CHAPTER III.

SLAVERY THE GERM OF REBELLION—SEED, GROWTH, FLOWER.

INVENTING A REVOLUTION.

Eli Whitney's cotton-gin opened before Southern politicians a vista of wealth and empire through the production of cotton for the markets of the world. These men already had a system of political objects and ethics distinct and variant from those held in the North; and the promotion of their aims now took on the character of a moral if not political conspiracy.

SLAVERY TRANSFORMED.

For a time after the adoption of the Constitution, vague hopes of a gradual removal of slavery were entertained even in some of the Southern States. Slavery was not profitable, a fact that quickened the consciences of masters and inclined them to emancipate. This was the period when eminent Virginians were indulging their homilies over the wickedness of slavery. Virginia was
overloaded with Africans beyond all other colonies. The demand for them in the culture of tobacco had enabled the traders to dispose of their dusky cargoes there till the Old Dominion was more than filled to repletion. Outside of tobacco there was no culture that could make this raw labor profitable. When by this single crop the soil had become exhausted, the problem had increased in difficulty.

The first African slaves were brought into Virginia by a Dutch vessel and landed at Jamestown in 1619—the year before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth. At the opening of the Revolution, it was estimated, about 300,000 slaves had been imported into the American colonies. In 1791, Virginia had about 295,000 slaves and 12,000 free negroes. In 1774 the Continental Congress resolved to stop the importation, but in the formation of the Constitution, on demand of the slave interest and in order to make it possible to secure a Constitution and Union at all, Congress was forbidden to interdict the African trade until 1808, when it was stopped. Georgia had prohibited it ten years before; and in 1820 it was by act of Congress made piracy. At the opening of the Rebellion there were nearly four million African slaves in the Southern States.

Emancipation and colonization were agitated in Virginia for many years, and some private experiments were tried by eminent men. Washington, John Randolph and his brother Richard were among those who freed their slaves by will. John Randolph had 386 at the time of his death, and he left a fund of $30,000 to colonize them in Ohio. The colony was a failure, and the negroes scattered far and wide.
The Rending of Virginia.

But before the sentiment in favor of emancipation in Virginia had become strong enough to prompt action by the State, the invention of the cotton-gin (in 1793) arrested the tide and turned it back with a force that grew to be irresistible. Even Jefferson could make no headway against it. The relation of slavery to the country was quickly reversed. Cotton at once took on the airs and prerogatives of royalty.

Crowning King Cotton.

The cotton industry in Europe which furnished a market for the American staple, and was destined to work such momentous results in this country, had its origin in the Saracen occupation of the Spanish peninsula, where cotton manufacture by the Moors began about A. D. 930, and whence it spread to Venice and into other parts of Europe. The first exportation from the United States was in 1784, in very small quantity. The obstacle to the preparation of the staple for the market was in the difficulty of removing the seed. A man could seed only one pound of cotton in a day. A cotton-gin multiplied this several hundred-fold. This multiplication of facility was responsible for tremendous consequences. The production and export rapidly increased from twenty millions in value (in 1801) to one hundred and fifty millions per year. In 1856, it was estimated the cotton produced in the United States was seven-eighths of the entire product of the world. As the business was limited only by the ability to produce and prepare the staple for the market,
the demand for labor in the cotton fields grew in almost geometrical ratio, the price of the human commodity rose rapidly, and the production was tremendously stimulated.

ROOM FOR ROYALTY.

Slave propagandism quickly took on a new character. Its partisans drew together by natural gravitation for the conservation of the enormous interests suddenly developed. The first want after this was more territory—room for expansion. "The condition of existence for a slaveocracy competing with free labor," remarks Von Holst, "is boundless expansion." In the "Peace Conference" of 1861, this demand found expression through a delegate from North Carolina. "You will never," he said, "get back the seceded States without you give them some hope of the acquisition of future territory. They know that when slavery is gathered into a cul de sac and surrounded by the wall of the free States, it is destroyed. Slavery must have expansion. It must expand by the acquisition of territory which we do not own. The seceded States will never come back to a government which gives no chance for the expansion of their principal institution." The reason for this need of continual expansion is stated in a few words by one who wrote from long experience of plantation life:

The Southerners are for the most part men whose only wealth is in their land and laborers. A large force of slaves is their most profitable investment. The planters are men of large estates but restricted means; many of them are deeply in debt and there are few who do not depend from year to year for their subsistence on the harvest of their fields and the chances of
the cotton and rice crops of each season. This makes it of vital importance to them to command an unrestricted extent of territory. The man who can move a "gang" of able-bodied negroes to a tract of virgin soil is sure of an immense return of wealth; as sure as that he who is circumscribed in this respect and limited to the cultivation of certain lands with cotton or tobacco by slaves will in the course of a few years see his estate gradually exhausted and unproductive, refusing its increase, while its black population, propagating and multiplying, will compel him eventually under penalty of starvation to make them his crop and substitute, as the Virginians have been constrained to do, a traffic in human cattle for the cultivation of vegetable harvests.

