# THE PIONEER

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Captain Ellison Adger Smyth
October, 1934

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# THE PIONEER

By

William Plumer Jacobs

Author of

Problems of the Cotton Manufacturer
in South Carolina

The Truth About the Cotton Mills

First Printing, June, 1935
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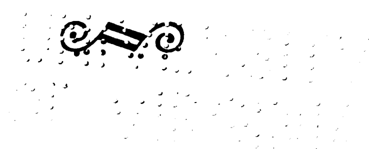

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# DEDICATION

To the memory of that faithful pioneer in the field of human emotions, my grandfather

**Rev. William Plumer Jacobs, D.D., LL.D**

March 15, 1842—September 10, 1917

Founder of Thornwell Orphanage
Founder of Presbyterian College

This volume is affectionately dedicated

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"What doth the Lord require of thee,
But to do justly, and to love mercy,
And to walk humbly with thy God?"
—Micah, The Prophet.

When asked to state his philosophy of life, Captain Smyth quoted the above passage from the Scriptures as the simple yet full statement of the emotions which actuated his efforts. It is here quoted as a frontispiece not only because it is a complete and sound philosophy, but because it is such a beautiful and fitting introduction to a study of the pioneering spirit.

The Author.

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# *Introduction*

This volume is dedicated to the pioneering spirit, and is intended to magnify the value of individual initiative and laud its effect upon history.

It is merely incidental that the story is largely based upon the life of an individual, Captain Ellison Adger Smyth. In his interesting life, however, is found such a perfect example of the constructive influence of a pioneer that the story of his life is woven into each phase of the subject.

Such a circumstance is unusual. A modest and humble man like Captain Smyth shrinks inherently from anything which seems to be personal praise. Biographies are seldom written during the life of a subject.

It was only after much persuasion by the author that Captain Smyth reluctantly gave his consent to the use of his life as the basis of this study.

The Captain not only had nothing to do with the author's determination to present this story to the public, but he actually withheld sanction and refused to be used as an example until it was explained to him that this effort would not be a true biography, but rather the promulgation of an ideal in which his life will appear only as an illustration. It is only the story of his life that he has loaned. He is not interested in the writing, the financing or the publishing of the volume.

Were this an autobiography the Captain would unquestionably delete all commendatory statements. Were this effort undertaken upon his sponsorship he would steadfastly refuse to allow his life's work to be so dissected, and he would disown all accomplishments.

The most difficult problem of the author, therefore, in writing this volume was not in finding the inspiration and material for the book but rather in securing the consent for its use.

The consent was given with great reluctance, and only after it was explained that the public has a right to the inspiration which actuates serviceable lives, and that the story will be illustrated with the lives of other prominent pioneers who made equally important contributions to the march of industrial progress.

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## *Chapter One*

In the natural evolution of political thought, we, a democratic people, have reached that state of skepticism in which no custom, no ideal, no tradition, is immune from taint and suspicion.

Recognized political processes of the past are torn apart. Sacred traditions are thrown into the discard. Ideals, once venerated, are torn down and supplanted with the thought of a new day. Objectives which seemed absolutely essential are forgotten in the light of mass determination. Lives of our forefathers are discredited. The sacred memories of national idols have been ruthlessly thrown aside. The spirit of the gossiping days of the public square and the guillotine of the French Revolution has returned, and we as a nation applaud as each honored head is bowed before the political knife.

Life has become one investigation after another. Each hour of the day brings sordid suspicion of the infidelity of a faithful public servant, or the rascality of some once honored prince of finance, commerce and industry.

It is the order of a new day, and each kill whips us into new frenzy for the blood of the next victim. One by one the heroes of the past are hurtled into oblivion. One by one we cast off the conventional cloaks of tradition and embrace the unknown.

The individualist of the past is lost in the shuffle of a new deal. It is the day of mass thought, mass action and mass objectives. As expressed by Thornwell Jacobs in his "Not Knowing Whither He Went"—"It is more largely a matter of the government cycle; individualization, organization, standardization, regimentation, ossification, and then explosion into little individual bits again."

"The present scene," he continued, "reveals the people of America being taxed to death to support myriads of parasites, all as a consequence of the colossal blunder of murdering millions of our fellowmen and allowing our treasure houses and whole credit system to be robbed and raped in order to do it. With our resources destroyed, hunger has been added to avarice. International carnivores have become domestic cannibals. The confiscation of private property and its redistribution to organized blocs of voters has be-

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gun. The tyranny of government is well on its way. The liberties of the people are being taken away. Those who created the wealth are being destroyed. That which created the wealth is also being destroyed. Once started, this process never stops until it reaches the logical end. After each temporary reform, the harpies return. Those who oppose them are removed by fair means or foul. Eventually there will come the death of all enthusiastic, creative initiative. The steps are: first the support, then the control, and then the ownership of all business by government. This is communism, and we are not honest enough to conduct a communism."

"And now that we have lost our money we find ourselves without the things that are more important, and we shall have to begin all over again and start where our ancestors started, upon the general principle that the only important thing in any nation is the personal character of its citizens. Old fashioned virtue and old fashioned honesty and old fashioned honor—these are the very things that we have sold for cash. Until we recover these, let us cease our babbling about the moral leadership of the world."

Whither are we headed? No one knows; no one dares foretell. We only know that there must be a Utopia somewhere in the offing; a happy land where all theories blend; where glory is found without the burdensome necessity of privation, self-sacrifice and hard work.

Upon the toilers of the past we look with disdain, and pity their short-sightedness which forced them to take the long and tedious way around. Upon the leaders of the years gone by we cast a suspicious glance and charge them with greed, avariciousness and dishonesty.

We look upon ingenuity as untrustworthy. We proclaim ambition the height of folly. We call individuality selfishness. We decree that solidarity is unscrupulous. We decry energy, discredit thrift, ridicule accumulation and damn wealth to "everlasting perdition." Such is our national temperament that we betray the very pioneering spirit which has brought us to our present state of civilization. All this we do in the passionate heat of temporary emergency.

King Public has spoken and he is the emancipator of a new thought. Little does it matter that ambition is discouraged, for the people are hungry. It is of small consequence that initiative is de-

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stroyed, for there is still the public till and it is open. We cannot be concerned with the destruction of the precious pioneering leadership of the past, for we have altered our journey and changed our goal. We are on our way, though God alone knows where we are headed. So far have we wandered from the path of fundamental democracy that one wonders whether we shall ever find the road again, or whether it will again be worth finding.

Recovery seems to be hidden beyond the apparently necessary, and always dangerous element, reform. Reform is only a step removed from revolution; and who knows what revolution will bring? These three R's of political changes may leave scars upon the national consciousness of a liberty-loving people which will require generations to heal. In spite of our sacred tenets of the past, and regardless of what may be sincere intentions of our political leaders of the day, we are, in the face of a temporary emergency, abandoning fundamentals, and launching out into a deep from which our simon-pure democracy may never again emerge.

It would be ideal if this volume could dispassionately weigh the strength and the weakness of conflicting thought and reach unbiased conclusions based upon fundamentals. Such a process, however, is hardly to be expected, for the human brain does not so function. Should this volume appear to lean in one direction or another, it is because of the pardonable zeal to magnify the lives of those whose contributions to human progress have been so constructive as to cause enthusiasm.

Possibly if this volume can bring us all a bit closer to the fundamentals of progress, if it can impress upon our memories a few of the precious old landmarks upon which our present civilization has been built, it will have contributed something toward the evolution of thought of the day.

We should not make the mistake of assuming that the masses do not think. We should not under-estimate the value of public opinion as a balance wheel. The rising tides of public thought are essentially a part of the human progress. Political uprisings are perfectly natural. They come and go in cycles which are necessary in holding the ground which mankind has gained.

When, however, public thought is in the heat of passion it is too

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much inclined to forget fundamentals; too likely to overlook accomplishments of the past; too prone to displace zeal with indignation, and progress with revolution.

In periods of emergency and of transition it is well for mankind to consider the future in the light of the past. There is no better guide. Nor is there ever a condition experienced which has not in some manner faced mankind before. The economic history of the world can produce a counterpart for practically every human emotion and experience with which we are faced today.

We have emerged from every depression, every period of privation, purged, quickened and better fitted to compete with the future. We have emerged, however, not because of revolutionary changes in the mode of living, but rather in spite of such changes. We have fought our way through the maze; and with our feet on the ground, firmly planted on fundamentals, we have overcome the temporary set-backs with which the world has been faced. We have overcome them all, and the centuries have witnessed an ever-progressive world improvement; a never-failing march of civilization.

Our accomplishments and ultimate stabilization after each period of emergency have been the result, not of mass thinking, but of the constructive leadership of political, financial and industrial pioneers who have led us out "of the house of bondage and out of the land of Egypt."

The process of business evolution has involved through the centuries alternate steps which we have appropriately called periods of prosperity and depression. There always arises a multiplicity of explanations of the causes of such periods. Fundamentally the explanation is simple: Prosperity is a term best used to designate more business activity, more transactions, more production, more payrolls, more sales, more consumption. Business transactions become more plentiful as they become more profitable, and business is active in ratio to available capital to support it. The greater the extension of business activity, the greater the need of capital to support it.

There invariably comes a time, however, in periods of extreme business activity when supporting capital becomes skeptical. Loans based upon a radically advancing business trend face an ever-increasing possibility of risk, and subsequently a decreasing margin of

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safety. Invariably prosperity at its height is checked by the withdrawal of skeptical capital. Speculation, after a period of riotous debauchery, ceases; and first cautiously, then later in panic, capital attempts to withdraw and seek safer ground. The effect is always the same—loss of confidence, skepticism, fear. Frequently capital, in rapid retreat, attempts to hide in any pocket where safety seems possible. Conservatism is at a premium. Business is left in the lurch—the smaller firms first, the larger and better financed, later. Public savings are lost; public earnings are reduced, and public indignation reaches unbelievable heights, frequently in unrestrained fury, resulting in the ruthless overthrowing of many of the most valuable assets. The wave of public skepticism evolves itself into a perfectly natural, though usually unnecessary and futile effort at revolutionary changes—changes first in the standards of public acceptance and later changes in governmental policies and procedure. As the changes become more revolutionary in scope and aspect, capital becomes more frightened, often seeking other fields in foreign countries for safety. The more frequent the revolutionary changes and the more radical the departures from established democratic principles, the more rapid and the more complete is the flight of capital, and the more hopeless becomes the future of business.

Thus it is that superficial efforts at recovery serve to delay rather than hasten a return to normal conditions. The repairing of public confidence, though confidence is an intangible element, is nevertheless dependent upon very tangible and practical steps. The time-honored rules of the past alone will suffice. Revolutionary theories are usually superfluous, useless and harmful.

However, just as capital becomes frightened at the height of speculation, it becomes steadily more confident as it realizes that business has "hit rock bottom" at the trough of the depression. As capital becomes more confident, it slowly, cautiously, but surely comes to the aid of business and begins again the building of a new period of prosperity.

Thus it is that in each instance of prosperity or adversity, capital is fundamentally the key to the situation. It is, always has been, and always will be largely responsible for the welfare of the masses.

The flight of capital when frightened is a natural one, as is its return. What the capitalist does with his invested funds, all of us

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would do under similar circumstances, and always will—laws to the contrary notwithstanding; for "self-preservation is the first law of nature." There can be no blame whatever attached to the honest effort of the capitalist to protect his own, and no one can justifiably question the right of the capitalist to expect a reasonable return for his invested funds when employed in the hazardous process of financing prosperity. The only fundamental difference between the capitalist and the working classes is a difference of productive and accumulative capacity. History is filled with instances where the poor become rich and the lowly become mighty. The worker is more inclined toward the capitalistic viewpoint the wealthier he becomes.

This simple fundamental picture is painted here to stress the futility of panic-stricken, radical steps in periods of adversity; to emphasize the dangers which lurk in recovery by revolution; and most important of all, to point to the vitally important part played by the often discredited capitalist and industrialist, the pioneer who almost alone must force the tide of returning prosperity.

He is more able, and will be more successful in producing normal conditions than the government or the public. His safety and his profits are dependent upon more sound business transactions, more payrolls, more production, more consumption; in short, more public prosperity.

To decry the capitalist, the industrial leader, in periods of adversity, is to forget fundamentals and hide one's head in the sand. To attempt to solve public problems at his expense, or to his injury, is to "kill the goose that laid the golden egg."

Steps which attempt the redistribution of wealth by superficial legislative means are but unsound theories which will pass in the night, but which in attempted application can only injure the working classes whose welfare always has, and always will be, commensurate with the prosperity and latitude of action of the pioneers in the fields of finance and industry. As capital suffers, so suffer the people. According to the great Nazarene, "The poor we have always with us." Wealth redistributed merely seeks new pioneers. It accumulates in the pockets of the more successful. The accumulation of wealth is both a natural and essential step of progress.

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We can well afford, therefore, in this volume to turn aside for a moment from our impetuous, unrestrained effort at condemnation, and consider fundamentals. We can well afford to apply the laws of common sense and of supply and demand. We can well afford to measure the efforts of our pioneers of the past and attempt to utilize the secrets of their successful battles of the past in overcoming depression and privation.

Let us thoughtfully measure our untried theories of the day with our practical accomplishments of the past. Let us forget the short cuts and Utopian bubbles and found our progress upon the only proven road of success—the journey which is based upon hard work, privation, a reasonable reward for well-doing, and common sense. Let us endeavor above all else to regain, not a superficial temporary prosperity, but rather a fundamental one, which can last, at least as long as the laws of nature will permit.

"There is nothing which succeeds like success." By the same token we can, in our efforts at prosperity, do no better than emulate the examples, and follow the motivating principles of those who have succeeded—our pioneers of yesterday.

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## *Chapter Two*

There is little difference between the worker and the capitalist, between the employer and the employed.

The essential Democratic principle was never better stated than by Abraham Lincoln, who said: "Twenty-five years ago I was a hired laborer. The hired laborer of yesterday labors on his own account today, and will hire others to labor for him tomorrow. Advancement—improvement in conditions—is the order of things in a society of equals."

In the beginning man is a hired worker, then a dreamer, and ultimately if possessed with initiative he becomes in turn an idealist, an individualist, a pioneer, a leader, a capitalist and a philanthropist.

The only difference between the communist and the capitalist is capital. When the socialist becomes rich he begins to believe in the protection of property. When the capitalist becomes poor he vents his spleen upon all who are fortunate enough to remain wealthy.

The creation and development of a builder is a normal process. It is one which follows a logical schedule so far as human emotion and capacity permit.

When the great sage of Monticello declared that all men are born equal he did not mean that the world owes the same reward to each individual alike. Rather he meant, as ably expressed by Hart in his "National Ideals," that "Modern conditions make it difficult to maintain the American ideal of equality. First, because the only real equality is that of slaves under a master, of subjects under an Oriental despot; it is freedom which brings inequality, by giving the best endowed an opportunity to rise above their fellows."

Some individuals have the capacity to rise higher than others. Some have the urge to accept more responsibilities than others. Some are unable to care for themselves, whereas others are capable of caring not only for themselves but for the welfare of hundreds of thousands of others as well.

The fundamental difference between the two is not measured so much by a difference in capital or in possessions, as it is by the difference in ambition, in urge, in energy, in ideals, and in the willingness and ability to accept greater responsibilities. In short, the difference is in emotion.

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All men have limitations. As an individual, one may accomplish more than another; but the limitations of personal accomplishment are severe. Beyond a certain limit no man can go in himself. Beyond a certain step he must depend upon his ability to induce others to help carry his load. There is a huge difference between personal efficiency and the ability to induce others to work profitably. Andrew Carnegie once said that the success of a man is measured not so much by his personal ability as by his ability to induce others to work, and become personally efficient.

And so with the industrial pioneer, his success is measured by his knowledge of how to work; his capacity to dream and plan for the future; his determination to follow lofty ideals; his self reliant individuality, his vision, his qualities of leadership, his philanthropic spirit. Possessing all these qualifications, he may succeed and ultimately become a capitalist. With most men capitalism is reached only after heart-breaking, soul-testing privations and abounding energy. With most men wealth comes only by bringing wealth (or a livelihood) simultaneously to thousands of others. No business transaction is so successful, so profitable and so lasting as the one which is profitable to all concerned.

The elements of success and capitalism, which on the surface appear to be selfish, are frequently in reality not selfishness at all, but extreme unselfishness. There is very little difference between a provident nature, selfishness and ambition; and were it not for all three we should have little success and no philanthropy. The urge for self-improvement leads directly into stewardship, and that in turn into benefaction. When one improves his own position, he immediately becomes provident. Were it not for the accumulations of wealth, labor could not be employed; factories could not be built.

Hart, in "National Ideals" says: "One of the American ideals is that a man may choose his own calling. The next ideal is that of private possessions; and in few countries is there a stronger feeling of sanctity of property than in this. There is admiration for the man who has possessions."

No great movement or trend ever succeeded, no great ideal or objective has ever been reached, except upon the basis of personal gain, and through the motivation of selfishness, self improvement,

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accumulation, the profit motive, or using a still better term, through individuality or individual initiative.

The profit motive has been the basis of the wars which have made history and changed the face of the globe. It has been directly behind the progress of science, education and religion. It has discovered new lands, brought new ideas to backward races, and has established our present civilization. The profit motive, the individual initiative, or as Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick better terms it, "the discontent" (the dissatisfaction with the present) of the pioneers of history has been directly responsible for what we have, what we are, and what we hope to be. The man who is so dissatisfied with his position in life that he is filled with an urge to improve himself and his environment, in so doing frequently becomes a benefactor of mankind.

Captain Ellison Adger Smyth, the pioneer, whose life is the inspiration of this volume, followed in his training and development all the usual evolutionary steps through which the pioneer passes.

In the beginning he was himself a worker, a junior clerk in a hardware establishment. He became a dreamer, for he saw more lucrative fields afar. He was a practical idealist, for he became dissatisfied with his own environment and planned a loftier future. He was essentially an individualist. He inherited the trait, and developed it. He became a leader through the exigencies of a period which was crying for young leadership. It was perfectly natural, possessed as he was with such characteristics, and such a background, for him to become a pioneer. His pioneering spirit and his business sagacity brought him prosperity, and he became a capitalist. Lastly—and perhaps it was his principal ideal after all—he became a philanthropist, and brought employment and higher standards of living to hundreds of thousands.

Like Columbus, he dreamed of an opportunity. Like Calhoun, he pictured a better citizenship, and a better state. Like Jefferson and Hamilton, he was an individualist. Like Washington and Lee, he was a born leader of men. So that in time he joined the ranks of Boone, Marquette, George Rogers Clark, Meriwether Lewis, Livingston, Peary, the Wright brothers, Fulton, and Whitney as a successful pioneer, and took his place among the foremost employers and philanthropists of his time.

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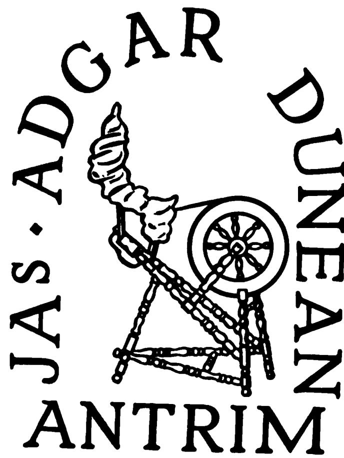


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## *Chapter Three*

Life has the peculiar habit of equalization. Where there is a void today there is plenty tomorrow. Failure today is displaced with tomorrow's success. The conservatism of the present moment will lead to greater progress in the future. Today we are in the throes of despondency, only to be enjoying a seat at the pinnacle of prosperity on the morrow.

Just as nature, through its alternating droughts and floods, manages to supply a proper amount of moisture to satisfy the world's needs, just so history has a habit of developing men whose intuitions seem to better fit them to fill the needs of historic emergencies.

Man cannot foretell what the morrow will bring. No one in the nineteenth century could accurately foresee the tremendous developments that were to come in the elaborate machine age of the twentieth century. Yet, back in the nineteenth century there was developing the need for men whose capabilities fitted them to better serve a generation which would move in circumstances totally different from any that had gone theretofore.

While men were plodding the pathways of the forests, they were opening the way for the trails, later the highways, and still later the railroads, which were to follow. These same men were undergoing the hardships necessary to enable them to train their progeny for the handling of problems far more complicated than they themselves would experience. Our forefathers, immediately following the War Between the States, had their metal tested in the crucible of life, and their wills thus hardened during periods of abnormal poverty and hardships, that their progeny might be trained to take the leadership in the greatest industrial development that the nation has ever known.

The period from 1830 to 1860 was a period in the history of America and particularly of the South, during which time giants were developed—men and women who were destined to prove their ability to lead the human race on to earn and enjoy standards of living which the world had not known and could not anticipate. And indeed giants were necessary for this task, for the modern citizens of the new nation have experienced cataclysmic changes in the en-

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vironment which has surrounded them during the past forty years. We have been alternately in the depths of despondency and on the heights of prosperity. We have learned to enjoy the luxuries of life, only to have to unlearn within a short span of time. It has been a period that has demanded the utmost patience, lasting perseverance, unbounded faith, and a super-abundance of wisdom.

We have just passed through a period that was perfectly suited to the idealist, but even more perfectly suited to the practical idealist, to the man with vision and with courage to follow his vision. In the rise of the new nation to world power, young men and women have been beckoned on to great accomplishments; and at the same time abundant failures have pointed the finger of caution that progress based upon stability can never suffer the loss of ground.

Thus it was that during the past century moral and intellectual giants have been developed as a natural product of the advance of the human race—giants who have been ably suited to lead us through our fits of despondency, and into a promised land.

It is the life of one of these giants—perhaps the foremost in the field of southern industry—which actuates this volume, for Captain Ellison Adger Smyth was unquestionably from his birth destined to be a man of the hour—born to be a leader in a period of transition of industry from hand to machine. He was one of the outstanding contributions of old Charleston toward the development of the human race.

Born in a period when human energy meant everything, and when man's value was measured by the labor of his hands, he, as much as any other individual in America—perhaps more—led an agriculturally-minded people to learn how to make two hands do the work of a hundred, and simultaneously how to supply gainful employment for each of the hundred hands.

The purpose of this volume is the analysis of the life of this son of destiny who has played such an important part in molding the life of the present generation. His ingenuity, his wisdom, his self confidence, his faith, his hope, his big-heartedness, and his broad vision, which became the foundation for the development of a great industry, herein give us the basis of the study of "The Pioneer."

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## *Chapter Four*

For the purpose of this volume it is well for us to turn back and for a moment have a glimpse at the family and community life which existed around the middle of the nineteenth century. Perhaps we might select a day in the year 1863, when young Ellison Adger Smyth, at the age of fifteen, stood on Charleston battery watching the attack on Fort Sumter, and before that the attack of the "Star of the West," a steamer which tried to land supplies at Fort Sumter for the garrison. The home of young Smyth's father was only a half block from the battery, and was twice struck by shells during the bombardment of the city in 1863.

Or, perhaps, if we prefer a less turbulent period for a better study of the standards of living enjoyed during the period of the development of industrial giants, we should turn to the years before the War Between the States, when in young Smyth's home city of Charleston, as elsewhere, life was most agreeable and pleasant, and prosperity was enjoyed. True, there were no electric lights, no motion pictures, no running water, no sewerage, no paved streets (except those that had been covered with cobble stones), no street cars.

Compared even with our periods of depression during the years 1932, '33 and '34, the people of those days were relatively poor, but happy and contented. The labor of a man's hands was limited, as was the compensation therefor. One was an individualist by nature, and by necessity. Self-reliance and resourcefulness were two of the prime requisites which by intuition, as well as by the hard knocks of life, were instilled into the hearts of the younger generation of that time.

Picture, if you will, the early days of young Ellison Adger Smyth, in a period in which the manufacturer was turning from the old hand loom to the newly-developed machine, which did the work of many. Picture a time when electricity was unknown; when industrialists were groping, with perhaps the inner feeling that just ahead lay gigantic developments and startling discoveries which would revolutionize their activities. Picture a world in which agriculture, merchandising and shipping filled the lives of the business men of the day; when the secret of quantity production was yet to be

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learned, when the younger generation were trained in the hard school of experience; when news traveled slowly; when man seldom got an accurate picture of the conditions beyond his own immediate environment; when business was completely surrounded with mystery; when the world needed young men who possessed the pioneering spirit, and men who could look forward into the future with confidence.

Picture the time when correspondence, bookkeeping and other clerical details represented laborious methods and painstaking care. Picture the time when the securing, the execution and the delivery of an order of merchandise at a distance involved not days, but months, and sometimes years. Picture the time when there were no telephones, no telegraph, no wireless, no radio, and communication was slow and uncertain. Picture a time when the city of Charleston was the metropolis of the South, led all other southern ports in shipping, and was the center of a prosperous agricultural region. Picture a time when its ships were almost the only sure means of communication between the South and the outer world. Picture, in such a period, the innumerable hardships which faced the younger generation, the almost insurmountable difficulties; and you can better appreciate the spirit of the pioneers who were born and trained in that period, can better understand how natural it was for them to be capable of assuming the leadership through the years of rapid transition, which followed.

By the study of such a picture you can better understand how our pioneers of today were providentially born and reared for the responsibilities which were later thrust upon them.

Before the war, young Smyth knew very little about the meagre industry which existed in America at that time. He only knew that Charleston was very prosperous and wealthy. It was one of the principal ports of the Atlantic Coast. Immediately following the War Between the States, all industry, as well as agriculture and commerce, and much of shipping, was at a dead standstill. Nothing was developed; nothing was being done. The only development in the vicinity of Charleston, worth the name at the time, was found in the mining of the phosphate rocks and the early development of the fertilizer works.

At the time when young Smyth became of age, as he did during

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the Reconstruction period, in the midst of its turmoil and strife and bitter misunderstandings which resulted, it took a man of vision and courage to thoroughly appreciate the natural resources of his country, and to anticipate the development of such resources; but young Smyth was a man of vision. He appreciated the South's greatest assets. He valued the delightful climate of the Piedmont plateau where the oak trees grew. He saw in such equable climate exceptional opportunities for industrial development and health and life. He saw the possibility of a great abundance of water power. He saw the masses of the people, who were then toiling on the farms, in competition with the colored race but eager for the advancement of their social condition, and who were thus capable of developing into a class of labor profitable both to themselves and to those about them, capable of earning and enjoying higher standards of living, capable of forming the backbone of gigantic manufacturing enterprises.

He visualized great cotton mill villages, with their schools, their churches, their higher standards of civilization; and he visualized the tremendous improvement in the health and intelligence of the white race.

It takes vision in darkest periods to see the silver lining of a cloud, to adequately measure and appreciate the enormous potentialities of latent assets; and young Smyth had this vision.

However, pioneers are not made over night. Young men may have vision, but in a restricted environment their vision may be clouded by lack of practical knowledge and experience; and Ellison Adger Smyth had this very severe handicap from the beginning, for his early training was in the field of commerce rather than in industry. He had no practical knowledge of manufacturing, even of his day; nor did many other young men of his early acquaintance have such a privilege. It was a great hindrance to him in furthering his ideals.

The enterprising young men of his day found it practically impossible, with the lack of knowledge of manufacturing, to secure adequate capital for, and encouragement in, the development of manufacturing enterprises. And in spite of the latent possibilities of the unskilled help of the South, they were still unskilled, and utterly lacking in experience of manufacturing. Thus both management

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and workers had to learn slowly by experience, by the most laborious methods, in spite of many set-backs and handicaps. But it is to their everlasting credit that they learned. They were filled with a determination to better themselves; filled with a desire to learn; and learn they did.

