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A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States

Frederick Law Olmsted (1822–1903) was a journalist and landscape designer who is regarded as the founder of American landscape architecture: his most famous achievement was Central Park in New York, of which he became the superintendent in 1857, but he also worked on the design of parks in many other burgeoning American cities, and was called by Charles Eliot Norton 'the greatest artist that America has yet produced'. His A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States was originally published in 1856, and arose from journeys in the south which Olmsted, a passionate abolitionist, had undertaken in 1853–4. This edition was published in two volumes in 1904, with the addition of a biographical sketch by his son and an introduction by William P. Trent. It abounds in fascinating and witty descriptions of Olmsted's encounters and experiences in a society which was on the verge of overwhelming change.
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A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States

With Remarks on their Economy

Volume 1

Frederick Law Olmsted
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr
William P. Trent
A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States

In the Years 1853–1854

With Remarks on Their Economy

By

Frederick Law Olmsted

[Originally Issued in 1856]

With a Biographical Sketch by

Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.

And

With an Introduction by

William P. Trent

In Two Volumes

Volume I

G. P. Putnam’s Sons

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The Knickerbocker Press

1904
ADVERTISEMENT.

In the year 1853, the author of this work made a journey through the Seaboard Slave States, and gave an account of his observations in the New York Daily Times, under the signature of “Yeoman.” Those letters excited some attention, and their publication in a book was announced; but before preparing them for the press, the author had occasion to make a second and longer visit to the South. In the light of the experience then gathered, the letters have been revised, and, with much additional matter, are now presented to the public.
PREFACE

The chief design of the author in writing this book has been, to describe what was most interesting, amusing, and instructive to himself, during the first three of fourteen months' travelling in our Slave States; using the later experience to correct the erroneous impressions of the earlier.

He is aware that it has one fault—it is too fault-finding. He is sorry for it, but it cannot now be helped; so at the outset, let the reader understand that he is invited to travel in company with an honest growler.

But growling is sometimes a duty; and the traveller might well be suspected of being a "dead head," or a sneak, who did not find frequent occasion for its performance, among the notoriously careless, makeshift, impertinent people of the South.

For the rest, the author had, at the outset, of his journey, a determination to see things for himself, as far as possible, and to see them carefully and fairly, but cheerfully and kindly. It was his disposition, also, to search for the causes and extenuating circumstances, past and present, of those phenomena which are commonly reported to the prejudice of the slaveholding community; and especially of those features which are
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Preface

manifestly most to be regretted in the actual condition of the older Slave States.

He protests that he has been influenced by no partisan bias; none, at least, in the smallest degree unfriendly to fair investigation, and honest reporting. At the same time, he avows himself a democrat; not in the technical and partisan, but in the primary and essential sense of that term. As a democrat he went to study the South—its institutions, and its people; more than ever a democrat, he has returned from this labor, and written the pages which follow.

South-Side Staten Island, Jan. 9, 1856.
“Men are never so likely to settle a question rightly as when they discuss it freely.”—Macaulay.

“

You have among you many a purchased slave,
Which, like your asses, and your dogs, and mules,
You use in abject and in slavish parts,
Because you bought them:

“So do I answer you.
The pound of flesh which I demand of him,
Is dearly bought; ’tis mine, and I will have it.
If you deny me, fie upon your law!”—Skylock.

“The one idea which History exhibits as evermore developing itself into greater distinctness, is the idea of humanity, the noble endeavor to throw down all barriers erected between men by prejudice and one-sided views, and by setting aside the distinctions of religion, country, and color, to treat the whole human race as one Brotherhood, having one great object—the pure development of our spiritual nature.”—Humboldt’s Cosmos.
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FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED

FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED, born on April 26, 1822, at Hartford, Conn., was the eldest son of John Olmsted, a prosperous merchant of that city, where the family had been living since the settlement of the place in 1636, having come from County Essex, England.

He went to a succession of schools, and was fitted for Yale in 1836, but on account of a weakness of the eyes gave up college, and spent most of the next three years nominally studying engineering with a Rev. Mr. Barton, of Andover, Mass., who was a surveyor as well as a minister, but a large part of his time was spent in the White Mountains.

During his youth and early manhood, he frequently accompanied his father and stepmother on long driving trips through many parts of New England, acquiring a keen power of observation, a warm appreciation of the varieties of New England landscape, and a familiar acquaintance with the conditions and habits of the whole community. The family spent part of nearly every summer at Guilford or some other point on the shore, and he became very fond of cruising in the waters of the Sound in a small sailboat.