BARREN VICTORIES.

The acquisition of Louisiana, the annexation of Texas; the cession of large territory by Mexico, were victories for the slavery expansionists; yet the conquest of Mexico a fruitless one. The "Wilmot Proviso" offered in 1846 by a Pennsylvania Democrat, was intended to preserve from the blight of slavery territory that might be wrenched from Mexico. It provided that slavery should not be admitted to territory acquired by treaty. It was not adopted, but despite the consummation foreseen by Wilmot, the result was reached without it. The "divinity that shapes our ends" was working to defeat the schemes that lay behind the onslaught upon Mexico. California was admitted as a free State under Clay's compromise of 1850; and of the rest of the territory acquired with it, none ever became the home of the blighting institution. Slavery had a nominal existence for a time in New Mexico under a territorial statute passed in 1859. The Legislature was authorized to enact laws and report them to
Congress. If Congress should disapprove, the enactment became void. The act establishing slavery in the Territory was approved in the House but not acted on in the Senate. Slavery meanwhile was legalized there but did not take root. In 1860 there were only sixty slaves in the Territory.

Acquired though new domain might be through the machinations of the oligarchy, the control remained in Congress. As the free States grew in population and representation in Congress and the slave States lagged in the race, the possession of the Territories by their evil institution receded farther and farther from the South; and the prospect that any of them could be shaped into slave-States by action of Congress became every year more remote. Hence it was that while the South appeared to be winning at all points, Southern statesmen like Calhoun realized the actual situation. It was like one walking on a way moving in the opposing direction. His progress is overcome by the trend beneath his feet—by a force greater than his own. The civilization of the world—especially the civilization of the American Republic—was moving in a direction opposed to the progress of the Southern negro-breeding, cotton-raising enterprise, which was being swept along to the crisis its aggressions must at length provoke, to ultimate overthrow.

A BOOMERANG.

It is instructive to note how the Southern hunger for new territory in that earlier period turned later to positive loathing. It made all the difference whose ox was being gored—which system of society was to be profited by Va.—6
such acquisitions. When it was found that through the
greater energy of free society the national domain was be-
ing fashioned into free States, the slavery partisans took
the other cue; and in their ultimatum in the spring of
1861, one of their demands was that no more territory
should be acquired except with consent of four-fifths of
the Senate, where they held what they supposed a secure
control. Note the poignancy of this disappointment in a
subsequent quotation from Calhoun demanding "equal
rights in the acquired territories"—acquired on demand of
the South to make new fields for slavery.

CATALINE CALHOUN.

After Calhoun had been silenced by Jackson as to
nullification on the tariff issue, this irreconcilable enemy
of the Federal Union sought another issue and found it
in slavery, then already assuming an aggressive and
formidable attitude. President Jackson himself perceived
the purpose of his arch enemy; and, writing in 1833 to A.
J. Crawford concerning the overthrow of nullification,
he remarked that "the next pretext will be the negro or
slavery question." Benton in his "Thirty Years" notes
that the regular inauguration of the slavery agitation
dates from 1835. Calhoun, when he went home from
Washington in the spring of that year, told his friends
the South could never be united against the North on the
tariff question; that the sugar interest in Louisiana would
keep her out; and that the basis of Southern Union must
be shifted to the slavery question. The first outgrowth of
this new purpose was the movement in the South which
sent the Bowies, Houston, Crockett, Fannin, Travis and other Southern leaders, into Texas to organize revolution and get possession of that vast domain; which resulted in the independence of Texas, its subsequent annexation to the United States, the resulting war with Mexico and treaty cession of territory.

FOLLOWING THE FLAG.

The acquisition of vast possessions with Texas and from Mexico was followed by an acute renewal of the agitation which had resulted in the Missouri Compromise near thirty years before—the struggle for possession of the Louisiana Purchase by slavery and the final agreement to divide it between the two opposing systems; touching which controversy Jefferson had then written from his retirement that “from the battle of Bunker Hill to the Treaty of Paris, we never had so immense a question.” In this renewed agitation, the South made another distinct advance in its tactics of aggression. Calhoun claimed, in the phrase of this latter day, that “the Constitution followed the flag;” that because the Constitution tolerated slavery in the States, the institution was carried by it likewise into the Territories. It was argued that slaves were recognized in the Constitution as property and that the people in the Territories suffered discrimination and inequality in being denied the enjoyment of that species of property. Being asked if the Union “could be saved,” Mr. Calhoun replied that it could if the North would concede “an equal right in the acquired territory”—meaning the right to establish slavery there—“do her
duty in regard to the fugitive-slave law and cease the agitation of the slave question." Already there was a large body of people in the Northern States who doubted whether the Union under such conditions were worth saving. This new doctrine was the one which had so ripened by 1861 that it was then offered on all hands as the ultimatum of the South and the alternative of war. The compromise of 1820, while not then distinctly repealed, was swept aside in the torrent of this new demand.