Immediately following the War Between the States, capital was extremely shy, when indeed there was any capital left. No one had confidence enough in manufacturing; no one knew enough about manufacturing to be willing to invest money in an experimental business, and the embryo pioneer was ever troubled with the subconscious feeling that he was taking great risks, both for others and for himself.

In young Smyth's own case, reared as he was in a city of limited area, where he was bound in on every side but one by water; where real estate was comparatively high in price, and far removed from areas that were better suited for industrial development, he found great difficulty, even after securing financial support, in removing the local capital of Charleston to other areas. In his day the financing of a cotton mill was close akin to the grub-staking of a miner. He saw great possibilities ahead, but he also was forced to undergo great risks and face great uncertainty, and the possibility of the loss of his entire estate. Young Smyth naturally faced the problem of proving to the good people of Charleston that there were too many difficulties to overcome in the development of industry in the city of Charleston, but that still they should invest in spite of the fact that their investment would be used for the development of enterprise that would give employment to others, and would develop industry elsewhere than at home.

It required great faith for young Smyth to reach the determination that his greatest field of activity was in the field of industry; that he must strike out on his own, at a distance, in an effort to reach his ideal. But he had faith in the proposition which he was considering. He had faith in himself that he, with ample funds provided, could carry through to a successful ending the experiment considered. This same faith followed him through his entire life, and encouraged him to reach out continuously, and each year's experience added confidence to his faith and a more definite form of assurance. But Ellison Adger Smyth had more than faith. He had an abun-

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dance of the attributes which he in later life stated he would like to see in his progeny; that is, a high sense of personal honor; regard for any contracts entered into; consideration for the feelings of others; generosity; firmness in dealing with so-called charitable objects; loyalty to his church, and a very definite independence of judgment.

These attributes he naturally possessed as a result of the finest characteristics of the days of his childhood, for the southern gentleman of his early days possessed the highest sense of personal honor; a lofty regard for and devoted protection of womankind; extreme courtesy and dignity in association with other men; due consideration for all men in all matters.

Young Smyth's day was a day of practical idealism. The pioneers before him had blazed the trail. Their rewards were practically negligible from a monetary standpoint, but they had paved the way, that pioneering in the latter part of the nineteenth century and in the twentieth century might be undertaken nearer at home, and might be transferred from the field of exploration to the field of industry and commerce.

Thus the problems of this pioneer were not greater, but instead perhaps simpler than the problems of the pioneers who opened our vast forests in the early stages of the new Republic. It was a different type of pioneering which lured the youth of Ellison Adger Smyth's day. There were few lands left to discover or conquer, but many lands left to develop. There were few untouched sources of fabulous wealth in the offing, but there were huge possibilities of a sober, conservative type of development, which promised not exorbitant, but substantial and permanent reward.

The problem facing the young pioneer of his day was not so much that of launching out into the dark and the deep as it was in a careful analysis of the numerous potentialities before him, and in the selection of the territory and opportunity which seemed to offer greatest possibility of reward for industrial activity.

This in itself had serious consequences for young Smyth. In his day it was unthinkable to develop industry at a great distance from the source of fuel, and Charleston was thus handicapped. He recognized in the very nature of the people of Charleston a handicap in the development of industry, which would be difficult to overcome.

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He saw great potentialities in the uniform climate of the Piedmont region, which was nearer the home of the potential workers of greatest energetic possibilities. He recognized the necessity of the development of the industry of the future in the proximity of rapidly-flowing streams, where it would be practicable to harness the water to do the will of man.

In the early years, as a Charlestonian, it was too much to expect him to anticipate the gigantic hydro-electric possibilities of the Piedmont region; but later in the development of electrical energy he did anticipate such potentialities, and electricity became one of his greatest aids in the field of industrial pioneering.

And so it was that in such an environment Ellison Adger Smyth began a career which earned for him ultimately the right to be called one of the South's greatest pioneers in the field of textile manufacturing, as perhaps better expressed, September 1921, in the publication *Commerce and Finance* of New York:

"If a vote should be taken as to the man best entitled to be denominated as Dean of Southern Cotton Manufacturers, the honor probably would fall to Ellison Adger Smyth (then) president of the Pelzer Manufacturing Company at Pelzer, S. C. The textile industry that has made such a busy industrial center of the Atlantic Seaboard state, is conducted largely by relatively young men—men of the New South, as Grady would have described it. Mr. Smyth is a veteran in this calling. He is one of the few remaining links between the Old and the New South; and although he is 72 years of age, a striking and dignified figure, he is alert and active as many a business man in comfortable middle age."

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## *Chapter Five*

The early life of Ellison Adger Smyth had little connection with industry. He was born in Charleston, S. C., on October 26, 1847, the son of Rev. Thomas Smyth and Margaret M. (Adger) Smyth. The great-grandfather ancestor of Ellison Adger Smyth was William Ellison, who came to America from County Antrim, Ireland, in 1741. Another great-grandfather, Robert Ellison, was a major in the Continental Army, and later a state senator and one of the founders of the Mt. Zion Society, afterwards merged with South Carolina College, now the University of South Carolina. Ellison Adger Smyth's grandfather, James Adger, was a merchant and banker in Charleston. Ellison Adger Smyth was educated in the private schools in Charleston, and later at the South Carolina Military Academy, and entered the Confederate Army in 1864 at the age of sixteen and remained in the army until the surrender of General Johnston in 1865. In the Confederate Army he was under Johnston, stationed on the coast, but was transferred in November, 1864 from the 43rd S. C. Volunteers to Cadet Corps. He was in the state troops at the end of the War and never surrendered. The Cadet Corps claim to have been the first that entered war and they were the last to stop, and they never surrendered.

Ellison Adger Smyth, the youngest son of Thomas Smyth, entered the field of business upon leaving the army in 1865, and was employed as junior clerk in the wholesale establishment of J. E. Adger and Company, of Charleston.

His two older brothers became prominent and successful in the fields of business and profession.

The eldest, James Adger Smyth, born 1836, became a successful cotton merchant, and was a partner in the prominent concern, Smyth and Adger. He graduated as a first-honor man at Charleston College. Later he was elected mayor of Charleston and served eight years.

As mayor he was instrumental in bringing the Navy Yard to Charleston. He served as Grand Master of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of South Carolina for two terms—an unusual honor. During the War Between the States, he served as quartermaster in the Twenty-fifth South Carolina Volunteers. He died, after a very

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successful career, at the age of 83. He was the father of five children.

The second in age was Augustine Thomas Smyth, who was born in 1841. After attending South Carolina College, now the University of South Carolina, directly from college he entered the Confederate Army and became major of the First Regiment of South Carolina Artillery.

After the war he practiced law and was a member of the law partnership of Smyth, Lee and Frost of Charleston. He served as State Senator for sixteen years, and like his illustrious older brother, served as Grand Master of the Masonic Grand Lodge of South Carolina.

He was a very prominent and successful corporation attorney, but enjoyed the universal distinction of never, while in the Senate, voting on any legislative measure which affected the interests of his clients directly.

He was an ardent lover of horses and cattle, and as a hobby owned and for years developed an extensive stock farm at Pendleton, S. C. He was very active and prominent in church work. He had two sons and three daughters.

He died at the age of seventy.

Perhaps the inspiration which encouraged young Smyth to go into the manufacturing business was to be found in the fact that among his ancestors are found James Adgar of County Antrim, Ireland, who owned and operated a linen mill at Dunean, and Samuel Smyth, who operated a mill at Brandon, near Belfast.

(Elsewhere in this volume appears an interesting reproduction of an imprint of the old hand stamp of the original Dunean mill which was owned by James Adgar of County Antrim, Ireland.)

Young Smyth married Julia Gambrill in 1869. She died in 1927. She was the daughter of Lancelot Gambrill of Baltimore, who later was engaged in the cotton business in Columbus, Ga.

The early years of Ellison Adger Smyth found him engaging in the typical life of a flourishing port city, boating and yachting in the beautiful Charleston Harbor. The water was a source of great relaxation and enjoyment for many years. And in his younger days the nautically-minded boasted of two strong boating clubs in Charleston—one the Palmetto, of which young Smyth became president; the other the Carolina. Shell races, with a crew of four, and

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sculling races, with only one, were frequent; and often the program was interspersed with meets between the yacht clubs of Savannah and those of Charleston.

Life must have been most pleasant to young Smyth as he learned to navigate the thousands of inlets, creeks, and rivers, which are so abundant on the irregular Carolina coast.

One can easily recognize in Captain Smyth of today the far-seeing eye of the pilot and captain, the stern expression of the sea-going man, the upright carriage of a soldier; for even in the eighties Captain Smyth still bears testimony, in his every step and expression, to the fact that his early training was of the sternest and most exacting nature.

Thousands of interesting stories could be told of the experiences of those who are living today, and have gone through the trying period of the Reconstruction. Young Smyth's unique escapades, during the period which embraces South Carolina's darkest hour, are most interesting.

He lived through the Reconstruction days in Charleston; and immediately after the war closed, Charleston was filled with the country negroes, who were, for the first time in their lives, enjoying freedom. It was perfectly natural that the new-found freedom should be accompanied with abuses—abuses unfortunately which brought much disease and suffering upon those who were turned loose on the world, drunk with the idea of freedom, yet incapable of that self-restraint which is so essential to citizenship. Hart, on this subject, ably wrote in his "National Ideals": "As for the negro, for him the forty years after emancipation saw a change of popular ideals by which he lost freedom rather than gained it. He was free to move about, choose employment, make contracts for wages, aspire to his own education; but he was like the blind man recovering his sight, who said:'I see men as trees walking.' Though slavery was gone, a servile race remained."

Small-pox was epidemic in Charleston at the time. Young Smyth had many opportunities to see large numbers of the negro race lying in the streets of Charleston, suffering from small-pox. Later there came Pillsbury as the carpet-bagger Mayor of Charleston, with a police force of negroes, headed by a white chief named Hendricks, a former Confederate officer who had turned radical.

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At that time the entire militia of the state, under radical rule, was composed of negroes. And while the German Rifle Club, a social organization of Charleston, celebrated a "Schutzenfest" each May, and engaged in target practice at a large wooden eagle, young Smyth and his associates, living in the lower part of the city of Charleston—principally below Broad Street—organized the Carolina Rifle Club, ostensibly for the same purpose, but actually for the defense of the white people of the city. It served as the only outlet for the energies of the young men of that section. After the Carolina Rifle Club was organized, young Ellison Adger Smyth was elected as Vice-President, and later, in the spring of 1876, he became Captain of the Washington Artillery Rifle Club, which was organized openly for self defense; and he succeeded in securing a battery of artillery of four guns, two of which are now mounted in front of the Citadel in Charleston, and one other gun, which was, incidentally, the first rifle gun ever made.

There were soon ten rifle clubs in Charleston, and a regimental organization was effected with General James Connor as Colonel, Major T. G. Barker as Lieut. Colonel, and Colonel Sam B. Pickens as Major. Colonel Simonton, later United States Judge, was Chairman of the Democratic Committee in Charleston, and under their orders, Captain Smyth was detailed on several occasions to "take a gun" and visit different points in the low country where joint political meetings, forced by the whites, were being held.

Captain Smyth tells interestingly of one important visit which he and his troopers made to Edisto Island. On this occasion he was in command of three rifle clubs. They made the trip on the steamer St. Helena. It required an all-night journey, and then a tramp inland of three miles, to the place of the meeting. His men, under his specific instructions, left their rifles on the boat, but were all armed with pistols, and were accompanied by a band of music.

The negroes were there in force, and the addresses of the radical leaders—among them Sheriff Bowen and Senator Taft—were of a most inflammatory nature.

With Lieut. R. J. Morris of the Washington Artillery, a war veteran, Captain Smyth skirted the grounds and found the rifles of the negroes stacked a short distance away. During the meeting the feeling was tense, and it was with great difficulty that Captain

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Ellison Adger Smyth, as the Years Advanced, Including a Photograph of His Bride.

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Smyth kept his men restrained. The officers, however, managed to keep the white men solid and together at the gathering, so as to avoid any friction. Augustine T. Smyth, an older brother of Captain Ellison Adger Smyth, was one of the speakers on the conservative side, and he later stated that he did not feel at all easy until all of the young troopers were back on the boat and the boat was under way to Charleston. The mob of negroes, all armed, followed the troops to the boat, yelling and cursing.

The earliest recollection which the Captain's daughter, Mrs. Margaret Smyth McKissick, of Greenville, has of her father was during these turbulent times. She recalls her father leaving the home to join the troops of the Rifle Club. She remembers on that occasion hearing the yelling of the negroes down the street.

On the next day another detachment of rifle clubs was sent up to Cainhoy, where trouble began and white men were killed, and the white men were forced to retreat to their boats.

A little later Captain Smyth was summoned to General Connor's office and was told that two hundred rifles and ammunition were being transferred that day from the South Carolina Railroad depot across town to the depot of the Savannah and Charleston Railroad—a road which at that time did not run into the city of Charleston. It was customary to ferry shipments across to what was then the terminus of the railroad on the St. Andrews side of the Ashley River. Captain Smyth was instructed to visit the Savannah and Charleston depot in Charleston that night by boat, and secure the guns and ammunition. He selected to accompany him six from the Washington Artillery and six men from the Carolina Rifle Club, and they made the trip in the yacht Elinor, owned by Mr. Lawton, a devoted friend to the cause, who kindly gave the use of the boat.

Captain Smyth made an arrangement to store the rifles in an empty warehouse on Adger's Wharf. After some difficulty he and his detachment of men were successful in seizing the goods, the yacht was loaded to the gunnels, and they sailed back around the city of Charleston to Adger's Wharf, where by means of two drays the guns were carried to the warehouse and stored. It was early dawn before the job was completed.

Prior to this time President Grant had outlawed the organization of Rifle Clubs and ordered their dismissal, and it was therefore

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necessary to act during the night. On one occasion a group of young men, under Captain Smyth, took five guns and carried them by dray from the old Armory on Citadel Green to Adger's Wharf, and then re-mounted them. The draymen used in this operation, under cover of night, were white porters from Adger and Company store.

Reference is made to the first rifle cannon ever manufactured. The story of this cannon is most interesting. It was made in 1862 by Mr. Archibald Cameron, head of Cameron and Barkley, machinists of Charleston. The cannon was given by Mr. Cameron to the Confederate government. Later, when Charleston was evacuated, it was spiked, and after the War, at the sale of a lot of abandoned property by the government, the gun was sold at auction and bought by Mr. Cameron, who at the request of Captain Smyth, gave it to him. Captain Smyth then had the rifle cannon mounted on the gun carriage and used on parade, with the four guns that were in active service. When the Washington Artillery in after years was dissolved, as no longer needed, Captain Smyth secured this gun for the Confederate Memorial Hall, and there it stands in Market Hall in Charleston today, with a suitable inscription.

During these turbulent days there were many riots in the city of Charleston. Captain Smyth and his company were active in preserving order, and in defending the white population of the city. It was in one of these riots that young Walter, the son of Captain George H. Walter, was killed. He was a member of Captain Smyth's Rifle Club. His father, Captain Walter, was Captain of one of the Washington Artillery Batteries during the Civil War. The other battery at the time was in Virginia, attached to Hampton's Legion, and was known as Hart's Battery.

The membership in the Washington Artillery Rifle Club was 350 at that time, and they had ample rifles for all, besides the artillery. Stores of rifles were kept in different sections of the city—one in the office of General W. G. DeSaussure, on Broad Street.

In the big riot in November, 1876, Captain Smyth's troops had scattered a negro mob, and had driven the negro police back into the guard house, on the corner of what was then Broad and Meeting Streets, where the postoffice building now stands. But from the roof of the guard house, behind the battlement walls, the colored

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police kept up a constant fire. General H. I. Hunt was in command of the United States Infantry Garrison, then occupying the Citadel building, and he appeared on the ground with his men, who came at double quick. On their arrival firing ceased. Captain Smyth conferred with his partner, Major Moffett, who was Captain of the Sumter Guards, Major R. C. Gilchrist of the Washington Light Infantry and Major E. Willis, as to their best course of procedure. The four of them together went over to General Hunt and told him that they were there preserving the peace with their men, and the General ordered them to take position on his left. As the local troops passed, marching in regular order, in front of the United States troops, they were lustily cheered by the United States troops. General Hunt kept the local troops there until four o'clock the following morning. In the meantime he called in all of the colored policemen and stationed soldiers throughout the city.

This courageous act of the General prevented further bloodshed, but complaint was made against him by the radical Mayor, and as a result, he was recalled from active service.

Captain Smyth reflects with a great deal of satisfaction upon the pleasant friendship which he had with General Hunt and the officers of his regiment, for they were visitors by invitation to the Charleston Club, of which Captain Smyth was a member.

After young Walter was killed, and his body had been taken home, twelve members of Captain Smyth's company, including himself, appeared at the home early the next morning; and when the negro coroner came they were standing on the piazza ready for duty. Since the law required that the coroner summon to jury duty the first twelve men he met, the twelve young members of the Captain's company, including himself, had to be summoned as the jury in this case. The jury naturally reached a verdict, naming three negro policemen whom they saw firing as the guilty ones. The coroner, a negro, named Aaron Logan, refused to receive the verdict; and from that time in November, until March 4, next, when Hayes took office as President, each day at 12 o'clock, with the exception of Sunday, the same jury of twelve men convened in Logan's office and rendered their verdict which he each day likewise refused to receive; and each day the jury would adjourn until the next day.

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The perseverance of these twelve young Charlestonians was an outstanding tribute to the memory of young Walter, and a most positive proof of the determination of the young men of the South of that day—to persevere until justice could be put back into authority, and law and order restored.

The two hundred rifles, which Captain Smyth and his troopers had taken from the Charleston and Savannah depot, had been sent by the radical government in Columbia to a negro regiment at Pocataligo, and of course no mention of the episode ever appeared in the public print; nor did the State Department make any investigation. It was an outstanding accomplishment for the young men of Charleston, and typical of thousands of events which occurred during those turbulent times. This particular episode was referred to as the "rape of the guns" in a series of articles written several years ago by A. R. Williams for the South Carolina newspapers, in which he covered many of the incidents of the Hampton Campaign.

A sequel to this experience is found in the fact that some time later, after Hampton was recognized in South Carolina, Inspector General Moise called upon Captain Smyth to return to the state the guns and ammunition. It was only after great difficulty that Captain Smyth succeeded in collecting about one hundred and ninety of the rifles—but of course no ammunition—and they were all returned to Inspector Moise.

A complete volume, or several volumes, could be written on the experiences of Captain Smyth and his friends in their heroic efforts to restore the government of South Carolina to the intelligent white people. Captain Smyth faithfully, and enthusiastically followed the leadership of his chief, the beloved General Wade Hampton, who, in the severe emergency, restored law and order in South Carolina. General Hampton's brilliant deeds and wonderful accomplishments are already recorded in history, and need not be chronicled here. It is, however, essential in calling attention to the environment which influenced the life of Pioneer Smyth, that a few of the episodes in the military phase of his life be mentioned in this chapter.

Undoubtedly Captain Smyth's military experiences in trying times made him the stern disciplinarian that he is today, and secured for him the outstanding qualities which have marked his many successes in the industrial field. The true pioneer must be a good soldier and a leader of men, and in this respect Captain Smyth's qualifications were outstanding.

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## *Chapter Six*

The earliest pioneers were the explorers. They blazed the trail. Following them others, pioneers to no lesser degree, served humanity by following the trail and improving it. Such was Captain Smyth's commission. He did not discover a new territory. It would be unfair to those who went before him to attribute to Captain Smyth the ingenuity and foresight which were responsible for the first conception of the possibilities of industrial development in the Piedmont region. There were others, no doubt, who had the same conception and the same inspiration. Few others, however, grasped the opportunities as eagerly and as vigorously as did Captain Smyth.

No pioneer will plunge ignorantly into the unknown. Every pioneer is actuated by the experiences or the inspiration of others who have gone before, or who have had the same conception.

Undoubtedly the active life of Captain Smyth was very largely influenced by the accomplishments of others in the field of industrial exploration. Captain Smyth recalls with a great deal of enthusiasm the experiences of Dr. St. Julian Ravenel of Charleston, who in the Captain's early boyhood first called attention to the phosphate rock in South Carolina, and its use for fertilizer purposes. He was a pioneer in his field, as was Colonel Joseph A. Yates, another capitalist in Charleston, who immediately followed with an organization of land companies, mining the land's rock, and in dredging a river for the rock. Mr. Robert Adger, an uncle of Captain Ellison Adger Smyth, organized the Coosaw Mining Company that operated on Coosaw River, paying $1.00 per ton royalty to the state for the privilege.

Incidentally this business was destroyed by Governor Tillman when he became Governor. The Coosaw Company was at the time mining over 100,000 tons a year. This material was sold in Europe for fertilizer purposes, but when Governor Tillman's suit was won in the United States Supreme Court, cancelling the lease, the work was abandoned, and has never been resumed. As a result of its abandonment, the state lost an income of over $100,000.00 annually.

These three men no doubt made a deep impress upon the life of the budding pioneer, Ellison Adger Smyth.

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Another Charlestonian who had quite an influence over the career of Captain Smyth was William Gregg, formerly a jeweler of Charleston, who bought the Graniteville Cotton Mill about 1844. Mr. Gregg published a number of addresses and pamphlets which Captain Smyth secured and read. The pamphlets urged the establishment of cotton mills in the South that employment might be given to the white tenant class. These pamphlets made a great impression on young Smyth, and had much to do with encouraging him in entering into the cotton mill business.

Incidentally, in 1881, Mr. W. C. Langley purchased a building that had been used for printing money for the Confederate Government, and turned it into a cotton mill. It proved to be a great financial success, thus encouraging young Smyth still further in his determination. Likewise, The Piedmont Manufacturing Company, the first mill built by Colonel H. P. Hammett of Greenville in 1873, had also a remarkable success, and a great influence over the decision of Captain Smyth to enter the business.

About the same time, Mr. D. E. Converse, who was employed by the Little Glendale Mill, organized the Clifton Manufacturing Company, and Captain John H. Montgomery of Spartanburg organized the Pacolet Manufacturing Company.

These outstanding pioneers in the textile field established the Piedmont, Clifton and Pacolet Mills about the same time Captain Smyth actually began the building of his first mill at Pelzer.

Colonel Hammett, Mr. Converse, Captain Montgomery and Captain Smyth were all tall men, and when they appeared together before the Railroad Commission or the South Carolina Legislature, as they often did, they were referred to as the "Big Four." Later, Colonel R. L. McCaughrin, of Newberry, organized the Newberry Cotton Mill, and he was added to this group of textile pioneers in South Carolina. The Newberry Mill and the Piedmont, Clifton, Pacolet and Pelzer Mills, were all very successful manufacturing enterprises.

In 1921 the publication *Commerce and Finance* was so impressed with the remarkable growth of the textile industry, that they were led to ask who had been the leaders in this very important development; and being unable to answer the question to their own satisfaction, they determined to take the opinions of those

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whose knowledge of the subject was more complete than their own. They therefore addressed a questionnaire to at least one officer of every important cotton manufacturing concern in the South, asking him to consult with his principal officers and designate the six men, living or dead, who in their opinion were best entitled to be considered as leaders by virtue of what they had done—or were doing—not only for their own enterprises, but for the interests of the southern textile industry as a whole. They included the dead as well as the living because they realized that the marvelous growth of the cotton manufacturing industry in the South was largely due to the vision and self-sacrificing enthusiasm of the many men who, like Moses, were taken away before they could enter the Promised Land to which they led their followers, and the publication was anxious to pay tribute to them, as well as to the leaders who are still in the flesh.

As a result of the ballot, the following outstanding leaders in the industry—some deceased—were nominated for the honor: Captain Ellison A. Smyth, then of Greenville, S. C., affectionately known to the whole trade as "The Captain"; J. W. Cannon of Concord, N. C.; Fuller E. Callaway of LaGrange, Ga.; Ceasar Cone of Greensboro, N. C.; D. A. Tompkins of Charlotte, N. C.; J. H. Montgomery of Spartanburg, S. C.; Lewis W. Parker of Greenville, S. C.; W. A. Erwin of Durham, N. C.; H. R. Fitzgerald of Danville, Va.; Leroy Springs of Lancaster, S. C.; Stewart W. Cramer, of Charlotte, N. C.; D. E. Converse of Spartanburg, S. C.; Henry P. Hammett of Greenville, S. C.; E. M. Holt of Graham, N. C.; and D. Y. Cooper of Henderson, N. C. The first six were elected.

The lives of these great men are covered by special articles in the publication, and it is from the article on the life of Captain Smyth that several quotations in this volume have been taken.

While this volume lays no claim to complete historical recording, it does present briefly the outstanding events of the lives of a few of the active textile pioneers, contemporary with Captain Smyth. These biographies are presented in the chapters which follow. There were many prominent and successful pioneers in this state, however, whose lives are not presented in this volume.

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There were, no doubt, many other men in the textile field who preceded Captain Smyth in his efforts, and whose lives served as a guiding beacon. There were many others, contemporary with the time of Captain Smyth, who labored as he labored, and whose successes undoubtedly spurred him on to greater accomplishments, and contributed toward the development of a great pioneer.

Undoubtedly Captain Smyth was impressed with the rugged determination, patriotic loyalty and excellent qualities of leadership of his beloved chief, Wade Hampton. Undoubtedly there were many prominent men in the field of commerce, shipping and agriculture, whose lives served as shining examples for him to follow, and whose successes gave him confidence in his own efforts. As he lived in a period of pioneer incubation, there were many examples for him to follow, and there was plenty of inspiration to encourage him. It is quite unusual, however, for a man of so many accomplishments to be able to point definitely to one specific man, and one particular activity which influenced him so decidedly in choosing his career. If William Gregg accomplished nothing else than the starting of young Ellison Adger Smyth on his way as a cotton manufacturer, then he could lay claim, by that single accomplishment, to one of the greatest contributions toward industrial development in America. He has indirectly given employment to hundreds of thousands, and brought prosperity into a potentially great industrial area. He gave the idea of textile industrial possibilities to a man who became the founder of more cotton mill establishments than most other individuals in the southern textile field.

It would be impossible in this volume to catalog the many strong characteristics of Captain Ellison Adger Smyth, and attempt to attribute each to the influence of some outstanding individual who helped to mold the Captain's life. To do so would necessarily involve at the outset a tribute to his father, who was a minister; to his mother, to his grandparents, to his teachers, to his two very successful and beloved brothers—James Adger and Augustine T. Smyth—and to many others; but such tributes are hardly necessary. According to Captain Smyth's own testimony, the specific beckoning call of one already within the industry, William Gregg, led him into the field, just as the industry today is beckoning to enterprising

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**The Captain, a Persistent Reader in the Living Room of "Connemara."**
**July, 1934**

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young men who possess inspiration, determination, and the will to become pioneers.

Captain Smyth is still actively engaged, at the time of the writing of this volume, in cotton manufacturing. Four of his grandsons are likewise actively engaged—Ellison Smyth McKissick, Ellison Adger Smyth, III, Edward Blake and Thomas L. Smyth. Two of his sons-in-law are also mill executives—A. F. McKissick of Greenville and Lewis D. Blake of Belton. His daughter, Mrs. Margaret Smyth McKissick, can claim the unique distinction of being simultaneously the daughter, the wife, the mother, the sister-in-law and the aunt of cotton mill executives. The spirit of Captain Ellison Adger Smyth is still beckoning to enterprising young men, far beyond the confines of his own family. The Captain is passing on the good word of William Gregg—the word which made such an impress upon his own life.

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*Chapter Seven*

# CONTEMPORARY PIONEERS

To complete the story of the life of Captain Smyth the fourteen chapters following are each devoted to a brief picture of the life of one of those stalwart pioneers in the textile field whose accomplishments were largely contemporary with the efforts of Captain Smyth. They each had an important part in influencing the efforts of the Captain.

