

As editor of the Atlanta Constitution, Henry W. Grady became the chief spokesman for the "New South," the conviction that the future of the region lay in industrialization and urbanization and in dealing with the "peculiar problem" involving African-Americans. At the Texas state fair on October 26, 1887, he gave the main address of the day on "The South and Her Problems."

from THE SOUTH AND HER PROBLEMS

Henry W. Grady

But the future holds a problem, in solving which the South must stand alone; in dealing with which, she must come closer together than ambition or despair have driven her, and on the outcome of which her very existence depends. This problem is to carry within her body politic two separate races, and nearly equal in numbers. She must carry these races in peace—for discord means ruin. She must carry them separately—for assimilation means debasement. She must carry them in equal justice—for to this she is pledged in honor and in gratitude. She must carry them even unto the end, for in human probability she will never be quit of either.

This burden no other people bears today—on none hath it ever rested. Without precedent or companionship, the South must bear this problem, the awful responsibility of which should win the sympathy of all human kind, and the protecting watchfulness of God—alone, even to the end. Set by this problem apart from all other peoples of the earth, and her unique position emphasized rather than relieved, as I shall show hereafter, by her material conditions, it is not only fit but it is essential that she should hold her brotherhood unimpaired, quicken her sympathies, and in the light or in the shadows of this surpassing problem work out her own salvation in the fear of God—but of God alone.

What shall the South do to be saved? Through what paths shall she reach the end? Through what travail, or what splendors, shall

mines, factories and personal property of every description whatsoever. Back of this our forests of hard woods, and measureless swamps of cypress and gum. Think of it. In cotton a monopoly. In iron and coal establishing swift mastery. In granite and marble developing equal advantage and resource. In yellow pine and hard woods the world's treasury. Surely the basis of the South's wealth and power is laid by the hand of the Almighty God, and its prosperity has been established by divine law which walk in eternal justice and not by taxes levied on its neighbors through human statutes. Paying tribute for fifty years that under artificial conditions other sections might reach a prosperity impossible under natural laws, it has grown apace—and its growth shall endure if its people are ruled by two maxims, that reach deeper than legislative enactment, and the operation of which cannot be limited by artificial restraint, and but little hastened by artificial stimulus.

First. No one crop will make a people prosperous. If cotton held its monopoly under conditions that made other crops impossible—or under allurements that made other crops exceptional—its dominion would be despotism....

But agriculture alone—no matter how rich or varied its resources—cannot establish or maintain a people's prosperity.... No commonwealth ever came to greatness by producing raw material. Less can this be possible in the future than in the past. The Comstock lode is the richest spot on earth. And yet the miners, gasping for breath fifteen hundred feet below the earth's surface, get bare existence out of the splendor they dig from the earth. It goes to carry the commerce and uphold the industry of distant lands, of which the men who produce it get but dim report. Hardly more is the South profited when, stripping the harvest of her cotton fields, or striking her teeming hills, or leveling her superb forests, she sends the raw material to augment the wealth and power of distant communities.

Another cause that has prospered New England and the Middle States while the South languished, is the system of tariff taxes levied on the unmixured agriculture of these States for the protection of industries to our neighbors to the North, a system on which the Hon. Roger Q. Mills—that lion of the tribe of Judah—has at last

laid his mighty paw and under the indignant touch of which it trembles to its center. That system is to be revised and its duties reduced, as we all agree it should be, though I should say in perfect frankness I do not agree with Mr. Mills in it. Let us hope this will be done with care and industrious patience. Whether it stands or falls, the South has entered the industrial list to partake of his bounty if it stands, and if it fails to rely on the favor with which nature has endowed her, and from this immutable advantage to fill her own markets and then have a talk with the world at large....

The incoming tide has begun to rise. Every train brings manufacturers from the East and West seeking to establish themselves or their sons near the raw material and in this growing market. Let the fullness of the tide roll in.

would have thought as during those lonely and terrible days he walked behind the plow, locking the sunshine in the glory of his harvest, and spreading the showers and the verdure of his field—no friend near save nature that smiled at his earnest touch, and God that sent him the message of good cheer through the passing breeze and the whispering leaves—that he would in twenty years, having carried these burdens uncomplaining, make a crop of \$800,000,000. Yet this he has done, and from his bounty the South has rebuilt her cities, and recouped her losses. While we exult in his splendid achievement, let us take account of his standing.

Whence this enormous growth? For ten years the world has been at peace. The pioneer has now replaced the soldier. Commerce has whitened new seas, and the merchant has occupied new areas. Steam has made of the earth a chess-board, on which men play for markets. Our western wheat-grower competes in London with the Russian and the East Indian. The Ohio wool grower watches the Australian shepherd, and the bleat of the now historic sheep of Vermont is answered from the steppes of Asia. The herds that emerge from the dust of your amazing prairies might hear in their pauses the hoofbeats of antipodean herds marching to meet them. Under Holland's dykes, the cheese and butter matters fight American dairies. The hen cackles around the world. California challenges vine-clad France. The dark continent is disclosed through meshes of light. There is competition everywhere. The husbandman, driven from his market, balances price against starvation, and undercuts his rival. This conflict often runs to panic, and profit vanishes. The Iowa farmer burning his corn for fuel is not an unusual type.

