

**THE SEVEN DIAGRAMS,
OR A PRACTICAL
LESSON IN PLANTATION
POLITICAL ECONOMY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649366767

The Seven Diagrams, Or a Practical Lesson in Plantation Political Economy by William Deering

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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WILLIAM DEERING

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THE SEVEN DIAGRAMS,

OR A

PRACTICAL LESSON

IN

PLANTATION POLITICAL ECONOMY.

SECOND EDITION

WITH A SUPPLEMENT CONTAINING INTERVIEWS WITH A FEW OF
OUR COUSINS OF THE LARGE BUT, IT IS TO BE HOPED, NOW
HAPPILY DECREASING FAMILY OF THE MOSIES.

BY A MECHANICIAN OF LOUISVILLE.

" * * * It is, we think, allowable to believe that improved gin-houses will be the harbingers
of improved plantations, and that these again will be the harbingers of our 'New South.'"

LOUISVILLE, KY:
JOHN P. MORTON AND COMPANY.
1872.

KF20229



PREFACE.

Easter Sunday, Anno Domini 1872.

Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1872, by

JOHN P. MORTON AND COMPANY,

In the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington City, D. C.

ROBERT ROWELL,
Electrotype and Stereotype Foundry,
LOUISVILLE, KY.

AN INTERESTING CORRESPONDENCE.

OFFICE ARKANSAS STATE AGRIC'L AND MECH'L ASSOC. }
Little Rock, Ark., August 10, 1872.

WILLIAM DEERING, Esq.,
Superintendent Deering Plantation Machine Works, Louisville, Ky.:

DEAR SIR,—I have recently read a book called the "Seven Diagrams," written by a mechanic of your city, with which I am much pleased. If you know him give him my compliments, and say to him that I am sure that every member of the Association of which I am President will join me in saying that his work is, for us planters of the South, a timely and useful publication. And please also suggest to him that when he is called on for a second edition he should amend his title-page. In the title "Waverly, or Sixty Years Ago," the second title "Sixty Years Ago" covers the main pith of the book, while the name "Waverly" is but of secondary consideration. But the chief value of the work of our Mechanician is under the first title, "The Seven Diagrams," and the title "Improved Gin-Houses" does not only not necessarily come under the first, but it and all that is said under it is of secondary importance. Those simple demonstrations, showing us the grievous loss to which we have thus far too generally subjected our mules, would be of incalculable usefulness, though he had never said a word about "Improved Gin-Houses." Under those Diagrams he has given a lesson in political economy which is of more immediate usefulness to us planters than the more universally applicable works of Smith and Mill. I would respectfully suggest therefore, for his second title, the words: "A Practical Lesson in Plantation Political Economy."

But far be it from me to say that the part of the book which treats of improved gin-houses is of no, or even of small, importance. I am so far from this that I intend to propose to our Directors to put up a house after his plans next season, on our fair grounds at Little Rock, as a full-sized model gin-house, to be exhibited by us for the benefit of the patrons and members of our Society who may visit us during our exhibition of 1873; and one purpose of this communication is to ask you to give me an estimate of the cost of the workmanship necessary to its erection. Mr. Mechanician, in his appendix, has given us the quantity of the material, the cost of which delivered on our grounds I can myself ascertain; and now I hope you will oblige me by sending me as soon as convenient the cost of the labor and carpentry.

I understand all the book but the preface. That to me is an enigma. Please give me, if you can, its interpretation.

I am, dear sir, very respectfully yours,

D. E. JONES,

President Arkansas State Agric'l and Mech'l Assoc.

COUNTING-ROOM DEERING PLANTATION MACHINE WORKS, }
Louisville, August 15, 1872.

D. E. JONES, Esq.,
President Arkansas State Agric'l and Mech'l Assoc., Little Rock, Ark.:

DEAR SIR,—Your esteemed and interesting favor of the 10th inst. duly received. Mr. Mechanician accepts and thanks you for your compliments. He asks me also to thank you for your discriminating criticism on his title-page, and to add that he will adopt your amendment in the second edition, now being made ready for the press. He bids me say to you, furthermore, that since he wrote the book he has come to the conclusion that in cases in which the lumber, as under its appendix, is to be sawed and not hewed, eight by eight inches will be large enough for the posts, and five by ten inches for the girders, provided that cleets made of sound board, an inch and a half thick and two or three feet long, be spiked on the posts for shoulders for the girders, and pieces an inch thick and twelve inches long nailed on the girders for shoulders to face up against the posts. He gives his assurance that good cleets, well spiked on the posts and

nalled on the girders, will be just as reliable as shoulders gained into the timbers with saw and chisel, as in the text; and taking into account the lesser lumber and labor required, these will, he says, considerably lessen the cost of the gin-house. In reference to those partitions on the gin-stand floor, and in reference to a plan suggested to him to put a floor for the seed-cotton on the principal rafters over the gin-stand floor, he says that each planter should study the matter deliberately, then follow his own judgment, and arrange everything within the outer walls of the house to suit himself. In any case of putting in a second upper floor for the seed-cotton, the gin, he says, would probably have to be moved to the other end of the house, and have the lint-room in front of it on the same floor. In this case he thinks a partition might be run through the house, parallel with and just along over the inside line of the engine-pulley. The corn-mill might then stand about N in figure C, and the belts of both mill and gin be made to run close along on the outer or right-hand side of that partition. Then by building a light pulley on the arms of the pulley proper of the engine, one of those very useful small-sized cotton-seed hullers, he continues, might be run close up to the partition, and just enough to one side or the other to give it a sufficient length of belt. He says useful cotton-seed hullers, because he is assured by good men that one bushel of hulled cotton-seed, properly fed, is worth more than two bushels of corn; and this, he concludes, is a new and important item in plantation political economy.

