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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE
SOUTHERN LITERARY MESSENGER

1834 - 1864

James E. King.

History

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at Richmond, Va., 1834-1864.

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The Pro-Slavery Argument, As Maintained by the Most Distinguished
Writers of the Southern States: Containing the Several
Essays; on the Subject, of Chancellor Harper, Governor
Hammond, Dr. Simms, and Professor Dew. Lippincott, Grambo
and Co., Philadelphia, 1853.

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Wherein is set up the purposes of this paper and something of the organization and history of the Southern Literary Messenger, is told.

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COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY :

Wherein from almost negative evidence the author reaches a positive conclusion.

INTRODUCTION

Change is the universal constant of nature. The fluctuations of society from one extreme to another, the growth of civilizations from the ruins of barbarism, the transfer of enthusiasm from radicalism to conservatism, all of these phenomena have been too much in evidence in the history of the world for us to fail to see that the only perpetual thread of the fabric is that of variation.

From 1774 to 1824 Virginia played the most conspicuous role in creating and directing a union of democratic states. In 1861 there is the anomaly of the Old Dominion occupying the stellar position in an attempt to disrupt the confederation which was her handi-work. No amount of explanation as to economic interests, slavery, abolitionism or frustration seems in the last analysis, adequate in understanding this great transition. When reasonable arguments are exhausted and there is yet no central solution to the problem, there remains only the catholic element of change as a conclusion.

No historian, however, would accept such a solution. It is an escape from, an excuse for, the difficulty attendant to a logical theory. Therefore, the almost universal answer is given as "Slavery". It is useless to contend that slavery was not the motivating factor in secession; at least it is the most persistent.

In this story it would be pointless to repeat the already familiar drama of the political controversy of slavery.

Every history of the Republic has told it and I could add nothing original or unknown. I shall be content only to give a view of the Advancement of slavery theory in the South.

The sum total purpose of this paper is meant to be a revelation of the social and economic implications of The Southern Literary Messenger. On examination, I soon discovered that the Messenger held astonishingly true to its literary function and that there was little of social, economic significance save the literature as depicting a forgotten culture and slavery as an issue more or less reluctantly admitted into its pages due to the pressure of its importance. The literary aspect of the Messenger has, of course, been well covered in other works and I am left primarily with slavery.

It is possibly wise to digress here and take a short look into the Messenger itself. By understanding its organization and administration, its literary character and reputation, we get some perspective of the basis for further observations in this paper.

"Gentlemen who may feel desirous to contribute to the literary reputation of the State, are respectfully requested to favor us with communications on literary and scientific subjects. The postage will be cheerfully paid by the Proprietor."(1)

With this notice ~~in~~ in the Daily National Intelligencer of Washington the announcement of the Southern Literary Messenger was made two and a half months
(2)
before its publication.

(1) Jackson, D.K., The Contributions to the Southern Litt. Mess. p.xii.
(2) Minor, B.B., The Southern Litt. Mess., p.13.

Here is seen the purpose of the venture, namely: to raise the literary reputation of the State" and to create a respect for southern literature and scientific prowess. The Messenger at ^{ts} ~~ist~~ zenith commanded an attention which has been enjoyed by no sectional publication of the South before or since. It was her reflection in the full glory of anti-bellum culture.

Something of its eminent nature may be appreciated by glancing at but a fragmentary list of illustrious contributors. Many of them you will readily recall as great scholars, poets, statesmen and essayists whose ability has perpetuated their name. Longfellow, Thomas B. Read, J. Q. Adams, John Marshall, N. B. Tucker, Dr. W. G. Simms, William Wirt, Lucian Minor, Thomas R. Dew, John Randolph, Henry Lee, Conway Robinson, Thomas W. Gilmer, John Tyler, Abel P. Upshur, Henry Thompson, John Esten Cooke, John C. Calhoun, Henry H. Timrod, Mrs. Tyler, Thos. B. Holcombe, Henry A. Wise, Sidney Lanier, Edmund Ruffin, Charles Cambell.

To the ordinary person the Messenger is indelibly associated with Poe. It must be noted, however, that this famous figure played a much less prominent part than is usually believed in the affairs of the Messenger. In December 1835 with the passage in the editorial section announcing that: "The intellectual department is now under the conduct of the proprietor, assisted by a gentleman of distinguished literary talents.", Poe began his association with T. W. White as an assistant editor. This association lasted until January 1837,

(3) Ibid., pp. 237-244.

(4) Ibid., p. 35.

(5)

a period shortly over a year. Among well over a hundred contributions Poe lent fame to the magazine by such stories as Bernedice, Morella, Lionizing, M.S. Found in a Bottle, Metzengerstein, and such famous poems as "Israfel", "To Helen", "Irene", and the "Raven."⁽⁶⁾

Other editors of the Messenger were T.W.White who was editor and proprietor from 1834 to 1843. Working with him at various times were Judge Henry St. George Tucker, James E.Heath, and Matthew Fontaine Maury.⁽⁷⁾ From 1843 to 1847 Benjamin Blake Minor was editor.⁽⁸⁾ In 1847 John R. Thompson bought the magazine and remained in control for thirteen years until 1860.⁽⁹⁾ Under his supervision the Messenger probably reached its height. From 1860 to its demise in 1864, two successive editors, Dr. G.W.Bagley and F.H.Alfriend were tied to its declining fortunes.⁽¹⁰⁾

(5) Ibid., p.35.

(6) Op.Cit., Jackson, et passim.

(7) Op.Cit., Minor, pp.13-70.

(8) Ibid., p.103.

(9) Ibid., p.160.

(10) Ibid., pp.209-231.

SLAVERY

Through its thirty years of existence in excess of (11)
thirty articles appear in the Messenger which treat of slavery.
This means scarcely more than an average of one per year. On
agriculture there is no exclusive article in these years. On
industry, two; on commerce, two, all of which seems to
accentuate the almost purely literary nature of the publication. (12)
It also serves to indicate how lively the slavery consider-
ation must have been to force thirty essays on the subject
into the sacred precincts of a literary memorial, whereas
agriculture merited in the eyes of the editor only a few
poems and industry four reviews. These slavery essays are
uniformly voluminous and uniformly featured by the editor.
Dignified with prefacing editorial recommendations in almost
every case, they may be assumed to simulate closely the attitude
of the Messenger management and, considering the representative
nature of the magazine, I believe also of the South.

