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*Volume IX*

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ORIGINS OF THE NEW SOUTH  
1877-1913

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A HISTORY  
OF  
THE SOUTH

*Volume IX*

*EDITORS*

WENDELL HOLMES STEPHENSON

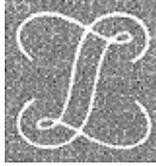
E. MERTON COULTER

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# Origins of the New South 1877-1913

BY C. VANN WOODWARD

*With a critical essay on recent works  
by Charles B. Dew*



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## PREFACE TO THE PRESENT EDITION

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**T**HE twenty years that have passed since this book was first published have witnessed unprecedented changes in the region about which it was written, an unprecedented amount of historical publication on the period it treated, and some significant changes in the way history is written and the questions that are asked of it.

Most striking are the changes that have overtaken the South since 1951. Long unique among the regions of the nation for abrupt and drastic breaks in the continuity of its history, the South in the last two decades has been overwhelmed with changes equal to or perhaps exceeding in abruptness and extent of social upheaval any preceding period, including the one covered in this book and even the period preceding it. As pointed out in the preface to an earlier printing, "the shadow of an anachronism" had already overtaken the title of the volume. What could be regarded as the origins of living institutions with ties of continuity running back to the 1870's at the time the book was written, could no longer be so regarded. The "New South" had already slipped into history and taken its place as one of several Old Souths of the past, just as distinctive and just as superseded. The author, of course, did not share then the advantages of perspective that these years of change afford the present reader.

The outpouring of historical scholarship during these twenty years is related to the swiftness and abruptness of social change that accompanied it. Changes in the present have always provoked new questions about the past and stimulated the rewriting of history. The amplitude and range of scholarly research on the South in the period 1877 to 1913 published since 1951 are indicated by the extensive bibliography compiled by Professor Charles B. Dew for this edition. Containing thousands of titles, it lists new works on virtually every subject treated in this book. On some subjects numerous monographs and articles have appeared in the last two decades. Even though the "Critical Essay on Authorities" for the original edition was not so exhaustive as the bibliography Professor Dew has prepared, a comparison of the two bibliographies suggests that more has probably been written on the subject since 1951 than in all the years before.

Republishing the original edition of 1951 without any revision is certainly not meant to suggest that the historical scholarship of the last twenty years has made no contribution worthy of notice. On the contrary, it has significantly increased our understanding of the subject in hundreds of ways. Had I written the book in the early 1970's instead of the early 1950's, I should have taken advantage of this recent scholarship and produced a different and, I hope, a better book. I should also have had the advantage of the added perspective and the stimulus of new questions raised by the swift changes and historical developments of recent years. It is even possible that I should have been able to make use of some of the new historical techniques, methods, and insights that have matured in the last two decades to improve the quality of scholarship.

But that would have been a different book, the product of another period, written under other circumstances and influences. Faced with a somewhat similar problem, Richard Hofstadter once wrote that "after a period of years a book acquires an independent life, and the author may be so fortunate as to achieve a certain healthy detachment from it, which

reconciles him to letting it stand on its own." In that spirit, I have decided to risk letting the book "stand on its own." Revision where it is needed must be the task of others. More important, a new synthesis awaits the pen of a historian with another world view, fresh insights, and perhaps a different philosophy of history. It would already appear to be time for him to be about his work.

C.V.W.

New Haven, May, 1971

## PREFACE TO THE ORIGINAL EDITION

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**A**MERICAN historians, generally speaking, have taken the New South at its word and accepted its professions of nationalism to justify a neglect of regional history. After more or less detailed treatment of the South during Reconstruction, the general histories of the United States have been governed by the tacit assumption that the South is adequately covered by the various phases of national history, and the perceptive section is disposed of with cursory reference to progress, poor whites, and the race problem. The historians cannot be blamed for this neglect, as Southern scholars themselves have connived in it and sometimes justified it.

Part of the difficulty lies in the phrase "New South." It is not a place name, as is "New England," nor does it precisely designate a period, as does "the Confederacy." From the beginning it had the color of a slogan, a rallying cry. It vaguely set apart those whose faith lay in the future from those whose heart was with the past. It suggested moods ranging from forthright recantation to an affable and uncritical optimism. It was invariably laden with hopeful nationalism suggesting that the lately disaffected South was at last one in faith with the country—or would be as soon as a few more bonds were sold, another appropriation was passed, the depression was ended, or the new railroad was completed. Those who have undertaken to write of the New South have not always been careful to dissociate themselves from the implication of the phrase as a popular slogan. Unconsciously, perhaps, they have emphasized those aspects of the region's history that are most congenial to the New-South mentality.

If it were possible to dispense with a phrase of such wide currency, I would not use the name "New South" except to designate an ill-defined group of Southerners. Unfortunately, the vocabulary of the subject and period is cluttered with a remarkable number of clichés that give the historian trouble and lead to popular misapprehension. In addition to "New South" there are, for example, "Bourbon," "poor white," "Solid South," "Redemption." Some of these are productive of so much mischief that I have consciously avoided them. Others, equally mischievous, seem unavoidable. The historian may deplore the injustice of the term "carpetbagger" when it falls alike upon the just and the unjust, but he is no more able to dispense with it than was the carpetbagger himself.