CROP REAPED BY ANOTHER.

The admission of California as a free State, while not a repeal of the Missouri Compromise, went over its head. Under the Mexican law, California was free territory. Under the Southern claim, the Constitution would have carried slavery into it. Under the Missouri agreement, part would have been free and part slave. The Wilmot Proviso was designed to assure its freedom, but that measure failed. The question was decided directly by Congress and the State made free by the act of admission. This was the service of one more notice on the South that though they might acquire territory they could not fasten on it the institution which enlisted all their political energies.

MISSOURI COMPACT BROKEN.

The Kansas-Nebraska act was an actual repeal of the Missouri Compromise, for it made a new and different rule for dealing with Territories. The inhabitants were left to say when they framed their organic law whether it
THE SETTLEMENT OF 1850. 85

should be slave or free. This left the question to be fought over every time a State was to be organized. The civil war in Kansas showed how dangerous this was to the peace of the country. It was cumulative of inflammable antagonisms, and made war inevitable. This was Douglas' bid for the favor of the South in his effort to reach the Presidency. But the result in Kansas showed the South what "squatter sovereignty" would be worth to them. Douglas did not gain the favor of the South, while he lost that of the North. It showed there was no longer any middle ground; no longer any place in the controversy for mere trimmers and expediency politicians.

CLAY'S COMPROMISE.

Calhoun died in the midst of the controversy, the last of March, 1850. Clay came forward again as a pacificator, with a plan covering five conditions. One was the admission of California as a free State; another, territorial government for Utah and New Mexico; settlement of the Texas boundary; perpetuation of slavery in the District of Columbia; the enactment of the fugitive slave law. These were agreed to the following September, and the argument of force postponed another ten years. Jeff. Davis had demanded the extension of the Missouri Compromise line through to the Pacific, giving the territory south of it to slavery. Clay said no earthly power could induce him to carry slavery into any new territory.
Taney's ruling six years later in the Dred Scott case was that the Constitution followed the flag and, ex proprio vigore, carried slavery with it. He gave to the Constitution the interpretation demanded by the South, and made it even broader than Calhoun's most audacious thought had ventured to formulate. The pronouncement was in effect that the negro was property and could not be a citizen; that being property, he could be carried and must be protected wherever other property might be; that the Missouri Compromise, forbidding slavery in territory north of a given line, was unconstitutional and that Congress had no right to prohibit slavery in any Territory; the effect of this being also that the Jeffersonian prohibition for the Northwest was void.

This would have been a Waterloo for free institutions in the United States if Taney's dictum could have been given the force of law; but in popular governments there is a natural law founded on justice and common sense which all the ingenuity of lawyers and casuists cannot pervert. The people in the Northern States were not ready to let the great republican experiment on this continent be defeated by a political extra-judicial dictum, even though it came from the highest tribunal. Public opinion in the matter of slavery aggression had reached the point where this decision became mere brutem fulmen. It only hastened the impending crisis by making clearer the purpose of the South.
RESTORATION OF MISSOURI COMPROMISE.

The violence done by this decision was corrected, so far as it could be, by act of Congress approved by President Lincoln, July 19, 1862, restoring the Missouri Compromise, entitled "An Act to secure Freedom to all persons within the Territories of the United States." This was the first step towards the nationalization of freedom. Others were: the passage of an act three days before this abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia with compensation to owners; the act of July 17, 1862, freeing slaves of rebels coming into the army lines; and the sweeping emancipation declared by the President September 23, 1862, taking effect January 1, 1863. The final extinguisher to Calhounism and Taneyism was the XIVth Amendment, declaring that a negro is a citizen, not property.

WEBSTER’S SLEDGE HAMMER.

Reply to Calhoun’s demand for the constitutional extension of slavery into the Territories, ex proprio vigore, was made by Mr. Webster, who reminded the country that the Constitution was made for the States, not the Territories; that it was not operative even in the States without legislation by Congress to enforce it; that the Territories were by the terms of the Constitution absolutely subject to the control of Congress. It was in the exercise of this control, let us note, up to that time unquestioned, that Congress had, on the motion of such Virginians as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, long before dedicated the Northwest Territory to free institutions, that condition being held normal and national, while slavery was recognized
as abnormal and local, existing nowhere except by force of positive law—nowhere by inference or presumption; that, as one writer has stated it, "the Union should be the nursery of freedom and not a breeding-place for slavery."

AGITATION TWO-EDGED.

Calhoun had argued that the agitation against slavery was growing more threatening and the influence of the institution relatively weakening, and that if these tendencies were not checked, the South would be driven to choose between abolition and secession. He forgot it was he who had started this agitation in 1835, in behalf of slavery, as an entering wedge towards disunion. When the wind veered and the agitation began to blow from the opposite quarter, it became "displeasing to South Carolina," as he had said the tariff was in 1832. His endeavor to put slavery in the position of the party aggrieved was ingenious; and his political executors in 1861 were careful to follow this lead when, through the Peace Conference and the Virginia convention, they put before the country their presentment of the case of slavery: how it was being cruelly confined to a limited domain and prevented from spreading its benign presence over the Territories and in other respects from becoming national!

