American drama in antislavery agitation, 1792-1861

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AMERICAN DRAMA IN ANTISLAVERY AGITATION, 1792-1861

by

John Daniel Collins

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Department of Speech and Dramatic Art in the Graduate College of the State University of Iowa

February, 1963

Chairman: Professor Donald C. Bryant
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INTRODUCTION

Few subjects have been so closely scrutinized as the Civil War and those events which led up to the outbreak of hostilities between the North and the South. Stanley M. Elkins, for instance, has pointed out that the institution of slavery itself has been so thoroughly discussed that it seems difficult to believe that any more could be said. It is especially "hard to imagine major veins of primary material lying still untapped." The attack on slavery also has been extensively studied from every conceivable point of view. Yet, from 1792 to 1861 there appeared a sizable number of American plays which, either directly or obliquely, joined the antislavery debate, but which have never been the subject of a detailed discussion. The terminal years 1792 and 1861 have been chosen because the first play (although in this case it was not an American play) which included antislavery sentiment was seen by an American audience for the first time in 1792, and because, since persuasion can operate best when there is some freedom of choice, it seemed appropriate to end the study when the South no longer had the opportunity to emancipate without coercion. This dissertation is a study of the relation of those plays to the agitation against slavery and of the part they played in the movement as purveyors of antislavery arguments and sentiments.

Lorenzo Dow Turner's survey of Anti-Slavery Sentiment in American Literature Prior to 1865 dealt with many of the plays which
are included in this study, especially those published after 1845. Yet, because Turner attempted to include all forms of literature, he was forced to be brief in his discussion of the drama, and to consider only generally the ways in which the playwrights used the various arguments to appeal to their audiences. This is seen, for instance, in his summary of the arguments advanced between 1850 and 1861:

Of the many arguments used against slavery . . . those based upon moral, religious, and sentimental grounds were the most numerous, and by the very nature of their appeal, were capable of influencing the greatest number of people; yet strong pleas for the abolition of slavery as a social, economic, and political necessity were not wanting.  

This study attempts to formulate the major arguments exploited by the antislavery playwrights with more precision, and, at the same time, to show more specifically how those arguments were related to the movement as a whole.

By far the most attention has been given to Uncle Tom's Cabin or to the drama as it reflects the Civil War itself. Civil War History, for instance, devotes its entire September 1955 issue to the Civil War theatre in a major effort to fill in much of what had been lacking in previous histories on that subject. William R. Reardon discusses the effect of the war on the formal organization of the theatre, while O. G. and Lenyth Brockett show how the contemporary drama treated the events of the war. Willard Welsh is primarily concerned with the theme of the Civil War found in post-war drama, al-
though he does touch upon such plays as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Dred*, *Neighbor Jackwood*, *Ossawattomi Brown*, and *The Honorable Anodyne Humdrum*—plays which will also be discussed in this study. In addition, he mentions the pro-slave drama, such as *The Old Plantation; or, The Real Uncle Tom* (which will not be discussed in this study), along with the "neutral" treatment of slavery, as found, for instance, in *The Octoroon* (which will be included in this paper in so far as it was interpreted as an antislavery document). William Reardon and John Foxen⁶ include in this same issue of *Civil War History* a study of the propaganda play, in which they discuss the effect *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had on the subsequent form of propaganda drama. Although they devote much of their attention to an analysis of twentieth century propaganda drama, many of the ideas concerning the form of the abolition drama included in my own study are developed from their analysis. Finally, R. B. Harwell⁷ considers the Confederate theatre—or at least the Richmond stage—in this effort to expand the knowledge of the Civil War theatre.

A recent work by Edmund Wilson (*Patriotic Gore; Studies in the Literature of the American Civil War*)⁸ also surveys the general field of literature, although Wilson devotes much of his attention to the war years or post-war years. In his discussion of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, he is interested in the novel, and not the stage adaptations (although he does note the chronological changes made in Aiken's version). However, he continues to interpret Mrs. Stowe's treatment of the South as sympathetic; an interpretation which will be examined in this
Wilson also discusses John T. Trowbridge, but he is concerned with Trowbridge's post-war travel books about the South, and not with his pre-war novel and stage adaptation, *Neighbor Jackwood*.

Similarly, J. C. Furnas's popular *Goodbye to Uncle Tom* is primarily concerned with the novel. He joins the so-called "Negro debate"--a debate which has been raging at least since the eighteenth century--in an attempt to debunk the myths surrounding the Negro race. He is especially critical of Mrs. Stowe's treatment of Uncle Tom. Richard Moody, in his "Uncle Tom, the Theatre and Mrs. Stowe," conveniently summarizes the stage history of the many versions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* during the 1850's, and goes on to indicate the extensiveness of "Tom shows" after the war. Harry Birdoff earlier devoted an entire book to the stage history of "the world's greatest hit." Yet, in none of these studies have the authors dealt with the specific relationship between the whole body of plays and antislavery agitation, especially in terms of how the plays furthered that agitation.

Reginald V. Holland's doctoral dissertation ("The American Theatre as a Form of Public Address") does include *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and its relation to the antislavery movement among plays which seek to persuade audiences to take action on various issues. However, his primary concern is to establish a method "by which the theatre of public address may be examined" in the attempt to show "that the theatre of public address has a definite place in the study of American drama in
and for itself; that it has served a realistic function in American social and political thought." The present study is not as concerned with establishing the legitimacy of such drama as it is in showing how a specific body of drama operated within a particular movement; how it was related to specific arguments used in the movement; how it reflected the development of ideas and organizational changes; and, finally, how it functioned in itself as a form of public address. Although this last point is not the primary concern of the study, portions of several chapters touch upon the means by which the playwrights exhibit their arguments, and the final chapter is especially devoted to an assessment of the plays as functioning public address. The Reardon-Foxen analysis of propaganda plays and Ross Scanlan's doctoral dissertation, "Drama as a Form of Persuasive Communication," provide the frame for that discussion.

The corpus of antislavery plays, especially for the period after 1845, has been well established by such literary historians as Turner and Arthur Hobson Quinn. Studies of more restricted periods of drama and regional histories of the theatre were also helpful in adding to the list of antislavery plays, particularly for the "middle period" of 1820-1840. Many of these plays, however, have been lost, and frequently the only indication that they were in fact opposed to slavery is the title or the context of the work in which they are mentioned. All of the extant plays which, according to these historians, include antislavery sentiments have been examined for this study. In
addition, in order to establish the corpus of early antislavery drama, the American plays included in Three Centuries of English and American Plays 16 were examined (and, as a result, some not previously recognized as "antislavery" were located).

For my construction of the context and significant features of the antislavery movement in its many interrelated aspects, I have drawn upon the body of recent excellent historical writing. In my interpretation of the abolition drama I have made especially heavy use of Gilbert H. Barnes, The Antislavery Impulse, 1830-1844; Avery O. Craven, The Coming of the Civil War; David Donald, Lincoln Reconsidered; Dwight Lowell Dumond, Antislavery Origins of the Civil War in the United States; Stanley M. Elkins, Slavery; A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life; Clifford S. Griffin, Their Brothers' Keepers; Moral Stewardship in the United States, 1800-1865; Allan Nevins, Ordeal of the Union and The Emergence of Lincoln; Russel B. Nye, Fettered Freedom: Civil Liberties and the Slavery Controversy, 1830-1860; and William R. Taylor, Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character.

The term "antislavery" is generic, and is used in this study to refer to those authors who, however indirectly, indicate an opposition to slavery. Within the antislavery movement itself, however, there were considerable doctrinal differences, and these differences are often reflected in the dramas. In this more technical sense, then,
"antislavery" refers primarily to those who advocated the gradual emancipation of the slaves while "abolition" is a term reserved for the more militant antislavery group who advocated immediate emancipation. A further term, "colonization," refers to the position of those people who claimed they opposed slavery, but who desired to see the freed slaves resettled outside of the United States. Before the 1830's most of the people who opposed slavery were "gradual emancipationists"; that is, they believed that slaves should not be freed unless they had been thoroughly prepared for freedom. After the 1830's many of the antislavery hosts continued to adhere to the doctrine of gradual emancipation, and many, including Harriet Beecher Stowe and Abraham Lincoln, continued to advocate colonization. However, those who became most closely identified with the antislavery movement—especially in the popular mind—were the radical abolitionists who preached the immediate emancipation of slaves. The plays included in this study generally reflect this doctrinal shift.

Most of the plays which were devoted exclusively to the attack on slavery were written after 1845, and many of them can be considered as antislavery "tracts"—an extension of antislavery propaganda in dramatic form. Propaganda drama, as such, can be at least partially distinguished by its purpose and form, a distinction which is developed by Reardon and Foxen in their study:

'It's purpose is to arouse an audience to action through incidents arousing fear and hate (or an emotion allied to hate) without permitting the
fear and hate to be resolved within the play itself. Thus with the end of the propaganda play there remains an element of the resolution (indeed in some instances no resolution whatsoever is given), which is still alive and yet to be acted upon.17

This definition alone—without taking into consideration "doctrinal" differences—would serve to distinguish the early "antislavery" plays from the "abolition" drama which appeared after 1845. Based on both of these characteristics, the following plays are considered in this study as propagandistic in nature: the anonymous The Captured Slave (1845); Mrs. Sophia Little's The Branded Hand (1845); Daniel S. Whitney's Warren (1850); Harriet Beecher Stowe's The Christian Slave (1855); William Wells Brown's The Escape (1858); Lydia Marie Child's The Stars and Stripes (1858); the anonymous The Honorable Anodyne Humdrum (1860); and the English play, Wilfred and Mary (1861), by Theodore St. Bo', included in this study for purposes of contrasting certain elements of the "escape plot" plays.

While not exclusively propagandistic, there were other plays written during the 1850's which attacked slavery, and which are thus included in this study. George L. Aiken's version of Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852) (which is the only extant adaptation of Mrs. Stowe's novel, outside of her own play, The Christian Slave) was advertised as "Abolition Dramatized"18 shortly after the play began its record-breaking run at Captain Purdy's National Theatre in New York. John Brougham's adaptation of Mrs. Stowe's second antislavery novel, Dred (1856), also
retains much of the opposition to slavery found in the novel, and is considered in this analysis.\textsuperscript{19} J. T. Trowbridge's adaptation of his own novel, \textit{Neighbor Jackwood} (1857), includes an attack on the Fugitive Slave Act and an appeal for the "higher law" (which was an integral part of the antislavery doctrine) and is thus included in the corpus of antislavery drama. Mrs. J. C. Swayze's apology for Captain John Brown in her play \textit{Ossawattomi Brown} (1859) is also related to abolitionism, and will be discussed. Finally, even the avowed "non-partisan" drama, \textit{The Octoroon} (1859), by Dion Boucicault, has certain elements which cause it to be considered antislavery in nature, and has been included in the body of works to be studied.

The plight of \textit{The Octoroon}, in fact, is indicative of the attitude during the 1840's and 50's. After the growth of militant abolitionism it was impossible to write a play which was only "generally" antislavery or included antislavery sentiments only incidentally, as was the case in many of the early dramas. For instance, because George Jamieson believed that \textit{The Octoroon} attacked the institution and thus threatened the solidarity of the Union, he wrote his own play, \textit{The Old Plantation; or, The Real Uncle Tom}. Jamieson, "an excellent all-around actor," had become "famous in his day especially as a Negro character actor," and, in fact, played Pete in the original cast of \textit{The Octoroon}.\textsuperscript{20} Perhaps considering himself an expert on the Negro character, he advertised his role (Uncle Tom) as "the only
truthful stage type of the Southern plantation negro." His concern for the preservation of the Union is also indicated in the advertising slogan: "Union! Union! Union!" Not only did Jamieson attempt to defend the institution of slavery, he attacked the abolitionists. The New York Herald reported, shortly after the play opened in New York on March 1, 1860, that "the plot turned upon the forcible abduction of a quadroon slave by a Yankee abolitionist, who is a thorough scamp, but who gets the worst of it in the end."²¹ Jamieson's play is only one of several which took the pro-slavery side of the debate raging throughout the 1850's. Since this study is specifically concerned with antislavery drama, however, such plays are not included. Nor are the many minstrel shows and parodies of the more famous antislavery plays discussed. Only those plays which have touched upon the main stream of antislavery agitation have been included in the corpus of anti-slavery drama.

This is not a stage history of the antislavery drama. However, many of these plays were produced. The dates of production for the early plays are included in the text, since these plays are dealt with chronologically—as opposed to the topical arrangement of the later plays. Of the thirty-three early plays mentioned in the text, all but six have known dates of production. There are no known production dates for six of the later abolition plays: The Branded Hand, The Captured Slave, Warren, The Stars and Stripes, The Honorable Anodyne Humdrum, and Wilfred and Mary. Some of these plays may not
have been intended for production. The extensive use of visions in *The Branded Hand* and the somewhat "non-dramatic" structure of *Warren* may have precluded staging, even if it were desired. Mrs. Child's play, *The Stars and Stripes*, was published in an abolition magazine, and was perhaps meant only as a dramatized propaganda tract. There is certain internal evidence that *The Captured Slave* was, or was meant to be, produced—perhaps before a Buffalo audience, while St. Bo's preface indicates that he at least intended his play for production. The anonymous *Humdrum* was apparently never performed, although it is an extremely clever piece of political satire, and might well be effective even today.

The other abolition dramas were staged, although Mrs. Stowe's *The Christian Slave* and Brown's *The Escape* were heard only in public readings. The success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, of course, was phenomenal. Even before Mrs. Stowe's serial in the *National Era* had ended and the novel was published (in March 1852), a dramatized version had been seen at the Baltimore Museum in January. C. W. Taylor's adaptation appeared in New York, August 24, 1852, a month before the version by George L. Aiken began its one hundred night run at the Troy Museum, New York, on September 27, 1852. Clifton W. Tayleure's pro-Southern version was seen in Detroit, October 2, 1852, and a month later H. J. Conway's pro-Southern version was seen in Boston. An early adaptation also appeared at John B. Rice's theatre in Chicago, December 13, 1852.
On July 18, 1853, Captain A. H. Purdy opened the Aiken play (considered by Montrose J. Moses as the one which may "be truly regarded as the stage version of Uncle Tom's Cabin") at his National Theatre, and thus began the "war of the cabin's." By early 1854 there were three other versions available to New York audiences, including the pro-Southern adaptation by H. J. Conway at Barnum's American Museum. The Bowery Theatre began its production January 16, 1854, with T. D. "Daddy" Rice--a famous Negro impersonator--in the featured role. Christy's Minstrels was the first such group to burlesque the play, but there were several imitators. Odell's history of the stage in New York indicates that the play was available at some theatre at some time of the year every year from 1852 to the beginning of the Civil War.

Throughout 1853 and 1854 other cities were exposed to Uncle Tom. Philadelphia had two versions simultaneously in the fall of 1853; Boston saw the original Howard Company cast in July 1854 in the first leg of an extended tour which took the Howards to Baltimore, Washington and St. Louis; Cincinatti witnessed a pirated version by Col. Robert E. J. Miles in December 1853; and Robert Marsh's Company toured western New York state shortly after the Howards left Troy. Stock companies also performed the play in Cleveland, Salt Lake City, and San Francisco. The Marsh Company was one of the earliest road shows, and Moody indicates that "Tom shows" were playing under canvas even before the Civil War. "Yankee" Robinson was manager of one such show out of
Dayton, Ohio, while others were based in Carbondale, Pennsylvania; Kalamazoo, Michigan; Oneida, New York; and Williamsport, Ohio.\textsuperscript{23}

Mrs. Stowe's second antislavery novel, \textit{Dred}, also precipitated something of a "war" during the fall of 1856. C. W. Taylor's non-extant dramatization of the novel opened at the National Theatre in New York and achieved a five-week run, September 22 to October 25, 1856. The original cast included as Tom Tit, Cordelia Howard, who had gained fame as little Eva. Meanwhile, John Brougham (whose extant antislavery adaptation is discussed in this study) dramatized the novel for the stage of his Bowery Theatre, and opened a two-week run on September 29, 1856. T. D. Rice portrayed Tom Tit in this adaptation. Finally, P. T. Barnum got into the act on October 16, 1856 with Conway's pro-Southern dramatization.\textsuperscript{24}

J. T. Trowbridge first saw his novel, \textit{Neighbor Jackwood}, on stage (his own adaptation) in New York on May 4, 1857. Odell indicates that the play had "a considerable run." Trowbridge's home town of Boston saw the play two years later, March 16, 1859. Boucicault's \textit{The Octoroon} also achieved a relatively long run for the times. It was seen almost continually in New York City from December 5, 1859 to March 15, 1860. Mrs. Swayze's play, \textit{Ossawattomie Brown} (or, as it is listed in Odell, \textit{The Insurrection; or, Kansas and Harper's Ferry}) was not a success, although it was staged in New York December 17, 1859, two weeks after Brown was hanged.\textsuperscript{25}
In light of all this activity, and in light of the sizable number of antislavery plays, it would seem profitable to examine these plays as rhetorical phenomena, to determine how they worked as vehicles for promoting the antislavery cause—how they were related to the general antislavery movement, the kind of arguments they emphasized, and the manner in which the formal elements were adapted to persuasive ends. While antislavery drama accounts for only a small portion of the total number of American plays, importance is not always a matter of numbers. Uncle Tom's Cabin itself was one of the most influential plays in American drama. Not only was it important in its own right as an abolition document, but, according to Reardon and Foxen, it influenced the pattern of all subsequent propaganda drama.

The other plays, while not so successful as Uncle Tom's Cabin, are indicative of one of the major functions of American drama. The antislavery movement was only one of several reform movements which swept the United States during the nineteenth century, and drama also served to popularize and propagandize many of these reforms. The Drunkard, for instance, was another highly successful propaganda play, while even the antimasonic fever which came to its climax in the 1830's was celebrated on stage. In turn, however, these "reform" plays are manifestations of the underlying moral and didactic nature of much of American drama. Thus, in a sense, this examination of antislavery drama is but a chapter in a more general study of the reform drama of
America; or, from another point of view, it is but a single manifestation of the many ends which persuasive drama might serve.

This study moves along a general chronological pattern in Chapters I to IV, as it relates the early antislavery drama to various "waves" of popular interest and as it brings out the major arguments and appeals exploited by the early playwrights. From about 1820 to 1840--the "middle period" of the antislavery movement--the plays indicate the general unsettled condition of the movement and of the country at large. After the militant abolitionists establish themselves as the major spokesmen for the antislavery movement (discussed in Chapter V), the plays are taken up in a topical pattern to show (in Chapter VI) the major themes which were used in the drama--the sin of slavery and the slave power conspiracy--and to show how these themes were related to the characterization of the Southerner. The kind of material which was selected to represent the condition of slavery is examined in Chapter VII, and the way in which abolition drama exploited the Fugitive Slave Act for propaganda purposes--especially in relation to the slave power conspiracy--is discussed in Chapter VIII. The position of the Negro in abolition drama is considered in Chapter IX, while Chapter X suggests the purpose served by the various exemplary characters found in abolition drama. Finally, in Chapter XI, the way in which the plays themselves functioned as a form of public address will be considered.
FOOTNOTES: INTRODUCTION


13. Ibid., p. 12.

14. Ross Scanlan, "Drama as a Form of Persuasive Communica-


17. Reardon and Foxen, p. 282.


19. H. J. Conway's version of Dred is extant, but, because of its pro-Southern proclivity is not included in this discussion of the antislavery drama. The New York Tribune noted that Conway had produced "an entertaining play," but by "discarding the story of the book" it had little to do with the intentions of the author. The Tribune was especially critical of the farce made of the character of Tom Tit, played at the American Museum by Barnum's famous freak, General Tom Thumb:

We beg leave . . . to enter our protest against his "statuary exhibitions" in the last act. Even had Tom Tit enjoyed the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with Ajax, and Cupid, and Hercules, he had too great a sense of propriety to take off his clothes and give miniature versions of those worthies. (Quoted in Odell, VI, 566).

Barnum had, in fact, taken a similar position on the slavery debate in the earlier "war of the cabins." Again using H. J. Conway's adaptation of Uncle Tom's Cabin (which is not extant) he advertised the drama as representing "Southern Negro SLAVERY AS IT IS," exhibiting "a true picture of negro life in the South, instead of absurdly representing the ignorant slave as possessed of all the polish of the drawing room, and the refinement of the educated white." (Quoted in Birdoff, p. 89). William Lloyd Garrison was highly pleased with the Aiken version, but considered Conway's play an attempt to further the argument that Southern slavery was paternalistic:

To make amends for the manner in which the New York theatres have set the South at defiance, and the
humanity they have inculcated, Barnum has offered the slave-driver the incense of an expurgated form of Uncle Tom's Cabin. He has been playing a version of the great story at his Museum, which omits all the strikes at the slave system, and has so shaped his drama as to make it quite an agreeable thing to be a slave. "Verily, he will have his reward." (Liberator, December 16, 1853; quoted in Birdoff, p. 88).


23. For the stage history of Uncle Tom's Cabin in the 1850's see Moses, pp. 608-13; Birdoff, pp. 107-114; Moody, pp. 31-33, 102.

24. Odell, VI, 557-58, 566.

Before the American Revolution most of the antislavery agitation had been conducted on an individual basis, and exerted little influence.

There were no antislavery societies and no antislavery newspapers or magazines before the Revolution. There was little of any sort of printed antislavery material, except occasional expositions, sermons, or remonstrances, published and privately distributed to small and select numbers of people.*

The impulse which led to the American Revolution was accompanied by an increased awareness of the slave's plight, and the hope grew that emancipation could occur, at least gradually. Louis B. Filler explains that "the spirit of the times seemed to favor an expansion of civil and other liberties," including those of the slave. Further, the part which was played by the Negro in the Revolution aided his cause, for this was the time "regarded as the most favorable era in Negro-white relations." And it was a time when playwrights, imbued with the revolutionary fervor, began to make use of the drama as a vehicle for the case against slavery.

By 1792 thirteen abolition societies had been established, from Massachusetts to Virginia, and emancipation had been accomplished, or was underway, in Vermont, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and in the Northwest Territory. Nevertheless, there was obviously much work to be done. One
of the major objectives of the individual and organized efforts toward the extension of liberty was to achieve emancipation by state legislation (gradual emancipation was advocated by most, immediate by a few radicals), or at least to persuade individual slave owners to manumit their slaves. Another objective was to oppose, by legal means, if possible, the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793. Most of the activity of the abolition societies during this time, however, went into the attempt to suppress the foreign and domestic slave trade (this last point also encompassing the prevention of slavery in the territories).

