

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott  
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel  
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen  
Weber Freiligrath Frey  
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel  
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas  
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach  
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil  
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London  
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer  
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup  
Mommssen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff  
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt  
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier  
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder  
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer George  
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke Bebel Proust  
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot  
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy  
Storm Casanova Lessing Tersteegen Gilm Gryphius  
Chamberlain Langbein Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates  
Brentano Strachwitz Claudius Schiller Bellamy Schilling Kralik Gibbon Tschchow  
Katharina II. von Rußland Gerstäcker Raabe Gleim Vulpius  
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Morgenstern Goedicke  
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Kleist  
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Mörike Musil  
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Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus  
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo Moltke  
Nestroy Marie de France Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht  
Nietzsche Nansen Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz Ringelntz  
Marx vom Stein Lawrence Irving  
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# **The Bishop of Cottontown A Story of the Southern Cotton Mills**

John Trotwood Moore

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## PART FIRST – THE BLOOM

### THE COTTON BLOSSOM

The cotton blossom is the only flower that is born in the shuttle of a sunbeam and dies in a loom.

It is the most beautiful flower that grows, and needs only to become rare to be priceless – only to die to be idealized.

For the world worships that which it hopes to attain, and our ideals are those things just out of our reach.

Satiety has ten points and possession is nine of them.

If, in early August, the delicately green leaves of this most aristocratic of all plants, instead of covering acres of Southland shimmering under a throbbing sun, peeped daintily out, from among the well-kept beds of some noble garden, men would flock to see that plant, which, of all plants, looks most like a miniature tree.

A stout-hearted plant, – a tree, dwarfed, but losing not its dignity.

Then, one morning, with the earliest sunrise, and born of it, there emerges from the scalloped sea-shell of the bough an exquisite, pendulous, cream-white blossom, clasping in its center a golden yellow star, pinked with dawn points of light, and, setting high up under its sky of milk-white petals flanked with yellow stars, it seems to the little nestling field-wrens born beneath it to be [Pg 8] the miniature arch of daybreak, ere the great eye of the morning star closes.

Later, when the sun rises and the sky above grows pink and purple, it, too, changes its color from pink to purple, copying the sky from zone to zone, from blue to deeper blue, until, at late evening the young nestlings may look up and say, in their bird language: "It is twilight."

What other flower among them can thus copy Nature, the great master?

Under every sky is a sphere, and under this sky picture, when night falls and closes it, a sphere is born. And in that sphere is all of earth.

Its oils and its minerals are there, and one day, becoming too full of richness, it bursts, and throws open a five-roomed granary, stored with richer fabric than ever came from the shuttles of Fez and holding globes of oil such as the olives of Hebron dreamed not of.

And in that fabric is the world clothed.

Oh, little loom of the cotton-plant, poet that can show us the sky, painter that paints it, artisan that reaches out, and, from the skein of a sunbeam, the loom of the air and the white of its own soul, weaves the cloth that clothes the world!

From dawn and darkness building a loom. From sunlight and shadow weaving threads of such fineness that the spider's were ropes of sand and the hoar frost's but clumsy icicles.

Weaving—weaving—weaving them. And the delicately patterned tapestry of ever-changing clouds forming patterns of a fabric, white as the snow of the cen [Pg 9] turies, determined that since it has to make the garments of men, it will make them unsullied.

Oh, little plant, poet, painter, master-artisan!

It is true to Nature to the last. The summer wanes and the winter comes, and when the cotton sphere bursts, 'tis a ball of snow, but a dazzling white, spidery snow, which warms and does not chill, brings comfort and not care, wealth and the rich warm blood, and not the pinches of poverty.

There are those who cannot hear God's voice unless He speaks to them in the thunders of Sinai, nor see Him unless He flares before them in the bonfires of a burning bush. They grumble because His Messenger came to a tribe in the hill countries of Long Ago. They wish to see the miracle of the dead arising. They see not the miracle of life around them. Death from Life is more strange to them than life from death.

'Tis the silent voice that speaks the loudest. Did Sinai speak louder than this? Hear it:

"I am a bloom, and yet I reflect the sky from the morning's star to the midnight's. I am a flower, yet I show you the heaven from the dawn of its birth to the twilight of its death. I am a boll, and yet a miniature earth stored with silks and satins, oils of the olives, min-

erals of all lands. And when I am ripe I throw open my five-roomed granary, each fitted to the finger and thumb of the human hand, with a depth between, equalled only by the palm.”