NO INTERFERENCE.

The pretense that the North wished to interfere with any existing right of slavery was baseless. The firmest foe it had was Sumner, and he in 1852 said: "Slavery
THE NEW ATTITUDE OF THE SOUTH.

where we are parties to it—where we are responsible for it—everywhere within our jurisdiction—must be opposed by every instrument of the political power. It is a mista

take to charge that we seek to interfere through Congress with slavery in the States. Our political aims as well as our political duties are co-extensive only with our political responsibilities.”

A LONG-DISTANCE VIEW OF SLAVERY.

A view of the pretensions of slavery different from the one held by its partisans and apologists in this country was expressed by the London Times in January, 1861:

For the last ten or twelve years Slavery has altered her tactics, and from a defensive has become an aggressive power. Every compromise which the moderation of former times had erected to stem the course of this monster evil has been swept away, and that not by the encroachment of the North but by the aggressive ambition of the South. With a majority in Congress and in the Supreme Court of the United States, the advocates of slavery have entered upon a career the object of which would seem to be to make their favorite institution coterminous with the limits of the Republic. With a majority in both houses of Congress and in the Supreme Court, the South cannot submit to a President who is not their devoted servant. Unless every power in the Constitution is to be strained in order to permit the progress of slavery, they will not remain in the Union.

This then is the result of the history of slavery. It began as a tolerated, it ends as an aggressive institution; and if it now threatens to dissolve the Union, it is not because it has anything to fear for that which it possesses already but because it has received a check to its hopes of future acquisition.
The Cotton-State politicians were themselves ready to try conclusions with the sword; but to make their fight successful they needed the co-operation of the "Border States." It was in deference to these that the conditions on which they would submit to remain in the Union under a Republican President were put forth; and Virginia, as the most potent of the border States, was made the medium for giving the ultimatum to the country. It was she who called the Peace Conference; and that failing, supplemented its demands by the same conditions embodied in the manifesto of her Convention. Virginia was, indeed, the pivotal State. It was the message Richmond sent to Charleston by Pryor which fired that first gun at Sumter which woke reverberations around the world—and it was by a Virginia hand the match to that first gun was applied.

The Peace Conference.

The "Peace Conference" which met in Washington, February 4, 1861, was the result of resolutions passed by the Virginia Assembly, January 19th. The Virginia members of the Conference were: Ex-President John Tyler, William C. Rives, John W. Brockenbrough, George W. Summers and James A. Seddon. Summers was the only one from the western part of the State. The other States which sent delegations were: Rhode Island, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Ohio, North Carolina, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Maine, Iowa and Kansas. The Virginia delegates urged the proposition known as the
"Crittenden Resolutions," with some modifications. This so-called "Crittenden Compromise" was industriously pushed in the border States as an auxiliary of the "no coercion" idea. Concerning the real authorship of these resolutions and hence their real significance, a correspondent of the New York Herald, writing from Alexandria, Kentucky, at that period, said: "I state now to you from the best personal authority what is generally known here, that the Crittenden amendment, so called, was drawn by Mr. Breckenridge and M. C. Johnson, Esq., of this city, prior to the departure of the former for Washington, and by him taken on and entrusted to Mr. Crittenden. This you may rely on as authentic beyond a question."

The entire programme had been laid out far in advance. The labors of the Conference—heralded to the country for weeks by daily telegrams—ended in a foregone demand for every point in the slavery brief. The purpose of the Conference, as set forth in the Virginia call, was "to afford the slave-holding States adequate guarantees for the security of their rights." The Commissioners agreed in demanding that the territories South of 36:30 should be devoted absolutely to slavery; never any interference there against it by either territorial or Congressional legislation. It was to be even forbidden to the United States to acquire any more territory which could by possibility grow into free States—that is, any treaty for it must be ratified by four-fifths of all the members of the Senate. Then it was to be provided that neither the Constitution nor any amendment to it should ever be construed to give Congress power to regulate, control or abolish slavery within the District of Columbia without
consent of Maryland and Virginia, without consent of the owners, nor without compensation to them. The District was to be made definitely slave territory. To still further emphasize the national character to be given to the institution, it was provided that there should never be any prohibition of slavery in places in slave States belonging to the United States, such as forts, arsenals or other national property. The execution of the fugitive-slave law was to be made more rigorous; and where the marshals in the free States might be unable to execute it by reason of the popular hostility, compensation for slaves lost was to be made by the United States.

THE VIRGINIA FORESHADOWING.

There is a striking likeness between these demands and those foreshadowed by Governor Letcher, of Virginia, in his message to the Assembly, by whom the Conference was called, and likewise in the propositions brought out in the Virginia convention by its committee on Federal relations; which were debated at length for the double purpose of inoculating the Convention and the border States with their virus and of occupying the time while the conspiracy was getting ready for action. The committee named the additional condition that no person of the African race should ever be a voter or office-holder.