Disinfected as much as possible, the term "New South" will be used in the following pages without its slogan-like connotations. By the South I mean the eleven former Confederate states plus Kentucky and, after it became a state, Oklahoma. The newness of the New South will be subject to considerable qualification. That it was new enough to have outgrown those peculiarities that in earlier periods had set the region apart and necessitated separate consideration by historians is frankly questioned. In some ways it was more distinctive as a region than it had been earlier. Politically the South achieved, on the surface at least, a unity that it had never possessed in ante-bellum times. Economically it was set apart from the rest of the nation by differentials in per capita wealth, income, and living standards that made it unique among the regions. War and Reconstruction, while removing some of the South's peculiarities, merely aggravated others and gave rise to new ones.

It would be impossible to acknowledge adequately all the assistance I have received in the book from scholars, librarians, and editors. I am especially obligated to Rupert B. Vance of the University of North Carolina, who read the entire manuscript and illuminated the margins with colored pencils. Charles A. Barker of the Johns Hopkins University, Howard K. Beale of the University of Wisconsin, Francis B. Simkins of Louisiana State University, and William C. Carleton of the University of Florida have read parts of the manuscript and contributed valuable suggestions. My indebtedness to the editors of this series for their painstaking work is very great. The paragraph on the page preceding this Preface is taken from Arnold Toynbee, *The Prospects of Western Civilization* (New York, 1949), and is quoted with the permission of the author and the Columbia University Press. I was assisted in completing research for this book by fellowships from the Rosenwald and the Guggenheim foundations.

C.V.W.

I remember watching the Diamond Jubilee procession myself as a small boy. I remember the atmosphere. It was: Well, he ~~we are on the top of the world, and we have arrived at this peak to stay there—forever!~~ There is, of course, a thing called history, but history is something unpleasant that happens to other people. We are comfortably outside all that. I am sure, if I had been a small boy in New York in 1897 I should have felt the same. Of course, if I had been a small boy in 1897 in the Southern part of the United States, I should not have felt the same; I should then have known from my parents that history had happened to my people in my part of the world.

ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE

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## THE REDEEMERS

ANY honest genealogy of the ruling family of Southern Democrats would reveal a strain of mixed blood. The mixture sprang from a forced union with the house that had been Democracy's bitter rival for the throne. A Mississippian once whimsically acknowledged the union. "A few years after the war," he wrote, "all lovers of good government in the South concluded to celebrate a marriage. The high contracting parties were Whiggism and Democracy and the ceremony took place in 1875, though the betrothal may antedate that time.... As is usual in such cases the parties have now one and the same name, but the Whig party is no more dead than is one of our fair damsels, because she has concluded to cast her lot with the man of her choice for weal or for woe."<sup>1</sup>

The fact was that instead of assuming the submissive role suggested by a change of name Whiggery often took the dominant position—along with the bulk of desirable offices. A North Carolina editor who described himself as one of the "unterrified Democracy" boasted that "the Democratic nominees for Governor since the war had been Worth, a Whig; Ashe, a Whig; Merrimon, a Whig; Vance, a Whig; and Jarvis, who was too young before the war to have had much political leaning one way or another." The Democrats of the First North Carolina District had in that period nominated five men for Congress, "every one of them former Whigs," and the state supreme court was "composed of three sterling Democrats, all former Whigs." By 1884 it appeared that "the Democrats of today admire Henry Clay just as much as the men of Whig traditions."<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, so repugnant had the marriage with the old enemies been to the Whigs that it was not until eight years after the war that the very name "Democratic" was avowed by the Conservative party of North Carolina.

The Whiggish tendency was widespread. "It is almost impossible to find a disciple of Benton among Southern Democrats," wrote an observer in 1882. The older generation had "apparently determined to adopt the views of the old Whigs," while the younger leaders were uninterested in Jacksonian dogma.<sup>3</sup>

Henry Watterson, thoroughly in accord with all but details of the New Order, took occasion to attack Colonel Arthur S. Colyar, commander of the dominant wing of the Tennessee Democrats. Colyar, he charged, was "in sympathy with the iron, coal, and manufacturing interests of Tennessee exclusively, and, being an old high-tariff Whig, has not emancipated himself from the crude opinions which prevailed among the shortsighted and narrow minded political economists among whom he grew to manhood." The reply came promptly from the *Nashville Daily American*: "Better be careful, Mr. Watterson, the Democratic party of Tennessee is made up, at least in part, of old Whigs, and, being now a part of the same family, it might hurt the party to establish that the old Whigs were 'short sighted and 'narrow-minded!'" If the Ken-tuckian were uninformed, he might make inquiry in his own state concerning the master of all those "narrow minded political economists." "His name was Clay, and no doubt some of the old men will remember him."<sup>4</sup>

All in all the union was a *mésalliance*. With every crossroad hustings and county courthouse the memorial of some battle between the old parties, any semblance of domestic harmony

was likely to be forced and artificial. "I despise the very name of Democrat," declared Democrat of Whig background from the Lower South. "There is not a principle or a tradition belonging to the organization which I approve." Another unwilling adherent described himself as "in principle an Old Line Whig, but, under existing circumstances, in practice and from necessity, a Southern Democrat."<sup>5</sup> Even the name Democrat fell into general disuse in the South during the seventies and eighties. The substitute, "Conservative," though originating in the battle against "Radical" Republicans, proved too appropriate a name to abandon for many years. In some states it was adopted as the official name of the party, sometimes in combination, "Conservative and Democratic Party." "Conservative" was not dropped from the official title of the Democratic party of Alabama for forty years after the war.

