



Social Life in Old Virginia Before the War, Annotated and Illustrated.

Thomas Nelson Page

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Originally published in 1897 by Charles Scribner's Sons, "Social Life in Old Virginia before the War," is a compilation the author's reflection on the social and economic set-up of antebellum Virginia. Page writes that his outline of "real life of the South in old times" takes issue with previous deceptive versions that do not tell the real truth about Southern culture where Southerners are represented as ignorant, coarse, and lazy. Page's narrative opens with an appealing illustration of the Virginia home surrounded by lovely well-kept gardens of fragrant flowers. From the central great house, he describes flourishing fields, perfumed orchards, and abundant vegetable and kitchen gardens. In his idyllic depiction, good nature and serenity flourish under the direction of the "Lady Bountiful" — mistress of the plantation. Throughout his storyline, Thomas Nelson Page eulogizes the southern assets of consideration, benevolence, high principles, honor, and elegance, which typically existed among people of all socio-economic levels. He prognosticates that the South will indeed rise like a Phoenix from the ashes, but he does grieve that certain aspects of the Old South will be forever lost. Page concedes that the antebellum South was not perfect (but close), and goes on to propose that its virtues compensated for its imperfections. Somewhere between the vile picture of the Southerner and the romanticized version, the truth of history lies. It is up to the reader to make this judgment. The editor of this book, while preserving the original narration, has added annotations, translations of Latin phrases, and photographs of some of the old Virginia "Great Houses," along with a capsule history of each one. The lovely illustrations enhance this work as a nice gift book.

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