

SOME VIEWS OF SLAVERY
FROM THE WRITINGS OF VIRGINIA AUTHORS
1824-1865

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of History
University of Richmond

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
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August 1956

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer takes this opportunity to express her sincere gratitude to Dr. Ralph C. McDanel for his valuable aid and suggestions. The writer is also indebted to Dr. Noble E. Cunningham, Junior, for his helpful suggestions.

Sincere thanks are also due to Germaine C. Logan for her constant encouragement and to the librarians of the Reference Department of the Virginia State Library for their valuable assistance.

To the memory of
my mother
Margaret Corrigan Logan

PREFACE

The period from 1824 to 1865 was a most critical one in the history of the United States. It was during those years that issues of great magnitude arose. After a period of discussion, views crystallized and finally became fundamental beliefs in the minds of the people of both the North and the South. The result of these beliefs culminated in the Civil War. The issues were concerned chiefly with the question of states' rights, the protective tariff, and, last but not least, with that of African slavery.

In Virginia, which had been the first of the English colonies in America, and where much had been contributed to the formation of the American government, these years were ones of great import. The people of the state were intensely interested in the problems which confronted the country and, as others, Virginians reached certain basic beliefs concerning these problems.

The crystallization of views into firm beliefs can be attributed in no small measure to the writings of the time. The literature of an age is closely interwoven with the history then being unfolded, and momentous issues always find a prominent place in the novels, essays, and other forms of literary expression. Men of letters, through their writings, are potent factors in shaping the beliefs

of readers. These authors also render a valuable contribution in their review and interpretation of history of the past which has a definite relationship on the issues under discussion.

One issue in which Virginians were keenly interested, and in which they had great stakes, was that of African slavery. The contributions of Virginia's literary sons on this subject are oft times overlooked. Their views influenced the thinking of many Virginians.

The purposes of this study are:

(1) to select some of the leading pro-slavery and anti-slavery writers of the period,

(2) to determine which views they set forth in specific works,

(3) to point out certain similarities in the views of writers on each side of the slavery question,

(4) to point out the differences in views between the pro-slavery and anti-slavery writers.

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CHAPTER I
PRO-SLAVERY WRITERS

GEORGE TUCKER

The Valley of Shenandoah, written by George Tucker in 1824, gave a picture of life in the region near the Blue Ridge Mountains. In this novel the master had died and left the family in deep debt, and, while the fortunes were not too good, yet a good picture of slavery was produced in the trying times through which the family passed.

Worthy of note was the great affection which the slaves had, both in good days and bad days, for the mistress and for her grown son and daughter. Evidence of this was given by the workers as they stripped the long blades from the corn while they sang songs which had a smack of poetry and which were natural expressions. The main theme, however, was that of praise of the master and gratitude for his goodness and kindness.¹ As the young master returned from a stay at college, all the slaves in the grain field welcomed him with joy and called out, "My master, my young master!"² Those who came close grasped his hand,³ and it was evident that all were overjoyed to see him. As he

1. George Tucker, The Valley of Shenandoah (New York: C. Wiley, 1824) II, 116.

2. Ibid., I, 65.

3. Ibid., p. 66.

turned to the shed an old darky put down his tools and tottered to the young man to welcome him. When one old darky heard that the estate was to be sold for debts, his first concern was not for himself but for the fate of his beloved mistress.

The care which the family lavished on the slaves was evident. Upon his return the young master did not delay in visiting the cabin of Granny Mott, now quite aged, who had been Edward's childhood nurse. He asked solicitously about her welfare, and she replied that the overseer had stinted her in the supply of wood, but, because of the goodness of the mistress, the supply had later been made ample. The aged woman blessed her master and was glad to see him once more on the plantation. Edward made it a special point to go up and greet one young Negro boy who had been his playmate but who had now been sent to the field for a misdemeanor. Just a shake of the hand restored the slave to a former joy, and his face lighted with happiness. That the slaves felt themselves to be an integral part of the family was evident from their actions. Belle, running out to greet a returning mistress, spoke with

4. Ibid., p. 33.
5. Ibid., p. 35.
6. Ibid., p. 81.
7. Ibid., p. 67.

the freedom of one brought up in the family.⁸ When the family fortune had declined to a low ebb, the coachman put his best foot forward by shining and polishing the carriage because he wanted the family's appearance to be the same as when a large fortune was theirs.⁹ Many of the slaves had a great pride in the work they performed, and, in turn, taught this carefully to their children.

The slaves were composed chiefly of two classes. One group worked about the house, and the other group worked in the fields. The house servants were better clothed and fed than those of the field and even more intelligent. They tended to look down upon the field laborers as inferiors. It was considered a disgrace to be sent from the house to the field and from the living quarters of the big house to the slave quarters.¹⁰ As a whole, the servants were all well clad, clean, and had their wool combed almost straight.

In conversation with the guest, the young master expressed freely his feelings about the institution of slavery. This, he felt, was an evil both morally and politically, but, he added, there was no remedy which was not worse than the disease.¹¹ It would be folly to think

8. Ibid., II, 145.
9. Ibid., p. 183.
10. Ibid., I, 67.
11. Ibid., p. 61.

of freeing the slaves and permitting them to continue to dwell in our country. This would probably renew the scenes of Santo Domingo. There was not yet any practical scheme for sending the Negroes abroad. To rid the continent of such a large part of the population was not possible. It was inconsistent, so argued the master, to confer on the Negroes those rights which would endanger all others. Slavery therefore, seemed a disease which admitted no cure.

The disadvantages of such servitude were many. Not only did it check wealth and was offensive to justice, but it also was injurious to morals and dangerous to peace. The average profits from slavery were few and for each master who derived profit, there were two or three who barely made ends meet. 12

The situation of the slaves, however, was not as bad as some imagined. These black folks were better supplied with the necessities of life than the laboring class in any country outside America. The slaves had their pleasures and enjoyments according to their stations and drew as much happiness with as few drawbacks as any class. The whole error in the thinking on this subject was that the white man put himself in the situation of the slave. 13

12. Ibid., p. 63.

13. Ibid.

It should be remembered that these people were born slaves and there was as much difference in their feelings as between one born with sight and one born blind.¹⁴ Slave labor differed little from free man's labor, and the visitor from the North said he had never seen more willing laborers than on this plantation.¹⁵

The great mischief of slavery was visited on the whites for this gave them idleness and this, in turn, provided time for gaming and drinking. Equally as bad was the belief of the white people that labor itself was degrading, and so they would not perform the simplest tasks for themselves.

The saddest scenes in slavery came when the Negroes had to be sold. In this case it had been necessitated by the deep debt into which the family had fallen. The scenes showed with a great clarity the relationship between master and slave. The slaves were steeped in sadness when they were to be sold. However, their hopes were raised when they were told no separation would be made if at all possible. The mistress was indeed gratified that one person bought the slaves as a unit for this prevented the separation dreaded by mistress and slaves alike. In a

14. Ibid., p. 64.
15. Ibid., p. 66.

kindly manner the mistress comforted a slave who was apprehensive about a future life in Georgia.

The mistress showed consideration for the slaves at the time of the sale. She called them to her in a group and explained she was selling them to a good person. Some wished to remain in Virginia, and these were noted. Then she gave to each a possession of hers which would help to ease the pangs of parting.¹⁶

George Tucker presented a sad and vivid picture of the slaves who were sold. Each was made to ascend a table unless a whole family was being sold and then the group remained on the floor.¹⁷ These humans were set up for sale like cattle or horses, and it was this experience which was the worst a slave had to suffer. Before this he had felt himself a member of the family, but then he was an outcast. It was at this time that slave felt the bitterness of his lot and his insignificance as a member of society.¹⁸ Some Negroes wept aloud and sadness was visible on the faces of all.

JOHN PENDLETON KENNEDY

Swallow Barn, published in 1832, by John Pendleton Kennedy, had as its sub-title A Sojourn in the Old Domin-

16. Ibid., II, 200.
17. Ibid., p. 206.
18. Ibid.

ion. The book is not a novel. The author visited a plantation of Virginia and tried to reproduce an accurate picture of plantation life in the early part of the eighteenth century.¹⁹ Many phases of plantation life were described, but it was the purpose of the study to view slavery on such a plantation with particular emphasis on the relationships which existed between the slaves and the master and the master's feeling concerning the institution of slavery.

The slaves lived in rather primitive homes. Garden patches were attached, however, to each cabin and such vegetables as cymblings, cucumbers, sweet potatoes, watermelons, and cabbage grew in great abundance.²⁰ There was plenty of domesticated poultry about the cabins, and a visitor would readily see that, though the slaves might have homes with few luxuries, they did have a variety and abundance of food.²¹

There was probably no place in the records of slavery where such a spirit of friendliness and love existed between conqueror and conquered as here on the Virginia

19. Kennedy was not born in Virginia, but he was the son of Nancy Pendleton of the distinguished Pendleton family of Virginia. His book was written after vacations spent on a plantation in the state, and hence his work was included in this study.

20. John P. Kennedy, Swallow Barn (New York: G. P. Putnam and Co., 1832) p. 450.

21. Ibid.

plantations. The slaves felt themselves to be an integral part of the master's family and the ease and familiarity with which they joined the family at times was indeed revealing. One evening the master's family staged a play, and Old Carey had taken a part by supplying the sound effects. When these stopped, the actors called for more. Carey then called out, "It's no use, Master Ned, the frying pan's got cold. It won't make no more noise." He had heated the pan and brought it to the door and then supplied the lard for the sound effects. Many other darkies stood in the doorways and windows to watch the performance. When dancing was in progress, it was a common sight to see the darkies gathered to watch the dancers of the Virginia reel or the minuet. It was also customary to have the slaves stand with the family to bid visitors hail or good-bye.