O voice of the cotton-plant, do we need to go to oracles or listen for a diviner voice than yours when thus you tell us: Pluck?

[Pg 11]

## **PART SECOND – THE BOLL**

[Pg 13]

### **CHAPTER I**

#### **COTTON**

Top

The frost had touched the gums and maples in the Tennessee Valley, and the wood, which lined every hill and mountain side, looked like huge flaming bouquets—large ones, where the thicker wood clustered high on the side of Sand Mountain and stood out in crimson, gold and yellow against the sky,—small ones, where they clustered around the foot hills.

Nature is nothing if not sentimental. She will make bouquets if none be made for her; or, mayhap, she wishes her children to be, and so makes them bouquets herself.

There was that crispness in the air which puts one to wondering if, after all, autumn is not the finest time of the year.

It had been a prosperous year in the Tennessee Valley—that year of 1874. And it had brought a double prosperity, in that, under the leadership of George S. Houston, the white men of the state, after a desperate struggle, had thrown off the political yoke of the negro and the carpetbagger, and once more the Saxon ruled in the land of his birth.

Then was taken a full, long, wholesome, air-filling Anglo-Saxon breath, from the Tennessee Valley to the Gulf. There was a quickening of pulses that had fal [Pg 14] tered, and heart-beats that had

fluttered, dumb and discouraged, now rattled like kettle-drums, to the fight of life.

It meant change—redemption—prosperity. And more: that the white blood which had made Alabama, need not now leave her for a home elsewhere.

It was a year glorious, and to be remembered. One which marks an epoch. One wherein there is an end of the old and a beginning of the new.

The cotton—the second picking—still whitened thousands of acres. There were not hands enough to pick it. The negroes, demoralized for a half score of years by the brief splendor of elevation, and backed, at first, by Federal bayonets and afterwards by sheer force of their own number in elections, had been correspondingly demoralized and shiftless. True to their instinct then, as now, they worked only so long as they needed money. If one day's cotton picking fed a negro for five, he rested the five.

The negro race does not live to lay up for a rainy day.

And so the cotton being neglected, its lengthened and frowseled locks hung from wide open bolls like the locks of a tawdry woman in early morning.

No one wanted it—that is, wanted it bad enough to pick it. For cotton was cheap that fall—very cheap—and picking cotton is a back-bending business. Therefore it hung its frowsy locks from the boll.

And nothing makes so much for frowsiness in the cotton plant, and in woman, as to know they are not wanted.

The gin-houses were yet full, tho' the gin had been [Pg 15] running day and night. That which poured, like pulverized snow, from the mouth of the flues into the pick-room—where the cotton fell before being pressed into bales—scarcely had time to be tramped down and packed off in baskets to the tall, mast-like screws which pressed the bales and bound them with ties, ere the seed cotton came pouring in again from wagon bed and basket.

The gin hummed and sawed and sang and creaked, but it could not devour the seed cotton fast enough from the piles of the incoming fleece.

Those grew lighter and larger all the time.

The eight Tennessee sugar-mules, big and sinewy, hitched to the lever underneath the gin-house at The Gaffs, sweated until they sprinkled in one continual shower the path which they trod around the pivot-beam from morning until night.

Around—around—forever around.

For the levers turned the pivot-beam, and the pivot-beam turned the big shaft-wheel which turned the gin-wheel, and the gin had to go or it seemed as if the valley would be smothered in cotton.

Picked once, the fields still looked like a snowfall in November, if such a thing were possible in a land which scarcely felt a dozen snowfalls in as many years.

Dust! There is no dust like that which comes from a gin-house. It may be tasted in the air. All other dust is gravel compared to the penetrating fineness of that diabolical, burning blight which flies out of the lint, from the thousand teeth of the gin-saws, as diamond dust flies from the file. [Pg 16]

It is all penetrating, consumptive-breeding, sickening, stifling, suffocating. It is hot and has a metallic flavor; and it flies from the hot steel teeth of the saws, as pestilence from the hot breath of the swamps.

It is linty, furry, tickling, smothering, searing.

It makes one wonder why, in picturing hell, no priest ever thought of filling it with cotton-gin dust instead of fire.