The shape and character of salvation promised the South by "Redemption" are in some measure revealed by the extrapolitical concerns of the "Redeemers." The first ex-Confederate state to be restored to Democratic rule, Tennessee had as her first Democratic governor General John C. Brown, a former Whig and brother of the ante-bellum Whig governor Neill Brown. Governor John Brown took prominent part in the ambitious schemes of Thomas A. Scott for a southern transcontinental railroad and served as vice-president of Scott's Texas and Pacific Company. Later he became president of the Bon Air Coal Company, and at the time of his death he was president of the expanding Tennessee Coal, Iron, and Railroad Company. His successor, also a former Whig elected by the Democrats, was James D. Porter, a Confederate veteran. After two terms in office, Governor Porter was elected president of the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railroad. He was also a director of the Tennessee Coal, Iron, and Railroad Company, along with several other financial enterprises of Nashville.<sup>6</sup>

The dynamic leader of this Whig-industrialist wing of Tennessee Democrats was Colonel Colyar. There were, according to Watterson, six prominent newspapers in the South that supported every Republican and opposed every Democratic policy. Three of these were published in Tennessee, and the "king" of this whole school of journalists was Colonel Colyar, who controlled the Nashville *American*. Watterson described him as a brilliant captain of industry, "backed by abundant capital of protected industries" issuing orders to his lieutenants throughout the Lower South.<sup>7</sup> His paper fought the free traders and the railroad commissions and defended the policies of the Tennessee Coal, Iron, and Railroad Company, of which Colyar was a director and general counsel. The company leased the convicts of the state penitentiary for an annual rental of \$101,000. "One of the chief reasons which first induced the company to take up the system," explained Colonel Colyar, "was the great chance which it seemed to present for overcoming strikes."<sup>8</sup> Governor Albert S. Marks, who succeeded Governor Porter, was a kinsman and former law partner of Colonel Colyar.<sup>9</sup>

Redemption came early in Virginia and was accomplished under peculiar auspices—a combination of Confederate Democrats, conservative Republicans, old-line Whigs, and Negroes. This mongrel group left "Democrat" out of the party name entirely, and for thirteen years was known simply as the Conservative party. "This combination," according to one historian, "was effected by city capitalistic leaders, and to it (and them) was entrusted the inauguration of the new regime." The city man's rule of a countryman's state had as the first Conservative governor a Carpetbagger-Republican and banker from Norfolk, Gilbert C. Walker. The nine men who acted as an executive committee for the state central committee

of the Conservatives were all residents of Richmond, and for years all state conventions of the Conservatives were held in that city.<sup>10</sup>

The General Assembly that laid the foundation of the New Order passed two bills of great consequence in quick succession. One of these provided for the sale, at a sacrifice, of the state's valuable holdings in the stock of its own railroads, a sale which proceeded at "immense loss" until virtually all the state roads had fallen into private hands, usually those of expanding Northern railroad systems. The railroads retained the special privileges and exemptions enjoyed under state ownership, but were relieved of state control or regulation—an arrangement which made virtually inevitable "railroad control over the legislature."<sup>11</sup>

The second measure, passed within two days of the railroad bill, was the Funding Act of 1871. The act fastened upon an impoverished, war-broken state an annual interest upon the funded debt almost equal to the entire revenue of the state. The funding and railroad acts were obtained by corrupt pressure methods of a combination of bankers, bondholders, and railroads. To a recent student it is clear that "if ever Virginia bowed to money interests and pressure against the will of her people and contrary to the exigencies of the situation, it was on this occasion."<sup>12</sup> Launched in this manner, the Hamiltonian financial policy of the Conservatives soon occupied such a conspicuous place in the new system that the party members came to be known as the "Funders."

Railroads continued to share honors with bondholders in the degree of influence they exerted over the Conservative party. Whether the Funders or their rivals were in power the railroads were prominently represented. General William Mahone's extensive railroad interests led him to seek power in the Conservative party and to take perhaps the largest individual part in bringing the Conservatives to power.<sup>13</sup> Out-of-state railroads, gaining predominant influence with the Conservatives, then assisted in overthrowing Mahone's schemes and driving him into a political revolt that removed the Conservatives temporarily from office. Even after defeat, subsequent reorganization, and return to power under the name "Democratic," the party remained thoroughly identified with railroad interests. This was clearly indicated by the composition of the state committee of the party in the seventies, eighties, and nineties, during which period nearly every state chairman was a railroad president or director.<sup>14</sup>

Despite Kentucky's failure to secede and join the Confederacy, no state below the Ohio River presented a more solidly Confederate-Democratic front in the decade after Appomattox. For a short time after the fear of Radical and Negro votes was quieted, a rift in the ranks opened between a weak "Bourbon" wing led by J. Stoddard Johnson's Frankfort *Kentucky Yeoman*, and a powerful "New South" or businessman's wing, whose spokesman was Henry Watterson's Louisville *Courier-Journal*. The struggle was uneven and short-lived.<sup>15</sup>