The affections between the Negro children and the white children was noticeable. The youngest son of the master had a playmate, Beelzebub, of the same age, and these two were inseparable. A happy picture was presented when the uncle of the white boy hinted that he might take the two youths fishing. The boys pestered him with questions and pleas. When he informed the youths they were

22. Ibid., p. 99.

ready to go, the little darky tumbled in merriment over the grass. When the necessary equipment was ready, the trio ventured forth. Beelzebub and his playmate led the way jabbering all the time.²³

The fine colts of the estate had been committed to the care of Old Carey and it was the custom of the master to hold consultations with the darky which were, in reality, debates. Carey thought he knew more on the subject than his master and frequent discussions had brought about a familiarity between the two. At times the darky used a force of assertion which caused the master to give up his ground. At times the master laughed at this and let the old man have his way remarking, "Faithful old cur, he has not many years to live, so it does no harm to humor him."²⁴ The old Negro coachman, who held a place of importance, did not hesitate to be kind to the young ladies of the family and he spoke to them in a tone which showed how largely he partook of the family interest. He did not, however, fail to let them know that he bowed but little to their authority.²⁵

The lot of the slave seemed to be a happy one on the plantation. Evidences of joy were shown as the washwomen

23. Ibid., p. 107.
24. Ibid., p. 38.
25. Ibid., p. 216.

sang as they rubbed and rinsed the clothes, and the little ones turned somersaults and pushed each other on the clothes spread out to dry.²⁶

The master was a kind and considerate person and that the slaves appreciated this as was shown in their affection for him. As a result, there was contentment and happiness in his domain. In his regard for the slaves the master frequently visited each individual cabin and saw personally to the welfare of each. Not only did he inspect the living quarters, but he also relieved their wants. Being a wise person, he did not leave the overseer to be the supreme authority for, as he explained, few men had the temper to administer wholesome laws to any population. It was the custom of the slaves to ask a boon as the master visited the cabins and these he granted or refused in such a manner that there was no occasion to murmur.²⁷ The familiar relations which existed between slave and master came as a surprise to the author who had expected to see the slaves severely treated.²⁸ On the contrary, he had found the slaves happy in the possession of a kind master. Kennedy said that in a separate national existence with cultivation and self-dependence, the Negroes

26. Ibid., p. 29.
27. Ibid., p. 451.
28. Ibid., p. 452.

might become a more respectable people, but Kennedy was sure that they would never be happier than he found them in Virginia.²⁹ While it was true that abuses were sometimes heard of in Virginia, yet these were not common and no doubt the oppression of apprentices, seamen or soldiers might be as much in some countries.

It was the nature of the Negro to be gay of heart and during the harvest season this gaiety was displayed by all night dancing. Most slaves tended to be good-natured, careless, light-hearted, and happy. They liked sports such as hunting and trapping. More enjoyment, said Pendleton, was scattered through a day's occupation of a slave than any laboring people.³⁰

Pendleton observed that the Negro was parasitical and was dependent on the white race. He was dependent on the guidance and direction of the master to procure even the most indispensable necessities. With the helplessness of a child, he was without foresight and thrift. To such people broad emancipation would be cruel indeed.³¹ The master set forth his views on slavery which gave a good clue as to the reasoning of like owners. Slavery, he believed, was wholly without justification or defense and

29. Ibid., pp. 452-453.
30. Ibid., p. 455.
31. Ibid., p. 454.

was wrong theoretically as well as morally.³² However, the slaves had been placed under the care of the whites and it was their duty to make servitude as tolerable as possible. It would be a hazard to free these slaves and place them in worse bondage and certainly violent removal or general emancipation would do this. The consequences of freeing two or three million people, so dependent and helpless, would be disastrous. When the proper means was found to give these people their freedom, the master would assist in the plan, but, for the meantime, the owners owed it to the slaves to give them kind treatment.³³

Slaves were not given cruel treatment. They were punished as disorderly persons in all societies were punished, and statistics of crime and punishment compared favorably with any other population.³⁴ On plantations, however, the punishment was marked as a personal act of the master whereas in other places punishment went free of ill will and was charged to justice itself.³⁵ Laws were set up to punish cruelty in masters. These were not needed, however, for a man was unable to hold up his head or keep his reputation in the community if it were known that he was cruel to

32. Ibid., p. 455.
33. Ibid., p. 456.
34. Ibid., p. 457.
35. Ibid.

36
his slaves.

On the question of emancipation, the Virginia planter believed it belonged to the slave holders themselves, and they considered interference from others as unwarranted. As owners of slaves only the masters were able to deal effectively with emancipation. Outsiders would be misled by feeling against slavery or by an insufficient knowledge of the institution. The masters had every motive to use calm and prudent counsel for their families' fortunes and lives were involved. Moreover the common wealth itself was at stake in this problem of emancipation.³⁷ Contrary to the belief of many in the North, there were some in the South who did not regard slavery as either fair or profitable. In the meantime, the only course which the South could pursue was to encourage natural contentment of the slaves.

It was advocated that laws should be set up which would regulate and recognize marriage and the relations of the family among the Negroes. Laws were needed to respect the bonds of husband and wife and of parent and child. For no reason should the separation of families be permitted.

Kennedy's views on slavery on a Virginia plantation

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid., p. 458.

were the accepted ones during the period before slavery³⁸ became a bitter issue between the North and the South.

THOMAS R. DEW

Thomas R. Dew was a pro-slavery man, and he was also one of the best writers on the slavery question in the South.³⁹ In his work, An Essay on Slavery, which was first given as part of a debate in the Virginia Legislature 1831-1832, he not only dealt with slavery as it then existed in the South, but he also gave an historical background of the institution. From this, as well as the time in which he lived, he drew many of his able arguments.

Dew pointed out that slavery was then existent in all parts of the South and was closely woven into the fabric of society.⁴⁰ The determinant factors in deciding whether the master and slave could be separated and if the Negro was to go forward in civilization, must be approached⁴¹ with the idea that infinite study would be required.

Because of Nat Turner's insurrection, in which from sixty to seventy people were killed,⁴² many Virginians wished to abolish the system of slavery. Pointing out that those

38. Francis B. Simkins, A History of the South (New York: Knopf) 1953, p. 101.

39. Jay B. Hubbell, The South in American Literature, 1607-1900 (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1954), p. 425.

40. Thomas R. Dew, An Essay on Slavery (Richmond, Va.: J. W. Randolph, 1849) p. 3.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid., p. 4.

who so wished were doing so too quickly, Dew reminded them that such a plan would give the Negroes the idea that liberation was the price of insurrection. This feeling would but incite future uprisings of the slaves.⁴³ It was the recommendation that Virginia consult the other slave states as to their views. Time was also needed to give the people of Virginia an opportunity to choose a legislature to handle this all important question.⁴⁴ Previous plans for abolition had not been carefully made and had been based on conclusions not true. If these were executed, the result would have ruinous effects.⁴⁵ After a careful study, it was the belief of the author that any plans to liberate the slaves and deport them would be a calamity; any plan to free them and keep them in this country would be fraught with grave peril to both races.⁴⁶

With the feeling that many opposed slavery because it was not in accord with Christianity and also because some looked upon it as a recent development, Dew pointed out that these facts were not true. In ancient times nearly all peoples had slaves, and when the world's best government existed slavery was found there.⁴⁷ Slavery was common

43. Ibid., p. 5.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid., p. 6.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid., p. 7.

at Troy during the time of the seige, and the Romans made slaves of conquered people. ⁴⁸ Indeed the invasion of Britain was made to procure slaves for Rome. ⁴⁹ Augustus Caesar enslaved 36,000 of the people of Salassii which he conquered, and Aristotle upheld slavery and advocated its continuance in the formation of his ideal republic. ⁵⁰ The children of Israel enslaved people and were in turn enslaved by others. Writings found in the Bible appeared to have approved slavery for Abraham was the owner of hundreds of slaves, and temples have been erected by the labor of these workers. The Hebrew laws gave permission for even a Hebrew to be sold for a six year period. ⁵¹ Serfdom in Europe was a form of slavery and, in Africa, at the time of Dew's writing, the natives used a system of slavery.

It was Mr. Dew's feeling that since God is all good, it most naturally follows that slavery, which had come as the result of laws, must be intended for some good purposes. Foremost among these was the fact that without slavery man would have remained a barbarian. ⁵² Previous to the institution of slavery man had roamed and killed. Those he captured he treated horribly. When man obtained land of his own and

48. Ibid., p. 11.

49. Ibid., p. 13.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid., p. 19.

52. Ibid., p. 24.

began to use captives as laborers, progress of mankind began. Man ceased to roam and used slaves to do his work while he himself turned to occupations of agriculture, mining and trading. It was then by the use of slaves that barbarous nations made advances in civilization.⁵³ The horrors of frequent war now came to an end.⁵⁴ When man's wanderings ceased there ceased also the opportunities to become involved in conflicts. This led to the cultivation of the soil and the raising of flocks, and, in due time, the savage, given a home, became a farmer.

One of the best effects was that which slavery had on the captives themselves. These were taken as indolent persons and made capable of work. Habits of sloth and laziness were destroyed and the slave was trained to become a laborer.⁵⁵ Mr. Dew felt that if the American Indian had been enslaved perhaps he would have been preserved. Left to a life of indolence, he was not able to survive.

Slavery also proved to have had a worthwhile effect on the status of woman.⁵⁶ In the days before slavery was established she was merely a beast of burden who was condemned to toil and endure sufferings. When slavery changed man from a wanderer to a farmer, woman was no longer

53. Ibid., p. 10.
54. Ibid., p. 25.
55. Ibid., p. 26.
56. Ibid., p. 30.

forced to follow and bear the burdens. The introduction of slavery freed her from her labors. She took her place as an important member of the family.⁵⁷ Her position became elevated and she moved in society as an equal of men.⁵⁸ This was borne out by the fact that women in African slavery were found to be better treated than the Indian women in America.⁵⁹

To determine how far Virginia was responsible for Negro slavery, Mr. Dew reviewed the history of the institution. The slave trade began when Antony Gonzales, a Portuguese mariner, captured some Moors near Cape Bojadar.⁶⁰ He was ordered by Prince Henry to take these back to the Moors and, in return, he received from these people ten Negroes. These were taken to Spain in 1442, and thus began the slave trade.⁶¹ Others followed Gonzales' example and, in 1502, Spain sent slaves to work in the mines of Hispaniola.⁶² After a century of use in the West Indies, the Negro was brought to Virginia in 1620. In that year twenty slaves were bought from a Dutch trader.⁶³ Because these blacks could endure the heat, more were brought in

57. Ibid., p. 31.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid., p. 32.
60. Ibid., p. 33.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.

the years which followed. The warm climate, the abundance of fertile soil, and the scarcity of white laborers were factors which caused the trade to thrive.⁶⁴

This trade had a beneficial effect on those left in Africa. When the demand for slaves was limited many captives were killed because their labor was not needed.⁶⁵ When the trade thrived, the captives were spared. Moreover, they were given more care and kindness. Children also received better treatment.⁶⁶

Those who came to America were placed in better circumstances than they were in Africa. Here they came into contact with civilization. Here, too, they received better treatment than they had in Africa. There, at a master's death, the slaves were usually killed because of the belief that they would be needed in a future life.⁶⁷ The climate of America was more conducive to the health of the Negro than his native land, and hence his physical condition improved.

The disadvantages to Africa of such a trade were two fold. Foremost was the fact that Africa was kept in a state of confusion due to the constant ravaging of land in

64. Ibid., p. 34.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid., p. 35.

search for slaves.⁶⁸ Equally as disturbing were the conditions of the passage to America. The slaves were kept on overcrowded ships and conditions were wretched. It was estimated that seventeen out of one hundred had died on the way to America and thirty-three later during the conditioning period.⁶⁹

Mr. Dew concluded that Virginians had no share whatsoever in the responsibility for the introduction of slavery. As colonies we had been under the control of England and could not be held responsible for acts which were hers.⁷⁰ Britain encouraged the American colonies to buy Negro slaves and, when in 1760, South Carolina passed an act to prohibit the trade, the mother country said the trade was beneficial to her.⁷¹ The governors of the colonies had been instructed by the British government to disapprove any law which supported the prohibition of slavery.⁷²

No colony had been more zealous in her efforts to abolish the slave trade than had Virginia.⁷³ Not only did she place duties on slaves but she also protested to the king, but it was to no avail.⁷⁴ As soon as she could

68. Ibid.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid., p. 38.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid., p. 39.