PLAY AND PROMPTER.

It is apparent this "peace" conference was only playing what would have been a farce if it had not had such deadly tragedy behind it. It was but the spokesman of a prompter behind the scenes giving public expression to demands long before carefully formulated. If the shade
of Calhoun had inspired these, he could not have asked for more or worded them with more devilish plausibility. The demand was, in a word, to make slavery national and freedom local and subordinate. The government was to be the mere creature and convenience of the malign institution, with free society under the ban, exposed to continual punishment, humiliation and shame; and every day was to enact, under the American flag, the "tragedy," as Emerson calls it, of the "cheapness of man."

NORTH IS RESOLUTE.

The time had been when the people of the North, for the sake of peace, from considerations of business, were willing to accept large doses of abasement before the menace of the truculent Southerners. That was past. They recalled the compromises of ten and thirty years before ruthlessly broken in the interest of slavery. They would humiliate themselves no more. They looked the danger calmly in the face and with bodeful quiet but rising indignation waited for the overt act. When Sumner was badgered in the Senate in 1854 for his frank defiance of the fugitive-slave law, his reply was, in the words of the Prophet: "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" Such was now the unuttered answer of the people in the free States to the ultimatum put forward by the slavery conspirators.

PLAYING TO BORDER-STATE GALLERIES.

Yet all this tragic farce over "peace" propositions was but a play to the galleries of the border States. The conspirators knew how their demands would be met in the
free States, and they had calculated that the rejection of their terms would throw Virginia, and they believed other of the border States, into the arms of their rebellion; when they would need only to raise the flag of an independent South, whose cotton scepter should bring the whole commercial world, including hated New England, to their feet.

NOTHING BUT SEPARATION.

Judge Summers, one of the most eminent of the Peace Commissioners, declared in his speech at Wheeling, in 1863, that on the part of the Southern men in that Commission separation was a foregone conclusion. "I saw enough," he said, "during the brief stay in Washington, while the Peace Conference was in session, to convince me that those Southern leaders would be satisfied with no amendment to the Constitution, no guaranty that could be given. Some of them, indeed, said before the war commenced—before the secession of Virginia: 'You may give me a sheet of white paper and let me write it out myself, and I will not agree to it.' Nothing but separation would satisfy them."

Edward McPherson, in the preface of his Political History of the Rebellion, remarks: "It is difficult for a candid person to escape the conviction that adjustment was hopeless—revolution being the predetermined purpose of the reckless men who had obtained control of the State machinery of most of the slave-holding States."

DISUNION PERDUE.

A definite purpose in the South to separate from the North had long been entertained by leading men. The
American system, as called by Clay, for the protection of domestic industries against foreign, was hateful to the South, whose dependence on coarse agricultural staples, employing only the rudest labor, did not require and was supposed to be prejudiced by such a system. The conception that the South might become the home of great manufacturing industries had not entered the thought of Southern statesmanship, which was blinded to everything greater or better by its devotion to the slave system of labor applied to the production of staples from the soil.

The first threat of disunion ever made was by Pierce Butler, of South Carolina, in the first Congress, in 1789. He declared it was "as sure as God is in the firmament." Richard Henry Lee, grandfather of Gen. Robert E. Lee, wrote in 1790: "When we (the South) attain our natural degree of population, I flatter myself that we shall have the power to do ourselves justice with dissolving the bond which binds us together." Hon. Nathan Appleton, member of Congress in 1832-33, wrote afterwards that when in Congress he made up his mind "that Calhoun, Hayne, McDuffie and others were desirous of a separation of the slave States into a separate confederacy as more favorable to the security of slave property."

A STORY BY FRANK THOMAS.

Some South Carolinians attempted a demonstration at Washington about 1835. Ex-Governor Francis Thomas, of Maryland, told about it in a speech at Baltimore, in October, 1861. The Southern Congressmen held a meeting one morning in a committee-room after the hour for assembling; and missing them from their seats and being
asked why he was not in attendance on the "Southern caucus," Mr. Thomas, who had not been invited, went to the committee-room and "found that little cock-sparrow, Pickens, of South Carolina, addressing the meeting and strutting about like a rooster around a barn-yard, discussing the following resolution:

Resolved. That no member of Congress representing a Southern constituency shall again take his seat until a resolution is passed satisfactory to the South on the subject of slavery.

"I determined at once," said Thomas, "to kill the treasonable plot, hatched by John C. Calhoun, the Cataline of America, by asking questions." He obtained permission to take part in the discussion, and asked what they proposed to do next, with a lot of other inconvenient questions which none could answer. He finally moved an adjournment of the caucus sine die, and being seconded by Craig, of Virginia, the motion carried. The caucus had been proposed by Rhett, of South Carolina. An anti-slavery speech by Mr. Slade, of Vermont, had been the immediate provocative.