Virginians have an almost instinctive interest in
Massachusetts. It is an interest based on competitive pride,
admiration and a modicum of envy. If we are proud of anything
we want Massachusetts to know of it; if we are ashamed, we are most
sensitive to her criticism. Thus it ~~is~~ is natural to find the
Messenger interested enough in Massachusetts' attitude to print
in 1834 the observations of a Virginian in a "Letter From New
England" on the northern reaction to the new abolitionist

(11) The Southern Literary Messenger, et passim.

(12) Ibid.

controversy. Of more significance, however, is the apparent disrepute which attended the name of abolitionism in 1834 and the picture of smug complacency which we see:

(13)

"Abolition, if not dead here, is in a state too desperately feeble to give us an hours' uneasiness. Of the many intelligent men with whom I have conversed on this subject in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut, there is but a single one who does not reprobate the views of Messrs. Tappan, Cox, Garrison and Co. as suggestions of the wildest, most pernicious fanaticism. ---Not only do persons I have talked with, themselves reprobate interference with that painfully delicate and peculiar concern of the South: they testify to the almost entire unanimity of their acquaintance, in the same sentiment. And such multiplied and decisive proofs have I, of the sound state of the public mind on that subject, as leave me not a doubt, that nine-tenths of the votes, and ninety-nine hundredths of the intellect of the country, are for letting us wholly alone. You have little idea of the contempt in which Garrison, and his will-o-the-wisp, the Liberator, are held here. I have heard him spoken of as a "miserable fanatic" and a "contemptible poor creature", in companies so numerous and mixed, as to demonstrate -none gainsaying it- that the speakers but expressed the public thought.----said a Cambridge Professor to me---In two years, abolitionism will be as prostrate as anti-masonry is now.

At Worcester, last year, an apostle of abolition from "some where away down east", delivered a lecture in the Baptist Church, against slavery; depicting its wrongs and evils, and insisting on its extirpation. He was heard patiently; but when he closed, the pastor of the church arose, and, to the satisfaction of a numerous audience, completely answered every argument; vindicated the southern slaveholders from all willful injustice in being such; shewed the impracticability of any but the most cautiously gradual emancipation, and the madness of attempting even that, by officious intermeddling from the non-slaveholding states. Our apostle wanted to lecture again the next day; but the excitement against his doctrine had grown so strong, that he was refused a further hearing, and admonished, by some of the leading citizens, that if he remained longer, he was in danger of tar and feathers.

---, it is a matter which concerns us alone; and as to which, we are so sensitively jealous of extraneous interposition, that every agitation of the subject in other states is calculated to weaken our attachment to them, and bind faster the chains of slavery."

In January 1835 the editor, T.W.White, writes the first of
(14)
a series of essays on pro-slavery thought. These seem to have
received their great inspiration from Dew's Pro-Slavery Argument.
So widely read and revered was this pamphlet in the South after
1832 that it became something of a custom to dismiss an argu-
ment by simply referring to it. Dew was the Oracle of pro-
slavery philosophy against whose pronouncements there was no
recourse in logic. This attitude towards him was character-
istic of all later slavery exponents. It is not extraordinary
therefore, to find White in his essay attacking Blackstone's
assertion that "Slavery cannot originate in compact because the
transaction excludes the idea of an equivalent", by referring
the reader to the "---masterly essay of Professor Dew, who has
so clearly exposed it as to leave me nothing to add." (14)

Dew's exposition argued that Blackstone was thinking
of those nations where man can by his own labour gain a com-
fortable living. In such a country there would be no equi-
valent to the price of liberty. But in barbaric or densely
populated regions of the earth where men cannot always indi-
vidually earn a living, there, he argues/are:
there

"---many instances in which liberty might have an
equivalent. Who for a moment can doubt but that
the abundant daily supplies of subsistence, con-
sisting of wholesome meat, bread, and frequently
vegetables and refreshing drinks besides, which
are furnished to our slaves, are more than equi-
valent for the liberty of the Chinese laborer, who
exhausts himself with hard labor-feeds on his scanty
and unseasoned rice - tastes no wholesome meat
from the beginning to the end of the toilsome
year- sees his family frequently perishing before
his eyes,---fishes up with eagerness the vilest
garbage from the canal or river, and voraciously
devours meat which with us, would be left to be
fed on by the vultures of the air." (15)

(14) Ibid., Vol. 1, White, T.W., "Note to Blackstone's Commentaries",
Dec. 21, 1834, p. 227.

(15) Dew, T.R., The Pro-Slavery Argument, pp. 321-22.

Mr. White now turns to attack a second statement of Blackstone , noting that:

"---the commentator farther tells us that, "slavery cannot lawfully originate in conquest, as a commutation for the right to kill; because the victor does not kill his adversary but makes him captive." Is this a fair inference?

There is a triple alternative in the case; to kill, to enslave, or to set at large. It may be practicable to do either of the two first; and yet dangerous in the extreme to do the last.---Among these, no argument is necessary to prove that foreign slavery is the mildest."(16)

Approaching the question from a different angle, he continues:

"I have said that slavery exists everywhere- originating in* the decree which makes labor the price of subsistence.--- So it has ever been, is, and will be.---There will be rich and poor, the rich will not dig the earth: the poor man must.

He becomes the rich man's servant, and the wages of his abject toil are food and raiment. To the slave these wages are paid in kind, and can therefore be always precisely adequate, and no more. To the free man they are paid in money, and may become deficient or superfluous, from a state of scarcity to abundance."(17)

This was a theme much favored by the pro-slavery thinker. They showed that subsistence was the price of labor the world over but that free labor during depressions was robbed of this price, while slave labor enjoyed an income always "precisely adequate". Besides the apparent health advantages which thus accrued to the negro under this system, he enjoyed the mental satisfaction which comes from economic security.

"The slave is said to labor, uncheered by hope. On the other hand he is free from many anxieties to which the freeman is exposed."

