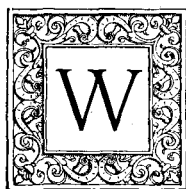


# Savannah Twice Visited

BY W. D. HOWELLS



WHEN James Oglethorpe wrote home to the trustees of his English Company in 1733, he gave the look of the land at Savannah in terms which graphically map it still. "The river," he said, "has formed a half moon, around the south side of which the banks are about forty feet high, and on the top a flat which they call a bluff. The plain ground extends into the country about five or six miles, and along the river for about a mile. Ships that draw near twelve feet of water can ride within ten yards of the bank. Upon the river-side, in the center of the plain, I have laid out the town, opposite to which is an island of very rich pasturage. The river is pretty wide, the water fresh, and from the quay of the town you can see its whole course to the sea. For about six miles up into the country the landscape is very agreeable, and bordered with high woods."

The river, though it still skirts the bluff in a golden tide, sweeping to the ocean so swiftly from the inland that it pushes the salt savor far seaward, would hardly be recognizable by him who first described it. The wild emptiness of the shore he saw has changed to a vision of commerce and industry, and of foundries on the banks, pouring their clouds of smoke out over a far stretch of steam and sail in the river, and beyond the river a vast expanse of docks, dense with the cotton and turpentine and resin which the railroads have brought down from the fields and forests of the whole Georgian interior to form the selvedge of the salt marsh here stretching to the horizon and fading into it.

If the river banks and the expanses of its sea meadows were estranged to the eyes of the founder, the town itself as it thickens over the plain above would be yet more incredible. The financial and official and commercial streets stretch

eastward and westward in impressive succession, and the quays and the roadways to them are paved with blocks of lava and marble and granite brought overseas in ballast by the ships that for nearly two hundred years have ridden at anchor in the bold water of the stream below. Then begins that noble sequence of wooded and gardened squares which form the glory of the city. These lengthen and widen far beyond eyeshot over "the plain country" where, at the moment Oglethorpe wrote, the colony was chopping its place out of the primeval forest and building its houses in little formal rows along the river bluffs, but he was already imagining those open spaces of grove and lawn which lengthen at last into a park thrice their extent.

Each square of those expanding from the main avenue of the city has its pillar or statue commemorating the events of a city storied in all our wars, from the revolt against Great Britain to the reconciliation of the States after our Civil War. Count Pulaski, the Polish exile, and Sergeant Jasper who fell in the same fight in 1778, on the field where the oldest railroad station stands, has each his figure in bronze and monument in stone in the square devoted to him. But, fitly, first and finest is the figure of Oglethorpe, where, in the somewhat swagger presence of a cavalier of the Second George's time, one of the truest Christians overlooks in the shadow of the live-oaks the rude monolith of the Indian chief whom Oglethorpe made and kept his friend lifelong. The statue, as Mr. French has imagined it, and the whole gardened ground, with its curving marble seats, are of a respective charm which I suppose I must not say is surpassed by that of the lovely little children who play about in all the city squares under the fostering neglect of their kind black nurses, but seem to superabound in this, as if for the peculiar pleasure of the good and brave Ogle-

thorpe. I may as well also say here as elsewhere that the children of Savannah are the best of Savannah; but if their mothers will not allow this, then I think no one will dispute the primacy of the beautiful young girls, of the flapper age, who seem to be perpetually going to and from the many occasions of ice-cream soda along the wide, well-shaded pavements, after the pretty school-girls have flocked home. Still, however I submit openly in this matter, I shall always secretly cling to my preference for the little or littlest people, who, with their nurses, or in their own personal safe-keeping, abound from early morning to early nightfall; and for all reason I allege the instance of *three small girls going along at twilight* well outside the sidewalk in a quiet talk about school, and leaving the many whirring motors to take care of themselves. By day the children are of course safe from the electric phaetons of their mothers, grandmothers, and aunts who drive these over the smooth levels of the well-kept, and well-bricked, or well-asphalted streets; and I suppose that in the early dark a kind Providence is equally mindful of the children, even if their little steps should stray beyond the vast suburbs to the forest where along the horizon its engulfing green hides the multitudinous house-tops and countless church spires and factory chimneys.

We had come to Savannah for our second visit in the earliest spring when the leaves were at their palest green, and we saw the foliage harden and thicken and darken till at last the mellow walls and roofs were almost hidden to the eye looking down on them from a high place, and the chimes from the belfry of a neighboring church seemed to peal from the heart of some dense and lofty tree, possibly one of those vast live-oaks which were letting their small leaves drip earthward in a belated autumn consciousness. Then the green tops mixed and sank together, till at last the whole thickly wooded city billowed spaciouly away to a sunset sky and carved itself in a Greek bordering of black along the golden horizon. Our first visit was timed for the famous freeze of February, 1917, when we saw the buds and blossoms per-

ish in the public grounds and door-yards, which now triumphed through an unbroken warmth with a wealth of the white dooryard roses and the milky streaming of the dogwood flowers in the other wooded squares and avenues. There is nothing of our Northern grass in Savannah, but there is the green of Italian rye which must be sown every spring but withers away toward the end of the long summer, and meantime forms an admirable camouflage of our lawns, which we now saw in its tenderest prime.