However, the reader is reminded that in these brief sketches no attempt is made at full portrayal. Each of them justifies a complete volume in itself if due credit is to be given. It is the author's hope that time will permit the early production of another and yet fuller volume than this limited edition . . . one in which the lives of all the leaders in southern textiles will be given ample and deserved recording. It is hoped that such succeeding volumes will assume the form of a complete, authentic recording of the history of the rise of the textile industry in the South, and of the valiant deeds of our hundreds of constructive textile leaders. May this volume serve as an introduction to the study of a field which deserves a permanent record.

Really this volume could add sketches of the lives of hundreds of others whose deeds in textile development were outstanding. Such honored names as Law, Geer, McCaughrin, Bailey, McKissick, Anderson, Johnson, Fitzgerald, Riegel, Kendall, Woodside, Self, Evins, Jones, Nicholson, Ligon, Gossett, Wright, Marchant, Henry, Hamrick, Webb, Dixon, Cramer, Sirrine, Poe, Hagood, Bruce, Elsas, Entwistle, Cole, Mebane, Roberts, Chapman, Arrington, and scores of others remind us of lives of unusual textile leaders, whose accomplishments justify far more than a passing notice. But space forbids. The following will suffice to illustrate the story:

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*Chapter Eight*

## *Dexter Edgar Converse*

Dexter Edgar Converse was born on April 21, 1828, in the little town of Swanton, Vermont, the son of Orlin and Louisa Converse. His father died when he was only three years old, leaving him to the care of an uncle, Albert G. Brown of Three Rivers, Canada. Mr. Converse was a direct descendant of the pioneer Edmund Converse, who came to New England with Governor Winthrop in 1630. Growing up under the direction of his uncle, he engaged in the manufacture of woolen goods with his uncle, and laid the foundation for that thorough knowledge in the art of textiles which was the mainspring of his success in after years.

At his majority, he accepted a position in a cotton mill in Cohoes, N. Y., which he held for five years. At Cohoes he was married to Miss Helen Twichell. After living in New York for five years, he came South, and became superintendent of a cotton mill at Lincolnton, N. C., where he remained for several months. It was before the days of railroads, and the journey by stage coach was a slow one.

In February of 1855 he settled at Bivingsville (now Glendale, S. C.) Having purchased an interest in the cotton mill there, his executive ability, his experience and success as a business man were at once recognized, and he soon became manager. This was the starting point of the D. E. Converse Company, under which title the Glendale Mills were incorporated in 1866.

In 1880 Mr. Converse, with some associates, formed the Clifton Manufacturing Company, under which three mills have sprung up. At Mr. Converse's death on October 4, 1899, he was a stockholder also in the Pacolet, Whitney and Spartan Mills.

He was active and prominent in the cotton mill industry in the South, and easily one of the foremost citizens of Spartanburg County. He was a quiet, conscientious, hard-working man, with a wonderfully sweet spirit, and utmost faith in his undertakings and in his fellowmen.

Mr. Converse loved the South—the country of his adoption—and

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in the War Between the States he enlisted in the Confederate Army; but his services were needed more as a manufacturer than as a soldier, and he returned home to hold a government position in the Glendale Mill, making cloth for the army.

He remained at Glendale until '91, when with his family he moved to Spartanburg, S. C., where he, his wife and daughter lived thereafter.

Though he was connected with all great charities of his section, and was always foremost in all plans for the public good, Mr. Converse is perhaps best known by the college which bears his name—Converse College of Spartanburg, S. C. To his generosity many women of the South owe their opportunity for a liberal education in a well equipped institution.

The statement of Mr. Converse's purpose, contained in the "Converse Concept"—a magazine of Converse College—on the occasion of his death, October, 1899, gives a remarkable insight into his life's ideals; and it is so striking that it is herein presented:

The purpose of D. E. Converse in founding Converse College:

"It is my opinion that the well being of any country depends much upon the culture of the women, and I have done what I could to found a college that would provide for women thorough and liberal culture; so that, for them, the highest motives may become clear purposes and fixed habits of life; and I desire that the instruction and influence of Converse College be always such that the students may be enabled to see clearly, to decide wisely and act justly; and that they may learn to love God and Humanity and be faithful to truth and duty, so that their influence may be characterized by purity and power.

"It is also my desire and hope that Converse College be always truly religious, but never denominational. I believe that religion is essential to all that is purest and best in life, here and hereafter. I wish the college to be really, but liberally and tolerantly, Christian; for I believe that the revelation of God in Christ is for salvation; and I commend and commit the college to the love and guidance of God, and to the care, sympathy and fidelity of my fellowmen."

Such a seriousness of purpose, thoroughly typical of the man, offers the fundamental reason for his unusual life and its accomplishments.

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## *Chapter Nine*

## *Leroy Springs*

Colonel Leroy Springs, one of the foremost pioneers in the cotton manufacturing field, and equally as prominent in the banking, cotton oil, railroad, and insurance fields, was for many years perhaps the industry's busiest executive.

He was possessed with an unusual determination, which enabled him to successfully carry through his avowed intention of forcing each enterprise into which he entered into successful operation. It can be said to the credit of Colonel Springs that he probably enjoyed more business successes than most other prominent business men of the South. Anyone can start an enterprise, but it takes hard work, self sacrifice, determination, common sense, and a never-give-up spirit to succeed as signally as did Colonel Springs.

He was born on Springfield Plantation, near Fort Mill, on November 12, 1861, the son of A. Baxter and Julia Blandina (Baxter) Springs. His father was educated at law, but also farmed on an extensive scale; was president of a railroad; was director of two other railroads, and extensively interested in banking as well.

His father was also state senator, and a member of the South Carolina Convention which formed the ordinance of Secession.

The ancestors of Leroy Springs came to this country from Holland and settled in New York in 1700.

Leroy Springs was a student at the University of North Carolina from 1878 to 1880. He married Grace Allison, daughter of Samuel E. White of Fort Mill, on December 28, 1892, who died in 1907. He was married a second time to Lena Jones, daughter of T. M. Jones of Pulaski, Tenn., on November 29, 1913. Leaving the University, Colonel Springs entered the mercantile business; and became a salesman for the firm of Springs and Burwell, wholesale grocers, of Charlotte, N. C., in 1880, and there began a long, successful and most useful business career. The wide diversity of his interests; the great number of successful enterprises which he founded and headed, offer an unusual record. How one man could so successfully found and operate so many varied interests is easily a mystery to the average man, but Colonel Springs possessed unusual business ability

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and keen judgment which enabled him to enjoy exceptional accomplishments.

He founded Leroy Springs & Company, wholesale and retail merchandise in Lancaster, S. C. in 1884; later operated as the Lancaster Mercantile Company. He was president of this company for sixteen years. He organized the firm of Springs & Shannon at Camden, S. C. in 1885; the Kershaw Mercantile and Banking Company in 1888, at Kershaw, S. C.; the Heath Springs Banking and Mercantile Company at Heath Springs, S. C. in 1889; the Bank of Lancaster, S. C. in 1889; the Bank of Kershaw in Kershaw, S. C. in 1904. He organized the Lancaster Cotton Mills, one of the largest in the South, in 1896 at Lancaster, S. C.; the Eureka Cotton Mills and the Springstein Mills at Chester, S. C. in 1899, the Kershaw Cotton Mills at Kershaw, S. C. in 1913. He reorganized the two mills of the Fort Mill Manufacturing Company, Fort Mill, S. C. in 1904. They were built in 1884 and 1889 respectively.

In 1928 Colonel Springs was the president of seven cotton mill companies, president of the Bank of Lancaster, the Lancaster and Chester Railway, the Lansford Water and Power Company of Lancaster; Vice-President of the Bank of Kershaw, S. C.; Director of the Catawba Fertilizer Company, the Lancaster Cotton Oil Company, First National Bank of Camden, National Exchange Bank of Chester, Bank of Kershaw, Savings Bank of Fort Mill, the Southern Home Fire Insurance Company of Charleston, the Prudential Fire Insurance Company of Greenville, Trustee of the Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York; Director of the American Trust Company of Charlotte; Vice-President of the Columbia, S. C. National Bank. He was director of the Charleston, Columbia & Augusta Railway at the time it was merged with the Southern Railway.

Colonel Springs was a member of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, member of the American Manufacturers Association, of the American Bankers Association, of the South Carolina Bankers Association, of the N. E. Manufacturers Association, of the New York and New Orleans Cotton Exchanges, of the Southern Manufacturers Club of Charlotte, and of the Cotton Manufacturers Association of South Carolina, of which for a time he was vice-president.

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He served as Colonel on the staff of Governor John P. Richardson from 1886 until 1890. He was Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Lancaster Graded Schools for a period. He was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention four successive times up to 1920, and a delegate-at-large in 1924. He was actively interested in many other enterprises.

Indeed, the enterprise and energy of Colonel Leroy Springs was most outstanding. At the time of his death, in 1931, he was probably officially connected with more separate corporations than any one business man that the state of South Carolina has produced. Few men ever enjoyed such great success; few South Carolinians ever occupied such a prominent position of leadership as did Leroy Springs.

He believed that business success should be founded on sound ideals, on good habits, strict attention to business responsibilities, good associates, strict integrity, honest dealing, and the setting of business persistently before pleasure.

Colonel Springs was a Presbyterian and a Democrat, and one of South Carolina's greatest benefactors. His contributions, financially and otherwise, to the development of commerce, industry, finance, agriculture, religion and education in the state were enormous. To Colonel Springs should go the lion's share of the credit for much of the progress in these fields which South Carolina has made during the last half century.

The mills which Colonel Springs founded, and many of his other interests are, since his death, under the capable management of his son and successor, Captain Elliott White Springs. Captain Springs is already, following in his father's footsteps, a successful manufacturer in his own right. He was one of America's greatest aces during the World War, and is also a writer of note.

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*Chapter Ten*

## *Lewis W. Parker*

One of the most magnetic figures in the textile industry of the South and of the United States for that matter, was Lewis W. Parker, of Greenville, S. C. His untimely death in 1916 cut short a career that had been full of inspiring achievement as well as tragedy. The financial losses that came to Mr. Parker at the outbreak of the European War and caused his retirement as the head of a great group of mills, represented even a greater loss to the enterprise of the nation. His friends and enemies, for in life he appeared to have both, admit that he was a real personage, a man of dynamic force and a broad human spirit that made him unique as well as beloved.

Lewis Parker was a business man. He was trained as a lawyer and a banker, following in the footsteps of a distinguished father. He was born in Abbeville, S. C., in 1865, and after an attendance in the public schools of his native town he pursued his college studies and graduated from law school. At the age of twenty-three he began the practice of law in Greenville, S. C. While pursuing his profession he became interested in business, and in fact his practice was entirely along business lines. He became a good corporation lawyer, and was made a director on the board of several companies.

In 1897 he withdrew from active practice to take charge of the Victor Manufacturing Company of Greer, S. C., in order, it is said, to prevent the mill from going into the hands of a receiver. He saved the situation and thus found himself, as the phrase goes, a manufacturer. In a few years this young lawyer had become the greatest cotton manufacturer in South Carolina.

In this work he was ably seconded by his brother, T. F. Parker. In order to show the scope of his operations, which even in this day of big business is impressive, the following outline of his textile operations is given, setting forth the mills in which he was the commanding spirit, and either president or treasurer or both:

Appalachie Mills, Arlington, S. C.; 20,000 spindles; 500 looms; capital, $350,000.

Capital City Mills, Columbia, S. C.; 15,000 spindles; 300 looms; capital, $310,000.

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Richland Cotton Mills, Columbia, S. C.; 26,000 spindles; 720 looms; capital, $300,000.

Granby Cotton Mills, Columbia, S. C.; 57,000 spindles; 1,560 looms; capital, $800,000.

Olympia Cotton Mills, Columbia, S. C.; 101,000 spindles; 2,400 looms; capital, $1,750,000.

Monaghan Mills, Greenville, S. C.; 60,000 spindles; 1,560 looms; capital, $700,000.

Victor Manufacturing Co., Greer, S. C.; 60,000 spindles; 1,524 looms; capital, $700,000.

Under Mr. Parker's control were mills with a total of 340,000 spindles and 8,564 looms, representing a capitalization of $4,910,000. The production covered a wide range, including print cloths, sheetings, shirting, nainsooks, dimities, etc.

Mr. Parker was also active as a banker. In 1891 he organized the Piedmont Savings & Investment Co., became president of the Bank of Greer, and a director in several banks in Greenville, S. C.

He was one of the busiest men in the South or in the whole country for that matter, but he found time to direct and organize one of the most successful systems for the care, well being and general comfort of his thousands of employes, that ever was instituted in the United States. At his Monaghan Mills, for example, the homes of his operatives consisted of model cottages. There was a mill hospital, Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A. Lawns, gardens and athletic fields gave the little manufacturing center an air of distinction and comfort. No employer in the United States identified himself more closely with the welfare of his employes than Mr. Parker, and his broad generosity was reciprocated to a degree approaching veneration.

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## *Chapter Eleven*

## *Daniel Augustus Tompkins*

No brief sketch can do justice to the manifold activities of Daniel Augustus Tompkins and his work as a builder of the New South. Few men in the United States had a more diversified career or better exemplified in their lives the constructive spirit. Unlike most of the successful men of the South, Mr. Tompkins possessed little of the characteristics of the merchant. He was essentially a pioneer, a man of far-sighted vision who saw clearly the possibilities of the future and who fortunately possessed the talents of an executive and an organizer which enabled him to practicalize his ideas.

It was more in what he did for others in the way of enabling them to help themselves than in what he did for himself that made the life of D. A. Tompkins an example to his community.

A broad outline of his activities is impressive even at a casual glance. He was among the first to recognize the possibilities of the cotton oil industry and make it one of the leading enterprises of the South. He was a builder of cotton mills. He designed and furnished machinery to industrial plants in his territory. He was a publicist, a journalist, a writer, a promoter of education and a pioneer in the establishment of trade schools that have equipped so many able men for the conduct of the South's textile industry.

He did much to instill in the South a spirit of thrift that had become almost a lost virtue among the American people. He strove untiringly for the establishment of building and loan associations in Southern communities. His fine philosophy with respect to the social qualities which make men valuable citizens had much of the flavor of Benjamin Franklin. Never posing as a philanthropist, he was at all times a friend of his fellow men. He did more than help them. He helped them to help themselves. He succeeded Captain Smyth as a member of the United States Industrial Commission. This body, as is probably well known, was formed to consider the problems presented by the growing complexities of our modern industrial life. The report of this commission, presented in nineteen volumes, covered a vast field involving almost every phase of Ameri-

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ca's business activities—industry, agriculture, transportation, labor and kindred questions.

Mr. Tompkins was a product of the old South. He was born on a plantation in Edgefield County, S. C., in 1851, and with the exception of a few years spent as a student at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute at Troy, N. Y., an apprenticeship served under old John Fritz at the Bethlehem Iron Works in Bethlehem, Pa., and a year in Germany in the introduction of American machinery, his life was passed chiefly in the South until his death in 1917. It probably is not going too far to say that he was then the foremost citizen of Charlotte, N. C.

It was in 1882, after Mr. Tompkins had finished his studies, served his apprenticeship and developed his talents abroad that he settled in Charlotte and hung out his sign as an engineer, machinist and contractor. He obtained the agency for the leading machinery manufacturers, and became very active in the building and installation of mills and power plants of various sorts.

The first shining example of the use of his vision came in his activities in the building of the South's infant cotton oil industry. He saw its possibilities, and he set to work to realize them. Ever since the invention of Whitney's gin, cotton seed had been the South's most objectionable waste product, the bane of the planter's life. Mr. Tompkins saw that it was a real economic waste, and for several years his activities were devoted to the building and financing of cotton oil mills. He lived to see the industry one of the most prosperous in the South, backed by capital amounting to hundreds of millions, and a product also running into hundreds of millions annually. He not only strove to make the cotton oil business profitable, but he fought to make it clean, to insist upon a superior product, one that would be highly acceptable to the world as a food.

The larger activities of Mr. Tompkins, if any distinction can be made, probably were devoted to the upbuilding of the Southern Textile industry. Here also he displayed the extraordinary breadth of vision of a Franklin. "Help to establish manufactures at home," he said, "and help to get foreign markets and ships to bring back three dollars and upwards where we now bring back one."

Mr. Tompkins always felt that the South never would become really great so long as it contented itself merely with producing

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cotton, the raw material. He used to point out that a crop of 10,-000,000 bales at six cents per pound was worth only $300,000,000, whereas in its manufactured state, half of it could be easily worth several times that amount. In one of his speeches he said:

"In order to manufacture the entire cotton crop of the South into plain white and coarse colored goods, there would be required something like 30,000,000 spindles and 1,000,000 operatives. The population of the Southern States may be ranked at 20,000,000. Does anybody doubt that out of this 20,000,000 there is enough idle time wasted, even by those who would be willing to work, to furnish 1,000,000 operatives in cotton factories? Go into ordinary cotton market towns where no cotton factories have as yet been built, and at any time from 7 a. m. to 10 p. m. count the people who are loafing, and the number found would more than make up the quota of people for its share of the workers necessary to manufacture the cotton crop."

Again he said:

"Practically all native people in the South are farmers. The manufacturing now being done by Southern people furnishes evidence of the facility with which the Southern farmer extends his operations. Almost every Southern man who has gone into manufacturing is still a farmer and will continue to be so. The escape of the cotton farmer from approaching poverty is not in trying to curtail production and increase the price, but in devising means to keep the cheap cotton at home and in utilizing surplus time in turning it into cloth worth eighteen cents and upwards per pound."

D. A. Tompkins did not stop with preaching the gospel of industrial expansion. He did not stop with urging capital to build mills or confine himself to providing the new plants with machinery. He strove with all his might to create a new industrial spirit among his people. He used several agencies in this missionary task. He did all he could to promote liberal education, but the phase of the work that was dearest to his heart was the establishment of trade schools. For more than twenty years he served as a member of the Board of Trustees of the North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, and he saw this institution work its way out of the handicap of poverty and discouragement into an agency of tremendous value to the South.

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His work did not stop here. He saw that if the South was ever to develop textile skill that could compare favorably with that possessed by Lancashire, Leel, Chemnitz, Fall River or New Bedford, it would have to develop not only its own operatives but managerial ability equipped with technical skill and scientific knowledge of a world-old industry. It was with this end in view that he interested himself in the establishment of textile schools. One of the most notable of these is the Clemson Textile School affiliated with the Clemson College in South Carolina. Another result of his efforts was the provision for a textile department in the N. C. State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. Encouraged by the work and enthusiasm of Mr. Tompkins, the States of Mississippi and Texas followed suit and established textile training schools.

No summary of the life of Mr. Tompkins would be complete without reference to his activities as a journalist and publicist. He was active in shaping the thought and sentiment of the South through the medium of the Charlotte Observer, which he developed into one of the most influential newspapers of the country. He was untiring in his work among his fellowmen. He was a fine speaker, although making no pretense to florid oratory. His manner in making an address bespoke clarity and force without flamboyant ornamentation. He had the social qualities of an industrial missionary, and one of his biographers sums up his splendid life in the following words:

"He built a New South—of mills and factories, of skilled labor and machinery, of diversified and intensified agriculture, of improved railways and highways, of savings banks and loan associations—a New South also of public schools, technical colleges and expanded universities, of independent journalism and independent thought, a New South of universal education and democracy."

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## *Chapter Twelve*

### *William Edgeworth Beattie*

On September 25, 1859, there was born a young man in Greenville, South Carolina, who was destined to become one of the most successful cotton mill executives in the South, as well as one of the most astute judges of men: William Edgeworth Beattie, son of Hamlin Beattie and grandson of F. F. Beattie.

His grandfather moved to Greenville from Virginia and entered the mercantile business. His father was also active in the business life of Greenville, and was founder of the First National Bank of that city. It was organized in 1872.

W. E. Beattie, after completing his studies in Greenville, attended Princeton University and graduated with the degree of A.B. in 1882.

After he returned to Greenville from college, his father placed him in the bank, and with characteristic determination, he applied himself vigorously to his task, arising steadily in position and responsibility until after 22 years of faithful service he arose to the position of Cashier. During his experience in the bank, he was of course closely associated with his father, who was serving as President. This gave him perhaps his most valued training and experience. The father's keen business intuition was readily absorbed by the son. Much of W. E. Beattie's astuteness and keen insight, which enabled him through life to measure men with such uncanny ability, are directly attributable to the training which he received at his father's hand.

In 1889 Mr. Joe D. Charles, who had served successfully as President and Treasurer of the Reedy River Manufacturing Company, died and after his death the mill which is now known as Conestee Mills was bought by Mr. Lewis Parker, Mr. F. F. Beattie and Captain Ellison A. Smyth, and W. E. Beattie was elected President and Treasurer. He remained at the same time as Cashier of the First National Bank.

At the time, Mr. Lewis Parker of Greenville was President of the Victor Mill at Greer, S. C. as well as other mills, and W. E. Beattie was elected to the directorate.

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Meanwhile a vacancy had been created in the Presidency of Piedmont Manufacturing Company through the death of Col. James L. Orr. The Piedmont Plant was organized in 1873 by Col. H. P. Hammett, who served as its successful President for years. Upon his death, Mr. R. L. McCaughrin succeeded to the Presidency for a short time, and he in turn passed the reins to Col. James L. Orr, the son-in-law of the founder. Upon the death of Col. Orr in 1905 the record of business management of W. E. Beattie was so outstanding that he was elected President and Treasurer. In accepting the position he gave up his position with the Reedy River Manufacturing Company and with the bank.

In 1914 the Parker Cotton Mills Company, a merger of some 16 mills that had been formed three years before by Lewis W. Parker, became badly involved, and W. E. Beattie and M. C. Branch, president of the Merchants National Bank of Richmond, Va., were placed in charge to try to straighten out the financial tangle. The indebtedness of the company was liquidated by disposing of some of the mills in the group, with the result that the remaining properties were saved for the stockholders. In 1916 this group was reorganized under the name of the Victor-Monaghan Company with M. C. Branch as president, and W. E. Beattie as vice-president and treasurer. In 1920 Branch resigned and Mr. Beattie was elected president, and for three years following the company was operated with signal success under his direction.

Adding the spindles of the Victor-Monaghan group to those of the Piedmont organization gave Mr. Beattie command of the second largest group of spindles under southern ownership.

While today Mr. Beattie is retired from the active management of cotton mills, he is still keenly interested in them and in the welfare of the industry at large.

In 1923 he turned over the management of the Piedmont Manufacturing Company to his eldest son, Samuel Marshall Beattie, who displays the same keen business judgment which characterized his father's textile activities. His other major textile interest, the Victor-Monaghan Company, which arose through W. E. Beattie's management and leadership from the old Parker Cotton Mills Company, is now under the direction of one of the industry's most prominent and most successful executives, Thos. M. Marchant.

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Mr. W. E. Beattie, however, still serves as a director of the Piedmont Manufacturing Company, as well as of the Victor-Monaghan Company. He was also, in 1934, a director of the Wallace Manufacturing Company of which his youngest son, William Hamlin Beattie, is President; and of the Marion Manufacturing Company of Marion, N. C. He retired from several boards soon after giving up active work.

He has served as President of the American Cotton Manufacturers Association, director of the Cotton Manufacturers Association of S. C.; as President of the Kiwanis Club of Greenville; as President of the Cotillion Club of Greenville; as Vice-President of the old Sans Souci Country Club of Greenville, and has been a member of a number of other prominent clubs in Greenville, Asheville and New York.

One of the foremost features of Greenville to attract the attention of a visitor is the well paved streets of the city. This was another of Mr. Beattie's activities, inaugurated back in 1911 when he was chairman of the paving commission. He took much interest in this work as he felt it would be of great value to the city and its people.

During the war period Mr. Beattie was appointed by President Woodrow Wilson to serve on a committee to investigate whether or not it would be wise to fix the price of cotton, and, it will be remembered, this was not done.

Mr. Beattie is an active member of Christ Episcopal Church of Greenville, and for many years served as junior warden and then as senior warden of that institution.

In 1885 he married Miss Kitty Marshall, daughter of Dr. Samuel S. Marshall. His wife died in 1930. There are three children, Samuel Marshall, William Hamlin and Elizabeth Cleveland, and there are seven grand-children.

Mr. Beattie's characteristics include more than ordinary business foresight and a rather unusual intuitive development which frequently enables him to feel rather than know the causes that lie behind certain actions on the part of others; and his first impressions, while sometimes apparently hasty, are quite likely to be correct and are usually safe. He is persistent in his efforts, competent in the performance of any duties he may undertake, and can be counted upon to finish in a careful and conscientious way any project upon which he starts.

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He is extremely approachable and never too busy to give due consideration to those who seek him. While he will listen with impartial patience and carefully weigh all the facts presented, his conclusions, though perhaps frequently tempered by leniency or charity for what he considers the weakness of the man or his argument, are again strongly influenced by his intuitive judgment as to the proper course to take.

A quiet, courteous, lovable man, Mr. Beattie is thoughtful and considerate of those more or less dependent upon him, unaffected and unostentatious in his business relations, but resolute and resourceful in attaining his objective. His sharp, penetrating eyes, with innumerable tiny lines radiating from the corners to reinforce the glint of humor which occasionally becomes visible therein, furnish a most potent index to his character; a much more reliable indicator than anything he says—because, usually, he doesn't say it.

Few men in the cotton manufacturing industry have developed the great host of friends that it has been Mr. Beattie's good fortune to gather.

Wherever cotton manufacturers gather he can be seen the center of a large group of devoted friends.

His good nature, his tact, his pleasing personality have made him one of the best loved men in the industry.

While it has not been his good fortune to launch out into the dark and build cotton mills in undeveloped territory, his work in developing the Piedmont Manufacturing Company to its position as one of the leading sheeting mills in America, and his judgment in handling the organization of the Victor-Monaghan Mills, mark him as a true pioneer as well as a most capable business man. Mr. Beattie knew how to work and put every ounce of his energy in attaining his aims. But he possessed characteristics far more valuable than a mere exemplification of personal efficiency. He knew how to inspire others into doing their best for him. In this respect he has no peer. In this ability lies no small portion of his unusual success.

The records of the development of cotton manufacturers as well as cotton manufacturing in the South will reflect the handiwork of William Edgeworth Beattie and set him apart always as one of the great pioneers of the early years of the industry. Like Smyth, Orr, Parker and other textile pioneers with whom he was associated, he, upon retirement, left the industry much farther advancd than when he entered it.

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## *Chapter Thirteen*

## *Edwin Michael Holt*

Few men have had such a wide-spread influence over the development of the Cotton Textile Industry as did Edwin M. Holt (1807-1884).

Beginning as he did early in the development of textiles, his contribution to the early developments of textiles in the South was most important.

He enjoyed the distinction of "casting his mantle" upon seven worthy sons, five of whom with their sons and successors later played a most important part in spreading successful industrial development throughout the South, for while the efforts of Edwin M. Holt were largely confined in the beginning to Alamance County in North Carolina, the influence steadily spread and gave rise to the establishment of cotton mills throughout the Carolinas.

He was a resourceful man of courage and vision, and his life was permeated with the pioneering spirit.

To Edwin M. Holt is due the honor of building the first colored cotton fabric manufacturing plant in the South, the old Alamance Mill, in 1837.

For the following outline of his activities and those of his successors, the author is indebted to Mr. J. Harvey White, one of the descendants of Edwin M. Holt, who is now president of the Travora Manufacturing Company of Graham, Alamance County, North Carolina.