Watterson's policy called for "an intelligent appeal to the business interests and conservative elements of Northern society" and a firm alliance of those elements against radicals of all sorts. He demanded a program of subsidies, tax exemptions, and privileged franchises in order to accommodate Eastern capital and encourage its flow into the state. The constant theme of New-South editors and orators was cheap resources, business opportunities, railroad developments, and commercial enterprise.<sup>16</sup> "Even though they might look like Southern colonels," writes one student of the new leaders of Kentucky, "with goatee and moustaches, and speak like Southern orators, retaining these outer trappings of the old"

days, the program of the 'New Departure' was a program of surrender."<sup>17</sup> The "Bourbon opposition soon faded into the past. By September 7, 1880, Watterson could write in the *Courier-Journal* of the old secession leaders that "not one of them remains upon the stage of active political life."

A multitude of interests, both in and out of the state, were served by the New Order in Kentucky, and joined in loyal support of its leaders. The railroads, the great wholesale merchants, the liquor and tobacco interests—none should be overlooked. It would be a mistake to identify the new structure with any one of its pillars and buttresses. However, the Louisville and Nashville Railroad should be singled out for special notice, not only because of its unique importance in Kentucky, but because of its remarkable influence in the affairs of other states to the southward into which it penetrated. By process of aggression, colonization, city building, and acquisition, the "L and N" gained predominance in Kentucky, and established connections with Memphis, New Orleans, Mobile, Atlanta, and Savannah. "Having here in Louisville a Railway Emperor and a Railway Bismarck," Watterson wrote, celebrating the latest "*coup de chemin de fer*" of the L and N, it was not to be wondered at that they were "making a 'United Germany' of the Southern railways which were lying about loose . . . instead of leading to Louisville as they should."<sup>18</sup>

It was characteristic of the times that in its battles to achieve monopoly, which differed in no essential from similar struggles the nation over, the L and N managed to identify its cause with that of the downtrodden South. This is the more curious in view of the road's service to the Union army during the war, the passage of control and ownership to Northern and European capital, and the appearance in the lists of its directors of the names Jay Gould, Thomas Fortune Ryan, Jacob Schiff, and August Belmont.<sup>19</sup> As chief lobbyist and leading light of its legal staff, however, "General Basil W. Duke, C.S.A.," as he described himself in the title of his *Reminiscences*, served the L and N for twenty years. Not only in his Confederate military record, but in his family connections, his striking appearance (including the standard mustache and goatee), his literary service to the Confederate memories, and his chivalrous and attractive personality, General Duke was all that the age expected in the Kentucky colonel of the old school.<sup>20</sup>

"The only inducement for railroad companies to enter politics— become parties to the dirty work—is to protect their property," remarked Milton H. Smith, president of the L and N. He was the first to admit that this inducement alone was considerable. It was found necessary to retain "legislative agents" in various states, lawyers in all county seats through which the road ran, and in strategic places friendly judges, legislators, and officeholders of all sorts with passes in their pockets or relatives on the L and N pay roll.<sup>21</sup>

Revealing light is shed upon the nature of Redemption and of the Redeemers of Alabama by following the course of the Louisville and Nashville empire builders in that state. Alben Fink, one of the ablest railroad superintendents of his time, foreseeing the immense potentialities of the undeveloped mineral resources of northern Alabama, began soon after the war to make large investments in that region for the L and N, subsidizing numerous developments and encouraging the building of new towns. In this manner there were affiliated with the fortunes of the L and N many of the new industries, along with a rising class of industrialists. In the front ranks of these men was James W. Sloss, said by the *Birmingham Iron Age* to be "identified with the development of the industrial interests of

Alabama to a greater extent than any other man in the State.”<sup>22</sup> Sloss was closely associated in business as well as in politics, with the most prominent leaders of the Democratic party in Alabama. Although the Panic of 1873 resulted in the transfer of ownership to Northern and European capital, the L and N continued as in the past to work in close co-operation with the state Democratic organization.<sup>23</sup>

Behind the fury of partisan conflict during Reconstruction there proceeded a struggle between the L and N and a rival system for access to the riches of the mineral region of northern Alabama. The opposing system, the Alabama and Chattanooga Railroad, seeking to divert ore shipments from Louisville to Chattanooga for smelting, was linked in its fortunes with the Republican party through the investments of such men as Henry Clews, Russell Sage and William D. (“Pig-Iron”) Kelley. During Reconstruction both railroads were beneficiaries of extravagant state-government aid that virtually bankrupted the state. Liabilities assumed for these two railroad systems alone, in the form of loans and endorsements of bonds, accounted for \$17,000,000 of the total estimated \$25,000,000 “debt” incurred after the war. That the system of state aid was inaugurated by the provisional Democratic government and manipulated to the advantage of a number of prominent party leaders did not deter the Democrats from playing up the state debt as the most sensational charge against the Carpetbag government.<sup>24</sup>

The election of 1874 had more than a racial or political significance, for it would determine not only the fate of the Republican party and Reconstruction in Alabama but also which of the financial interests involved would be able to make the best possible settlement with a state government they had both brought to the point of bankruptcy. Walter L. Fleming wrote that “the campaign fund was the largest in the history of the state,” and mentioned especially the contributions of “northern Democrats and northern capitalists who had invested in the South or who owned part of the legal bonds of the state.”<sup>25</sup> It should be remembered, however, that it was just this question of the “legality” of bonds that would be determined by the outcome of the campaign to which the Northern capitalists contributed. The Conservatives won by a large majority. The L and N was by this time firmly identified with the downtrodden South and the victory of White Supremacy in Alabama.