Virginia took decisive steps, and, in the first assembly which met after the first state Constitution had been accepted, Virginia prohibited the slave trade.⁷⁵ Moreover, the first clause in that Constitution which referred to the "inhuman use of the royal negative" included the king's⁷⁶ refusal to permit Virginia to discontinue the slave trade. Both before and after independence the states had given conclusive evidence that slavery had been imposed upon them by the mother country contrary to their wishes.

One plan proposed in the time of Dew's writing was to free the Negroes and deport them. Most Virginians were agreed that the best plan would be to send them back to Africa.⁷⁷ This would return to that continent natives who had been instructed in Christianity and the benefits of civilization.⁷⁸ The whites would be benefitted by such a removal,⁷⁹ and Africa would be opened to civilization.

Dew viewed this plan as impractical for several reasons. The chief problem was that of payment to the owner who was entitled to the value of his slave. In the year 1830, the slave population of Virginia was evaluated at \$94,000,000⁸⁰ and made up one-third of Virginia's wealth. Slaves gave

75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid., p. 40.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid., p. 41.

a value to the soil of Virginia and without these workers the land would be a wilderness. To be considered, too, was the great cost entailed in the returning of these people and the setting up of a colony.

The suggestion had been made to send back to Africa only the increase and let the others remain here. Even this would involve a tremendous expense, and at \$30 each for transportation and colonization, the expense would be \$1,380,000 annually.⁸¹ This would incur too much expense for any state to bear.

Mr. Dew viewed financial help from the Federal Government, which some advocated, as a dangerous step.⁸² It was his strong conviction that a state should depend on its own powers and not invite the participation of outside agencies.⁸³ It was only in this way that Virginia could maintain her political independence.⁸⁴ In accepting Federal aid Virginia would violate a principle of long standing and she would also be allied irrevocably to that government in the future.⁸⁵

There were those who argued for the deportation of the Negroes on the ground that free white labor would be

81. Ibid., p. 42.
82. Ibid., p. 75.
83. Ibid.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid.

better. The vacuum left by the negroes who would be de-ported would, in time, be filled by the labor of free white men.⁸⁶ Dew viewed this as false. Since only a limited

number could be deported, it would be necessary for the whites to work with the Negroes, and this the white workers would be unwilling to do. Even if the reverse were true, the association of the two races would have the effect to draw the white race down to the level of the black and

perhaps lower.⁸⁷ Tests had proven that a white man who worked with a Negro would do no more work than the blacks.⁸⁸

Through observation, during the years, it had been demonstrated that a higher level of labor always descended to the level of the lower.⁸⁹

Mr. Dew viewed as a detriment the emigration of large numbers of people.⁹⁰ This had happened in France, Spain, and Holland. The emigration of the Huguenots was injurious to the French because those sent out were of the laboring

class.⁹¹ France's inferiority to England in industry and other fields might be traced to this exodus.⁹² In this

case only one fiftieth of the population left and the

86. Ibid., p. 45.

87. Ibid.

88. Ibid.

89. Ibid.

90. Ibid., p. 51.

91. Ibid.

92. Ibid.

government was involved in no expense.⁹³ Contrasted to this there would be a much larger number of people to leave America and much expense would be borne by the nation.⁹⁴

Mr. Dew disagreed with those who believed the masters would willingly free the slaves. He pointed out that in history the slaves had been freed only when it had been to the interest of the masters to do so.⁹⁵ This had been true of the serfs liberation. Philanthropy had not of itself effected one great work.⁹⁶ Self-interest has been the main spring of all so-called generous liberation of slaves.

Dew viewed the plan of colonization with opposition. The three grounds on which this was based were physical, moral and national.⁹⁷ The physical rehabilitation of the Negro in Africa would be difficult because it would entail a reconditioning to the unhealthy climate.⁹⁸ While it was true the land bought by the American Colonization Society was a healthful place, it was equally true that the area was a small one.⁹⁹ What would ensue when a larger amount of surface would be needed and was not available? What too

93. Ibid.
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid., p. 54.
96. Ibid.
97. Ibid., p. 60.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid., p. 63.

would be the reaction of native Africans when we attempted to obtain such land? Unlike the Indians, the Africans were attached to their land and it would be difficult to get additional areas from them.¹⁰⁰ Wars and strife might well result from this.

The moral difficulties would result from the hardships of the new-comers to adjust to life in the tropics. Their lack of conformity in habits, tempers, and dispositions would likely result in the formation of a group of an unco-operative and perhaps hostile people.¹⁰¹

The national difficulty would be that which would arise when the new colony, because of its differences, came into conflict with the various tribes of Africa.¹⁰² To prevent such the American government would have to exert much care and management in the African colony.¹⁰³ Those sent would have to be judiciously chosen and much in money and supplies would be necessary to protect the colonists against the attacks of the neighboring tribes.¹⁰⁴ Mr. Dew pointed out the difficulties of the colonists who came to the New World and showed that in early Virginia the first three attempts at colonization ended in disaster.¹⁰⁵

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- 100. Ibid., p. 69.
 - 101. Ibid., p. 60.
 - 102. Ibid.
 - 103. Ibid.
 - 104. Ibid.
 - 105. Ibid., p. 61.

Commenting on the plan which would free the slaves and keep them in this country, Mr. Dew stated the plan was fraught with danger not only to the whites but also to the blacks.¹⁰⁶ This plan would bring evils which were greater than those of slavery and to this even the abolitionists of the North agreed.¹⁰⁷ Economically the slaves were not ready for equality with the whites. In the first place, slave laborers were much better than the free Negro laborers.¹⁰⁸ These tended to be lazy and indolent; and this was shown in the states where they were found. Quite often they were a bother to the state, and in Ohio many had been sent out.¹⁰⁹ Others had to be under police vigilance because of habits of laziness. Those who had been freed in the West Indies did not work or have a care for the future.¹¹⁰ A report of the Committee of the Privy Council in England in 1788 stated that the freed Negroes in Jamaica and the Barbadoes were never found to work for hire.¹¹¹ In addition, the agent reported that if the slaves there were offered freedom at the price of self-support not one-tenth would be willing to accept the offer.¹¹²

106. Ibid., p. 76.

107. Ibid.

108. Ibid., p. 77.

109. Ibid.

110. Ibid., p. 78.

111. Ibid.

112. Ibid.

The Negro, when freed, would offer nothing to the wealth of his land. The Indians proved that they would not work except under the supervision of a master and even then had to be carefully watched.¹¹³ In Cayenne where the slaves were freed the experiment proved to be a failure, and resumption of slavery was hailed by even the Negroes themselves.¹¹⁴ In the Barbadoes a plantation worked by freed Negroes did not prosper and, in time, was sold for debt. Later this same plantation was tilled by slave labor and was found to be productive.¹¹⁵ In Virginia an intelligent master had experimented with free Negro labor.¹¹⁶ The experiment failed due to the fact that the Negroes became lazy. Here the negroes had the best incentive because the master had informed them that slavery would be reinstated if free labor proved ineffective.¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, the Negro's love for indolence overcame his love for freedom,¹¹⁸ and he was returned to his former condition.

It was Mr. Dew's view that the Negro was morally unfit for liberation.¹¹⁹ His love for idleness was apparent and this in itself was the breeding ground for every and

113. Ibid., p. 79.
114. Ibid.
115. Ibid., p. 80.
116. Ibid.
117. Ibid., p. 81.
118. Ibid.
119. Ibid., p. 83.

all vice. From idleness stemmed a want and this in its turn brought temptations which were followed by acts of wrong doing.¹²⁰ In Massachusetts about one seventy-fifth of the population was comprised of free Negroes yet one-sixth of those convicted were of this group.¹²¹ The Virginia Penitentiary reports up to the year 1829 showed one conviction for every 16,000 whites; one for every 22,000 slaves and one in every 5,000 for freed Negroes.¹²² It was Mr. Dew's firm conviction that the Negro was not yet ready for liberation, and to give him this too quickly would redound to his ruin.¹²³ To remain in the position for which one had been trained was better than to climb too fast without proper conditioning.¹²⁴ Moreover, in a free society the Negro would be told he was an equal of the white man, but prejudice would be against him. In an effort to mingle with the whites he would be relegated to a position of inferiority and chagrin and disappointment would be his end.¹²⁵ In Haiti after freedom had been given the soil had been neglected. It was necessary to establish a system of labor somewhat like slavery in order to prevent

120. Ibid.
121. Ibid., p. 84.
122. Ibid.
123. Ibid., p. 85.
124. Ibid.
125. Ibid.

126
chaos. Like conditions prevailed in Santo Domingo and
there the Negro master was found to be a cruel one.¹²⁷
Liberation of the slaves would cause white people to
gradually leave certain areas and these would fall into
the hands of Negroes. These districts would rapidly fall
into decay and if the whites were associated with the Negroes
the former would sink to the level of the blacks.¹²⁸

The Negro temperament was suited to incite murders and
insurrections. Gradual liberation would have this effect
in those yet unfree who desired their liberty. Rapid liber-
ation would likewise foster resentment and misdeeds would
result.¹²⁹ The slaves of ancient Greece and Rome were
usually learned, industrious, and intelligent. There was
no difficulty presented in their emancipation as they
could readily be assimilated into the body of free men.¹³⁰
This was not true of the slaves in America.

Mr. Dew did not view slavery as an injustice. He felt
that if slavery could not be abolished without causing more
harm to both master and slave, it was better to continue
the institution.¹³¹ The original sin was not ours and to
cause greater evils would not justify emancipation.

126. Ibid., p. 87.
127. Ibid., p. 88.
128. Ibid., p. 89.
129. Ibid.
130. Ibid., p. 91.
131. Ibid., p. 93.

It was Mr. Dew's opinion that the master was usually a kind person who meted out food, shelter, and clothing to his slaves.¹³² In the good relationship which existed between slave and master more good than evil resulted. Slavery had the tendency to awaken benevolence in the master. Northern men who married Southern heiresses became more cruel masters than those raised in the South.¹³³ The slaves had a friendly and affectionate relationship with the master and members of his family.

Since the slave was happy in his position, Mr. Dew asked why should man wish to disturb this contentment. Why should the slave be offered his liberty, which he did not fully comprehend, and thus end his happiness?¹³⁴ The mistake made was that the white man placed the slave in his position. Since the white man would desire freedom, he felt the Negro did also. Omnipotence had, however, arranged a different plan. The slave strove and was happy to do so in order to be superior to other slaves. From the white man's view the slave was unhappy but, in reality, he was happy.

