that "the present supply of Southern pine will be exhausted in twenty years." Anyone who has been acquainted with the South, and returns to it after an absence of ten years will readily concur with this estimate. The pine will be exhausted in twenty years with even more rapidly in the South than elsewhere in the United States, and it is a fact of startling significance, and one which seems not to be deeply impressed on the minds of the people, that the pine supply will be exhausted in twenty years.

But the big thing that strikes the visitor after he has noted the increase in the price of cotton, and the phenomenal industrial development in the direction of manufactures, is the fact that when the price of raw cotton had declined to five or six cents a pound, the farmers were either losing on each crop produced, or were being actually bankrupt. The energies of the South were paralyzed; business was at a standstill. When the price of cotton rose to ten to twelve cents the South began to recover. A fairly widespread demand to have been passed over a period of desolation. Thus the South of to-day is a twentieth century phoenix; and while it is in common with the rest of the country, feels the stress of the present hard times, it is enjoying such prosperity as it has not known since the civil war, and, indeed, such as it has never known, for all have shared in the blessings of the recent years.

WONDERFUL EVIDENCES OF PROSPERITY.—The farm houses in general are inconspicuously better than I have ever seen them. Few of them are permitted to remain unpainted, and many of them are large and slightly. Good outbuildings, adequate and attractive furniture and dairy curtains are common. Vegetables and flowers, nursery fruit trees, shade trees, poultry, pigs and cattle, handsome horses and large and sleek mules, strong and new or recently painted wagons and improved ploughs and other farming implements with good harness and gears, and well built and comfortable carriages and buggies—the surest tokens of prosperity in an agricultural community—are the rule and not the exception. In fact, I did

I say this just advisedly, for Atlanta, in general, is a surprise and a delight. It has one suburban avenue—Fayetteville—more than any other city except long wide, unshading and well shaded, and looked upon from right to left by houses of rare variety and magnificence. All this, however, is a digression, and by way of establishing exceptions, as a rule, the New South is an architectural and civic disappointment. Money is not lacking, but through indigent taste, I saw almost no reproductions of Southern colonial houses of which all these States possess many good specimens, and of which a few exist at the present time and might serve as models.

Naturally enough, almost all the houses are of wood, and this is not necessarily an evil, inasmuch as they are of a badness which is only surpassed by the seashore cottages of the New Jersey coast, and there is no reason why they should not be used for only two or three months of the year. The much shabbed and peaked, excessively windowed, over-painted, lightning-rodged, tin-roofed cottages with veranda and uncolored meagre posts (not columns) is inescapable. The two-story houses are commonly constructed on the same plan, and the lines are lamentably similar, which a predictor would say ought to be natural, appears to be one of the least acquisitions of the highest intellectuality and aesthetic taste and the merit of it is usually overlooked in the newer portions of the South. The New South has been too busy recovering from the past to imagine that it could spend much time over the unessential considerations of life. Many of the houses seem to be temporary structures, as also the bridges, shops and churches. The evidence of crime and careless habits is unmistakable. A farmer buys a piece of forest land, in it he makes a clearing, there he builds a house, hurriedly, unartificially, and he has no time to spare to shade trees about the site where his house is to stand. If he ever has them, he must grow or transplant them. This accounts for the bareness of many of the country homes. Little things are overlooked. Often pretentious houses are surrounded by unwholesome fences, or worse yet, wire and rail monstrously of hurdles, which smother the plants and are about as proper in their surroundings as zig-zag fences would be.

GAUDY COLORS.—The colors which are in high favor at present in the rural regions of the South are doubtless from the same sources as those which one encounters in the country throughout New England. The present prevailing fashion in colors, as it seemed to me, is for gaudiness and variety; blue, green, yellow and maroon being steady favorites. Among the more intelligent people in the cities and occasionally in the country, ivory white, cream and various shades of gray are being used effectively, and these colors are especially to be commended for the South, as there is often little coal smoke to

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The picture shows the students of one of the new rural high schools, this one being located in Granville county. Twenty-nine of the young men and women in the group assert that but for this school they would have been unable to acquire the higher education they now possess. The picture speaks volumes for this forward movement along educational lines. This group of intelligent young men and women is a credit to the county of Granville and the State.

"The Call of the South." In the publishers' notes accompanying this good-looking novel the theme is described as "the danger of the encouragement it receives in the social amenities extended to negroes of distinction by persons prominent in politics, philanthropy and education." Some of us do not find it easy to reconcile the purpose of the author, as there stated, with his course as a trustee of Trinity College, in which capacity (again) the information comes from the publishers' notes) he voted to retain Professor Bassett after the latter had written his inflammatory article in the South Atlantic Quarterly. However that may be, there is a possibility that the circulation of this story in the North and West may do much to enlighten the ignorant and folly, advocate social equality between the races. The purpose of the novel receives special emphasis at this time from the recent Cosmopolitan Club dinner in New York, where persons of supposed culture and intelligence—not really representative of Northern opinion—brought notoriety upon themselves by ignoring the racial dead-line. Perusal of the story ought to benefit these fanatics and all who are misguided by them as much as it sickens us. There is some writing here and there in the book, and the climax is dramatic, though repulsive.

THE NEW PURE FOOD AND DRUG LAW.—We are pleased to announce that Foley's Honey and Tar for coughs, colds and lung troubles is not affected by the National Pure Food and Drug Law as it contains no poison or other harmful drugs, and we recommend it as a safe remedy for children and adults. R. Jordan & Co. and W. L. Hand & Co.

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