George S. Houston, Redeemer governor of Alabama, described in campaign literature as “the Bald Eagle of the Mountains,” won his office with the usual slogans of “White Supremacy” and “home rule.” A northern Alabama lawyer with industrial interests, he was leader of the Unionists of the state. “How much will the young men ... be enthused by H[ouston]’s nomination?” demanded one Alabama Democrat. “Can it be expected that they will vigorously exert themselves for a man selected because he is supposed to be strong with that element which in all this region is known in common parlance as Tories?”<sup>26</sup> Houston was a close associate of Sloss and the L and N, for one of whose affiliated lines he was director.<sup>27</sup>

Houston hastened to bring about a settlement with the state’s bondholders and the railroads. His friend Rufus W. Cobb, who framed the plan later adopted with modifications, was a local attorney of the L and N and president of the Central Iron Works at Helena, which was subsidized by that railroad.<sup>28</sup> Governor Houston served as ex-officio chairman of the debt commission. Levi W. Lawler, one of the commissioners and director of a railroad competing with the Alabama and Chattanooga, confessed privately that in view of his party’s complicity

in the railroad-bond legislation, “we, the commissioners, and the party, are environed with embarrassments of no ordinary magnitude.”<sup>29</sup> The settlement agreed upon was satisfactory to some bondholders and highly advantageous to those railroad systems favored by the Redeemers, particularly L and N affiliates with which Sloss and Houston were in one way or another associated. Since the debt was always a potential debt, and would have become an actual debt only by the state’s becoming the owner of the railroads endorsed, the “debt settlement” took the form of relieving the state of its potential debt and relieving the railroads of the threat of foreclosure on mortgages held by the state. The “settlement of 1877” left the residual obligations of the State Government ... at approximately \$12,000,000.”<sup>30</sup>

After serving two terms Governor Houston was elected to the United States Senate. He was succeeded in the governor’s chair by Cobb, whose connections with Houston and his interests have been described. On Houston’s death Governor Cobb appointed to the Senate his successor Luke Pryor, Houston’s law partner and also a business associate of Sloss and the Louisville and Nashville interests.<sup>31</sup>

Redemption was sometimes accomplished by means that did much toward determining the character of the new administrations. Tactics, habits, and vices that established the plane of public morals during Reconstruction were not abandoned overnight, and sometimes persisted for a decade or even longer. Impoverished state committees of the Conservative party were at times driven into alliance with the very forces against which the Redeemers’ crusade was launched. In such cases the privileged interest was likely to continue in the enjoyment of its privileges and take as powerful a hand in the Redeemers’ regime as it had in the Radicals’.

According to one of its enemies the Louisiana State Lottery Company was “conceived in the miscegenation of reconstruction and born in iniquity.” It was, as a matter of fact chartered in 1868 by an act of the Louisiana legislature which gave it a monopoly of the lottery business in the state for a period of twenty-five years. The profits of the company were enormous, and its political power in the state was said to be “stronger than the Tweed ring in New York.” Its money went not only to the legislature but to the Radical campaign fund in every election: “There has never been a Radical judge or recorder in New Orleans who has not been the subservient tool of the Lottery managers.”<sup>32</sup> However close the ties between Lottery and Radicals, the connections between the Lottery and the Redeemer regime became quite as intimate.

In the tense days of April, 1877, Louisiana had two governors, each claiming to have been rightfully elected, and two rival legislatures, each lacking a quorum. When other persuasion failed, money was used to induce enough of the Republican legislators to desert the government led by Stephen B. Packard and move over to the Democratic legislature to give the desired quorum. There is considerable evidence, including statements of Lottery spokesmen, that much of the money used to attain this end was supplied by the Lottery Company. One account, purporting to give the “inside history,” places the cost to the company at “nearly or quite \$250,000.”<sup>33</sup> Though this seems an excessive amount, even considering the flourishing market for Louisiana legislators that particular season, other estimates indicate a considerable investment on the part of the Lottery.<sup>34</sup> The editor of a paper that was an outspoken defender of Lottery interests went so far as to assert that Francis T. Nicholls, Redeemer governor, “could never have been Governor of the State of Louisiana but for the Lottery Company,” which “upon earnest solicitations, came forward and put up

the money which Was absolutely necessary to win over the negro Senators.”<sup>35</sup>