Mr. Dew's conviction was that the foundations of society were deep and could not be broken by a new law.¹³⁵

132. Ibid., p. 95.
133. Ibid., p. 96.
134. Ibid., p. 98.
135. Ibid., p. 115.

To tear asunder the system of slavery would be but to engage in a plan which would be ruinous to our land.¹³⁶

From the experience of past history he hoped Virginia would learn this wisdom.¹³⁷

NATHANIEL BEVERLY TUCKER

Nathaniel Beverly Tucker was a noted person in Virginia from 1830 to 1850. Although he occupied no political or military position, he was responsible for a valuable contribution to his native state.¹³⁸ It was through his pen that he gave voice to his ideas which included a defense of slavery. This defense was found in the books he wrote, in his essays, and in his lectures at William and Mary College.

In the book The Partisan Leader, which foretold the course of the Civil War, Tucker gave a picture of loyal and kind slaves. Concerning the status of the slave, Mr. Tucker believed that after one bore something for a long period of time, he ceased to consider it a hardship.¹³⁹ This was true concerning the African slave and yet the

136. Ibid.

137. Thomas R. Dew's Essay on Slavery was first published in 1832. The edition used for this study, however, was the second edition printed in 1849.

138. Maude Howlett Woodfin, "Nathaniel Beverly Tucker: His Writings and Political Theories, With a Sketch of His Life," Richmond College Historical Papers, II:9-42, June 1917.

139. Nathaniel Tucker, The Partisan Leader (Washington, Duff Green, 1836), p. 14.

Yankees would have him rise against a master to obtain liberty. Most of the slaves were happier than white people realized, and this happiness would be destroyed by the people of the North who wished to free the slave and then put him in a position and in a labor for which he was unfitted and untrained.¹⁴⁰

The kind and affectionate relationship between a slave and master was demonstrated when the latter told the former to greet a returning young member of the family. It was recalled how the two, in earlier years, had been cronies and the slave had taught the boy lessons in riding.¹⁴¹ The two shook hands, and the young master told the slave how valuable those lessons had been and how they had stood him in good stead in his military career.¹⁴²

Tom, the slave, was described as a graceful and gentle person who was possessed of good manners.¹⁴³ His proud and polite humility was contrasted to the sulkiness found in servants of the North. The young master, who had spent some years in the North, reflected that servants there had a bitter and hostile feeling.¹⁴⁴ He was of the belief that the time would come when the northern people would see the

140. Ibid.
 141. Ibid., p. 97.
 142. Ibid., p. 98.
 143. Ibid., p. 99.
 144. Ibid.

error in their views on slavery.¹⁴⁵

Attesting to the devotion of slaves was a part taken when a scheme was devised for military preparation to safeguard the master. Used as a watch, the slaves proved to be trusted sentinels for the gentleman.¹⁴⁶ This proved to these attempting to capture the master that slavery which they considered weak was, in reality, strong.

This plot also showed the willingness of the slaves to co-operate whole-heartedly with the master. One slave was instructed to go alone and engage in conversation with the soldiers who were on guard while their captains were in the house for the capture of the master.¹⁴⁷ The slave did as was instructed and pretended to leave the soldiers to procure food and drink. These, carried by other slaves, were brought and given to the men. The sentry on duty left his post with its guns in order to enjoy the provisions.¹⁴⁸ At a signal from one slave, the other Negroes plunged the company into darkness, then confiscated the guns, and captured the unarmed men.¹⁴⁹ The master had known that Jack, the leader of the slave group, could be depended upon to foil and capture the soldiers and bring

145. Ibid.
146. Ibid.
147. Ibid., pp. 218-219.
148. Ibid., p. 220.
149. Ibid.

the whole plan to fruition.

As the master left the plantation he and his family were surrounded by a body guard of twenty slaves. No white person, with the exception of the family, was included and the safety of the family was placed entirely in the hands of the slaves. Willingly, too, all the Negroes went into exile with the master and there was not an unfaithful one found.¹⁵¹

Believing that the Northern people could not understand the character of the Negro, Mr. Tucker felt they could not fathom his love and devotion to his master and family.¹⁵² Through misunderstanding, the man of the North thought the slave felt as he did and would be ready to slaughter the master if the opportunity presented itself.

In an address to the law students of William and Mary on December 2, 1834, Mr. Tucker presented his views on the slavery issue. This address was printed in the Southern Literary Messenger. He pointed out that slavery had had a good effect on the Negro in many ways. The institution had helped to elevate the Negro race; it had tamed the savage and brought civilized ways to him, it had served to soften his nature; and it had enlightened

150. Ibid., p. 221.
151. Ibid., p. 224.
152. Ibid., p. 205.

his mind.¹⁵³ Moreover, it had brought to him the teachings of Christianity and had done more than all the missionaries had been able to effect.¹⁵⁴

It was the view of Mr. Tucker that Virginians had nothing to do with the origin of slavery and that it had existed in some form since Adam and Eve had been driven from the Garden of Eden.¹⁵⁵ Then it was that man had been condemned to toil by the sweat of his brow. Thus was born the institution of slavery and since it was the result of evil,¹⁵⁶ its origin might be considered evil. In society it was natural that some men would rise and others would be the rich and the poor. The rich did not toil but the poor must and hence the poor man became the servant of the rich. Since the poor man's wages were for food and clothing, which came from labor given to the rich, what was this but a form of slavery? Whether in free labor or slave labor the results of work were food, clothing and shelter.

The wages of a slave were more adequate because they were in kind, but the free men received wages in money. This could be inflated or deflated and would not then be

¹⁵³. Nathaniel Beverly Tucker, "Notes to Blackstone's Commentaries--Being the Substance of Remarks on the Subject of Domestic Slavery, Delivered to the Law Class of William and Mary College, December 2, 1837," Southern Literary Messenger, I:227-231, January, 1835.

¹⁵⁴. Ibid.

¹⁵⁵. Ibid., p. 228.

¹⁵⁶. Ibid.

the equivalent of toil. In such a manner some received too much and others received too little if money were the payment. The payment in slave labor, however, was more accurate.¹⁵⁷

Commenting on the happiness of a slave, Mr. Tucker believed that those who knew him best believed him to be a happy individual. Because he could not hope for the things a free man did, he was not robbed of happiness. The freed man had many cares from which the slave was exempt.¹⁵⁸ The slave had a sense of security as to home, shelter, food, and care in old age which the free man did not share. In sickness the Negro looked to his master and was usually loved and protected. The poor in free society had no such security and had to depend on the provisions of society.¹⁵⁹

In reality, all laborers had a master. In free society the laborer was obliged to seek a master who had little interest in the worker except for the labor he could produce. In slavery an individual was the property of a person who was interested in his work and welfare.¹⁶⁰

One advantage of slavery was that it filled the low

157. Ibid., p. 229.
158. Ibid.
159. Ibid., p. 230.
160. Ibid.

and degrading places in society by the labor of slaves. All menial labor was done by these people. The freemen were left to perform the services which required trust and skill.¹⁶¹

The two basic grounds on which Tucker based his defense of slavery were: (1) that it was necessary to place labor on those who could not live honestly without toil and, (2) that to free the slave would eventually lead to his use of the franchise which would not aid society.¹⁶² Concerning the latter, Mr. Tucker did not believe any good had come from raising the laboring class to voters. There would be the tendency to sell the vote to demagogues, and where this had happened no progress had been forthcoming.¹⁶³

Speaking of the North's attitude toward slavery, Mr. Tucker reminded the people of that section that when the slave trade was permitted they used the opportunity to gain wealth through that trade. When the trade was declared illegal the North began to look differently on the slave question.¹⁶⁴

In defense of slave holders, Mr. Tucker put forth an

161. Ibid.
162. Ibid.
163. Ibid.
164. Ibid., p. 231.

able argument. He cited that it was permissible to take
another's life in order to defend one's own.¹⁶⁵ A person's
liberty might be taken in a like case. Could a master then
not keep one who had been given to his care even if the act
of the captor had been unfair and if the master had not
participated?¹⁶⁶ Would this not be even more justifiable
if the captive could not be released without endangering
himself or his captor's way of life? The evil of slavery
had been placed on us by our forefathers without any con-
sent on our part.¹⁶⁷ To now free these Negroes would but
bring ruin to both races. It was the South's responsibility
therefore, to hold the slaves as one would prisoners of
war. These we would be willing to liberate and send
back to their native land as soon as it could be done
with safety and profit to both races.¹⁶⁸

Tucker wished to see a colony set up for the Negroes
on Haiti where they could be given an education and kept
under the protection of a Southern Confederacy. When the
Negroes proved competent for self-government, small bands
would be sent to Africa. There these would instruct natives
in civilization and Christianity which, as Tucker viewed it,

165. Ibid., p. 270.
166. Ibid.
167. Ibid.
168. Ibid.

had been the divine decree.

GEORGE FITZHUGH

George Fitzhugh, in his book entitled Cannibals All or Slaves Without Masters, predicated his theory of upholding slavery on the grounds that free society had failed in its efforts to make better living conditions for the laboring class.¹⁷⁰ This failure had been recognized not only by writers of Europe but also by those of the North including the Abolitionists.¹⁷¹

Speaking of white labor versus slave labor, the author was convinced that the former was more cruel in nearly all aspects than the latter.¹⁷² This was because in hired labor more was taken from the worker and nothing was given in government or protection of the person. The worker was left to care for himself and for his family out of a small pittance of money. When his day of work was over, he was burdened with cares of a financial nature and also the care of the future.¹⁷³ In such conditions Mr. Fitzhugh believed that the word liberty was only a mockery. In a free society the worker was forced to do harder labor

169. Richmond College Historical Papers, op. cit., p. 22.
170. George Fitzhugh, Cannibals All or Slaves Without Masters (Richmond, Va.: A. Morris, Publisher, 1857) p. 193.
171. Ibid., p. 137.
172. Ibid., p. 25.
173. Ibid., p. 26.

and received a smaller return than the Negro slaves. Neither was the white laborer free to enjoy the holidays of the year for he was weighed down with anxiety and burdens.¹⁷⁴ Always the white slave was forced to work or starvation would be his end. In his old age he was faced with poverty and the anxiety as to what would happen to his loved ones.

Leveling criticism at the masters of the white slaves, Fitzhugh said that their respectability consisted in not working but in living off the work of others. In these the master had no concern after working hours, but he retained the fruits of their labor.¹⁷⁵ These white slave owners, because they commanded the capital, held a sway over the workers and were, in reality, slave owners without any of the responsibilities or obligations which should have accompanied such a position.¹⁷⁶ If these same persons were owners of cattle or horses there would be an obligation to protect and look after their property. Why then, should they be freed of all responsibilities concerning their laborers?