In the autumn of 1840, he entered the employ of Benkard & Hutton, dry-goods importers, in New York,
Frederick Law Olmsted

and remained in this uncongenial occupation till the spring of 1842, after which for about a year he attended lectures and did a certain amount of reading at Yale, where his younger brother, John Hull Olmsted, was then at college.

In April, 1843, he sailed for Canton as one of the crew of the bark *Ronaldson*, going through with experiences which in many respects resembled those of Richard H. Dana, in his *Two Years before the Mast*. He was attacked by typhus fever while the vessel lay for weeks in the pest-ridden river below Canton, and with the rest of the crew he suffered severely from scurvy on the return voyage. He gave up the sea, with impaired health, but always retained a fondness for ships and an appreciation and mastery of the qualities of that "ship-shape," orderly, and resourceful adaptation of means to ends, which is the ideal of all good seamen and which had produced in those days one of the most beautiful works of man—the American clipper-ship.

After some time spent in recruiting his health, staying a good deal at his Uncle Brooks's farm in Cheshire, Connecticut, and taking more of those carriage cruises about New England with his father, he decided to adopt farming as a regular occupation. The season of 1845 he spent with an intelligent farmer near Waterbury, Connecticut, working hard and learning much, and the next winter was again at Yale taking lectures in chemistry, reading, and enjoying the pleasant society of New Haven. The following season he spent as a
Frederick Law Olmsted

workman with another farmer, Mr. Geddes, near Syracuse, N. Y., to whom he had been attracted by his receiving the prize offered by the New York Agricultural Society for the best-ordered farm in the State. Mr. Geddes’s father had been prominent in building the Erie Canal, and he was himself an engineer as well as a farmer, and also interested in politics, so that Mr. Olmsted had plenty of stimulus to think while he worked, and in the evening to discuss a wide range of subjects with an intelligent man. Meanwhile he did a great deal of reading.

During 1847, he worked a farm at Sachem’s Head, on Long Island Sound, which his father had purchased for him; but it was small and not profitable, and a year later he changed to a farm of 130 acres on Staten Island, N. Y., where he was successful in raising fruit for the New York market.

In 1850, with his brother John and Charles Loring Brace, he made a trip abroad, going very economically and travelling mainly afoot. Although they saw something of France, Switzerland, and Germany, most of their time was spent in England, and after his return Mr. Olmsted wrote out an account of that portion of the trip under the title of *Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England*. The book was well received, although it never had a very large sale.

At about this time he made the friendship of A. J. Downing, the landscape gardener and writer on horticulture, and was led to do more or less writing for periodicals, mainly on rural subjects.
xiv Frederick Law Olmsted

In 1852, his brother's delicate health suggested the desirability of a warmer climate and he began seriously to consider moving to Virginia. While he was contemplating a visit to Virginia for the selection of a farm for his brother, Mr. Raymond of the New York Times, struck by the qualities shown in his book on England, proposed to him to make a tour in the South and write a series of letters to the Times upon the economic and social conditions of the Slave States. He at once fell in with the idea, and on December 11, 1852, he started on his first trip. He returned April 6, 1853, having gone as far as New Orleans. It was the letters written to the Times while on this trip that formed the principal material for the Seaboard Slave States, published in 1856.

On November 10, 1853, again as correspondent of the Times, he started, in company with his brother John, on a second trip, which extended to the Mexican boundary. In returning, he parted from his brother at New Orleans and travelled on horseback from there to Richmond, reaching home in the summer of 1854. The letters he wrote during the first part of this trip were compiled and edited by his brother and published in 1857 under the title of The Texas Journey, while the material gathered by him on the return journey, alone, forms the major part of The Back Country, published in 1860.

A hasty condensation of the three books was published in 1861, at the outbreak of the war, in London and New York, under the title of The Cotton Kingdom.
Thus diverted from farming into literary work, Mr. Olmsted moved to New York City, and turned over the farm to his brother. He became one of the editors of *Putnam's Magazine*, and shortly after, with George William Curtis, he entered into partnership with Dix & Edwards, publishers; an ill-judged venture, for the firm proved to be in bad financial condition and soon failed, making Olmsted and Curtis liable for a considerable amount of debts which were finally paid in full.

During 1856, in connection with the publishing business, he was in London for some time and used the opportunity to join his sisters in a little journey through Italy.