"Under date of January, 1849, there appears in Lossing's Pictorial Field Book of the American Revolution, Volume Two, Page 388, the following:

"I left the place of Pyle's defeat toward noon, and, following a sinuous and seldom-traveled road through a forest of wild crab apple trees and black jacks, crossed the Alamance at the cotton factory of Holt and Carrigan, two miles distant. Around this mill quite a village of neat log-houses, occupied by the operatives, were collected, and everything had the appearance of thrift. I went in, and was pleased to see the hands of intelligent white females employed in a useful occupation. Manual labor by white people is a

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rare sight at the South, where an abundance of slave labor appears to render such occupation unnecessary; and it can seldom be said of one of our fair sisters there, 'She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.' This cotton-mill, like the few others which I saw in the Carolinas, is a real blessing, present and prospective, for it gives employment and comfort to many poor girls who might otherwise be wretched; and it is a seed of industry planted in a generous soil, which may hereafter germinate and bear abundant fruit of its kind in the midst of cotton plantations, thereby augmenting immensely the true wealth of the nation . . .

"This factory, in the midst of a cotton-growing country, and upon a never-failing stream, cannot be otherwise than a source of great profit to the owners. The machinery is chiefly employed in the manufacture of cotton yarn. Thirteen hundred and fifty spindles were in operation. Twelve looms were employed in the manufacture of coarse cotton goods suitable for the use of the negroes!

"At that time, the condition of the landless white man in Piedmont, North Carolina, was pitiable. He had only his labor for sale, and that was in competition with slave labor. If he was fortunate enough to have a trade, the wages were exceedingly meagre, and the slave competition still existed. In February, 1846, we find an entry in the diary of the late E. M. Holt: 'Thomas Miller commenced work at five dollars per month.' This probably included board. Another entry read: 'Hired boy, Harvey, of Mrs. Freeland's at fifty dollars for the year.' This was evidently a negro slave.

"The working woman at that time had no opportunity for employment except in domestic service, if it could be found, work in agriculture or in the handicrafts. The agricultural work was exceedingly laborious; for example, in binding wheat after the cradlers, women would come from the fields with their wrists raw and bleeding from the cuts of the stubble. The wages of a woman in domestic service were a dollar a month and found payable in corn, wheat or other farm products.

"Conditions were so intolerable that thousands immigrated to the West where they secured free land. In 1850 one Congressman from Indiana stated that one-third of his constituency was composed of either natives of North Carolina or sons of North Carolinians.

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"It was under such conditions that cotton manufacturing was begun in North Carolina, first by the Schencks in Lincoln County, later by the Battles and others.

"In 1836, Mr. Henry Humphrey was operating a cotton mill in Greensboro, known as the Mount Hecla Steam Cotton Mill.

"At that time, Edwin Michael Holt (Born January 14, 1807—Died May 14, 1884) son of Michael Holt, Second, who represented his county in the Legislature in 1804, and grandson of Michael Holt, First, who was one of the Magistrates under the Crown before the Revolution, was running a farm and country store in the western part of Orange County. (His home was in the present County of Alamance.) He frequently visited Greensboro, and became well acquainted with Mr. Humphrey. Being of mechanical turn of mind, he was very much interested in the cotton mill. In 1837, in partnership with his brother-in-law, William A. Carrigan, he erected the Alamance Factory, Holt and Carrigan, proprietors, on Alamance Creek with five hundred and twenty-eight spindles. The machinery was bought from Goodwin Clark & Company, Patterson, New Jersey. Additional machinery was installed in 1845. Under date of March 26-27, 1845, Mr. Holt enters in his diary the following:

" 'Wednesday 26—arrived in New York. Went to Patterson.

" 'Thursday 27—Bought of C. Danforth 528 spindles and preparation and returned to New York in the morning.' "

"The mill was lighted by whale oil lamps, (though they later tried out camphene lamps) and was heated by wood-burning stoves. They worked twelve hours a day, and wages were approximately twenty-five cents a day for women and forty cents for men; children worked for ten to twenty cents. The product was at first bunch yarn put up in five-pound bundles, and was either sold to peddlers to be peddled out through the country, or hauled by wagons to various towns for sale as hand-knitting yarns or weaving yarns for hand looms. Some yarns were shipped to Philadelphia, going by wagon to Petersburg and thence by packet.

"Later eight or twelve looms were added to the equipment to weave Osnaburgs for negroes.

"Edwin M. Holt had seven sons, of whom Alfred, the eldest, and Alexander, the fourth, were not identified with the cotton mill business.

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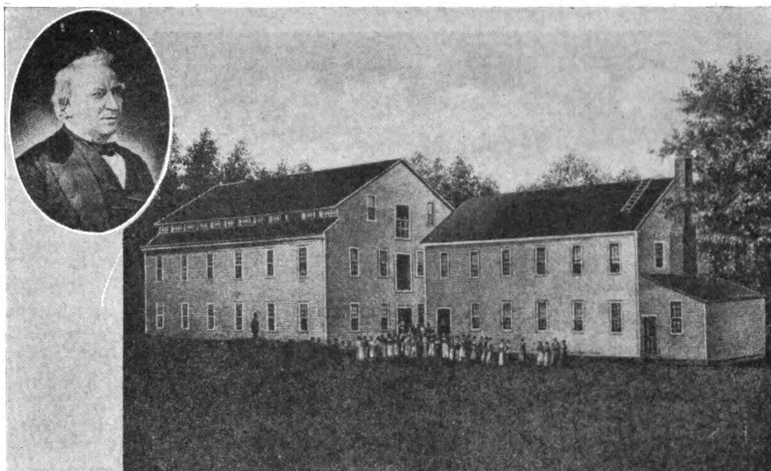
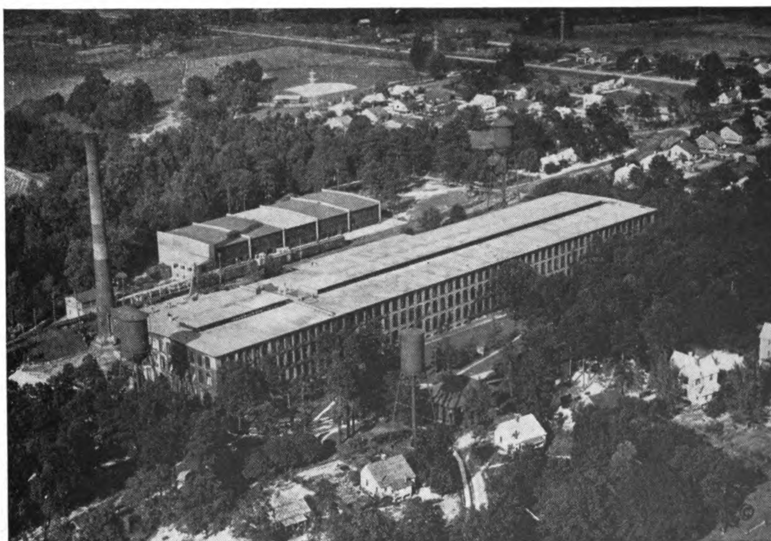


Old Alamance Mill, and Its Founder, Edwin G. Holt. The First Colored Cotton Fabric Manufactured in the South was Woven in this Mill. Built 1837 on Alamance River, Burned and Re-built 1871. Burlington, N. C.



Belton Mills, Belton, S. C.

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"In 1850, Mr. Carrigan decided to move to Arkansas, and sold out his interest in the partnership to E. M. Holt.

"Thomas M. Holt, one of his sons, (Born July 13, 1831—Died April 11, 1896) who was afterwards Governor of North Carolina, was then twenty years old, living in Philadelphia, learning business methods. His father recalled him and put him to work in the mill after Mr. Carrigan's departure.

"In 1853, a Frenchman, traveling through the country, and who was a dyer, stopped at the mill and offered to teach them how to dye yarn for the sum of one hundred dollars and his board. Mr. Holt accepted this offer and, securing an eighty-gallon copper boiler (used for cooking turnips for cattle food on the farm) and a cast iron wash pot, started with this equipment to dye yarns for sale. Later full dye equipment was secured, four box looms installed and the manufacture of Alamance Plaids began.

"Writing in 1895, Governor Holt states:

" 'I am reliably informed that up to that time there had never been a yard of colored cotton goods woven on a power loom south of the Potomac River. If this be true, I am entitled to the honor of having dyed with my own hand and woven under my own supervision the first yard of colored cotton goods manufactured in the South.'

"In 1860 the Alamance Mill had twelve hundred spindles and ninety-six looms making Plaids.

"In 1845 a mill was started at Haw River, North Carolina, with five hundred and twenty-eight spindles. This failed in 1858 and was bought by E. M. Holt and his son, Thomas M. Holt, at the sheriff's sale. In 1860 Thomas M. Holt bought his father's interest in this mill and operated it as the Granite Cotton Factory very successfully until his death in 1896. In 1895 the mill had twenty-two thousand, eight hundred and thirty-four spindles and nine hundred and forty looms all on colored goods. This mill continued in the hands of his sons and sons-in-law until 1920, when it was sold.

"Governor Holt also was largely engaged in farming at the celebrated Linwood Farm near Lexington, North Carolina.

"James Henry Holt, third son of E. M. Holt, (Born April 22, 1833—Died February 13, 1897) received his early training at the

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Alamance Mill, and also as cashier of the Bank of Thomasville, North Carolina. He served as a Private in the 10th North Carolina Artillery during the War Between the States. In 1867 he and Capt. Williamson superintended the building of the Carolina Cotton Mills, near Graham, North Carolina, for E. M. Holt, and in 1880 in partnership with his brother, W. E. Holt, built the Glencoe Mills near Burlington, North Carolina. He was very successful in the different enterprises, and as his sons grew up he helped and encouraged them to go into the cotton mill business. Walter L. Holt and his brother, E. C. Holt, sons of James Henry Holt, built the Elmira Mill in 1886. James Henry Holt, Jr., and Walter L. Holt built the Windsor Mills in 1890, and a few years later Walter L., E. C. and Samuel M. Holt built the Lakeside Mills at Burlington. In 1897 Mr. W. L. Holt moved to Fayetteville and became associated with Mr. Sam Morgan and others and built the Holt-Morgan Mills. Shortly afterward E. C. Holt moved to Wilmington and was associated with the Delgado Mills. After his father's death, W. L. Holt bought his father's and Uncle's interests in the Glencoe Mills.

"William E. Holt, fifth son of E. M. Holt (Born November 1, 1839—Died May 26, 1917) received his early instruction at the Alamance Mill. After his father's death in 1884, the Alamance Mill, with the Carolina Mills, which were owned by E. M. Holt, became a partnership, composed of his five sons engaged in the cotton industry and one of his daughters, under the firm of E. M. Holt's Sons with Mr. W. E. Holt as manager of the plant. In 1887 Mr. Holt moved to Lexington and there built the Winnonah Mills. Later he moved to Charlotte and became the president of a little weaving mill then known as the Highland Park Manufacturing Company. He took this plant and, with the assistance of Mr. J. S. Spencer and C. W. Johnson, built it up into the present Highland Park chain of Mills. Mr. Holt retired from the management of the Highland Park Mills in 1905. He held large interests in a number of other cotton mills. At one time he was president of the Commercial National Bank in Charlotte, of which he and his brothers and sisters held the controlling stock for a good many years. His son, W. E. Holt, Jr., is now president of the Winnonah Cotton Mills at Lexington. His nephew, C. A. Hunt, Jr., whom Mr. Holt trained in his office, is president and general manager of the Dacotah Mill in Lexington,

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and his brother-in-law, C. A. Hunt, Sr., has been associated with Mr. Holt, in the Nakomis Mills in Lexington, which is now a part of the Erlanger group.

"Linn Banks Holt, sixth son of E. M. Holt (Born June 28, 1842—Died October 25, 1920) served through the War and was seriously wounded and captured at Fort Harrison near Richmond. At the close of the War, he returned home to work on his farm and received his business education at the Alamance Mill. In 1879, with his youngest brother, Lawrence S. Holt, he built the Bellemont Mill near Graham. After his father's death in 1884, he moved to Graham and bought the original Sidney Cotton Mill, which was built in 1881 by Scott and Donnell. He greatly enlarged this mill and re-named it the Onieda Cotton Mill. This mill is still owned by his descendants and is operated by them today. In addition, he had interests in the Altamahaw Cotton Mill, owned by Holt, Gant and Holt, in the E. M. Holt's Sons partnership, in the E. M. Holt Plaid Mills, the Asheville Cotton Mill, Leaksville Cotton Mill and the Minneola Mills. He was very much interested in fine horses and at one time owned a very extensive racing stable.

"Lawrence S. Holt, born May 17, 1851, and still living, the seventh son of E. M. Holt, received his early training in business in Charlotte, North Carolina, under Colonel Lewis Williams and Mr. McLaughlin. After his marriage to Margaret Erwin of Morganton in 1872, he moved back to Alamance and went to work for his father at the Alamance Mill. In 1879, in partnership with his brother, L. B. Holt, he built the Bellemont Cotton Mill. In 1886 he moved to Company Shops (now Burlington) and bought the LaFayette Mill, which name he changed to the Aurora Cotton Mill. This mill he greatly enlarged and ran on ginghams exclusively for a good many years. After his sons, Erwin A. Holt, Eugene Holt and Lawrence S. Holt, Jr., became of age, he took them in partnership with him under the name of Lawrence S. Holt and Sons. This partnership later bought the Gem Mills at Gibsonville, which they still own. Eugene Holt is largely interested in the Spencer Love group of mills known as the Burlington Mills—on silk and rayon.

"In 1885 L. Banks Holt, Lawrence S. Holt and his brother-in-law, John Q. Gant, who received his early training at the old Alamance Mill under E. M. Holt, built the Altamahaw Mills. Later Mr. Gant

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built the Glen Raven Mills. Both the Altamahaw Mills and the Glen Raven Mills are now owned by Mr. Gant's sons.

"In 1884 Mr. L. Banks Holt, Mr. Lawrence S. Holt and his brother-in-law, Mr. W. A. Erwin, and Capt. W. H. Turrentine, built the E. M. Holt Plaid Mills. This was operated by W. A. Erwin until he was called to Durham by the Duke interests to build the Erwin Cotton Mills. He sold his interest in the E. M. Holt Plaid Mills to his brother, J. Harper Erwin, who also went with the Dukes later on. When J. Harper Erwin left he sold his interest to Lynn B. Williamson, a grand-nephew of E. M., Holt, who now operates this mill much enlarged, on silk and rayon fabrics, also knit goods.

"E. M. Holt had three daughters. Fannie A., the eldest, married Dr. John L. Williamson of Caswell County. The second, Mary E., married Capt. James N. Williamson of Caswell County, North Carolina, and the third, Emma V., married Capt. James W. White of Fort Mill, South Carolina. In 1871 E. M. Holt bought the Saxapahaw Mills, built by Jonathan Newlin and Sons in 1849, and made a proposition to his two sons-in-law, Dr. J. L. Williamson and Capt. J. W. White, that if they would put in one-third of the quick assets in a partnership formed by himself, he would form a partnership composed of himself, Capt. White and Dr. Williamson known as Holt, White and Williamson, and they would share equally in the profits and that at his death the wives of Dr. Williamson and Capt. White would receive each one-third of the real property of the mill. The two sons-in-law accepted this proposition, and they assumed management of this mill.

"When Mr. E. M. Holt died in 1884, he left the third of the partnership which he held in his name to Ben J., George T. and Edwin H. Williamson, sons of Dr. John L. Williamson, and the partnership continued in the name of White, Williamson & Company instead of Holt, White & Williamson.

"In 1898 E. H. Williamson moved to Fayetteville, and, with Mr. W. L. Holt and others, built the Holt-Williamson Manufacturing Co.

"The other sons of Dr. John L. Williamson to engage in cotton manufacture were Lawrence A. Williamson at the Holt-Morgan Mills in Fayetteville, Finley L. Williamson at the Holt-Granite Manufacturing Company in Haw River, J. Walter Williamson at the Del-

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gado Mills and the Belleville Mills in Wilmington, and L. Banks Williamson with the Glencoe Mills near Burlington.

"The partnership was incorporated in 1906 under the name of White, Williamson & Company, under which style it was continued until the mill was sold to other interests in 1927.

"J. Harvey White, (son of Capt. Jas. W. White, who got his early training under his uncle, Mr. W. E. Holt, at the Winnonah Mills at Lexington and at the Alamance Mills and afterwards as representative of his mother in the partnership of White, Williamson and Company) with his two brothers, William E. White and E. H. White, and his mother, started the Travora Manufacturing Company at Graham and Haw River in 1901.

"The second daughter of E. M. Holt, Mary E. Holt, married Capt. James N. Williamson of Caswell County and, upon the insistence of Mr. E. M. Holt, they moved to Alamance. In 1882 Capt. Williamson built the Ossippee Mills, and after his two boys, William H. Williamson and James N. Williamson, Jr., finished their education, he took them in partnership with him under the firm name of James N. Williamson and Sons. In 1892 Capt. Williamson and his son, William H. Williamson, and son-in-law, O. H. Foster, built the Pilot Mills of Raleigh, North Carolina. In 1907 he and his sons bought the old Big Falls Mill near Burlington, renaming it the Hopedale Mills.

"These all retired from the cotton manufacturing industry in 1919, except Mr. Foster who had retired in 1894.

"You will note from the above account that E. M. Holt and the men trained by him had all the individualism of the true pioneer. Five of Mr. Holt's sons branched out and built a mill either alone or in partnership with one of his brothers. When their sons grew up they, in turn, went into the cotton mill business with a small mill managed individually. As we look at it now, this was not good economics. It was probable that had they incorporated one or more large companies and united their efforts they would have dominated the colored goods industry in the South for a good many years. Be that as it may, the course they took threw responsibility on the younger men as they came on, and thus helped to develop them.

"The early mills were located on small streams, and were frequently driven by overshot water-wheels. As the mills grew larger, improved wheels were installed and auxiliary steam plants added.

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"As stated above, the goods manufactured consisted almost entirely of Alamance Plaids with each man selling his own goods. As was to be expected, this led to very fierce competition among themselves and with other mills of the State, with the result that the market for these goods got very much demoralized.

"In 1891 Moses Cone and his brother, who had been selling goods for the Asheville Cotton Mills, made a proposition to the various mills that they allow the Cones to sell their out-put of plaids, guaranteeing the accounts, for five percent commission, the mills to give them the exclusive sale for five years. After considerable delay and discussion, most of the colored goods mills in North Carolina signed this contract with the Cone Export & Commission Company, and thus was born the 'Plaid Trust,' so named by the politicians in the early Nineties.

"In 1892 Mr. W. A. Erwin left the E. M. Holt Plaid Mill in Burlington to build the Erwin Cotton Mills in Durham. Like all the other mills on colored goods in this section, this mill was built to make plaids, and Crompton-Knowles box looms were installed. The Cone Export & Commission Company were selling agents. They found that there was a growing demand for denims in the South and induced Mr. Erwin to begin making them. Mr. Erwin quickly found that he could not make them satisfactorily on Crompton-Knowles looms, so installed plain looms and then later Draper Automatic looms. In 1896 Mr. Erwin changed his account. This left the Cone Export & Commission Company without a denim mill to supply the large demand which had been built up. Therefore, in 1895, Mr. Cone and his brothers built the Proximity Mills in Greensboro, which has become one of the largest denim manufacturers in the world.

"The above is an outline of the cotton mill industry as built up by E. M .Holt and his associates. Some of these mills have gone out of existence; a number of them have gone into the hands of other people; a good many of them have changed the product to rayon or silk weaving or knitting; some of them are enlarged and improved but still run on cotton goods. They are giving employment to a great many thousands of operatives and, as prophesied by Lossing in his Field Book, have proved 'a real blessing, present

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and prospective, for it gives employment and comfort to many poor girls who might otherwise be wretched.'

"The original Alamance Mill is still in operation. In 1905, Mr. L. Banks Holt bought out the interests of the other partners in this little mill and, when he incorporated the L. Banks Holt Manufacturing Company, this became one of the units. Mr. Holt died in 1920, and in 1927 his heirs sold the old Alamance Mill out of the family to John Shoffner, who started as a Doffer boy in this mill. Mr. Shoffner with John Black, his brother-in-law, who had been an overseer in the mill, had started a little knitting mill a few years previous in the edge of the village. This had been very successful and, as they wanted to enlarge, they bought out the original mill and are still operating it as a corporation under the name of Standard Hosiery Mill, which at present is capitalized at $635,000.00."

Thus we chronicle briefly the accomplishments of a true pioneer and his descendants. Few men, if any, have influenced the building of so many cotton mills as did Edwin Michael Holt. As much as any one man, he can be truly called the Father of Cotton Manufacturing in North Carolina.

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## *Chapter Fourteen*

## *James W. Cannon*

James W. Cannon, one of the deans of the Southern textile industry and the greatest manufacturer of towels in the world, ranked among the leading business men, not only of the South, but of the entire United States. He was a merchant as well as a manufacturer, a trader of superlative ability, a virile personality. He was considered the oracle of the industry and was constantly sought for advice by younger men who came to rest their burden of trouble on his willing shoulders.

Mr. Cannon's success was due largely to his vision. He first saw the vision, dimly, as a boy of fourteen, when he left the farm in Mecklenburg County, N. C., where he was born, and started in as a clerk in a general store in Concord. His pay for that first job was $48 a year and his board, and there was mighty little time allowed for vision in the hours he had to work.

At twenty, however, Mr. Cannon had established himself well enough to start a store of his own. Within a few years he had built up his business to a point where he could build no more, for the Concord territory could not support a larger trade. Like Alexander the Great, he pined for new worlds to conquer. He found them and out of his experience he took one of the first principles of business success:

"Don't limit yourself. Pick out the biggest field you can find, and the biggest goal in it, and aim for it."

That was what Mr. Cannon did. He broke away from the mercantile trade because his circle of buyers was limited, and embarked in an industry whose product he could sell all over the world. In 1888 he organized the Cannon Manufacturing Co., at Concord, with a capital stock of $75,000. He built a 4,000 spindle mill—Liliputian compared to the present Cannon Manufacturing Company. But it was the genesis of the largest towel plant in the world, with mills at York, S. C., Concord and Kannapolis, N. C., a "Cannon" town, built by Mr. Cannon, consisting only of his plant and the residences of his workers. In addition Mr. Cannon assisted in the organiza-

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tion of, or was largely interested in, about twenty other mill properties, with 600,000 spindles and more than 10,000 looms.

Mr. Cannon's success was due to the trading and merchandising ability which was his original gift of genius, and to two attributes of character. One was absolute integrity, the other the will to give all he had to his work. "Put in more than you take out," he said. "A tree won't grow unless you fertilize it." His honesty was never questioned; consequently he never failed to obtain credit when he needed it. He agreed with the view that bankers should judge a man who applies for a loan by his character rather than by his financial standing, and made use of this standard in his own judgment. "There goes a man," he once said, "who can have anything I've got. I trust him." Mr. Cannon built up this reputation by hard work, so hard that it was his only interest. He avoided expanding his interests too much outside of the cotton manufacturing field. No manufacturer has been quicker to absorb modern ideas and to act on them. His buildings are conspicuous for their up-to-date appearance, their cleanliness, and the care taken of them and their equipment. His mill villages are models.

In 1900 Mr. Cannon organized a commission house under the firm name of "Cannon Mills," in New York City. This has grown to include offices in many other cities, and markets not only the product of the Cannon chain, but of many other mills in addition.

Mr. Cannon found happiness as well as success in his long and useful life. He married young and fortunately, and had ten children. His youngest son, Charles A. Cannon, is now president of the Cannon Manufacturing Co., succeeding his father.

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## *Chapter Fifteen*

## *John Henry Montgomery*

No sketch of the Southern textile industry would be complete without a review of the activities of Captain John Henry Montgomery. To the younger generation of cotton manufacturers, his name is largely a memory, for he died in 1902, from a fall suffered while inspecting work on the erection of the plant of Gainesville Manufacturing Company. Several great organizations stand as memorials to his achievements, chief among these being the Pacolet Manufacturing Co. at Pacolet, S. C., with mills also at New Holland, Ga.; the Spartan Mills at Spartanburg, S. C., and the Gainesville Manufacturing Company at Gainesville, Ga.

Captain Montgomery, as he was known to his friends and business associates, was born in 1833, the eldest of a large family of children and a member of a family distinguished in British history. Among his ancestors are a number of members of the aristocracy of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. His great-great-grandfather was of Scotch-Irish descent. He moved to Pennsylvania from the North of Ireland before the Revolution, and settled finally in Spartanburg in 1785.

The early training of John Henry Montgomery was along mercantile lines, and rather humble ones at that. In 1852, at the age of nineteen, he became a clerk in a country store near Spartanburg at the princely salary of $5 per month and board. He held this position for a year, and then went to Columbia, where he became a clerk in another store. He later formed a partnership with a brother-in-law in general merchandising business at Hobbyville, S. C. After the loss of his partner, he conducted a mercantile business in connection with a small tannery until the outbreak of the Civil War, when, in December, 1861, he enrolled as a volunteer in the 18th Regiment, S. C. V. Later he was made commissary with the rank of Captain, and in 1863 became assistant commissary of the brigade, and in 1864 he was appointed assistant division commissary. While he was in the army, his family subsisted on the proceeds from a small farm. In 1865, on his return from the war, he found that he was in possession of a small stock of leather in

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his tannery, and with this he set to work to restore his fallen fortunes.

His business abilities, which were strikingly demonstrated later in life, displayed themselves through the recognition of the possibilities of commercial fertilizers in the South. The restoration of the depleted soil of the South became more or less of a passion with him, and he experimented with the use of commercial fertilizers on his farm. He showed his neighbors the importance of stimulating plant growth through this agency, and subsequently became engaged in the fertilizer business. He built warehouses in Spartanburg, where he finally moved in 1874. His business grew to such an extent that he expanded its scope and took into partnership Walker and Flemming and thenceforth operated under the name of Walker, Flemming & Company, dealers in fertilizers at Spartanburg.

It was in 1881, when the firm of Walker, Flemming & Company purchased certain water power rights on the Pacolet River, known as Trough Shoals, that he made his debut into the textile world. Upon a site adjacent to the water power, a cotton mill was erected in 1881, and this became the first unit of the Pacolet Manufacturing Company of which Captain Montgomery was chosen president and treasurer. The mill at the outset consisted of 10,000 spindles. In 1887 he increased it to 20,000, and in 1893 he doubled it again to 40,000 spindles. In 1900 he built a 20,000 spindle unit at New Holland, Georgia. Under the guidance of Captain Montgomery the capital stock of Pacolet Manufacturing Company was increased four times—$300,000 to $450,000 to $700,000, to $1,000,000. Its equipment and production have been considerably increased since that time.

Captain Montgomery next, in 1889, organized the Spartan Mills, of which he also became president and treasurer, and under his management and that of his sons and grandsons this plant grew to a capacity of 85,000 ring spindles, 1,100 broad and 1,490 narrow looms, the company's product comprising print cloths, broadcloths and sheetings. Captain Montgomery also became interested in the Gainesville Cotton Mills, Gainesville, Georgia; the Whitney Mills, Whitney, S. C.; the Lockhart Mills, Lockhart, S. C.; the Clifton Mills, Clifton, S. C., and the Morgan Iron Works.

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During a long and fruitful life Captain Montgomery won the reputation of a generous and public spirited citizen, and was an active worker in stimulating the educational facilities of the South. He became president of the Cooper Limestone Institute, now known as Limestone College, which owes much of its growth and success to his excellent business judgment and financial aid.