In the slave society of the South the author said one found the Negro to be the happiest of people.¹⁷⁷ The children and aged labored not at all and yet enjoyed the

174. Ibid., p. 30.
175. Ibid., p. 28.
176. Ibid., p. 29.
177. Ibid.

provisions of home, food, and clothing. All of these were supplied by the masters. Those who did labor had freedom of mind and body because they knew the sustenance of life would be provided.¹⁷⁸ The work of the laborers was not so difficult as those of the white slave, and the men worked not more than nine hours a day.¹⁷⁹ Little hard work was done by the Negro woman, and she was protected from any injustice of the husband by the master.¹⁸⁰ Freedom to enjoy the Sundays and holidays was the privilege of the Negro, and these days were spent in leisure without care. Thus it was that the slave was permitted to have a larger share of his results of work than the white slave of the North.¹⁸¹

The master of the South assumed much in the way of obligation for his workers. Not only did he provide for them throughout life, so making his profit much less than that of the master of hired workers, but he was also their teacher in the field of mechanics and also Christianity. He was one who worked that his laborers might be well cared for.¹⁸² This system of labor demanded no idleness on the part of the owner. The care of his own family, with the added care of the slaves and the plantation, required

178. Ibid., p. 26.
179. Ibid., p. 30.
180. Ibid.
181. Ibid., p. 25.
182. Ibid., p. 44.

careful planning and execution. His obligation was even more than that of the slave because the latter was required to work when he could, but the master had always to provide for his slave. If this could not be done, the law would give the slave to a new master to insure protection, and hence it was that the position of the slave was more secure than that of a hired worker.¹⁸³

Not only was the owner bound to provide for the slave in times of sickness and in health but also in infancy and old age. To feed the Negro, to clothe him, and to guard his morality was the task of the master of the Negro slave.¹⁸⁴

The slave was treated kindly and, as a result, he was a happy person and the master was a useful member of society. The mistress of a plantation shared her husband's interest in the laborers, and she too was a busy person. Not only was she a wife, a mother, and a housekeeper, but she was also the one who taught the household slaves and was the dispenser of charity.¹⁸⁵

George Fitzhugh denounced as false the belief that it was right to make weak poor men free and then cast them out into a society which was controlled by a few wealthy individuals. This could only cause the poor to become

183. Ibid., p. 121.
184. Ibid., p. 126.
185. Ibid., p. 44.

slaves who had no rights and placed them under masters who
assumed no obligations for the worker.¹⁸⁶ As an example
of this, the author cited the liberation of the serfs of
Europe who were told they were free men and could get em-
ployment. As a result, the free labor was cheaper than
the slave, and the serf found less freedom after emanci-
pation than before.¹⁸⁷ Not only was a livelihood more dif-
ficult to obtain, but the worries of the serf increased
while those of the master decreased. Disagreeing with
Blackstone, who felt that the liberation of the serfs was
a forward step, Fitzhugh also challenged the former's be-
lief that the lessening of the power of the church and
throne helped liberty. Fitzhugh was of the opinion that
the church and throne had always been champions of the
working class.¹⁸⁸ During the days of serfdom the people
belonged to the soil. At the time of the writing of Can-
nibals All thirty thousand men owned the land in England
and the great mass of people had been removed from the soil
without any means of livelihood.¹⁸⁹ When serfdom existed
there were no beggars and few crimes. With the liberation
of these people, unused to freedom, crimes increased.¹⁹⁰

186. Ibid., p. 108.
187. Ibid., p. 109.
188. Ibid., p. 158.
189. Ibid., p. 159.
190. Ibid.

This was perhaps due to the cessation of the daily duties of the freed people.

As another example of freedom leaving the people in a worse condition, Mr. Fitzhugh cited the land of Ireland. There the land was taken by the British and the people were supposedly free. The English charged so much for rent that, after having deducted this sum, the Irish had worked harder and realized less than the Jamaica slaves.¹⁹¹ In one year three hundred thousand of the Irish had died of starvation.¹⁹² To what avail had their freedom been?

At one time the Jamaica slaves had their wants supplied by masters. Then it came that Britain freed these slaves and gave them liberty, but at the same time Britain took the best land. As a result, the people became destitute and their lot was much worse than when they were in servitude.¹⁹³

Referring to England to show conditions of the workers, Mr. Fitzhugh wrote of the half clad, poorly fed, and dirty children who suffered as a result of free labor.¹⁹⁴ The poor workers, with little hopes of any future, frequented saloons and drank gin and beer which afforded some conso-

191. Ibid., p. 38.
192. Ibid.
193. Ibid.
194. Ibid., p. 188.

195
lation. Some poor girls were driven to crimes of a horrible nature. When questioned it was found that many of these poor people had never slept in a bed, that many lived by begging, and that some had neither shoes nor stockings. 196
When William Howitt visited a section in England he found in one home that common English was not understood by the children. Worse yet were the conditions in factories where dust, accidents, disease, and suicide claimed the lives of the youthful workers. 197 The working class had come to be regarded as tools with which to build up the capital of the wealthy.

Contrasted with these conditions were the conditions in the homes and palaces of the rich. These were decorated with great beauty until they were more gorgeous than those of any land. 198 Staffed by many servants and filled with articles of rarity, these homes housed the members of wealthy English class. Yet under all of this existed a class of working people who suffered from poverty. 199

In reference to Biblical mentioning of slavery, the author pointed out that the Scriptures recognized and approved slavery as a means of securing happiness for man

195. Ibid.
196. Ibid.
197. Ibid., pp. 220, 221.
198. Ibid., p. 189.
199. Ibid., p. 190.

and also as a means of fostering morality.²⁰⁰ Southern slavery was compared with ancient Jewish slavery in which the slaves were well treated and the intimate companionship between slave and master resulted in a society which was well ordered.²⁰¹ It was only when the intimate relationship between master and slave was severed, as was true in ancient Rome, that idleness came to master and ignorance and other evils to the slave.²⁰²

African slavery was introduced into America many centuries ago and, due to English slave traders, there was an ample number of Negroes in our country by 1776.²⁰³ The slave holders protested because more were being sent and asked that this trade be stopped. England, however, was reaping money from the sale of slaves and was reluctant to end it. Later cotton, rice, tobacco, and sugar became important crops in America and slaves were needed for the cultivation of these. Before long Europe and the North were being aided by the labor of the slaves.²⁰⁴ To set the Negroes free would then bring starvation to the laborers of Europe and the North. It would seem then to Mr. Fitzhugh that the hirelings of Europe were saved from starvation

200. Ibid., p. 47.
201. Ibid., p. 46.
202. Ibid.
203. Ibid., p. 298.
204. Ibid.

in a free world by the contributions of the Negro slave in the South.

What, it might be asked, were the advantages of a life lived in Southern slavery? Mr. Fitzhugh stressed there were many. One consisted of the care of the master which a slave enjoyed from cradle to grave in the essential elements of life such as food, shelter, and clothing. Certainly an important advantage was that the slave learned morality from the master. The house servants were in close contact with the family and it was largely through the former that information was given to those who labored in the fields.²⁰⁵ As a means of education slavery was good because it tended to separate the masses of ignorant and gave them access to persons of education.

Public opinion protected the slave for a cruel master was not well thought of in the community in which he lived.²⁰⁶ On the other hand, unfair treatment of a hired laborer was considered all right for to get as much as possible from a worker was considered good business. No wastefulness was found in slavery for the master controlled the management of all. Good police control existed in the form of society because the master was always careful of super-

205. Ibid., p. 45.

206. Ibid., p. 39.

207
vision. This was also true in ancient Rome where there was scarcely any criminal code in the days of slavery. This institution checked cruelty of husbands and parents. These, in reality, had more power than monarchs, but the master held in check any viciousness of a slave man to his family.
208

Mr. Fitzhugh felt that the mere dependence of a slave did much to develop the character of the master. The very dependence and weakness exerted a great control over the owner.
209 The slaves belonged to the family group and their care, from infancy until death, was a matter for the master's attention. An obedient slave's weakness and dependence was in reality a strength, and the mutual control of master over slave and slave over master resulted in an equality of rights.
210 No human law can beget love and affection and the author reminded one that, though slavery might be abolished, never could there be between capital and labor the affectionate relationship which existed between the slave and the master of the South.
211

Mr. Fitzhugh made a direct refutation of the statement of Moncure Conway's, an anti-slavery writer, that the

207. Ibid., p. 45.
208. Ibid., p. 98.
209. Ibid., p. 301.
210. Ibid., p. 302.
211. Ibid.

abolitionists were interested only in freedom of the slaves. Mr. Fitzhugh stated that not only did the abolitionists desire to free the slaves, but they wished also to change the existing relationship of husband and wife, parent and child, private ownership, and to separate the ownership of churches as they were then organized.²¹² It was their aim also to reorganize classes in the North. Mr. Fitzhugh wrote that he bore no ill will toward abolitionists and that he knew some personally. In spite of this, the author felt that Gerret Smith would abolish Christianity as it then existed.²¹³ Christian marriage was to be abolished because of the wife's vow to obey her husband.²¹⁴ William Lloyd Garrison believed that slavery was protected by the Bible and the Constitution so, therefore, he would do away with both.²¹⁵ He would ask for disunion and no ministers in order to get abolition of the slaves. He thought that success would come to the anti-slavery group only through the ruin of the American Government and churches.²¹⁶ As long as the government did not oppose slavery, then abolition was impossible.

Fitzhugh, however, reiterated that man was a creature

212. Ibid., p. 127.
213. Ibid., p. 133.
214. Ibid., p. 147.
215. Ibid., p. 142.
216. Ibid., p. 147.

who was not only law making but also law abiding. ²¹⁷ Like
the ants and bees, man was ruled by laws of life and labor.
Not only was this true but man was also a religious be-
ing. ²¹⁸ To take away these two safeguards would return man
not to nature but to a state of war in himself and with
others. ²¹⁹

The author wrote a letter to William Lloyd Garrison
and stated that the abolitionists were Secessionists or
Communists and that their aim was radical change in the
government. Fitzhugh believed that slavery was natural
and that it was indispensable. Garrison believed it to
be immoral and criminal. Fitzhugh asked Garrison to reply
to this letter and the author would print it. Failure to
reply would be construed as an admission of the truth of
Fitzhugh's statements. ²²⁰ Since no reply appeared in the
book, the reader was to believe Garrison made none.

The abolitionists were determined to destroy only
Negro slavery; no attempt was made to free the white
slaves of Europe and other lands. ²²¹ Perhaps prejudice
existed against Negro slavery because of the publicity
given to the horrors of the passage from Africa to America.