He had always been keenly appreciative of the beauty of landscape and had taken much pleasure in quiet contemplation and analysis of its qualities, and this had led him to a close observation not only of the large range of natural scenery through which he had journeyed, but of many public and private parks of Europe; again, he had been a close observer of men, their habits and their social needs; if to these qualities be added his practical experience in farming, it will be seen that he was unconsciously laying a strong foundation for what was to become his chief life work.

In 1856, a Board of Commissioners had been created to lay out the Central Park, New York: the land had already been acquired and its improvement was at once begun under a plan prepared by the Chief Engineer of the Board, Captain (afterward General) Vielé. One of the Commissioners with whom Mr. Olmsted was well
acquainted, Charles W. Elliott, met him at a little place near New Haven by chance, late in the summer of 1857, and mentioned that the Commission wanted to get a superintendent to act as assistant to Captain Vielé in handling the large force of men then at work on the park. When asked what kind of man was needed the Commissioner replied: "A man like you—one with your knowledge of farming and your other experience." The failure of Dix & Edwards had left him ready to take up a new enterprise and he returned to New York that night, procured letters of introduction to the several Commissioners, and on September 11, 1857, received the appointment.

The park was "in politics," and the efforts of the new superintendent to introduce good discipline and efficiency in the conduct of the work were hampered at every turn by the exercise of underground and overhead "pulls." By dint of hard work, persicency, and patience, the efficiency of the force was greatly increased, but never in all of Mr. Olmsted's connection with the Central Park was there a cessation of this harassing struggle with the debauchers of the public service. Any one who wishes light on this phase of "practical politics" in the fifties, sixties, and seventies, should read his pamphlet, published in 1882, *The Spoils of the Park; with a Few Leaves from the Deep-laden Note-books of "a Wholly Unpractical Man."*

After some months the Commission, becoming dissatisfied with the plan under which the preliminary work had been done, decided to hold an open competi-
Frederick Law Olmsted

tion for a new one. Mr. Olmsted had no intention of going into the competition, and when he was asked by Calvert Vaux, who had been an assistant of A. J. Downing, to collaborate with him in the preparation of a plan, he withheld out of deference to his chief, whose first plan was set aside, and who was going into the competition himself. But when Captain Vielé rather contemptuously expressed his indifference as to whether he entered the competition or not, he accepted Mr. Vaux's proposal. Thirty-three plans were submitted and the award was made to that marked "Green-ward," which turned out to be by Olmsted and Vaux, who were thereupon appointed to direct its execution.

"Persistently recasting and retouching their design, consolidating their corps of young engineers and gardeners, managing the thousands of workmen who were often rendered insubordinate by the consciousness of political 'pulls,' and fighting the politicians themselves," the two artists led a difficult life.

"It was a perpetual struggle to obtain the money legally at their disposal, while their steps were dogged by men in search of employment—men often wholly unfit for service, but armed with insistent letters from one 'boss' or another. The extent of this latter annoyance may be read in the fact that it was only by moonlight hours that they could walk about the park to consider what had just been done, and to decide what should next be undertaken." ¹

In June, 1859, Mr. Olmsted married his brother's widow, who, together with her three children, had been under his care since his brother's death at Nice, in 1857; and during the most active period of construction the family lived on the park in the old Convent of the Sacred Heart. In the autumn of 1859, exhausted by the strain

¹ M. G. Van Rensselaer, Century Magazine, October, 1893.
of work prosecuted under such harassment from political interference, he was prostrated with a slow fever, and upon recovery went abroad to complete his convalescence, again visiting England and also Paris, where the great works of the Second Empire in laying out and improving the boulevards and parks were then in progress under M. Alphand, who showed many courtesies to his American confrère.

Returning with fresh vigor, he rejoined his partner in their uphill fight for the successful completion of the design and for efficiency, honesty, and economy in the work. A runaway in which his thigh was badly broken kept him on his back for weeks and greatly hampered him in his task at this time, leaving him permanently lame. In spite of all obstacles, however, the greater part of the construction and planting which were necessary to convert eight hundred acres of peculiarly unfavorable, rough, rocky, and swampy land into a highly developed city park were accomplished within the four years 1857–1861.