Among slaves, the individual is the slave of an individual master. Among free laborers, the class is held in vassalage by the class of employers.--- In sickness the slave looks for support to a master who is interested to maintain and cherish him, and who, for the most part, knows and loves him. What is the freeman's equivalent? Hear Mr. Blackstone on

(16) Op. Cit., White, pp. 227-228.

(17) Ibid., p. 229.

this: "There is no man so wretched or indigent, but he may demand a supply sufficient for all the necessities of life,"--- A humane provision; yet,--discounted by the Roman laws. For the edicts of the Emperor Constantine commanded the public to maintain the children of those who were unable to provide for them, in order to prevent the murder and exposure of infants. --- Who ever heard of infanticide by ~~by~~ a Slave?

We certainly have reason to believe that the existence of domestic slavery among us has been of singular advantage in preserving the free spirit of our people. Slave labor pre-occupies and fills the low and degrading stations in society. To freemen belong those services which imply trust and confidence, or require skill; which therefore command higher wages than mere animal labor, and give a (18) sense of respectability and a feeling of self-respect."
 can

The slavery debate ~~can~~ be roughly divided into two periods; the period after the revolution to about 1830 when slavery was defended as an objectionable necessity; and the period thereafter to the war, when slavery was defended as an institution natural and proper in itself. Dew's Argument was propounded partly because of his disgust with the first point of view as expressed in the Virginia Assembly of 1831 by such men as Thomas Jefferson Randolph. Every article appearing in the Messenger accepts Dew's thesis with one exception. The month following White's editorial there appear more "Remarks to on A Note to Blackstone's Commentaries" contributed by a (19) Virginian. The latter censures the stand of White, expressing shock that the editor should maintain that slavery was proper in itself.

"I had thought, indeed, that it was a point conceded on all hands, that, wrong in its origin and principle, it was to be justified, or rather excused, only by the stern necessity which had imposed it upon us without our consent.---

Slavery cannot originate in compact, because the transaction excludes the idea of an equivalent. Every sale implies a price, a quid pro quo, an equivalent given to the seller in lieu of what he transfers to the buyer; but what equivalent can be given for life and liberty?

(18) Ibid., pp. 229-30.

(19) Ibid., Feb., 1835, p. 266.

I hold , as I have always done , that under the peculiar circumstances , it is justifiable or rather excusable, upon the soundest principles of law of nature; and, more particularly, upon the principle of necessity and self-defense. By the law of nature, I may take away the life of another when I cannot otherwise defend my own." (20)

A "Planter" writing from Perry southern Alabama in 1841 expressed more clearly than in any other summary ~~the~~ in the Messenger the economic argument for slavery. He discloses the information that the average man slave in his section has given him per-week, 3 gallons of meal
2 lbs. of bacon or pork
milk 2 times a day
women and children
2 gallons of meal
2 lbs. of bacon or pork
milk 2 times a day

All of this plus an abundance of potatoes, cabbages, tomatoes, black-eyed-peas and "---molasses, sugar, coffee, rice, with anything else, which is to be found at the table of the master are unsparingly supplied to them when sick." (22)

Against this he pictures the conditions in England of free labor as reflected in a report made March 1, 1841 to Parliament; for the average family of seven in Sussex was provided by their income, 6 gallons of flour, tea of burnt crusts, no sugar save 1/4 lb. for the baby, no meat save on Sunday. Itemized more closely the weekly diet for seven consisted of:

6 gallons of flour
1 lb. of butter
1 lb. of cheese
1 1/2 lbs. of meat
1/4 lb. of sugar
1/2 lb. of soap
3/4 lb. of candles
pepper, salt, yeast. (23)

It is interesting to see that the author did not attribute this vast superiority of the slaves to the natural

(20) Ibid., pp. 267-270.

(21) Ibid., Vol. 7, Nov. 1841, "Treatment of Slaves in the Southwest."

benefits of an agricultural society over an industrial economy.

Another vindication of slavery was seen by the southerner in the marked chivalric superiority of the gentlemen below the Mason and Dixon Line:

"Whoever has travelled in a stage or steamboat in Virginia, and has travelled also in steamboats and stages in non-slave-holding states, must have perceived that more deference and respect are shown towards female passengers with us, than in the northern and eastern states. In a southern steamboat, men will not be seen scrambling for seats at table, before the ladies are provided with places, and in a southern stage, a female traveller will always be offered that seat which it is supposed she would prefer.---the next inquiry is, whether slavery be the cause of this difference.---There must be some cause for the difference, and slavery is in a great degree that cause. To the north, in consequence of the absence of slavery, many females, even in respected ranks of life, perform duties which here would devolve upon our slaves. ---A very large proportion of the sex engage in the business of buying and selling, and travel about unattended. Thus embarking in what with us would be regarded as proper offices of men, the consequence is that they are treated with no more respect than is shown towards men." (24)

Heartily commending the attention of the readers the editor prints in April 1841 an article by a northern lady on "Northern and Southern Slavery". Again the unenviable position of women in the north as compared to the South is used to demonstrate the social justification for slavery.

"I am informed that the owner of a large plantation has a great number of negroes; that they are provided with comfortable habitations, clothing and food, while in return they are required to perform a daily task. Undoubtedly they are more or less comfortable, as humanity or its reverse preponderates in the nature of their owner. Yet setting aside the bare word "slave", I maintain that their condition might be envied by thousands of our northern free citizens.

Our soil, I believe, is less productive and more

(22) Ibid., p. 775.

(23) Ibid.

(24) Southern Litt. Mess. Vol. 1., Nov. 1834, signed (C), "New England", pp. 84-5.

encumbered with stone than yours, requiring a far greater amount of labor to produce less profitable crops. This labor must be performed; hirelings are generally scarce, and their wages considerable; what shall the farmer do? He toils from daybreak to dark himself, and requires his family to do the same.---The mistress of a family, although surrounded by several small children, --, is obliged to rise long before the dawn and prepare breakfast, so that the laborers may be in the field as soon as they can see; and if not sufficiently expeditious, she receives abusive and opprobrious language, such as a man would be ashamed to bestow upon a female slave."