In 1879 the legislature, in the mood for wiping out another Carpetbag landmark, passed an act rescinding the Lottery Company’s charter. The act was signed by Governor Nicholls, and the monopoly was faced with a death blow. Quick response from the Federal circuit court in the form of a temporary restraining order, and later an injunction, averted this threat, but the decision of the Supreme Court promised danger from another quarter. The Lottery lobbyists next stormed the doors of the state constitutional convention, sitting in 1879 to replace the Radical constitution with a home-rule product. The Lottery this time demanded nothing less than the writing of its charter into the fundamental law of the land, where it would be beyond the reach of fickle legislatures and ungrateful governors. The Lottery had its way. On the floor of the convention “the Caesarean operation which evolved the Nicholls government was fully explained,” and one member pointed out how unreasonable it was to ask the New Order “to wipe out the institution to which it owed its existence.”<sup>36</sup>

Not only was the company’s charter placed beyond the threat of legislative repeal, but the Nicholls government, which had antagonized the Lottery, was removed from power by a constitutional provision calling for the election of a new governor and legislature, to assume office in January, 1880, thus shortening Nicholls’ term of office by more than a year. Furthermore, by a provision reorganizing the supreme court, the judges who had sustained the government’s policy were removed and replaced by a new court.<sup>37</sup> In the midst of these changes the New Orleans *Democrat*, party organ of the Redeemers, found itself bankrupted by a Federal court decision rendering worthless the state warrants it held for a year’s printing for the government, and by the Governor’s withdrawing the state printing from the newspaper. The *Democrat*, which had been the most outspoken opponent of the Lottery, promptly fell under control of Major E. A. Burke, Charles T. Howard, and the Lottery Company, and suffered a sudden reversal of editorial policy. The Federal court then reversed its decision on the state warrants after a rehearing, thereby giving the new proprietor of the *Democrat* the full value of the state warrants.<sup>38</sup>

The next ten years were the most prosperous in the history of the Lottery. Collecting \$28,000,000 a year through the sale of tickets for its monthly and semiannual drawings, the company distributed in prizes less than \$15,000,000, and kept about 46 per cent of the collections—a shockingly bold take compared with that of foreign lotteries. Exempt from other taxes, the company paid a flat fee of \$40,000 annually to the state. Newspapers over the nation were offered double and sometimes quadruple prices for Lottery advertisements. Banks, business houses, and manufactures were brought under Lottery domination. The number of regular pensioners on the company’s fund, some of them in public life, was said to be “enormous” the list of employees was extensive. The support of the masses was courted by spectacular charities.<sup>39</sup> “With its gigantic ‘slush’ fund it debauched legislators, muzzled the press, made and unmade public officials,” declared a Louisiana historian. He believed that the Lottery “subtly exercised a power greater than that of the State government itself.”<sup>40</sup>

Important institutions in the South of that day sought to identify themselves with the romantic cult of the Confederacy. It was a poor subsidiary of an Eastern railroad that could not find some impoverished brigadier general to lend his name to a letterhead. General Robert E. Lee’s austere example in this regard was much admired but rarely followed. Some surprising naturalizations of Yankee capital into Confederate citizenship were effected. The

Louisiana Lottery, with its well-known Carpetbag origins and Yankee owners, took rather more pains than usual. A few weeks after the Carpetbag government collapsed in 1877, they appeared on the platform, to act as personal supervisors of the "Extraordinary Drawing" from the great glass wheels of the Lottery, two distinguished personages—General P. G. Beauregard and General Jubal A. Early. It would have been hard to find surviving figures of greater prestige in Confederate legend. Both gentlemen had seen lean days before they accepted the Lottery's offer of handsome salaries. Their signatures in facsimile were so familiar to newspaper readers the country over, appearing year after year in Lottery advertisements endorsing the honesty of the drawings the men supervised. Another tie binding Lottery and Confederacy was the Confederate Memorial Building in New Orleans, built by descendants of the Lottery owner, Charles T. Howard, a Carpetbagger who was said to have "loved the dignifying memories of the war."<sup>41</sup>

It is one of the rarer ironies of the period that the Redeemers of so coy and inconstant a widow of the Confederacy as Georgia should have come to be known as "Bourbons." No group of Southern rulers less deserved that much-abused epithet, with its implications of obstinate adherence to the old loyalties and abhorrence of the new, than did Georgia's so-called "Bourbon Triumvirate." Concerning the justice of the term "Triumvirate," however, there was little question. During the eighteen years following the overthrow of the Carpetbaggers, either General John B. Gordon or Joseph E. Brown occupied one of the state places in the United States Senate, and after 1883, Alfred H. Colquitt, the third member of the Triumvirate, held the other. For the major part of the same period General Colquitt or General Gordon served as governor. Here was a concentration of authority that, if rightly understood, would reveal much of the nature of Georgia's new order.