And it clings there from the Lint to the Loom.

Small wonder that the poor little white slaves, taking up their serfdom at the loom where the negro left off at the lint, die like pigs in a cotton-seed pen.

There was cotton everywhere—in the fields, unpicked; in the gin-houses, unginned. That in the fields would be plowed under next spring, presenting the strange anomaly of plowing under one crop

to raise another of the same kind. But it has been done many times in the fertile Valley of the Tennessee.

There is that in the Saxon race that makes it discontented, even with success.

There was cotton everywhere; it lay piled up around the gin-houses and screws and negro-cabins and under the sheds and even under the trees. All of it, which was exposed to the weather, was in bales, weighing each a fourth of a ton and with bulging white spots in their bellies where the coarse cotton baling failed to cover their nakedness.

It was cotton—cotton—cotton. Seed,—ginned,—lint,—baled,—cotton.

The Gaffs was a fine estate of five thousand acres which had been handed down for several generations. [Pg 17] The old home sat in a grove of hickory, oak and elm trees, on a gentle slope. Ancient sentinels, and they were there when the first Travis came from North Carolina to the Tennessee Valley and built his first double-log cabin under the shelter of their arms.

From the porch of The Gaffs,—as the old home was called—the Tennessee River could be seen two miles away, its brave swift channel glittering like the flash of a silver arrow in the dark green wood which bordered it.

Back of the house the mountain ridge rolled; not high enough to be awful and unapproachable, nor so low as to breed contempt from a too great familiarity. Not grand, but the kind one loves to wander over.

[Pg 18]

## CHAPTER II

### RICHARD TRAVIS

Top

Strength was written in the face of Richard Travis—the owner of The Gaffs—intellectual, physical, passion-strength, strength of pur-

pose and of doing. Strength, but not moral strength; and hence lacking all of being all-conquering.

He had that kind of strength which made others think as he thought, and do as he would have them do. He saw things clearly, strongly, quickly. His assurance made all things sure. He knew things and was proud of it. He knew himself and other men. And best of all, as he thought, he knew women.

Richard Travis was secretary and treasurer of the Acme Cotton Mills.

To-night he was alone in the old-fashioned but elegant dining-room of the Gaffs. The big log fire of ash and hickory was pleasant, and the blaze, falling in sombre color on the old mahogany side-board which sat opposite the fireplace, on the double ash floor, polished and shining, added a deeper and richer hue to it. From the toes of the dragon on which it rested, to the beak of the hand-carved eagle, spreading his wings over the shield beneath him, carved in the solid mahogany and surrounded by thirteen stars, all was elegance and aristocracy. Even the bold staring eyes of the eagle seemed [Pg 19] proud of the age of the side-board, for had it not been built when the stars numbered but thirteen? And was not the eagle rampant then?

The big brass andirons were mounted with the bronzed heads of wood-nymphs, and these looked saucily up at the eagle. The three-cornered cupboard, in one corner of the room, was of cherry, with small diamond-shaped windows in front, showing within rare old sets of china and cut glass. The handsome square dining table matched the side-board, only its dragon feet were larger and stronger, as if intended to stand up under more weight, at times.

Everything was ancient and had a pedigree. Even the Llewellyn setter was old, for he was grizzled around the muzzle and had deep-set, lusterless eyes, from which the firelight, as if afraid of their very uncanniness, darted out as soon as it entered. And he carried his head to one side when he walked, as old and deaf dogs do.

He lay on a rug before the fire. He had won this license, for opposite his name on the kennel books were more field-trials won than

by any other dog in Alabama. And now he dozed and dreamed of them again, with many twitchings of feet, and cocked, quivering ears, and rigid tail, as if once more frozen to the covey in the tall sedge-grass of the old field, with the smell of frost-bitten Lespedeza, wet with dew, beneath his feet.

Travis stooped and petted the old dog. It was the one thing of his household he loved most.

“Man or dog—'tis all the same,” he mused as he watched the dreaming dog—“it is old age's privilege to dream of what has been done—it is youth's to do. [Pg 20]”

He stretched himself in his big mahogany chair and glanced down his muscular limbs, and drew his arms together with a snap of quick strength.

Everything at The Gaffs was an open diary of the master's life. It is so in all homes—that which we gather around us, from our books to our bed-clothes, is what we are.