She concludes by admonishing her people to:

"First cast out the beam that is thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye." (25)

Less than ten years after the publishing of "A Letter From New England" observing that abolitionism, is not dead was at least in such a decrepit state of health in the North as to cause Virginia not a moments uneasiness, a contributor "W" expresses the greatest horror over the change in northern apathy to active anti-slavery organizations. In an essay entitled "Slavery In the Southern States" he cited the fact that hundreds of abolitionist societies were functioning at home and abroad, drawing the best people into their confines and generally threatening the security of slavery in the South by an unbalanced ballot box. (26) He then proceeds to support the South on three grounds, the right of necessity, the difficulty of abolition and its good effects on chivalry, culture and personal welfare of the negro. (26)

Another evidence of the change in attitude is afforded when in 1844 Benjamin B. Minor, then editor of the Messenger, prints "An Essay On the Moral and Political Effect of the Relation Between the Caucasian Master and the African Slave" which he was to have delivered before the National

Institute April 1, 1844, but did not. The reason being that the secretary had advised him to forbear:

"There are some substances which, in combustion decompose and convert into explosive gas the water that is used to quench them." (27)

The author continues to discuss the beautiful relations which exist between master and slave, relations which:

"---may be expressed ~~in~~, not in words, but find a mute language in the cheerful humility, the liberal obedience, the devoted loyalty of the slave, and in the gentleness, the courtesy of the master." (28)

In Oct. 1838 the Messenger printed the second great pro-slavery argument. This was written by Judge Harper of South Carolina and along with one by William Gilmore Simms it served as a reference for pro-slavery theory second only to Dew's. (29) Simms, Harper and Dew were the triumvirate champions of the southern cause.

He begins by showing.:

"The institution of domestic slavery exists over far the greater portion of the inhabited earth. ---Yet, in the few countries in which it has been abolished, --claiming, perhaps justly, to be farthest advanced in civilization and intelligence, but which have had the smallest opportunity of observing its true character and effects, it is denounced. ---" (30)

If he is wrong, he argues, then arrange for gradual emancipation.

"But if we are nothing of all this; if we commit no injustice or cruelty; ---let us enlighten our minds and fortify our hearts to defend them.

President Dew has shewn that the institution of slavery is a principal cause of civilization, ---

Will those who regard slavery as immoral, ---, tell us that man was not intended for civilization, ---? Or will they say that the Judge of all the earth has done wrong in ordaining the means by which alone that end can be attained? The act itself is good, if it promotes the good purposes of God. ---" (31)

(25) Vol. 7, April, 1841, pp. 313-315.

(26) Vol. 9, Dec., 1843, p. 737.

(27) Ibid., pp. 737-41.

(28) Vol. 10, p. 329.

(28) Ibid., p. 339.

(29) Vol. 4, "Memoir On Slavery, p. 609.

This syllogism built up, of course, on Dew's classic argument that slavery was the root of progress, may be better appreciated by examining Dew's work. In the Pro-Slavery Argument he explains that man was once a hunter, a nomad. In this pastoral state he did well to feed himself. Then the strong began to enslave the weak and being unable to move his slaves he settled down and allowed his slaves to feed and clothe him. This permanency of location was the beginning of Agriculture. Having become agricultural society fought less; there were fewer wars because there was less roaming. Agriculture became the basis of wealth and eventually of civilization itself. Further proof of this contention was offered by the examples of Peru and Mexico in the New World, the only high civilizations here when discovered by the white man and the only slave holding peoples.
(32)

It is a peculiar thing to see Harper and his disciples turning against the philosophy of the early Virginia liberals as Jefferson & Madison and Monroe. But as long as the liberal pronouncements of these great thinkers were left unchallenged they would be a source of embarrassment to the ideology of the slave holder. Harper, therefore, denies that:

"All men are born free and equal. Is it not palpably nearer the truth to say that no man was ever born free, and that no two men were ever born equal?---Wealth and poverty, fame and obscurity, strength or weakness, knowledge or ignorance, ease or labor, power or subjection, mark the endless diversity in the condition of men."(33)

(30) Ibid.

(31) Ibid.

(32) Op. Cit., Dew, pp. 326-331.

(33) Op. Cit., Harper, p. 610.

He demonstrates as additional evidence that women are rational creatures and yet to free them would be to:

"---place them in a situation in which they would be alike miserable and degraded. ---Man is born to subjection, --it is the very bias of nature that the strong and the wise should control the weak and the ignorant." (34)

Next he attempts to refute the axiom that:

"Man has been endowed by his creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.---Yet every government does and of necessity must, deprive men of life and liberty for offenses against society.---Why all the laws of society---restrain men from the pursuit of happiness, according to their own ideas of happiness---. It is for its own protection!*" (35)

In conclusion he charges that in the North under the name of liberty capital has enslaved labor reducing it to depths of living unknown to the southern negro. (36)

A Southron, possibly W.G.Simms, with a few "Thoughts on Slavery" summarizes rather clearly the pro-slavery arguments.

"That slavery is coeval with society, necessary for its formation and growth, and was in the primitive ages a natural condition of a large portion of the human family.

That it is universal, and has existed in all ages.

That it is neither prohibited by the moral or the divine law.

That christianity alone, by its exalting influence, and by its peaceful and gradual operation can abolish it.

That its sudden abolition---must be necessarily attended with frightful social, and political revolutions, destructive alike to the bond and the free." (37)

In the (Oct.) number of 1839 appears an article which nourishes a favorite assumption of the pro-slavery advocates, namely that slavery was beneficial to a democracy. They assert that ,first,slavery insures and perpetuates an agricultural society which is naturally conducive to democracy. Secondly, the very sight of slaves makes the freeman more appreciative of his freedom. The author quotes a passage (38)

from a speech of Edmund Burke:

"---,as Mr. Burke remarks, "Where slavery is established in any part of the world, these who are free are by far the most proud and jealous of their freedom. Freedom is to them not only an enjoyment, but a kind of rank and privilege."(39)

The Rev. Richard Fuller in 1845 contributes the first of a series of papers adorning the Messenger which present slavery as an institution sanctioned by the laws of the Bible and Greeks. To be sure, at that time, a thing proved by the Bible was proved conclusively. Aristotle and Plato were to the southern scholars the wisest of mortals; therefore, if they approved of slavery its justice was doubly confirmed. The Rev. Fuller shows that the ten Commandments themselves sanctioned slavery when one of them read:

"Thou shalt not covet -his man-servant, nor his maid-servant."---If man cannot hold property in man then, why an acknowledgment of the right; and if God intended Hebrews only to hold slaves, why have such a command in the Decalogue?---in a general code, for constant and universal application."(41)

Turning to the new testament, he points out that the Christianity of Christ:

"---was bound to correct the errors which had been gathered around.---, it entered into the temple and expelled the profaners,---exposed the unholy glosses of Phariseeism, rebuked the unbelief of Saduceeism ---it spared no vice, extenuated no crime. ---Christianity found slavery under the patronage of Jewish law.---Acquainted with these circumstances, Christianity, the corrector of Jewish error and the reformer of Jewish corruptions, is perfectly and steadily silent."(42)

For five years there are no further entries in the Messenger on slavery, a period of peculiar silence. In April

(34) Ibid. p. 611.