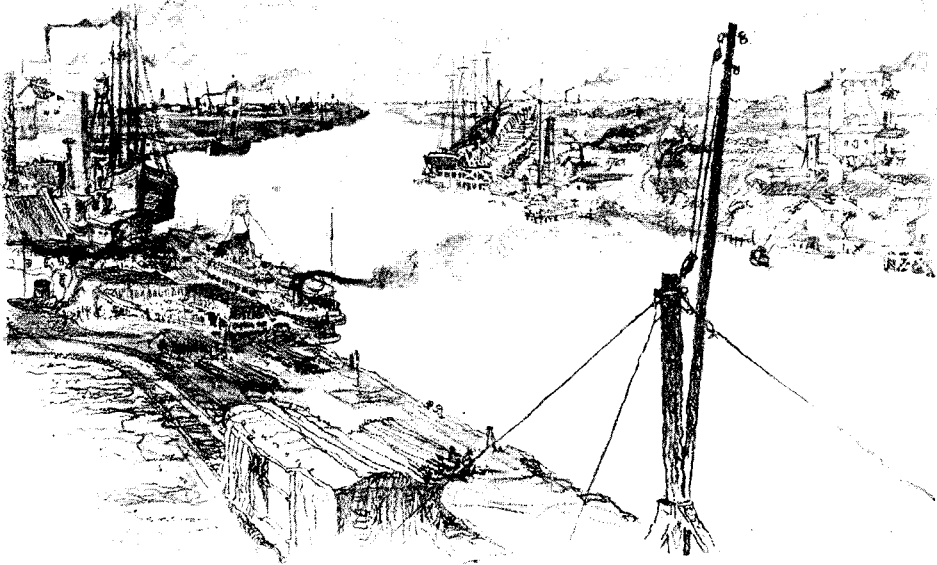
Perhaps the affection of the noble founder of the Georgian state was prophetically dedicated to its best future interests; for above everything Oglethorpe was devoted to the love of his fellow-man, though this did not prevent his being a valiant soldier and a very gallant gentleman. He served in the great wars under Prince Eugene with splendid courage, and he knew so well how to defend his own dignity that, when a silly Swabian princeling once flipped some wine from his glass on him at table, Oglethorpe, aware that he could not challenge royal blood for the insult though he could not ignore it, said, quietly, "Ah, that's very well; but we do it much better in England," and flung his whole glassful in the prince's face. It was a very Thackerayan incident which might have come out of *Henry Esmond*, where Oglethorpe's Jacobitish opinions, or any of the fine qualities which went with them in him, would not have found themselves amiss. Thackeray might have followed him with love and praise in his whole career, and would have known how to honor him for the philanthropy which, before Howard's, moved Oglethorpe to visit the prisons and to rescue the hopeless debtors in the abominable jails where they languished. He would have liked in him the manly poetry of helping these captives to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in a new world, and he would have found a peculiar relish in this generous royalist's being the first Englishman of his class to call upon the first American ambassador to England, and hail him upon the success of his country, and his own happiness in coming to represent it at the court of the British sovereign

whom the Americans had so Englishly outfought.

Oglethorpe had then lived to be nearly a hundred years old, and to be the generalissimo of the British armies. In this quality he was not less the friend of the envoy from the rebel American nation than if Mr. Adams had brought our submission to his sovereign, and he was equally the friend of every worthy Englishman who needed one. He was more eminently but not more gladly the friend of Samuel Johnson, and Oliver Goldsmith, and Doctor Johnson's henchman and superior, James Boswell. These last celebrities urged Oglethorpe to write his life, but Oglethorpe urged the work upon Johnson, who so far consented as to say that he might send him the materials for it. Oglethorpe never did so, or, if he did so, Johnson did nothing with them, but left it open for me to write it if I should live to the ripe leisure of Oglethorpe's ninety-seven years. I could desire nothing better than such an employment, for to my

mind no better or greater man has lived. But life is short and in one's eighty-first year one cannot promise anything positively.

Oglethorpe not only brought to Savannah many sorts and conditions of capable and incapable colonists besides those hopeless debtors whom he delivered from prison, but he duly attracted apostles for the salvation of the colonists' souls. Chief among these were John Wesley and George Whitefield, and Wesley preached his first sermon on the site of one of the stateliest structures of the stately business section; but I shall not betray its identity because I cannot remember it, and the traveler can easily find it by the tablet in its wall. Wesley was, as his journals show, a saint of a troubled and troublesome mind, and he presently involved himself in a love-affair, or near-love, with a very lively young lady whom some of his friends advised him not to go further with. He took their advice, but when he wished to retire from this likeness of love-making,



THE RIVER PRESENTS A VISION OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

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neither the lively young lady nor her family liked it, and when Wesley, after her marriage with another, forbade her the communion because of her levity of make and manner, her brother-in-law took up the matter in the courts of law; and then Wesley departed out of the gates of Savannah, such as the gates

Joshua Reynolds, hangs in the Historical Library in Savannah, and represents a lady of rather hard-favored countenance, but of iron resolution such as could very well face down the Duchess of Buckingham, who wrote her: "I thank your ladyship for the information concerning the Methodist preaching. Their doctrines are strongly tinged with impertinence towards their superiors, in perpetually trying to level all ranks. It is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth. I wonder your ladyship should relish any sentiments so at variance with high rank and good breeding."