Very soon after the outbreak of the Civil War, the Rev. Henry W. Bellows, mindful of the terrible suffering of the British troops in the Crimean War from disease and other preventable causes, and of the helplessness of the humane spirit of the people in the face of such suffering without proper organization for its relief, conceived the creation of an independent agency to be supported by voluntary contributions, to be responsible directly to the people, and to serve toward the sick and suffering at the front as the eye of the peo-
Frederick Law Olmsted

people to see and the hand of the people to relieve. Fully realizing what a vast field of action such an agency might be called upon to cover, Dr. Bellows, after consulting with other prominent men in New York, stated that if he could get Mr. Olmsted to undertake the executive management of such an organization, he would set his idea on foot.

Incapacitated by his lameness from military service, Mr. Olmsted gladly seized this opportunity of serving the country, and with a strong committee which Dr. Bellows had got together, helped to draw up a project of organization and aims, which was submitted to President Lincoln who after some hesitation gave his assent. The United States Sanitary Commission was thereupon at once organized, with Dr. Bellows as President and Mr. Olmsted as General Secretary.

The work upon the park was still going on, but Mr. Vaux, as his contribution to the war, undertook to do double duty there, still giving his partner his share of their salary and thus enabling him to serve the Sanitary Commission without pay.

It is impossible to condense into a few words the history of the Sanitary Commission or the work of its General Secretary, inextricably bound up as it is with the devoted work of the other members and officers. In its relation to the army, its primary function was to inform itself as to conditions affecting the health and morale of the troops, and simply by advice and suggestion to the officers and medical staff to aid and stimulate the regular authorities to improve those conditions and
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forestall dangers. It was essential to overcome official jealousy and resentment against what was often taken to be meddlesome interference; and to accomplish this while acting with urgent rapidity over an enormous field, and employing a large number of assistants hastily assembled and organized, demanded not only rare executive ability, but the highest tact. That the Commission, which Lincoln feared would be "the fifth wheel of the coach," overcame this fundamental obstacle so successfully, was due in great measure to Mr. Olmsted's management. This work was conducted by the Department of Inspection, the Inspectors being physicians of ability and discretion whose very inquiries in camp and hospital served to call the attention of officers to possibilities of improvement, while suggestions to the Surgeon-General's Department based upon their reports often resulted in orders of far-reaching importance. The volunteer surgeons, drawn from civil practice and entirely inexperienced in campaign conditions, were immensely aided by a series of condensed monographs upon their new problems and duties, and wherever the Inspectors found serious trouble resulting from lack of information upon any subject from camp cooking to the treatment of amputations a systematic general effort was made to supply the information.

A second great department dealt with organizing the means of relief which the whole people was anxious to contribute; instructing the workers at home as to what was most needed; gathering the supplies, and dispatching each thing to the place of most pressing need at the
right time. Long before official reserve and distrust were overcome by the tact with which Mr. Olmsted contrived to inspire his lieutenants, the army itself had learned to appreciate the foresight and efficiency which so often brought the means of relief upon the spot at the instant of greatest need. It also became necessary under stress of emergency for the Commission to extend the relief service to include the care of sick and wounded and their transport from the front, the regular hospital service being greatly overtaxed. The emergency became so acute during the Peninsular Campaign that the General Secretary had to take charge of the work at the front in person.

“One thing clearly important was to gain a system by which the work could be carried on—the current work disposed of in such a way that everything could be kept clear for an emergency. For this Mr. Olmsted toiled; building unweariedly on shifting sands. . . . Men who ought never to have gone North—who could have got well in ten days, with care—were rushed upon the Commission. In vain did Mr. Olmsted protest . . . striving to keep his boats for the essential work. . . . Some of his assistants themselves hardly understood his efforts; but after a while it was seen that, slowly, things were shaping themselves to his moulding, and the time came when the wisdom of it was acknowledged.”

A Department of Special Relief was organized for the care of invalid soldiers discharged from hospital in a bewildered and helpless condition to shift for themselves in the turmoil behind the army. It transacted their business, notified their friends, and saw to their transportation to their homes.

Frederick Law Olmsted

The volume of each kind of work accomplished by the Commission was commensurate with the vast size of the war, the number of names on the Commission’s Hospital Directory, for example, amounting to 215,221 in 1863.

But the Sanitary Commission had a purpose back of all this activity beyond the mere alleviation of suffering.