(35) Ibid., p. 612.

(36) Ibid., p. 629.

(37) Vol., 4, Dec. 1838, p. 737.

(38) Vol., 5, "Domestic Slavery As It Exists in the Southern States Considered With Reference to its Influence Upon Free Government" p. 677.

of 1850 there is printed "Observations on a Passage in the
Politics of Aristotle Relative to Slavery."⁽⁴³⁾

"Esse igitur nonnullos alios liberos, alios servos natura perspicuum est: quibus expedit quosque justum sit servire." Nature has clearly designed some men for freedom and others for slavery: and with respect to the latter, slavery is both just and beneficial."--Let it be remembered that this is the deliberate conclusion of him, who has been justly termed "the master of the wise."

Returning to the Bible, he continues:

"---we will only allude to the fact that Abraham, Issac, and Jacob, and the rest of the Patriarchs were large slave owners;---"

Then, turning to Timothy he extracts an admonition which neatly fulfills his purpose:

"Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their masters worthy of all honour; that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed,---These things teach and exhort, If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to Godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, where of cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is Godliness; from such withdraw thyself!"

He concludes:

"This is not merely a recognition, without blame, of the practice of slavery, but the strongest possible reprobation of Abolitionism, and its various motives."⁽⁴⁴⁾

A few years later John R. Thompson with an editorial, "A Few Thoughts On Slavery", discharges a few darts of satire against the Abolitionist leaders of the North:

(39) Ibid., p.680.

(40) Vol., 11, Sept. 1845, "Domestic Slavery, Considered as a Scriptural Institution.", p.521.

(41) Ibid.

(42) Ibid., p.522.

(43) Vol., 16, p.193.

(44) Ibid., pp.197-98.

"Mr. Sumner will find perhaps, a more pleasant position with his new and admired ally, the Bey of Tunis to assist him for a time in his schemes of emancipation, until having supplanted him in the affection of his council, he may get up a coalition-bring the Bey to the bowstring, and rule himself; a most respectable Pasha of three tails! Mr. Chase might in Liberia find the equality, he so much courts; perhaps, re-enter public life as the President of the Ebony Republic. Mr. Seward might personate the "Illustratious Stranger", in a black domino at the court of Dahomey; while the reverend Theodore might gratify his largest ambition as the active head of that magnificent scheme projected by Aminidat Sleek-the great Timbu&too and Aethopian Amelioration Society-which proposes to give to every negro child living near the Equator the inestimable blessings of a flannel shirt and a moral tract!"(45)

Having tired of satire, he passes to terms of actual hatred and arrives to a flourishing finish in a gloating elation over the passage of the Nebraska bill in the Senate. (46) The whole tone of the essays becomes vitriolic after 1850. Disappeared from the pages of the Messenger (are the friendly letters from New England and in their stead appear tracts fulminating against the "yankee" North.

In May, 1856 there is presented an exposition "Liberty and Slavery", attributed by Jackson to the pen of Edmund Ruffin, which is interesting not only as presenting just another argument but also for some unique figures. The author insists that:

"---slavery is absolutely necessary to confer on the negro race the enjoyments of their rights as proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence. --- Under the law of population,---, the free negro race will become so nearly extinct at no distant day, that it will ~~no~~ only exist as an appendage to slavery. This phenomenon is explained by the sanitary conditions of the free negro. In this class there are seven times as many lunatics, twice as many idiots, twice as many deaf mutes, and more than twice as many blind persons in proportion to numbers as there are among the slaves. ---Freedom is, therefore, with the negro a condition of such flagrant disobedience to the first law of nature, that it is punished with death."(47)

(45) Vol., 20, April 1854, p.195.

(46) Ibid.

(47) Vol., 22, p.386.

It seems that it was not until the fifties that the South began to sense the inevitability of the impending conflict. With each year this fateful certainty appears to have fixed itself more securely in the southern mind. The growing tide of anti-slavery sentiment in the North was fast forcing Virginia and her sister states to study their alternatives. This sensation of foreboding is definitely expressed in an article on "American Slavery in 1857",

"The existence of African slavery in a portion of the States of this confederacy, and the wide difference in sentiment, opinion, and feeling, between the North and the South, on its general nature and influence and the Constitutional rights of the States holding slaves, have produced a conflict which threatens the dissolution of the Union, or the complete prostration, ruin, and degradation of the South."(48)

After the election of Lincoln this grim spectre seemed to have crystalized into reality. With all the despair which was felt by Job when he cried, "That which I had most feared has descended upon me," the South in a voice of finality declared the end ^{as} come:

"A sectional party, inimical to our institutions, and odious to our people, is about taking possession of the Federal Government. The seed sown by the early Abolitionists has yielded a luxurious harvest. When Lincoln is in place, Garrison will be in power.--- Opposition to slavery, to its existence, its extension and its perpetuation, is the sole cohesive element of the triumphant faction.---The question is at length plainly presented; submission or secession.

He has not analyzed this subject aright nor probed it to the bottom, who supposes that the real quarrel between the North and South is about the territories, of the decision of the Supreme Court, or even the Constitution itself; and that, consequently, the issues may be stayed and the dangers arrested by the drawing of new lines and the signing of new compacts. The division is deeper and more incurable than this. The antagonism is fundamental and ineradicable. The true secret lies in the total revision of public opinion which has accurred in both sections .

of the country in the quarter of a century on the subject of slavery.