These objectives aroused more controversy and action in the 1790's than had been seen before in the history of antislavery. At a meeting in Danville, Kentucky, in 1792 David Rice was inspired to deliver a speech considered by one student as "the most comprehensive indictment of slavery to that time, one of the finest of all times." The attempt, furthermore, to execute the demands of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 often resulted in public fury against the officers of the law, as in Boston, or in increased pressure in the Halls of Congress to allow the issue of slavery to be debated, an unusual event in itself.

Philadelphia was a hot-bed of such antislavery activity, and in Philadelphia an American theatre audience first saw the case against slavery brought to the stage. Thomas Southerne's Oroonoko is
not, of course, an American drama, but it did have certain obvious and immediate significance to the contemporary audience. That there were high hopes for the ability of drama to help accomplish abolition is indicated in the preface to the Bell's British Theatre edition, published in 1796, the same year the play was seen for the first time in Boston. The editor declared that "the performances of Oroonoko should have dealt 'a death blow to that most infernal of all commerce, the traffic of our Fellow Creatures.'" Although the play had been introduced in this country in 1783, it was performed before an audience largely made up of British soldiers, stationed in New York City, and was not seen there again until 1832. Ten years later the Kenna family came to Philadelphia, as the "New American Company," established themselves in the rather appropriately named Northern Liberties Theatre, and gave the first performance of Oroonoko in Philadelphia, April 30, 1792. A year before the 1796 Boston production, the play was seen at the Charleston City Theatre, February 14, 1795.

A Philadelphia barber is remembered for being the first American playwright to extend antislavery agitation from the platform and pulpit to the stage. John Murdock, the author of The Triumphs of Love; or, Happy Reconciliation, was one of many Americans hoping to create a national literature. He writes in the Philadelphia Gazette, February 24, 1796, that "occasionally visiting the theatre,
I was, at times, much disgusted, to see and hear pieces performed, so foreign to the circumstances of a republican people." This circumstance prompted Murdock "to throw his ideas into a proper train to produce a drama, which would be more consonant to the ears of Americans."\(^8\) That Murdock "threw his ideas together is supported by the critical comment by Arthur Hobson Quinn, who asserted that "his play is as formless as it well could be."\(^9\) Nevertheless, Murdock had been moved by the spirit of the times, and had received the approbation of the leading Philadelphian abolitionists. The play was printed soon after its production on May 22, 1795, and among the list of seven hundred subscribers were to be seen the names of many members of the local abolition society, including the name of its second president, the famous physician, Dr. Benjamin Rush. Professor Quinn's criticism, however, had been anticipated by the review of the play which appeared in Benjamin Franklin Bache's *Aurora and General Advertiser*, on May 25. The reviewer points out, for instance, that "the plot wants interest and incident" while the author "wants that knowledge of the stage, necessary to succeed in dramatic composition." He goes on, however, to point to one of the characteristics of this period of antislavery. One of the major objectives, as we have seen, was the attempt to persuade individual slave owners to manumit their own slaves, an objective which was accomplished, in large part, through appeals to their humanitarian feelings. Thus, Murdock
is congratulated for having "interwoven sentiments that do honour to the writer's heart, both as a man and as a citizen"; sentiments which show "the writer a man of feeling."  

The play itself aims at this objective. After freeing his slave, Sambo, George Friendly, Jr. indicates the exquisite pleasure to be derived from such an act: "Tell me, ye sensualists, what are all your luxurious gratifications, compared with the exalted mental sensations of doing a generous act? Would to heaven I could as easily liberate our fellow-citizens, who are slaves in Algeria" (III.i.53). That Murdock believes the appeal to such sensations can lead to the desired action more effectively than can the more usual forms of antislavery propaganda is indicated in an earlier speech. After going over a list of accomplishments which include singing, dancing, and fiddle playing, Sambo adds that he also thinks (which was, in itself, a refutation of a favorite pro-slave position, one which will be taken up in "The Negro Debate"). In fact, Sambo "berry often tink why he slave to white man; why black folk sold like cow or horse. He tink de Great Somebody above no order tings so." After Sambo exits, George, who has overheard his slave, remarks on the effect of Sambo's speech:

Be softened as thou wilt, still, slavery, thy condition is hard. The untutored, pathetic soliloquy of that honest creature has more sensibly affected me than all I have read or thought on that barbarous, iniquitous slavetrade.

George is so moved, in fact, that he decides to free Sambo, thus portraying on stage one of the major objectives of the anti-
slavery movement. Sambo re-enters and George puts the question to him: "Sambo, suppose you had your liberty; how would you conduct yourself?" Sambo is dubious: "Ah, Massa George, you no ax Sambo dat for true." But Sambo is mistaken: "Yes, Sambo, I do; and from this moment you are free. You may remain with me upon wages, or go where you may think yourself more happy." George is able to witness the fruits of his magnanimous act, for Sambo goes into "a reverie--then becomes extremely elated; jumps about; kisses the skirt of his master's coat; kisses his hand," and he hears Sambo exclaim, "O Massa George, I feel how I neber feel before. God bress you. (Cries.) I must go, or my heart burst" (III.1.51-3). It is the portrayal itself which makes the appeal effective--at least in terms of eighteenth century humanitarianism. Further, Murdock hits upon one of the major reasons for employing the drama as a vehicle for antislavery sentiment. In order to "sensibly affect" George Friendly (and, by extension, affect the members of his audience) Murdock is chiefly interested in creating a situation which will bring about strong emotion. It is, in fact, for this reason the critic compliments Murdock; it is for this reason he is considered a "man of feeling."

It was most appropriate that Murdock chose a Quaker for his hero. The Quakers had begun the organized effort toward individual manumission, and had become famous for their quiet determination to rid their sect of slavery. For instance, one of the most publicized mass manumissions had occurred in 1771, when the father of
Robert Pleasants, a Virginia Quaker, had attempted to free his slaves. Restrictions against such an act, however, had resulted in litigation which was still in the courts in 1792. It was not until 1800 that Pleasants was able to execute the will, at which time he freed eighty slaves of his own, after providing them a means of making a living on his own land. Murdock did not have to go so far afield, however, to find a model for his hero. Warner Mifflin, another Quaker, and also originally from Virginia, was well known in Philadelphia as a radical abolitionist and pacifist. In fact, he was very much in the news throughout the 1790's. He had submitted a memorial to Congress in November 1792, protesting against both the foreign and domestic slave trade. A heated debate followed, in which "his petition was denounced as unconstitutional, mischievous, disturbing to the harmony of the Union, and likely to precipitate insurrections among the slaves." 12

The difficulties encountered by such Quakers as Robert Pleasants in attempting to free their slaves, and the problems posed by setting loose on society a group of uneducated, despised Negroes, were also touched upon by Murdock. After being freed, Sambo goes out on the town, and comes home reeling drunk.

Liberty and quality, for eber and eber. Caesar, Pompey, and I, had drom fine frolic upon a trent of our become free. Caesar massa, forget to put him in a book dat make him free; and de good Quaker foke buy Pompey free. (Reels). Drom Caesar heart, he make me drink too much.--Sambo feel berry sick. Eh, eh, eh--house go round like a wholagig. (Holds fast by the scene).
George and his friend, Careless, witness this spectacle, and, after George carries Sambo off to bed, the skeptical Careless remarks, "so much for against liberating those people. The greatest number of them, after they are set free, become vicious." George sincerely hopes not. At any rate, "that, by no means, authorizes their being detained in a state of slavery. Much is to be said in favour of them, for their want of education" (III.ii.68-69). Murdock, like most enlightened eighteenth century antislavery supporters, was far from convinced that freedom for the slave would in itself solve all problems.

By far the greatest amount of energy of the abolition societies during the 1790's and the early 1800's went into the suppression of the foreign and domestic slave trade, as they agitated for both state and national legislation. Although the Slave Trade Act of 1794 is considered by Dumond "a feeble attempt to assist Britain and France in suppressing the trade to their colonies," the movement against the trade was important, "above all," Miss Locke believes, because "it furnished a legitimate outlet for anti-slavery energy in connection with a national cause." Had it not been for the agitation which centered upon this issue, "the national conscience might have gone to sleep for almost a score of years. . . . It was in fact the 'entering wedge' for the anti-slavery sentiment behind it." 

The chain of events which led to the passage of the act and called into existence the first nationally organized abolition group
began on March 23, 1790, when Congress resolved to limit the African slave trade. Because no action was taken, however, on December 8, 1791 nine local societies petitioned Congress to execute the resolution. Congress still refused to act, and in 1793 the New York Manumission Society called for a national convention of abolition societies in Philadelphia in order to secure the desired action. Accordingly, the delegates convened on January 1, 1794, to decide upon a plan of action, to prepare memorials to state and national legislations, to circulate propaganda among the local societies and general public, and to establish a system of regularly scheduled meetings of the societies. The address to the citizens of the United States from this convention had been prepared by Benjamin Rush, Warner Mifflin, and Isaac H. Starr and, naturally enough, alluded to "the principles of the American Revolution and to the incongruity of slavery in a land which based her own liberty on the rights of man."15

Most plays written during this period which included anti-slavery sentiment alluded to a similar incongruity. John Murdock, in fact, also referred to the situation which called forth more anti-slavery plays than any one single event until the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, when, after freeing Sambo, George Friendly went on to say: "Would to heaven I could as easily liberate our fellow-citizens, who are slaves in Algiers" (III. i. 53). Americans had been enslaved in Algiers, and a storm of protest arose in the country. The American navy was established to protect its citizens, and the jingoists penned
one of the most memorable war slogans of our history: "Millions for
defence, but not one cent for tribute." Abolitionists, however, were
quick to seize upon the incongruity of the matter. Warner Mifflin,
for instance, in his 1793 expostulation to Congress said:

I profess freely, and am willing my profession was
known over the world, that I feel the calls of human­
ity as strong towards an African in America, as to an
American in Algiers, both being my bretheren; especially
as I am informed the Algerine treats his slaves with
more humanity.16

Piracy was the economic and political foundation of the Bar­
bary states, and it was their custom to send out three cruises a year,
between April and November, to enrich their coffers. As early as July
1785, Algerian corsairs, on one such cruise, netted twenty-one offi­
cers and men aboard the "Maria" from Boston, and the "Dauphin" from
Philadelphia. Although negotiations by the Continental Congress were
begun the following year, little progress was made, and the new govern­
ment promised stronger measures. On December 30, 1790 President Wash­
ington proposed that steps be taken to insure the captives' release,
and a committee on the matter soon reported that "American interests
in the Mediterranean could be protected only by a naval force."17

By 1794 the number of American slaves had increased to 115
and in America the reaction was strong. The situation was debated in
Congress, the newspapers were full of protests, and several patriotic
organizations were formed to relieve the prisoners. Early in 1794
the bill to create an American navy finally passed, though only by
two votes. Irwin points out that support for the Navy came from New England; "southern members were, with few exceptions, its enemies." Three days before the bill became law (March 27, 1794), Philadelphia's "first" "Benefit for American Citizens, Captive in Algiers" was held at Wignell and Reinagle's newly opened Chestnut Street Theatre. The performance at this time was *Everyone Has His Fault.* Three months later, however, a new play, devoted to this burning issue, was produced.

Susanna Haswell Rowson, the author of *Slaves in Algiers; or, A Struggle for Freedom,* had been discovered by Wignell on his tour to England in search of talent for the new Philadelphia company. Although Mrs. Rowson had spent her childhood near Boston, her family was forced to return to England during the Revolution since her father, a lieutenant in the British navy, maintained his allegiance to the king. The move brought financial hardship, however, and Susanna turned to literature to help regain some of the losses. Between 1788 and 1792 she published several novels, including *The Inquisitor* (1788) and *Charlotte Temple* (1791). The latter novel, when republished in Philadelphia in 1794 became America's first best seller, and went through over one hundred editions, the last appearing early in the twentieth century. In 1792 Mr. Rowson's hardware business went bankrupt, and both he and his wife and Rowson's sister Charlotte turned to the stage. They were appearing in Edinburgh when Wignell saw them and hired them for his Philadelphia company.
Slaves in Algiers glorifies republican virtues, and the American slaves, inspired by the blessings of liberty, manage to overthrow the Dey of Algiers. At the end, when the Christian slaves are victorious, and Muley Moloch, the Dey, has been subdued, Sebastian somewhat bitterly remarks, "by the law of retaliation, he should be a slave." Rebecca's reply, however, points to the incongruity which the abolitionists were exploiting: "By the Christian law, no man should be a slave; it is a word so abject, that, but to speak it dyes the cheek with crimson. Let us assert our own prerogative, be free ourselves, but let us not throw on another's neck, the chains we scorn to wear" (III. vi. 70). Like many of the later abolitionists of her own sex, Mrs. Rowson was also a feminist, and combined both interests. Earlier in the play, Fetnah complains about being a slave to Muley Moloch. Her friend and fellow-slave, Selima, however, cannot understand how she can be so set against the customs of her own country. Fetnah explains that she had been influenced by a female American captive; "it was she who nourished in my mind the love of liberty, and taught me, woman was never formed to be the abject slave of man. Nature made us equal with them, and gave us the power to render ourselves superior" (I. i. 9).

Although Quinn finds it "remarkable . . . to hear abolition sentiments expressed on the stage," Mrs. Rowson had used another form to express such sentiments. In her earlier novel, The Inquisitor, which had been published in Philadelphia in 1793, she included a
chapter entitled "The Slave," which the critic in the *Monthly Review* considered to be in the "best manner" of Stern's *Sentimental Journey*, upon which she modeled the work. He goes on to say that "there are many pathetic traits which speak to the heart, and are drawn from nature: they are extremely affecting, when we forget the ring." The ring referred to was worn by the "Rambler," and was able to make him invisible—a feature which is considered "a trick so artificial, as at once to disgust the more rational reader." In the slave episode, Mrs. Rowson follows the pattern used by countless numbers of later writers. The Rambler watches as the African is torn from his family by European slave traders, through the middle passage to the West Indies, where he sickens and dies "without one tear of affection or regret being shed upon his bier." His soul, however, "shall appear white and spotless at the throne of Grace, to confound the man who called himself a Christian, and yet betrayed a fellow-creature into bondage.”

Following the premier performance on June 30, 1794 (thus preceding Murdock's *Triumphs of Love* by one year), *Slaves in Algiers* was seen on December 22, and again, in Baltimore, on November 26, 1795. It was performed by the Old American Company (as *Slaves Released from Algiers*) in Boston on January 8, 1796, in New York on May 9, and in Hartford on August 24. Mrs. Rowson remained with the Philadelphia company through the 1795-96 season, and, in fact, appeared as Hannah Friendly in Murdock's *Triumphs of Love*. In September 1796, however,
the Rowsons joined John B. Williamson's Boston Theatre company, and while there Mrs. Rowson was seen as Olivia, in *Slaves in Algiers*. Only weeks later Mrs. Rowson appeared in her last role on stage, and she finished her years as the proprietress of a fashionable Boston girls' school. 26