"Henceforth let it not be said that Georgia is not reconstructed," commented a Mississippi editor upon the news of former Governor Brown's election to the United States Senate by Democratic legislature.<sup>42</sup> Governor Brown's career in war and peace is, in fact, another striking illustration of the continuity between Reconstruction and Redemption. "First in secession, first in reconstruction, and very nearly first in the restoration of Democratic home rule," Brown, as one historian observes, "came up on top at every revolution of the wheel of destiny."<sup>43</sup> Supplanted as war governor in 1865, he wrote that "The Statesman like the business man should take a practical view of questions as they arise." He urged upon the South a policy of acquiescence in Radical Reconstruction, became a Republican himself, and was appointed chief justice of the state supreme court by Rufus B. Bullock, Radical governor. Though not personally involved in the corrupt bond issues that disgraced the Republican administration, Brown was closely associated with many beneficiaries of them. Just before Governor Bullock fled the state in fear of indictment, the legislature leased the Western and Atlantic, a state-owned railroad, to a company of which Brown was president. Later investigation pronounced the lease and the formation of the company fraudulent, but no action was brought. The following decade saw the rise of Brown to a rank among the leading industrialists of the South. Not only was he president of Western and Atlantic, but also of the Southern Railway and Steamship Company, the Walker Coal and Iron Company, and the Dade Coal Company. In his coal mines Brown used convict labor leased from the state for about seven cents a day. These and other industrial interests made him a wealthy man in a short time, while his large philanthropic gifts and endowments tended to soften the hostility

aroused by his political apostasy.<sup>44</sup>

One enthusiastic supporter of Brown in the political contest of 1880 was former Governor Bullock. His case illustrates from another angle the indulgent spirit of the times as well as the lack of sharp distinction between Reconstruction and Redemption. Bullock returned to Georgia in 1876 and stood trial on an indictment for embezzlement of public funds. Neither his acquittal for lack of evidence nor his published defense of himself has convinced historians that his administration was other than a “carnival of public spoliation!”<sup>45</sup> Yet remaining in Atlanta after his trial, Bullock soon became one of its most honored citizens: he was president of an Atlanta cotton mill, president of the Chamber of Commerce, and director of the Piedmont Exposition. H. I. Kimball, a Carpetbagger from Maine, second only to Bullock among Georgia Radicals and second to none of them in his reputation for public plunder, was also president of an Atlanta textile mill and served as “director general” of the Atlanta Cotton Exposition of 1881. His popularity was attested by his near victory in a race for the mayoralty of Atlanta in 1880, which he lost by fifty-four votes. Alexander K. McClure attended a dinner at the home of Henry W. Grady in honor of Governor Colquitt and found among fellow guests Kimball and Bullock, whose “political filthiness” had once been the subject of Grady editorials. “Their general agreement as to State policy was somewhat a surprise to me,” said McClure. He “did not meet any Atlanta prominent business Republicans who desired Republican control in the State.... All had absolute confidence in Grady.”<sup>46</sup> “Even Governor Brown is in a marked degree a representative of this New South,” wrote Bullock. “He fully understands her practical needs and will foster her commercial advantage.”<sup>47</sup>

Confusion regarding General Gordon, second of the Triumvirate, is more understandable. The General’s distinguished military record, his popular title “Hero of Appomattox,” his chivalrous bearing and courtly appearance, and above all his office of commander in chief of the United Confederate Veterans from the time of its organization until his death, combined to make him a popular idol in the South and the incarnation of the Lost Cause in the North. More revealing about the significance of the General as a Redeemer than his romantic *Reminiscences* were his business connections. These included the Central Pacific and later the Louisville and Nashville, which he served as counsel at a salary of \$14,000. Gordon became an adventurous speculator in Southern industry and business. A mere listing of his schemes, mainly railroad ventures but also including insurance, publishing, mining, manufactures, and real estate, would require more space than is available here.<sup>48</sup>

Colquitt, third member of the Triumvirate, at first appeared out of place in the New Order. A gentleman of distinguished family, coming from the Black Belt, and one of the largest planters in the state, he seemed to belong to the old aristocratic planter-statesmen. His interests were not exclusively agricultural, however, nor his association with the Triumvirate exclusively political. At the height of its political teamwork, Governor Colquitt was reported by a friendly source to be co-operating with General Gordon and his brothers in large-scale speculations in two Southern railroads, a New England textile mill, and a Tennessee fertilizer factory, and in coal mining. These gentlemen were understood to have cleared \$ 1,000,000 by their transactions in less than a year.<sup>49</sup>

Colquitt’s case is only one illustration of the growing attachment between representatives of the New Order and the few survivors of the old planter class who entered its service. Senator L. Q. C. Lamar of Mississippi was also associated with Senator Gordon in sundry

speculations.<sup>50</sup> Mississippi, in fact, had almost as much of a triumvirate as Georgia. Its members were Lamar, Edward C. Walthall, and James Z. George, all United States Senators. Among them they occupied both of their state's seats in the Senate throughout the eighties. They were the three men most influential in state politics, yet neither they nor their lieutenants had exercised important influence in ante-bellum Mississippi. All three Senators were corporation lawyers. Lamar and his intimate friend General Walthall, a man of considerable wealth and aristocratic connections, were avowed friends of the railroads and corporations and hostile to any attack from agrarians. Although Senator George had the largest corporate practice in his state and had built a fortune for himself, he came up from the ranks, took pride in the name "Commoner," and gained the confidence of the small farmer element. After George's election to the Senate in 1881, Lamar's supporters said that he was "of the same political school" as Lamar and that the two "saw eye to eye on many matters." George, however, was never on intimate terms with his two colleagues.<sup>51</sup>