It has not been more than twenty-five years since Garrison was dragged through the streets of Boston with a rope around his neck, for uttering Abolition sentiments; and not thirty years since the abolition of slavery was seriously debated in the Legislature of Virginia."(49)

There remained in the mind of the author but one alternative to dis-union, "Africanization" . In this terrible word was summed up all the possible woes attendant to a white people dominated by a colored caste. In fifty years it was believed that there would be twenty million negroes in the South. If she should free her slaves she should be forced to compose an epitaph reading, "Here lies a people, who, in attempting to liberate the negro, lost her own freedom." (50)

The only choice lay in a Confederacy.

"With the Republican party,---, we have no parley. If it question us, we, have no reply, but the words of the gallant Georgian, "Argument is exhausted, we stand to our arms."(51)

(49) Vol., 32, Feb. 1861, Holcombe, W.H., "The Alternative: A Seperate Nationality, or the Africanization of the South.", p;81.

(50) Ibid., p.85.

(51) Ibid., p.87.

SECESSION

It has been difficult to separate the story of secession sentiment from the drama of slavery. Indeed it may seem an arbitrary and unwise procedure to have pursued. The affinity of one to the other almost defies separate consideration. Yet, in order to present a more consecutive and sequential account of the social developments as reflected in the Messenger, I have attempted to accomplish that very end.

In 1834 and for many years thereafter there is to be found no hint of a desire for dis-union. I was surprised to find no comment on nullification or South Carolina's state's rights theories. Throughout 1834, as we have seen, there was printed a series of letters from New England, written by a Virginian, in which Massachusetts and Neighbors were extolled to the skies.

The first mention of dis-union was a reaction against the unpatriotic activities of John Quincy Adams and his cohorts over the Texas question in 1845. Robert Mercer Taliaferro Hunter writing in Aug. of that year on "The Massachusetts Proposition for Abolishing the Slave Representation as Guaranteed By the Constitution", notes:

"At the last session of Congress, John Quincy Adams presented a memorial, signed by William Garrison, Edmund Quincy, George Adams and many others; who say, that "deeming slave-holding a heinous sin, and convinced that slavery ought to be immediately and forever abolished, they look upon the Constitution of the United States as enjoining obligations and duties which are incompatible with allegiance to God, and with the enjoyment of freedom and of equal rights--.

In view of these facts, your memorialists, disclaiming citizenship, and repudiating the present Constitution as a covenant with death and an agreement with hell; ask you to take immediate measures, by a National Convention, or otherwise, for the

dissolving of the Union of these States.

Why, by dissolving the Union, terminate a connexion which exhibits results so gratifying, prospects so brilliant and so encouraging? Far, far better will it be for us all to heed the warning voice of that illustrious patriot and sage, who, in his Farewell Address, exhorted his countrymen to "Cherish a cordial, habitual and immovable attachment to the Union; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest." (52)

There could hardly be a more positive declamation against secession than here. Yet it is but five short years before the Messenger presents its first article that predicts the withdrawal of the South from that Union which "exhibits results so gratifying". In Dec. 1850, a Virginian in "A Letter to the Hon. Josiah Quincy, of Massachusetts, On the Subject of the Fugitive Slave Bill", is impelled to prophesy:

"I confess, sir, that Disunion and war seem to me imminent. That will be a fatal day for freedom when this Union is overthrown and burst asunder. But that the North is defying that result—practically despising all the consequences of its acts, is no less certain than that the sun is in heaven." (53)

By 1860 it would seem that the South was "fast hardening into a separate republic". She was on the defensive and clutching at the most ephemeral thread of justification for her coming action. In June of that year an unknown writer sends the first of several essays conjuring up the fable of the "Difference of Race Between The Northern and Southern People". He maintains that the North is peopled by subservient Anglo-Saxons, while the South is predominantly of the ruling Norman lineage. (54) Although recognizing the apparent hopelessness of the situation, he contends that the race

(52) Vol., 11, pp. 466-67.

(53) Vol., 16, p. 709.

(54) Vol., June, 1860, p. 403.

instincts of the South will save and direct the Union:

"... the representative blood of the South & comes of that branch of the human race which, at this time, controls all the enlightened nations of the earth, and they are false to their instincts when they even discuss, much less, admit, the propriety of a dissolution of this government. ... We may continue to look for reenactments of the scenes of Harper's Ferry and Kansas territory, - none of which, it is probable, would bring about a dissolution of the government, - "that" would still continue to exist, and the South, as heretofore, would continue to control it, even if she controlled it badly, as of late she certainly has done - disunion being apparently hostile to the present destiny of the republic - and a surrender of authority, which dissolution would amount to, would be beneath the high calling, the instincts, and the blood of the Southern people. Our bickerings and controversies will but result in diminution of national character and mutability in the value of property. There will always be Southern men sufficient to preserve the government,..." (55)

In November in another thrust at "Northern Mind and Character" the same thesis is held, probably by the same author, and the same conclusion reached. He begins by harrying the North whose:

"priest hood prostitutes itself to a level with the blackguard and enters the secular field of politics, in the spirit of a beer-house bully; and the politician as carelessly invades the sanctuary of the priest. Her women abjuring the delicate offices of their sex, and deserting their nurseries, stroll over the country as politico-moral reformers, delivering lewd lectures upon the beauties of free-love and spiritualism, or writing yellow back literature, so degraded in taste, so prurient in passion, so false in fact, so wretched in execution, and so vitiating to the morals of the mothers in the land, as almost to force them to bring daughters without virtue and sons without bravery"

"And, unless the conservative elements in their own midst shall prove themselves more capable in the future, than they have in the past, of controlling the extravagances of the multitude-.... The South, in self-respect, will be compelled to withdraw from longer association with her as a member of one common Government."

(55) Ibid.