The prevailing faith of colonial Savannah was evangelical, but all faiths, except the Roman Catholic, were tolerated, and Oglethorpe found among his followers some forty Portuguese Jews, who at once took a leading part in the smaller commerce and a rank in society still conceded to at least one family of them. Their synagogue can scarcely claim distinction in ecclesiastical architecture, and only the beautiful church of St. John can be called dear to both ear and eye. Its spire rises from the sea of foliage which sweeps the plain to the horizon, and at the appointed hours its chimes fill the air through and over all the other city noises, on week-days as on Sundays. Especially on the memorable Saturday

were. Whitefield was of more fortunate experience in the colony, and the traveler who goes to visit the earliest and greatest of American charities at the Orphan House of Bethesda several miles out of the town, will do well to remember Whitefield as its founder and the first great preacher there. Later Bethesda enjoyed the beneficence of Lady Selina Huntingdon, who made Whitefield her chaplain when she established that "Connexion," so called, of the English Church which promoted the cause of the early Methodists in England. Her portrait, quite impossibly attributed to Sir

when the first Liberty Loan was inaugurated, there was such burst of patriotic tunes after the pious hymns from the bells of St. John's that the hearer's love of country might well have known a consecration to his hope of heaven. It was something that spiritualized the financial moment and gave the church a primacy which in architecture must be yielded, above every other religious edifice, to the famous Presbyterian church rebuilt in exact form after its destruction by fire. The structure on the outside is of such Sir Christopher Wrenish renaissance that one might



THE ANCIENT MANSIONS ARE LOVABLE



well seem to be looking at it in a London street; but the interior is of such unique loveliness that no church in London may compare with it. Whoever would realize its beauty must go at once to Savannah and forget for one beatific moment in its presence the ceilings of Tiepolo and the roofs of Veronese.

If this is the end of our praise for sacred or civil structures, the beholder will have pleasure enough in the many lovely old mansions in the heart of the city, or where the heart once was before its life went to find other residence in the ever-enlarging suburbs. It was a fancy we cherished from the first of our first visit to the last of our last that these old houses reminded us of certain dear old English towns like, say, Leamington or Cheltenham, though it would be hard to say how or why. Perhaps it was because of their gardened keeping, oftenest glimpsed over garden walls, with roses clambering or climbing upon them, and other blossoms like azaleas and wistarias within them, and even now and then a mesh of ivy covering the whole side of a house. But we could not claim for association with Leamington or Cheltenham the mellow red-brown or the softened pink of other old houses at once so stately and so

kindly. These colors brought back the sense of Latin sojourn, and perhaps it is not too extravagant to imagine the early returning from their forays into the Spanish neighborhoods below with a liking for the coloring of the old Spanish houses of St. Augustine. I do not insist; I only say that these old mansions are lovable, if not always lovely, and that the soft damp, coolish air of late March which clung about them after rain was undeniably English, if not Bostonian, and sometimes specialized itself as Liverpoolish. One of the best of them, or which earliest took our fancy, is the house where Thackeray stayed when he was in Savannah and immensely liked staying, in 1855. It was built for Mr. Andrew Low, an Englishman, and it is of the general presence of an Italian villa, or some *palazzino* in a subordinate Italian city. While the illustrator was sketching it, there came out on the veranda and down the stately stairway and then over the garden walk to the garden gate a lady like the legend of a lady living or haunting there, and transfiguring it all to Southern European keeping. Another house of supreme interest and beauty was the Owens house, famous for the visit of Lafayette when he came to Savannah in 1825. The in-