Perhaps inspired by Mrs. Rowson's success, John Hodgkinson altered Bickerstaff's popular afterpiece, *The Sultan*, renamed it *The American Captive*, and produced it at New York's John Street Theatre on February 29, 1796, immediately following the company's return from Boston. Mrs. Rowson, in fact, was seen as Ismene during her Boston season, on November 14, 1796. 27 Hodgkinson, however, was not the only one to follow Mrs. Rowson's lead. At least two other works of fiction appeared in 1797, both using the same theme, and both referring to what they consider the hypocrisy of their own country. The narrator in Royall Tyler's *The Algerine Captive*, Dr. Updike Underhill, was a surgeon on a slave ship bound for Africa (which was later captured by Algerian pirates.) He was, however, repulsed by conversations in which human beings were considered no better than cattle and by his thoughts which pictured the separation of man and wife, of mother and babes.

```I execrated myself for even the involuntary part I bore in this execrable traffick; I thought of my native land, and blushed. . . .```

An even more bitter denouncement appeared in the anonymous *American In Algiers; or, the Patriot of Seventy-Six in Captivity*. Here the ex-Algerian slave points to America with scorn:
Eternal God! And is this freedom's land,
Where whip is law, and mis'ries' wings expand?
Are these the men who spurn'd despotic pow'r?
And drench'd their swords in haughty Albion's gore?
Freedom, avaunt! your sweets I'll never crave,
If this is Liberty, oh! let me be a slave.

It was, in fact, during this same year of 1797 that William Smith of South Carolina complained of the "entering wedge" being forced against the foundations of the "peculiar institution" which he defended. On January 30, 1797, a petition signed by the manumitted slaves Jacob Nicholson, Jupiter Nicholson, Job Albert and Thomas Pritchett was presented to the House of Representatives, in which they prayed for the relief of their "fellows in complexion" held in unconstitutional bondage:

We cannot conceive their condition (more especially those who have been emancipated and tasted the sweets of liberty, and again reduced to slavery by kidnappers and man-stealers) to be less afflicting or deplorable than the situation of citizens of the United States, captured and enslaved through the unrighteous policy prevalent in Algiers.

During the debate which followed—an unusual circumstance in itself—Smith pointed out that previous petitions had been returned unopened to the senders, without even being allowed to remain on file. "To encourage slaves to petition the House," he said, "would have a tendency to invite continual applications. Indeed it would tend to spread an alarm throughout the Southern states; it would act as an 'entering-wedge,' whose consequence could not be foreseen."

Meanwhile, the situation in the Mediterranean had worsened.
Although Joel Barlow and his agent in Tunis, Joseph Famin, thought they had secured a six month truce from the Bey of Tunis, beginning June 15, 1796, Tunisian corsairs captured the schooner "Eliza" at about the same time, and the Bey demanded a $10,000 ransom for the American ship and nine-man crew. Thus, the next play to deal with the Barbary pirates is set in Tunis.

This play, *Slaves in Barbary*, by David Everett, is really the most outspoken antislavery drama of the decade, which perhaps accounts for the fact that it was not produced, although it was published in *The Columbian Orator*. Everett did, however, write for the stage, and his *Daranzel; or, the Persian Patriot*, was produced in Boston in 1800. Irwin, in his study of American diplomatic relations with the Barbary states, remarks that although Hamuda Pasha, the Bey of Tunis, was an absolute ruler, "he nevertheless appears to have secured a firm hold on the affections of his subjects." Everett, in fact, maintains this point of view, and portrays Hamet, the Bashaw of Tunis, as something of a humanitarian and "model slaveholder." The plot involves two Venetian brothers who had been slaves of the cruel Oran, but who find themselves suddenly the property of the Bashaw himself. Ozro is suspicious of all Turks (who, of course, made up the ruling class during this entire period), but his brother, Amandar, is more charitable: "Tunis, of all the states of Barbary, is famed for its refinement. Every Turk is not an Oran. I think I have heard the Bashaw noted for his humanity." Ozro is not convinced:
"That ruler has but an ill title to humanity, who suffers his subjects to traffic in the dearest rights of man, and shares himself the execrated commerce." Amandar then reminds Ozro not to be quite so self-righteous, in a speech which has obvious implications for America (and which are made more explicit later): "True, my brother. But let us remember our native Venice. We have seen the Turk sold there in open market, and exposed to all the indignities which we have borne with Oran" (I.ii.105). In fact, their own brother, Francisco, once interceded for a "noble souled" Turk, and managed to release him from servitude. Happily, it turns out that this Turk is Hamet, himself, and he is thus able to return the favor. Everett supplies two examples of Bashaw's compassion. When the new lot of prisoners is brought in, he tells the guard to see to it that they "are treated with humanity. Ill-fated men! their lot is miserable indeed. 'Twere almost just to rise above the laws, and give them all their freedom" (I.iii.108). Later, when the first lot of slaves is sent up to be sold, there are a number "with broken legs, arms, &c., and a number more with mortal wounds." Oran offers four hundred sequins for the whole, "scarce the price of one good-able-bodied slave." Hamat, however, intercedes:

These unfortunate men are the objects of compassion, not of unfeeling sarcasm. Raise their price to five hundred, and charge them to my account. Servants, see them removed to the hospital. Let a surgeon be employed to heal their wounds, and restore them to health. (I.ii.110)

It is thus not Hamet, but Oran, who is the villain of the
piece, and in one scene he utters the kind of pro-slave argument which, in later dramas, will be expressed by Southerners:

He who frees a slave, arms an assassin. The Bashaw may learn this to his sorrow. Let him look to that.... The Bashaw may be as ostentatious as he pleases of his boyish pity: thank fortune, I am not so tender-hearted. No: dominion is the right of man. The love of power is planted in his nature. But all men can't be kings. If there are lords, there must be slaves. And what must be is right. Let moralizers murmur at the doctrine: their arguments are slender threads; feeble as those, who spin them out from lovers' dreams, and children's notions. What is justice without power? The slave's ideal friend; whom he would wish to break his chains; on whose credit, he would establish universal government; then dissolve connexion, and shut his partner up in prison. (II.i.108-109)

Everett includes the first dramatized slave auction—a scene which is to become a regular feature in anti-slavery plays. The crier announces the auction, complete with exclamation marks:

At half an hour from this time! will be sold at public auction! to the highest bidder! prisoners of all colours! sorts and sizes! lately captured! on the Mediterranean! and brought fresh into port! warranted free from sickness and wounds! also, a considerable number! a little damaged! by musket shot! and cannon balls! and careless handling, with long knives and broad swords! and for want of wholesome air! on easy terms for the purchasers. (I.iv.108)

Apparently Everett, unlike Mrs. Rowson, does not pronounce a blanket condemnation of slavery; in certain cases it seems quite proper. For instance, one lot of slaves is made up of some effeminate noblemen. Zanga, a sea captain, asks Gorton, another captain: "These, I sup-
pose, are your champions, that took shelter in the hold, with their seafaring brethren, the rats, when you fought them?" The auctioneer has no luck with them: "One! two! three! Just going for--nothing."

One of the purchasers remarks: "Precisely what they are valued at, at home. You know, captains, these men of the feminine gender, don't pass very current with us. You would do well to exchange them for ballast, or fresh water." Nevertheless, he breaks down and offers "one hundred sequins a piece for them" (II.ii.110).

In another example of rather labored poetic justice, Everett drives home the point which has been referred to throughout this chapter--the incongruity of a slaveholder declaiming on the rights of man. One of the captives to be sold is the American slave owner, Kidnap, and an officer relates a dream he had overheard while Kidnap was a prisoner on his ship:

He was in a very companionable mood last night. He must have thought himself at home: poor man, I am almost sorry for his delusion. In his social glee, he ordered six dozen of port, gave Liberty and Independence for a toast, sung an ode to Freedom; and after fancying he had kicked over the tables, broken all the glasses, and lay helpless on the floor, gave orders, attended by a volley of oaths, to have fifty of his slaves whipped thirty stripes each, for singing a liberty-song in echo to his own; and six more to be hung up by the heels for petitioning him for a draught of milk and water, while he was revelling with his drunken companions. Then waked up, and exclaimed, Oh happy America! farewell forever! Justice! thou hast overtaken me at last.

Kidnap's Negro slave, Sharp, was also taken prisoner, and the roles
are about to be reversed. Hamet asks the African if his master had
been kind to him; if he would wish to continue to live with him.

Sharp replies:

No, masser planter! he get drunk! he whip me!
he knock a me down! he stamp on me! he
will kill a me dead! No! no! let a poor negur
live wid a you, masser planter; live wid a
masser officer; wid a dat man; or any udder
man, for I go back America again; for I live
wid a massa Kidnap again.

The philanthropic Hamet assures Sharp that nobody will harm him here,
and to prove his concern, he orders the officer to deliver Kidnap
"to the highest bidder. Let misery teach him, what he could never
learn in affluence, the lesson of humanity." On the other hand, Sharp
is considered a good buy by the auctioneer:

Here is this honest negro lad, who has been
under the benevolent instruction of a task-
master, and converted to Christianity by
lectures applies to the naked back with a
rope's end, or nine-tail whip. He is bred
to his business; you will find him an ex-
cellent purchase. (II.i.112-115)

One of the bidders recognizes his worth and buys him for four hundred
sequins. Another purchaser complains that this price is too high -
"you will raise the price of slaves above their profit." The new
owner, however, has his reasons: "He is trained to his business: I
intend to put his old master under his instruction, that he may occa-
sionally have the advantage of a whip-lecture from his former slave,
whom he has treated so kindly." The other purchaser sees immediately
the appropriateness of this solution: "Perfectly right, Sir. Every
dog must have his day" (II.ii.115).

While Kidnap is not a major character in the play, he does afford a convenient contrast to another "man of feeling," Hamet. With such contrasting characters, Everett is thus able to dramatize one of the major positions taken by those who opposed slavery in the eighteenth century. Almost all such advocates believed that emancipation would have to be gradual. Meanwhile, however, it was the duty of the master to see to it that his labor system was operated as responsibly as possible. The example put forth--the model slaveholder--would, like Hamet, see to it that the sick were cared for, and that justice would be done them. On the other hand, Kidnap's dream indicates the criticism leveled against those masters who selfishly accepted the system of slavery while giving liberty and independence a toast.

While slavery may be a necessary evil, Everett seems to say at this point, there is no need to accept the dehumanizing position of Oran, who considers the belief in the rights of man to be "tender-hearted."

The last slave sold turns out to be the long lost brother of Ozro and Amandar, Francisco--the same man who had years before freed Hamet from slavery in Venice. When Hamet recognizes him, there is a tearful reunion, after which all the brothers are freed. He tells them that a ship will return them to their native land, and concludes the play with the moral: "Let it be remembered, there is no luxury so exquisite as the exercise of humanity, and no post so honorable as his, who defends THE RIGHTS OF MAN" (II.ii.118).
During this busy year of 1797 there were two other productions, apparently on similar themes, although the plays have been lost. Seilhamer records a production in Boston of Mrs. Cowley's *Day in Turkey* on March 22, 1797; a play which had apparently been seen earlier with the title of *Liberty Restored*. The cast of characters indicates some of the typical names for such a play: Mustapha, Muley and Ismael often appear. During this same week, in Philadelphia, Mrs. Merry was seen on her benefit night in *The Ransomed Slave* (March 29), a play which was apparently adapted to the current events by her husband from his own play, *Lorenzo*, which had been seen earlier at Covent Garden Theatre. 35

Not only were antislavery men intent on curtailing the foreign slave trade, they were also eager to halt the domestic trade, especially as it related to the debate over territorial expansion. In March 1798 the organizing bill for the Mississippi territory, similar to the Ordinance of 1787, came up for consideration in Congress, and an amendment was introduced which attempted to limit the introduction of slavery into this territory. During the debate, the New England Federalist, James M. Varnum, one of the few in favor of the amendment, made use of the Algerian situation when he said that he "looked upon the practice of holding blacks in slavery in this country to be equally criminal with that of the Algerines carrying our citizens into slavery." 36 The discussion over this amendment was short, however, and only twelve voted in its favor. The results were indi-
cative of the general decline of interest in antislavery agitation which occurred around the turn of the century.

This decline of interest in antislavery is perhaps reflected in the dearth of plays written after 1798. It would be ten years before another play with antislavery sentiments was published. The last play of this early period, The Captive, by Charles Stearns, the pastor of the church and preceptor of the Liberal School in Lincoln, Massachusetts, was included in a large collection of Dramatic Dialogues for the Use of Schools, published in 1798. While this little piece was intended to illustrate the virtue of compassion, it does include some of the features already seen in previous plays. It includes, for instance, something of a slave auction--slave trading might be more appropriate--and it makes use of some of the typical antislavery arguments. In addition, it foreshadows to some extent the attack on the historical precedent for slavery, which was one of the favorite pro-slave positions, since it is set in ancient Greece.

Damartis explains to her friend, Climene, that she has never been able to recover from the loss of her whole family which occurred during the last siege of their city by the Spartans, six years ago. In order to relieve her sorrow, she is contemplating buying a slave. Climene is shocked: "Would you deal in that inhuman traffic?" Damartis explains, "not to make any one miserable but to make one happy--I would treat her as mine own child. Then I would pray to the Gods for mine own poor child in captivity" (I.1.115-16). It so
happens that Climene does know of someone who wants to get rid of an extra slave—it seems that the beautiful slave girl Melissa is distracting the son of Tryphena, Philander. With this knowledge, Damartis has the advantage in the haggling—conducted much like that between two housewives at the greengrocer's.

Damartis. What do you ask for her?

Tryphena. She is worth at least twenty-five Attic talents.

Damartis. I shall not give that for her, for a reason that has been told me (Melissa hides her face) and for which you want to get rid of her— I will give you twenty, and no more.

Tryphena. Were it not for the circumstance you mention—you should not have her for thirty, and even more.

The bargain is struck, and Melissa makes ready to move again—only one more change in the whole series of moves which she has experienced in her six years of slavery. As she enters the House of Damartis for the first time, with her little bundle of clothing, she laments the plight of the slave:

How many sweet maidens, the hope of prosperous families, are sold into slavery—how many widows mourn the loss of their husbands... As for me, wretched I am, and wretched I must be. Since I became sensible of the loss of liberty—everything looks dark about me. Earth is a dungeon, and the sky frowns on me from above—bo't and sold like a beast—0 wretched, bitter slavery—Is there no remedy but death. (III.i.119)

Fortunately for Melissa, there is a happy solution, for she turns out to be the long lost daughter of her present mistress; and,
since she is no longer considered a slave, she will be free to marry
her love.

The first major wave of popular interest in antislavery was
ending. Attendance at yearly meetings of the American Convention
fell off, and by 1803 the only states which regularly sent delegates
were New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware. By 1806 the
formerly strong Pennsylvania society was so discouraged that it was
almost ready to suspend activity. Another indication of the de­
cline of interest is seen in the number of general antislavery works
published. Miss Locke, for instance, includes over forty pieces of
antislavery literature for the period between 1790 and 1800, while
between 1800 and 1810 only a dozen works, including some only remote­
ly concerned with antislavery, were published. By the same token,
the first "wave" of antislavery plays corresponds to this first major
period of antislavery activity.

There were several reasons for this decline. For one thing,
peace negotiations with Algiers and Tunis had been successful, at
least temporarily, and the American captives in Algiers had been re­
leased in June 1796. Although this issue would be revived later
by dramatists for the same purpose as in the 1790's, the immediacy
of the situation was removed for the time being. An even more impor­
tant reason for the lack of antislavery agitation during the late 90's
and early 1800's was the fear of slave insurrections. As early as
July 4, 1791, George Buchanan, in An Oration upon the Moral and Polit-
ical Evil of Slavery, delivered before the Maryland Abolition Society, had pointed to this danger:

What then, if the fire of Liberty shall be kindled amongst them? What, if some enthusiast in their cause shall beat to arms, and call them to the standard of freedom? Would they not fly in crowds, until their numbers became tremendous, and threaten the country with devastation and ruin?

Hark! Methinks I hear the work begun, the Blacks have sought for Allies, and found them in the wilderness; they have called the rusty savages to their assistance, and are preparing to take revenge of their haughty masters.

When he published this speech in 1793, Buchanan included a footnote at this point: "This was thrown out as a conjecture of what possibly might happen, and the insurrections in St. Domingo tend to prove the danger, to be more considerable than has generally been supposed, and sufficient to alarm the inhabitants of these States." Indeed, Herbert Aptheker indicates that even the most responsible of leaders, including George Washington, Harrison Gray Otis, Charles C. Pinckney, Albert Gallatin, and Henry Lee "flatly asserted that agents on . . . St. Domingo were sowing seeds of revolution among the Negroes." The fear of an invasion from St. Domingo, either independently or at the request of France, to be accompanied by a general uprising of the slaves in the South, was so strong that it "gave occasion for a special congressional legislation in the session of 1797-98," and "was a factor in the rearmament program of the federal government from
1797 to 1799. Even the Slave Trade Act of 1794 had been in large part inspired by this fear. Although the relation between this fear and the alien and sedition laws of 1798 is beyond the scope of this study, and has, to my knowledge, not been investigated, it seems quite possible that playwrights might have been considered encouraging such slave revolts and might well have been prosecuted under these laws. Certainly Warner Mifflin's remarks in 1792 had been considered by some as "likely to precipitate insurrections among the slaves," and Everett's Slaves in Barbary is no less strong in sentiment. Finally, Gabriel's uprising in Virginia created hysteria throughout the South, and ushered in "a long period of turbulence," which never really subsided, at least in Virginia.

Thus, from the first major wave of antislavery agitation, American drama reflects and extends antislavery sentiment. The plays were prompted by the same Revolutionary impulse which led to such activity, and were related to all the major objectives of the antislavery advocates. Further, the decline of such drama acts as a gauge of the general decline (if not violent reaction) of popular interest in such agitation at the turn of the century. It will be seen in subsequent chapters that the drama continues to reflect each wave of popular interest and, at the same time, is exploited by antislavery propagandists. It should also be noted, in light of the shift we will see in the attitude toward the Southerner, following
the growth of militant abolitionism, that the attacks on slavery during this period are highly general in nature. Indeed, to use the Mediterranean as the major locale for such antislavery plays as there were, is to essentially remove the discussion from our own shores, although there were obvious domestic parallels to be drawn. However, the playwrights were not attempting to castigate any particular section, and, in many plays, the possibility of a humane slaveholder was accepted. Obviously George Friendly had not been a cruel master, Hamet Pasha of Tunisia is portrayed as a humanitarian, in spite of the hundreds of slaves he owns, and Damartis (in Stearn's The Captive), explains that she wants to buy a slave in order to make it happy. Such attitudes, as we shall see, are drastically revised after the 1830's. However, we should note that the playwrights suggest certain practical solutions for the problem of slavery. The major appeal in these plays is directed toward the slaveholder: it is to be hoped that he will be moved to such an extent that he will manumit his slaves--one of the major objectives of the antislavery agitation. Another major goal--bringing the slave trade to a halt--is emphasized in those passages which point out the incongruity of American complaints about the Barbary slavery while men are held in bondage on our own shores.

Not only does this first "wave" of plays reflect a growing concern about slavery, but the drama itself has come to operate as an integral force in the revolutionary impulse toward extending the
rights of man to all. While the actual number of such plays is relatively small, it nevertheless indicates one of the major functions of American drama. Thus, just as the drama was employed before and during the American Revolution to agitate for independence, as in John Leacock's *The Fall of British Tyranny; or, American Liberty* (1776), it now continued to serve in the attempt to make use of all media of persuasion. Indeed, in creating situations calculated to move men of feeling, the playwright has at his control one of the most potent of the media.
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER I


4. Dumond, Antislavery, p. 61; see also Marion G. McDougall, Fugitive Slaves, 1619-1865 (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1891), p. 35.


10. Quoted in preface to Murdock, The Beau Metamorphized, p. xvi. See also Locke, p. 3.

11. Even as late as 1825 the Quakers were still being considered by some as the major advocates of antislavery, even though by then abolition sentiments had been for many years widespread. For instance, in a play by Perkins Howes, The New England Drama (Dedham, Mass.: H. & W. Mann, 1825), Jane Elton, an orphan girl who had been befriended by a Quaker, Robert Lloyd, speaks in praise of the humanitarian Friends:

    Is it not the Friends that have been foremost
    and most active in efforts for the abolition of
slavery? Among what people do we find more reformers of the prisons--guardians of the poor and the oppressed--most of those who "remember the forgotten, and attend to the neglected--who dive into the depths of dungeons, and plunge into the infection of hospitals"? (IV.1.43)

12. Quoted in Dumond, Antislavery, p. 76; See also Locke, p. 37.


15. Locke, pp. 142, 101. These meetings were held until 1832, and it was as a delegate to this convention that William Dunlap travelled to Philadelphia in 1797. His connection with anti-slavery will be discussed in Chapter II. See also Dumond, Antislavery, p. 78.

16. Quoted in Locke, p. 95.


18. Ibid., p. 68.


20. Pollock, p. 207. R. W. G. Vail points out that the play had been altered for this performance by William Rowson, the prompter at the Chestnut St. Theatre, and husband of Susanna Haswell Rowson, author of Slaves in Algiers. See Susanna Haswell Rowson, the Author of "Charlotte Temple" (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1933), p. 7.

22. Vail, p. 6; Seilhamer, III, 143.


24. Quoted in Vail, p. 94.


31. Ibid., 2021.

32. Irwin, p. 86.


34. Irwin, p. 5.

35. Seilhamer, III, 344; Pollock, p. 332.


38. Locke, pp. 109-110. While I have been unable to learn how extensively this collection circulated among the late eighteenth century New England schools, it was apparently only one of several such works, used primarily to teach "rhetoric." "It has often been observed," Stearns points out, "that where there have been
in the same town, schools on the same footing in other respects, yet some have had exhibitions and others not, that the schools in which there have been exhibitions, have not only excelled in the point of exhibitions but in every other. The modest nymphs or swains by practising in rhetoric will soon acquire polite manners, for they will often personate the most polite characters." (p. 25)

39. Irwin, pp. 74, 88.


42. Dumond, Antislavery, pp. 76, 114.
Chapter II
THE SLAVE TRADE: 1803-1812

The work begun in the 1790's would not be complete until the Constitutional restriction against the slave trade (which had been delayed twenty years from the time of ratification) had been put into operation. Although there was little public concern over the matter—and we can gauge this by the lack of theatrical activity—the hard core of abolitionists continued the work. Those most concerned with the situation—the Negroes themselves—managed to obtain a revision of the 1794 Slave Trade Act when a group of free Negroes from Philadelphia, under the leadership of Absolom Jones, petitioned Congress for tighter controls of the slave trade. Furthermore, a bill which considerably strengthened the earlier act was approved May 10, 1800.¹

It was not until after 1803, however, that the first major period of activity of the nineteenth century occurred. After the annexation of Louisiana, in 1803, South Carolina officially reopened its ports to the slave ships. This brought immediate reaction. According to Miss Locke, "it is evident that the action of South Carolina in removing her prohibition aroused an anti-slave sentiment which was becoming somewhat languid."² The continued agitation over this issue "must have done much to promote the passage of the prohibitive act of Congress in 1807."

The antislavery men took two lines of action. While they