Amid this universal conflict, where stands the South? While the producer of everything we eat or wear, in every land, is fighting through glutted markets for bare existence, what of the southern farmer? In his industrial as in his political problem he is set apart—not in doubt, but in assured independence. Cotton makes him king. Not the fleeces that Jason sought can rival the richness of this plant, as it unfurls its banners in our fields. It is gold from the instant it puts forth its tiny shoot. The shower that whispers to it is heard around the world. The trespass of a worm on its green leaf means

more to England than the advance of the Russians on her Asiatic outposts. When its fibre, current in every bank, is marketed, it renders back to the South \$350,000,000 every year. Its seed will yield \$60,000,000 worth of oil to the press and \$40,000,000 in food for soil and beast, making the stupendous total of \$450,000,000 annual income from this crop. And now, under the Tompkins patent, from its stalk newspaper is to be made at two cents per pound. Edward Atkinson once said: "If New England could grow the cotton plant, without lint, it would make her richest crop; if she held monopoly of cotton lint and seed she would control the commerce of the world."

Not alone in cotton, but in iron, does the South excel. The Hon. Mr. Norton, who honors this platform with his presence, once said to me: "An Englishman of the highest character predicted that the Atlantic will be whitened within our lives with sails carrying American iron and coal to England." When he made that prediction the English miners were exhausting the coal in long tunnels above which the ocean thundered. Having ores and coal stored in exhaustless quantity, in such richness, and in such adjustment, that iron can be made and manufacturing done cheaper than elsewhere on this continent, is to now command, and at last control, the world's market for iron. The South now sells iron, through Pittsburgh, in New York. She has driven Scotch iron first from the interior, and finally from American ports. Within our lives she will cross the Atlantic, and fulfill the Englishman's prophecy. In 1880 the South made 212,000 tons of iron. In 1887, 845,000 tons. She is now actually building, or has finished this year, furnaces that will produce more than her entire product of last year. Birmingham alone will produce more iron in 1889 than the entire South produced in 1887. Our coal supply is exhaustless, Texas alone having 6000 square miles. In marble and granite we have no rivals, as to quantity or quality. In lumber our riches are even vaster. More than fifty per cent of our entire area is in forests, making the South the best timbered region of the world. We have enough merchantable yellow pine to bring, in money, \$2,500,000,000—a sum the vastness of which can only be understood when I say it nearly equaled the assessed value of the entire South, including cities, forests, farms,

every community there are colored men who redeem their race from this reproach, and who vote under reason. Perhaps in time the bulk of this race may thus adjust itself. But, through what long and monstrous periods of political debauchery this status would be reached, no tongue can tell.

The clear and unmistakable domination of the white race, dominating not through violence, not through party alliance, but through the integrity of its own vote and the largeness of its sympathy and justice through which it shall compel the support of the better classes of the colored race—that is the hope and assurance of the South. Otherwise, the negro would be bandied from one faction to another. His credulity would be played upon, his cupidity tempted, his impulses misdirected, his passions inflamed. He would be forever in alliance with that faction which was most desperate and unscrupulous. Such a state would be worse than reconstruction, for then intelligence was banded, and its speedy triumph assured. But with intelligence and property divided—bidding and overbidding for place and patronage—irritation increasing with each conflict—the bitterness and desperation seizing every heart—political debauchery deepening, as each faction staked its all in the miserable game—there would be no end to this, until our suffrage was hopelessly sullied, our people forever divided, and our most sacred rights surrendered.

One thing further should be said in perfect frankness. Up to this point we have dealt with ignorance and corruption—but beyond this point a deeper issue confronts us. Ignorance may struggle to enlightenment, out of corruption may come the incorruptible. God speed the day when—every true man will work and pray for its coming—the negro must be led to know and through sympathy to confess that his interests and the interests of the people of the South are identical. The men who, from afar off, view this subject through the cold eye of speculation or see it distorted through partisan glasses, insist that, directly or indirectly, the negro race shall be in control of the affairs of the South. We have no fears of this; already we are attaching to us the best elements of that race, and as we proceed our alliance will broaden; external pressure but irritates and impedes. Those who would put the

negro race in supremacy would work against infallible decree, for the white race can never submit to its domination, because the white race is the superior race. But the supremacy of the white race of the South must be maintained forever and the domination of the negro race resisted at all points and at all hazards—because the white race is the superior race. This is the declaration of no new truth. It has abided forever in the marrow of our bones, and shall run forever with the blood that feeds Anglo-Saxon hearts.