“Its projectors were men with strong political purpose, induced to take this means of giving expression to their solicitude for the national life, by discovering that the people of the country had a very much higher sense of the value of the Union, and, above all, of the value of a great common national life, than most of the politicians of the States or the United States Government seemed to recognize; that the women of America had at least half of its patriotism in their keeping, and that a great scheme of practical service, which united men and women, cities and villages, distant States and Territories, in one protracted, systematic, laborious, and costly work—a work of an impersonal character—animated by love for the national cause, the national soldier, and not merely by personal affection or solicitude for their own particular flesh and blood, would develop, purify, and strengthen the imperilled sentiment of nationality, and help to make America sacred in the eyes of the living children of her scattered States.

“The members of the Sanitary Commission were absorbed in this conviction, and under great opposition and immense difficulties, they adhered to it and conquered by it. They would yield nothing to the intense feeling of State and local pride or anxiety which sought to create differences in the administration of their resources. Their plan, with all its methods, was intensely national.

“The education in nationality which the Commission gained in the first year of the war gave it convictions as to the importance of cultivating this sentiment, which over-topped all others. They found in their daily business a perpetual lesson on this theme, and in each other almost the only fully aroused sympathizers with the sentiment. The phrase ‘Unconditional
Loyalty, Mr. Seward said, originated in the Sanitary Commission, and the Government scattered ten thousand copies of a tract with that title through the Army of the Potomac—a tract which the President of the Commission had prepared."1

Out of these purposes arose the idea of another agency for strengthening them. Prof. Wolcott Gibbs of the Executive Committee, who first broached the project, turned to Mr. Olmsted for bringing this idea to realization. In the midst of his other labors, Mr. Olmsted then took a leading part in the formation of the Union League Club of New York, an organization the political purpose of which was so quiet in its depth and strength and in the devotion which it inspired that it worked almost unnoticed by the general public beneath the merely social aspect of the Club.

Working under tremendous pressure, often remaining at his desk all night, Mr. Olmsted again impaired his health and in October, 1863, he felt compelled to resign his position as General Secretary of the Sanitary Commission, leaving to his successor a splendid organization for the continuance of the work.

After leaving the Sanitary Commission he was concerned with the earlier stages of a number of projects of public importance: among others that of establishing a weekly review of high standing, for which he desired his friend E. L. Godkin to serve as editor. It was out of this project that soon after sprang The Nation, although at the time of its launching Mr. Olmsted had turned it wholly over to Mr. Godkin and was himself

1 H. W. Bellows, The Union League Club, New York, 1897.
in California, whither he had gone to take charge of the mines and other properties of the Frémont estate, which had fallen into a financial confusion from which he was unable to rescue it.

After a sojourn of about two years, during which time he took an active part in the movement to preserve the Yosemite Valley as a public preserve of scenery, he returned from California at the urgent suggestion of Mr. Vaux, who had been asked to plan another great park for Brooklyn, and again entered into partnership with him in landscape architecture. The creation of Prospect Park, together with the completion and development of Central Park, formed their chief work for several years, although numerous other public parks and private estates were planned by them and their several successive partners up to the time when Mr. Olmsted became chiefly engaged upon the Boston parks between 1876 and 1878.

In 1880, he removed his home and office to Brookline, Massachusetts, partly induced by the fact that his friend the architect Richardson had already established himself there.

From 1868 to the time of his retirement through failing health in 1895 his energies were devoted almost exclusively to his profession, and so numerous were the important works of landscape architecture which he designed and the execution of which he directed, many of them in partnership with others, that it is impracticable in so brief a sketch as this to do more than simply enumerate them. After 1875, one partner was
Frederick Law Olmsted

always his stepson and nephew, John C. Olmsted, whom he brought up and regarded as a son, and later he was joined by his pupils, H. S. Codman and Charles Eliot, both of whom were soon cut off in their prime. During the twenty years following 1875, he took a controlling part in the design of thirty-seven public pleasure grounds, twelve suburban districts, and four town sites; the grounds of seventeen educational institutions, fifteen public or semi-public buildings, and twelve considerable private estates; and had to do with a large range and number of minor problems. His work was scattered over many parts of the country and has greatly developed popular appreciation of the wholesome enjoyment to be derived from the beauty attainable in the surroundings of daily life through the exercise of foresight, well-balanced intelligence and cultivated taste.

Setting aside the pioneer work on Central Park and Prospect Park, if one were to select examples of the several classes of his work above mentioned, one would naturally call to mind among the grounds of public buildings those of the United States Capitol; among private estates Biltmore, in North Carolina; among the problems involving the grouping of buildings and the treatment of their surroundings, the World’s Fair at Chicago; and among public parks, the system of related parks and parkways of the city of Boston.