About 1850 a paper called "The Southern Press" was started in Washington, to present the advantages of Disunion and advocate the organization of a Southern Confederacy to be called the "United States of the South."

VIRGINIA TESTIMONY.

The writer of the "Sketch," in Vol. I, Hagans' West Va. Reports, intimates that the Macchiavellian hand was at work in Virginia as far back as the shaping of the Constitution of 1850-51; and the feature of that instrument
permitting conventions to be called without authority of a popular vote was the work of men who had sinister purposes remotely in view—a part of "that vast combination," the writer calls it, "of well-laid plans which had been maturing for thirty years."

Samuel McDowell Moore, a Union member of the Richmond Convention of 1861 from Rockbridge County, made a speech in the Convention in which he produced the documents of the fire-eaters for the twenty years preceding showing that the disunion movement had been secretly cherished and fulminated all that time and even longer. Mr. Moore had been in the Convention of 1829-30. He spoke by the card, and his remarks produced intense exasperation among the conspirators. The mob in the streets made all preparations to burn him in effigy, and only by a trick were prevented. Sherrard Clemens was to have a similar compliment at the same time; but O. Jennings Wise, who had crippled Clemens in a duel, felt that in view of his own avowed part with the conspirators his honor was involved in preventing this insult to his victim. He made a speech to the crowd to dissuade them, and while he held their attention the effigies were spirited away.

William T. Joynes, a native Virginian resident at Petersburg, in testifying before the Joint Committee on Reconstruction, in February, 1866, said:

Originally the number of secessionists in the State was very small. The first time I ever heard any man say that he desired the dissolution of the Union was during the session of the Democratic convention at Petersburg which nominated Mr. Letcher in 1859. I confess I was very much shocked at it, and I said to the gentleman: "Is it possible?" And he said, with
some vehemence "Yes," that he wished "the Union might go to
finders before to-morrow morning." The next time, so far as I
recollect, that I heard the declaration was from old Mr. Ruffin,
which was some time in 1860. He killed himself after the sur­
render of General Lee. Said I: "Mr. Ruffin, are you in the habit
of expressing opinions of that kind?" "I have been in that
habit," said he. "for ten years."

It will be recalled that it was Mr. Ruffin, old and
white-haired, who touched the match to the opening gun
fired at Sumter in the dawn of that fateful April 12, 1861.

MENE TEKEL UPHARSIN.

But this definite purpose to separate from the North
was always in abeyance while the South was in control of
the national administration, and so long as they felt con­
fident of their ability to maintain their domination. They
could always depend on a large party in the North who
sympathized with their antagonism to a strong centralized
Union; and they could count on the timidity of the purely
commercial interests of that section to defer to any bluster­
ing demands they might make to maintain control. But
at last, in spite of these elements of weakness in the North
—in spite of broken compromises, subservient national
legislation and judicial prostitution—the Southern politi­
cians between 1856 and 1860 began to discern faint out­
lines of the hand-writing on the wall. As the anti-slavery
feeling in the North—intensified, strengthened, consoli­
dated by the events beginning about 1845—manifested its
growing power, it began to clearly appear that with Bu­
chanan's term would end the ascendancy of the slavery
régime at Washington; that the Democratic party was
about to lose its supremacy and the South its dominion over the Republic. That wing of the Democratic party in the South which had always dictated its attitude towards slavery, which had long been prepared for a rupture the instant its grip on the Government was broken, helped on this contingency by dividing the counsels of the party in the convention at Charleston. Thus when the three parties got their tickets into the field in the summer of 1860, the inevitable result was revealed as by a flash. Then, definitely and at last, the conspirators in the Cotton States threw off the mask they had so loosely worn and declared their defiance of the North, their contempt for the Union, their purpose not to abide the result of the election if it should be adverse to their candidate. "In a day—in an hour almost—" wrote Frances Ann Kemble, an Englishwoman, in London, in January, 1863, "those stood face to face as mortal enemies who were fellow citizens of the same country, subjects of the same government, children of the same soil; and the North, incredulous and amazed, found itself suddenly summoned to retrieve its lost power and influence, to assert the dignity of the insulted Union against the rebellious attempt of the South to overthrow it."

SOUTHERN POLITICAL ARCHITECTURE.

All plans for disunion and the setting up of a Southern government looked to a purely aristocratic structure on a slave foundation. The Southern scheme had first been by spreading their institution all over the public domain and compelling government protection in the free States, to give slavery a national standing; a purpose
clearly outlined by Calhoun and supported by the Dred Scott obiter dictum. All these plans were based on the "great truth" afterwards discovered by Alexander H. Stephens, that "the negro is not equal to the white man and that slavery is his natural and normal condition." Mr. Chestnut, of South Carolina, had some years before described the negro as the "mud-sill" of Southern society. He resolved the economic problem into the very simple proposition that capital should own labor; and on this mud-sill of subject-labor was to be reared the graceful structure of a Southern society and government. By the time the conspiracy had culminated, the application of these theories to the North had been found impracticable, and Southern statesmen were looking to the establishment of a separate slave republic in the South. The failure of Southern plans to possess all the territories, the check to the formation of new slave States, due to the wonderful growth and energy of the North, spreading out and possessing the public domain, embittered the Southern conspirators and gave edge to their hatred of the free North and to their schemes for separation and retaliation.

