

## EDITOR'S COLUMN<sup>1</sup>

Some historians have regarded the Civil War of 1861-1865 as sufficient explanation of the disruption and relative backwardness of the Southern economy. Those who have felt the need for additional analysis have often stopped after pointing to the alleged horrors of Radical Reconstruction or the alleged exploitation of the Southern economy by Northern business interests.

J. Carlyle Sitterson, of the history faculty at the University of North Carolina, takes a more comprehensive view in his article on the southern sugar industry from 1850 to 1910. He shows the significance for this industry of factors which did not originate in the United States at all: the rise of new producing areas abroad, the gradual penetration of the new sciences of agronomy and chemistry into the sugar industry. By working chiefly with plantation records, he is able to trace the interaction of production costs, sugar prices, technological changes, marketing methods, problems of recruiting labor and organizing it into an efficient work force. At the center of these interacting forces was the planter-manager, charged with combining all of these functions in such a way that the productive unit would be profitable.

Students of business history will note another feature of Professor Sitterson's story. During the late nineteenth century, many American firms, in fields as diverse as manufacturing and retailing, sought survival by means of integration. But in those years the existing integration in the sugar industry was destroyed. Vertical integration decreased as planters began to specialize in the cultivation of sugar cane, while central factories for the production of raw and refined sugar were operated by independent firms. And horizontal concentration also was reduced with the appearance of numerous small farmers and tenants as producers of sugar cane.

Dr. Fritz Redlich continues in this issue his account of the Lauchhammer Iron Works, which was begun in the June issue of the *BULLETIN*. The present installment focuses on the efforts of Count Detlev von Einsiedel and his son to introduce in the Lauchhammer Works the most advanced methods which had been developed in

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<sup>1</sup> Written by Professor Ray Ginger, under whose direction this issue of the *BULLETIN* was prepared for publication.

other regions. Along with a wealth of detail, Dr. Redlich presents a suggestive theory to account for the prominence of aristocrats among the business innovators of Europe before 1825.

The Far Eastern trade of the nineteenth century, which served as the source of so many New England fortunes, has been the subject of several volumes. But none of these earlier writers has tried to view the trade in detail from the perspective of the merchants who were engaged in it in China. Therefore a blanket of ignorance has covered the daily operations of the China merchants a century ago.

S. G. Checkland, of the Department of Economics, University of Liverpool, shows how to remedy this situation in his analysis of the operations of the British firm of Rathbone, Worthington and Co. These young Englishmen—having little knowledge of markets in China, obstructed by the absence of an organized exchange market, forced to act as commission agents for principals half a world away, beset by a conflict between morals and business in regard to the opium trade—yet won gradually through the shoals to success for their firm. Mr. Checkland here describes the policies and methods which brought profits in the China trade a century ago.

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The Agricultural History Society announces the establishment of the Everett Eugene Edwards Memorial Awards, in honor of the late distinguished scholar in that field. Two prizes will be given each year to the authors of the best articles published in *Agricultural History*: one to a graduate student, the other to a more advanced scholar. The awards, which carry a stipend of \$50 each, are effective in the present year. Further details may be secured from Wayne D. Rasmussen, Acting Secretary-Treasurer of the Agricultural History Society, Room 3906 South Agriculture Building, U. S. Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Washington 25, D. C.

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The annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists was held in Detroit, Michigan, at the Hotel Park-Shelton, September 13-15, 1953. The major sessions of the meeting were devoted to an intensive examination by both European and American authorities of the progress, problems, and techniques in the fields of business archives, business history, and business records management.