OLD SLAVE QUARTERS AT THE HERMITAGE

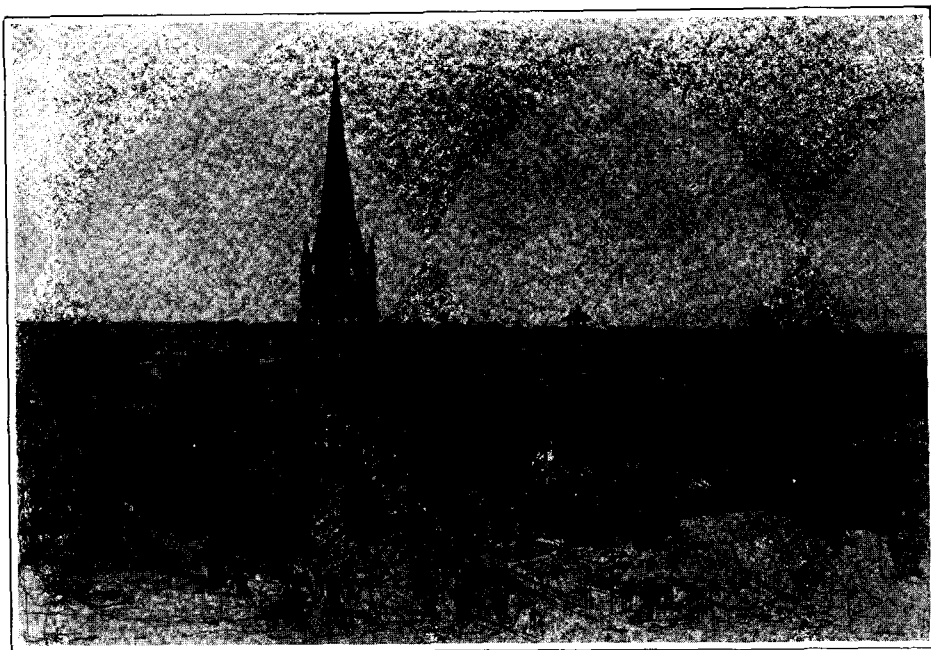
terior of the house naturally does not show in the picture, but it is more French than Italian and is suggestive of the sort of *hôtel* which is native in Paris, where its like may have been studied by the English architect Jay who built the Owens house and many another sympathetic mansion of such as give Savannah that effect of an English town which I have imagined. Such houses abound chiefly in and about that sequence of squares which follow up from the business streets along the handsome length and breadth of Bull Street. One of these, but not one of the most characteristic, is the Green mansion built by yet another Englishman, who left his name to it, and left it to be chiefly famed for becoming the headquarters of General Sherman in 1864. The garden space about this is more open to the public eye than the grounds of most other similiar houses, and it keeps itself less an allure to the fancy for that reason; instead of a high, solid wall, it has an iron grille about it, graceful enough, but not so English in effect, or even so Spanish.

These very characteristic and memorable mansions can still be counted by scores, but every now and then one of them disappears through natural causes, as well as through that effect of bad taste which asserts itself everywhere, or from some real or imaginary public demand. Only last year one was pulled down to free a site for an Auditorium, but now and then one is dedicated to the general advantage with little or no change, as in the case of the Telfair mansion. As if in response to the sympathetic tenderness with which this has been done, the Telfair Art Gallery remains a collection of pictures which no other American city of Savannah's age or population can invite the traveler to visit.

The former slaves' quarters in the rear of these mansions front on the narrow streets or alleys where you may see colored people darkly coming and going, though whether they are still the servants of the resident quality I do not know. Sometimes, but rather rarely, you find in Savannah an aged black with frosty wool who boasts himself slave-born, and counts from "before the

Freedom," as they call the emancipation. The phrase is touching, and in the case of one at least of these bondsmen-born, the pathos went with both respect and self-respect and with those good manners which all men seem to have in Savannah, or for that matter the whole South in comparison with our Northern unceremoniousness. Perhaps I shall here be reminded of the savagery of the lynchings which goes along with the Southern good manners, especially in Georgia; but there has been no more powerful protest against this savagery than the paper which Judge Samuel B. Adams, the most distinguished jurist of the state, delivered a few years ago. It is a pity that his paper should not be known throughout the North where the abhorrence of the Georgian lynchings most insists. These have their causes, if not their reasons, in the jungle-lust of the criminals, but in relation to our slave-born friend (he liked to speak of our "friendship") such abominations are unimaginable, and even an infraction of good manners could not be supposed of him. I should call him a gentleman if gentlemen were not often such poor things, but as it is I will call him a man, more than manly in his moments of such extreme courtesy as always lifting his hat when he spoke to us, and of first assenting to whatever we said until he could gather himself for a necessary dissent. He was a most intelligent guide to the city and its objects of interest, and if his top phaëton, which we preferred to any hireling automobile, left at last, as at first, something to be desired in style and repair, it somehow grew to seem newer and handsomer. If it had been at its worst somewhat tattered in its leathern and linen appointments, the presence of our friend on the front seat constituted it an establishment of prime quality, especially with those whose social rank he recognized when he said, one day after a round of calls with us, "You seem to know *all* our best people."

His delicate recognition of our good fortune in this was a finer compliment than could have been paid to our merit, and it kept our regard for our slave-born friend untainted by suspicion of flattery. In fact, there was no suspicion of this in



THE GOTHIC SPIRE RISES FROM A SEA OF FOLIAGE

the intercourse of the races, so far as I noticed it. What was apparent was the absolute submission of the colored people in all public matters to the rule of segregation. I never witnessed any attempt to transgress it, but the compliance was for me so nearly painful that when I got back to New York it was a relief to sit down next to a chocolate-colored fellow-man in the first street-car I took. Yet I am bound to say that in the very wide-mindedly imagined city which Oglethorpe founded there seemed no abuse of their superiority by the white people, and there was no apparent willingness to keep the blacks ignorant or intellectually inferior. The Georgia Industrial College is one of the several institutions which testify to this fact, and if I speak especially of the Cuyler Street School for the training of boys in the manual, and the colored girls in the domestic arts, it is because the visit I paid to it in the company of certain Savannah gentlefolks was practical proof of what I say. I heard the pupils of both sexes read and sing excellently; I saw the boys working at carpentry through the school windows, and I sat

down with my friends to a tasteful and admirably appetizing lunch which the girls had cooked. It would not have been possible for the near-white teacher who talked with us over our shoulders to sit at table with us, but neither would this have been probable in Boston, and I think several of these kindly Southern gentry felt with me the irk of that modest man's obvious inferiority; but then I do not like to have a pure white man wait behind my chair in the character of servant. I have no right to suppose any great parity of feeling in myself and my commensals concerning our conventionally enforced superiority, but I may at least own my sympathy with one of our company when he said, in noting several of the children who looked as Caucasian as either of us, but were hopelessly negroes in reality, "Yes, that is the tragedy."