Yet , in face of all this and these, I, for one, say control them: and preserve the government; even if it converts the republic into a despotism. ---Yes, let the better people of the country preserve the flag of the republic.---"(56)

Thus through the year 1860 , the Messenger appears while recognizing the tenuous bonds between North and South to abjure the thought of actual secession. But in January of 1861 with an editorial on "The Union; Its Benefits and Its Dangers" for the first time is expressed the imminent desir-
(57)
ability of such moves. The author begins:

"In the first place, we should endeavor to correct an impression, which seems to rest upon many minds. We have heard so much noise about federal politics and have had our fears so much excited in behalf of federal legislation, that many have come to regard the federal government as the only, or at least, the great government, which regulates and fixes our affairs and protects our rights. To such it is the paterna patistat, whose jurisdiction extends over every interest.

If you will consider, for a moment, you will see how erroneous such an impression is. We hardly ever see an officer of the federal government. If we suffer injury, in life, liberty or property, we do not look to the federal government for protection or redress. The great every-day affairs of life are under the jurisdiction of the state governments alone."(58)

He then admits great benefits from the federal government, but "what are the dangers ~~of~~ of our united government to the Southern States?"
(59)
First, the North controls the electoral college by 183 votes to the South's 120. She has 147 seats in Congress to the southern 90, 36 in the Senate to the southern 30. It is natural that she will use her power to the furtherance of her own ends. The greatest danger , however, is seen as the predominance of numbers in the North as the basis of government. Labor is in greatest numbers and the country is seen as degenerating into a state controlled by the rabble:

"All Northern politics are fast ripening into the most licentious and destructive agrarianism. Where is the thinking man, who now believes that universal suffrage is not subversive of all free institutions?"(60)

Compare, he advises, this condition with the rights of suffrage in the South based on property. Even where property qualifications do not apply, it is not true universal suffrage.

"Are not the Southern States in simili casu? They have, or many of them have, universal suffrage.---But it is universal suffrage of only one half of the population.---Here in the South capital and labor are not at war. Capital owns labor. They are at peace. --- the duty of self preservation, demand our withdrawal to avoid danger. The South should set up for herself."(61)

The following month the anonymous author reasserts his theory of race difference as a cause of and for "Disfederation of the States". This time, however, the race characteristics of the South are not depicted as impelling them to preserve the Union, rather he has turned to the pessimistic thesis that "never the twain shall meet".

"The beginning of the end is upon us. And also the end was from the beginning. The inevitable and necessary consequence which, sooner or later, each and every of the founders of our confederation felt and foreknew must overtake the Union, is now taking place before our eyes.

Napoleon I did not level the Pyrenees, neither, could he. Spain and France exist now as they did before Rome and Carthage. Nations, then, are not made but born; born of an identity of race, language, interest; born of similarity of climate, production pursuit; born of congeniality of thought, feeling, habit, taste, religion; born not of treaties, leagues, constitutions; born not of man, but of nature and God.

Judged by this criterion, how could, how can ever the Northern and Southern people unify? What similarity, pray, was there, or will there ever be between Plymouth and Jamestown, between Boston and Charleston, Raleigh and Rochester, Nashville and Detroit, Milwaukee and Mobile, New Orleans and Chicago? What attraction could there exist between Puritan and Cavalier, between Rev. Cotton Mather

(57) Vol. 32, Jan. 1861, p. 1.

(58) Ibid.

(59) Ibid.

(60) Ibid., pp. 3-4.

(61) Ibid. p. 4.

and Capt. John Smith, between the Blue Laws of Connecticut and the perfect toleration of Maryland? What congeniality is there between the productions of the North and the South; between the ice of New Pond and the rice of Santee river; the enormous granite monoliths of Quincy and the saccharine juciness of the cane of Atchfalaya; between the Jerome clock of Connecticut and the cotton bale of Alabama? Whom, therefore, God and nature have put asunder, man cannot join together."(62)

In July the concluding parry is made at Union. "The True Question" embellishes the tribal theory and explains the war as "A Contest for the Supremacy of Race, As Between the Saxon Puritan of the North and the Norman of the South."

"The hour of that hybrid thing, a democratic republic, for the government of two different races, has passed away forever, and we must now direct our attention to those ethnological facts, from out of which the new government is to flow. The position, w which it is foreshadowed, the South is about to assume, calls for a free and liberal, but a Strong government. Her people are directly traceable, first to the English cavaliers, and thence to the Norman of William, the Conqueror; and are of that stock which really controls all the great, meritorious interests of the world; and sooner or later, it is our destiny to give tone and action to all the social and governmental machinery of this Continent. The contest therefore, now raging, is purely on for the innauguration of one supreme race. It is the old English contest revived on this Continent, of the Norman and Saxon- -Cavalier and Puritan. In England, the Puritan was victorious on most of the battle fields of the Revolution, yet he failed to maintain his power, or to establish his dynasty; and he is today the Saxon subject of a Norman government."(63)

It is truly an ironical ending to the secession chapter in the Messenger to be reduced to this perversion of fact, this ingenius explanation, the most utter corruption of logic. It is notable that slavery is never directly mentioned in these last articles. As if they had retreated from

(62) Vol., 32, Feb., 1861, pp. 118-119.

(63) Vol., 33, July, 1861, p. 25.

untenantable ground, they hide the truth under a structure of pure fancy. That men should be reduced to such levels of reasoning would be comical if they were not at the same time drawing the curtains on a tragic era.

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

The story of agriculture and industry is nearly lost, submerged as it is beneath the issues of slavery. It was as if the clouds of a coming war had obscured from sight the economic elements which more surely determine the courses of nations than the greatest strifes.

The period from 1820 to the war in Virginia may be boldly characterized as an age when the dreams of the founders were obstructed by their reactionary sons. We have already seen southern philosophy denying the tenets of Mason and Jefferson. The story of sectional factions destroying the hopes of such early leaders as Washington for the union of east and west by public works is too well known. It was an era of desire frustrated by inaction, indifference and sectionalism.

A typical example of this condition is afforded by two articles contributed by Matthew Fontaine Maury. The first, in 1839 presents "A Scheme for Rebuilding Southern Commerce". Herein he advocates energetic trade enterprise from the port of Norfolk to Havre before northern supremacy is so far advanced that there will be no hope.