The industrial work of Captain Montgomery has been ably carried on by his sons and grandsons, as have his public-spirited efforts. Victor M. Montgomery succeeded his father as president and treasurer of the Pacolet Manufacturing Company, and the Gainesville Manufacturing Company. He was later also made Treasurer and General Manager of Whitney Manufacturing Company of Spartanburg, S. C. He was active in the development of the industry, serving faithfully until his death in 1934 as Treasurer of the Traffic Committee of the Cotton Manufacturers Associations of Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and of the American Cotton Manufacturers Association. He served as President of the Cotton Manufacturers Association of South Carolina for a term and occupied a prominent position in other associations of Cotton Manufacturers. Benjamin W. Montgomery served as Assistant Treasurer of Pacolet Mills. He was most active, however, in Drayton Mills of Spartanburg, S. C., of which he was President and Treasurer until his death, which occurred in 1933. Walter S. Montgomery, another son, served for years, from 1902 until his death, as President and Treasurer of the Spartan Mills. He succeeded his father in the active management of Spartan Mills. Like his illustrious father, he was very prominently identified with the general associational activities of the cotton manufacturing industry, as well as active in civic affairs.

As a member of the firm of Montgomery & Crawford, wholesale and retail hardware and cotton mill supplies in Spartanburg, he was closely identified with the mercantile business in Spartanburg. He was active in the organization and erection of the Montgomery Building, a sky scraper of Spartanburg, which he served as Treasurer. In 1904 he became Treasurer and General Manager of the Laurens Cotton Mills, Laurens, S. C. He was director of the P. & N. and C. & W. C. Railways, as well as several banking institutions. A grandson, Walter S. Montgomery, Jr., is now serving as active head of Spartan Mills and also of Gaffney Manufacturing Company. V. M. Montgomery, Jr., another grandson, is serving as active head of Gainesville Manufacturing Company at Gainesville, Ga.

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## Chapter Sixteen

### Fuller E. Callaway

Fuller E. Callaway was one of the leading cotton manufacturers of the South, a beloved citizen of LaGrange, and his great ability was often called into counsel at Washington.

If a vote were to be taken among his friends, as to his pre-eminent personal quality, it would probably show a majority stressing Mr. Callaway's fine, human naturalness, which was one of his most endearing attributes, and which was never affected by success, wealth and fame which crowned his labors.

Fuller Callaway was innately a great humanist. Because he knew human nature and loved people, he could work with them in a spirit of understanding and mutuality.

A notable, and for his friends, a delightful side of Mr. Callaway's personality, was his ability as a teller of good stories. It was one of his methods of expressing his philosophy, for, practical as he was, he was a philosopher as well. He did not indulge in sarcasm. His humor had no sting. It was of the variety that points a moral.

It is this powerful personality that has made him esteemed and loved in his home town and respected by his business associates throughout the United States. A man of rare business judgment, hard-headed and practical, he never lost the human qualities that make one place men above things. For example, an interviewer once put this question to him:

"What do you do at LaGrange?"

"We make American citizens, and run cotton mills to pay the expenses."

Another trifle that went far toward furnishing the key-note to his character was the following phrase from his daily prayer: "O, Lord, give me enough trouble to keep me humble." The average man with less faculty for accomplishment than Fuller E. Callaway might with propriety omit the supplication as savoring of superfluity.

Mr. Callaway was a son of the South. He was born in LaGrange, Ga., in July, 1870. Both his father and grandfather were Baptist ministers. As a mere lad Mr. Callaway showed an aptitude for

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business. When he was only thirteen years old he cleaned up $36.45 in a cotton-raising venture, and he put every cent of it in the bank. He was still going to school, and it was his requirements for educational purposes that induced him to draw his first check. He wanted to get a copy book. When he went to the window to draw his money, one of the bank officials was at the paying teller's window. He looked at the check. It was drawn for twenty cents.

"Why, my boy," came the protest, "we are not accustomed to accept checks for less than a dollar."

"But I don't want a dollar," replied the boy. "My copy book is only twenty cents. I am afraid if I had eighty cents more I might spend it."

This juvenile thrift impressed the banker. "You may cash a check for twenty cents or one cent, any time you want to," he said.

The merchant traits cropped out early in Mr. Callaway. At the age of eighteen he established a small five and ten cent store in LaGrange on borrowed capital. At that time Woolworth was just blossoming out with his first big venture in New York, and his Georgia compeer used to go to the metropolis to look over the establishment of his exemplar. The little mercantile concern prospered and expanded into the leading department store of the town. It became the foundation of a large wholesale dry goods business with customers over a large adjacent area.

It was in 1900 that Mr. Callaway entered cotton manufacturing. His first venture was in LaGrange, of course. He told the story of his initiation as follows:

"It was like the measles in the South in those days. Every town wanted to build a cotton mill. We got it at LaGrange. We did not have much of anything, but we got up a cotton mill; and auctioned off the directorships. Anybody that would take $5,000 worth of stock, we would make a director; and if a widow with a son had $2,000, we would make the son a bookkeeper. We organized our little mill, and got our home people there to work in it, and we worked it along rather human lines. Everybody was proud of it and carried everything he had in it. A good many of the laborers took stock in it. We had a great many poor white people with the highest type of morality and religion. They could not produce cotton at five cents a pound against the negro; and these men be-

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gan to move to town as cotton mill operatives. Their position in the country had been so poor, on account of the low price of their product, that it elevated them even to bring them to town to work in a cotton mill, which in itself was a poorly-paid occupation.

"They were mighty good stock, however, pure Anglo-Saxon. They had not much of anything but their independence, but they were mighty careful about that. It was this kind of people we had from the start as operatives in our LaGrange mill. You cannot standardize that kind of people. They are too independent, too individual; and I have felt right along that nothing could be worse for the country than to try to standardize them. If you are going to have good Americans you must have individuals, and our problem is to make them good American citizens as well as good cotton mill operatives."

In 1901, Mr. Callaway was induced to take over the management of the Milstead Manufacturing Co., Conyers, Ga., which had been established several years before that but had not been successful. He made a signal success of this venture, and as a result it became easy to command the capital for other enterprises as rapidly as he was willing to assume the responsibility for them.

It was not long before he began to find himself head of quite a number of flourishing concerns, including banks, warehouses, mercantile establishments and real estate developments. A list of the enterprises which he launched and led to success will give an idea of his energy and widespread activities. They included: Unity Cotton Mills, Elm City Cotton Mills, Unity Spinning Mills, Hillside Cotton Mills, Valley Waste Cotton Mills, all at LaGrange; Milstead Manufacturing Co., Conyers, Ga.; Manchester Cotton Mills, Manchester, Ga.; Callaway Department Stores, the LaGrange National Bank, the LaGrange Savings Bank, Security Warehouse Co., Electric Ginnery, LaGrange Insurance Agency, the Callaway Development Co. and the Manchester Development Co.

From the little mill founded with local capital in 1900, the textile organizations now under the direction of Mr. Callaway's sons who succeeded him, embrace eleven large successful mills doing a business of approximately $25,000,000 a year.

His sons, Cason J. Callaway and Fuller E. Callaway, Jr., succeeded to many of the active managerial duties formerly filled by

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their father, and are ably carrying on in the light of his inspiration.

No sketch of Mr. Callaway's career would be complete without a brief reference to his public service. He has filled several State offices of importance in Georgia, and he was a member of the governing board of the Council of National Defense during the World War. He was also chairman of the Commission on European Representation at the World Cotton Conference held in New Orleans in October, 1919. He was vice-president for the United States of the World Cotton Conference, and past president (1917-18) of the American Cotton Manufacturers Association.

As in the case of several other broadminded Southern Cotton Manufacturers, Mr. Callaway took a keen interest in the daily life and social working conditions of his mill operatives. He was too democratic and too deeply human, and he also had too much of a sense of humor, to permit this interest to descend to the snobbish level of "welfare work." He liked people and he liked to see them get ahead. He wanted to see men doing their best in the kind of work for which they were best suited. The comfortable and attractive homes of his employes, their schools, gardens, playgrounds and athletic fields and parks were merely instruments for the attainment of this end.

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# *Chapter Seventeen*

## *William Allen Erwin*

For the following facts, covering the life of this active pioneer in the textile industry in North Carolina, we are indebted to his brother, J. Harper Erwin, president of Durham Cotton Manufacturing Company, and to the History of North Carolina, Volume V, North Carolina Biography.

One of the most active and most successful of industrial pioneers to carry on the work of that grand old patriarch of cotton manufacturing in North Carolina, E. M. Holt, was his grand nephew, William Allen Erwin, who was the son of Colonel Joseph J. Erwin, a prominent farmer and plantation owner on Upper Creek, near Morganton in Burke County, North Carolina.

William A. Erwin was born on his father's plantation, known as Bellevue, on July 15, 1856. His mother was Elvira J. Holt, daughter of Dr. William R. Holt, of Lexington, N. C., who was a brother of Edwin Michael Holt.

William Allen Erwin secured his early education in the schools of Burke County and in the Finley High School at Lenoir, and then had two years of higher education at the A. & M. College of Kentucky University, but his education was cut short while he was yet a boy.

On December 4, 1874 he became a salesman in the general store of Holt, Gant & Holt at Burlington, N. C., where he remained until 1877. At that time he took a position as bookkeeper with the North Carolina Railway Company at Burlington. A year later he became engaged in merchandising, and continued as a merchant until 1882.

It was in 1882 that Mr. Erwin first became identified with the business which brought him into the industrial field. From that year until 1893 he served as treasurer and general manager of the E. M. Holt Plaid Mills in Alamance County. His experience, therefore, was obtained at the very source of textile industrial development in North Carolina. He learned his pioneering in the original school of industrial pioneering in the state. What wonder that in later years he achieved such great success in the development of the textile industry of the state!

After 1893 Mr. Erwin made his home at West Durham, N. C. un-

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till his death. At West Durham he established, developed and operated one of the largest cotton mill interests in the state of North Carolina.

At the time of his death, under his leadership and control, were four of the outstanding mills of the Erwin Cotton Mills Company, Numbers 1 and 4 at West Durham, with 75,000 spindles, 903 narrow and 1,030 broad looms; Mill No. 2 at Duke, with 35,000 spindles and 1,024 looms; Mill No. 3 at Cooleemee, with 45,000 spindles and 1,296 looms. Also under his control and direction were the Durham Cotton Manufacturing Company, East Durham, with 24,000 spindles and 820 looms; the Pearl Cotton Mills, North Durham, with 11,000 spindles and 248 broad looms; Oxford Cotton Mills at Oxford, with 6,200 spindles; and the Locke Cotton Mills Company at Concord, with 35,000 spindles and 976 looms.

These mills under his direction employed a capital of approximately $10,000,000, and in the aggregate formed a very large part of the industrial resources of the state of North Carolina.

On October 23, 1889 Mr. Erwin married Miss Sadie L. Smedes, daughter of Aldert Smedes, D.D., founder of St. Mary's Episcopal School at Raleigh, N. C. To them were born four children, three daughters and one son: Bessie Smedes, Margaret Locke, Sarah Lyell and William Allen Erwin, Jr.

It is probably an outstanding fact in the annals of the development of industry in North Carolina that so many of the descendants of that first pioneer, E. M. Holt, have gone so actively into the textile industry, and have made such marked successes.

William Allen Erwin was most successful in practically applying the lessons which he had learned at the feet of his great uncle, E. M. Holt, who established the old Alamance Mill, which in turn led to the establishment of many prominent manufacturing plants in North Carolina.

The spirit and inspiration of E. M. Holt was enormous. Its practical application and actual operation in the hands of William Allen Erwin was even greater. E. M. Holt blazed the trail. William A. Erwin made it immensely wider and smoother. Both were pioneers of the first water.

William A. Erwin was succeeded as president of Durham Cotton Manufacturing Company by his brother, J. Harper Erwin, who is also a follower of E. M. Holt, and an apt disciple.

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## *Chapter Eighteen*

### *Henry Pinckney Hammett*

An industrial pioneer contemporary with Captain Ellison A. Smyth, and one of his principal co-workers in the development of the interests of industry in South Carolina for many years, was Colonel Henry Pinckney Hammett, who was the son of Jesse and Nancy Elliott (Davis) Hammett, and was born on January 1, 1823, about twelve miles east of Greenville.

The name Hammett is an English surname of early origin. It originally derived its meaning from the baptismal name of "son of Hamon," and has been popular in Cheshire, England, for many centuries. The English ancestors of Colonel Hammett's family have not been traced, but it is known that the original Hammett in America was Jesse Hammett, the progenitor of this line, who came to America from England before the Revolution and settled in Maryland.

The records of the next few generations are missing, and the first descendant of Jesse Hammett, the American ancestor of whom there is positive record, is John F. Hammett. He was born in Virginia and died in Greenville, South Carolina. He was a planter and a proprietor of note. His son, Jesse Hammett, was like his father a planter. He was also a justice of the peace.

Henry Pinckney Hammett, the Colonel Hammett of this chapter, son of Jesse Hammett, became one of the most widely known cotton manufacturers of the South, and was one of the most honored and distinguished citizens of Greenville, South Carolina. His ingenuity, perseverance, and his many other pioneering qualities gained for him accomplishments far above the average, and enabled him to establish a record in industrial pioneering that is outstanding.

Colonel Hammett received his early education in the local schools of his neighborhood. and at the age of eighteen he accepted a position as a teacher near his home, and taught for two and a half years. At the age of twenty-two he entered into partnership in a mercantile business, which lasted for four years, and was quite successful.

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Selling his share and interest in the store to his partner, Nathaniel Morgan, in 1848, Colonel Hammett purchased an interest in the Batesville Cotton Factory, which was owned in part by the father of Jane Bates, who was Colonel Hammett's wife. The firm name became the William Bates and Company, and Colonel Henry Pinckney Hammett continued his connection with this firm for fourteen years in the capacity of financial and commercial agent. In 1863 he removed to the town of Greenville, South Carolina, where he resided until his death.

In September, 1863, however, he enlisted in the Confederate Army, taking at once the rank of Quartermaster of the First Regiment of South Carolina State Troops. He was stationed with the regiment at Charleston, but after a few months, on account of ill health, he was compelled to return home. Early in 1864 he was detailed as war assessor for Greenville County, and continued in the service of the Confederacy in that capacity until the close of the war.

He was elected a member of the popular branch of the state legislature in the fall of 1865 and served for one term, declining re-election. In May 1866, he was elected president of the Greenville and Columbia Railroad Company, a position which he filled for four years, also declining re-election. In the meanwhile, in 1862, he had purchased a water power on the line of the railway, with the far-sighted intention of building a cotton mill on the site at some future date.

The city of Greenville elected him a member of the Board of Aldermen, and later elected him Mayor. He served in each capacity for one term. He was one of the most highly esteemed citizens of Greenville, prominent in civic affairs, and a leader in most worth-while, constructive movements.

Colonel Hammett's greatest accomplishments, however, were attained in the field of industry. He founded and developed Piedmont Mills, now the Piedmont Manufacturing Company, and became a pioneer in the development of one of the first and largest modern, scientific cotton mills of the South. In 1873 he carried out the plan on which he had been working for several years. After the purchase of the land on the Greenville and Columbia Railroad he began the erection of the Piedmont Mills, having organized a cor-

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poration under a charter secured in 1874. He was elected the first president and treasurer, and was the largest stockholder in the company.

Under his able guidance and foresight the corporation grew steadily to its present position, as one of the leading manufacturing establishments in the South. A village grew around the mill, and was also named Piedmont, and now possesses a population of from 3,000 to 4,000 people.

In 1885 Colonel Hammett was one of those who purchased the Camperdown Mills in Greenville, which were organized into a new corporation under the name of the Camperdown Cotton Mills, with Colonel Hammett as president and treasurer. This position he held until his death. He was also, at his death, financially interested in many other corporations in the state. He had a deep and abiding interest in the welfare of the workers of his mills. It was through his leadership that a progressive and serviceable mill vicinity was developed around each enterprise in which he was interested.

He was of a progressive nature, and ever ready to launch out into new and improved phases of the textile industry. Being of a true pioneering spirit, he knew no difficulties, and was the master of his own destiny. He was an outstanding, upright, Christian gentleman and industrialist, who typified the noble characteristics of the leaders of the years gone by, who were responsible for the development of a great industrial commonwealth.

Colonel Henry Pinckney Hammett married Deborah Jane Bates in 1848. They had seven children: Betty, Mary, Edwin P., Thomas C., William H., James D., and George Pierce. One of the daughters, Betty, married Colonel James Lawrence Orr, Jr., who founded Orr Cotton Mills of Anderson, S. C., and was the father of the present president of Orr Cotton Mills.

James D. Hammett, one of the sons of Colonel Hammett, in 1899 was elected secretary and assistant treasurer of the Orr Cotton Mills at Anderson. In 1903 he organized the Chiquola Manufacturing Company at Honea Path, S. C. and was made president and treasurer, and continued in this capacity until his death in 1924. Likewise he served as president and treasurer of Watts Mill at

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Laurens, as president and treasurer of Brogon Mills and Anderson Cotton Mills of Anderson, as president and treasurer of Orr Cotton Mills, as president of the American Cotton Manufacturers' Association, and of the Cotton Manufacturers' Association of South Carolina.

His son and successor, Lawrence O. Hammett, who is a grandson of Colonel Henry Pinckney Hammett, is now the capable president and treasurer of the Chiquola Manufacturing Company of Honea Path.

Another son, James D. Hammett, Jr., is also active in textiles and serving as assistant treasurer of the Chiquola Manufacturing Company.

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# *Chapter Nineteen*

## *James Lawrence Orr, Jr.*

Among the pioneers in the industrial field in the South will be found men who started in their activities in various walks of life—some agriculturally inclined, others commercially, others industrially, and still others professionally.

The legal profession has produced a number of brilliant industrialists. Among this number we find Colonel James Lawrence Orr, Jr., who was the son of former Governor James Lawrence and Mary Jane (Marshall) Orr. He was born at Abbeville, S. C. on August 29, 1852 and died February 26, 1905, after a brilliant and constructive career.

His ancestors were Irish, the record of the family dating back as far as 1580. His first American ancestor was Robert Orr, born in Ballygowan, Ireland. He was a native of County Antrim, Ireland, that famous section in which were produced many outstanding ancestors of prominent Americans. Robert Orr died in North Carolina.

It seems to have been a natural trait for the Orrs to be engaged in textiles, and active in military affairs. Robert Orr was a linen merchant and Captain of the Militia in Pennsylvania.

His son Jehu Orr was born in North Carolina and moved to Anderson County in South Carolina. He also was a Captain in the Militia. In turn his son Christopher Orr was a farmer and a merchant, and likewise a Captain of Militia. In turn his son James Lawrence Orr, I, who was born in Anderson County in 1822, became one of the most famous men ever produced in South Carolina. He was in turn an attorney, an editor, a legislatureman, a member of Congress, Speaker of the House, Colonel of Orr's Regiment, a member of the first Confederate Senate, Governor of South Carolina, a Judge, and United States Minister to Russia, where he died.

James Lawrence Orr, Jr. attended the primary schools of Anderson, and Kings' Mountain Military Academy at Yorkville, from which institution he graduated in 1869. He then entered the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, Va., and remained there two years. Later he spent a year in the law office of McGowan and

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Parker at Anderson, S. C., and in January, 1873, he resigned his position to accompany his father, who had just been appointed as Minister to Russia by President Grant. James Lawrence Orr, Jr. was appointed second secretary of the legation, and was established in St. Petersburg. On his father's untimely death, he was in charge of the funeral party on the 9,000 mile journey home, where his father was buried in Anderson, S. C.

Mr. Orr then resumed his law studies and was admitted to the bar in November, 1873. He went immediately into a co-partnership with Judge J. P. Reed of Anderson. In 1874 he was chosen a member of the state legislation from Anderson County and was re-elected for two subsequent terms, declining election the fourth term.

He was appointed solicitor of the Eighth Circuit Court in the autumn of 1881, and was elected to the same position in 1884, serving for seven and a half years, then declining re-election. In 1888 he was chosen permanent chairman of the Democratic State Convention. This conferred upon him the title of Colonel, by which military cognomen he has since been known.

As a member of the law firm of Wells and Orr, he re-entered active practice of law after retiring as solicitor. In 1891 he became interested in cotton manufacturing and was made president of the Piedmont Manufacturing Company, Piedmont, S. C. He was organizer of the Orr Cotton Mills of Anderson, S. C., vice-president of the American Company, the Mills Manufacturing Company, the Greenville "News," the Paris Mountain Hotel Company and the Greenville Gas and Electric Company. He was a director of the First National Bank of Greenville, the American National Bank, and the People's Bank of Greenville, also of the Easley Manufacturing Company and the Cox Manufacturing Company. He also served as a trustee of the South Carolina Medical College, of Charleston, of Converse College in Spartanburg, and the Clemson Agricultural College of Clemson.

He was particularly active in educational and political affairs of the state for many years.

He was married on November 12, 1873, to Miss Betty Hammett,

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daughter of Colonel Henry P. Hammett, one of the state's most prominent industrial pioneers. Their union was blessed with six children: Floride, James Lawrence Orr, III, Eloise, Henry Hammett, Marshall Pinckney and George Wells.

The Orr Cotton Mills, one of the most successful in South Carolina, and which Colonel Orr organized, is now (in 1935) very capably directed by his son, Marshall Pinckney Orr, who became vice-president and assistant treasurer of the mill in 1923, and in 1924 was elected president and treasurer.

The near and distant relatives of James Lawrence Orr, Jr., are today engaged in the textile industry, and in direct charge of many of South Carolina's most progressive cotton mills.

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## *Chapter Twenty*

### *Moses H. and Ceasar Cone*

True pioneers in any endeavor are rare, but it is very exceptional to find brothers cast in such a role. This unusual circumstance, however, did happen in the textile industrial development in North Carolina.

The Cone brothers were pioneers of the first water in the field of denims, a most important branch of the textile industry.

Starting as novices in the industrial field, within a remarkably short time they became all-powerful factors in the denims market.

Their rapid rise was based on sound business judgment and two closely correlated, progressive spirits. As many of the industrial pioneers of their day likewise did, they gained success not merely by their business sagacity, but also by a big-hearted and full appreciation of the welfare of their employees.

No textile executives ever took more interest in their workers or did more for them than did Moses and Ceasar Cone.

As a result, they left to their successors model mill villages, populated by healthy and happy workers—a solid foundation for the building of any future industry.

The Cone brothers' success pays tribute to their parents, Herman and Helen Cone, whose thrifty, industrious habits and sound views of life and business had much to do with shaping the careers of their illustrious progeny.

Moses and Ceasar Cone were born in Tennessee, Moses in the year 1857 and Ceasar in 1859. During their youth, the father moved to Baltimore and there established a wholesale grocery house, which became in the year 1878 the firm of H. Cone and Sons. When this firm was dissolved in 1890, Moses and Ceasar Cone formed the Cone Export and Commission Company, handling cotton goods in New York City.

It was through this sales organization, which remains today a leading factor in the marketing of southern-made cotton fabrics, that the Cone brothers became acquainted with mill owners, mills and manufacturing. Desiring to maintain an even closer contact

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with the mill owners, the Cone Export and Commission Company established in 1893 a main office at Greensboro, N. C., a city which has the advantage of proximity to cotton fields, gins and warehouses. However, the New York office remained the general sales headquarters.

Through their close association with the cotton manufacturers, the Cones saw great possibilities in cotton spinning, and determined to begin the manufacture of denims. They acquired several hundred acres of land on the outskirts of the city of Greensboro, alongside of the main line of the Southern Railway, and erected in 1895 and 1896 the mills of the Proximity Manufacturing Company—so named because of the nearness to the source of supply—and began the operation of their 240 looms. After ten years of remarkable success, the company built near-by the White Oak Mills, which have become the largest denim manufacturing plant in the world.

Becoming more familiar with the market for work clothes, Ceasar Cone later organized the Proximity Print Works, in order to secure foreign markets, which absorb large quantities of indigo, drills and khakis. The Proximity Print Works has since gone into the printing of art ticking for mattress covers, and is a large industry in itself, with a present capacity of 125,000 yards a day.

In 1890, Greensboro had 3,000 people. It is now a city of 53,500 population, its growth being due quite largely to the progressive spirit and vision of the Cone brothers.

Moses Cone did not see his great ambitions fully realized, for he died in 1908, leaving his brother Ceasar to carry on most successfully. However, Moses Cone was a dreamer of dreams, and a doer of great deeds. It has truly been said of him: "He established high ideals in the textile industry, and his benefactions remain to bless future generations."

The Cone Mills reached the point where they were producing one-third of the denims made in all the world, and the denim market looked to Ceasar Cone to forecast the demand and to set the pace in production.

Ceasar Cone was the first man in the textile industry to recognize the fact that work clothes are a necessity in commerce; that cheap, shoddy fabrics, made into work clothes, are a detriment, a failure, an expense; and that durable, dependable, lasting work clothes are

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an economic necessity. He was a recognized leader in the industry, and became known internationally as a leader, an organizer and a man who dared.

Before his death in 1917, at the age of fifty-seven, he had brought into the business two younger brothers, Bernard M. and Julius W. Cone. Since Ceasar Cone's death, these men, with Ceasar's son, Herman Cone, and J. E. Hardin, Secretary and General Manager, have taken over the responsibilities of the Cone Mills.

Bernard M. Cone is now president of the Proximity Manufacturing Company, and is not only operating the company successfully, but is amplifying the humanitarian policies with regard to the welfare of the operatives and their families. The employees of the Cone Mills are well housed, well paid and provided with the comforts and pleasures of life; for the management has always realized that the most economical production and resultant profits depend upon the physical, spiritual and mental well-being of their operatives.

The annual pay roll of the Cone Mills is around $3,000,000, and the number of employees averages 3,000. It may be safely stated that the Mills provide a livelihood for 15,000 people who live in the mill villages, and for many thousands of other folks who grow, pick and handle the cotton, and whose labors produce other commodities that are used in the mills.

White Oak Mills operate 3,000 looms and 61,000 spindles; Proximity Mills, 1,600 looms and 53,000 spindles; while the Print Works has seven great printing machines, bleachery, dyeing and finishing apparatus.

White Oak Mills manufacture daily 160,000 yards of denim, and Proximity Mills 90,000 yards each day. The daily capacity of the three mills is 375,000 yards or over 210 miles of cloth per day—sufficient to lay a tread carpet from Buffalo to Albany, N. Y.

The mills consume 82,000 bales of cotton per year, and produce 75,000,000 yards of denims, or 37,000,000 pounds. Add to this the yardage production of the Print Works, 37,500,000 yards, and you have a strip of cloth reaching two and a half times around the earth.

Of the output of these mills, 95 per cent is sold direct to the cutters for making overalls. The goods produced in all three mills is sufficient to make 115,400 garments per day.

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They are the largest users of indigo dyes in the world, buying over 2,000,000 pounds of indigo annually. For the baling of their product they use 400,000 yards of burlap per annum.

Through this tremendous production, the Cone enterprise ranks not merely as one of the greatest institutions in the textile industry of the South, but is one of the great manufacturing communities of the United States.

The life of each of these two outstanding Cone brothers justifies a separate chapter of this volume. Try as hard as you may, however, it will be virtually impossible to separate the lives of these two prominent pioneers. Their aims, their ideals, their accomplishments were usually identical. Such a beautiful, close association of brothers in business is not common in American history, and it is very exceptional to find two such outstanding pioneers in the same family at the same time.

Greensboro, the state of North Carolina, and the entire cotton textile industry have much to thank Moses and Ceasar Cone for. Their names are inscribed in history along with the greatest of the great in industrial progress.

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## *Chapter Twenty-One*

### *Braxton Bragg Comer*

In the development of each industrial state there usually will be found one or more outstanding lives which typify the very spirit of the state itself. The life of a constructive leader will influence development in many ways, and the resulting progress will very definitely carry his impress.

Such was without question the case in Alabama during the life and times of Braxton Bragg Comer. When one thinks of industrial Alabama, one thinks of the name of Comer. The family name has long since been synonymous with industrial progress in the state.