It is useless to deny a sense of the situation which remains for the South from the enslavement of the negroes in the obscure, beginnings of colonial life. Here as elsewhere, slavery was not desired at first; Oglethorpe did not want it, nor his Trustees, but the easing of

labor to the colonists by the toil of the slaves was insidious, and even the good Whitefield could justify slavery as a providential means of civilizing the Africans. When the cotton-gin gave its touch to the pecuniary profit of the cotton culture, and the institution ended in the chaos of "the Freedom," the North madly took a part in it, and turned the slaves with all their unfitness into sovereigns. This could not last, and then nothing but patience remained, the patience of the whites with the black masters changing back into servants, and the patience of the blacks with their old masters doing them the civil wrong, which seems to be the only possibility of the impossible situation. How long this can endure no one thinks or dreams; there is no tangible or imaginable outcome. The incongruity confronts the witness from every point, and when he would escape from the comedy of it he is stopped by the tragedy taking form in the jungle-lust which imperils every white woman in an unguarded house, as from invading Germans.

His tenderness of feeling for the past transmits to the young Southerner a faith in the pre-historic kindness of the slaveholding days, but no trace of it appears to the traveler. If he deals honestly with himself, he finds only ugliness and hatefulness, which in such a relic as The Hermitage becomes monumental. People motor out of Savannah to see this famous place and return to suffer from the thought of it unless they can rejoice over the shame that has befallen its pride. The mansion which was once so stately and beautiful is now a dismal presence of barred windows, and verandas flocked over and defiled by goats, with a rabble of black boys scattering over what was the lawn and assembling to mob the stranger with a clamor for money and afflict him with their shapeless dances and their version of the variety-show songs instead of the "spirituals" which he may have hoped for from them. Behind them scatter a few lank black girls with black babies on their hips, and then beyond the squalid dwelling of these lies the desolation of what had been a walled garden. On the river-front of the mansion stretch the grounds of what had been its flowery

pleasaunce, but the wilderness has stolen back upon it all and the waters of the swollen river have leaked among the paths which once led to it. Beside it an autumnal cotton-field shows the husks of the gathered bolls on its withered stems, and to the landward of the mansion, under the boughs of the moss-hung live-oaks, stretches a row of slave-huts built of brick, with each a hearth and a single window to light its only room. The things have the effect of having been boastfully shown as the homes of the happy slaves who must have always groveled in them. I suppose they are now the nightly lairs of those rabble boys who were waiting our return to our motor; but only one of the huts showed any sign of habitation; and the gloom of the hovering live-oaks, with their funeral wreaths of moss, seemed to swoop down upon them.

Possibly I might have found gainlier memorials of the past if I had duly sought them, but the traveler must take his chances, and I had chosen The Hermitage as the most typical. I wished to forget it as soon as I could in my return to the charming city, where I found nothing to remind me of slavery except the slaves' quarters opening in the alleys behind those mansions which I can never be tired of praising. Out of their doors sometimes issued elderly uncles or aunties laden with whatever burden they were bearing to or from the great house or their own, wrapped in the gloom of their habitual black which I never saw relieved in either sex except once when one of the aunties suffered herself to wear a gay handkerchief turban-wise. I have the belief that this, so universal in the times "before the Freedom," could hardly have been well seen by her neighbors; and I have a like doubt for a like reason that the only surviving street-cry was not heard with pleasure as a voice from the past. Every morning, however, we had our own pleasure in it as it issued from the ample lips of an ample hucksteress who bore a wide, flat basket on her head, in the classic manner, and cried the wares which we never could be sure of till we stopped her and bribed her to tell. What she seemed very nasally to call was: "A crab! Buyer! A crab!"



and we had our difficulty in convincing her that we did not wish to buy the crabs which she took down her basket to show us; but eventually we prevailed, to her joy in our absurd curiosity as great as if she had sold us all her crabs.

These crab-women and the children's nurses, of various dusks and pallors, and those elderly uncles and aunties were the colored folk whom we saw oftenest; but probably we might have seen the coming and going of the domestic servants, who as in other Southern cities could not be persuaded to "sleep in," but had their custom of abandoning their mistresses' household at nightfall, and "sleeping out" wherever their own shelter was, with such basketfuls as remained to them from the meal they may not otherwise have fully shared with their employing families. They may have

gone with this provision for their own families as far as the quarter called Yamacraw, now given almost wholly up to them, after being first the tribal capital of the Indians whom Oglethorpe placed there, and then the home of some of the proudest and finally the poorest of the white colonists. It is a very dismal quarter now, little enlivened by the aspect of leisure in the inhabitants hanging from their doors and windows or sprawling over the steps of their porches.