attempted to halt the foreign slave trade, they also tried to prevent Louisiana from becoming a slave territory, hoping to extend the restrictions of the 1787 Ordinance. However, in spite of the activity of the American Convention of Abolition Societies, in March 1805 the entire territory of Louisiana, regardless of latitude, was given the privilege of importing slaves from within the United States, thus following the Mississippi precedent rather than the Northwest restriction. The effort to outlaw the slave trade was more successful. In addition to the bills introduced by Congressmen, state legislatures increased the pressure on their elected representatives. Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Ohio, for instance, requested that national action be taken against the slave trade. Finally, President Jefferson's message to Congress on December 2, 1806 called for the end of the slave trade, and Senator Bradley of Vermont introduced the bill which ultimately became law on March 2, 1807. The following year the United States joined with Britain in outlawing the slave trade.  

As the time for national action on the slave trade drew near, antislavery propaganda increased, as did public interest. The most prolific and influential propagandist during this period was Thomas Branagan, an ex-slave trader and plantation overseer turned penitent. Shortly after the reopening of the South Carolina ports he began publishing his series of antislavery works (spanning the years 1804-1807), which were, according to Dumond, "a tremendous
influence."^{4} In *A Preliminary Essay on the Oppression of the Exiled Sons of Africa* . . . (Philadelphia, 1804), he touched upon the theme which was to become one of the favorites of the dramatists, and which was first dealt with to any extent during these same years. He describes the capture of the Africans:

> Children are torn from their distracted parents; parents from their screaming children; wives from their frantic husbands; husbands from their violated wives; brothers from their loving sisters; sisters from their affectionate brothers. See them collected in flocks, and, like a herd of swine, driven to the ships. They cry, they struggle, they resist; but all in vain. No eye pities; no hand helps.

And, as Mrs. Rowson's character, The Rambler, noted, no hand helps when they die, which happened, according to Branagan, at least 30,000 times a year in the slave ships alone.^{5} In *Avenia*, a "tragical poem . . . written in imitation of Homer's *Iliad,*" published in 1805, Branagan returns to this theme. The poem "is a tragic tale beginning with the innocent joys of Africa, which are soon disturbed by the arrival of the slave-trader, and ending with the suicide of the heroine on account of the brutal treatment of her master."^{6}

In 1807, the nineteen year old A. B. Lindsley, a member of the New York Park Theatre Company, wrote *Love and Friendship; or, Yankee Notions*, in which he acted during the 1807-08 season.^{7} In this play, set in Charleston, Harry, who is owned by a wealthy South Carolina family, is repulsed by the wickedness of the Southern society, and contrasts such vice with the "innocent joys" of Africa. Harry
has, however, learned to enjoy a mint julep himself, but he claims that, "I no git drunk" like his massa. When Dick Dashaway comes reeling home Harry says:

Heigho! what wicked worl dis white man worl be for true do! no like de negur country; no do sich ting dere! no hab rum for git drunk and fight. I wish I neber bin blige for lef it. I bin happy dere, wid fader, moder, and friend; no de hab massa for scole, no lan bad ting and hear him ebery day so much. Now see de young buckrah man, git drunk, losa all he money, fight and stay out mose all de night, den come home and sleep half de day long.

But what is even worse, the married men do the same thing:

But what hurt me mose, some marry white man do same ting: he great deal wose den, for he make dear wife and fam'ly unhappy too. He come home drunk and cross in de night, wake all de house top'y-turvy, scole he dear wife and chillen, and beats all poor black folk come in he way. Oh dis bad, bad ting! (II.iii.35)

Harry (like Branagan) also touches upon death in the middle passage when he describes the capture of his family:

Oh Africa, oh my poor moder! when the cruel buckrah man bin steal us, she de most break she heart! but she de happy now, she bin die on de passage wid grief and hunger! but he no good for me for mourn now, he no de bring back my moder, nor fren, nor no taka me back Africa. (I.i.22-3)

The only thing he can do is drink. So, adopting a stoical attitude he says: "But why me do no happy? he bess be happy I can, now I here poor slave and no can git backa my country gin. So, now massa Dicky de gone drunk a bed and leava de wine here, I set up chair and
sot myself down happy like he, and drink my glass like gen'man" (II.iii.36).

Two plays written (or adapted) by William Dunlap during this same period reflect his life-long concern with the problem of slavery, and at least one of them bears on the matter of the slave trade. As early as 1793 Dunlap had become interested in the plight of the Negro, and, in that year, was appointed to the board of trustees for the New York African Free School. This institution had been established in 1787, two years after the founding of its parent organization, the New York Manumission Society. It was as the result of the call from this society that the American Convention of Abolition Societies convened in Philadelphia, in 1794. In 1797 Dunlap was sent as a delegate to the convention (held May 2-9), and was appointed chairman of a committee which had the task of investigating the laws concerning slavery. Following his return from the convention, he continued to devote time to the African school; a service which was not particularly rewarding or popular at that time. Aaron H. Payne, in his article "The Negro in New York Prior to 1860," points out that the school had to carry on "a constant struggle with difficulties of a pecuniary nature, as well as with the opposition of many who were unfriendly to the noble undertaking." Because of the public sentiment which existed against the school, "it was frequently the case that the purses of several individuals in the Society were made to feel the sincerity of their hearts." As Dunlap testifies, in his diary
entry for June 16, 1797: "Go with Saml Bowne to collect subscriptions for the use of the African free school, an irksome business, we got near a hundred Dols." Nevertheless, the school had received support enough to enable it to make an expansion in 1796 when it moved from its original site to Cliff Street, a move made possible by the sale of a Great George Street lot of ground, donated by Frederick Jay. By 1797 the school had 122 pupils enrolled in its day school and 44 in its night school. Meanwhile, Dunlap continued to serve on the standing committee of the school, apparently in the role of recording secretary, for his diary indicates that he wrote "on ye minutes of the standing Committee" throughout the summer of 1798. In addition, he records several meetings of the whole committee in 1797 and 98.

We are also able to get a clear notion of Dunlap's position on slavery and its remedy from his diary, from those autobiographical portions of his History of the American Theatre, and from the History of the New Netherlands ... and State of New York.... Not only do Dunlap's views on slavery represent those of many members of the Enlightenment, they are reflected, at least indirectly, in his plays. We see, for instance, that he, like many other antislavery men (and American nationalists) blamed England for "forcing" the peculiar institution on the helpless colonies. He points out, for instance, that when Lord Cornbury was appointed governor of New York and New Jersey, he was instructed by William III "to give all possible en-
couragement to trade and traders; 'PARTICULIRLY to the Royal African Company of England,' and recommending the said company to take especial care that the said province may have a constant and sufficient supply of merchantable negroes, at moderate rates." In a footnote he adds, "thus we see the queen equally zealous for the propagation of the Church of England and of negro slavery." Although the governor was to endeavor to restrain "inhuman severity" to the slaves, Dunlap concludes this section with this indictment:

Thus among one hundred and three articles of instruction, for the conduct of the governour and the good of the province, especial care is taken that God Almighty shall be duly served, and an ample supply of negroes be brought into the colony for the encouragement of the Royal African Company, and good of all parties; these negroes being doomed to hopeless slavery in a foreign country, after being kidnapped, or otherwise torn from their homes, and forced, in chains and dungeons, upon the colonists. 14

This same line is taken in one of the autobiographical chapters of his History of the American Theatre, in which he also touches upon the degrading effects of slavery to the whites, a favorite theme of abolitionists, and one which has been seen at work, for instance, in Harry's speeches in Love and Friendship.

Slavery had been introduced into the colonies and fostered by the commerical spirit of the mother country. Every family was served by negro slaves, and every kitchen swarmed with them. To be petted, indulged, spoiled, and have their example before his eyes, was the lot of the only child of the master of the family. 15
There was, however, one household in his home town of Perth Amboy without slaves—the home of Thomas Bartow, young Dunlap's "chief friend and instructor."

While every other house in the village, nominally a city, was encumbered by negroes, and every family degraded by the presence of slaves, his alone was free from the stain and the curse. Two domestics, both white and free, served, and were served by him.16

Dunlap's biographer, Oral S. Coad, notes that "one of his first acts after his father's death in 1791 was to free the family slaves, retaining some as hired servants."17 Thus, Dunlap, in the spirit of the Revolutionary impulse, is in the tradition of Robert Pleasants, Warner Mifflin, and, one might add, George Friendly.

Dunlap was not, however, an immediate emancipationist. Rather, like most gentlemen of the Enlightenment, he felt that the Negroes had to become prepared for citizenship. Thus, in 1797, when Edward Rushton, a Liverpool philanthropist, attacked George Washington for inconsistently maintaining slaves in a land of freedom,18 Dunlap came to his defense. In a letter to Thomas Holcroft, dated July 29, 1797, Dunlap justified Washington's actions, and, at the same time, presented his own viewpoint:

The Author does not chuse to suppose that Mr. Washington is gradually preparing the minds of his slaves for emancipation & giving liberty to them as he finds them fitted to receive it, that is capable of using it for their own advantage & the benefit of those around them. He does not seem to reflect
that Mr. Washington gives justice to his fellow citizens as well as to his slaves; or, blinded by a maxim, considered as in itself essentially right, he cannot see, that liberty, may, under certain circumstances, injure the possessor & those around him, or, in other words, that there are individuals in certain situations requiring restraint by coercion.

By the same token, Dunlap found himself in disagreement with Dr. Benjamin Rush, who had also attended the Philadelphia convention in 1797. At that convention Rush agreed with fellow delegate Robert Patterson that "it is morally right that all men should be free and what is morally right cannot be politically wrong." Rush went so far as to advocate disunion: "Perish the colonies rather than we should depart from principle." Dunlap contends these gentlemen have mistaken abstractions for realities; that there are circumstances "in which such an act would be productive of evil."

Now we see a number of savages who have been torn from their native country and forcibly fixed in another, as servants to ignorant & selfish masters. The masters, seldom thinking for themselves, have been induced by the laws of their country to adopt the manner of living which has now become habitual to them. The question here may be asked would these savage Africans be made happier by a decree of our national Legislature similar to the decree of the French Convention by which their Colonial slaves were liberated or by any other measure which should give them liberty without knowledge suiting the society into which they have been forced, without property, & with sentiments hostile to their former masters, the possessors of ye property of every denomination & consequently of ye means of subsistence?
To free the slaves suddenly in the face of the defiance and hatred of the former masters, would, Dunlap thinks, lead only to "devastation, misery & murder."  

Dunlap's belief in the preparation and general emancipation of the slave, seen in his writings and in his actions through the African Free School, is also at work in his second version of The Father of an Only Child, revived in New York in 1807. It had been seen first in 1788 as The Father; or, American Shandyism. There is actually very little difference between the two versions, but Dunlap has changed one speech which bears directly on his concern with properly preparing slaves for freedom and their maintenance following emancipation. In referring to his Colonel Campbell, a perfect example of the eighteenth century enlightened gentleman, Platoon says:

On his estate in Virginia, he has substituted the culture of wheat to that of tobacco, and liberated all those unhappy Africans, who had been doomed by his predecessors to a hopeless life of slavery. He not only liberated, but protected, and placed them in the way, and with the means, of becoming useful to themselves and others. "No," said my gallant colonel, "it shall never be said that I shed the blood of my English brethren for a theoretic principle, which I violate myself in practice." (III.i.44)

In the original version, it might be noted that Campbell's magnanimity is portrayed in different terms. He would not kill a mosquito (because it acts according to its nature), he helped the poor wood
creatures to survive during the winter cold, and he helped poor widows and orphans. There was no mention, however, of freeing slaves (III.30).

The Africans; or, War, Love and Duty, is generally attributed to George Colman the Younger, who wrote a play by that name, first produced at the Haymarket Theatre in 1808. Dunlap's biographer, Oral S. Coad, concedes that Dunlap may have made some alterations and have changed a few scenes, but doubts that Dunlap wrote an original play by this name. Nevertheless, Dunlap included this play under his name in the appendix to his History of the American Theatre, and was apparently willing to have its sentiments concerning slavery attached to his name. It was seen first in New York, according to Dunlap, on January 2, 1810. Later it was produced in Washington (July 30, 1810), Alexandria (August 6, 1810), and in Philadelphia the following year, where it was also published by the abolitionist, Mathew Carey. It was later revived in New York in 1817 and 1823, and was seen in Philadelphia again in 1832.

In this play we see the same contrast between the civilized vices and native innocence as is to be found in Branagan's Avenia and Lindsley's Love and Friendship. When the chief of the tribe announces the festivities for his daughter's wedding day, Augustus Mug (a cockney who, like Melissa in Stearn's The Captive, had been bought out of kindness, and extremely well treated by this "mussulman negro") declares that he plans to "be as deadly lively at your jollification,
as a shut up shop on a fast day." Farulho, however, is shocked by such profanity:

Oh, no! excess befits not me, nor mine--
A priestly festival unbends the brow,
As cheerful morning lights the sober hills:
The drunkard's revel is a heated day,
That ends in midnight storm, distorting nature.
Though faiths may differ, all must join in this:
We seldom see a wretch that shocks us more
Than a debauch'd man in a sacred function.
(I.ii.103)

When Farulho asks his daughter, Berissa, what he can do to make her happy on this, her wedding day, she immediately replies that he can free his slaves, and, in much the same language of Branagan and Lindsley, describes the evil of the slave trade:

How the slave's heart must sicken for his home!
The nightingale's wild carol to the moon,
Reminds him of the sweet and fellow notes
Once warbled near his cot of liberty.--
If he's a father, and a prattling child
Lisps where he labours "Where are now my babes,"
He groans "that I am torn from?" Mothers captiv'd,
Must still know keener anguish. Man or woman
In bondage doubly feel all kindred ties;--
And when they die, 'tis heaven only numbers
How many slaves have perish'd by despondence.
(I.ii.107)

We are even introduced to a group of slave traders. Just after the wedding, the whole village is captured by a rival tribe and is to be sold into slavery. The European traders are there to secure their prizes, and are introduced by Fetterwell:

Here's Mr. Flayall, bound to Barbadeos;--Mr. Grim, going to Jamaica;--young Mr. Marrowbone, once a carcass butcher in Clare-market, but an estate dropping to him in the West India Islands,
he now barters for blacks, instead of bargain-
ing for bullocks.—Captain Abraham Adamant, who
lost his left leg when the inhuman negroes chuck'd
him down the hatchways, for only stowing fifteen
in a hammock, in hot weather,—and sundry others.
(II.iv.142)

The somewhat high hopes for the American-British outlawing of the
slave trade is reflected in Fetterwell's next comment, one which
would have been particularly timely at the original performance in
1808:

We must make short work of this, as this will
be our last venture: for, when I left London,
a bill was passing that will kick our business
to the devil.

Mug thinks, naturally enough, that it is high time: "I am very glad
to hear it. The work begins in the natural quarter; and the stream
of freedom flows from the very fountain head of true natural liberty"
(II.iv.142).

Following the passage of the slave trade acts in the United
States in 1807 and 1808, there was an even sharper decline of interest
in antislavery matters than at the beginning of the century. Not
only was the general public affected, but, even the activity of the
abolition societies decreased. Locke notes, for instance, that the
result of the "crusade against the slave trade was less satisfactory
than they appeared at the time." For one thing, there was really lit-
tle Southern opposition to the act, since the cargoes were to be
turned over to the states, and the slaves were to be dealt with accord-
ing to individual state laws. For another, the law was continually
evaded. DuBois, for instance, points out that the law "came very near being a dead letter," and that evidence of the trade being continued is "voluminous." 24

Nevertheless, "the act served to quiet the public conscience and to give room for an impression that slavery would gradually disappear in the wake of the slave-trade." Furthermore, organized anti-slavery activity declined. At the first meeting following the passage of the act, the Convention "congratulated the country on its success." The enthusiasm which had created the national convention fourteen years earlier was beginning to wane. "Before 1808 the leadership of the Convention was strong," Alice Adams points out, "and the earlier meetings were especially enthusiastic and well attended." After 1808, however, "its addresses to the societies lost what little authority they had, and became mere recommendations." Further, after 1809, the acts recommended by the convention "were only binding upon the individual societies so far as they decided to make the action of their delegate their own." 25

In fact, the only American play expressing any antislavery sentiments for ten years after the passage of the slave act rather neatly points out the self-complacency of the Americans concerning the effectiveness of the law. In James Ellison's The American Captive; or, The Siege of Tripoli, 26 first produced at the Boston Theatre in 1812, Jack Binnacle, one of the American captives, boasts to his overseer, El Hassan, about the freedom of America: "Come,
why not take a trip to America and take us poor fellows with you, I'll introduce you to as fine a crew of blooming doxies as--as--O bless me, finer than you ever saw. . . . And the country too, it's a charming place, Mr. Overseer; no slavery there! all free born souls!" The overseer, however, is quick to point out the discrepancy: "No slavery, hey? go where the Senegal winds its course, and ask the wretched mothers for their husbands and their sons! what will be their answer? Doom'd to slavery, and in thy blasted country, too!" But Jack has an answer for him: "Avast there! I'm a Yankee--no slaves with us; why, a black gentleman, in our part of the country, is the very paragon of fashion!" The cook, Juba, is even willing to testify to this: "We brack gentlemen be all free!" (IV.ii.37-38).

The author, a book-keeper in a Boston bank who was active in amateur theatricals in that city, did, however, include some rather strong antislavery sentiments. Immorina, the daughter of the deposed and exiled Bashaw, speaks up against the custom of her country. When Suleiman tells her that the newly captured slaves are "to be exposed in the market place and sold to the highest bidder," she expresses deep sympathy for them. He is surprised:

Why thus moved, fair Immorina; it has ever been the usage here for all Christian captives to be sold for slaves, and to continue so, 'till ransom'd by their country, or their friends. Of this thou canst not be ignorant--why then this emotion at the sentence of these captives?

At this point, Immorina makes her speech:
No, Suleiman; I am not, indeed, a stranger to that custom, which in my mind, is so repugnant to that pure spirit of moral obligation, which binds man to man, and teaches him to soften by his compassion, instead of aggravating by new tortures, the sufferings of an unhappy fellow mortal. By what authority, let me ask, does this country, or any other country on the globe, subject any portion of the human species to slavery? It is an assumption of power unauthorized, and is, in the highest degree, criminal, in the sight of Allah, the great sovereign of the universe, the father of mankind. To see our fellow creatures entering into a state of bondage and servility, is, at any time, enough to rouse with indignation, any mind, not dead to humanity, against the wretch who caused it.

(II.iii.22)

The immediate source for this play had been the exploits of General William Eaton in the Tripolitan War, 1801-1805, and in fact, the action of this play follows, at least in some respects, the actual events. William Goodell, who made use of Eaton's antislavery letters, outlined his activity:

Gen. William Eaton had been American Consul at Tunis, during our war with the piratical Barbary powers, and had concerted with Hamet, the legitimate but exiled sovereign of Tripoli, proposing an expedition against the usurper who had dethroned him, and with whom this country was at war. Communicating this project to his Government, and obtaining due authority from it, he had embarked in the perilous expedition with a few followers of Hamet and some Egyptian troops. He had marched, with incredible fatigue and suffering, over a desert of a thousand miles in extent, had taken Derne, a Tripolitian city, by assault, had fought two battles with the reigning Bashaw, and had obtained terms of peace which had been accepted by our agent, Mr. Lear, thus suddenly and successfully closing our long and ex-
pensive naval war of five years in the Mediterranean. 27

In the play, Immorina represents the daughter of the exiled Hamet (here called Ali-ben-Mahadi), while Jack Anderson is the chief American captive, who manages to escape, with Immorina's help, and join the advancing troops.

Eaton returned to the United States a hero, at least in the North, which "was resounding with his exploits against the barbarians who had captured and enslaved so many American citizens." 28 Ellison, however, was as anxious to point out the incongruity of condemning such barbarians while maintaining Negro slavery in America as David Everett, for instance, had been in Slaves in Barbary. In fact, General Eaton had also criticized this inconsistency; something which William Goodell believed had cost Eaton his popularity in the South. Eaton, Goodell points out, was a New Engander and a Federalist. "The South could never permit such a one to wear military laurels. Worse than all this--Eaton, while residing at Tunis, had written letters home to his wife, which had, somehow, appeared in print, in which he described the horrors of Tunisian slavery." However, he went on to declare that he "blushed at the remembrance of having witnessed worse scenes in his own country." 29 Eaton died in 1811, the year before Ellison published The American Captive, and perhaps it was in tribute that Ellison revived Eaton's glory. There was, however, an even more immediate cause. On August 25, 1812, the Algerians had
captured the Salem brig "Edwin," along with its crew of ten, and had placed them in slavery. Again the incongruity of American policy is scored. Amos Stoddard, for instance, in his *Sketches of Louisiana*, also published in 1812, compared American slavery with that of the Barbary States and concluded: "With what justice can we demand the enjoyment of a right, when at the same time we prohibit it to others?" 31

The second wave of antislavery agitation ended with the passage of the Slave Trade Act and with the more pressing concern of the War of 1812. As Miss Adams points out, "from 1808 to 1815 was a time of struggle for the national honor, and almost for the national existence"; and, if not dead, the antislavery interest was "dormant." 32

It was, however, during this period that William Dunlap, a Federalist of the rationalistic tradition became the first major American playwright to turn his attention--albeit relatively indirectly--to the problem of Negro slavery. There was no doubt in his mind that the slaves ought to be free; the major issue was one of execution. But, he was convinced that only through education--and he attempted to see to it that the Negro was provided with an education--could they become useful to themselves and to society. It is true that he eventually became a colonizationist, and advocated the removal of the freed slaves, but this was essentially after the growth of the doctrine of immediate emancipation. He was never able to accept such a solution. Those who agitated for the violent overturn of the socio-
economic system which had been established in the colonies for over a hundred years recommended that one ought to do his duty, "and trust then even to providence." This was not enough for Dunlap, who had a share of the religious skepticism of a great number of the enlightened gentry. "This," he comments, "may satisfy the religionist, but the unshackled enquirer must do nothing but with a view to consequences." 33

Dunlap would have agreed with his fellow member of the New York Manumission Society, John Jay (the society's first president), who indicated his position on the solution of Negro slavery in a letter to J. C. Dongan, February 27, 1792.

As to my sentiments and conduct relative to the abolition of slavery, the fact is this:-- In my opinion, every man of every color and description has a natural right to freedom, and I shall ever acknowledge myself to be an advocate for the manumission of slaves in such way as may be consistent with the justice due to them, with the justice due to their master, and with the regard due to the actual state of society. These considerations unite in convincing me that abolition of slavery must necessarily be gradual. 34

By the same token, Colonel Campbell, Dunlap's spokesman for the eighteenth century Virginia gentry, in Father of an Only Child, sees to it that his manumitted slaves are provided for so that they become "useful to themselves and others." This concentration on the problem of slavery, and the assumption that even the slaveholders could be "gentlemen," is a mark of these early plays. At the same time, however, we have seen the first hint of sectionalism. In James Ellison's
The American Captive (significantly produced in Boston) we find Jack Binnacle boasting that he is a Yankee, and that there is to be no slavery found in his corner of the land, while the New England Federalist, Gen. William Eaton, blushes for the South, and for "professing Christians."
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER II


5. Quoted in Dumond, p. 80.


12. Payne, p. 43.

13. Dunlap, *Diary*, I, 51, 66, 67, 80. Entries are included for May 25, 1797; June 8, 1797; February 13, 1798; March 1, 1798; May 22, 1798. See *Diary*, I, 48, 66, 148, 221, 227.


16. Dunlap, American Theatre, p. 234; see also Coad, p. 5.

17. Coad, p. 23.