However, with this individual, there was an influence far wider than the confines of the industrial life of Alabama. B. B. Comer as president of the Railroad Commission, as Governor and as Senator, very greatly influenced the political growth of the state. In the same capacities, he became also a great educational leader—perhaps the outstanding patron of education in the history of Alabama. He likewise became one of the state's chief leaders in the field of moral and social uplift. Through the years of his public service he portrayed the very spirit of Alabama. He was one of her greatest statesmen, her chief benefactor, and outstanding pioneer, and a leader who drew the respect and faithful following of an ardent group of progressive Alabamians.

He and his brothers and sons made worthy contributions to great developments in the fields of agriculture, finance, commerce and industry outside of Alabama, as well as within. Together they were responsible for much of the growth of the textile industry in Alabama and elsewhere during the past two generations.

Braxton Bragg Comer was born at Spring Hill, Barbour County, Alabama, on November 7, 1848, the son of John Fletcher and Catherine L. (Drewry) Comer.

He attended the University of Alabama, the University of Georgia, and Emory and Henry College, graduating at the age of twenty-one, with the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

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After college he returned to Alabama and settled at Comer Station on the Montgomery and Eufaula Railroad and engaged in agriculture. It was as a planter that in 1872 he married Miss Eva Jane Harris of Cuthbert, Georgia.

Later he moved to Anniston, Alabama, where he continued his farming interests and engaged actively and extensively in wholesale pursuits, under the firm name of Comer and Trapp.

Mr. Comer was one of Alabama's most extensive and progressive farmers, and at one time owned over 30,000 acres of land, growing over 3,000 bales of cotton annually. He was among the first of the Alabama cotton planters to become a manufacturer of cotton goods on a large scale.

After he moved to Birmingham, Alabama, in 1890, he became president of the City National Bank and the Birmingham Corn and Flour Mills. Later he liquidated the bank and devoted his time to the manufacture of cotton, farming and corn milling. When Avondale Mills was organized in Birmingham in 1897, Mr. Comer was asked to take the presidency of the company, which position he held until his death on July 6, 1927.

Avondale Mills, starting with 30,000 spindles in the first plant at Birmingham, grew progressively, until today there are ten units in seven different communities in the state of Alabama, with a total of 282,160 spindles. They own and operate Eva Jane, the Central, the Sally B. and the Catherine Mills at Sylacauga; the Alexander City Cotton Mills, the Sycamore Mills, Mignon and Bevelle Mill, and the Pell City Manufacturing Company. These mills have a varied production, both in yarns and in cloth.

Under the leadership of Governor Comer, the Avondale Mills built up a reputation for honest dealing from Honolulu to the Argentine, and from the western slopes of the Andes to far Norway.

During the re-adjustment following the war, the warehouses of Avondale Mills were full of goods, the cotton mills were shutting down all over the country, and it looked as though no earthly power could prevent Avondale Mills from shutting down, but Governor Comer said, "I'll run these mills as long as I can borrow a dollar". His first thought always was to keep Avondale Mills strong so that people who moved within its shadow could depend on regular employment.

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He never let up on insistence for more and greater care in the manufacture of the products of Avondale Mills, but also he insisted with his selling agents that they get the higher price for the better goods.

His four sons were brought in the business at successive intervals, and today at one and the same time they find themselves outstanding textile leaders following constructively in the footsteps of their father, whose spirit serves as a constant inspiration. During the years of long association they have caught much of his vision and his high ideals. His sons, now actively engaged in manufacture are: J. Fletcher, Donald, Braxton B. and Hugh M. Comer.

Mr. Comer entered politics in 1874, when he was elected to the Commissioner's Court of Barbour County, in which capacity he served until 1880.

Through his experience as merchant, planter, manufacturer and shipper, Mr. Comer early realized the need for remedial railroad legislation, and succeeded in unifying shippers of a like conviction. As a result of his agitation in this matter, he was elected president of the Alabama Railroad Commission in 1904, and served two years, just previous to his election as governor of Alabama in January, 1907, in which capacity he served until 1911. He was later appointed to the United States Senate to serve the unexpired term at the death of Senator John H. Bankhead.

When Mr. Comer became Governor he was fortunate in having a legislature that endorsed the Comer policies, and it promptly enacted the Comer rate and railroad regulatory statutes, and wrote into the state's law the rates that might be charged by the railroads for transportation of the state's basic commodities.

Thomas M. Owen, in his "History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography", said of Mr. Comer: "He declared that the interest of the producer and the consumers needed to be more firmly safeguarded against the corporate interests, that the debauching lobby maintained by the railroads and operating in the very halls of legislation must be controlled, and that the sovereignty of the state should not be subordinated to public service corporations whose idea of freight and passenger tariff tax was limited to what the traffic will stand."

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Owen also stated that Governor Comer's induction into office was accompanied with brilliant military and civic ceremonies, the most elaborate and impressive since the Civil War, rivaling the historic parade of 46 years earlier, when Jefferson Davis was inaugurated on the same spot as President of the Confederate States.

As Governor of Alabama, Mr. Comer, with broad vision and the experience of large affairs, put the law-making body on notice that a liberal policy was to be maintained toward the educational and eleemosynary institutions, a policy which caused his name to be written in the annals of Alabama as a great educational governor. He was recognized as the father of Alabama's educational system as it now exists. When he left the office of Governor the state treasury contained little money, but the funds of the state were represented in buildings at the University, Alabama Polytechnic Institute and other educational institutions, and a movement had been put into effect which has resulted in the construction of a county high school in a great majority of the counties of Alabama.

While Mr. Comer was Governor, the first law attempting to regulate the ages of children working in mills was written into Alabama statute books. This effort of his grew until in after years the Alabama child welfare laws were among the fairest of those of any of our states, and the administration of these laws was such that directors of child welfare departments from other states were constantly coming to Alabama to study not only their laws, but the administration of them.

Governor Comer was also recognized as the father of Alabama's prohibition laws. The legislature favored the policy of state-wide prohibition and succeeded in passing a state-wide prohibition law which remained on the state books until 1911. He did not quit the fight, and in 1915 saw another state-wide prohibition law written—a law that established prohibition as the state's definite policy. In 1919 the law was further strengthened by friends of prohibition and Governor Comer's policies, and the legislature ratified the national prohibition amendment.

Governor Comer believed with all his might in a fair chance—that a child should have a fair chance for health and education; that a man should have a fair chance to work. As Governor, he put schools as far back in the country as children lived; and in the

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mill villages the children were provided with modern school buildings and playground equipment.

In the latter years he allowed his interest to center on certain activities not directly concerned with manufacturing. Two hospitals were built by his mill, a drug store opened and nurses employed, that employees and their families might have the care that such arrangements provide. A dairy, chicken farm, grist and flour mill, cotton gin and model farming were all added, not only for what it meant to employees on account of purer foods, but as encouragement to the immediate farming communities.

Next to his last instruction was, "Build a riverside camp as an outing place for any one who works for Avondale Mills". The camp that was built on Coosa River was named "Camp Brownie" after Mrs. B. B. Comer, Jr. He loved the camp and his own last happy well days were spent there. It was his wish that in the years to come it would furnish a gathering place for happy families and friends.

His last instructions were, "Pave the streets in the mill village in Birmingham", and this work was begun in the fall after his passing.

Governor Comer took great interest in the whole community. He built a school house and named it after his mother, "The Catherine Comer School". He and his youngest brother, Mr. E. T. Comer, founded an endowment fund which guarantees for all time a full nine-months term, with extra pay for the teachers. He also built a school for the negro children, "The Beckie Comer School", named for the oldest living Comer ex-slave.

Nothing gave him more pleasure than to ride over the farms and speak words of encouragement to the negro tenants.

Throughout his thirty-seven years of residence in Birmingham, Mr. Comer was active in social and civic affairs. He also served as superintendent of the First Methodist Church Sunday School, as steward and as trustee. It was through his interest and enterprise that a lot was bought and the Sunday School building erected for the First Methodist Church of Birmingham. And it was Governor Comer who brought a carload of books from New York, while he was superintendent, and established the Sunday School Library of the First Methodist Church.

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Mr. Clark Howell, Editor of the Atlanta *Constitution*, said of Governor Comer: "He was one of the most remarkable men I ever knew—one of the 'Old Roman' type who stood for what he thought, and was always ready to fight for it."

Governor Graves of Alabama stated: "He was a great governor, a strong senator, and an upstanding and fearless citizen. He was true—true unto himself and unto his own, unto his people and unto his God."

There are perhaps a number of cotton manufacturers who, as industrial pioneers, blazed an important trail in the industrial field. There are a few who succeeded as well as did Mr. Comer. There are no doubt some who were as extensively engaged in farming and merchandising. There have been isolated instances—some mentioned elsewhere in this volume—where cotton manufacturers have become outstanding statesmen, as did Mr. Comer. The annals of history, however, record very few, if any, instances where cotton manufacturers have displayed such outstanding versatility, and have succeeded so signally in the several important fields of industry, commerce, agriculture, finance, statesmanship and education.

Governor Comer was as unusual in his versatility as he was outstanding in his leadership. The state of Alabama will long feel the influence of his constructive life and will for centuries enjoy the fruits of his pioneering.

Mr. Donald Comer, who succeeded his father as president of Avondale Mills, and to a slightly lesser degree his brothers, have since the death of the Governor set before Alabama and the entire industrial field an exceptionally high standard of foresight, business sagacity and leadership.

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## *Chapter Twenty-Two*

Perhaps a good definition of a true pioneer is one who, beginning with nothing, launches out into the great unknown with courage and determination.

At least, it is admitted that a good test is found in the willingness of the pioneer, in the face of lack of experience in the path which he seeks to follow, and in spite of a minimum of re-assurance, and handicapped with the scarcity of comparative experiences of others, to strike out fearlessly with only his own determination and self confidence. Such was the case with Captain Ellison Adger Smyth. While his early training was sufficient to develop unusually strong characteristics, which stood him in good stead as he faced the uncertainties of hitherto untrodden paths, yet in his early life there was nothing in the nature of industry in his experience.

Shortly after his marriage in 1869 he was admitted as a partner in the wholesale hardware enterprise of J. E. Adger and Company in Charleston. In 1881, however, he began to realize that the future of the jobbing trade in Charleston was jeopardized by adverse freight rates, and by the concentration of wholesale houses in outlying cities which Charleston had previously supplied. Charleston's territory was suffering a steady limitation.

It is characteristic of Captain Smyth that he, more than any other prominent business man of his time, had the happy faculty or intuition which enabled him to see more definitely into the future. This characteristic no doubt made him the great pioneer that he was. Numerous incidents in his life proved conclusively that he could "read the hand-writing on the wall" unerringly, and he never hesitated to change his path, no matter how radical the change in direction, if he thought the circumstances warranted it. He possessed the uncanny faculty of building and beginning at the right time, and of selling and stopping at an equally advantageous time.

Discouraged with the limitation of the Charleston territory, and encouraged by the lives of the few earlier pioneers in the industrial field, he determined to leave the city of his birth and bid good-bye to wholesale activities, and enter into the field of cotton manufac-

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turing. At the time when his determination took definite form, he had never actually been in a cotton mill.

Because of the limitation of the Charleston wholesale territory, the firm of James Adger and Company, Bankers, suspended payment. Captain Smyth was appointed assignee for James Adger and Company. After he had settled the affairs of the company, and paid off every creditor, his close friend and associate, Mr. F. J. Pelzer of Charleston, in approaching him one day said, "Ellison, the wholesale business of Charleston is a thing of the past. What are you going to do for the future?" His ready reply was: "I am not going to sell goods. I am going to make my future in another direction. I am thinking seriously of buying the Fork Shoals Manufacturing Company, and of going into the cotton manufacturing business." Whereupon Mr. Pelzer immediately advised him that the enterprise was entirely too small and too far removed from a railroad. After a conference, the two agreed that they would go together and organize a company at Pelzer, on the river, where adequate water power could be secured, and near the Columbia and Greenville Railroad.

Mr. F. J. Pelzer and Captain Smyth were life-long friends. Mr. Pelzer was one of Charleston's most public-spirited citizens. He was one of the organizers and directors of the Anderson Phosphate and Oil Company, located at Anderson, S. C. He was a large investor in cotton mill stocks, and always lent a helping hand to new corporations located in different sections. He was extensively interested in banks and other types of industrial enterprises as well.

Having reached this determination, Captain Smyth busied himself in the sale of sufficient stock in the proposed new corporation to make it a possibility. Capital was over-subscribed, Captain Smyth, his relatives and Mr. Pelzer and friends purchasing all of it.

Accordingly with his family he moved to Pelzer and began the erection of the Pelzer Manufacturing Company and its village. For some time he lived in one of the mill houses there.

The capital stock of the Pelzer Manufacturing Company originally was $400,000. The mill was located near the Saluda River. The first mill had 10,000 spindles. Three other mills were subsequently built, making total spindles of 136,000. The capital was gradually increased to $1,000,000.

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Captain Smyth was the first president and treasurer of the Pelzer Manufacturing Company, and he held both offices for forty-three years, until he sold the entire company—which at the time of the sale had a trade-in capital stock of $1,000,000, and employed 1,500 operatives— for a price of $9,000,000. The property embraced the complete mill village, with population of over 5,000.

It is singular that Captain Smyth's determination to build was never more spectacular or more wise than his determination to sell. He had the uncanny faculty of knowing when to do a thing, and when to stop doing it.

It should be noted at this point that the erection and operation of a cotton mill at that time was no simple matter. Hardships and difficulties were on every hand. First he was faced with the skepticism of those who were investing their funds in the financing of his enterprise. For the most part his financial supporters were not blessed with the same intuition and foresight that Captain Smyth possessed. They were naturally of a conservative type, and it was always with a great deal of fear and misgiving that Captain Smyth entered into steps which represented radical departures from the accepted customs of the day. Aside from the attitude of his financial backers, however, he had the problem of building at Pelzer a modern mill (modern for that day) in a backwoods section—away from civilization, away from masses of population. It was necessary for him to build a complete village along with the mill. It was necessary to arrange the commercial phase of the village so as to accord his people all of the conveniences of life. Schools had to be built, and churches, and later other village facilities, as the standards of living improved and the demands of the people became more complex.

Another serious problem facing the erection of a mill in 1881 was in the matter of securing adequate help. For a time sufficient workers could be secured in the neighborhood of the mill itself, for they came in from the farms, hoping for an increased income. But after a time this once adequate source of help dwindled, and it became necessary to recruit workers from the foothills and mountains beyond. It required a great deal of persuasion to convince a backwoodsman that higher standards of living awaited, with education, and all the modern conveniences and comforts of life. But Captain

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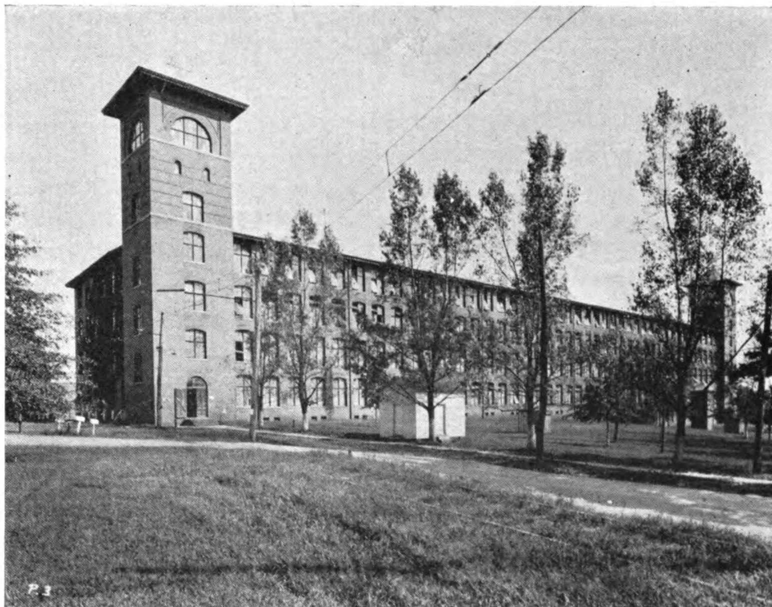
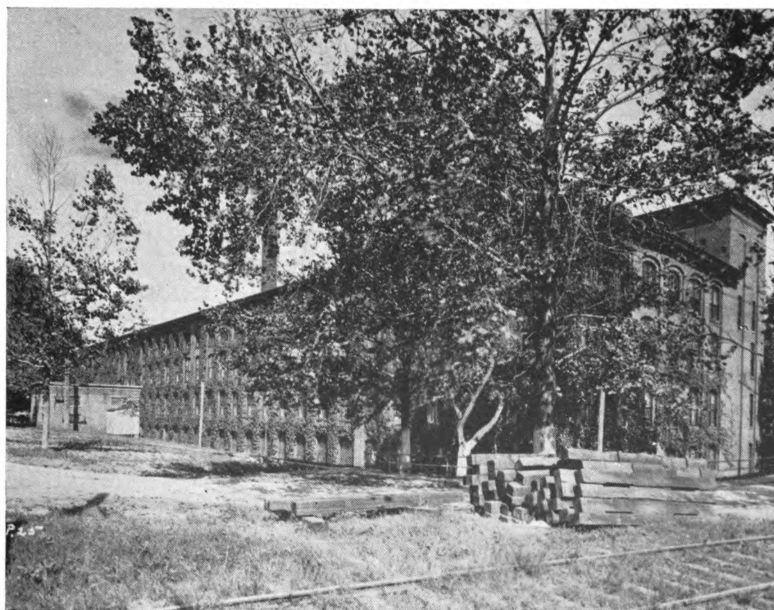


Pelzer Mill No. 4, Pelzer, S. C.



Pelzer Mills 1 and 2, Pelzer, S. C.
Captain Smyth's First Textile Efforts

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Smyth, as one of the pioneers in the textile industry, did convince thousands; and it is to his credit that many of the sons and grandsons of the mountaineers who originally came from the backwoods regions of North Carolina and South Carolina to Pelzer, followed him later as he moved on with the erection of other textile plants in other regions. The Captain, when reflecting upon the many difficulties which he faced during the early years, states that he often felt much as Moses must have felt when he led the children of Israel out of Egypt and into an uncertain future. His people, discouraged by a new environment, were besieged on every hand. A serious epidemic of measles spread. Other diseases plagued their lives. A stout heart was necessary to meet the emergencies.

It is stated that within recent years, when he moved to Flat Rock, N. C. and built the Balfour Mills, that spontaneously many of the people from Pelzer and Belton followed him to Balfour, because of their devotion to him and their confidence in his leadership. Many who followed him were the descendants of the original mountaineers who came to Pelzer when he issued the first call.

Another problem facing Captain Smyth in the erection of his first mill was in the fact that very few of his employees had ever been in a cotton mill before. None of them knew any of the intricate details of cotton manufacturing. They had to learn anew, and many of them had passed the age when learning was simple. It was a new life for them, but they entered into it through the leadership of the pioneering spirit of Captain Smyth. Captain Smyth's mills, being among the first, naturally became the training schools for hundreds of thousands of cotton mill workers, who with their sons and their grandsons have manned hundreds of cotton mills throughout the Southeast, and are working in them today.

Many interesting stories are told of the experiences of Captain Smyth with his first workers. Those of pure Anglo-Saxon stock, who came down from the mountain sections of North and South Carolina, proved to be most adaptable and valuable citizens, whose strongest characteristics were their independence, strong personalities, and their willingness to follow when clearly shown that it was to their best interest. Yet they were suspicious, impossible to drive, and at first greatly influenced by the local politicians and demagogues, who made life a misery to the cotton mill executives.

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In the early days there were no sewer systems, and living conditions—while a great improvement over the conditions of the mountain fastnesses, representing a decided step upward in the standards of living for the people who came down to become the first mill workers—still left much to be desired. There were no water systems. Wells had to be dug throughout the villages.

It is interesting to note that at Pelzer Captain Smyth first built story-and-a-half houses, thinking that they were getting more rooms under one roof and on one foundation; but they found to their surprise that the upper rooms were seldom used, that the employees did not like to go upstairs. As a consequence, all later houses which have been erected by Captain Smyth in his mill villages have been built on one floor.

It should be remembered that there was no electricity at that time. The mills were run by steam engines, and the mills and the houses were lighted by kerosene lamps.

Captain Smyth has always had a strong conviction, in the matter of the development of the cotton mill village, on the subject of company stores. He has never permitted the organization or operation of a company store in his village. He has always insisted that his workers be allowed to trade where they please; and while the modern company store of today is most careful to avoid coercion or forced trade, the Captain throughout the years past has always avoided the danger of such a tendency by steadily refusing to allow his mill companies to operate stores of their own.

Among the interesting experiences of Captain Smyth in those pioneer days, the Captain himself tells the following: "The number 1 mill of the Pelzer Company, built in 1882, had incandescent lights—the first mill to use them, as mills at that time were all lighted with kerosene glass lamps, which were carried lighted into the mill and placed in holders. After a few months at Pelzer one mountain family left, giving as the reason, sickness which was caused by the electric lamps in the mill."

"Another interesting incident is related of an old mountain woman, who up to the time she died, insisted upon going out on the veranda and blowing her horn very vigorously when she thought it time for her husband and older children to return from the mill to dinner."

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"It was interesting to watch the gradual development of the families from the backwoods in North Carolina who brought everything they had in a one-horse wagon, everybody barefooted, and to see the gradual effect of living in a community surrounded by other people. Gradually you could notice the change in their appearance as shoes and stockings appeared, and then perhaps ribbons around their heads, and hats to adorn them."

It was very difficult to force the parents to send their children to school, as they were without education themselves and did not value education so highly for their children. They did not know what it meant. It was awkward work, though in 1890 the South Carolina Cotton Manufacturers Association, of which Captain Smyth was president for fourteen years, appointed a committee to urge the Legislature to enact three important laws—a compulsory school law, a marriage license law, and a birth registration law. It was impossible to enforce labor laws properly unless the age of the minors could be authentically ascertained.

In spite of handicaps, however, which one would naturally expect to meet in forward-looking movements, Captain Smyth has retained his self-confidence throughout life. He applied himself assiduously to his tasks. He determined to learn not only about manufacturing, but about the philosophy of life. He studied the needs of his people and their peculiarities, and few textile executives in history have been so well versed in the requirements of successful manufacturing as is Captain Smyth. He has known what the workman needs most for happiness; that is, steady employment, in a mill where the yarn is good and strong and the work runs well. He knows the workman also needs domestic happiness, the comforts and conveniences of life, the pleasure of association with friends, and the advantages of citizenship.

Captain Smyth also well understood the responsibilities of an employer: to see that his employees were properly housed, given steady employment, were paid in cash, and that special advantages were given them in the way of community developments such as community houses, libraries, churches, recreation grounds, and general welfare work of that type, though the Captain has always been wise enough not to overdo in the field of welfare work. He has known that it can easily lead to that most dreaded of all accusations—pa-

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ternalism. He has always enjoyed the confidence, and in most instances the deep devotion of those who worked for him. He has also known well the limitations of association between employer and employee, and has never been willing to pass the danger line which marks the difference between a successful employer and an overbearing and paternalistic one.

He has had a deep insight into the hearts of men and women who have worked for him, and he has his ideal of what a perfect workman should possess—a high-toned moral life, loyalty to his friends and to his employer, honesty in fulfilling his contracts and in giving full return for value received.

The present generation of workers in most of the cotton mills of the South are the second and the third generations of those who first entered the employ of the cotton mill. The advantages of education, religious and social life in a mill village, have all tended to lift the living standards of the workmen of today as compared with fifty years ago. Improvements in their ideals of life and in their appreciation of the responsibilities of citizenship are most marked and most pleasing. The change of outlook on life on the part of the cotton mill worker of the South has been most gratifying; and it is through the keen insight into the needs of the workers in the South by such men as Captain Smyth that great improvements have been made in the standards of living for southern workers.

It would be interesting to read a book—and it would have to be a very large one—that would list the names of the workers who have served under the leadership of Captain Smyth during his long and useful life.

Many years ago, while he was at Pelzer, a list was made of fifty-three men who were workmen at Pelzer and Belton under Captain Smyth, who had gone out from these mills and become mill superintendents; but unfortunately the list is lost.

It is not unreasonable to state that the friends and followers of Captain Smyth, among the working classes of people, can be numbered in the hundreds of thousands; and that thousands of the more prominent superintendents and overseers of the South owe to Captain Smyth their training. Scores of higher executives owe their start in textiles to Captain Smyth.

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The difficulties of pioneering in the field of industry are too numerous to mention in this volume in detail; but perhaps the most serious problem which faced the young executives of Captain Smyth's day was the uncertainty of new departures and new inventions in the field of industry. Particularly was this true of electricity. Captain Smyth believed that the principal characteristics of a leader, a builder and a pioneer, were faith in the proposition undertaken; confidence in himself that he, with ample support, could succeed with any reasonable experiment.

In 1896 it was decided that the Pelzer Manufacturing Company should build a number 4 mill, equal in size to the three that had already at that time been built. Land was accordingly purchased for the additional village and the mill site was selected at a point four miles below Pelzer, where there was another shoal to be developed on the Saluda River. Later it was suggested to Captain Smyth, by Mr. Stephen Green, that the new mill and village should be erected at Pelzer on land which was already owned by the company, and that a dam and water power should be developed four miles below Pelzer, at the point of the shoals where it was originally suggested the village should also be erected. This involved carrying the electrical current four miles by transmission lines. This was a radical, new departure. Captain Smyth, in his characteristic manner, decided to take the step. It was considered then an extravagant experiment by other mill men, and failure was freely predicted. So widespread was the prediction that it had the effect of depressing the Pelzer Company stock on the Charleston market, and it was generally reported throughout the area that Captain Smyth was doing a dangerous thing.

However, to the great credit of the young pioneer it should be stated that the experiment was finally successful, though for a year the General Electric Company used Mill No. 4 of the Pelzer Company as an experiment ground, testing various kinds and forms of electrical motors, much to the annoyance of Captain Smyth and actual loss to the mill.

Success, however, finally crowned his efforts. With the same pioneering spirit Captain Smyth experimented in purchasing the first 1,000 Draper Automatic looms which were ever sold, and they were erected in his mills at Pelzer. Although they were very inferior

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compared with the modern looms that were later developed, and although they were replaced in a few years, this forward step of Captain Smyth—typical of the pioneer—was a success. The broad vision of the Captain made Mill No. 4 a show mill and caused many visitors to come to Pelzer who were interested in textile development.

Another forward step taken through the ingenuity and vision of Captain Smyth was the purchase of automatic tying-in machines for his Pelzer mills. They were purchased from Mr. Coleman, and records will show that Captain Smyth was the purchaser of the second, third and fourth automatic tying-in machines ever sold. Two were installed at Pelzer and one at Belton.

In three forward steps undertaken by Captain Smyth he was distinctly a pioneer, and the first in his field to undertake them. He installed the first electric drives ever used in cotton mills. The installation was in 1895. In the same year he bought the first Draper Automatic Looms that were produced. In 1881 he had already installed the first incandescent lighting system ever installed in a cotton mill of the United States. It must have required courage for this young executive, inexperienced as he was comparatively in the industrial field, to take the leadership in harnessing the strength of electricity and making full use of radically different machines in the improvement of the process of manufacturing.

The matter which gives the average manufacturer the most serious concern is that of the cost of production. Any good manufacturer realizes that radical departures in the process of manufacturing find unwilling followers among the large class of conservative workmen, and he knows that it has by no means been true that every new invention in the field of textiles has succeeded in reducing the cost of manufacturing, or in making it more simple or satisfactory.