Yamacraw is not so squalid as it might be, but it is very dispiriting from the gloom of the unpainted, weather-worn wooden houses which partake of the dismal coloring, voluntary and involuntary, of the inhabitants in their persons and clothing. One could wish they wore flaming scarlets or flaring blues, but they

do not, and they probably would not think such dyes respectable. Even the young girls who wore a semblance of the modern fashions in the better quarters of the town subdued them to a quieter taste even than that of some white ladies; and expressed the abeyance of their race in all outward things.

The city seemed largely given over to the white children and the young girls who kept their supremacy well into maturity. We fancied an absolute deference to their sex which it might have



THE TOUCHING RECORD OF A NAMELESS GRAVE

been mortally perilous for any one of the other sex to default in, if such a thing had not apparently been impossible; and here again I wish to testify my pleasure and comfort in the good manners of the Southern men of all classes. This Southern courtesy did not wear away with use; it was as if the men always had time for it, and I chose to believe that if I had been young or middle-aged I should have met the same politeness which soothed and reassured

my senility. I could not say whether it was ever based upon the danger of reprisal. The violence of some "lewd fellows of the baser sort" among Georgians toward the negroes is notorious, but if there was ever anything homicidal in the resentments of gentlemen among themselves, the duel is now apparently quite extinct. There is a record of it incomparably touching in an epitaph of that beautiful old cemetery which the city keeps for a playground of the neighboring school-children, and the resort of sympathetic frequenters. In rural graveyards everywhere the grief of the survivor is apt to express itself with unsparing passion, but here, beyond elsewhere it imparted the pang of indignant anguish. "He fell," this epitaph said of the dead below, "by the hand of a man who a short time before would have been friendless but for him.

By his untimely death the prop of a mother's age is broken, the hope and consolation of sisters is destroyed, the pride of brothers is humbled in the dust, and a whole family, happy until then, is overwhelmed with affliction." The words must have been primarily meant for the eye of the homicide, but they wrung my heart with abhorrence for the custom which wronged him and his victim alike and made me feel its atrocity and stupidity as never before. There were other touching records in the place, but perhaps no other so personal as one which was impersonal to the point of leaving the gravestone without any inscription. A serpent coiled in the symbol of eternity, with no name or date in the circle, tacitly offered a choice of legendary sins and shames to the credence of the stranger, where time had often obliterated an epitaph or left a

head-stone to fall upon the grave like some desperate mourner prostrated there. Often the stone was broken, but where this had happened the fragments were piously gathered up and set in a boundary wall of the cemetery with other fallen memorials to the effect of tablets in a church. Constantly I was impressed by the youth of the dead, whose ages were oftenest under thirty and seldom beyond forty, and I easily accepted the theory that they were victims to the pestilential air of the river-flats in the time when these were the flooded rice-fields. But one day when I noted this youthful mortality to another stranger whom I met in the old graveyard, he opposed the theory, and made me observe how commonly the early dead were from the North. In the ignorant old days as soon as consumption intimated itself to the victim he was hurried to the South, and especially to Savannah,



IN SHAPE AND INSCRIPTION THE TOMBS SPEAK OF A STately PAST

where the soft climate was fatally imagined beneficial in the white plague when the wiser science of our day would have prescribed the pure rigor of his native cold. I believe that people live as long in Savannah now as anywhere, but I am not versed in the statistics, and know only from hearsay that the long summer is exhausting chiefly because it is so very long, and the winter is never what we Northerners would find severe in the lowest of its habitual temperatures.

The old cemetery is now given up to the school-children for a playground, and in the adjoining common they have their games unmolested by the kindly ghosts who would not resent the forays of the boys among their tombs (often built in a grotesque likeness to brick ovens), but could not like the marauders breaking the limbs of the low trees that embowered their strange roofs, though at the worst they seemed to make no spectral reprisals. The marauders were, in fact, comparatively few, and were probably truants from a distance; the other frequenters of the place were young mothers with their babies in perambulators, and young lovers sitting hand in hand on the benches, or sauntering through the aisles under the level boughs of the milky-blossomed dogwoods. The children from the school-house next their playground were drilled one morning by a lady teacher in civil and military exercises, the girls eagerly responsive to her commands, and the boys, as their nature is, reluctantly and grotesquely, if finally, obedient. To our ignorance she seemed an excellent disciplinarian, and so did a young lady tip-toed and high-heeled who taught them old-fashioned English folk-games and dances. I remember nothing pleasanter than the times we gave in all practicable weather to this old burial-ground in both our first and second visit. In the first we felt the tourist's obligation to see the famous Bonaventure cemetery, with its grandeur of live-oaks and solemnity of moss-hung aisles, but I thought its fame exaggerated and went to it only once. I forget just where on the way coming or going we passed one of those negro graveyards which seem of a conventional pattern in the South, with

a fantastic decoration of bottles and tumblers holding feathers and flowers in whatever tradition of ancestral savagery, and wildly expressing the grief of the wild hearts that broke in compliance with it.