There is not a white man North or South who does not feel it stir in the gray matter of his brain and throb in his heart. Not a negro who does not feel its power. It is not a sectional issue. It speaks in Ohio, and in Georgia. It speaks wherever the Anglo-Saxon touches an alien race. It has just spoken in universally approved legislation in excluding the Chinaman from our gates, not for his ignorance, vice or corruption, but because he sought to establish an inferior race in a republic fashioned in the wisdom and defended by the blood of a homogeneous people.

What of the South's industrial problem? When we remember that amazement followed the payment by thirty-seven million Frenchmen of a billion dollars indemnity to Germany, that the five million whites of the South rendered to the torch and sword three billions of property—that thirty million dollars a year, or six hundred million dollars in twenty years, has been given willingly of our poverty as pensions for Northern soldiers, the wonder is that we are here at all. There is a figure with which history has dealt lightly, but that, standing pathetic and heroic in the genesis of our new growth, has interested me greatly—our soldier-farmer of '65. What chance had he for the future as he wandered amid his empty barns, his stock, labor, and implements gone—gathered up the fragments of his wreck—urging kindly his borrowed mule—paying sixty per cent for all that he bought, and buying all on credit—his crop mortgaged before it was planted—his children in want, his neighborhood in chaos—working under new conditions and retrieving every error by a costly year—plodding all day down the furrow, hopeless and adrift, save when at night he went back to his broken home, where his wife, cheerful even then, renewed his courage, while she ministered to him in loving tenderness. Who

she give to the Union this section, its wealth garnered, its resources utilized, and its rehabilitation complete—and restore to the world this problem solved in such justice as the finite mind can measure, or finite hands administer?

In dealing with this I shall dwell on two points.

First, the duty of the South in its relation to the race problem.

Second, the duty of the South in relation to its no less unique and important industrial problem. . . .

What of the negro? This of him. I want no better friend than the black boy who was raised by my side, and who is now trudging patiently with downcast eyes and shuffling figure through his lowly way in life. I want no sweeter music than the crooning of my old "mammy," now dead and gone to rest, as I heard it when she held me in her loving arms, and bending her old black face above me stole the cares from my brain, and led me smiling into sleep. I want no truer soul than that which moved the trusty slave, who for four years while my father fought with the armies that barred his freedom, slept every night at my mother's chamber door, holding her and her children as safe as if her husband stood guard, and ready to lay down his humble life on her threshold. History has no parallel to the faith kept by the negro in the South during the war. Often five hundred negroes to a single white man, and yet through these dusky throngs the women and children walked in safety, and the unprotected homes rested in peace. Unmarshaled, the black battalions moved patiently to the fields in the morning to feed the armies their idleness would have starved, and at night gathered anxiously at the big house to "hear the news from marster," though conscious that his victory made their chains enduring. Everywhere humble and kindly; the bodyguard of the helpless; the rough companion of the little ones; the observant friend; the silent sentry in his lowly cabin; the shrewd counselor. And when the dead came home, a mourner at the open grave. A thousand torches would have disbanded every Southern army, but not one was lighted. When the master going to a war in which slavery was involved said to his slave, "I leave my home and loved ones in your charge," the tenderness between man and master stood disclosed. And when the slave held that charge sacred through storm and temptation, he

gave new meaning to faith and loyalty. I rejoice that when freedom came to him after years of waiting, it was all the sweeter because the black hands from which the shackles fell were stainless of a single crime against the helpless ones confided to his care.

From this root, imbedded in a century of kind and constant companionship, has sprung some foliage. As no race had ever lived in such unresisting bondage, none was ever hurried with such swiftness through freedom into power. Into hands still trembling from the blow that broke the shackles, was thrust the ballot. In less than twelve months from the day he walked down the furrow a slave, the negro dictated in legislative halls from which Davis and Calhoun had gone forth, the policy of twelve commonwealths. When his late master protested against his misrule, the federal drum beat rolled around his strongholds, and from a hedge of federal bayonets he grinned in good-natured insolence. From the proven incapacity of that day has he far advanced? Simple, credulous, impulsive—easily led and too often easily bought, is he a safer, more intelligent citizen now than then? Is this mass of votes, loosed from old restraints, inviting alliance or awaiting opportunity, less menacing than when its purpose was plain and its way direct?

My countrymen, right here the South must make a decision on which very much depends. Many wise men hold that the white vote of the South should divide, the color line be beaten down, and the southern States ranged on economic or moral questions as interest or belief demands. I am compelled to dissent from this view. The worst thing in my opinion that could happen is that the white people of the South should stand in opposing factions, with the vast mass of ignorant or purchasable negro votes between. Consider such a status. If the negroes were skillfully led—and leaders would not be lacking—it would give them the balance of power—a thing not to be considered. If their vote was not compacted, it would invite the debauching bid of factions, and drift surely to that which was the most corrupt and cunning. With the shiftless habit and irresolution of slavery days still possessing him, the negro voter will not in this generation, adrift from war issues, become a steadfast partisan through conscience or conviction. In