Captain Smyth certainly could be reckoned a good manufacturer—indeed one of the best in the field. Recognizing therefore as he did the absolute necessity of keeping the cost of production on a minimum basis, in the face of uncertain market conditions, it must have required an enormous amount of confidence on his part to take, as he did so frequently, the lead in making his mills the most modern and up-to-date in the field. Yet such confidence was typical of the man, and still is in all his textile activities. He has always looked ahead. While unquestionably he should be classed as a conserva-

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tive, and in the true sense of the word he has never been guilty of a gambling spirit, yet in the field of industry where he could see a reasonable possibility of improvement in his position by a forward step, he took the chance; and it is a great tribute to his judgment to record the fact that in practically every major instance he won.

After living at Pelzer five years, Captain Smyth moved with his family to Greenville, where he built a residence, and he resided in Greenville, sixteen miles from the site of the Pelzer Mills, for forty years.

The requirements of successful cotton manufacturing and the village system carried Captain Smyth into collateral fields. In 1886 he realized the necessity at Pelzer of a savings bank, though he has throughout his life persistently refused to allow any of his manufacturing enterprises to engage in the banking business for his operatives, because of the obvious dangers involved in such an operation. He had in 1886 several thousand dollars left with him for safe keeping by his employees. As a consequence, to serve his employees, he organized the Chicora Savings Bank, with a capital of $25,000, which was afterward increased to $50,000.00. When he sold the entire capital stock, which had a par value of $100.00, at $900.00 per share to Messrs. Lockwood, Green and Company—the purchasers of the Pelzer Company, in 1923—the savings bank had deposits of over $600,000.00, owned almost entirely by the employees of the Pelzer Manufacturing Company.

It is interesting to note that within this period of time the operatives of his mills were sufficiently well paid and sufficiently stable and satisfied to be able to save such large sums of money.

In the early days of the textile industry spinners were receiving a wage of from 6c to 8c per side, and 80c a day was the maximum wage for a six-loom weaver. This was long before the days of the automatic looms. The automatic looms naturally enabled a weaver to handle more looms than he previously had been able to handle, to make more goods, and consequently to make a larger income. Now, in comparison, a weaver will earn from $2.50 to $4.00 per day, and a spinner will make almost as much.

Captain Smyth's operatives have always been comparatively well paid. Proof of the fact is found in the exceptionally large percent-

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age of his operatives who have been faithful to him through their lives. While the facts cannot be secured to support the statement, it is believed that Captain Smyth has enjoyed a smaller percentage of labor turn-over than most executives in the cotton textile industry of the South.

Another interesting collateral line in which Captain Smyth engaged was his entry into the newspaper and publishing field. Without any intention on his part, he became owner of 75% of the stock of the Greenville News Company, a daily newspaper of Greenville, S. C., and when the property became his the paper had a circulation of 7,000. He owned the controlling interest of this publication for eleven years, and increased its circulation to 17,000, but without one dollar of salary or dividends to the stockholders, as the earnings of the company, under his management as president, were all invested in improved machinery and enlarged facilities. In 1923 he sold the stock to Mr. B. H. Peace who had been the active manager of the company. Captain Smyth then retired from the newspaper business.

In 1899, because of his success in the textile industry, the people of Belton—only a few miles removed from Pelzer—approached him and asked him to organize the Belton Mills. He did so with a capital stock of $700,000.00, and also assisted Mr. R. A. Lewis of Belton in the organization of the Bank of Belton, July 11, 1899, with a capital of $50,000.00 He became the vice-president of this bank, and so continued until Mr. Lewis' death, at which time he assumed the presidency of the bank, and also of the Belton Savings and Trust Company, which had a capital stock of $25,000.00. Captain Smyth was president of the Belton Mills from 1899 until he sold the mill in 1920. At that time he sold the controlling interest (75%) to Messrs. Woodward, Baldwin and Company of Baltimore and New York, on a basis of $700.00 per share for $100.00 par value.

On April 23, 1927, he sold the stock of the Bank of Belton at $300.00 per $100.00 par value share, and the stock of the Savings and Trust Company at $125.00 per $100.00 par value share. The sale was made to the South Carolina State Bank.

It is interesting to note that in each of these transactions Captain Smyth not only organized and built at the right time, but he was

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farsighted enough to sell at a time when the sale meant a decided profit upon the investment for all the share holders.

During his career Captain Smyth has been called upon as a cotton mill executive to act in official capacity and assist in the organization or re-organization of a number of cotton mills in the Southeast, among them Grendel Mills of Greenwood, S. C., of which he was president; the Ninety-Six Cotton Mills of Ninety-Six, S. C., of which he was president; the Riverside Manufacturing Company and the Toxaway Mills of Anderson, S. C., of which he was president; the Anderson Phosphate and Oil Company of Anderson, S. C.; and the Dunean Mills of Greenville, S. C.

In 1907 he was instrumental in developing the Belton Power Company, with a dam on the Saluda River, which was sold in 1915 on a basis of two and a half for one.

Other cotton mills of which Captain Smyth has been an officer are Brandon Mills, director; Monaghan Mills, director; Woodruff Mills, vice-president; Williamston Mills, vice-president; Watts Mill, director; Saxon Mill, director; Victor Mill of Greenville, director; Union Bleachery, director; Alice Manufacturing Company, director; Moneynick Oil Mills, Ninety-Six Cotton Mills, Anderson Phosphate and Oil Company, Dunean Mills and Conestee Mills (which Captain Smyth, with Messrs. W. E. Beattie and Lewis W. Parker bought at auction). It was then known as Reedy River Mills.

It is interesting to note that through Captain Smyth's connection and influence, many of the cotton mills of South Carolina bear the original old names taken from County Antrim, Ireland, and vicinity. It was from County Antrim that Captain Smyth's ancestors originally came. It was there that James Adgar first operated his linen mill, "Dunean." Captain Smyth still has one of the old spinning wheels used in the original old Dunean Mill.

Moneynick, Dunean, Brandon, Antrim, and other old Irish names will be found in many of the industrial communities of the South.

He has been director in a half dozen other banks. At one time he was director in thirty-six different corporations, and has been active in the affairs of other business enterprises.

In 1925, having disposed of almost all of his real estate in South Carolina, and being entirely without occupation, he sold his home in

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Greenville, S. C., and moved with his wife to their summer home at Flat Rock, N. C., in the Blue Ridge Mountains near Hendersonville. At the time he had owned the summer home at Flat Rock for twenty-five years. After moving to Flat Rock he undertook the building of the Balfour Mills—a modern cotton manufacturing enterprise—at a point which he named Balfour, two miles beyond Hendersonville, N. C., on the Asheville Highway. This mill—the last one which he has organized—was started with a capital of $400,000.00, all of which he subscribed, with the exception of $50,000.00, which he asked the people of Hendersonville to subscribe, so that they might have some local interest.

He had expected that his son, James Adger Smyth, who had previously been in the cotton mill business, would direct the Balfour Mills. His son had moved to a farm near Hendersonville because of his ill health, and was living there with his family. However, his sudden death in 1928 left the mill management in the hands of Captain Smyth again. Since that time he has been actively directing the affairs of the cotton mill, with the able assistance of his grandsons; and anyone who has had the pleasure of visiting the Captain in his office fully realizes that in activity he is most happy.

As in the erection of the Pelzer Mills, Captain Smyth met with many difficulties in the erection of the Balfour Mill. When he erected the mill many of his faithful followers came to him from Pelzer.

The Balfour village is a beautiful village, with attractive homes, occupied by an alert and happy people, in a healthy country, enjoying all of the comforts and conveniences of modern life.

One of the prides of Captain Smyth is in the exceptionally large village library which he established for his working people. It is quite unusual in an industrial village, in which most of the inhabitants are comparatively uneducated, and very few have gone beyond the grammar school in their education, that they should be successfully operating a library, from which 1200 to 1500 secure books each month. From the library over 400 volumes are taken each month. The library includes a general assortment of literature of all types, and is not solely confined to popular fiction. The Juvenile Department is the most important department of the library. Captain Smyth, who has always been a reader himself, and

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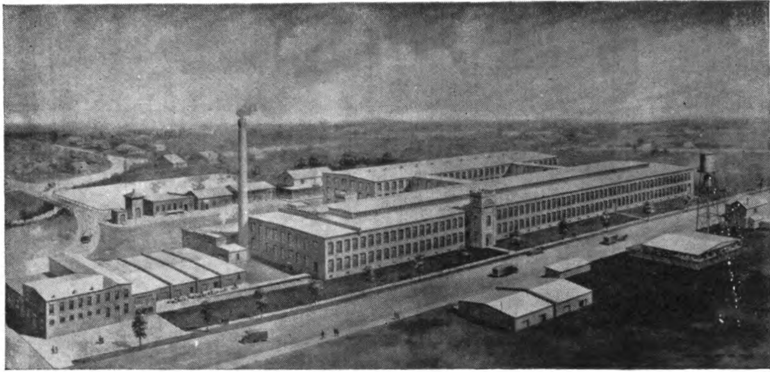
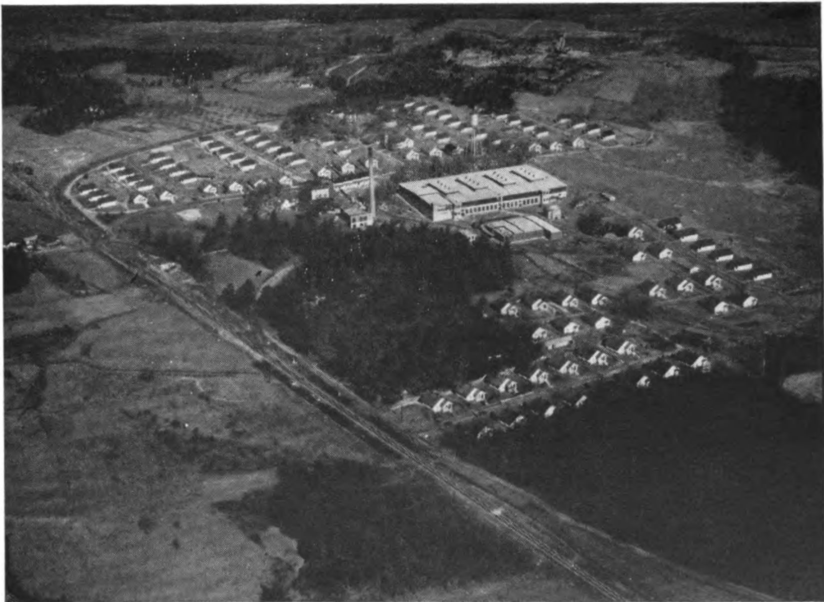


Williamston Cotton Mills, Williamston, S. C.



Balfour Mill, Captain Smyth's Latest Contribution to the Textile Field.

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has depended upon his reading quite largely for his education, recognizes the value of a good library to a community; and as a consequence of his activity in the establishment of libraries in his villages, he has reaped the dividends which come from more intelligent workmen. He is a collector of books and has made valuable contributions to various libraries. His most recent and perhaps most valuable contribution was a collection of volumes on South Carolina which he made within recent years to the Presbyterian College library at Clinton, S. C.

His love of books is not an unusual trait of the Captain's. His interest in libraries was inherited from his father, Reverend Thomas Smyth, who was the author of over thirty books. Captain Smyth's father bequeathed to the Columbia Seminary $20,000, $10,000 of which was designated for their library and $10,000 for their endowment.

When asked his views on the essentials of education as applicable to cotton manufacturing, the Captain stated: "Realizing my own deficiency from an educational standpoint, having not been to school since I was sixteen, when I entered the Confederate Army, I have given attention to the school facilities in all mill villages I have managed, realizing that if a boy is given an opportunity to read and write intelligently, nothing can keep him back. After my first two years in a mill village, I realized the injury in the employment of minors; and while there were no labor laws enforced in South Carolina, I established in the superintendent's office a record book in which, when parties were employed, the age of each of the members of the family was given, and all children under twelve years were to go to a school established by the company. In fact, I established a school at Pelzer immediately on beginning construction work, though the families were not permanent residents, and all children were urged to attend the school though they were not prospective mill hands."

Captain Smyth has always been a champion of the cause of compulsory education, and has been active in encouraging the enforcement of educational laws in the state of South Carolina.

One of the Captain's greatest accomplishments in the industrial field is in bringing about the organization of the Cotton Manufacturers Association of South Carolina, for which he served as presi-

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dent for fourteen years. The association has been of great benefit to all interests connected with cotton manufacturing.

Not only has he been a benefactor to hundreds of thousands whom he has employed, but he has been the patriarch of cotton manufacturing in the Southeast, and the father of the association, which has so well served manufacturing interests. Not only has he raised the standards of living in the mill villages of the South, but he has raised the standards of manufacturing through his progressive associational activities within the industry.

Captain Smyth also served for a time as president of the American Cotton Manufacturers Association, representing all of the cotton manufacturers of the South, and for many years was one of its representatives in the National Council of Cotton Manufacturers, and likewise a representative of the American Cotton Manufacturers Association on the National Industrial Conference Board.

In 1896 he was appointed a member of the Industrial Commission by President McKinley. The commission consisted of nine members, of which he was the only Democrat. For two years, with the exception of August, he spent in this activity one week each month in Washington. The life of the commission was to be two years, but when it was proposed to continue beyond the two years he resigned to the President and urged the appointment of Mr. D. A. Tompkins, of Charlotte, N. C. as his successor, and his appointment was made public with the Captain's resignation.

One of the most outstanding services of Captain Smyth to the textile industry is found in his thirty-five years of faithful service without salary as chairman of the Traffic Department of the southern mills. The Traffic Department of the several state associations of the South and of the American Cotton Manufacturers Association, maintains an office force in Atlanta of from eight to nine employees. They have been solving the traffic problems of the cotton mills of the South for many years most effectively. They now represent over 400 corporations.

In this unselfish service Captain Smyth has been the guiding spirit, and his work in this direction has been without compensation. Few men in the textile field are as well versed in matters of transportation and traffic as is Captain Ellison A. Smyth.

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He has for many years been a member of the Executive Committee of the Cotton Manufacturers Association of South Carolina, and upon leaving the state he was elected Honorary Life Member of the Association. He was also elected Honorary Permanent Vice-Chairman of the Print Cloth Group of Cotton Manufacturers, representing the manufacturers of print cloths of America, and he was active in the organization of the Print Cloth Group.

It is natural to expect that a man of his capabilities and experience would be the recipient of many honors during his life, and this has been the case. Aside from his official connection with many associations and corporations throughout the South, and in addition to the numerous honors which have been bestowed upon him, he has also received the degree of LL.D. from the Citadel Military College of South Carolina, and the degree of Lit.D. from the Presbyterian College of South Carolina. However, no matter how frequently honored he may have been, and how many titles and degrees may have been added to his name, there is no title so endearing or so familiar to his thousands of friends as the simple, well-earned and beautifully worn title of "The Captain." As "The Captain" he has been known and beloved through the many years.

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## *Chapter Twenty-Three*

Thus the life of Captain Ellison Adger Smyth has been a most active one. His accomplishments have been many. He has paced the activities of several generations, reaching the ripe age of 87 (in 1934). He can live quietly and happily among his loved ones and friends and, if he chooses, look back upon the accomplishments of his very full and long life with the satisfaction of having made a very definite contribution to civilization.

Few men have been as active as has Captain Smyth, and few have reached the age of 87 with such a store of energy, with such a teeming brain, and with such a fruitful background of experience.

Still standing erect among his fellow men, with a far-seeing eye, captivating smile, clear and commanding voice, he offers a remarkable picture, as he stands like Moses at Mount Nebo and points the way into the "promised land" of industry. Few men have lived whose leadership would be more eagerly followed than that of Captain Smyth; and few have been in such a favorable position to point the way to the future.

He lives today in his beautiful and picturesque home, at "Connemara," which majestically stands on the side of Glassy Mountain, overlooking the valley in which is located the little city of Hendersonville. This home, which is located in the Flat Rock section above Hendersonville, he purchased thirty-three years ago. The home itself was built, and the grounds laid out under the direction of Colonel C. G. Meminger, a prominent attorney, who in his later life became secretary of the Confederate Treasury, but whose winter home was in Charleston, S. C.

The estate of "Connemara" covers about 400 acres, including the slopes of two attractive small mountains, and two beautiful, sparkling lakes, which nestle at the foot of the hills. All the buildings, except the original home itself, have been erected by Captain Smyth during the past thirty-three years; and the old Meminger home has been frequently altered by the Captain. The house stands 125 feet above the public road, and is reached by a very steep climb, which winds in and out among the beautiful pines and past the two lakes. The view from the front piazza is most beautiful, with Mt. Pisgah

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in the distance on one side, and in front the Bear Wallow Range. On fair days Mt. Mitchell and Mountain Craggie can be seen in the distance; and on the right can be seen the range of Sugar Loaf Mountain and Tryon Mountain, and behind them the hosts of the Blue Ridge Range.

Captain Smyth calls himself a farmer, specializing in the raising of hogs, cattle, sheep, colts and poultry. His specialty is turkeys, and hundreds of them dot the lawn of "Connemara."

Captain Smyth is surrounded by an unusually large and devoted family, who, though they do not live with him, are frequently visitors at "Connemara." His only son, James Adger Smyth, died at the age of 52 in 1928. The Captain has, however, three living daughters—Mrs. Margaret Smyth McKissick of Greenville, S. C.; Mrs. Annie Pierce Blake of Belton, S. C.; and Mrs. Sara Smyth Hudgens, Hendersonville, N. C. Mrs. Hudgens also is interested in farming. Mrs. Blake is the wife of Lewis D. Blake, President and Treasurer of the Belton Mills—one of the mills founded by Captain Smyth. Mrs. Margaret Smyth McKissick, already mentioned in this volume, is the wife of A. Foster McKissick, formerly professor of Engineering in Alabama Polytechnic Institute, Auburn; more recently President of Grendel and Ninety-Six Cotton Mills; and at present Vice-President, and with his son Ellison, the directing head of Alice Manufacturing Company, embracing Alice and Arial Mills, near Easley, S. C.

The only son of Margaret Smyth McKissick, Ellison Smyth McKissick, is the President of Alice Manufacturing Company. Ellison is the father of four children, Mary McLean, Margaret Smyth, A. Foster and Ellison Smyth, the Captain's first great-grandson to bear his name. He and his father are actively engaged in the operation of these two important mills.

Assisting Captain Ellison Smyth in the direction of the Balfour Mills at Hendersonville are Ellison Adger Smyth, III, Thomas L. Smyth, and Moultrie H. Smyth, three grandsons, who are rapidly proving their ability to follow the well-known Smyth tradition, and become successful cotton mill executives. On October 24, 1934, there was born to Mr. and Mrs. Ellison Adger Smyth, III, a son who also bears the name of his illustrious great-grandfather. He is of the

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fifth generation of the name of Smyth and the fifth Ellison Adger Smyth now living.

They are: I, Captain Ellison Adger Smyth.

II, Doctor Ellison Adger Smyth, Jr., member of the faculty of Virginia Polytechnic Institute, son of James Adger Smyth and nephew of the Captain.

III, Ellison Adger Smyth, III, Treasurer of Balfour Mills, grandson of the Captain.

IV, Rev. Ellison Adger Smyth, IV, a Presbyterian minister, now preaching in West Virginia.

V, Ellison Adger Smyth, V, son of E. A. Smyth, III, and great grandson of the Captain.

Were this volume a complete biography, it would probably not be written during the lifetime of Captain Smyth; but it is not intended as a mere biography, but rather as a story of a life which stands as a beautiful monument to the pioneering spirit. As a consequence, the volume is fortunate in containing that which the usual biography lacks—something of the retrospection and the matured thought of the individual whose life is portrayed.

It is most unusual to study the life of an individual in the light of his professed philosophy of life.

As a consequence, it is rather difficult to reconcile the most active life of leadership of Captain Ellison Adger Smyth with his particularly humble philosophy of life, as he himself expresses it:

"To do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

Who would expect the South's foremost industrialist, pioneer, and capitalist to profess a desire for such an humble spirit, a big heart and just conduct? But one who has had the opportunity of understanding Captain Smyth better can readily see in his every thought and activity an exemplification of that philosophy of life, which he professes. It is doubtful whether the textile industry has ever produced a more humble servant, a more kindhearted employer and a more just business leader; and it is unusual that this combination should be found in the same personality of a stern disciplinarian, a born leader, and a man who has earned the reward of an unusually successful business career.

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Captain Ellison A. Smyth With Two of His Great-Grandsons, Anthony Foster McKissick, II, and Ellison Smyth McKissick, Jr.

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The beauty of the life of Captain Ellison Adger Smyth is in its enthusiasm and encouragement to those who are to carry on the banner beyond the goal which it has reached. Perhaps the most valuable portion of this narrative will be found in the exposition, through the next few pages, of the Captain's attitude toward life. Perhaps therein we shall find the source of his inspiration, the underlying causes of his unusual success.

Let us recall, in its beautiful setting, a bit of reminiscence and retrospection, a conversation under the stately, colonial columns of the historic old home, "Connemara," overlooking the inspiring panorama which only the Blue Ridge Range can produce, with the clear, sparkling lakes at our feet, and the unusually interesting, wide range of southern trees and shrubs beautifully arrayed before us. There he sat on a balmy summer afternoon, looking back over the years of his active life, and telling of the experiences which had made the deepest impress upon his memory; simultaneously looking forward beyond the hills, to the fields of endeavor afar, where future generations, walking in his footsteps and following his leadership, will carry on to greater accomplishments than the past has yet known. If the younger generation—the future industrialists of America—have sat at the Captain's feet, and followed the glance of his far-seeing eye; if they have caught the inspiration which has actuated his life, the spark of enthusiasm that has carried him forth through all hardships and difficulties into unusual accomplishments; undoubtedly they will be blessed with an urge which will know no difficulties and recognize no handicaps.

When asked the romance of his life, the Captain peacefully replied: "My whole life has been one romance, a full life, but one I would not care to live over." An unusual statement for a man who has seen so much of life, who has accomplished so much during life, and who has been so uniquely successful in influencing the lives of hundreds of thousands of others. But perhaps it isn't unusual for a servant of humanity—and the Captain has been a true servant—to prefer not to re-live a life. Possibly it is only natural to express an antipathy to the return of the thousands of heartaches, disappointments, responsibilities and fears which always accompany success.

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When the Captain was a boy, his father asked him, and also asked his brothers, James Adger and Augustine T. Smyth, what were their ambitions in life. The reply of Ellison Adger Smyth was: "To be a rich man, have a big house, and have my family and friends to come and visit me."

Captain Smyth now has a big house; he has a large family, and many friends who come to see him often, and whose visits are a source of constant pleasure. He has likewise been fortunate enough in the affairs of the world to earn the right to live in comfort the rest of his life.

He is still an active business man, still a clear thinker, and able to enjoy and appreciate the worthwhile things of life.

He protects the wild life on his farm; he prevents shooting, and as a result the squirrels play constantly around his house. He built a little feeding stand on which he places corn, at the rear of his home, and the birds and squirrels are constant visitors for the food which they have learned through the years to expect from the provident hand of their friend.

Also he has outside of two of the windows of his dining room trays for food for the birds.

The Captain has two especial pets of whom he is quite fond—two fine Collie dogs, Laddie and Mike—and it is interesting to hear him affectionately talk to them, or sternly chastise them when they have been guilty of reckless play among the turkeys or other peaceful denizens of his forest and farm.

As the worth of a man is best expressed in his attitude toward life, toward his fellow men, toward the responsibilities of the world, and thus measured by his concept of relative values, perhaps the inspiration of the Captain was better expressed in a precious hour on his veranda at "Connemara," when he kindly permitted a searching quiz that was designed to probe beneath the outer surface, and display a part of the true nature of the man, and the true source of his success. Had it been fully recorded, the dialogue would have been perhaps as follows:

"Captain Smyth, the world has in a sense a sort of right to know something about the underlying fundamentals which actuate the lives of its leaders, thinkers and pioneers. There are hundreds of thousands who would accord you the distinction of Pioneer Extra-

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ordinary—hundreds of thousands who have followed your leadership, and are still following it—hundreds of thousands who would like to see instilled in the lives of their progeny those sound principles which actuated you and brought to you more than your share of the world's acclaim. It is probable, therefore, that it is your duty, as one of our foremost citizens, to express yourself frankly on some of the subjects which are closest to your heart, and on some of the questions which are burning questions in the minds of the people today. If you will, therefore, kindly submit yourself to a number of pertinent questions, and will without reserve express yourself frankly for the benefit of your hosts of friends and followers, and for the benefit of their posterity, it will probably be an outstanding contribution, and a step well worth while."

To which the Captain smilingly replied with a gracious manner, in that soft, assuring voice of his: "My friend, it is with a great deal of hesitation that I would permit the chronicling of the events of my own life. I would very much regret to have my inner self taken apart and displayed blatantly before the public. If there is any one thing that I have desired more than all else in my contacts with my fellowman, it has been that I be allowed to live in peace and obscurity; that I be permitted the privilege of a quiet, retired, humble life among my loved ones and friends; and that whatever views I entertain toward life be kept secure in my own breast, and in no instance enforced upon others."

"But, Captain, you must admit that in spite of the fact that we all possess a degree of modesty that would encourage us to assume a retiring attitude and demeanor, still there are some of us who, by virtue of leadership and success in life, assume the responsibility for the continuation of that leadership and the ideals which have actuated our lives. There are some of us who are duty bound to transmit to posterity our ideals and aims. Indeed, it is enough for the spirit of Captain Smyth to carry on in its wholesome influence over the lives who have been close to him; but there are hundreds of thousands who have never had the opportunity of a personal contact with you, and never, therefore the direct opportunity of enjoying the abounding enthusiasm that would result therefrom. These, the future generations of your friends, can only see your life through the recitation of your attitude toward life. You do not force your

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will upon others when you merely permit the expression of your views on some vital subjects. There are few men of this day with minds so clear, with eyes so far-seeing, with ideals so lofty, and with such a true concept of life, so accurately and actively appreciated, as in your own instance. Only a few can enjoy the privilege of this conference today; yet hundreds of thousands, and perhaps millions, deserve it. If the pioneer spends his entire life in self-sacrificial effort, in the building of a foundation for the future; and then, after years of privation, as he has reached success, if that same pioneer closes the doors to his mind and heart and assumes a clam-like attitude, he seriously minimizes the effect of his life and the value of his accomplishments. This is a day of inquiry. The world must not only know that a fact is, but it must know why. Why have you devoted your life to the development of industry? Why have you afforded remunerative employment to hundreds of thousands of individuals who otherwise would very largely have lived in restricted fields, with little concept of the world beyond? Why have you sought the development of the natural resources of your native land; and not only 'why,' but 'how'? What, in your viewpoint, are the essentials of success in industry?"

"This," replied the Captain, "requires sobriety, energy, honesty and concentration on the job at hand, and avoidance of scattering of one's energies."

"What are the essentials of success in government?"

"The old adage, 'The least governed people are the best-governed people' holds good, both for the public and in private industry. Too much paternalism destroys individuality and initiative and the independence of action and thought which has made this country as prosperous as it has been."

"What are the essentials of success in commerce and finance?"

"Strict compliance with all contracts entered into, and high regard for every obligation made; strict honesty in all dealings with others, and recognition of the sacredness in handling any money belonging to others."

"What is your attitude on currency?"

"I was reared a hard-money man, believing in gold as the basis of currency; and so thought until lately. I am now somewhat in doubt, but greatly opposed to inflation as being ruinous eventually."

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"And what is your attitude toward the National Recovery Program?"

"Simply a waiting one. The increase of wages was justified and needed, but unwisely distributed. The reduction in hours and control of our business was also perhaps needed, but one looks forward with dread to what is coming when the dole is over and the millions who have been taught to look to the Government for a living are told 'No more.' I fear there is great trouble ahead—problems which will tax the resources of the most fertile minds of America. We are in grave need of stern leadership and thoughtful leadership."