Our second visit included Easter Sunday, which is an especial feast of Savannah, but was now spoiled for outward show by the rain that lasted far into the afternoon. The bright summer things to have been worn by the young girls and little girls, whom bright summer things are meant for by nature, had mostly to be left at home with their wearers. But no malice of the elements could quite extinguish them, and curls and flapping hats tardily dared the best of the bad weather. The clouds broke and then in the cool air youth came forth, sometimes in the company of khaki-clad figures which were so often finding their way into town from the nearest camps. A moment of vivid expression devoted itself to the white of two intensely black little girls whom no one could have had the heart to deny it, and who looked glad enough for a whole cityful of gratified children.

I am trying to believe that I know more of the social life of Savannah than the facts justify. One of the things I have heard is that receptions for ladies, especially young ladies, are often given in the forenoon, and are followed by lunches which do not prevent the ladies from going home to dinner at two o'clock, with supper at seven, when the gentlemen of their families come from business to join them. The office hours of the city, whose chief business is that of cotton, are much governed by the hours of Liverpool, where the difference of time makes itself felt in this domestic derangement. But the like derangement prevails elsewhere in the South, and fifty years ago in Boston, where very little cotton is grown, I remember people used to dine at two, and half past two.

Since the world-war involved us the ladies of Savannah have been devoted to the duties of the Red Cross, and the Gordon house, one of the most memorable and beautiful old mansions, was given up to its various work. The wonted amusements of the town were re-

linquished, though perhaps not totally; but I must recur to the experiences of our first visit if I would give an idea of the gay abandon of the young people in amusing themselves and delighting the public. There was then a whole evening of colored song and dance and conundrum, in the conventional ideal of negro minstrelsy, when they took part in the only form of drama which America has invented. They exhausted the resources of this, and then they added events studied from the colored life of their own town or country homes and remembered with affectionate fun in what may often have been the portrayal of actual character. As strangers, we were necessarily on the outside of much and could only guess at the truth of the hits from the pleasure of an audience which filled to the roof the friendly old theater (the oldest in the country), but was more wont to yawn over the drama of one-night stands.

I hope I am not very guilty in so far omitting mention of those intellectual clubs which largely occupy the Savannah ladies, as well as the ladies of our whole land. I can only plead that this paper is a less serious study than I should like to make it if I could, and that I must seem to neglect many facts of interest, when I am merely ignorant of them. We heard vague mention of picnics which young people enjoyed when the cold of the early winter made the woods safe in the torpor of the rattlesnakes; there were friends who drove us in their automobiles in widening circumferences beyond the city and showed us the reach of its ambition and prosperity everywhere; and there was one excursion down the river to the sea which was a revelation of the enterprises and industries promising a business future far beyond the great business present. Not every visitor has the luck or the leisure for a sail beyond Tybee Light, but no one need fail of seeing the expanse of the freight sheds with their cotton and turpentine in the shore across from the city, or on the city side the magnificent dock of the coastwise steamers, which is the last and loudest word of dockage in the whole world, a thing absolutely so fitted to its vast use as to be as much a thing of beauty as a painting or a flower.

As the river seeks the sea both shores find the same level with a like low bosage and the same reaches of reedy swampland, which cease as the yellow current ceases in the ocean tides. There is at one place an old fort of the Vauban design which does not succeed in being very historical, but in another there is a human event which makes a more dramatic impression. "Now, watch, and you will see her," we were promised as we drew abreast a house with a veranda opening toward the river; and in fulfillment a woman came out and waved a white kerchief in salute. "She waves the cloth by day to every ship that passes, and by night she waves a lantern, and she has done it ever since she was a little girl." The sailors remember her in every sea, and when they come near always return her salute. It was a poetic impulse, and it was one-half possible, but for the other half, the nightly half, the tradition had its difficulties for a mind perplexed with the details of waking up, or keeping awake for the moment of romantic drama.

The lure of the great river was not seaward, but inland; and I longed to take a steamboat for Augusta, but I was warned against the too great simplicity of the life on board, and eventually I contented myself with that excursion in a government yacht. The yellow waters were practicable as far as Florida, I heard, but again I denied myself and went only so far as the Isle of Hope in a friend's motor. There we visited the famous terrapin farm (a roofed-in space of the native swamp), which supplies Baltimore terrapin to the whole world, and to the visitor is accompanied by a lecture from the "farmer," which does not well transport entire. One of the most portable jokes was his scientific explanation of the difference between a mud-turtle and a terrapin of the same size; the terrapin is worth three dollars and the mud-turtle is worth nothing. Another difference appeared experimentally in the course of the lecture when the farmer made a low chirping noise to the terrapin lurking by hundreds, perhaps thousands, in their oozy beds, when they cast off their covering and started toward him chortling in tender affection or expectation of food, while the mud-turtles in their



haunts outside remained mute if not motionless.