217. Ibid.; p. 150.

218. Ibid.

219. Ibid.

220. Ibid.; p. 154.

221. Ibid.; p. 296.

Certainly an aversion to the Negro existed in the North, and Fitzhugh felt that perhaps this aversion was responsible for the hatred of the abolitionists of the North to the institution with which the Negro was attached.²²²

The abolitionists wrote that labor produced all things and that capital was the whip that made it work.²²³ While admitting the failure of free society, the Abolitionist Party, by abduction, brought slaves into a system such as this.²²⁴

Because of their radical policies, Fitzhugh warned that the abolitionists were the enemy of both the North's and South's institutions, and he urged all to work for the suppression of this party.²²⁵

222. Ibid., p. 297.
223. Ibid., p. 135.
224. Ibid., p. 137.
225. Ibid., pp. 143, 144.

SUMMARY

It is worthy of note that both George Tucker and John Kennedy were the only two pro-slavery writers who viewed slavery as being wrong both morally and theoretically.²²⁶ Tucker's book was published in 1824 and Kennedy's, though written in the early years of the nineteenth century, was not published until 1832. Hence, one may consider these the views of the writers of the early 1800's. In no pro-slavery author, of this study, was this found to be the viewpoint after 1831 or 1832. From then on one was conscious of the author's efforts to uphold the institution and that was often done by basing it on the grounds of divine sanction. No doubt the debates in the Virginia Legislature of 1831-1832, which stemmed from the insurrection of Nat Turner, marked the beginning of the change in this viewpoint. Thomas R. Dew was certainly not in accord with this view expressed by Tucker and Pendleton. Beverly Tucker and George Fitzhugh, who followed, agreed with Dew. The last three named not only based their views on the fact that the Bible sanctioned slavery, but each went so far as to say that a divine plan was involved in the question of African slavery. To Beverly Tucker this had included

²²⁶. Tucker also undertook to point out evils of slavery as he saw them, and he can by no means be considered a writer who viewed only the constructive side of the institution.

the bringing of slaves to America, their becoming civilized and Christianized, and their returning to Africa to instruct those who were not to come.

These writers, Dew, Fitzhugh and Beverly Tucker, felt that Biblical sanction for slavery was found in the fact that Abraham had owned slaves, and Hebrew history was replete with reference to slavery both among the Hebrews themselves and those they captured.

A view of similarity which ran through the writings of most of the pro-slavery writers was that the whole viewpoint of the white man was wrong concerning the freeing of slaves. Here the white man tried to place himself in the position of the Negro which could not be done. The two races were so basically different that the white could not understand the feelings of the black. The slaves as such were happy in their positions which would not be true of the whites in such a place. In their positions the slaves were secure; they had existed in such a state for long periods and were content; their aspirations were not for freedom but to surpass each other in service to the master. If the people of the South erred in this view, then it was to be expected that those of the North did so to an even greater degree. Coupled with the fact that there was a basic difference in the races, there was also the fact that most Northern persons had, from experience, no understanding of the Negro character.

Most of these writers were in accord on the view that the slaves were well provided for by the masters. Not only did the workers receive a fair return for the labor they expended, but they were also offered security from the cradle to the grave. When illness struck they had no fear for the masters made all the necessary provisions. Fitzhugh was convinced that the slaves had far more security than had the free workers of the North or Europe.

The kind treatment given to the slaves by the owners was a dominant theme in writings of the authors. Examples were offered of the masters' visiting of the slave quarters for inspections, of the giving of gifts to the slaves, and of the kindness of the mistress to those under her care. If not from his own desire, then certainly from the desire for public respect a master was obliged to avoid harsh treatment. Any master who was known to be cruel could not command the respect of the community. Moreover, the fact that the slaves were dependent on the master awakened in him feelings of benevolence.

There was unanimity in the belief that the African found in slavery was a happy individual, happier certainly, said Fitzhugh and Kennedy, than the workers found in a free labor system. Much of this happiness was attributed to the sense of security which the slave possessed. Indications of this happiness were found in his songs, his dances,

and in participation in holiday festivities with the master's family. Another view which found expression in most of these pro-slavery writers was that which viewed as unwise any plan to deport the Negroes. To rid the country of such a large population would be ruinous especially since it was comprised of the laboring class. When, in addition, financial burdens would have to be borne by America, the deportation plan was even more impractical. Moreover, any plan to free the Negro and permit him to live in the United States was looked upon with disfavor. The very temperament of the Negro, together with his unpreparedness for liberation, foretold serious danger if he were emancipated and continued to dwell here.

Dew, Beverly Tucker, and Fitzhugh believed that the sin of originating slavery was due in no part to Virginia or America. The blame was put entirely on England for her insistence that the colonies buy slaves. When Virginia protested England refused to make a change in her policy. Tucker viewed the North's charge concerning slavery as worthy of comment. When that section engaged in the slave trade, no cry was made against slavery as an institution. When, however, the slave trade was prohibited, the North changed entirely its attitude about slavery as it existed in the South.

Most writers agreed that the Negroes were not ready for

emancipation. They were found to be immature and could not provide for themselves. Left alone, they fell into idleness which resulted in crime. Figures were given to cite the high crime rate found among free Negroes. In contrast, the rate among slaves was surprisingly low.

CHAPTER II
ANTI-SLAVERY WRITERS

The Kentuckian in New York or, the Adventure of Three Southerns, by William Caruthers, told of the travels of three young men of Virginia, two of whom visited the North and one who moved through the South. It was apparent that the author strove to create good will among people of the two regions for he pointed out that the people of the two sections were not too different. They merely needed to understand one another. He felt the peoples should learn more about each other and this was best done through travel.²²⁷ This would be a means by which prejudices would be broken down.²²⁸

This study was chiefly concerned with the travels of the person who visited the South and his reactions to the slavery issue as he saw it.

The principal objection or evil of Southern slavery²²⁹ was the effect it had on the poor whites of the region. These people were among the most wretched and miserable to be found anywhere. They lived in pine log cabins and were pale and undernourished. Much sickness was evident

227. William A. Caruthers, The Kentuckian in New York or, the Adventure of Three Southerns (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1834), Vol. I, p. 181.

228. Ibid.

229. Ibid., p. 76.

in the adults as well as in the children.²³⁰

Worse, perhaps, than these physical evils were those of an economic and intellectual nature. The land was neglected and what crops were grown were poor indeed. A few cattle, goats, and sheep comprised the livestock. Debts had accumulated and there was no way to pay these.²³¹ The intellectual growth of this class was degraded and the whole outlook on life was a sad and morbid one.²³² These people looked upon labor as degrading, and this tended to make the poor even poorer.

Slavery did away with the need for an industrious middle class of people for the places of labor were filled by African slaves. This prohibited the growth of industry and also checked any growth in the intelligence and energy of the poorer white class.²³³ Because of slavery too great a difference existed between the classes of whites, and Mr. Caruthers felt that this gulf could never be bridged until this system of servitude was abolished.²³⁴

Mr. Caruthers contrasted the dwellings of poor whites with a section composed of Moravians in North Carolina. Here, of course, no slaves were found, and the conditions

230. Ibid., p. 79.
231. Ibid.
232. Ibid., p. 78.
233. Ibid.
234. Ibid., p. 77.

of the people were found to be exceptionally good. The people engaged in all kinds of laborious work and were found to be in good physical condition. This settlement proved that white people could work in the climate of the South.²³⁵ This colony led one to believe that like conditions could prevail among non-slave holding people of the South if slavery were not in existence.

One liability which slavery produced in South Carolina was that of the poor relationship between master and slave. One master sometimes owned hundreds of slaves and did not know these by name or by sight. The only way by which he knew of their sicknesses or deaths was through the reports of the overseers. In other words, these Negroes were as mere possessions of the master as were his sheep and cattle. The whole relationship was an impersonal one.²³⁶ Here the slaves were not attached to the owner and his family and did not participate in the kind, personal relationship of the master as did most slaves of Virginia.

Another evil of slavery which fell upon the slaves was the power of black overseers. It was true that white ones were used, but, where many slaves were found, black ones were selected by the white ones to assist. These black ones were cruel and hard masters who drove the slaves

235. Ibid., p. 80.
236. Ibid., p. 115.

with whips and exacted a great amount of work. ²³⁷ No regard was given for age or physical condition and all were expected to give the same equivalent of labor. The female slaves were forced to work hard and their labor was expected to be that of the males. ²³⁸ Helpless children were left in the care of aged women while the parents toiled. ²³⁹

The food given to slaves was not proportioned justly. Once a week the provisions were distributed which consisted of one peck of corn or three pecks of sweet potatoes for each. The corn was ground in the cabins by a hand device made by the slaves. No meat was given except at Christmas. ²⁴⁰ Those who were physically strong enough to complete their work before the end of the day were permitted to cultivate patches of land. Needless to say, these slaves had more in the way of food supplies than those who were not as physically fit.

Mr. Caruthers viewed the lot of the slaves owned by the small slaveholders as a miserable one. ²⁴¹ This owner was, as a rule, an ignorant, hard, and cruel man. For his slaves life must have been a wretched one. The more fortune such a man obtained usually had the effect of making

237. Ibid., p. 116.
238. Ibid.
239. Ibid., p. 118.
240. Ibid., p. 116.
241. Ibid., p. 119.

him more cruel.

Writing in 1834, Caruthers viewed slavery as a disease, and he was aware of the tension which was beginning to mount between slave states and free states.²⁴² It was his hope that a cure would be found before the two sections would be torn apart by war. Yet the emancipation of the Negro would prove dangerous to life and property in the South and to set the slaves free among the whites would be disastrous.²⁴³ Caruthers did not look favorably upon those of the North who talked glibly about emancipation. He said they viewed the problem as spectators who stood at a distance but who would not come to the actual scenes and study the problem. Had they done so, they would have been able to see all forms of tyranny resulting from their plan of liberation.²⁴⁴

MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY

Moncure Daniel Conway, one of Virginia's anti-slavery writers, was born in Falmouth, Virginia, and made it his home for twenty three years.²⁴⁵ In the introduction to his book, Testimonies Concerning Slavery, he stated that he did not pretend to give a complete picture of the institution

242. Ibid., p. 165.

243. Ibid., II, p. 71.

244. Ibid., p. 72.

245. Moncure Daniel Conway, Testimonies Concerning Slavery (London: Chapman and Hall, 1865), p. vi.

of slavery as he had never visited the plantations of the deep South. What he endeavored to do was to give a picture of slavery in the community where he had spent his early life.²⁴⁶ This was a section in northern Virginia where slavery was found in its mildest form and had been less studied and regarded than in other sections of the South.²⁴⁷ It was Conway's belief that people who loved liberty could help America by giving keen criticism, but he urged those who did so to use the theme of liberty and not that of slavery.²⁴⁸