During the two decades following Redemption in Mississippi the governorship was exercised by only two men—John M. Stone and Robert Lowry. Conservative railroad lawyers, both men resisted regulatory legislation and conformed to the Lamar-Walthall approach toward Northern capital and corporate interests in the seventies and eighties. Stone, like Senator George, was to prove more adaptable to the ground swell of agrarian sentiment. Governor Lowry, a former Whig, proved a consistent friend of factories, railroads, and textile mills in quest of tax exemptions and freedom from regulation. Among the seventeen Democratic Congressmen elected by Mississippi between 1876 and 1890, a careful investigator was able to find only seven who "sympathized with, worked for, and were approved by the farmers."<sup>52</sup>

Redemption, like Civil War and Reconstruction, meant only one more postponement of the eventual reckoning between the "two South Carolinas, the one of the masses, the other of the classes," between which there had long existed "a fatal lack of touch."<sup>53</sup> In the crisis of 1877, as in the presence of external dangers in earlier times, the upcountry democracy once more subordinated its ancient grievances to the common cause and submitted to the leadership of the low country and the men with the old names. Senators Wade Hampton and Matthew C. Butler, whose family connections, manners, and patrician outlook identified them with the Old Order, gave superficial color to the picture of Redemption as a "restoration." But like the Redeemers of sister states, those of South Carolina definitely allied themselves with the business interests—with the factory owners, railroad men, and merchants of Charleston, Columbia, and other cities. If their manners and names were of authentic plantation origin, their votes and deeds were of the middle class, and to that Class the Redeemers lent all the prestige of aristocratic lineage and glorious war record. One heated contest after another arose to divide the white man's party. In each conflict—whether with the bondholders over the state debt, with the bankers over a usury law, with the merchants over protection of fertilizer consumers, or with railroads over rates—the popular side of the issue was opposed by the Redeemers with striking consistency.<sup>54</sup>

Florida was ushered into the ranks of redeemed states in 1877 upon the arm of Governor George F. Drew, a native of New Hampshire, who moved to Georgia in the fifties and settled in Florida in 1865. Like many of the leaders of Redemption, Governor Drew was an old-line Whig. He was a Union man in sympathies and took no part in the war. Locally he was known

as “Millionaire Drew” because of his “vast and successful enterprises,” chiefly in the lumber industry, but including also “the largest mercantile house in the State.” In partnership with New York capitalist, he bought great tracts of timber land during Reconstruction. “The firm now owns the largest saw-mills in the State, and ships immense quantities of yellow pine to New York,” it was reported in 1877.<sup>55</sup>

Harriet Beecher Stowe, a resident of Florida since the year after the war, was glad to reassure Northern friends that “although Gov. Drew is a Democrat, the Republican papers cordially support his administration,” a sign that “the lion and the lamb ... may yet lie down together.” Prospects for Uncle Tom’s children seemed to her “all they ought to desire,” and since “about all the money circulating in the State comes from Northern immigrants and visitors,” Yankees were thrice welcome.<sup>56</sup> Governor William D. Bloxham, Drew’s successor, improved handsomely upon the policy of hospitality by granting to visiting capitalists considerably more land than the state owned. The path for Henry B. Plant and Henry M. Flagler, the Rhodeses of the American tropics, lay open before them. Men of this type found it easy to co-operate with Drew, Bloxham, and their two successors in the governor’s office.

So far in this account of the Redeemers the emphasis has been upon the dominant element and its leadership. In the main they were of middle-class, industrial, capitalistic outlook, with little but a nominal connection with the old planter regime. This is not to suggest that all Redeemers and all elements of their party were so aligned. Other elements that took part in the struggle for Redemption were more strongly associated by their point of view and leadership with the ante-bellum order. They sometimes resisted capitalistic encroachment but they usually constituted a minority within the Conservative party and were dominated by the New-South Redeemers. In three states these factions were led by figures important in Confederate history.

General Robert Toombs, former member of the Confederate cabinet, joined hands with Joseph E. Brown to overthrow Bullork’s Radical administration in Georgia, but quickly broke with his ally. His personal prestige enabled him to dominate the Constitutional Convention of 1877 and, in spite of Brown’s stiff opposition, to write into the new constitution prohibitions against irrevocable franchises, railroad monopolies, and state subsidies to railroads. Disfranchised and deprived of citizenship, Toombs had no coherent following and soon ceased to wield important power. His old friend Alexander H. Stephens bitterly disappointed him by making peace with Grady and the Bourgeois Triumvirate.

In Tennessee Senator Isham G. Harris, secessionist and war leader, commanded a strong wing of the Conservative party based mainly on a cotton-planter constituency in western Tennessee. Adhering to the old state-rights line of John C. Calhoun, the Harris-planter wing wrestled annually with the more powerful Colyar-Whig-industrialist wing for control of the party. Gaining temporary ascendancy in 1882, the Harris-planter wing infuriated the industrialist faction by repudiating some of the state’s fraudulent bonds and by establishing a commission to regulate railroads. The policy nearly split the party.<sup>57</sup>

There was comparable discord among Redeemers of other states. In Texas, for example, Congressman (later Senator) John H. Reagan, former Postmaster General of the Confederacy and his agrarian lieutenants, who fought for state and Federal railroad regulation, offer some contrast to the dominant element of Texas Redeemers. As a rule, however, the planter and industrialist Redeemers were able to compose their differences amicably and rule together.

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