The terrapin farm is what mostly attracts the stranger, even if he cannot afford to eat terrapin, but the Isle of Hope adds the attraction of dancing and dining for the Savannah youth, or perhaps the lower middle class. The suburb of Thunderbolt has a restaurant of peculiar merit for its fish, rolls, and coffee; and the whole region is of suburban residence and resort throughout the year and in the summer months, when the activity of the rattlesnake forbids the neighboring groves to the picnicker. Throughout the South, indeed, you must count with the rattlesnake in your love of nature, and I should be loath to give an exaggerated notion of peculiar peril in the neighborhood of Savannah. I suspected that in its season the mosquito would be a far more constant and insistent enemy even in the city itself, but in neither springtime of our visits had I any experience of it. I saw nothing even of the alligators which in the earliest colonial times are said to have come up from the river and prowled the streets after nightfall to the terror of the inhabitants, until the paternal Oglethorpe caught a monster twenty feet long and invited the boys to beat it to death with sticks. The boys liked the sport so much and the alligators so little that the sole incident of record sufficed to end the peculiar danger.

So much cannot be said of the annoyance which the colonists suffered for a long series of years from the Spaniards who came up out of Florida and put to proof the effectiveness of Georgia as a buffer for Carolina, which valued it mainly for that use. There was no trouble with the Indians from the first, for the simple reason that Oglethorpe made friends with them by justice and mercy; but the Spaniards were another matter. They claimed the whole country round about where he had settled his humanitarian colony, and he had to fight them everywhere in the wilderness, which their men-at-arms infested. He always beat them, but this did not avail, and even his siege of St. Augustine was in vain, perhaps because it had to be raised after the bombardment of the great fortress of San Marco, which still remains perfect

there, but his campaigns served for the comfort of Carolina till a general peace between the mother-countries could be made to include their colonies.

In the mean time divers experiments were tried at Savannah for the material and spiritual prosperity of the settlers. Every form of Christian faith except the Roman Catholic was welcomed in its missionaries, while negro slavery was established for the release of the white settlers from the heavier labors of the field and in the several forms of experiment. It was supposed that with the gentle climate the grape would flourish and the best wines be made, but the sandy soil did not second the sun in its favor, and the olive shared the fate of the grape. From the beginning it was hoped that the silkworm would prosper, and experienced Italians were imported for its care, while it was fed from the mulberry-trees which promptly took root and produced an inexhaustible abundance of foliage for its food. It is not clear why the silk culture followed the disuse of the wine and oil culture; it was almost universally attempted, and within the memory of men still living the silkworms remained in the warm attics where they were fostered, and attested in death their attempt to justify the wisdom of the experiment made in their introduction. The cotton culture, which is now the supreme industry of Georgia, and is incomparably the greatest commercial interest of Savannah, far exceeding the famous Georgia pine and its resin, was the reason why the silk culture began to decay, and forbade all competition. The cotton exchange of Savannah is not quite the cotton exchange of Manchester, but it was of a presence equally interesting as it evoked itself from the clouds of tobacco-smoke, and was of a certain authority as being a main cause of the Lancastrian consequence. I cannot say that I found it so impressively housed in Savannah, but it was incomparably more magnificently placed. A window of it hospitably lent its outlook over the river to the illustrator; and the obliging host realized to the author the difference between the long-fiber cotton of the Sea Islands and the short fiber of the Georgian uplands as it showed in the comparative samples put

side by side on his coat-sleeve, as I suppose they are shown to actual customers. I yielded my highest admiration for the silky Sea Island fiber with some such regard as one pays to rank in society, and viewed with the lessening consideration which one pays to middle and lower middle class merit, the shorter and shortest fibers of the decline from the aristocratic filaments. Cotton is still King in the South as it was before the states went to war with one another in our great civil contest, but its sovereignty is founded now upon the industry which is not bought and sold, but is practised in free competition by black as well as white planters. This seems to me an advance, and it is a comfort which I like to think Oglethorpe would share with me in his generous humanity.

I am always coming back to him, and I do not wish to leave him again in these inadequate notices of the city he founded. Of all the fathers of our American civilization, I think him the kindest, and the wisest because the kindest,

and I offer to the visitor Savannah for all and full proof. There is a very Roman legend of a local Fountain of Trevi (by whatever other name it is known) and a superstition that any one who drinks of it will be sure to come again. For my own part I do not think I need drink of Tomochichi's magic source; I shall hope to return without the draught, unless something among things here ventured should spoil my welcome; but I shall trust that Oglethorpe where he looks down from his column on the Indian's monolith will invoke a friendly spirit in my behalf. I will not turn from Mr. French's brave statue of the good hero, the true gentleman, without trying again for fit recognition of its inspiration, and I will say that if Oglethorpe is not the highest praise of Savannah, then at least Savannah is a supreme honor to the Jacobite philanthropist, of whom it could be said far beyond the Jacobite prince and martyr—

"He nothing common did or mean."

## The Path of the Stars

BY THOMAS S. JONES, JR.

DOWN through the spheres that chant the Name of One  
 Who is the Law of Beauty and of Light  
 He came, and as He came the Night  
 Shook with the gladness of a Day begun;  
 And as He came, He said: Thy Will Be Done  
 On Earth; and all His vibrant Words were white  
 And glistening with silver, and their might  
 Was of the glory of a rising sun.  
 Unto the Stars sang out His Living Words  
 White and with silver, and their rhythmic sound  
 Was as a mighty symphony unfurled;  
 And back from out the Stars like homing birds  
 They fell in love upon the sleeping ground  
 And were forever in a wakened world.