18. Expostulatory Letter to George Washington, of Mount Vernon, in Virginia, on his continuing to be a Proprietor of Slaves. See Locke, p. 47, n. 7.

19. Dunlap, Diary, I, 119-120.


22. Coad, pp. 351, 357.


25. Locke, p. 155; Adams, pp. 162, 192.


28. Ibid.

29. Ibid. One of Eaton's letters to his wife was printed in *Liberty* (1837), and reflects the growing hostility between sections, which became more apparent in the 1830's:

Many have died of grief, and the others linger out a life less tolerable than death. Alas--remorse seizes my whole soul when I reflect, that this is indeed but a copy of the very barbarity which my eyes have seen in my own native country. And yet we boast of liberty and national justice. How frequently in the southern states of my own country, have I seen weeping mothers leading the guiltless infant to the sales with as deep anguish as if they led them to the slaughter; and yet felt my bosom tranquil in the view of these aggressions of defenceless humanity. But when I see the same enormities practised upon beings whose complexions and blood claim kindred with my own, I curse the perpetrators, and weep over the wretched victims of their rapacity. Indeed, truth and justice demand from me the confession, that Christian slaves among the barbarians of Africa, are treated with more humanity than the African slaves among professing Christians of civilized America; and yet here sensibility bleeds at every pore for the wretches whom fate has doomed to slavery.


31. Quoted in Adams, p. 75.


Chapter III

KINDLING FIRES: 1816-1830

After our second war with England a new spirit arose in the land, and with the second Great Awakening came the almost countless numbers of benevolent societies, all convinced that they were their brothers' keepers. "By 1820 there were hundreds of local Sunday school, tract, Bible, charitable, and domestic and foreign missionary societies. National organizations, staffed by professional executive secretaries, traveling agents, and skillful editors and supported by numerous auxiliaries in every state, were just coming into existence."¹

One such benevolent organization was the American Colonization Society, established in 1816 by the Reverend Mr. Robert Finley of Baskingridge, New Jersey. Convinced, as were many who opposed slavery, that the Negroes would never be able completely to integrate themselves into the white society, Finley's scheme called for the wholesale removal of the Negroes to a colony to be established in Africa. The society, however, was strongly criticized by those who believed it was being used for other than "benevolent" purposes. The free Negroes immediately opposed the organization, as did the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, suspecting that it was a tool of slaveholders, who wanted to clear out potentially dangerous elements. And, in 1818 the Abolition Convention reported that it had not "been able to discern, in the constitution and proceedings of the American
Colonization Society, or in the avowed sentiments of its members, anything friendly to the abolition of slavery in the United States.  

One of the major goals of antislavery leaders following the Treaty of Ghent was to reinforce the laws restricting the slave trade. Although the American Convention would naturally be concerned with this issue, it was of particular importance to the Colonization Society. In 1818, the Reverend Samuel J. Mills and Ebenezer Burgess were sent as agents of the society to Africa for the purpose of collecting information for a possible site of the African colony. Staudenraus notes their particular concern:

Burgess's return marked the beginning of a campaign to trumpet colonization's utility in strangling the slave trade. The managers saw that measures for suppressing the slave trade might provide the entering wedge for federal assistance. With all its stark tragedy and gore, the slave trade was an excellent vehicle for propaganda.

At the same time, however, the first major sectional struggle had been introduced in Congress. In November 1818 Missouri had requested statehood, and on February 13, 1819, the request had been taken under consideration in the House. No action was taken, however, until the Sixteenth Congress convened December 6, 1819, at which time the Missouri question was immediately taken up. On December 8, Maine applied for statehood, and the two requests were tied together by the Senate Judiciary Committee. The struggle over this issue, which ultimately led to the 1820 Compromise, was accompanied by a
bitter public discussion. The Congressional debates, in fact, according to Mrs. Archibald Dixon, "but faintly indicate the storm of feeling which had raged over the whole country since the discussion of the question by the Congress" in 1818. "Town meetings had been held, city meetings, country meetings, cross-roads meetings. Memorials from nearly all the Legislatures of the States were sent to Congress, beginning as soon as its session opened." The struggle "left the people in a very different condition from that in which it found them."

According to Miss Adams, "between 1808 and 1819 there is little indication of a real sectional jealousy on the subject, but after the struggle over Missouri it is rarely absent," a situation which led the aging Jefferson to compare it to a fire bell in the night, a comment which could have been provoked by Thomas W. Cobb, of Georgia, who said, referring to the Talmadge amendment, "We have kindled a fire which all the waters of the ocean cannot put out; which seas of blood can only extinguish."

In spite of these early hints of sectionalism, it was still possible for a Southern playwright to include antislavery sentiments in his work. In fact, Miss Adams suggests that during the 1820's some of the most important antislavery agitation was carried on in the South. Thus, at the Fredericksburg, Virginia Theatre, in 1820, David Darling had his *Beaux Without Belles* produced (which was published at Charlottesville in the same year). Darling's approach toward the problem was similar to Dunlap's *Father of an Only Child*,
in that he used antislavery sentiments primarily to indicate the humanitarian qualities of his hero. Charles Safety (played in Fredericksburg by Thomas Jefferson) is much upset because he thinks he has killed a man in a duel. His father is even more upset, since he had just loaned the man five hundred pounds. Charles tells him that he must hide until he finds out for sure if the wound was mortal. Safety replies:

> And who the devil cares--go--be off--the sooner the better, you have stuck to me like a plaster of Burgandy-pitch, while you ought to have been abroad, and made your fortune as others have done--but you were too conscientious--you would not buy and sell blacks forsooth! now you may go and live among them if you please--it's the only company you are fit for. (I.i.8)

In order to show the hypocrisy of the old skin-flint, however, Maxwell and O'Dramond take a line which they know very well Safety would never agree with, if he were honest. When Safety complains, for instance, that this is no time for an enterpriser to make money, Maxwell agrees:

> Why, certainly, fortunes are not made as rapidly now as they have been--people living in a civilized country, and professing Christianity, have sacrificed the honour of human nature and moral justice, by buying and selling their fellow creatures; till the interference of legislative authority became necessary to check a practice as degrading as it is unjust.

Safety agrees:

> Hem--0, yes, to be sure; your sentiments agree exactly with my opinion on that subject, and the last advice I gave my son before he left
me was, rather to come home a beggar, than accept the whole wealth of the world, at the price of a single tear or sigh.

Safety even denies that he would "touch a penny" of any money made by a "friend or relation, who had enriched himself by that sort of traffic." At this point Maxwell, in an aside, calls Safety "a canting villain," and, in fact, Safety loses his scruples quickly enough when it is proposed that he marry into a wealthy slaveholding family (I.i.12).

It must be admitted that the section in the play which deals with slavery is proportionately small. At the same time, the existence of antislavery sentiments, in a Southern play, employed almost casually to indicate that the hero was, after all, a civilized and humane gentlemen, as opposed to the selfish, canting father, who approved of slavery, would seem remarkable, until one recalls Miss Adams' suggestion that throughout the 1820's the South was still an open society, in which such matters could be debated. Within ten years, however, this would be impossible, and Southern playwrights, if they discussed the problem of slavery at all, would do so in accordance with the "party" line. During the ante-bellum period Southern gentlemen would not be portrayed in opposition to slavery, although they would still be pictured as model slaveholders. By then, however, Northern abolitionists could not, for the most part, conceive of such a thing as a "model slaveholder," considering such a possibility self-contradictory. Thus, one of the most forceful,
and perhaps persuasive, devices for agitating the amelioration of the institution would be lost to playwrights.

We have already seen how events in the Mediterranean were used by playwrights to agitate against the slave trade. Following the War of 1812, the United States continued to have difficulties with the Barbary Powers, and again playwrights used the situation as a vehicle for their thoughts concerning American slavery. James Ellison's play, The American Captive, for instance, was revived, and produced in Washington on February 23, 1818, and again in Boston during the summer of 1820. Earlier that year Mordecai Manuel Noah's play, The Siege of Tripoli, which has not been preserved, had been produced at the New York Park Theatre (May 15, 1820) and was repeated in Philadelphia, January 25, 1822. Whether or not this piece included antislavery sentiments is unknown, although Noah himself had been actively engaged in trying to get American captives released from Algiers. In 1813 Noah was appointed United States Consul for Tunis, and received instructions to negotiate for the prisoners taken from the brig "Edwin" on August 25, 1812. He managed to secure the release of two of the American slaves.

It was not until after the War of 1812, however, that the troubles with the Barbarians ended. On February 23, 1815, President Madison declared war against Algiers, and dispatched two squadrons to the Mediterranean. The squadron under the command of Commodore Stephen Decatur was victorious in two engagements against the Algerian
fleet, and he was successful in demanding the abolition of tribute, the release of the American prisoners, restoration of all American property, and the guarantee that all subsequent American captives would be treated as prisoners of war and not as slaves. In addition, Decatur secured retribution from Tunis and Tripoli. When he returned to New York in November 1815, he was hailed as a hero, just as General Eaton had been greeted ten years earlier. An attempt by the Dey of Algiers to break the American treaty was forestalled in August 1816 when a combined force of British and Dutch ships, under the leadership of Lord Exmouth, severely bombarded Algiers and virtually destroyed the Algerian fleet. Lord Exmouth secured the release of about 1100 captives and the complete abolition of Christian slavery at Algiers. The renewed treaty was sent to the United States in 1817 and was finally ratified in 1822. Following this action, "the United States had no further disputes of consequence with any of the Barbary Powers," nor did it ever again pay annual tribute. 13

The victory over Algiers was celebrated in a curious play by Jonathan S. Smith the year after final ratification of the treaty. His piece, entitled The Siege of Algiers; or, The Downfall of Hadji-Ali-Bashaw, was an extremely long and involved "political, historical and sentimental tragi-comedy in five acts." 14 While Smith does not make any direct comparison between Algerian and American slavery, it is evident that he considers slavery in general to be an inhumane
practice. The major figure in his work (which was apparently never produced) is an American observer, Citizen Yankoo. There is, in addition, an invisible character—something like Mrs. Rowson's Rambler—called "Christian Monitor," who makes appropriate comments throughout the work.

When Citizen Yankoo first arrives in Algiers he meets Consul and Lady Tribute. Lady Tribute surmises that "I suppose you have, like most strangers visiting Algiers, formed a strong prepossession against the customs and manners of the Algerines, and particularly at the sight of Christian slavery." Yankoo agrees:

In truth, my mind was forcibly struck the moment I put my foot on shore, to see some hundreds of Christians on the marine, working in Chains! And this must be painful to Christian female sensibilities, as like wise towards the feelings of the representative of a free and enlightened nation!

Consul Tribute explains that "We Christian consuls at Algiers are the less feeling on this point, as none of the citizens or subjects of our respective nations are now slaves, otherwise we could not with propriety exercise our consular functions here." Yankoo believes that his lack of concern is deplorable:

In my humble opinion, from this abstracted view arises the evil! As I am fully aware, that when personal liberty suffers the least encroachment, it may, in time, blunt the finest feelings of the human mind!

Yankoo obviously does not understand the problems of diplomacy, and the Consul must explain the realities of life:
The fact is, that from the great desire of most of the Christian powers to monopolize the trade to the Mediterranean Sea, they not only court the Barbary powers, but pay them well for passport to these waters, and this is likely to continue as long as commercial interest is the over-ruling principle in this system, whatever weaker nations or individuals may think, or say against it. (I.i.27-28)

Later in the play Citizen Yankoo makes a tour of the marine. Mustapha and Hassan, the overseers, are particularly suspicious of this "independent" citizen, since "he is no friend to the Barbary system." Their conjecture is correct. He says to himself as he approaches the mole, "I wish my sense of feeling had been left at home: the sight of Christian slaves, and some working in chains, is degrading to human nature, and causes my blood, as a free-man to revolt" (III.ii.58). He comes upon one of the slaves and wants to know how many Christian slaves there are presently in Algiers and how they are treated. Yankoo assures the slave that "this is not the idle curiosity of a traveller, but intended towards a good end which time may disclose." The slave tells him his story:

Hear the sad tale; and I pray you bear evidence to the Christian world, for, without some such friendly interference, many of us now within your view must be doomed to drag out a life of misery, in Barbarian slavery. There are at present about one thousand five hundred Christian slaves in the city of Algiers—as to other parts of this regency I cannot say—One half of those here are Portuguese, and expect shortly to be ransomed by their nation—the remainder are Sicilians, Sardinians, and Neapolitians. I
am a Sardinian by birth, and about ten years ago had the misfortune to be taken out of my bed in the dead of night by the boat's crew of a Barbary corsair: as this is their practice on the unprotected shores of the islands of the Mediterranean, they sometimes take off whole families, and all their valuables—My wife and children happened to be on a visit to some friends in the mountains, at the time I was taken; and when I shall see them, or my country again, if ever, God only knows!—Excuse me, sir, if the ties of nature cause me to shed a tear.

But Yankoo wants to know more about his present treatment.

It is bad enough—we are all turned out to work at sunrise, the year around; our daily allowance two small rolls of hard black bread, such as this (holding up a crust) and this hard mouthful, with water, is our bare subsistence, unless we happen to get a little money by hard begging, and then, if our keeper finds it out he forces it from us. The gates of our city are closed at sun down; then we are counted over and locked up in a miserable damp hovel, like a dungeon; and if any of us happen, from inability, or other causes, not to have done our task, or in any manner displeased our keeper, he calls us Christian dogs; and if we complain of our hard treatment, he loads us with fetters—this, you see, has been my hard fate:—by my wrists and by my hands, you may also judge that I have not been used to hard labour in my younger days. But I must be off, as I see Black-beard, our keeper, coming this way hot foot, and he is a cruel Algerine, worse than any Turk, as all Christian slaves here can testify. (III.ii.58-60)

In order to make the tragedy of slavery even more telling, he includes a scene in which two young virgins decide to commit suicide rather than to submit to the demands of their capturers. Taking the names of their native countries, both girls tell their story, further illuminating the methods of the Mediterranean pirates.
Georgiana relates her tale first:

Would to heaven that day had been my last, when I was treacherously stolen away from my native land, as I have since found out, by a dealer in women, who brought me to Grand Cairo, and there he sold me, to be exported to a better market— I was purchased by a mercenary adventurer, and am now sold again, to this extravagant old Bashaw, for some thousands, because, as he hints, my youth and beauty has awakened his desires.

Circassiana can sympathize with her fate:

I once was happy as the days were long, in the plains of Zabran so noted in Circassia; and there also beloved by a noble youth; but I was, in the dead of night, seized by two ruffians, who conveyed me to a caravan, and there I was sold to an adventurer, who brought me to Grand Cairo, where I first met you; and now, like you, I am to become the next victim to this despotic voluptuary; but what makes all these imperious scenes the more sensibly felt by me, I have reason to believe they originated in the connivance of my own parents, as I am informed this is more or less the case in Georgia, as also Circassia, where, for the sake of gold, mothers most unnaturally barter the youthful innocence of their own female offspring.

The girls determine to poison themselves. Circassiana tells her friend:

Haste, give my my portion, and let us die together!—Then the story may be told in Georgia and Circassina, thus did we to the last preserve our youthful pledges, and that virgin innocence which is the pride and ornament of our sex; and this, at least, may be some consolation to our noble, generous, and faithful youths, who will no doubt mourn the sad tale. (III.iii.64-65)

The end of Algerian slavery, however, is in sight. Omai, the ruling Dey, is informed that the British and Dutch fleet is
approaching, under the command of "Admiral Thunder," and that Consuls "John Bull" and "Myn Heer, Van Splutter Box" have forwarded the following demands:

First, Abolition of Christian Slavery at Algiers.

Second, To deliver up all slaves of whatever Christian nation, now in the Dey's dominions.

Third, To return all monies paid for redemption of slaves since the commencement of the last year.

Fourth, Reparation to John Bull for all losses.

Fifth, and last, The Dey to make apology to Consul Bullyean publicly, in terms to be dictated by himself for the gross insults received.

Omai is outraged at such demands. He tells the messenger to inform "your thunder sounding commander, that you have not the former old and weak Hadji Ali Bashaw to deal with, and that Omai, the present ruler of this regency, will not listen to any negotiations however powerfully combined, when arrogant propositions are thus dictated." He assures the messenger that he "is determined to defend his honour and his people to the last drop of his blood" (V.iii.139). In fact, Irwin characterizes Omar, the ruling Dey at the time of the British bombardment, as possessing "great courage and determination." He had overthrown the old Hadji Ali in 1815, who had, in turn, come into power in 1809, and had instituted the harassment of the Americans during the War of 1812. 15
Notwithstanding Omai's determination, he is forced to submit under the British bombardment, since he can no longer depend upon native support. The citizens of Algiers cry out: "Enough, Omai, the brave!—Enough; let us have peace, and save our women and children, if you have no regard for our city" (V.iii.139). Omai agrees to their demand: "I cannot contend against the cries of women and children, although a Turk by birth," even though he is aware that the power of the Barbary states has ended: "This looks like the downfall of the tributary system; and this my own people will not be satisfied with in the moment of cool reflection, when their danger is over" (V.iii.140). Rather than publicly apologize to the British consul, Omai falls on his sword (a melodramatic touch not recorded by Irwin).

The "Christian Monitor" has the final word, and is able to take a parting shot at the British:

John Bull, you have long balanced in the scale of Barbarian wrongs, as well as other mighty belligerents, for lucre of gain, wanting to kick the beam your own way, until you have been obliged to force this imperious truce, and seal it in blood: but fortunate has it been for the defenceless nations of the Christian world, that a constellation has arisen in the West, whose independent banner has pointed out the true way to treat with these petty despots of Barbary, as well as all other tyrants.—"Millions for defence, but not one cent for tribute." (V.iii.140)

Smith's play is by far the most extensive treatment of the problem of slavery dealt with so far. Further, it is the most patent-ly propagandistic. As Citizen Yankoo assures the slave he talks to
on the marine, his concern is not "the idle curiosity of a traveller," but is "intended towards a good end which time may disclose." One can assume that the "good end" is in fact the play itself, and its attempt to educate the public concerning the evils of slavery. Further, he is not unaware of the danger of indifference to the misfortune of slaves in far-off Algeria. It is Yankoo's "humble opinion," if not Smith's own, that "when personal liberty suffers the least encroachment, it may, in time, blunt the finest feelings of the human mind." The parallel to be drawn concerning the encroachment of personal liberty within the borders of his own country must have been obvious to his audience.

It is, however, strange that Smith chose the drama to express his ideas. The play is full of long and detailed exposition of the conditions of slavery, and is apparently quite accurate in all its factual material. It is the kind of material one would expect to find in the general propagandistic essay. However, the problem does not appear to lie in the material, but in the way in which he handles his material. Thus, even though Smith includes long scenes which attempt to appeal to the emotions, he is essentially describing the action, and, if anything is to be learned from a study of propagandistic plays it is that action cannot be described. The most powerful weapon which the drama wields over the passions of its audience is its portrayal of action. This lesson is well learned, certainly, by the time of Aiken's dramatization of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and, as we will
see, most of the abolition dramas after 1852 follow a pattern which was established by that novel and play. Thus, instead of presenting the audience with a description of the adventures of Georgiana and Circassiana, for instance, Aiken and the other later abolition dramatists allow the tragedy of slavery to unfold before the eyes of the audience. And, rather than describe the inhuman conditions of slavery, the later playwrights attempt to achieve the reality of the savage cruelty of man to man.

By 1822 the Greek craze was in full bloom in America, and Jonathan Bailey in The Sultana; or, A Trip to Turkey, combined this interest with the anti-Turkish sentiments to inveigh against the foreign slave trade. Bailey founded his play on Byron's Don Juan, and in his version Juan falls in love with a Greek girl, Haidee. Her father, however, ships him out to be sold as a slave to the Turks. Faithful Haidee follows her lover and, so moves the Sultan, that he eventually frees Juan. The second act opens with a slave market, one of the most effective means to dramatize antislavery propaganda. On the block Juan meets a fellow slave, Orloff, a Russian. He tells Juan that "you and I, my boy, of all this motley crew of Georgians, Russians, Africans, and what not, are methinks, the only gentlemen—so let us be acquainted." Orloff considers himself a citizen of the world in pursuit of knowledge and believes that this is a good place to acquire it: "For instance, now, we learn what slavery is, and how to behave ourselves, when we get to be masters." Juan replies, "would
we were masters now, if but to try how apt we are to catch the lessons which these Pagan friends teach us. Heaven help the scholar, whom his fortune sends here." Orloff is, however, quite philosophic about the predicament. He tells Juan, "perhaps we shall be masters some­day hence, when our bad luck mends; but, after all, what is our pre­sent state? 'tis bad, and may be better; all men's lot. Most men are slaves—none more so than the great—slaves to their passions, whims, and what not." At this point the slaves, including Juan and Orloff, are inspected. Orloff comments that "we've had many peering over us, to mark our looks, and age, and capabilities, to discover if we're fitted for the purposed cage. No lady e'er is ogled by a lover, horse by a black leg, fee by a counsel, or felon by a jailer, as is a slave by his intended bidder." When Juan sighs, "and are we not most wretch­ed?" Orloff again attempts to comfort him: "Sigh not thus, 'tis the lot of half mankind; all are to be bought, if you consider their pas­sions, and are dexterous: all men have their price, from crowns to kicks, according to their natures" (II.i.13-15).

Mustapha, the slave-seller, then enters with the prospective purchasers, and Juan expresses sympathy for the "wretched group" of slaves: "Poor creatures; they seem sadly changed, if they were ever what their garb denotes— from friends, from home, and freedom far es­tranged—my heart bleeds for them." Orloff agrees that "all seem jaded with vexation"; all, that is, "but the negroes, who show more philosophy; used to it, no doubt, as eels are to be flay'd; poor
The bidding begins and the first to be sold is a beautiful young girl, recommended by Mustapha as "a wife, to the single, to avoid the intended tax upon bachelors, and to the married, on the principle that a man, who is deep in the mud, needn't be afraid of the mire." She goes for 500 sequins. Then a lot of four negroes is sold—"all sound except one. . . . I won't warrant him: they look somewhat worse for wear and tear just now, having been stowed away with little food, and less air on their passage; but they'll mend." They bring 700 sequins. Orloff is sold for 300, then Juan's turn comes.

Mustapha points him out as "another Christian dog, a likely fellow too--a very Adonis! he'd do to grace a lady's toilet, or to kill and stuff for pastime, for a statue--he'd make an ornamental piece of furniture." When he tells Juan to "hold up your head," the proud Christian tells him to "unhand me, wretch!" Juan is paid the supreme compliment, however, for his price is 1000 sequins; worthy of the hero. The scene is concluded with the point driven home. Orloff asks, "I say, Juan, what think you of this traffic in human flesh, where we are sold like a parcel of sheep, and are in a fair way to be fleeced, too." Juan thinks "'tis too shocking, humanity should blush at it--all men were born to be free, and the curse of Heaven light on the wretch who would enslave them." Orloff remarks that "The Greeks, 'tis said, who groan beneath oppression, are every where aroused, and the spirit of war is kindling." Juan hopes that the Greek spirit is an inspiration for the rest of humanity: "And may it blaze afar until
its beams are quench'd in glorious liberty. Heaven grant their cause to triumph" (II.i.16-18).