And so the setter on the rug meant that Richard Travis was the best wing-shot in the Tennessee Valley, and that his kennel of Gladstone setters had won more field trials than any other kennel in the South. No man has really hunted who has never shot quail in Alabama over a well-broken setter. All other hunting is butchery compared to the scientific sweetness of this sport.

There was a good-night, martial, daring crow, ringing from the Hoss-apple tree at the dining-room window. Travis smiled and called out:

“Lights waked you up, eh, Dick? You're a gay Lothario—go back to sleep.”

Richard Travis had the original stock—the Irish Greys—which his doughty old grandsire, General Jeremiah Travis, developed to championship honors, and in a memorable main with his friend, General Andrew Jackson, ten years after the New Orleans campaign, he had cleared up the Tennesseans, cock and pocket. It was a big main in which Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama were pitted against each other, and in which the Travis cocks of the Emerald Isle

strain, as Old Hickory expressed it, "stood the steel like a stuck she-b'ar, fightin' for her cubs."

General Travis had been an expert at heeling a cock; [Pg 21] and it is said that his skill on that occasion was worth more than the blood of his Greys; for by a peculiar turn of the gaffs,—so slight as to escape the notice of any but an expert—his champion cock had struck the blow which ended the battle. With the money won, he had added four thousand acres to his estate, and afterwards called it The Gaffs.

And a strong, brave man had been General Jeremiah Travis,—pioneer, Indian fighter, Colonel in the Creek war and at New Orleans, and a General in the war with Mexico.

His love for the Union had been that of a brave man who had gone through battles and shed his blood for his country.

The Civil War broke his heart.

In his early days his heart had been in his thoroughbred horses and his fighting cocks, and when he heard that his nephew had died with Crockett and Bowie at the Alamo, he drew himself proudly up and said: "A right brave boy, by the Eternal, and he died as becomes one crossed on an Irish Grey cock."

That had been years before. Now, a new civilization had come on the stage, and where the grandsire had taken to thoroughbreds, Richard Travis, the grandson, took to trotters. In the stalls where once stood the sons of Sir Archie, Boston, and imported Glencoe himself, now were sons of Mambrino Patchin, and George Wilkes and Harold. And a splendid lot they were—sires,—brood mares and colts, in the paddocks of The Gaffs.

Travis took no man's dust in the Tennessee Valley. At county fairs he had a walk-over. [Pg 22]

He had inherited The Gaffs from his grandfather, for both his parents died in his infancy, and his two remaining uncles gave their lives in Virginia, early in the war, following the flag of the Confederacy.

One of them had left a son, whom Richard Travis had educated and who had, but the June before, graduated from the State University.

Travis saw but little of him, since each did as he pleased, and it did not please either of them to get into each other's way.

There had been no sympathy between them. There could not be, for they were too much alike in many ways.

There can be no sympathy in selfishness.

All through the summer Harry Travis had spent his time at picnics and dances, and, but for the fact that his cousin now and then missed one of his best horses from the stable, or found his favorite gun put away foul, or his fishing tackle broken, he would not have known that Harry was on the place.

Cook-mother Charity kept the house. Bond and free, she had spent all her life at The Gaffs. Of this she was prouder than to have been housekeeper at Windsor. Her word was law; she was the only mortal who bossed, as she called it, Richard Travis.

Usually, friends from town kept the owner company, and The Gaffs' reputation for hospitality, while generous, was not unnoted for its hilarity.

To-night Richard Travis was lonely. His supper tray had not been removed. He lit a cigar and picked up a book—it was Herbert Spencer, and he was soon interested. [Pg 23]

Ten minutes later an octoroon house-girl, with dark Creole eyes, and bright ribbons in her hair, came in to remove the supper dishes. She wore a bright-colored green gown, cut low. As she reached over the table near him he winced at the strong smell of musk, which beauties of her race imagine adds so greatly to their aesthetic *status-quo*. She came nearer to him than was necessary, and there was an attempted familiarity in the movement that caused him to curve slightly the corner of his thin, nervous lip, showing beneath his mustache. She kept a half glance on him always. He smoked and read on, until the rank smell of her perfume smote him again through the odor of his cigar, and as he looked up she had busied around so close to him that her exposed neck was within two feet of