At the age of fifteen, Conway was sent to Dickinson College in Pennsylvania. After graduation he returned to Virginia bringing with him an anti-Northern feeling.²⁴⁹ Shortly thereafter he began to make a study of slavery. He felt sure that he would have accepted the anti-slavery view had he not come under the influence of a person whose opinions Conway valued.²⁵⁰ This person had given time to a study of the slavery question and had come to the belief that Negroes were not men in the sense that the word was used in the Declaration of Independence. To him the Negro race was one of inferiority, and Conway, at length,

246. Ibid.
247. Ibid.
248. Ibid., p. vii.
249. Ibid., p. 27.
250. Ibid.

accepted it too.²⁵¹ Conway then accepted a position in Warrenton, Virginia. It was here that he saw the worst examples of suffering and abuse in the institution of slavery. While he had accepted the view that Negroes were less than men, yet he could not bear to see the brutal treatment they received. He was told this happened in all society and that the way to improve matters was to elevate the white race by education.²⁵² Wishing to do something of a positive nature, Conway began an intensive study of the establishment of free schools.²⁵³ When this was complete, Conway was ready to place it before a convention hold in 1850 which was to revise Virginia's laws.²⁵⁴ First he brought it to the attention of J. M. Mason and R. M. T. Hunter who were senators of Virginia. Mason was opposed to the education of the masses.²⁵⁵ Conway, in spite of this, continued his work and published a pamphlet entitled Free Schools in Virginia. This was circulated among people of the state and also at the State Convention of 1850.²⁵⁶ The pamphlet was attacked by prominent men who said the poor must be kept ignorant. If given an education, the whole South would be revolutionized. Conway felt the poor

251. Ibid., p. 29.
252. Ibid., p. 31.
253. Ibid.
254. Ibid.
255. Ibid., p. 32.
256. Ibid., p. 33.

were being deliberately kept ignorant, and he decided to espouse their cause. It was his decision to become a Methodist minister because that denomination was most prominent among the middle and lower classes of Virginia. Hence it was that he relinquished the study of law for that of the ministry.²⁵⁷

What followed next was to have much influence on Conway and led him from his desire to educate the masses to becoming an abolitionist. As a Methodist, Conway had southern Maryland and northern Virginia under his supervision.²⁵⁸

As he made his rounds he was struck by a Quaker settlement which he passed. There, at Sandy Springs, were fine farms, good homes, and a cheerful neighborhood. The Negroes there were the only happy ones Conway had ever seen.²⁵⁹

Being impressed, he returned and visited the meeting house where he met the leader of the Quaker group. Again and again Conway visited this settlement and wondered at its prosperity. He was told the Quakers saw that laborers received just wages for their work and that no slave had been on the land of Sandy Spring. These were the first words Conway heard against slavery and well did he ponder them.²⁶⁰

257. Ibid., p. 34.
258. Ibid., p. 36.
259. Ibid., p. 37.
260. Ibid., p. 38.

slavery, and he went home to tell of his changed views. Resigning his position in the Methodist Church, he entered Divinity College at Cambridge, Massachusetts. ²⁶¹

After graduation he returned to Virginia to find no welcome there. Friends of former years left him and those related to him despised him because he had become affiliated with the abolitionists. ²⁶² At length he was told to leave his state forever. Accepting a call from a church in Washington, Conway's stay there was short because of his anti-slavery views. ²⁶³ Being ostracized by those he loved and had served did not deter him but rather urged him on in his desire to wipe out slavery in America. The very fact that Virginia had banished those who opposed slavery was to him a confession of mistrust. Had the defenders of slavery felt strong there would have been no need for such measures. ²⁶⁴

In Falmouth there were many Negroes; some were slaves and some were free. The author's parents were the owners of from fifty to sixty slaves and relatives also were slave holders. ²⁶⁵ The kind treatment of their slaves by his parents contrasted with the treatment of other slave owners.

261. Ibid., p. 43.
262. Ibid., p. 45.
263. Ibid.
264. Ibid., p. 47.
265. Ibid., p. 1.

This contrast caused Conway to question this institution of labor. He saw that the fatherly relationship which many said existed between masters and slaves was, in many cases, not present at all. ²⁶⁶ To get work from such laborers was difficult because they knew the curse of slavery and that no rewards came from their labor. ²⁶⁷

Conway saw the slaves not as merry and happy creatures. Never had he seen one dance. They were people of a melancholy disposition, and the only enthusiasm they displayed was for religion or funerals. ²⁶⁸

Some slaves gave evidence of the possession of much intelligence and wit. To Conway one of the sad plights of slavery was exhibited in the person of a young Negro lad. This boy had protected Conway and his brother when they were children and the three were close companions. This slave was thirsty for knowledge, but this was denied to him by the laws of Virginia. ²⁶⁹ The most cruel part of this companionship came, as it invariably came in all slave-holding families, when the black companion was no longer permitted to associate with the white ones. Before this the slave was on a democratic footing, but suddenly this was removed. ²⁷⁰ This brought to a slave the first

266. Ibid., p. 2.
267. Ibid., p. 3.
268. Ibid., p. 4.
269. Ibid., p. 5.
270. Ibid.

bitter realization of his unequal status and took from him comfort. The companion of the Conway boys now became very bitter and unruly and, as a result of this, he was sent to the deep South.²⁷¹ The author viewed this as an example of the great waste of human potentialities. The Negro could have become a valuable member of society, but the mind was robbed of that which it desired and loss was the result.²⁷² This case was repeated in numerous cases in slave holding families.

Conway said it was a common belief that because of a man's interest in his slaves they would be well treated. This was not always true.²⁷³ As all animals needed societies for protection, so too did the slaves. Often a man sacrificed his animals in fits of anger and lust, and the slaves proved to be no exception. It was true that men of some years of age protected their slaves as their money; it was true also that many young and rash masters did not have this interest and the slaves thereby suffered. Kindness to the Negro was an exception rather than the rule. The African was oft times sulky and defiant and this served to anger the master.²⁷⁴ At such times a slave was killed to show the other Negroes the power of the master. This was

271. Ibid., p. 6.
272. Ibid., p. 7.
273. Ibid., p. 9.
274. Ibid., p. 10.

sometimes the only method by which the blacks could be held in check.

Pointing out that it was the nature of the Anglo-Saxon to be cruel to those who were subordinate to him unless he was restrained, the author said that he had seen gentlemen of the South transferred into raging animals when trouble developed with the slaves.²⁷⁵ The whip was the instrument of punishment most used, and this caused the slaves to bear scars.

The law was always on the side of the cruel master, and this was harmful to the community. According to the law the slave was always wrong, and he could never testify against his owner.²⁷⁶ Conway knew an owner of slaves who was known to have killed a slave in full sight of the other hands. An inquest was never held. When this same man took four slave women to court on the charge of poisoning him, no evidence could be found, and the court refused to give the death sentence.²⁷⁷ When this was done, in the sight of many spectators, the master chained the women to his cart and beat them unmercifully on the way home.²⁷⁸ There may have been some who disliked such scenes, but they made no outcry because the law protected the master. In a

275. Ibid., p. 11.
276. Ibid.
277. Ibid., p. 12.
278. Ibid.

few years the same man was elected to a public office.

Whipping was the form of punishment most frequently meted out to the slaves. They were lashed by the overseer or by someone under his authority. A room for the whippings was found on nearly all plantations. The slaves did not attempt to resist punishment because they knew that by a mere act of resistance they could lose their lives. ²⁸⁰

In towns and villages there was a certain person who made his living by whipping slaves for the master. By a mere note the slave was dispatched to this person for a specified number of lashes. In Falmouth for some years ²⁸¹ the lashing was done by a Captain Pickett. He was described by Conway as being grim and hard looking; seldom was he known to have talked. His own children left him when they reached maturity, so he was left alone. ²⁸² Children were not permitted to loiter near Pickett's, but they had peep holes through which they watched the flog men at work. Nearly always there was a victim and as the children watched they saw the poor frightened creatures, heard the whip as it fell on the black bodies, and heard too the sobs and cries of the victims. ²⁸³ Captain Pickett kept

279. Ibid., p. 13.
280. Ibid., p. 15.
281. Ibid.
282. Ibid., p. 16.
283. Ibid.

accounts with many families in Falmouth. When visitors from the North wrote of the good treatment given to the slaves they had no idea that such a place as Captain Pickett's existed. Such a place, however, was known to the slaves and to the boys. Captain Pickett grew to despise his work even though he made a good living, and, at length, he hanged himself close by the post where so many humans had suffered torture.²⁸⁴

Conway viewed the "slave harvest" as another horrible cruelty of slavery. At that time buyers came to the plantations to purchase the surplus slaves. Then came the sad plight of those torn from their families to be sent away, sometimes to the far South. At times such as this the children would dart under beds and into closets to try to hide. Eventually they were dragged forth and priced. Some slaves would be permitted to remain longer in order to be full grown; others were taken away.²⁸⁵ Conway viewed it as an agonizing scene to witness the terror in the slave as the dealer passed on with his cargo of human freight.

Concerning the slave codes, Conway wrote that Virginia had revised these in 1848,²⁸⁶ and they were much more severe than the former ones. One law punished any

284. Ibid., p. 17.
285. Ibid., p. 21.
286. Ibid., p. 48.

Negro who dared resist a white man regardless of what the cause might be. Another law specifically stated that no Negro could testify in a court against a white man. In order to maintain discipline it was necessary to require that no resistance be given by a Negro. If this had not been done chaos would have resulted.²⁸⁷

Because education tended to make the Negro dissatisfied with slavery, it was decided not to give an education to the slaves. Conway thought this unjust, so he and Samuel Janney tried to have the law repealed which forbade one to teach the Negroes to read.²⁸⁸ These two men received a letter stating that a petition to repeal the law could not be read.²⁸⁹

It sometimes happened that slaves were defrauded of their freedom even when the master granted his Negroes liberation upon his death. A Mrs. Coalter, who had lived near Falmouth, wrote in her will that her slaves should be freed upon her death. Her lawyer persuaded her to change the clause to read that those who chose freedom could have it. Those who did not could choose their owner

²⁸⁷. Ibid.

²⁸⁸. Moncure D. Conway, Autobiography--Memories and Experiences of Moncure D. Conway (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1914), Vol. I, p. 225.