To see a representation of men being sold like sheep goes far toward overcoming the problem discussed in connection with Jonathan Smith's *The Siege of Algiers*. Thus, while Bailey does not devote the amount of attention to slavery that Smith did, he has handled the subject more effectively. In one scene he has been at least as telling as Smith was in his whole play. The reason lies in the fact that he allows the situation to speak for itself; he allows it to act as its own persuasive force. Even the "philosophy" introduced, which attempts to intellectualize the tragedy of being "from friends, from home, and freedom far estranged" works in favor of touching the audience, just as it had touched Don Juan himself. Thus, the attempt to hone the "finest feelings of the human mind" would be more likely to succeed in such a presentation.

Richard Penn Smith's *The Bombardment of Algiers*, written in 1829, but never performed, also includes a slave auction scene. While the plot involves a common enough situation, Smith's play does have echoes of David Everett's earlier slave play, *Slaves in Barbary*. In this case, the Dey of Algiers has disguised himself to find out why his people hate him, only to discover that the real villains are his courtiers. In the process of wandering the streets, he comes across the slave market and runs into a shrewd native type, Barbuctar. Barbuctar offers what he considers to be a stranger his services: "I
know how to render myself useful to those who employ me. I can direct you to the best assortment of merchandise, the most expert salesmen, the handsomest slaves." Unfortunately, he doubts if there will be many slaves available: "Four months have elapsed since Ali Mehemet, the corsair, sailed, and he has not yet returned. They believe that he has fallen into the hands of the French, who are cruising in our seas" (I.i.39).

The pirate eventually returns, and brings with him a French officer, Choiseuil, who happens to be the husband of Valentine, one of the Dey's lovely slaves. The Frenchman, however, is as indignant as the Spaniard Don Juan, when he is inspected on the block. The Crier tells him to "hold up your head and show yourself." Choiseuil replies: "Off, reptile. Do not abuse the advantages that my condition allows you. Respect the unfortunate and do not forget that you speak to a French officer." The Dey realizes that this is his long lost friend, and, just as Francisco had helped Hamuda Pasha in Everett's Slaves in Barbary, Choiseuil had allowed the Dey to remain at his French villa, even though he was technically a prisoner. The Dey thus orders the chains to be removed. "His limbs were never made to be manacled" (I.ii.44-45). Needless to say, husband and wife are reunited, and, even though the Dey is doomed, he has proven himself a "model slave-holder."

Although Richard Penn Smith has included a slave auction scene in his play, there is no indication that he has utilized it for
the same purpose as did Bailey, much less as did David Everett in his earlier play, *Slaves in Barbary*. When Choiseul gives the auctioneer a tongue lashing for manhandling him, the playwright is as concerned—if not more so—with showing the courage of his hero under trying circumstances as he is with attacking the slave trade. The trouble with Algiers had been resolved for over ten years by the time Richard Penn Smith wrote his play, and the use of the Mediterranean situation as a vehicle to express antislavery sentiments had run its course.

Another theme, primarily concerned with the problem of slave insurrections, was to prove more timely during the 1820's. While the Gabriel uprising, together with the St. Domingo rebellion, seemed to play a part in bringing to a temporary halt public concern and agitation over the problem of slavery at the turn of the century, slave revolts in the 1820's reinforced the position taken by many members of the Colonization Society, namely, that to allow free Negroes to remain in the South was dangerous. Thus, the Denmark Vesey uprising of 1822, and similar plots, were used by advocates of colonization to prove their point, especially since Vesey was, himself, a free Negro. In fact, this whole "middle" period might well be considered the apex of the popularity for this organization, since the militant abolitionists attempted to discredit the Society after the 1830's, claiming that it was primarily a tool of the slaveholders.

Aptheker calls "the second decade of the nineteenth century another period of sharply increased rebellious activity." Just as
the first period of this study, 1790-1802, had lasted twelve years, so does this one. It had "two great climaxes, that of 1822 conceived by Denmark Vesey, and that of 1831 conceived by Nat Turner." Aptheker believes that the Missouri struggle had a direct influence on Vesey's followers:

The bitter and prolonged Congressional debates concerning the admission of Missouri into the Union, in the course of which men like King and Tallmadge expressed opposition to slavery, somehow reached the ears of certain of the slaves involved in the great Vesey conspiracy of 1822 in South Carolina.

However, they received a much distorted form of the debates. They "became convinced that Congress had not merely heard speeches denunciatory of slavery but had actually passed an act of emancipation, by which their masters refused to abide." He supports this contention by pointing out that the same connection was drawn in the official report of the trials, following the attempted uprising. Further, Joel R. Poinsett, in Charleston at the time of the capture of the Negroes, wrote James Monroe that "the discussion of the Missouri question at Washington, among other evils, produced this plot. It was considered by this unfortunate and half instructed people as one of emancipation."18

The "plot" itself was not successful. While Vesey and his followers managed to collect some pike heads, bayonets and daggers, they were never used. Vesey's plan was exposed by some loyal slaves, and mass arrests began early in June 1822. Over one hundred slaves were arrested, and thirty seven of them were hanged between June 18
and August 9.\textsuperscript{19} This planned insurrection, however, invoked the dreadful memories of the Gabriel uprising, and throughout the decade Southerners became more and more apprehensive about rumors of further plots.

One of the earliest plays to deal with a theme of insurrection was Thomas Morton's \textit{The Slave}, a play first produced in the year the Colonization Society was established. Performed first at Covent Garden in 1816, it had its American premier in New York, October 7, 1817, and was seen frequently throughout the 1820's and 30's.\textsuperscript{20} \textit{The Slave} is in no sense a justification for rebellion. Indeed, Gambia, characterized in the tradition of the two other British plays considered thus far, \textit{Oroonoko} and \textit{The Africans}, is the major spokesman against such lawlessness. Nevertheless, Gambia desires to be a free man, and in the end he is rewarded for his faithfulness and loyalty.

The governor of Surinam (which was the same locale used for \textit{Oroonoko}) returns to the province in the midst of a slave uprising. When he asks, "what use have the revolted negroes made of their acquired liberty?" he is told: "To burn, insult, and massacre even their own countrymen." Although the governor is no defender of slavery, he cannot countenance such behavior: "Indeed! then have at them; for on none can the chastisement of severity be more justly visited, than on those who pervert the noblest prerogative of man, into man's bitterest curse" (I.i.2). Not all the slaves, however, have joined the insurgents. The governor sees his own slaves and
asks, "are they all faithful?" To a man they reply, "all!" Their spokesman, Gambia, steps forward and addresses the governor:

These slaves offer to their master the homage of their obedience, the humble pledge of their fidelity. For their faults, they solicit your mercy—for their helplessness, they entreat your pity—for their wrongs, they implore your protection—So, may you live in freedom, die in the arms of your children, and your spirit be wafted to the promised land of your fathers. (I.i.3)

Gambia is not only a loyal slave, he sees some poetic justice in his present state. Although he was a free man in Africa he now considers himself to have been the "vilest" kind of slave: "the slave of fierce ambition; revell'd in luxuries purchased by blood; stimulated by Europe's baubles"; in short, he was a slave dealer himself. But "the hunter was taken in the toils; just, full retribution, even to the uttermost pang, is now my doom; that freedom I denied to others, is now far from my hopes as hell from heaven." Although "that innocent man I sold to slavery" had forgiven Gambia, the question is: "Can I forgive myself?" There is, however, something even worse than slavery, and for this reason he has refused to join the rebels: "There is a state worse than slavery—liberty engendered by treachery, nursed by rapine, and invigorated by cruelty" (I.i.4).

Even though Gambia's loyalty is sorely strained by his love for Zelinda, the slave mistress of Clifton, his native virtue holds firm. When Zelinda and Clifton are ambushed by the rebels, Gambia almost falls. He enters just in time to see Clifton retreating in
the face of insurgent power. "What do I see?" he says, "my hated rival in the rebels' power--strike home--they have him down, they bear him away--now I'm revenged!" But, when he hears Zelinda's voice crying out, "Mercy! Oh, mercy!" he is galvanized into action: "It is that voice that never called in vain! Yes, proud Briton, thou shalt feel, and own my power!" Clifton is impressed by Gambia's magnanimity. "African! not for my life preserved, but in atonement for the wrongs I did your noble nature, behold me bend before thee" (I.iii.27-29). To see his rival thus kneeling before him is revenge enough for Gambia.

As a result of his role in putting down the rebellion, Gambia is freed. When he hears his name pronounced by the Governor, Gambia is "electrified," and "becomes violently agitated." We see how much freedom really means to this noble child of nature:

Free! a man! Let me control this strong emotion! it will not be!--thou open, liberal air!-wilder-ness of nature!--thou are mine! all, all are mine! for I am nature's free-born child!--Liberty! give me the language of gods, to tell that I am free! the tongues of angels, to pour forth the gratitude of a heart, swelling with its dignities! bursting with its joys! alas! I am unfit for thanks or converse! a few moments, spare me--.

After he regains his composure, he predicts Britain's role in the antislavery movement.

Generous Briton! prophetic be my tongue! when thro' thy country's zeal, the all-searching sun shall dart his rays in vain, to find a slave in Africa--Zelinda, bid me bleed, die for thee, write but on my tomb, that Gambia died free!
The governor's final comment represents the approach and goal of many early advocates of antislavery:

Oh, my friends! 'tis not by the thunder of the war, but by the still voice of conscience, that the liberty of mankind will be achieved--yes, slavery must fall before the Christian warrior;--Truth forges: his shield--his armour is rivetted by Reason, and his lance is tempered with Mercy. (II.i. 35-36)

Morton's approach to the problem of slavery is almost the epitome of the "gradualist's" position. A counter argument is presented at every point, and moderation is the key word throughout. Slavery is an evil, but the bonds of ambition are tighter. Liberty is desirable, but not at the expense of loyalty. Freedom is to be sought after, but can be enjoyed by the few--not all slaves have Gambia's capacity for freedom. Finally, the sun may well dart its all-searching ray on an Africa free from slavery, but there will be peace in our time. It was becoming obvious to many, however,--including playwrights--that the "still" voice of conscience needed a stronger tongue; that "gradualism" could go on indefinitely. In one sense, Morton is reinforcing the convictions of the gradual emancipationists. In another sense, however, Morton directs his arguments to the slaves. He here seems to be trying to convince those held in bondage that there are men of good will working for their benefit, and that when the time comes, they will be freed. While the former were satisfied that slavery would eventually "fall before the Christian warrior," the latter were growing impatient.
The year after Denmark Vesey's unsuccessful uprising a play which uses the theme of Negro insurrection was written for a group of Negro actors in New York called the African Company. Odell notes that on June 20 and 21, 1823, the drama of King Shotaway was announced, a play "founded on facts taken from the Insurrection of the Caravs in the Island of St. Vincent, Written from experience by Mr. Brown." The play is lost, but is indicative of public interest concerning insurrection. Laurence Hutton includes a play bill of the African Company in his book, Curiosities of the American Stage, which announces a performance of Tom and Jerry; or, Life in London. It is significant that a scene has been added of the slave market in Charleston, in which Mr. Smith appears as the auctioneer.

On the same bill was included an afterpiece entitled Obi; or Three Finger'd Jack. Little is known of this play, except that it was probably adapted from an earlier travel book. It first appeared in Philadelphia during the 1802-1803 season. Wood refers to "the new pantomine of 'Obi, or Three Fingered Jack'" for that season, a play which was apparently successful, for it "brought large receipts to the treasury." It is quite likely that at the time the interest engendered by the St. Domingo and Gabriel insurrections were being exploited, and Wood adds that "much interest attached to the savage exploits of Jack," a famous Jamaican Negro outlaw. Only three members of the cast were included on the 1823 play bill--if indeed there were more. Johnson played the Planter, Miss Hicks the Planter's Wife,
and Bates played Obi. Ira Aldridge, the first famous American Negro actor, included this piece in his repertory from 1825 to 1848 so, as Moody points out, "it is reasonable to assume that there was at least one excellent acting part for a Negro." There were two other plays which, at least by title, indicate the undercurrent of violence of the late 1820's. On November 7, 1828, Talbot's revenge play, The Serf, was produced at the New York Park Theatre, while on April 8 and 10, it had been seen in Philadelphia. According to Odell this was "the story of vengeance sought by a wronged serf (Osip) on the family of his master." If Tom Taylor's play, The Serf, was based on this work, it was another qualified "justification" of revolt. The following year a play called The Slave's Revenge appeared at the Park. One character was called Cato, the name of the leader of an early eighteenth century New York slave uprising. It was seen at the Park Theatre on February 23, 1829 (and was revived for a one-week run at the National, September 22, 1851). Throughout the 1820's the nation was first experiencing the taste of bitterness over the slavery question. In fact, Miss Adams believes that the beginning of militant abolitionism might well be pushed back to the early 20's:

\[\text{During this period we find many changes of attitude, both in the societies and in individuals. So convinced, so eager, so aggressive, so unceasing, so uncompromising were some of the anti-slavery agitators, that the opening} \]
of the long contest might be dated a decade earlier than it is usually reckoned. There was no period of sleep between 1821 and 1831; there was no period of retrogression or of general inaction. It was the period of great contests over slavery; of persistent activity in the 'American Convention'; of stirring and vigorous publications.  

As the decade grew to a close, uneasiness grew throughout the country.

Louis B. Filler describes the last years of the 1820's in terms of a psychology of crises:

Numerous events contributed to the growth of a crises psychology in both the North and South. There was the Andrew Jackson "revolution" of 1828, his election to the Presidency, which overturned established political alliances. The year 1829 teemed with incidents, including the official ending of slavery in Mexico, which caused the Yankee settlers of Texas to be concerned for their slave property. That same year saw a cruel riot against the free Negroes of Cincinnati which caused many of them to flee the city and state, clouded as it was by a Black Code. In 1829, too, there was a debate on the slave trade in the District of Columbia, which resulted in resolutions condemning the trade and even looking to the gradual abolition of slavery itself. 

The feeling was one of near panic in the South. "Beginning in 1829 and persisting through 1831 there prevailed a period of extraordinary rebelliousness," says Aptheker. A series of suspicious fires swept the South during 1829; and more followed the next year. Whether the fires were incendiary in origin will never be known, but the suspicions of the whites were aroused. Further, uprisings and plots were reported from all over the South, and there were even prophecies of a savior of the Negroes. Aptheker reports that in 1829 Robert Alex-
ander Young published a pamphlet at New York, called *The Ethiopian Manifesto*, foretelling "the coming of a mulatto savior." He was described as "a huge, bearded, and invincible man," who was "to come from Grenada's Island and destroy slavery."  

Just as the debates over the Missouri struggle had been considered contributing factors to the Vesey plot of 1822, so were the Virginian debates of 1829-32 cause for concern. Aptheker points out that "the agitation of western Virginia for a greater share in the governing of the State, which was accompanied by much talk about liberty and equality and which culminated in the constitutional convention of 1829, seems to have been taken seriously or perhaps one should say, seems to have been misinterpreted, by the slaves, and to have inspired them to plan their own liberations." There were, in fact, so many rumours and alarms of insurrection that Governor Giles advised distributing arms to fifty-nine counties throughout eastern Virginia, and, the crises in the South grew to such proportions that in 1831 federal aid was requested.

It was becoming increasingly difficult to argue against slavery in general and in a detached manner, as many of the early playwrights had done. For one thing, the immediacy of the Mediterranean situation had waned, and it was possible, for instance, to use a stand against Algerian slavery for the purpose of increasing the stature of a romantic hero, as Richard Penn Smith did in *The Bombardment of Algiers*. For another, the bitter dispute over the Missouri
Compromise and the "crises psychology" of the late twenties made it apparent that the problem of slavery could no longer be considered an academic problem. No longer would arguments against slavery in general be construed to mean anything but an attack on Negro slavery in the United States.

The plays which seem to be the result of the growing alarm in the country in a sense reflect public concern about possible insurrection. Thus, if the extant plays and the titles of those plays which are lost are any indication, toward the end of the decade theatre audiences could see mirrored on the stage their own anxiety. Such plays do not, however, merely reflect such a temper; playwrights actively engage in the controversy and attempt to persuade their audience to accept, or at least to consider, their point of view. Thus, the popularity of Thomas Morton's The Slave would seem to indicate a concern for moderation. It is significant that Morton employs not only the Governor of the island, the voice of authority as it were, as a spokesman for moderation, but that he also utilizes the slave himself to bolster such arguments. This results, in terms of the audience, not only in an appeal for moderation, but in a sense of reassurance. The "audience" here referred to, of course, was almost exclusively white. Therefore, to see a Negro accept his position as a slave so stoically, and to argue against treacherous rebellion so sensibly, could well have relieved some of the tension and anxiety which had been produced by the psychology of crises.
Although the position of the gradual emancipationists and the members of the Colonization Society during the 1820's was maintained in the sentiments of the Governor of Surinam, in Morton's *The Slave*, there were other, more dire warnings. The Governor had said that "'tis not by the thunder of the war, but by the still voice of conscience, that the liberty of mankind will be achieved." He predicted that slavery "must fall before the Christian warrior," and that "the arena he combats in, is the human mind" (II.i.36). There were, however, colonizationists who could foresee bloodier battles and fiercer gladiators. In 1820 Leonard Bacon, Theodore Dwight Woolsey (William Dunlap's brother-in-law), and Alexander Catlin Twining, organized the New Haven Anti-slavery Association, "pledging to popularize colonization in New England." Bacon predicted that between 1820 and 1880 the slave population would increase from one and one-half million to twelve million, and he wondered "how much terror and anxiety must be endured, how many plots must be detected, how many insurrections must be quelled" during those years. "'A Touissant, or a Spartacus, or an African Tecumseh' would surely hoist the standard of insurrection." And in his July 4, 1825 sermon, the Reverend Nathaniel Bouton addressed his Concord, Massachusetts, congregation with the same warning that Cobb of Georgia had made earlier: "Plots will thicken! servile insurrections spring up! and flames be kindled, which can be quenched only with blood."
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER III


3. Staudenraus, p. 50. An attempt to use the Slave Trade Act of 1819 as a basis for an African colony was defeated, largely through the persuasion of J. Q. Adams, although the Society was granted at least semi-official recognition, since the federal agents who were chosen to receive the Negroes being returned to Africa, were chosen by the Society. See Staudenraus, pp. 52, 56.


7. Ibid., p. 110.


9. David Darling, *Beaux Without Belles; or, Ladies We Can Do Without You* (Charlottesville, Virginia: C. P. and J. E. McKennis, 1820). It is pertinent to note, however, that the western part of the state had always been more opposed to slavery than had the eastern part, and that as late as the famous Virginia debates of 1829-32, western Virginians were the major antislavery spokesmen.


15. Irwin, pp. 173, 178.


20. Thomas Morton, *The Slave* (London: M'Millan, 1816). After its premier in New York, in 1817, it was revived in 1821 and seen at least fourteen times during this period. Odell records productions on October 3, 1821; September 25, 1822; January 22 and September 21, 1824; October 26, 1825; May 16, 1826; January 22 and July 9, 1827; April 2 and June 23, 1828; July 15 and October 1, 1831; January 15, 1833 (with *The Ethiopian Rivals; or, Jim and Jack Crow*); and September 17, 1833. After a lapse of five years it was again revived January 10, 1838 as well as August 5, 1841. (See Odell, III, 8, 48, 101, 134, 205, 208, 242, 298, 315, 362, 506, 547, 647, 658; IV, 221, 493).

The Slave was first seen in Philadelphia April 3, 1818, and had a run of four nights. It was later seen April 7, 1819; and, after a lapse of over ten years, it was revived. During the fateful year of 1831 it was seen March 9, September 13 and October 24. It was also produced July 28, 1832 and October 18, 1833. (James, 670). Clapp also notes one production of play in Boston during 1831 (shortly after Nat Turner had been apprehended), on November 3. (294).


23. See, for instance, excerpt from Dr. Mosely's "Treatise on Sugar," in which "obi" is described as a form of voodoo; Monthly Magazine, II (1800), 375.


27. Odell, III, 384; James, p. 670.

28. Odell, III, 391; VI, 140.


30. Louis B. Filler, The Crusade Against Slavery, p. 52. The implications of Jackson's "revolution" for the antislavery movement are taken up in the discussions concerning the "double crusade."

31. Aptheker, pp. 281, 82.

32. Ibid., pp. 283, 285, 291.

33. Staudenraus, p. 120.
Chapter IV
VIOLENCE AND REVOLT: THE TURBULENT THIRTIES

The conflagration so long predicted, broke out on a hot
night in August 1831, when "prophet" Nat Turner and some half dozen
followers began the bloody business of reprisal against their white
masters of Southampton County, Virginia. The first to die was Turn­
er's own master, Joseph Travis, and his family. Throughout the night
Turner was joined by more slaves, until his band numbered some seventy Negroes. By August 23, at least fifty-seven whites had been killed.

Turner was unable to maintain discipline, however, and his forces
were split when several of his followers insisted on stopping off at
the Parker plantation, on the way to the county seat of Jerusalem,
in order to enjoy Parker's well-stocked wine cellar. By this time
the whites had been alerted and several volunteers attacked the small
group of slaves who had remained at the Parker gate, waiting for
their comrades to rejoin them. The militia soon arrived and scatter­
ed the insurrectionaries. By the 24th, the militia was joined by a
detachment of federal troops from nearby Fort Monroe, plus some marines
from the warships Warren and Natchez, who completed the mop-up oper­
at ions. Turner himself had managed to escape, but was also captured
on October 30.1

Meanwhile, panic had gripped the entire South. At least
twenty slaves who had been involved in the uprising were hanged, and
several were shot down by vigilantes, scouring the neighborhood for plotters. Mrs. Lawrence Lewis wrote to Boston Mayor Harrison Gray Otis that the situation in Virginia was "like a smothered volcano--we know not when, or where, the flame will burst forth but we know that death in the most horrid forms threaten us. Some have died, others have become deranged from apprehension since the South Hamp­ton affair." A Virginian planter wrote to the Cincinnati Journal describing the panic:

> These insurrections have alarmed my wife so as really to endanger her health, and I have not slept without anxiety in three months. Our nights are sometimes spent in listening to noises. A corn song, or a hog call, has often been the subject of nervous terror, and a cat, in the dining room, will banish sleep for the night. There has been and there still is a panic in all this country.

Southerners immediately assumed that the Turner insur­rection had been the work of Northern agitators. Two men were es­pecially singled out: David Walker and William Lloyd Garrison. Walker was a free Negro who had settled in Boston in 1828, and in the following year published a bitter pamphlet calling "plainly for vio­lence and revolt." His work, called, Appeal in Four Articles, With a Preamble to the Colored Citizens of the World, But in Particular to Those of the U. S., Written in Boston, Mass., Sept. 28th, 1829, lashed out against the white masters. "The whites," he said, "have always been an unjust, jealous, unmerciful, avaricious and blood thirsty set of beings, always seeking after power and authority."
He goes on to pose his ominous threats:

The whites want slaves, and want us for their slaves, but some of them will curse the day they ever saw us. As true as the sun ever shone in its meridian splendor, my Colour will root some of them out of the very face of the earth. They shall have enough of making slaves of, and butchering, and murdering us in the manner which they have. . . . The whites shall have enough of the blacks, yet, as true as God sits on his throne in Heaven.5

Even before the Nat Turner revolt, Walker's Appeal had been linked with rumours of slave insurrection. The police chief of Wilmington, North Carolina, reported that "unrest and plotting" among Negroes in that section during the summer of 1830 was at least in part "attributable. . . to the circulation among them of David Walker's seditious pamphlet."6 The South was so alarmed that "the legislatures of Virginia and North Carolina held long and solemn council" over the pamphlet,7 and, although Negro education had been long restricted, as a result of Walker's agitation, "the South outlawed Negro education and threatened heavy reprisals for the circulation of incendiary publications."8

