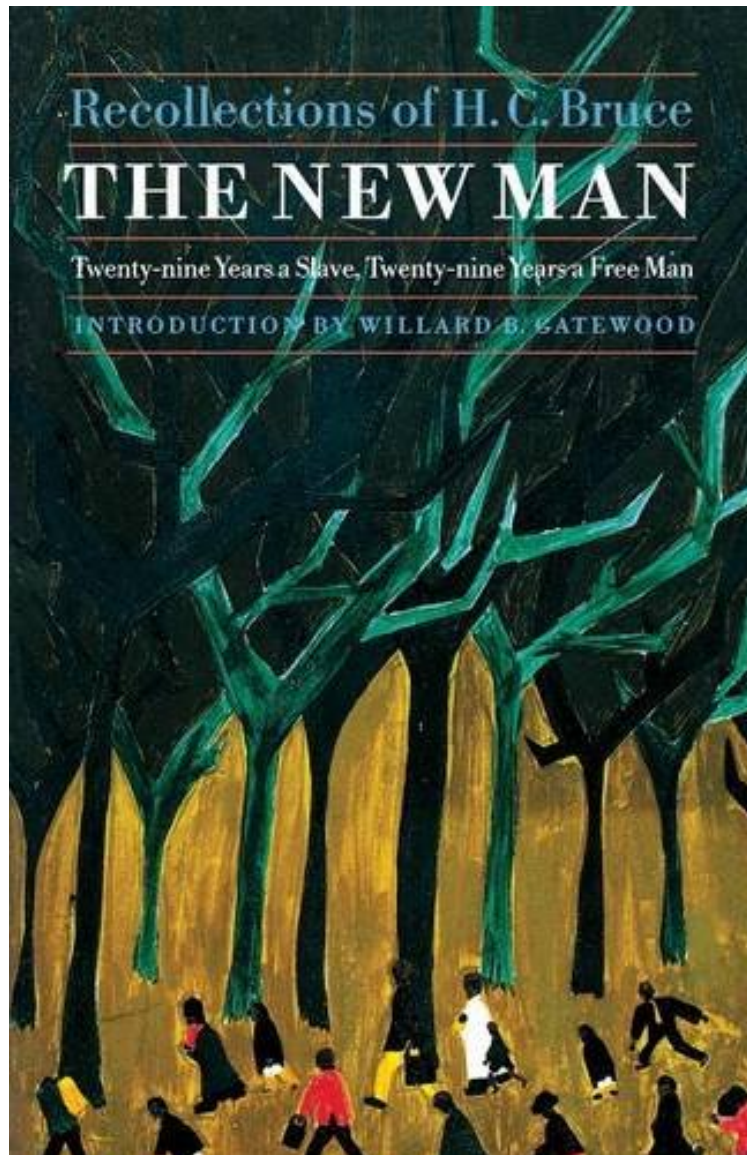


[Ebook free] The New Man: Twenty-Nine Years a Slave, Twenty-Nine Years a Free Man. Recollections of H. C. Bruce (Blacks in the American West)

The New Man: Twenty-Nine Years a Slave, Twenty-Nine Years a Free Man. Recollections of H. C. Bruce (Blacks in the American West)

H. C. Bruce

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H. C. Bruce : The New Man: Twenty-Nine Years a Slave, Twenty-Nine Years a Free Man. Recollections of H. C. Bruce (Blacks in the American West) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The New Man: Twenty-Nine Years a Slave, Twenty-Nine Years a Free Man. Recollections of H.

C. Bruce (Blacks in the American West):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy Don HansonInteresting story that should be on High School reading lists.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Denessial have a completely biased opinion because Henry Clay Bruce is my great-granduncle.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Slavery apologist becomes civil servantBy David WinebergIt is difficult to assess *The New Man*. It is a memoir, but it is unexpectedly confusing. The first two thirds of the book seem to be an apology for slavery in the USA. Bruce was born a slave in Virginia and Missouri and seemed to have been surrounded by largely beneficent masters who rarely took a whip to him. Instead, they gave each slave an acre of land of their own, and bought fancy clothes for them with the proceeds from the sale of crops on them. They ate good wholesome meals. Slaves went to dances, got to mingle, and children played with each other among the farms. Passes into town were common. In his world, there wasnt much mixed race pregnancies, many slaves could read and/or write somehow, and many were rented out yearly to work in factories in cities where they enjoyed a better life. No one is tortured, beaten to death or lynched. It is difficult to rationalize this near-idyllic scenario with everything else I have read about slavery.Come the emancipation and the Civil War, things change. Masters offer slaves wages to stay put. A huge problem reveals itself in that newly freed blacks dont know how to behave in society. They dont know the value of money, what their labor is worth, how to provide for a family, behave in a legal marriage, etc. They are fat prey for scammers. And they find themselves in direct conflict and competition with Irish immigrants, who normally hold all the lowest paying jobs. Bruce says the government should have taken former slaves under its wing for at least a year of transition.He goes on at length about poor white trash, basically slaves who got to go home at night. They were uneducated, ignorant, ruthless, unfair and uncivil. And were looked down upon just as blacks were. They seemed to be a far greater menace than slave owners. Give poor white trash a tiny bit of power, and they lord it over you, because they can, Bruce says.In the last 30 pages, the gloves come off at last. Bruce blasts racism and slavery in specific detail, since he was one for 29 years and had another 29 years of freedom to compare it to. Unfortunately, he is just as racist, slamming the Hebrews for getting rich while providing nothing of value. He recommends blacks leverage their own political and economic resources and move forward as a united block. He ends with a long criticism of political patronage in Washington, as employees in the pension office where he worked were replaced for no other reason than a political favor was owing. He conveniently forgets that he got his own position through the political connections of his brother.So while there are definite insights here, *The New Man* is not the astounding blow by blow description of slavery and freedom it could have been.David Wineberg

Born to black slaves in 1836, H. C. Bruce took the name of his master, a farmer in Prince Edward County, Virginia. After years of slaving on the plantation in Missouri and working in tobacco factories, Bruce escaped to freedom in Kansas with his future wife. In the 1880s, he moved to the District of Columbia to take a federal job arranged by his brother, Blanche K. Bruce, a senator from Mississippi. *The New Man* is unusual in its double perspective: for Bruce's life was split by servitude and freedom, and his experience gave heightened meaning to both. Bruce provides insights into the slaves attitudes toward his masters and toward poor white people. He believes that good blood (a sense of honor and duty and domestic virtues) will tell, no matter the race, but he appeals to fairness in assessing the situation of emancipated slaves at the end of the Civil War: "They were set free without a dollar, without a foot of land, and without the wherewithal to get the next meal even, and this too by a great Christian Nation."

From the Back CoverBorn to black slaves in 1836, H.C. Bruce took the name of his master, a farmer in Prince Edward County, Virginia. After years of slaving on the plantation in Missouri and working in tobacco factories, Bruce escaped to freedom in Kansas with his future wife. In the 1880s, he moved to the District of Columbia to take a federal job arranged by his brother, Blanche K. Bruce, a senator from Mississippi. *The New Man* is unusual in its double perspective: for Bruce's life was split by servitude and freedom, and his experience gave heightened meaning to both. Bruce provides insights into the slave's attitudes toward his masters and toward poor white people. He believes that "good blood" (a sense of honor and duty and domestic virtues) will tell, no matter the race, but he appeals to fairness in assessing the situation of emancipated slaves at the end of the Civil War: "They were set free without a dollar, without a foot of land, and without the wherewithal to get the next meal even, and this too by a great Christian Nation".About the AuthorWillard B. Gatewood, a professor of history at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, and the author of *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920*.