In reference to the workmanship of the gin-house, I think I can safely assure you that with a good foreman it will not cost over two hundred, or at most two hundred and fifty dollars. Your idea of building an improved gin-house on your fair grounds as a pattern for the planters of Arkansas is an excellent one; and would it not be a good supplementary idea to supply it with a horse-engine, so that corn-mill and cotton-gin manufacturers can exhibit their machines in operation, driven by the same power—the muscle of mules—by which they are driven generally on the plantations? The driving of these machines by steam-power at our Fairs may be or may be made so easily deceptive that I think all honest manufacturers, as well as all planters, would hail such an improvement with gladness. And now, to follow the advice of St. Paul and be zealous in well-doing, I propose for myself and associates in these Works, Messrs. Geo. W. Wicks & Co., to supply your model gin-house with one of my No. 8 horse-engines, to be used permanently in that gin-house for that purpose.

In answer to the paragraph which closes your communication, Mr. Mechanician bids me remind you that Easter means Rising—Rising up; and that his preface is therefore an adumbration of the rising up which it is hoped we are now all working for over our beloved South.

I am, dear sir, very truly yours,

WILLIAM DEERING.

LITTLE ROCK, ARK., August 21, 1872.

WILLIAM DEERING, Esq., Louisville, Ky.:

DEAR SIR,—Your very kind favor of the 15th, in answer to mine of the 10th inst., now lies on my table. I like those suggestions of our Mechanician which lessen the material and the cost of the carpentry of the outside or principal frame-work of his gin-house. His words and your words, and particularly the generous offer of yourself and associates in making us a donation of one of your No. 8 horse-engines, strengthens my hands, as I contemplate laying this matter before our Directors, who I believe will co-operate with me so heartily that next year will see this matter carried into full and beautiful fruition.

Now I know what is meant under that preface, and feeling a little of the quiet enthusiasm of our Mechanician, I will hope that in that part of the Rising up to be thus instituted by our Association we shall be but pioneers.

With sincere thanks, not forgetting that every member of our Association will by-and-by join me in these thanks for your liberal donation, and with faith that we will be in good time able to avail ourselves of its usefulness,

I am, dear sir, very respectfully yours,

D. E. JONES.

THE SEVEN DIAGRAMS,
OR
IMPROVED GIN-HOUSES.

The reasons which point to the necessity for improved plantation office-houses are of two classes: *First*, those which exist in the promptings which underlie the advance of civilization; and *second*, those which are suggested by the immediately and practically useful.

The reasons of the first class lie rather outside the province of men of immediately practical conceptions, and belong more specifically to the philosopher. Nevertheless, some of us practical men sometimes indulge a little in philosophy; and so, by an easy analysis, many a manufacturer concludes that if his machines fell into proper places in proper houses they would be much more likely to give the required satisfaction. So too a thoughtful man of any occupation, after passing through a district in Indiana destitute of barns, and with but open hovels for stables, and then through one of those rich districts in Pennsylvania, dotted with farm office-

houses comparatively like palaces, would irresistibly come to the conclusion that in the world of husbandry the people of the first district are a long way behind the broad and beautiful advance of the people of the second.

I will not speak of the farm office-houses of the South generally; but, that I may give an evidence which will introduce that immediately and practically useful with a greater impressiveness, I will speak freely, but I hope kindly, of a single plantation which I visited during a cold week in February.

It had no sheep-cots, but a number of dead lambs; no sties, but in the evening a litter of eleven, out of which next morning there were nine frozen pigs; no byres, but a crowd of raw-boned, sickly-looking cows; no stables, but a frightful looking hovel of logs, with openings between them through which foals could suck their mothers, without a door worthy of the name, and with layers of manure three feet deep for beds for the long-haired, dirty-looking, shaggy, shambling mules; no implement-room, but shams in shape of one-horse plows rotting in the fence-corners; neither barn nor granary, but a little "fodder" losing its little remaining virtue in loose heaps, kept from the hungry cattle by ugly fence-rails. It had no proper gin-house, but in its place an insane strata of immense logs, dribbled by some uncouth giants in a horizontal row, nine feet from the ground, on the tops of upright—or nearly upright—24-inch diameter butts of trees. These were covered with a roof with eaves springing from themselves, and ending in a comb high enough to show that it contained

material to make, in addition to a roof proper, a comfortable second story for the gin-stand. Under these logs I found a decayed running-gear and six mules on it, doing the work that under fair conditions could have been done as easily by four. The axle of the running-gear had mortices for four levers. Two mules were on each of two of these, and one mule on each of the two others. One boy tottered behind each lever, making four boys freezing under, that day, a bitter north wind, blowing unobstructedly through that miserable open quadrangle. Up stairs—if I might say stairs in connection with a place about which there was nothing worthy of the name—were two other boys as attendants on the gin man; and the gin man, with his gin shrieking in the darkness under that low roof, through whose ragged imperfections the icy winds grated round their shivering bodies. I said shrieking because, as I climbed the crazy ladder, I heard a noise which I knew to be not simply usually but dangerously abnormal. I steadied myself past several openings gaping down into the mule-room, and as I approached the gin bumped my beaver against a purloin; and then in no very good humor grasped the man by the shoulder, and ducking my head, as well to avoid another bump as to reach his ear, I said:

“There is something in your gin, uncle.”

“I reckon not, masser; I reckon the gin’s all right,” he responded.

“I tell you there is something—a nail or something; you had better look,” I reiterated. I should, however