The Virginia convention of 1861 had a committee on "constitutional reforms," with Alexander H. H. Stuart, as chairman. Through this committee an effort was made to eliminate from the State constitution such democratic features as free suffrage. Even the mixed basis had not sufficed to keep the vulgar non-slaveholding whites from acquiring an unpleasant degree of power and influence. Something further was needed. Some of the committee's conclusions were stated in a report made by Mr. Stuart, from which is this extract:
In the opinion of your committee, no system of government can afford permanent and effectual security to life, liberty and property which rests on the basis of unlimited suffrage. In the South, all who are in a condition of servitude are necessarily excluded from the exercise of political privileges, and the power of the country is wielded by the more intelligent classes, who have a permanent interest in the well-being of society. Slavery also constitutes an effectual barrier against that tendency to antagonism between labor and capital which exists in the North. There capital is the casual employer of labor and interested in diminishing its wages. Here capital is the owner of labor and naturally seeks to enhance its rewards. [!]

Concerning this proposed restriction on suffrage, *De Bow's Review* for November, 1861, took up the question in an elaborate article on "The Perils of Peace." The editor said:

The obvious danger of an immense Yankee immigration which will paralyze the Border States at the ballot-box unless such restrictions are placed upon the right of suffrage as will prevent them from ever voting, are painted in letters of light. We have often referred to this danger as one which if we no not provide against it will render all the blood and treasure expended in this war entirely profitless.

The Richmond Whig, early in 1863, referred to the "Yankees" as being "in open and flagrant insurrection against their natural lords and masters, the gentlemen of the South. When they are again reduced to subjection," observed the Whig, "we must take care to put such trammels about them that they will never have an opportunity to play these tricks again."

Robert Barnwell Rhett said at Charleston:

It is no experiment that free government existed in slave-holding countries. The republics of Rome and Greece were built on domestic slavery. But it is an experiment to maintain free government on universal suffrage.
De Bow's, in October, declared that the maxims of "the greatest good to the greatest number" and "the majority shall rule" are "pestilent and pernicious dogmas." "The institution of a Senate and hereditary executive," it said, "is the political form best suited to the genius and most expressive of the ideas of Southern civilization."

ALL FOR SLAVERY.

Some of the old secessionists at this late day would like to make the world believe their revolt was solely in vindication of the State sovereignty dogma—dead as that dogma now confessedly is—not in behalf of slavery. This might impose on some of the later generation not familiar personally with the circumstances attendant upon the opening and prosecution of the rebellion or the conditions in the slave States which led up to it; but the claim is contradicted by all the facts. Without going back of 1861, it is sufficient to note that every demand in behalf of the South bore the same burden of greater safe-guards for slavery where it existed and the extension of its prerogative into the territories and free States. This pretense insults the public intelligence. The truth was frankly confessed in the Richmond convention by Haymond, of Marion, in his two days' speech on taxation. In answer to the question, as he put it, What has involved Virginia in the position to make it necessary for her to consider whether she shall longer remain in the Union? Mr. Haymond said: "It is not with a view of prejudicing the institution of slavery—for I am a slave-holder myself to a limited extent—that I answer that all has grown out of the
institution of slavery. It is alone the dangers which threaten that institution that has made it necessary for Virginia citizens to come together and consider solemnly whether the protection and safety of her interests as connected with that institution do not make it necessary for her to destroy the Union."

In the South Carolina convention, in December, 1860, declaring the "justifying causes of secession," Lawrence M. Keitt said he was "willing to rest the issue of disunion upon the question of slavery. It is," he said, "the great central point from which we are now proceeding."

It is slavery that has made the Southerners rebels to their government, traitors to their country and the originators of the bloodiest civil war that ever disgraced humanity and civilization.

So in 1863 wrote Frances Ann Kemble to a friend in England. She was the wife of a Georgia planter; had lived on his rice and cotton plantations at the mouth of the Altamaha, and had written a journal of her experiences there.

Mr. Preston, of South Carolina, one of the commissioners to the Virginia Convention, declared that "Southern civilization could not exist without African slavery." Leonard W. Spratt, of the same State, wrote that the South was "now in the formation of a slave republic;" and he advised the South to avow and affirm slavery "not as an existing fact, but as a living principle of social order, and assert its right not to toleration only, but to political recognition among the nations of the earth. If, in short," he adds, "you shall own slavery as the source of your
authority and act for it, and erect, as you are commissioned to erect, not only a Southern but a slave republic, the work will be accomplished."