"What are your views on the Agricultural program, commonly known as the A.A.A.?"

"I do not admire the present agricultural policies of the Administration, particularly those which involve the placing of the processing tax on the cotton mills instead of at the final sale of the cloth. The direct result of this policy has been the pyramiding of the tax through each process of bleaching, printing, wholesaling and retailing; so that the tax serves as a serious detriment to the initial processor—the cotton manufacturer—and to the ultimate consumer; in fact, at both ends of the line it is detrimenal. There is a serious question also as to the value of a policy of this type to the farmers themselves. Of course we all like Santa Claus, and when our government sets out to favor us, even though at the expense of others, it is difficult for us to convince ourselves that we do not justify the favors. As a matter of fact, however, the crop-control program, which is the soul of the A.A.A., is one which involves serious doubts in the minds of those who have followed similar tendencies in the past. The practicability of the plan is not yet proven. It would be easily possible for a heavy processing tax to injure the interests of the customers of the farmers, and to so stifle the market for the farmers' products as to do the farmer more harm than good. It is easily possible that the farmers themselves will rise up ultimately in opposition to the principle of the processing tax and demand its elimination from the program."

"What are your views on the subject of prohibition?"

"I never believed it possible, legally, to enforce the prohibition law, or attempt by legislation to teach people the benefit of temperance. I do not wish to see the barroom returned; but the legal

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sale of bottled liquor, and an increase in the use of wine and beer, I think will be the proper course. We should expend every effort to inculcate the principles of temperance in the minds of the people—temperance not merely in drink, but in thought, in word and in deed. I do not believe in total prohibition."

"What are your views on political reform?"

"Unquestionably we have too much government, too many officials, too extravagant legislative bodies; too many counties; and the lack of wisdom in the recent past by city and county officials in extravagance in incurring bonded indebtedness has wrought great distress and lack of confidence in government affairs. We must balance more budgets. We must set up reasonable and automatic agencies for the liquidation of our indebtedness. We must scrupulously avoid incurring further debts. We must learn governmentally to live within our own means; and we must, through practical means, wipe out all of those influences which tend toward extravagance and wastefulness in investing the people's money."

"Captain, tell us, in view of the present tendency in America, what do you think would be the effect of a dictatorship?"

"A dictatorship in many respects would be much more horrible than mass rule. One of the fundamental principles of success is found in the individuality of men. Give man the three R's—reading, 'riting and 'rithemetic, and if he has anything in him at all, he will make himself. Dictatorship, like communism and socialism, will suppress individualism and crush it to earth. We need more of the feeling of responsibility on the part of the individual. We need more initiative."

"Then you must surely be definitely opposed to the present bureaucratic trend of government in Washington. What, in your judgment, would be the best method of stemming the tide?"

"Unquestionably our present trend of government is too autocratic, too dictatorial; and our bureaus in Washington, which have been multiplied unnecessarily and unmercifully, are unapproachable, and guided only by their satellites, who completely surround them in office and are the source of most of their information. The whole system is wrong, but I am frank to say that I do not know the solution of this particular problem. I do not know where and how the turn will or can be made.

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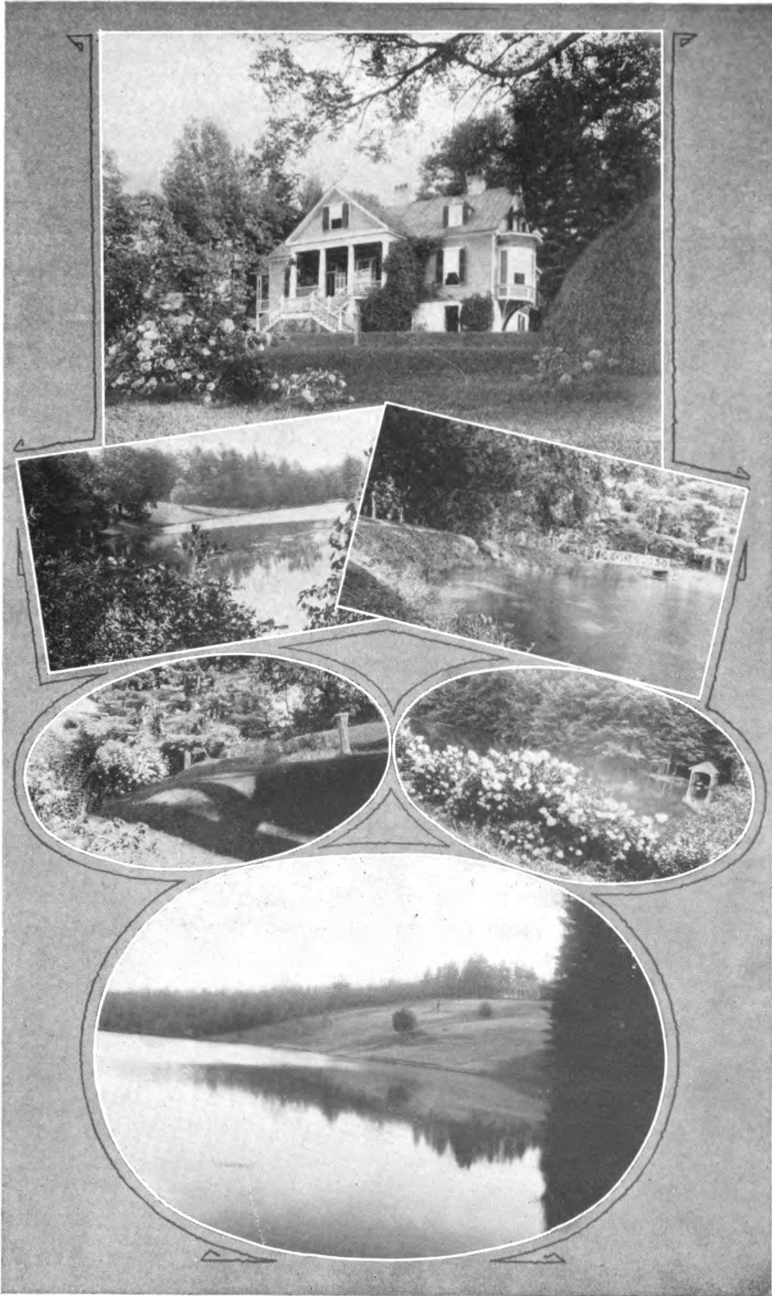

"Connemara,'' the Picturesque Home of Captain Smyth
at Flat Rock, N. C.

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"We are too democratic a people for our people to attempt to build a wall around themselves. The country is too diversified to be governed by men with sectional views. We need more broadminded leadership. We need bigger men,—statesmen, rather than politicians. We need a reduction, not an increase, in boards, commissions, bureaus and lobbies. And the man who can solve this problem will be indeed the leader of the day. I hope, and somehow believe, that ultimately God will provide such a leader in our emergency. We are cursed with perhaps the weakest legislative bodies and officers of courts that we have known. The aims of our political leaders seem to be to secure election to office, and acquire power. Whether this is a fundamental weakness of democracy I do not know, but I am quite sure that our leaders are today thinking too much in terms of political expediency, and too little in terms of nation-wide statesmanship."

"Would you say that somewhat the same condition exists in the church today?"

"In the church there is too much creed, too much slavish adoration of ancient thoughts and beliefs. We need broader men in our pulpits, and fewer men who have assumed the ministerial office and then left it for other work, and yet continue to exercise a vote in our church conferences. I think that only active pastors of churches should be eligible for membership in our church legislative bodies. We should get further away from doctrinalism, creeds, and nearer to pure evangelism. We should forget denominationalism, sensationalism, and in fact all of the "isms," in favor of a simple trust in God, and a spontaneous urge to do His will."

"What of the press of today? Undoubtedly it has a tremendous influence over the lives of the people. Undoubtedly the influence of the press is felt quite largely in government and industry and in the church; in fact, in every walk of life. You have been the owner of a newspaper. What are your views on this subject?"

"I believe that the press can be developed into a most constructive influence. It should think less of sensationalism. It should be concerned more in a constructive effort to build our country, make it a better place in which to live, and develop in it a better race of people to enjoy it. The press could be used as a very constructive influence for good in this country. At present it is given too much

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to sensationalism. There is too much publication of crime news, too much slavish obedience to 'the powers that be' in office. There is too much lack of independence in the press; for individuality and individual initiative are just as essential with the press as with the person. Today so much news is suppressed or censored, and so much opinion is subsidized, that we are losing confidence in the press."

"Captain, you have been essentially a Southerner, and one of the South's chief exponents. What are, in your judgment, the greatest assets of the South?"

"First, I would put our delightful climate, where oak trees grow. It is remarkable that below this section cotton milling has not been successful. There is an abundance of water power; the large population formerly in competition with the colored race in farm work, and eager for advancing their social condition, led to a steady supply of most suitable labor for all manufacturing enterprises; and the cotton mill villages, with their schools and churches, became great civilizers, and promoted a wonderful improvement in the health and intelligence of the people."

"What natural resources indicate further development?"

"I would say that our climate, our abundance of intelligent labor, the inexpensiveness of a livelihood in the South as compared with other sections, are among those natural advantages which should stand us in good stead in the future."

"What then do you think of the future of the textile industry, Captain?"

"The future of the industry in the South is greatly jeopardized by the new rules of the National Recovery Administration. The regulation of hours being equal all over the country, and the wage scale being practically the same, regardless of the expense of maintaining the cotton mill villages, the absence of friendly capital, and the distance from the markets of the world, are serious handicaps for the future. Our freight rates are high, interest rates are high, and it will require the most careful and intelligent handling of the industry in the southern states to make it successful and remunerative to the stockholders. The southern states are burdened with the highest rate of taxation in America. That is a severe handicap. Cotton can be shipped from Dallas, Texas to Fall River, Mass., there

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processed and shipped on to the market in the form of goods, at a much cheaper shipping rate than if the same product were shipped from Dallas to Greenville and thence to the market. Some of our southern states have a slight advantage in the matter of power rates, but in many of our states the power rates are entirely too high for satisfactory competition. The interest rates involved in capitalizing the cotton mills of the South have ever been high, comparatively, and have worked a severe handicap. Many of the New England plants have long since been depreciated, so that the plant investment itself, as compared with the future investments of the South, amount to very little. Many of the fine new plants erected in the South during high-priced times, therefore, have a very severe handicap in meeting competition of plants which have long since been completely depreciated. Prior to the application of the N. R. A. the plants in the South for the most part were working on a two-shift basis, 55 hours of day labor and 50 hours of night labor. The plants in the East for the most part were working on a single shift basis. The introduction of the N. R. A. forced the double shift basis on all plants, on a 40-40 basis, so that spindle activity in the South was greatly reduced, while spindle activity in the East was greatly increased. Thus eastern mills were given a special advantage, at the expense of the southern mills; and competitive advantage formerly enjoyed by the southern mills was wiped out. The processing tax, as applied, came as an added competitive disadvantage to southern mills; for buying and consuming as they do over 86% of the cotton, and manufacturing as they do goods in which the cotton content occupies a much greater percentage proportionately, it means that the southern mills—the first and best customers of the southern cotton farmers—have been forced to pay the bulk of the processing tax; while the competitive mills in the East, which largely confine their activities to finer goods, have been comparatively free from this burden.

"The setting of the wage differential between the South and the East has worked another serious hardship upon southern industry. The dollar differential would indicate that the South has been given a special advantage. But, as a matter of fact, southern mills have found it necessary to adopt the village system because most of them have been erected in areas of sparsely settled population. Removed

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as the southern mills are quite largely from the centers of population, it has been necessary for the mill managements to erect complete villages. This has entailed an enormous additional expense, which is not ordinarily assumed by manufacturing plants elsewhere. In the state of South Carolina alone, I am told there is at the present time invested by the mills in permanent improvements, such items as churches, schools, water, sewer and light systems, parks, recreational fields, Y. M. C. A.'s, etc., etc., over $20,000,000. There is no doubt three times that much invested in the homes of the operatives. All public service items and municipal improvements involve a complete loss to the mill; and even the village itself is operated at a tremendous loss to the mill by virtue of the fact that the rate of rental is so low. The average in the state of South Carolina at the present time, I am told, is only 27c per week per room. This in many instances includes free water and lights, or water and lights at a reduced rate. There are many wage equivalents, such as free or low-priced water, lights, fuel, gardens, laundries, ice, etc., etc., which should be added to the wage of the southern operatives, before any accurate comparison can be made.

"I am quite sure that if we should add to the actual payrolls of the southern mills the actual net losses of the mill villages to the mills, the actual cost of erection and maintenance of municipal facilities for the operatives, the actual cost of the various wage equivalents, which have been given as special advantages to the cotton mill people of the South, we should find that the wage scales of the southern workers are far greater than the wage scales of the eastern workers. We should find that our workers are much better paid, and live under much better conditions than the workers elsewhere. It is extremely unfortunate that the N. R. A. should set up what they believe to be a gratuitous sort of differential, which is misleading in the extreme, and from a competitive standpoint injurious to the interests of development of southern industry. There are other factors in which southern industry is handicapped in the competitive field. The standards of living of our people in the South are so far superior to the standards of living of the textile workers in the East, in England, France, and in other European countries, that we find competition very severe; and now there is developing the most serious competition of all in the Orient, for the Japanese, Indian

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and Chinese mills are growing with leaps and bounds. They have learned how to reduce their costs and produce in quantity a better grade of product; and they are completely captivating our foreign market, forcing the textile industry of the South to content itself with a much restricted domestic market. In the face of this world competition, which we cannot meet on account of the low cost of living in the foreign countries; and in the face of the inevitable loss of practically all of our foreign trade; and in the face of the fact that many of these foreign countries can actually buy our cotton, manufacture it into goods and ship it back into the United States over a high tariff wall, and still beat us at our price, one wonders whether the textile industry really has the future that it at one time was thought to have. When foreign countries are reducing wages, increasing hours, increasing production per worker and per machine, and thus are producing more cloth at lower costs, and using tax-free American cotton, it is clearly indicated that we shall not save our industry by decreasing production and increasing costs. Even high tariff walls will not permanently solve the problem."

"But, Captain, you are essentially a pioneer, a progressive spirit. Would you consider the many obstacles which you have just enumerated as insurmountable and impossible?"

"No, my friend, nothing is impossible in the sight of the Lord. The outlook at present is most discouraging. It is difficult to see just how many of our problems can be solved in the light of the present trend of public thought. However, there is a way, and undoubtedly there is a will. I firmly believe that leaders will be developed to see us through these serious problems. To what extent the textile industry will have to be remodeled, revitalized to meet the new day, I cannot foretell. It seems to me that the problems of the leaders of tomorrow will be much more severe than those of yesterday. The more extensive the competition, the more finely drawn the rules of competition, the more exacting are the requirements thereof. Southern industry will certainly survive. There are too many fundamental advantages to permit it to do otherwise. But it is going to take sound thinking and positive action on the part of men of vision and faith."

"Captain, we think so much today in terms of legislation; we are trying to solve so many of our problems by legislation, that it would

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be interesting to know what you think of the value of legislation to the working people of the day?"

"Some legislation has undoubtedly helped labor, as without it uniform action could not have been taken; but to attempt to force labor into organizations against its will, or to force restrictive regulations in regard to machinery, has been of little benefit, if any at all. In fact, much attempted legislation is so short-sighted as to be really injurious to the operative as well as to the public at large, and to industry. It is impossible for one to overlook the individuality of the southern mill people. It is impossible for a lawmaking body to overlook this factor. There has been much talk about legislation on the matter of the stretch-out for many years. The stretch-out is in itself an unfortunate expression. It is a title used to designate what is more aptly called 'the multiple loom system' if applied to the weaving room. However, a very fine distinction should be made between the work load and the machine load; and it should be remembered that there is a constant, steady progress in the development of machinery, in new processes in industry, which no man-made law can stem. It is a tide that is going to sweep on regardless. From the day of the invention of the first hand loom until today workmen have always resisted the improvement of machinery on the ground that it reduces the number of workers. As a matter of fact, every constructive step in the development of machinery has not reduced, but has increased the number of workers, has increased the comparative wage of the workers, and has produced a greater product at a lower cost. It is as a natural step in the process of the textile industry that the multiple loom system should enter into the picture; that the automatic loom should enable weavers to do more work with less effort, to accomplish more and earn more. I referred to the difference between the work load and the machine load. The 'stretch-out' would indicate that the activities of the individual are stretched out, that he has more work to do; and indeed most of the accusations on this subject involve that principle. As a matter of actual fact, anyone who is familiar with a mill can verify the statement that the work of the weaver of today is much simpler than it has ever been before. He or she formerly found it necessary to fill the batteries, tend the looms, clean the looms, fix the looms, tie the broken threads or ends, and

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finally to remove the cloth after it was manufactured. Today all of the laborious processes of the operation of a weaver are eliminated, and to the weaver is left only the skilled operation of tying the broken threads; and that incidentally is the weaver's prime and only duty. The unskilled helpers take care of the other laborious activities. As a consequence, there is actually no increase in the work load for the individual; though the process, when properly installed, does permit increases in the number of machines a workman can supervise. It matters not if the machine is enabled to do more work, provided it does not involve a greater strain on the activities of the individual. No mill has been able to successfully install the extended labor or multiple loom system, involving an increase in the machine load, except by installing a variety of processes throughout the mill. A better grade of raw cotton must be purchased; greater care exercised in the opening room; improved machinery all along the line, including the carding room, spinning, spooling and warping, so that a stronger, better, more uniform yarn is brought down to the weave room, and the possibility of breakage of the yarn in the process of weaving is reduced to a minimum. This necessarily involves skilled help along the line. This involves the installation of better machinery, long draft spinning, automatic warping and spooling, better carding equipment. Indeed, every process along the line must be strengthened, adjusted and improved before it is possible for the actual process of clothmaking; that is, the weaving, to justify a reduction in the number of stops per hour of the loom, or broken ends per hour, and thus an increase in the number of looms supervised by one weaver. It is the loom stops which regulate the work load. The work load cannot be increased beyond a certain physical limitation. No manufacturer would be foolish enough to try to increase the work load of an individual. He might increase the machine load after the entire process of manufacture has been improved all along the line. This has been misunderstood by the public, by the press, and often by the operatives themselves; and it is believed that the introduction of the new system has been injurious to the health of the individual operatives, and has caused more labor. As a matter of fact, it has caused less labor, greater production, greater earning capacity; for the weavers are usually paid on a piece-work basis.

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"Legislation, therefore, designed to regulate such a thing as the commonly called 'stretch-out' is a practical impossibility. It has been threatened for years. It is obvious that the work load in one mill may differ from the work load in any other mill, for the dozens of processes and steps in manufacture will differ, as will the general environment and the class of help. No general, set rule can be laid down that will apply to all mills alike. The adjustment is one that must be made in the light of common sense; and there is a naturally governed factor or limitation beyond which no man-made process can go; and that natural factor will determine the work load of the individual more accurately and more automatically than any law which is attempted can possibly do. Successful legislation on such technical matters is an impossibility.

"Legislation designed to give greater protection to the health and safety of individuals is unquestionably desirable. Legislation designed to encourage greater progress in the field of education of the workmen is desirable. As president of the Cotton Manufacturers Association of South Carolina, I first championed the cause of compulsory education, and I believe in it as strongly today. If we are to have child labor laws and minors beneath the age of sixteen are prohibited from working, then we must do something to keep their time engaged, and that something should involve a schooling.

"Thus, I say that reasonable legislation, practical legislation, is of great value to the working classes of people; but the difficulty lies in the fact that we are constantly trying to go too far in our efforts to enforce moral and social uplift by law."

"Captain, for a man to have lived as long as you have, and as fully as you have, there must have been pathos in your life."

"There has, a-plenty. The sorrows that have come to me in my life are too sacred and still too fresh to be discussed. For a man to lose within twelve months, his wife, his only living son, a daughter and a granddaughter, is enough pathos without adding more."

And thus ends an unusual introspection, which displays and establishes for future generations the fundamentals of one of industry's most constructive and most useful lives.

His own personal re-actions toward the burning questions of the day are no doubt tempered by the experiences of a full life. His views can most profitably be accepted by industry as a sound

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The Captain in a Familiar Pose, on the Veranda at ''Connemara'' With His Two Faithful Collies, ''Mike'' and ''Laddie.''

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**basis for future adjustments. In the light of his experience and his wisdom, future efforts may become far more constructive, and more profitable than even his efforts have been.**

**What soundness, what vision, what experience, what understanding, what inspiration, are displayed in his words!**

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## *Chapter Twenty-Four*

As one studies the life and accomplishments of a leader like Captain Smyth, and analyzes the principal characteristics of so successful a pioneer, it is interesting to note how many of the principal pioneering qualities are prevalent in his makeup.

The true pioneer possesses vision. So does Captain Smyth. Since his early work in the firm of J. E. Adger and Company, he has ever been able to see the future with exceptional clearness and accuracy. He foresaw the development of the Piedmont Plateau. He predicted the building of an industrial South. He anticipated the huge forward steps, which later followed in the field of electricity. He championed the cause of improved machinery. His vision was that of a genuine pioneer. Vision was one of his greatest assets.

Pioneering goes hand in hand with ambition. Captain Smyth was most ambitious. Like all progressive pioneers, he was sufficiently discontented with his environment and his opportunities to launch out into a well directed plan to improve his position. He has ever been the type of man who is unhappy with small things. No one could ever picture Captain Smyth standing still. Self-satisfaction was and is absolutely foreign to his nature. In ambition he is typical of the progressive pioneer.

Determination is an important requisite of a successful pioneer. Those who followed Captain Smyth through the War Between the States, the Reconstruction, the early struggling days of industry, and those who have seen him bravely and successfully meet the tests of a series of eight or more national financial crises or panics, will eagerly testify to the fact that he was one of the most determined of all of South Carolina's leaders.

Small obstacles never worried Captain Smyth. Even the larger and more serious business barriers were not insurmountable to him. His indomitable will carried him over more handicaps, through more hardships, and past more disappointments than ninety-nine percent of the South's business men have ever seen.

There must be present with each pioneer a sufficient touch of practicle common sense to make him a keen judge of true values.

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Indeed an appreciation of values, differentiation between the trivial and the worth-while, is most essential to success whether in business or profession. The exceptional successes enjoyed by Captain Smyth are convincing proof that he of all our industrial leaders has possessed a clearer appreciation of true worth. In judging men he has been most successful. In differentiating between the right and the wrong time to act or to wait, to sell or buy, he has displayed an unusual insight. As an investor he has been exceptionally successful. In the conservation of his time and energy he has shown great wisdom. He has always followed the principle of investing his odd moments in activities of value and of importance. He has persistently waged war against wasted time and thought. He possesses today an uncanny ability to get directly at the heart of things, and when he speaks, as he does most forcefully, in meetings of cotton manufacturers, his words command complete attention. His powers of analysis stamp him as a constructive and productive pioneer.

Perseverance is one of the requisites of successful pioneering, the keeping on in spite of all disappointments. It is doubtful whether obstacles ever induced Captain Smyth to abandon any important undertaking. He is not a quitter. He has ever possessed a bulldog tenacity, which has stood him in good stead through thick and thin.

Courage is essential to pioneering. History tells of very few successful "blazers of the trail" who were faint-hearted—nor was Captain Smyth. He ever was, and still is, unafraid.

There were many occasions in his life when none but the most courageous could have prevailed. He faced many dilemmas which would have throttled the ambition of the average man. When he launched out into the textile field, an inexperienced, untrained young man with little but the ambition of youth and the good wishes of devoted friends to encourage him, he faced tests which threaten few men, yet he had courage and ultimately met success. When he launched into each new revolutionary step in manufacturing processes it required great courage. And it goes without saying that no youngster could have so bravely led his fellow men through the War Between the States and through the critical period of Reconstruction without an unusual courage.

One naturally selects energy as one of the most important characteristics of a pioneer. The urge and the resulting energy and action

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have been vital factors in most discoveries, most inventions, most conquests. Captain Smyth was in earlier years perhaps one of the most active and busiest young men in South Carolina.

To this day he displays energy which is rare for men of his age. History can tell of few men who at the age of 87 have been so actively and energetically engaged in building, directing and operating large industrial interests as has Captain Smyth. There are not even many young men of this age who are so alert to the dangers which face industry, and few so energetic in helping solve industry's many problems.

A provident nature, a desire to serve humanity, an urge to safeguard posterity, are qualities which underlie a permanent pioneering spirit. Such motives have actuated the life of Captain Smyth since early boyhood. It was the call of the unemployed, poorly paid, socially handicapped backwoodsmen of the white race which spurred Captain Smyth in his pioneering activities in the textile field. He saw an opportunity to raise the standards of living of a hardy race of poor white people of the foot hills and mountain fastnesses. He seized the opportunity by the erection of cotton mills nearby. He became a benefactor of mankind as a result.

Furthermore, through his long and useful career as an employer he has ever striven to improve the living conditions of his employees and widen their opportunities. His life as an employer has been remarkably free of labor distrust and disturbance. His workers are devoted to him. They love him for what he is and for what he has done for them. Ever avoiding the slightest semblance of paternalism, he has at the same time carefully studied the growing needs of those who work with and for him, and has faithfully seized every opportunity to protect and provide for them.

His provident nature has not been exclusively altruistic, but rather practical. He has appreciated the relative value of the labors of healthy, happy workmen and he has known full well that he can never make a better investment than one which protects and upbuilds the character of his own employees, and thus the quality of their labors. Furthermore, he has known that the wisest provident nature is the one which provides not necessarily for the whims and wishes of the beneficiaries, but rather for their needs. Few industrialists have had a truer conception of the fundamental needs of

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the worker or have shown more aptitude toward providing those elements which insure health, happiness and loyalty. Captain Smyth has been a most provident pioneer.

A constructive nature, a building spirit, is important in pioneering. Whether it be in building the map of a new world, in the conquest of a new nation, or in the construction of a new field of industrial, commercial, agricultural, educational or spiritual endeavor, this spirit is of vital importance.

This constructive nature typifies the life of Captain Smyth, the pioneer, perhaps more than any other spirit. At least it is the trait by which men have identified him most frequently. Captain Smyth was ever the builder. He has been an untiring builder. Hardly had he established the one activity upon a solid foundation, before he launched into the next building effort. Dozens of industrial, financial and commercial structures, testify to his building spirit. The great textile industry and many of its forward policies and processes owe their establishment to the constructive spirit of this pioneer.

Possessed as he was, however, with so many of the prime characteristics of a pioneer, Captain Smyth was ever merciful, unselfish, honest, humble. He seldom departed from the roll of the humble servant of humanity. He seldom avoided the responsibilities of the good Samaritan. A full volume could be written of his manifold benevolences, but he would never permit. Nor are many of them known except to himself, and the direct beneficiaries. His kindness, friendliness and faithfulness have endeared him to hundreds of thousands, whose children will call him blessed.

This side of his nature, which is perhaps the most valuable of all, is the more unusual when one considers such constructive life of action in the field of industry. To those who know him, however, it is not surprising for he has seldom allowed himself to forget the words of the Prophet Micah: "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

With an humble spirit, no doubt the Captain would prefer to write his own biography and be privileged to list therein all his disappointments, mistakes and shortcomings. Such an active life must certain-

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ly have had many of them, but this volume, written without the Captain's full sanction and in a sense against his wishes, reserves the right to cover this side of his life with the quotation of the Captain's own favorite hymn, one which has been handed down through the generations:

> "The mistakes of my life have been many,
> The sins of my life have been more.
> But I hope that Jesus will take them all
> When I enter the open door."

THE END

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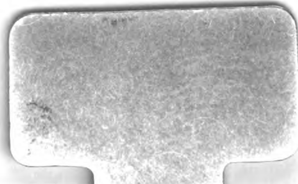

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