In all of his professional work he was characterized by breadth of view, by clear insight into conditions, and by a strong common sense in the selection of aims; to
Frederick Law Olmsted

which was added that delicacy of feeling in the choice of æsthetic ideals perfectly fitted to the conditions and aims of each problem which is the mark of the great constructive artist. Notable as he was for the masterful executive ability which marked his conduct of large affairs, for the clearness of his observations on social conditions as shown in the present book, and for the statesmanlike qualities which were brought out so clearly in his Sanitary Commission work, he was before all an artist; and he has been called by so eminent a critic as Professor Charles Eliot Norton, “the greatest artist that America has yet produced.”

F. L. O.

April 6, 1904.
INTRODUCTION

That important statistical journal and organ of pro-slavery propaganda, *De Bow’s Commercial Review*, opened its number for August, 1857, with a somewhat cursory article upon the second of Mr. Olmsted’s books descriptive of the social and economic features of the South. This article, which was from the pen of Mr. De Bow himself, referred to the prior work of Mr. Olmsted that is here reprinted as “abounding in bitterness and prejudice of every sort,” and, after charging him with pandering to abolitionist fanaticism for the sake of gain, continued as follows:

“Here, again, the opportunity is too tempting to be resisted to revile and abuse the men and the society whose open hospitality he undoubtedly enjoyed, and whom, we have no doubt, like every other of his tribe travelling at the South, he found it convenient at the time to flatter and approve.”

Mr. Olmsted took occasion later ¹ to reply to the aspersions of his critic in a tone of notable moderation. He regretted that the “most able and just-minded statistician in the country” should have condescended to adopt the current partisan practice of attributing unworthy motives to all persons not of his way of thinking with regard to slavery. If Mr. Olmsted had been less modest, he might have called attention to the fact

¹ *A Journey in the Back Country*, p. 399, seq.

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that Mr. De Bow had found little beyond a rash prediction or two on which to rest his censures, and had thus been thrown back upon general denunciations of the kind just illustrated. It seemed more philanthropical, however, to the downright Northerner to endeavor to open the exuberant Southerner's eyes to the egregiously false assumption he was making with respect to the universal range and the engaging qualities of Southern hospitality. Whether the several pages devoted to this task were convincing to Mr. De Bow may be doubted; they certainly leave upon a modern reader the strong impression that Mr. Olmsted and other Northern travellers whose experiences he cites exchanged more good dollars for bad meals in the newer and rawer portions of the South than would have been possible at that day anywhere else between the Danube and the Mississippi.

The character of Mr. Olmsted's reply to Mr. De Bow is not, however, so much to my purpose as the fact that this reply was incorporated in a later book by Mr. Olmsted, which was dedicated to John Stuart Mill and which has recently been highly praised by no less a person than Mr. John Morley. This book, entitled Journeys and Explorations in the Cotton Kingdom, was based upon three former books of its author, The Seaboard Slave States, here re-issued, A Journey through Texas, the volume reviewed by Mr. De Bow, and A Journey in the Back Country (1860), in the second of which, as we have been informed in the Biographical Sketch, Dr. John H. Olmsted had an editorial share. Upon this condensation, and upon the
Introduction

first volume of the series, Mr. Morley, in a footnote to vol. ii., p. 70, of his Life of Gladstone, bestowed the high praise that follows:

“... the reader who cares to understand the American Civil War should turn to F. L. Olmsted’s Journeys and Explorations in the Cotton Kingdom (1861) and A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States (1856)—as interesting a picture of the South on the eve of its catastrophe as Arthur Young's picture of France on the eve of the revolution.”

In these words we have not only the broad view of the world with regard to the value of Mr. Olmsted’s books set over against the parochial, polemic view of Mr. De Bow, but also the reason why the first and most interesting of these descriptive works is now, after nearly half a century, given to the public in a new and convenient form. Just as the French Revolution is a cataclysm that will never cease to interest men, so the war between the States is a contest that will continue to attract the attention of successive generations; and just as Arthur Young’s famous Travels in France is invaluable to the student of the causes of the Revolution, so Mr. Olmsted’s “Journeys” are invaluable to the student of the Civil War. Both men were fortunate enough to make fairly leisurely explorations only three or four years before the great catastrophes; both were wide awake, intelligent, and honest observers; and, singularly and appropriately, both were interested in scientific agriculture and were in consequence led to extend their observations over large areas, instead of confining them in the main to urban centres of population.