Alexander H. Stephens, Vice-President of the Confederate States, in an address at Savannah, March 21, 1861, in explanation and vindication of the Confederate constitution, said that instrument had put at rest forever the question as to the "proper status of the negro in our form of civilization. This was the immediate cause of the late rupture. Jefferson in his forecast had anticipated this as the rock upon which the old Union would split. He was right." Mr. Stephens also said: "The corner-stone of the Confederate government rests upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery is his natural and normal condition. This stone, which was rejected by the first builders, is become the chief stone of the corner in our edifice."

The Richmond Convention's committee on Federal relations, in their report of March 9th, took substantially the same ground. Every proposition submitted by the Peace Conference, in Crittenden's resolutions, by the Congressional caucus—every proposition submitted by anybody anywhere at this period as a condition on which the South would submit to the election of Lincoln and remain in the Union—was a recognition of the dogma respecting the negro thus bluntly stated by Mr. Stephens, and looked to the aggrandizement and supremacy of slavery. Yet John Goode, a relict of the Virginia Convention of 1861, and president of another Virginia Convention this year of grace, 1901, tried in 1900 to make the world believe that
the rebellion was not undertaken by Virginia in behalf of slavery—only in vindication of the abstraction of “State sovereignty.”

THE IRREPRESSIBLE CONFLICT.

The *London Times* article from which we have previously quoted, went to the heart of the controversy over which the South and North had at last been brought face to face—the irrepressible conflict between two systems of civilization under one government. The *Times* saw the question as it appeared to the whole world outside of the South:

Between the North and the South, there is this moment raging a controversy which goes as deep as any controversy can into the elementary principles of human nature and the sympathies and antipathies which in so many men supply the place of reason and reflection. The North is for freedom, the South for slavery. The North is for freedom of discussion; the South represses freedom of discussion with the tar-brush and the pine faggot. Slavery used to be treated as a thoroughly exceptional institution—as the evil legacy of evil times; as a disgrace to a Constitution founded on the natural freedom and independence of mankind. But the United States became possessed of Louisiana and Florida; they have conquered Texas; they have made Arkansas and Missouri into States; and these successive acquisitions have altered entirely the view with which slavery is regarded. Perhaps as much as anything, from the long license enjoyed by the editors of the South of writing what they pleased in favor of slavery with the absolute certainty that no one would be found bold enough to write anything on the other side and thus make himself a mark for popular vengeance, the subject has come to be written on in a tone of ferocious and singular extravagance which to a European eye is absolutely appalling. The South has become enamored of her shame. Free labor is denounced as degrading and disgraceful;
the honest triumphs of the poor man who works his way to independence are treated with scorn and contempt. It is asserted that what we are in the habit of regarding as the honorable pursuits of industry incapacitate a nation for civilization and refinement, and that no institutions can be really free and democratic which do not rest, like those of Athens and Rome, on a broad substratum of slavery.

DICKENS' PORTRAYAL OF SLAVERY.

Slavery was one of the things Charles Dickens came to America to study in 1842; and after examining the institution at short range, he told the world in American Notes what he thought of it. He divided owners into three classes. Here is his estimate of the second:

The second consists of those owners, breeders, users, buyers and sellers who will until the bloody chapter has a bloody end breed, use, buy and sell them at all hazards; who doggedly deny the horrors of the system in the teeth of such a mass of evidence as was never brought to bear on any other subject and to which the experience of every day contributes its immense amount; who would at this or any other moment gladly involve America in a war, civil or foreign, provided that it had for its sole end and object the assertion of their right to perpetuate slavery and to whip and work and torture slaves, unquestioned by any human authority and unassailed by any human power; who when they speak of freedom mean the freedom to oppress their kind and to be savage, merciless and cruel; and of whom every man on his own account in Republican America is a more exacting and a sternier and less responsible despot than a Caliph Haroun al Raschid in his angry robe of scarlet.

EXUENT DON QUIXOTE.

This is the way American slavery looked to the outside world. Not so to those who were conspiring to promote and perpetuate it. They were looking to Utopia; and
through the glow of an imagination inflamed by a century of irresponsible rule, they saw themselves, like the knights of the feudal age, standing on the neck of a prostrate race, and rising on the view they beheld the splendor of a new and unexampled chivalry; which, disdaining the sordid considerations attendant on the details of trade and industry—the vulgar perplexities that grow out of the relations of employer and employed in free society, where labor is paid for—could devote its refined attention to the exercise of political direction, on the one hand, and to polite life and social felicity, on the other. But the award of the sword, to which they appealed, was against these budding aristocrats. From these dreams of social and political efflorescence, invested by their fancy with amaranthine bloom and immortal fragrance, how rude the awakening! Where now are these heralds of the new order of a slave-founded chivalry in America? How is it with them now, only forty years after they were about to enter upon the rearrangement of social and economic order? In the picturesque words of Carlyle, applied to greater figures in history, they are “gone into the night. They are all gone; sunk—down, down, with the tumult they made; and the whirling and the trampling of ever new generations passes over them; and they hear it not any more forever.”