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## The New South.

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### Do we Tell the Truth?

The Nation gives an interesting and suggestive article on the above subject. If it were shorter, we would be glad to insert it in full. We purpose to give partly the gist of the article, with a thought or two of our own.

It is a remarkable fact that Moses, in his great moral code—never made any prohibition of lying; nor did he of slavery and polygamy. He was too wise to attempt any impossibilities. A sweeping denunciation of these would have been simply useless. It would have been too far in advance of the moral sentiment of the people to be obeyed, and would not have been looked upon in the light of a positive obligation.

There are many forms of cheating tolerated among us, unprohibited by statute, simply because the moral sentiment of man is not yet highly cultivated enough to treat that as illegal which is generally regarded as dishonorable. Yet the latter feeling is a proof of that steady growth of the moral sentiment of mankind which has been going on since the creation. It is difficult to say how much our view of the morality or immorality of actions is due to education or nature. It is known that in the North some men regarded slavery as the sum of all villainies, while in the South it was regarded as a Bible institution. So with polygamy. Abraham was a polygamist, and so was Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes. Circumstances alter cases, and our better education and advancing civilization changes many things. Right and wrong may be always the same, but our ideas in regard to them change constantly.

Four thousand years have passed since the time of Moses. He made no prohibition against lying. Is the world yet prepared for such prohibition? We doubt it. If a man, or woman either, was absolutely truthful, each would be considered a moral monstrosity, a nuisance to be abated swiftly. Few appreciate how much we owe to falsehood. Without the lubricating oil of deception, the social wheel would end in conflagration.

Is this true? What is the idea of a falsehood? It is the effort to produce a false impression on the mind of another. This impression may be made by an untrue statement, by equivocation, by evasion, by ambiguous words. And this is falsehood. Will morality accept any lower standard? If not, then who are guilty of falsehood?

The ordinary rules of politeness require us not only to hide our sentiments from

those around us, but to convey to others, in many instances, an entirely false impression of our sentiments. We often live in an atmosphere of deception so thick that we are not only hid from our neighbors but hid from ourselves, also: so that, from constantly striving to persuade others that we think and feel differently from what we do think and feel, we sometimes succeed in convincing ourselves that we are what we endeavor to seem to be. We constantly receive with courtesy those we dislike, and utter words of cordial greeting which do not spring from a true respect. Possibly it may be right to do so; but so far as our words and acts are intended to give our neighbors an entirely wrong impression of our feelings towards them, so far those words and acts cannot be brought into accord with the rule of absolute truthfulness.

We sometimes meet with people who pride themselves on being frank and speaking the truth, but these forget that generally they succeed in being offensive also. Society generally ostracises this class of persons. Some of our philosophers, with these facts before them, hold out to us a standard of truthfulness to be aimed at, though incapable of realization, yet as a duty possible in attainment and obligatory in practice. When they come to test their proposition, they betray the weakness of their position.

There seems to be no escape from the conclusion that in the present moral condition of our race, perfect truthfulness is scarcely attainable.

### Work.

If the majority of the late slave owners in Virginia would forget their former habits of idleness, eschew tournaments and follow the example of the two young farmers referred to in the following extract from the Richmond Dispatch, there would be some probability of that State becoming an agricultural commonwealth: "Two young farmers in Albemarle have accomplished, on a farm of three hundred and thirty-three acres, the following results: The boys rise by early dawn; one milks the cows, the other feeds and carries the horses, attends to the hogs and cattle, and after early breakfast perform earnestly and industriously what ever work is necessary to be done. Their fields have been well raked and ploughed and the result is good crops realized and prospective. The house-work is done by a negro woman and one girl, while the sisters of the young farmers keep the house in order, and perform many things heretofore left to slaves."—Lynchburg Virginian.

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