"The hour is ripe for a steam enterprise across the Atlantic. That town-[Havre]-is ready to cooperate with any city in the Union, and no doubt would receive with open arms, a proposition from the South, to run from Norfolk a line of steam packets.---

Let the South bring her strong men to the enterprise, and get up, as we have said, her line of splendid steamships to England and France; and let the first blow be aimed to divide with New York the facilities of communication; and then withdraw from her, if she can a part of the travel, and make the port of Norfolk the centre of exchange for New Orleans and the South." (64)

The editor , Mr. White, attracted by the idea recommends :

"At the next Convention, let each member subscribe for no less than ten shares, and pledge himself to procure among his constituents a subscription for no less than one hundred shares of stock in the Southern Atlantic Steam Navigation Company."(65)

Twelve years later Maury returns with an essay on "The Commercial Prospects of the South". He discloses that "Some 12 or 15 years ago there was a move in the South in favor of direct trade." (66) He describes his former article in the Messenger and the subsequent failure of the Legislature to act on any of its suggestions. There remains, he concludes, little hope for Virginia commercial preeminence. (67)

Who can say that if the Old Dominion had been actively conscious of naturally favorable geographic assets, and the Legislature had acted whole heartedly for such projects in these early years, that she might not be the great commercial queen of the Atlantic seaboard. This is but a further manifestation of an age of unappreciated opportunities, of horizons unseen through the haze of local interests.

In November 1834 the editor prefaces a survey on "The Mineral Wealth of Virginia" by Peter A. Browne of Pennsylvania by an expression of astonishment that the survey when presented to the Assembly caused no action. He notes that he was :

"---somewhat mortified , that the valuable hints and suggestions thrown out by an intelligent and scientific stranger should have failed to attract the attention of our public functionaries."(68)

(65) Ibid., p.3.

(66) Vol., 17, Oct. & Nov. 1851. p.5.

(67) Ibid.

(68) Vol., 1, Nov. 1834, p.91.

Mr. Browne in his survey comments on the indifference of Virginia to her potential abilities:

"The people of Virginia have too long been ignorant and unmindful of their own vast resources.---I will, therefore, close my observations with noticing two instances of want of confidence in the mineral productions of your own state, which I am persuaded that geological survey would tend to correct. I met many wagons loaded with sulfate of lime (gypsum) from Nova Scotia, being taken to the interior to be used as a manure, but I did not see one wagon employed to bring carbonate of lime (common lime stone) from inexhaustable quarries of the great valley.---In the beautiful and flourishing city of Richmond, I observed the fronts of two ^{stores} fitting up in the new and fashionable style with granite---from Massachusetts, while there exists in the James river, and on its banks, in the immediate vicinity of the town, rocks of superior quality, in quantities amply sufficient to build a dozen cities." (69)

That no progress industrially was being made in Virginia would be an erroneous inference from the foregoing essays. In an extract from the Virginia Gazette featured in the Messenger, in Feb. 1835, we get a picture of a busy and alive Richmond. (70) In the year 1833 the city port saw 5 schooners, 9 barks, 37 brigs, 30 ships, in all, 81 vessels leave for foreign countries, a total tonnage of 22,331 or an average of 275 tons per boat. The foreign exports amounted to:

American vessels-----	\$2,466,360.00
Foreign "-----	498,131.00
	<u>\$2,964,491.00</u>

Coast wise exports rose to around \$6,000,000.00. At the same time imports were only \$209,963.00. (71)

"No inconsiderable part of the produce shipped from the city is brought down the James River Canal. This important improvement commences at Maidens Adventure ---about thirty miles distant.---The tolls paid to the James River Company on descending goods in the year 1833---\$43,949., carried up, \$10,139.---total \$54,088.

The proximity of the coal mines to Richmond, constitutes that mineral a valuable article of commerce. Besides the quantity brought down by the canal, there were more than 2,000,000 of bushels transported by the Chesterfield rail road in 1833, the tolls on which amounted to \$87,813.30. The Chesterfield rail road, terminates on the Manchester side of the river,

and deserves ~~the~~ to be honorably mentioned as the first successful enterprise of the kind in the state of Virginia." (72)

The record also shows that Richmond was becoming a milling center. There were four large mills.

"The Gallego flour mills -----is 94 feet long, 83 1/2 wide, and is calculated for 20 pairs of stones to be worked by three water wheels. Connected with it, is another building 80 feet square, and four stories high, in which the wheat will be received and cleaned.---the whole appearance is very imposing." (73)

The Gallego utilized 200,000 bushels of wheat in 8 months. Per-annum

Haxall's Mills-----	14	pair of stones	---	200,000
Rutherford's Mill---	8	" "	"	--- 90,000
Mayo's Mill-----	6	" "	"	--- 90,000

It is interesting to note the large amount of colored, presumedly slave, labor which was used by the Richmond Cotton Manufactury, 60 to 70 whites, 130 blacks. The factory ran 3,776 spindles, 80 looms, used 1,500 lbs. of cotton per day. (74)

Already there were many printing establishments and a remarkable "number of Doctors. (75)

Richmond had almost tripled in population from 1800 to 1830.

<u>1800</u> ---	free whites	2,837	1830---	7,755
	slaves	2,293		6,349
	free blacks	<u>607</u>		<u>1,956</u>
		5,727		16,060 (76)

The scarcity of material in the Messenger makes any thorough or conclusive study of economic and social conditions impossible. To create or imagine profound implications would be

(69) Ibid., pp. 91-93.

(70) Vol., 1, Feb., 1835, p. 259.

(71) Ibid.

(72) Ibid.

(73) Ibid., p. 260.

(74) Ibid.

(75) Ibid.

to take liberties with the extreme paucity of factual data. I do not think it too audacious , however, to draw at least one conclusion from the economic essays contributed; this is that Virginia before the war was a land straying from the road of economic and social progressiveism. There were possibilities on every side but she was content with her present state.

It can not be over emphasized , I think, that the all absorbing interest of Virginia and the South from 1830 was in slavery, its defense, extension and perpetuation. This obscuring of the stars of progress by the sun of a burning issue may be partly responsible for her economic reactionism. Successively aroused, irritated and alarmed by the rising tide of Abolitionism she turned to the rabid defense and justification of an institution which in 1831 she was on the verge of abandoning as archaic and outworn. The prodding of northern anti-slavery forces bound ever tighter the shackles of the slaves and made the conflict an inevitability.

(76) Ibid.