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### A Little Tragedy of the State's Dark Days.

Messrs. Editors: Many strange events occurred in North Carolina in the early '60's, as well as in every other State that espoused the cause of the South. These events, though of startling character, were put behind us for the time, we had such a load to carry—to support our families and pay the enormous taxes. It is true whatever crops we raised brought big prices, but we had to pay a tax of fifteen dollars on every bale of cotton we raised. Every bushel of corn we put in our cribs, or meat we put in our smoke-houses, was taxed to the utmost limit.

But taxation is not our theme at present, but to tell some things that happened just after the war for Southern Independence. To bring to mind some things that it would have been better had they never occurred; but such is history, and this dark period of our South should never be forgotten, nor who caused it.

In the Piedmont section of North Carolina soon after the close of the War Between the States, there lived a young and beautiful girl by the name—we will call her—Nan Heliotrope. She was one upon whom nature had been lavish with her most excellent gifts beauty and graceful manners. She was possessed of a cultured mind for the times in which she lived, and a most superb figure. If she had lived and flourished thirty years later, when North Carolina had gained her former position, when our schools and colleges had reached their noonday radiance and splendor, her position in society would have been one of envy indeed.

But she came along when political gloom hung as a heavy cloud upon our country. When not a public school was taught in our State for seven years. Then our State University was captured by the camp-followers of a conquering army; Southern professors whom the people loved and respected were most summarily ejected from their seats and their places filled by those who gloried in our discomfiture. This was a heavy blow upon our University, as well as upon our State. Our people were hard pressed to feed and clothe themselves; taxes were enormously heavy; every bale of cotton the farmer raised was taxed three cents per pound, and everything else in like proportion. No wonder the mind was left with poor culture and the moral virtues were grossly neglected.

Some of our people are opposed to looking backward at the horrible times that immediately succeeded the close of the four years' war. Society was badly disorganized and demoralized in every respect. Honesty, morality and virtue were not to be compared with what we were accustomed to before our system of morals were tainted by the coming amongst us of the unclean birds that followed in the wake of a victorious army. Young women were employed to teach subscription schools. The pay was very poor, but it was better than idleness; and it opened the only door for our children to gain something of an education.

While we are on this subject, lest our young people never learn of the difficulty of getting an education immediately after the war, it is right and proper that I should state there was 150 young men who came out of the war badly crippled—with an arm or a leg missing, or an eye shot out, or otherwise disabled, who were anxious to complete an education begun before they entered the service. But the University soon fell into the hands of those who hated us, and we were at their mercy. Our crippled soldier boys were driven from

the State school, the professors who were loved and revered were made to hunt other employment, and the University was captured by camp-followers who had their little sons, half dozen in number, for students! Halls of learning that were formerly graced by such men as Governors Morehead, Bragg, Graham, and Vance; Senators Wylie P. Mangum, George Badger, Thomas H. Benton, and President James K. Polk—what a spectacle for men and angels to behold! These people who think they are or were the salt of the earth, should now cover their heads with sack-cloth and sit in ashes.

This train of thought has almost led me away from what I intended to recount. But I am not sorry, for I do not want the young people to grow up in ignorance of the history of the ten years succeeding the surrender. Thirty-five years ago Miss Heliotrope was engaged to teach a neighborhood school, and she was frequently visited by a young man, who was too young to be a soldier for the Southern army; he had just attained the age that gave him the idea that he knew it all; he made love to her, professed undying devotion, and made promises that he never intended to keep; ruined her prospects for life, made his escape to Texas and made no arrangements for the unhappy woman. In the course of time she returned home on a visit, looking the picture of despair. Her family and her friends treated her with marked kindness and sympathy. Although the facts of her blasted life were known to but few, yet conscious that the most fragrant flower of life had become mildewed, cast a melancholly over her future life. In a few years her general health was restored, and she married a clever, hard-working man. She is now a childless old woman, doing what good she can as she floats down the western stream of life.

There is a peculiar—though melancholly—sublimity in beholding the evening shadows of a life that has been marred in the early days of joyous youth, through the influence of the serpent that beguiled the mother of us all. Let us look back a little more than thirty years and the country was rife—or a small section—with the question: "What has become of the waif that was expected, or who had it in charge?" We only know that in 19— he was pointed out by Dr. — as the lost boy of the thirty odd years of age. He was as fine a looking specimen of humanity as you would see in a day's walk on our crowded thoroughfares. He was a lineman, in the employ of the Great Western Union. He was not given to much talk, but no one could excel him in climbing a telegraph pole. He knew naught of ancestry or parentage, and it is more than probable he never will.

He is not the only one who has passed through life without knowing his parentage. Two, at least, of those who were strangers to their parents have held the highest positions on earth. Queer things happen around us when we are not looking; but few people take time to consider the novelties of nature.

J. B. ALEXANDER, M. D.  
Mecklenburg Co., N. C.

### Cotton in Cuba.

Four bales of cotton weighing seventy-five pounds each, which arrived in New York from Cuba a few days ago, represent samples from the crop raised on the Island, writes the Washington correspondent of The Progressive Farmer. Two years ago when cotton prices went kiting, attempts were made in various parts of Cuba to start cotton growing on a scale sufficiently to be competitive. Although not altogether successful,

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