Although William Lloyd Garrison was himself a pacifist, and disavowed such uprisings as Nat Turner's, his style of writing was so inflammatory that it was difficult to distinguish what he said from the way he said it. In the first issue of his Liberator, January 1831, he set the tone which was to become so familiar for thirty-five years. That the Southerners considered Garrison's style incendi-
ary is not surprising. He declares that "the standard of emancipation" is now "unfurled" and long may it float:

Yes, till every chain be broken, and every bondman set free! Let southern oppressors tremble—let their secret abettors tremble—let their northern apologists tremble—let all the enemies of the persecuted blacks tremble.

Then, in the passage probably most quoted, Garrison repudiates "moderate" abolitionism:

I am aware, that many object to the severity of my language; but is there not cause for severity? I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject, I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation. No! no! Tell a man whose house is on fire, to give a moderate alarm; tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hands of the ravisher; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen;—but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. I am in earnest— I will not equivocate— I will not excuse— I will not retreat a single inch— AND I WILL BE HEARD.

In the same issue Garrison refers to the Walker Appeal, pointing out that he has "already publicly deprecated its spirit."

He can easily see why "the south may reasonably be alarmed at the circulation of Mr. Walker's Appeal; for a better promotion of insurrection was never sent forth to an oppressed people." Garrison's position was that immediate emancipation was absolutely necessary, for without it, such insurrection as Walker predicts will be sure to occur. Thus, in September, when the first notices of the Southampton uprising appear in the Liberator, Garrison is quick to point out
that he has been already vindicated:

What we have so long predicted,—at the peril of being stigmatized as an alarmist and declamer,—has commenced its fulfilment. The first step of the earthquake, which is ultimately to shake down the fabric of oppression, leaving not one stone upon another, has been made. The first drops of blood, which are but the prelude to a deluge from the gathering clouds, have fallen. The first flash of the lightning, which is to smite and consume, has been felt. The first wailings of a bereavement, which is to clothe the earth in sackcloth, have broken upon our ears.

He then reprints from the first number of the Liberator some lines which had alluded "to the hour of vengeance":

Wo if it come with storm and blood and fire,
    When midnight darkness veils the earth and sky!
Wo to the innocent babe—the guilty sire—
      Mother and daughter—friends of kindred tie!
Stranger and citizen alike shall die—
    Red-handed Slaughter his revenge shall feed,
    And Havoc yell his ominous death-cry,
    And wild Despair in vain for mercy plead—
    While hell itself shall shrink and sicken at the deed!

Garrison goes on to point out that the danger of insurrection lies in the system itself, and not from any agitation from abolitionists. But in doing so, he appears to be countenancing such action even as he condemns it:

Ye accuse the pacific friends of emancipation of instigating the slaves to revolt. Take back the charge as a foul slander. The slaves need no incentives at our hands. They will find them in their stripes—in their emaciated bodies—in their ceaseless toil—in their ignorant minds—every field, in every valley, on every hill-top and mountain, wherever you and your fathers have
fought for liberty—in your speeches, your conversations, your celebrations, your pamphlets, your newspapers—voices in the air, sounds from across the ocean, invitations to resistance above, below, around them! What more do they need? Surrounded by such influences, and smarting under their newly made wounds, is it wonderful that they should rise to contend—as other 'heroes' have contended—for their lost rights? It is not wonderful.

He promises to press on, in spite of opposition. Indeed, he will increase the pressure:

If we have been hitherto urgent, and bold, and denunciatory in our efforts,—hereafter we shall grow vehement and active with the increase of danger. We shall cry, in trumpet tones, night and day,—Wo to this guilty land, unless she speedily repent of her evil doings! The blood of millions of her sons cries aloud for redress! IMMEDIATE EMANCIPATION can alone save her from the vengeance of Heaven, and cancel the debt of ages.10

During the long, unsettled summer of 1831, Robert Montgomery Bird and his friend, Edwin Forrest, took an extended tour of the eastern United States while they worked on the manuscript of Bird's play of slave uprising, The Gladiator. In July they gazed at the wonder of Virginia's natural bridge, and then returned to Philadelphia in August.11 On the night of August 13, after many rumours, Nat Turner and his band struck. On September 26, 1831 The Gladiator opened at the Park Theatre.

That Bird meant his play to be, at least in part, a conscious antislavery document is indicated in the notes to the preliminary sketch which he and Forrest were working on during the summer of
1831. He notes that at the point that Spartacus begs his owner to buy his wife and son also, he intends to include "an impassioned and strong dialogue about slavery." Bird even feared that if the work were performed in a slaveholding state, "the managers, actors, and author as well would probably be rewarded with the penitentiary." Certainly the play was easily interpreted as antislavery propaganda. Walt Whitman, for instance, reviewed a production of The Gladiator at the Park in 1846, and declared it to be "as full of Abolitionism as an egg is of meat." It was, in fact, "running o'er with sentiments of liberty--with eloquent disclaimers of the right of the Romans to hold human beings in bondage--it is a play, this Gladiator, calculated to make the hearts of the masses swell responsively to all those nobler manlier aspirations in behalf of moral freedom."

It is doubtful, however, that Edwin Forrest was himself an abolitionist. That he was opposed to slavery is quite likely, but there is no evidence that he was ever actively engaged in any kind of organized antislavery movement. Indeed, the evidence would point the other way. Like most Democrats of the ante-bellum period (or, for that matter, like most Whigs), he would have been more anxious to keep the issue of slavery out of politics. And he was a strong Democrat. In fact, his famous Fourth of July speech in 1838 catapulted him into the political limelight, at least for a few months, and he was seriously considered as a likely candidate for Congress from New
York. Forrest was faithful to the party to the end, and was a Union man—thus repudiating secessionists, both of the South Carolinian and New England ilk. Even though he did not favor General McClellan as the 1864 Democratic presidential nominee, he "would vote for anyone," he wrote to his friend, Oakes, "in preference to the incumbent. Another four years of Lincoln's misrule and the country would be 'sunk below Heaven's reaching mercy.'" And after Lincoln's victory he was at a loss to explain how "the people could be so blinded 'to their true interests, or is it, that those whom the Gods would surely destroy, they first make mad.'"

In spite of its rather sensational theme, The Gladiator in many ways reflects the more moderate position toward slavery which had been taken by the old centers of abolition in Philadelphia and New York. At the same time there are elements of the play which are related to some of the specific issues in the debate over slavery, elements which could lead to the interpretation made by Whitman. One of the most traditional aspects—in spite of doctrinal differences—is the almost inevitable slave market scene, a scene certain to move an audience. Bracchius, a Roman "lanista" (or master of gladiators), owns Senona, the wife of Spartacus, and their son. However, he is willing to part with her for three thousand drachmas. Lentulus, the prospective buyer, and present owner of Spartacus is outraged at such a price:
Lentulus. Three thousand furies!
Bracchius. Ay, with the boy, too--'tis a lusty imp.
Lentulus. Three thousand sesterces; and that's too much.
Bracchius. Well, out of friendship,
It shall be four. (I.i.167)

An even more intimate relationship with the contemporary antislavery literature, however, is seen in Bird's attack upon Rome itself. One major pro-slavery line of argument was the historical precedent of slavery. William Sumner Jenkins, in his *Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South*, explains that the Southerners made use of the Roman recognition of slavery under both the *jus gentium* and *jus civile*, and of the fact that many major commentators on law had given sanction to slavery. "With the weight of these authorities, the Southern slaveholder united the facts he had derived from history. Slavery had existed in all ages and at all times in some form. It owed its being, therefore, to universal custom, the common consent of mankind." In fact, many of the propagandists turned this evidence into one element of the "positive good" argument, asserting that both Greece and Rome owed a large part of their success to the slave system.

Northern abolitionists of course attempted to refute such a contention, and the state of Roman slavery came under sharp scrutiny throughout this period. Shortly after the appearance of *The Gladiator*, for instance, the *American Quarterly Review* reviewed William Blair's *An Inquiry into the State of Slavery amongst the Romans*, in
which slavery was said to have been "a main cause of the decay of the Roman Empire." In the North American Review, George Bancroft devoted a long passage to the Spartacus uprising, in which he referred to the gladiator as "a man of genius and courage." He concluded that "the Barbarians did not ruin Italy. The Romans themselves ruined it. Slavery had made it a waste and depopulated land, before a Scythian or a Scandinavian had crossed the Alps." Such an interpretation assumed an almost official status in the history books of the North during this period. For instance, in Samuel Griswold Goodrich's Universal History upon the Basis of Geography (ghost written by Nathaniel Hawthorne), which appeared in 1836, and which sold over a million copies, we see such a comment:

Splendid as the Roman Empire was, it was destitute of real glory. Its splendor was acquired by robbery, and its fame, though it might dazzle a heathen, will be regarded as a false renown by the Christian.  

While Bird may not have been consciously engaged in this phase of the antislavery debate, his play did much to popularize such notions. Indeed, some of Spartacus's speeches are almost echoed in the lecture and history book interpretations. After Spartacus arrives in Rome he tells his master how dazzled he had been by the reputation of Rome back in Thracia:

I heard of it, when I was a boy among the hills, piping to my father's flocks. They said, that spoke of it, it was the queen of cities, the metropolis of the world. My heart grew big within me, to hear of its greatness. I thought those
men who could make it so, were greater than men; they were gods. . . . How many palaces, that look like mountains, that have been hewn down and shaped anew, for men to dwell among. Gold, and silver, and purples, and a million of men thronging the pillared hills!

Bracchius asks him what he thinks of Rome, now that he has seen it.

That,—if Romans had not been fiends, Rome had never been great! Whence came this greatness, but from the miseries of subjugated nations? How many myriads of happy people—people that had not wronged Rome, for they knew not Rome—how many myriads of these were slain like the beasts of the field, that Rome might fatten upon their blood, and become great? Look ye, Roman—there is not a palace upon these hills that cost not the lives of a thousand innocent men; there is no deed of greatness ye can boast, but it was achieved upon the ruin of a nation; there is no joy ye can feel, but its ingredients are blood and tears. (I. i. 164-165)

Bird goes on to show that Rome's whole economic system is based on slave-trading and on the hiring out of slaves. Again, both areas were targets of Northern abolitionists. When Phasarius (who turns out to be Spartacus's brother) is first planning the slave revolt he points out that now is the perfect time, since all the major generals are out of town. The only man Rome could look to for support is the praetor, Crassus.

The miserable rich man, the patrician monger, that, by traffic in human flesh, has turned a patrimony of an hundred talents into an hundred thousand! If there be any virtue in the love of wealth, then is the praetor a most virtuous man; for he loves it better than he loves the gods. And if he be great and magnanimous, who coins his gold from the sinews of his bondsmen, set me down Crassus as the beloved of all greatness. (I. i. 161)
Act II opens at Crassus's house, and we see him castigating an artificer for not paying the rent on a slave Crassus has hired out to him. He tells the craftsman that he will collect "to the full letter of the law."

What, use
My excellent slave in thy most gainful craft,
And groan at the reckoning? By Jupiter,
Thou shalt his hire pay to the utmost sesterce,
Or have a quittance writ upon thy back.
Breed I then servants for the good of knaves?
Find me the money, or I'll have thee whipped.
Begone.

After the artificer leaves, Crassus explains to Jovius that were it not for the wages he extracts from his slaves, he could not afford to provide the circuses demanded by the Roman public:

I built not up my fortunes thus,
By taking sighs for coin: had I done so,
Foul breath had ruined me. How should I then
Have borne the hard expenses of these games,
The uproarious votes clamor for?

Thus, while slavery maintains Crassus's games, Jovius points out that the games, in turn, maintain the government:

... What do they
In their elections? Faith, I have observed,
They ask not if their candidate have honor,
Or honesty, or proper qualities;
But, with an eager grin, What is his wealth?
If thus and thus--Then he can give us shows
And feasts; and therefore is the proper man.
An excellent mode of judging! (II.1.167-68)

The most dramatic and timely element of The Gladiator was the slave uprising itself, coming as it did on the heels of the Nat Turner insurrection in Virginia. One of the major evils of slavery,
the abolitionists contended, was that by its very nature whatever humanity a slave might have would be beaten out of him. It was bringing up a horde of vicious, ignorant, bloodthirsty brutes, eager to jump at the throats of their masters. Although the gladiators had been specially trained to kill, their situation was only an extension of the system itself. Thus, when Aenomaiis, a gladiator from Gaul, tells Phasarius that "I should like to be at the killing of some dozen" Roman tyrants, Phasarius indicates that one of the major weaknesses of slavery is this very natural desire to revolt:

Why should you not? Some thousands like ourselves, Most scurvy fellows, that have been trained, like dogs, To tear each other for their masters' pleasure, Shed blood, cut throats, and do such mortal mischiefs As men love best to work upon their foes,— Of these there are some thousands in this realm, Have the same wish with us, to turn their swords Upon their masters. And, 'tis natural, That wish, and reasonable, very reasonable. (I.i.161)

The idea of rebellion comes to Phasarius's brother independently, thus reinforcing the notion that the desire to revolt is natural. Spartacus questions a fellow slave, Crixus, about the state of affairs. He learns that there is obviously no love lost for the masters, nor that the gladiators have any desire to die in the arena.

But being slaves, We care not much for life; and think it better To die upon the arena, than the cross.

Such being the case, Spartacus wants to know why they don't at least die like men, and not like dogs:
Were it not better
To turn upon your masters, and so die,
Killing them that oppress you, rather than fall,
Killing your brother wretches? (II.ii.170)

Spartacus will not rebel, however, until pushed to the final extremity.

Only when he learns that he must combat his own brother does he begin
the insurrection:

Death to the Roman fiends, that make their mirth
Out of the groans of bleeding misery!
Ho, slaves, arise! it is your hour to kill!
Kill and spare not--For wrath and liberty!
(II.iii.174)

The "hour of vengeance" had come.

The revolt, however, is doomed almost from the moment it
begins. Crixus, the leader of the German gladiators, demands that
Spartacus push the attack against Gellius, but Spartacus reminds him:

... We do not fight for conquest,
But conquer for our liberties; and they
Are lost by rashness. (III.ii.177)

Phasarius warns the German that if one of his men dares to leave the
lines, "I'll have him spitted like a cur." Spartacus attempts to
calm his brother. He points out that "contention will harm worse
than this partition," and allows Crixus to leave with his force.
Eventually, however, there is a falling out between the brothers.
Phasarius wants to sack Rome, but Spartacus believes that by concen-
trating their force in Sicily, they could join with the defeated
tribes there, and then crush Rome. The split between the rebel army
leads to their downfall. Phasarius's force is defeated, and six
thousand gladiators are crucified. It is only a matter of time until the remaining seven thousand troops led by Spartacus are destroyed by the Roman legions. Although Spartacus is buried with honor, Rome is triumphant: "Thus ends rebellious rage in lunacy" (V.v.197). Lentulus is not even sorry that Spartacus' family was slain: They were my slaves, punish'd as fugitives." Insurrection, while an inherent danger of slavery, would not abolish slavery.

Although Forrest was not an abolitionist, his name was frequently linked to the radical left-wing of the Democratic party—the Locofocons. When, for instance, he returned victoriously to the United States after his English engagement in 1837, his fans at the Bowery Theatre "were frequently referred to simply as the 'Loco Focos.'" And Forrest also became connected with the Locofocon movement through one of his major starring vehicles—Jack Cade. In fact, "Jack Cade-ism" became an opprobrious term in its own right, when used by the conservative elements.

While these radical Democrats were primarily interested in freeing Northern workers from "wage slavery," at least the intellectuals of the movement were also concerned with gradually expanding emancipation on all fronts, North and South. Thus, when Cincinnati rioters threw James G. Birney's abolition press into the Ohio River, William Cullen Bryant attacked such suppression of free speech:

So far as we are concerned, we are resolved that this despotism shall neither be submitted to
nor encouraged. . . . We are resolved that the subject of slavery shall be, as it ever has been, as free a subject for discussion, and argument, and declamation, as the difference between whiggism and democracy, or the difference between Arminians and Calvinists. 25

William Leggett 26 also believed that slavery should continue to be freely discussed. After a Charleston mob had taken bundles of anti-slavery literature from the post office and burned it, the U. S. Post Master General agreed to attempt to curtail circulation of such incendiary material. Leggett, however, opposed such a move:

Neither the General Post Office, nor the General Government itself, possesses any power to prohibit the transportation by mail of abolition tracts. On the contrary, it is the bounden duty of the Government to protect the abolitionists in their constitutional right of free discussion. . . . 27

Similarly, Leggett expressed surprise at the growth of pro-slavery agitation on the part of the South, which had occurred after the Virginia debates:

Nothing in these days of startling doctrines and outrageous conduct, has occurred to occasion us more surprise than the sentiments openly expressed by the southern newspapers, that slavery is not an evil, and that to indulge a hope that the poor bondman may be eventually enfranchised is no less heinous than to desire his immediate emancipation. We could have hardly believed, if we had not seen these sentiments expressed in the southern newspapers that such opinions are entertained by any class of people in this country. . . . we could not have believed that the madness of the south had reached such a climax. Not only are we told that slavery is no evil, but that it is criminal toward the south, and a violation of the spirit of the federal compact, to indulge even a hope that the chains of the
captive may some day or other, no matter how re-
mote the time, be broken. 28

In a sense, Southerners agreed with the Locofocos that
Northern industrialists were exploiting their workers in a system of
"wage slavery." In fact, Vernon L. Parrington believes their "major
premise" was that "every civilization rests on labor exploitation," and the pro-slave spokesmen pointed with scorn to the self-righteous
Northern industrialists who were "indulging in a vicious fallacy in
confusing wage labor with free labor."

In defending the plantation system they attacked
the factory system; in upholding black slavery
they attacked wage slavery; and in this game
of the pot and the kettle the exploitative root
of both systems was nakedly exposed.

Since they assumed that some form of slavery was inevitable, they
turned their attention to the relative well-being of the exploited,
both North and South.

They examined the condition of the proletariat in
the English mill towns; they commented on the
callous exploitation of the textile workers in
Massachusetts; they assessed the waste in the
labor turn-over under the factory system; they
considered the seeds of class war sown by
industrialism and pointed out the insecurity
of society under a system of capitalistic
irresponsibility.

They were particularly interested in showing that the condition of
the field hands was far better than that of the factory worker, and
"they proved to their own satisfaction that the. . . [south's] was far humaner, more truly social."
The workers were never troubled by uncertain means of subsistence. The young were free from care, the old and infirm were adequately provided for. Living conditions were commonly pleasant, and the personal relations between master and slave kindly and loyal.

Thus, while the Southerners made use of the precedent of Roman slavery in defense of their own institution, they found the concept of paternalistic feudalism even more satisfying. "The feudal principle," Parrington points out, "was peculiarly congenial to the plantation temper," and Southerners frequently claimed that they had inherited the medieval sense of responsibility and loyalty to their "vassals" and "serfs."

Robert T. Conrad's Jack Cade however, attacks the notion that the relation between master and slave during the middle age was in any sense paternalistic. Judge Conrad pointed out that the spirit which led to the "abolition of villenage" was best exemplified in the mass movements of England. He believed it was erroneous, however, to think that equalitarianism grew out of the struggle between the king and the nobles: "The triumphs of the nobles were theirs alone, and enured almost exclusively to their own advantage. The mass of the people were villeins or serfs, and they were left, by those charters, in their chains." The growth of liberty was in fact accomplished by their own efforts, against overwhelming odds:

The condition of the bondmen differed in degrees of degradation and cruelty (for the mere slaves--servi--were known by the names of theow,
esne, and thrall, and distinguished from the villeins), but, even where most favourable, it was a dark and inhuman oppression. The villeins were incapable of property, destitute of legal redress, and bound to services ignoble in their nature and indeterminate in their degree; they were sold separately from the land, could not marry without consent, and were, in nowise, elevated above the beasts of burthen with which they drudged in their unrequited and hopeless labour. At length, their sufferings drove them into resistance; and that resistance, provoked, and sanctified by unmeasured wrongs, has been, by almost every successive historian, made the subject of misrepresentation and obloquy.

From the opening line of the play the concept of feudal paternalism is attacked. Indeed, the curtain opens on the miserable "hovels" of the "coarsely" dressed bondsmen, as they trudge off to work in the fields. The first line of the play refers to the measure of food received by the bondsmen, a measure which would have been familiar to the audience as similar to a Negro slave's weekly portion of food:

Straw. Of corn three stinted measures! and that doled With scorge and curse! Rough fare, even for a bondman.

Pembroke. Yet must he feed, from this, his wife and children; They'll starve, of course. Courtnay cares not for that.

When Courtnay, the "bverseer," arrives, with his five foot long spiked staff--the medieval version of the whip--Pembroke pleads with him.

Pembroke. My children have no food; Give me to feed them, ere I go afield.

...
Give me an hour to labour for a crust.  
They pine, to perishing, for food!

Courtney. A stale device!  

A trick--

Pembroke. No, by this light, it is not.

Courtney. What care I for your brats? Away to work! (I.i.465-67)

Cade himself is unable to find food for his starving boy, after he has fled into the forest, a fugitive. Friar Lacy hopes that he may reach the town, but Nat Worthy, in a comment which might well have been aimed at Conrad's own contemporaries who refused to aid fugitive slaves, points out that Cade will receive no aid from the townsfolk. "These citizens own no God but Mammon. No aid from them!" (III.i.496). His prophecy is borne out. Cade returns to his wife empty-handed:

I begged, till my brow  
Blackened with blushes, and my thick tongue faltered.  
None would relieve! The pitying poor dare not  
From dread of Say; the rocky-hearted rich  
List to my plaint of agony with sneers. (III.iii.500)

Not only is there little food, the nobles have no concern for the sick. Courtnay turns to Jack Straw and demands to know why he hasn't set off for work.

Straw: My wife is sick--sick unto death: I will not,  
To pleasure any he that lives, leave her  
To die alone.

Courtney: Thou lying knave! Dost think--
Straw: I lie not, sir! O'ercome with toil, she fainted
I'n the field: four days and nights I have watched o'er her,
And cannot toil— and would not, if I could.

Courtnay. (Raising his staff.) Villain!

Straw. (Drawing his knife from his girdle.) Strike, an' thou durst!

Courtnay. (Backing, and slowly letting his staff sink.)
I'll have thee flayed
And hung for this. (Exit Courtnay.)

Straw. I care not, I!
Why should I wish to live? Would I and mine Were on the hillside lain, where bond and free Are equal! (I.ii.467-68)

Nor is there any assistance from the nobles for the old.

Scene ii of Act I opens in the cottage of Widow Cade, Jack's mother.

Widow. A heavy lot, and hopeless! Friendless, poor. Stricken with years and sorrow, and bowed down Beneath the fierce frown of offended power! Would that widowhood and life could sink together Into my husband's grave!

Friar Lacy. 'Tis strange! No aid yet from the castle, dame?

Widow. The castle? No, sir, no; they aid me not. I am worn out with years, and toil, and sorrow; And 'tis our steward's wont the useless bond To turn adrift. We only know our masters by our miseries. (I.ii.468)

Later, after Cade had struck Clifford for making approaches to his wife, Lord Say is determined to crush the peasant. He tells Courtnay:
And, look ye, steward, that mangy hag, Cade's widow, 
Expel her from the cot, and burn it, burn it! 
Let her beg, starve, or leave the barony! 
For years my plague! (II.ii.489)

Finally, the bondsmen have no legal rights. Will Mowbray intends to wed Kate Worthy, but the overseer, Courtnay, desires to make her his own, and has Lord Say, the lord of the manor, on his side. Worthy objects to such highhandedness:

Worthy. She's the free branch of a free stock; and I May graft her where I list, and ask no leave Of liege or lord. So speaks our law and charter. (I.iii.474)

Lord Say lets him know exactly how much power such laws and charters have over him:

As for thee (to Mowbray) 
And thee (to Worthy) who prate of right; 'tis well you know 
