

**A DAUGHTER OF
THE SOUTH, AND
SHORTER STORIES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649172016

A daughter of the South, and shorter stories by Mrs. Burton Harrison

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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MRS. BURTON HARRISON

**A DAUGHTER OF
THE SOUTH, AND
SHORTER STORIES**

*A Daughter of the South
and Shorter Stories * **

BY

MRS. BURTON HARRISON

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NEW YORK

CASSELL PUBLISHING COMPANY

104 & 106 FOURTH AVENUE

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ZILBONA ZOLTA
YRABELL

THE MERRISON COMPANY PRESS,
RAHWAY, N. J.

PS
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A DAUGHTER OF THE SOUTH.*

TO look now at the scene of Berthe's fondly remembered childhood would reveal but a melancholy semblance of its old-time stately beauty. The alleys of almond laurel, under which the girl played until the crash of war silenced forever the sweet symphony of her Southern life, are matted and hoary, their arches lost to sight beneath the wedded blooms of wild-growing rose and jasmine. The gardens around the old house are a weedy ruin; the walls of the forsaken dwelling are scarred where patches of stucco have dropped away. But why multiply images of the most distressful fea-

* First published in the COSMOPOLITAN MAGAZINE.

ture of American home history? Everyone who has journeyed in the South will have carried away some vision of

The nakedness and vacancy
Of the dark, deserted house,

which all the bourgeoning of new prosperity is powerless to efface. Les Amandiers had been built and named by Berthe's great-grandfather St. Felix, from whom it had come by inheritance to her mother, Mme. de Lagastine.

Early in the century M. Gaston de St. Felix, then a youngster at his studies in Paris, had scandalized his friends in New Orleans by marrying a beautiful girl actress, whom he transported from the scene of her early triumphs to a home in the wilderness across the sea. For her the enamored young husband had lavished wealth upon the great stately white house with wings and galleries and colonnades; for her were the terraces, with rows of orange and oleander

trees, the flights of steps with vases holding century plants, the gardens with clipped hedges, the fountains, fish ponds, arbors—all fashions of old France designed to comfort the expatriated little Parisienne. At no great distance from one of the most prosperous of the towns built on the lower Mississippi River, in that region pictured as tropical by Chateaubriand in "Atala," but in reality bearing the characteristics of the temperate zone, this earthly paradise had been constructed. But, alas, at a season when the splendid white chalice of the cucumber tree opens its bosom to the sun, the little French lady had put forth her first blossom and faded from the scene.

Berthe's mother, a famous heiress, was, on coming into her majority, the only living representative of the St. Felix line. They had married her to Louis de Lagastine, the handsome scion of an impoverished family