²⁸⁹. Samuel M. Janney was also an anti-slavery writer. In his autobiography he stated that he wrote several articles on slavery which were printed in The Alexandria Gazette in 1827.

from Mrs. Coalter's relatives. When she died her heir brought the case to court and said since slaves were chattels they could not choose their conditions.²⁹⁰ The lower courts decided in favor of the heir and the Supreme Court of Virginia upheld the decision.²⁹¹

Conway did not subscribe to the view of some that the mind of the Negro was inferior to that of the white man. To prove his point he cited that some Negroes had made notable intellectual achievements. Benjamin Banneker, of Maryland, had one of the most scientific minds of the South and was recognized by Jefferson for this mental ability. Banneker and five others were noted for their mental achievements.²⁹² Negroes were taught with ease up to the age of twelve or fourteen when it was noticed they were slow to grasp. Conway had taught white children and had observed these same periods of mental alertness and slowness.²⁹³ He perceived that the Negroes of the South were weaker in the way of understanding but had strength of imagination and expression.²⁹⁴ An exquisite mosaic floor at Monticello was planned and laid by a Negro slave who had had no instruction in this type of work.²⁹⁵ It was the author's belief

290. Conway, Testimonies, op. cit., p. 55.

291. Ibid.

292. Ibid., p. 60.

293. Ibid., p. 66.

294. Ibid., p. 71.

295. Ibid., p. 72.

that no one race of people possessed all the marks of superiority. In one race certain outstanding qualities would prevail and in other races other aspects would be equally as outstanding. It was in such a manner that the good qualities of the human race were distributed.²⁹⁶

Europeans were prone to believe that their energy and intellect were the all-important qualities. Conway reminded them that other qualities such as goodness, kindness, and affection helped to make the world better. He reminded the European too that his energy, which was responsible for his settlements in many places, was considered by some to be robbery and not conquest as the European chose to term it. This energy had caused the oppression of others and had caused the white man to be an oppressor for as long a period as African slavery had existed.²⁹⁷

Conway viewed the Negro as the possessor of some good qualities. Chief among these was his custom of performing more work than specified in a contract, his remembrance of those who had befriended him, and his spirit of unselfishness. He had, too, a sense of honor and upon this the whites had relied when they left their children in the slave's care.²⁹⁸ The Negro was seldom known to have betrayed

296. Ibid., p. 73.
297. Ibid., p. 74.
298. Ibid., p. 71.

secrets in spite of the fact that he know many because of his intimate contact with the family. Conway wrote of one slave in his family who frequently left the plantation to visit his ill wife in Baltimore. Always he returned and upon his arrival gave back the money he had not used on the trip.
299

Conway had much praise for the abolitionists who had struggled for thirty years to gain freedom for the slaves. These would-be liberators saw the poor Negro as the one who was referred to in the story of the Good Samaritan and hence the abolitionist movement began as a religious one.
300 The slave states, by their wealth, yielded a great influence on the ministers and newspapers, and against this wealth the abolitionists were forced to fight.
301

Conway saw their fight as one for the right of a man to be free in his person. That they fought for a race not their own was commended by the author. In order to feel the humiliations of the slave, the abolitionists gave up voting rights, honor, and political privileges.
302 No form of violence was decreed by them in carrying out their objectives.

The author felt the efforts of William Lloyd Garrison

299. Ibid.
 300. Ibid., p. 78.
 301. Ibid., p. 79.
 302. Ibid.

were commendable. He was seen as a person who protested against the selling of slaves in Baltimore because it was not in accord with the principles of Christianity. Because he wrote of this, he was arrested, fined, and accused of libel.³⁰³

After this was settled Garrison went to the North where he had much difficulty in getting a place where he could express his views to the people. When at length he did, he was forced to move to the Boston Commons to accomodate the numbers who came.³⁰⁴

Garrison then began the printing of The Liberator, and Conway wrote that he saw the first copy of this publication.³⁰⁵ This newspaper gradually became influential and its circulation increased.

Conway looked with favor, too, upon the efforts made by Wendell Phillips who became a co-worker of Garrison's. Phillips fought against the institution of slavery, and, in spite of the pleas from friends to change, he always remained an ardent abolitionist.³⁰⁶

While the followers of Garrison were not involved in any political party, Conway felt that it was due to their efforts in behalf of slavery that the Republican Party which opposed the institution of slavery was formed.³⁰⁷

303. Ibid.
304. Ibid., p. 82.
305. Ibid.
306. Ibid., p. 83.
307. Ibid., p. 84.

Garrison's followers believed the states should be permitted to leave the Union, and they were jubilant when the South attacked Fort Sumter and war eventually came.³⁰⁸

Throughout the conflict the abolitionists never lost sight of their aim to free the slaves. Whenever the administration proceeded in a manner contrary to this, the anti-slavery group was not slow to register disapproval.³⁰⁹ From the beginning to the end of the strife, the abolitionists recognized this war as a struggle between freedom and slavery.

Contrasting the treatment of the Negro in the North with that of the South, Conway wrote that in the South he was permitted no education and that his family life had no protection. The women were forced to bear children for the sales to the slave dealer and many women escaped because of the brutal treatment they received.³¹⁰ On the other hand, the Negro in the North was given a home of comfort and his children were permitted to attend the public schools.³¹¹ While it was true that the Negroes were treated as a caste, Conway attributed this to the fact that they had been slaves in the South and this had placed

308. Ibid., p. 86.
309. Ibid., p. 88.
310. Ibid., p. 98.
311. Ibid., p. 99.

a mark of disgrace on them. Some hostility toward the Negro by the Irish was noted. This had been placed there by Southern agents who caused the Irish workers to think their jobs would be taken by the Africans.³¹²

Conway disproved the theory that the slaves wished to belong to their masters. His father had believed this to be true, but when McDowell came to Fredericksburg and raised the Union flag, all the Conway servants had asked for their liberty.³¹³ Among these were the old and aged ones who had the necessities of life provided for them, the male slave who had always returned from his visits to his ill wife in Baltimore, and those who had been well cared for by Conway's father.³¹⁴ This was indeed proof that the desire to be free was stronger than the desire to live in security. When these Negroes finally reached the North, after passing through many difficulties, they worked and no complaint was made of any idleness on their part. Some wished to repay Conway for the money he had spent to help them reach a haven of freedom. With happy homes, and with education provided for their children, there was much in the future for the Negro's happiness and progress.³¹⁵

312. Ibid., p. 100.
313. Ibid., p. 104.
314. Ibid., p. 105.
315. Ibid., p. 114.

Conway felt that one of the worst blights of slavery was that it was responsible for the development of the poor white class in the South. These people were forced to live a squalid life, devoid of religion and morals, possessing little or no land of their own, and believing that labor was degrading. Despised by the Negro, who called them "poor white trash" and hating the Negro in turn, these poor unfortunates had to make a living which was much more wretched than the poor who lived in large cities of Europe or the north.³¹⁶ Only the war would help these poor of the South. The military discipline would make them a good working class, and it was only a return to slavery that could bring them back to lives of degradation.³¹⁷ As captives of the North, persons of this class would see the good working conditions of the laboring classes, and then slavery,³¹⁸ with all its evils, would be unmasked to them.

That the abolition of slavery would bring benefits to all classes of society in the South was the belief of Moncure Conway. To the planter it would bring much more produce from his land which would be cultivated by free labor; to the poor whites it would bring education and a restoration of the dignity of work; to the Negro it would bring the freedom of his person.³¹⁹

316. Ibid., p. 122.

317. Ibid., p. 123.

318. Ibid.

319. Ibid., p. 125.

SUMMARY (ANTI)

The chief point of similarity among the anti-slavery writers was concerned not so much with the effects of slavery on the Negro as with the ill effect it produced on the white man. The institution of slavery had caused the status of the poor whites in the South to be a deplorable one; and the authors were concerned with the economic, physical, and intellectual conditions of the members of this class. Believing that labor was degrading, these people were kept from making any worthwhile contributions to society. Potentialities, however, were there and, with training, the people could be made valuable members of the South's family. It was felt that slavery also caused too great a gulf between the whites of the South thus preventing a blending of the classes as was found in the North. The presence of slaves was the factor which kept out of the South an energetic middle class which was essential to the prosperity and welfare of any state.

These writers viewed the lot of the slave as an unhappy one. His venture into life among strangers was the beginning of a life of sorrow. Once here, he was forced to work for long hours, oft times at the lash of a whip. The thoughts of being sold and torn from those to whom he had become attached gave him torture. At times his overseer was a black man, and in him was found cruelty greater

than in a white man. In the far South there was no close association with the master who owned hundreds of slaves, so the slave felt no one had a personal interest in him. So full of sorrow was life for some that they resorted to suicide rather than to continue a life which gave no hope of a brighter future.

Writings of this anti-slavery group show that the slave was not well treated. The Negro's food was inadequate and poor and all slaves were compelled to work long hours. No provision was made for those who were aged or physically unfit, and they were expected to do the same labor as those who were in good condition. Conway cited the horrors of the punishment of whipping. These were given either by owners or by one employed to punish. Certainly the whip figured prominently as an instrument of torture in the writings of Conway and Caruthers. Kindness, said Conway, was the exception rather than rule.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

As one read through the writings of the authors mentioned in this study, from 1824 to 1865, there was the realization that the passage of time with the pressure of events left its mark on both the pro-slavery and anti-slavery writers.

In the writings of the 1820's there was the impression that the question of slavery, while under discussion, was not yet a serious issue. The early pro-slavery writers, if indeed they may be termed such, saw not only the advantages but also the disadvantages of the institution to both races. George Tucker and John P. Kennedy pointed out that slavery was wrong from a moral standpoint. Both felt that emancipation would come. They warned, however, that this would be a serious problem and was one best entrusted to the masters themselves.

In the 1830's a change took place. The pro-slavery writers were moving more to the defensive side. The positive views of the earlier writers were crystallizing into decided views and the negative ones, such as the moral and theoretical rights, were being reversed. Biblical references were used to prove that slavery was compatible with Christianity. The earlier views concerning emancipation were changing also. Liberation was viewed as being

impractical and dangerous whether the plan was to liberate and deport the Negro or to emancipate him and make him a resident of the United States.

By the late 1850's the view was wholly defensive. Fitzhugh's views, which favored the retention of slavery, were the result of comparing that labor with free labor. It would seem he was answering the Northern critics by asking them to look into conditions in their own house. He was asking the abolitionists why they wished to free the African when free society would offer less than slavery. Fitzhugh reminded the British critics of slavery to look at their own free labor system with its child labor, poverty, and ignorance.

In the anti-slavery writers the views became more pronounced against slavery as the years passed on. Caruthers, who wrote in 1834, pointed out that the slaves in Virginia were fairly well treated; it was with the large slave holders of South Carolina that slavery was not a benevolent institution. This author was impatient with those of the North who advocated speedy liberation, and he warned them that only trouble would come if such a course were adopted. Conway, whose book was published in 1865, did not use this reasoning and led one to believe the Negro, given an education, would become a worthwhile citizen. Conway stressed the harsh and unjust treatment given to the slaves in the

homes and in the courts and he told of the great desire of the Negro to be freed from the yoke of slavery.

The chief differences between the writers of the pro-slavery and anti-slavery authors were found in their views concerning:

- (1) the treatment given to the slaves by the masters
- (2) the relative happiness of the Negroes in slavery
- (3) the provisions made by the master for the Negro's welfare.

Other differences of interest were found in the views concerning:

- (1) the relative worth of the abolitionists' aims
- (2) the question of free labor in the South
- (3) William Lloyd Garrison's efforts in America
- (4) the ability of the Negro to care for and govern himself.

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