My will is charter and my rule is law. 
The sun that sees you wed, shall, ere its setting, 
Beam through your dungeon gates. Now get you gone. (I.iii.475)

Say later tells Courtnay:

Have your wish, 
I'd force this blacksmith knave give up his daughter, 
If but to teach him that he is my thrall, 
Even yeoman though he be. (II.ii.487)

All of these individual grievances need only to be combined, and, with the proper leader, they will result in insurrection—a natural outcome of slavery. There has already been a prophet of revolt, preaching throughout the land. Friar Lacy (who represents John Ball) "says that all men are in God's image made, and all are
He hath preached through Kent,
Till bond and yeomen weary with their lot.
The down-trodden yet may, some day, turn and sting
The foot that tramples them. (I.i.466)

Lacy's most prized disciple had been Jack Cade himself. After Cade returns home in disguise from Italy, Friar Lacy relates to him the story of Widow Cade's son:

She had a son, a noble boy,
So brave, so early wise*. "Here's one," I said,
"That may be made the land's deliverer."
I took him to my cell, and in his soul
Poured all mine own. By day and night, for years,
I sought to foster in his breast a love
For all men, bond or noble, all that heaven
Hath quickened with its breath, and made to rank
Above earth's gilt nobility, with angels.

In the hushed cloister's solitude, I taught him
That bond and baron had one sire, and all
Were brethren, equal all, all noble, save
Those whom their vice debased; and that the law
Of our blest faith is violate by the force
That makes the feeble bond. (I.ii.470)

Lacy's teachings have caught hold. Cade tells the Friar of the kindling fires of freedom in Italy, and how he had resolved to return to England "to make the bondman free!" (I.iv.479-80). Yet, he goes on, "Have I come home a slave--a thing for chains/ And scourges--ay, a dog./ Crouching, and spurned, and spat upon!" Friar Lacy agrees that there is no reason to rejoice at his homecoming.

Unhappy England! You beheld her lords
Rolling in reckless revel, while her people
Laboured beneath the lash, and mixed their blood
With the grudged crust that fed them. They may sow,
And Heaven give increase; but 'tis not for them!
The earth is curs'd to them, until it opens
To take their life-worn bodies in. (I.iv.480)

There are already discernible rumblings of discontent. Say asks of his comrades: "Did' st mark the sullen mood of yonder yeomen?"

Buckingham. There's menace in their bearing; how is this? What do they murmur at?

Say. At everything. They prate of rights and wrongs; and talk in whispers, Of the people's power.

Clifford. Ha! they've found it out! Believe me, Say, it is a frowning danger, When a crushed people Know they have power to right themselves. (I.iii.476)

And thus it is that Jack Cade begins to agitate. He reminds Mowbray of Lord Say's decree against his marriage, he reminds Sutton how Say had threatened him merely for objecting to his hunting hounds beating down his crops, and he reminds Jack Straw of his wife's death: "I could weep for thee, and thy wife murdered, save that tears kill not." Then he lists their complaints:

We toil to feed their lusts; we bleed To back their quarrels; coin our sweat and blood To feed their wassail, and maintain their pomp! And they in payment Plunder our dwellings, spurn us as their dogs, Stain those we love, and mock at our affliction!

But what should they do, the peasants demand.

"Do!" Listen, Heaven!--"Do!"--wear a loyal smile, And bow your heads, and bare you to the scourge; And, on your supple knees, down, down, and pray, For those who smite you! Do!--Bear they a charter
From the highest,—
To make His earth a hell for us to howl in?
Or are these proud and pampered minions gods,
And we but dogs, and made to fawn and suffer?
Are your arms sinewless, or your hearts craven?

And then, in the style of Garrison, calling forth the red-stained hand of slaughter, Jack Cade concludes:

"What should ye do!" What would ye, twine a serpent's slimy volumes round you? Stood? Caress?
And stand to think and tremble? No, you'd dash
The reptile to the earth, and trample on,
And crush it!

He would demand "freedom for the bond! and justice in the sharing/
Of the soil given by Heaven to all" (II.iii.491-492).

Insurrection, however, breeds its own destruction. Just as Spartacus lost control of his forces (and, incidentally, just as Nat Turner was unable to maintain a solid front), so does Jack Cade find it difficult to maintain discipline. The Southerners of the 1830's were pointing out that it was absurd to talk of "equal rights"—such a concept had no grain of reality in fact, nor was it desirable to achieve. Lord Say reflects such a position:

Why Heaven ne'er made the universe a level.
Some trees are loftier than the rest; some mountains
O'erspeak their fellows; and thus,
Some men are nobler than the mass, and should,
By nature's order, shine above their brethren. (I.iii.475-6)

Cade, in fact, reaches a similar conclusion when he sees his followers in drunken revels, once the insurrection has been victorious.

Of course, he is also pointing out the dangers of withholding freedom
in the first place. Frair Lacy tells him:

Already they are struggling for their rank,
All would be great, all captains, leaders,
lords.

At this point, Cade cannot help but agree with Lord Say:

Life's story still! All would o'erstep their fellows;
And every rank—the lowest—hath its height
To which hearts flutter, with as large a hope
As princes feel for empire! But in each,
Ambition struggles with a sea of hate.
He who toils up the ridgy grades of life,
Finds, in each station, icy scorn above,
Below him hooting envy. (IV.iii.514)

There is a difference, however. Clifford had already indicated the
difference between hereditary and "natural" aristocracy—a major
point of discussion in the 1830's. He agreed with Say that the truly
noble should outshine their fellows: "But who is noble? Heaven and
not heraldry makes noble men" (I.iii.474). Buckingham speaks of the
tradition of nobility—the tradition which the Southern aristocracy
contended they were carrying on: "Art dead to all the burning
thoughts that speak/ A glorious past transmitted through long ages?"
Clifford cannot agree:

All this is well, or would be if 'twere true.
Men cannot put their virtues in their wills.
'Tis well to prate of lilies, lions, eagles, but
Your only heraldry, its true birth traced,
Is the plough, loom, or hammer! Without them,
pray tell me
What were your nobles worth? Not much, I trow!
(I.iii.476)

But unless the bondsmen are able to realize that freedom
is not a license for vice, they will perpetuate such an error. Lacy
tells Cade that he has found his host "drunken with triumph":

They think toil and care
Are over now, and deem that, when they're free,
Life will be but a lawless long-drawn revel.

Cade's answer indicates the only solution:

Liberty gives nor light nor heat itself;
It but permits us to be good and happy.
It is to man, what space is to the orbs,
The medium where he may revolve and shine,
Or, darkened by his vices, fall for ever!
(IV.iii.514)

Such a position is, in fact, not far removed from Dunlap's view that "liberty, may, under certain circumstances, injure the possessor & those around him!; that "there are individuals in certain situations requiring restraint by coercion." Even to free slaves under such conditions would only lead to "devastation, misery & murder." 32

The preoccupation with violence and revolt seen in The Gladiator and Jack Cade is indicative of the turbulent thirties in general. A reviewer for the American Quarterly Review in 1835 notes, for instance, that "the years 1833 and 1834 will be remarkable in the annals of our country for disregard of the laws, and illegal violence to person and property." 33 Popular will, he concludes, has been substituted for public law, and he refers specifically to the "Five Points Riot" (against the Tappan brothers in New York), anti-Negro and anti-abolition riots in Newark, Philadelphia, and Albany; the Natchez riot, the anti-Mormon riots in Missouri, and the anti-Catholic riot against the Order of Ursuline Nuns convent. Again in
1836 the journal reviews a report on the Maryland anti-riot laws passed as a result of anti-abolition and anti-Negro riots in Baltimore, August 1835.  

Throughout the 1830's antislavery agitation was followed by bloodshed and mob violence. The first incident to gain national prominence involved Prudence Crandall who, in 1833, attempted to open an academy for Negro girls in Canterbury, Connecticut. Not only was the school torn from its foundations, Miss Crandall chose to spend time in jail rather than accept bond. In October 1833 the Clinton Street Hall was stormed to protest the forming of the New York Anti-slavery Society and the return of Garrison from England. In July 1834 a three day riot stormed through New York, aimed at destroying Lewis Tappan's house and the Bowery Theatre, which had recently been used for antislavery meetings. In October 1835 Boston erupted in reaction to William Lloyd Garrison and his English friend, George Thompson, who was to address the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society. The most vicious outburst was against Elijah Lovejoy, who became the first martyr to the cause in 1837 when he was killed in rioting in Alton, Illinois, protecting his abolition press. And in Philadelphia, in May 1838, the new Pennsylvania Hall, built by subscription money from abolitionists, was burned. These are only some of the most memorable occasions. Abolition agitators were constantly being mobbed and harassed as they attempted to spread the word throughout Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and New England. Theodore Weld, one of the
major antislavery agitators during the 1830's, was proud of the title of the "most mobbed man in the United States." 35

Such turbulence, however, was manifested not only in attacks against abolitionists, although their agitation may have had a great deal to do with the undercurrent of violence of the 1830's. While the South was constantly beset by fears of slave insurrection, the North also showed general signs of anxiety. As William R. Taylor points out, "uncertainty and pessimism . . . underlay the more evident buoyancy and expansiveness of the eighteen twenties and thirties." 36 Curtis Dahl, who earlier noted the same tendencies, says that "even in the bright optimistic morning of Transcendentalistic America" ran a "black current of terror." 37 The phrase "black terror" seems particularly apt, even though Dahl was not referring to fears of Negro revolt. In fact, the connection between this "age of anxiety" and the possibility of slave insurrection has not been particularly pursued, but I believe that such a concern was quite possibly in the background. Especially remarkable is the frequent comparison seen between America and Rome. "America, it was thought, would become a great empire comparable to Rome. Yet what, after all, had finally happened to Rome and to all other great historical empires?" 38 This question was in the background, for instance, of such plays as The Gladiator and in the debate over the status of slavery in Rome. But the question could bother even the most optimistic.
Daniel Webster, for instance, could foresee a great future for his country, "but he hedged his boast about with characteristic qualifications, the apocalyptic kind of afterthought which marked the age: '... If the civilization of the present race of men... be not destined to destruction.'”

Thomas Cole painted a series of pictures entitled The Course of Empire in the 1830's, and the final tableaux, "Destruction," pictures a classical city, then at the height of its glory, destroyed in a single day by invading barbarians. This is only one of many such paintings and poems which Dahl characterizes as the American "School of Catastrophe." One of the earliest of such works was written in 1808 by the old abolitionist Thomas Branagan, entitled, "The Rise and Fall of the Antediluvian World," while another poet, Paul Allen, included a discussion of slavery as a part of his Noah (1821). The theatre during the 1830's and early 40's also reflected this preoccupation with destruction. Bulwer-Lytton's Last Days of Pompeii is probably most famous, but was only one of many such plays. Odell records, for instance, plays like The Earthquake; or, The Spectre of the Nile, and Wilson notes that Philadelphia witnessed the Destruction of Jerusalem in 1837. A diorama, Creation and Deluge, was popular in New York, and the theatres even took to displaying some of the more spectacular paintings dealing with such subject matter. Anelli's five hundred foot painting, "End of the World," for instance, was unravelled, as was Spohr's "The Last Judgment."
It would thus be not surprising to find that the plays dealing with the problem of slavery during the 1830's were quite likely to emphasize the "black terror"—America's own vast horde of barbarians. Some agitators were actually inciting them to revolt, and whites of all shades of belief could see that if something were not done, they could easily lay waste to the splendor of America. The only trouble is that information concerning those dramas produced during the 1830's is extremely sketchy. Only a hint, in some cases, is available concerning the subject matter; in some, only the title—and titles can be misleading. Nevertheless, there does seem to be enough evidence to indicate that the theatre reflected to some degree the anxiety about the presence of Negro slaves in the country, being urged on—either in reality or in the imagination of the nervous—to revolt.

For instance, Thomas Morton's *The Slave; or Blessings of Freedom*, was seen in November 1831 at Boston's Tremont Theatre. In this case J. R. Anderson portrayed Captain Malcolm and his wife, Stella Clifton. The performance was accompanied by rioting. In this case it might appear simply to be a manifestation of the general anti-British feelings which were rife during the decade. But, considering the subject matter of the play, considering the fact that Garrison was stirring up the citizens of Boston, and considering the fact that the appearance of the abolitionist George Thompson would bring on one of the bloodiest riots of Boston's history only four years later, it is possible to weave a connection between these events.
An even more enticing production was seen in Providence in December 1831. This play, by S. S. Southworth, was entitled The Capture of Prescott; or, The Heroism of Barton. I have been unable to learn anything about the play. However, coming as it did only four months after the Nat Turner uprising, it is curious to see that, as Willard says, "the prominent feature of the play was the part of Guy Watson," played by Mr. McGuire, "an excellent delineator of Ethiopian characters before T. D. Rice." Willard goes on to say that "the play gave rise to some ill feelings, as it was supposed by some that the dramatist had indulged his party prejudices and individual malevolence in writing the language of one or two of the dramatis personae." I have no idea what Willard is talking about. But again, some conjectures might be made concerning the connection between the Turner uprising and Southworth's play.

Slightly more solid evidence is to be seen in the production of Samuel Woodworth's The Cannibals; or, Massacre Islands, which appeared February 20, 1833 at the Bowery (and revived there in September 1833). This play, according to Odell, was adapted from Captain Benjamin Morrell's A Narrative of four Voyages to the South Sea. . . 1822 to 1831. Comprising. . . an account of. . . the Massacre Islands, where Thirteen of the Author's crew were Massacred and eaten by Cannibals. The play would apparently have been set in the South Sea islands, yet one of the characters included in the cast was called Congo, while on the same bill T. D. Rice was seen jumping Jim Crow.
Captain Morrell himself has perhaps provided a clue revealing the general apprehension concerning the "black terror." Morrell indicated that the natives of the Massacre Islands (which he claimed to have discovered) were "nearly as dark-skinned as Africans." He claimed that he attempted to achieve friendly relations with the natives, and that, in fact, such relations had been established.

Yet, on the following day—so treacherous are savages—a massacre took place. While the ship's crew were employed, some on shore, some on the water, Captain Morrell was suddenly alarmed by hearing the terrific war-whoop of the savages. He immediately discharged a cannon, the shot of which did no execution: but the report indicated to his men that hostilities had commenced. Two of his officers, three mechanics, and seven seamen were killed, and several wounded, while the loss on the part of the enemy was supposed to be much greater. By means of a telescope, Captain Morrell ascertained that the bodies of the slain were mangled for a cannibal feast.45

Again, it may be quite true that Woodworth had no intention of exploiting the fear of the "black terror." Yet we do know he wrote a play, *King's Bridge Cottage*, in which he touches upon the problem of slavery. It was published in 1826, and later performed at Richmond Hill Theatre, February 22, 1833, only two days after *The Cannibals* opened at the Bowery.46 In this play, Cato, a Negro slave of Mr. Richardson, is characterized as being without courage in a fight, but full of bluster before the fight. His master has been captured, and Cato is determined to rescue him.

I wonder General Washington don't abberrise in
de paper, for brack sogar? I speck he tink
do dat white sogar got pluck 'nuff, and dat de
nigger run 'way, same as if de debbil arter him.
He mistaken if he tink so bout me, for I bin
used to berry hard using and terrible sight ob
and down, 'fore good ole massa Richardson buy
me at de hoss auction; he berry kind to Cato,
and I must go gib him little comfort, or cry
'long with him. (I.ii.11)

Later, when Mary, Richardson's poor orphan ward, has also been cap-
tured by the villainous British officer, Percy, Cato declares: "I
wish I only drab hold of dat Percy, I make him croak like a toad on
a trap stick. (Knocking at the door.) O dear, O dear, I wonder if
dats annuder redcoat arter me. Where shall I hide? (Shaking with
fear)." Mr. Robinson insists that he open the door, and when he dis-
covers that it is a friend, Valmore, come to rescue them, Cato re-
sumes the pose: "By golly if I'd only met a red-back, he'd been ex-
tonished wid--" Valmore interrupts: "--Your running, I presume, by
the manner in which you opened the door."

There is, however, an undertone of irony in a later scene
with Cato, a scene which indicates the injustice and incongruity of
Cato's position. Mr. Richardson's son, Frederick, an officer in the
American Revolutionary army, has also been captured, but has managed
to escape. He now finds that Mary is still in the clutches of Percy,
and is off to the rescue. Cato observes that he has seen a similar
separation:

Massa Freddy take no more observation ob poor
brack Cato, dan de skunk ob de bull frog. Well,
no matter, he in lub, I 'speck, and quite com-
plex. Cato lub once too in he own country; but when I leave dat as slave, I almost wish I nebber had a heart to break poor Dinah's! (weeps) But stop, I shall get wild as de partridge in de henroost. Oh, dear, what a fuss dis war makes. (II.ii.19-20)

In the last scene, just before we learn that everything has turned out happily, Mr. Richardson frets about his missing son. Cato again has an appropriate side remark:

Poor ole massa, it grieb me to see him take on so berry much; ebbery ting seem to cross him, like de wedder cock in storming morning. He worry as much 'cause massa Freddy gone for little while, as Cato was allowed to do, when he torn forebber from his home, parents, wife, child, all--but no matter, I am old; and I soon meet Dinah again, where white man no part us. (II.iii.21)

Two plays with extremely intriguing titles were seen in Philadelphia during the mid-thirties and again seem to indicate a concern with the violence of the period. The Planter and his Dogs, which played at the Walnut Street Theatre, June 19 and 20, 1835 (and was revived at the Arch Street Theatre on July 23, 1846) conjures up visions of slave-hunting, while Murder at the Black Farm, produced at the Walnut, September 8, 1836 hints at even more dire happenings. We are on far stronger ground, however, with a play called The Black Schooner; or, The Private Slaver Amistad, seen September 2, 1839 at the Bowery. In April 1839, some fifty African slaves, under the leadership of Cinque, overthrew the crew of the ship which was transporting them from Cuba to a destination in the West Indies. They forced one of the remaining crew to head out to sea, hoping to return somehow to
Africa. The pilot, however, managed to steer the ship northward, and landed off the coast of Long Island, where the insurrectionists were captured by a United States craft. At the time that the play was seen (which had a week-long run), the long court battle, carried all the way to the Supreme Court, had just got underway. The Negroes were in the middle of an extremely complicated maze of legality. The Cubans claimed possession of their property, Lt. Thomas R. Gedney, who commanded the brig which captured them, claimed them and the ship as salvage, and the abolitionists, financed by Lewis Tappan, claimed that such proceedings were absurd, since slave trading had been outlawed by Spain itself. John Quincy Adams was persuaded to take the case to the Supreme Court, and the abolitionists were jubilant when the court handed down its decision, March 9, 1844, which made Cinque and his band free to return to Africa. The hopes the abolitionists had, however, of sending them as "missionaries" to Africa were short-lived as most of them returned to paganism once on their native shores.

If it is correct to assume that such plays as The Capture of Prescott, The Cannibals, Planter and his Dogs, and Murder at Black Farm had anything to do with slave insurrection or slave escapes, as it is known that The Slave, The Black Schooner, Jack Cade, and The Gladiator did have, it seems possible to assume that theatre audiences in the 1830's were becoming concerned about the "black terror" in the United States. Great numbers of abolition agitators were roaming the
countryside, stirring up trouble, and getting mobbed for their efforts. The South had already claimed that the most serious Negro uprising of the ante-bellum period had been caused by such agitation, and to many the possibility seemed very real that the United States, like Rome, could well be destroyed by its vast horde of near savage slaves.

To a certain extent the most popular plays of this period engaged in the antislavery agitation. Both The Gladiator and Jack Cade argue against the pro-slavery position of historical precedent and feudalistic paternalism, and King's Bridge Cottage, though not so popular, includes a short scene which echoes some of the by now traditional complaints against slavery. Yet, for the most part, these plays are not appeals for immediate emancipation. Certainly they are not like the out and out propagandistic drama which appears in the 1840's and 1850's. Rather, upon closer analysis, they seem to operate much like Thomas Morton's The Slave. That is, they point out the dangers of insurrection, not so much to the masters, but to the slaves themselves. In this sense, the audience to whom they aim their argument is lost to them, since slaves seldom attended the theatre. In another sense, however, they agree with the warnings of William Lloyd Garrison. Bird and Conrad agree with Garrison that the system of slavery itself breeds revolt. It is, as Phasarius points out, the natural and reasonable outcome of bondage. Garrison maintained that immediate emancipation was the only solution to the threat of widespread
destruction. There is no evidence, however, that the plays of the 1830's advocated such a drastic move. On the contrary, they seem to be saying, as Morton appeared to maintain fifteen years earlier, that the way to reduce the danger of insurrection was to make the system more tolerable. In this sense, then, they are more concerned with the fate of the white man than they are with the fate of the black. And in this sense they are addressing their arguments to the masters. Jack Cade himself, for instance, must finally admit that liberty, as such, will not solve the problem of the slave. Liberty simply allows man to fulfill his potential, be it good or evil.

This is a familiar position, and was maintained, for instance, by William Dunlap and his fellow "gradualists." It has already been noted that his and other early plays placed a strong emphasis on preparing the slave for freedom, primarily through education. There was, however, another major means of assuring society that slaves would not turn their freedom into drunken revels, or, if they were unable to secure freedom, that they would at least be less likely to revolt. This was the power of the gospel, and an examination of a play which maintains this position will serve to complete this chapter.

It has already been noted that the previous "waves" of plays which have included in some fashion antislavery sentiments were accompanied by a general increase of public concern. Another parallel is to be found in the "waves" of religious activity which swept
the country periodically from the 1790's to the 1850's. Whitney R. Cross, the historian of the "burned-over district" of western New York, notes, for example, that the winter of 1799-1800 represents the peak of the first "Great Awakening." Another crest rose and fell in 1807-1808, while the "religious upheavals following the War of 1812 surpassed all previous experiences." The "grand climax," however, was reached from the mid-twenties to the end of the thirties, with an "aftermath" into the early forties. Gilbert Barnes finds that it is no accident that the Great Revival and the growth of militant anti-slavery activity coincide:

In leadership, in method, and in objective, the Great Revival and the American Anti-Slavery Society now were one. It is not too much to say that during the thirties the antislavery agitation as a whole was what it had long been in larger part, an aspect of the Great Revival in benevolent reform.51

One of the great manifestations of these cycles of religious fervor was the "protracted" meeting perfected by Charles G. Finney and exploited by his followers (including Theodore Weld, who used such a technique extremely effectively in his antislavery agitation). There were those, however, who decried such a "degeneration" of the revivalist motives. Most obvious was the excess of the camp meetings themselves. Cross points out that the techniques adopted did hold certain dangers.

The revival engineers had to exercise increasing ingenuity to find even more sensational means to
replace those worn out by overuse... The protracted meeting, though only a form within which the measures operated, helped the measures themselves grow ever more intense, until the increasing zeal, boiled up inside of orthodoxy, overflowed into heresy.

However, there was another, an ideological, deviation which bothered many of the "purists." John Humphrey Noyes, for instance, wrote to William Lloyd Garrison, warning him that he was subverting the very essence of the Great Revival by his concern in antislavery and other such moral reforms:

All the abhorrence which now falls upon slavery, intemperance, lewdness and every other species of vice will in due time be gathered into one volume of victorious wrath against sin... If you love... the forefront of the hottest battle of righteousness... set your face toward perfect holiness.

Cross points out that this advice "closely paralleled Charles Finney's to Theodore Weld, that he subordinate abolitionism to revivalism, and both indicate the superior logic of perfectionism over moral reform. For in exerting their zeal upon some single evil the reformers allowed their thoughts to be warped away from the comprehensive piety of their ultraist origin."

Mrs. Elizabeth Ricord, author of Zamba; or, The Insurrection, made no such ideological error. She notes in the preface to the drama, published in 1842, that she intends to hold fast to the belief that only through the purification of individual souls can such sins be overcome.
The piece . . . has no relation to the sentiments on the subject of slavery, that, of late, have excited such interest in our republic. My design in the selection of this subject was, when I commenced this drama, and still is, to exhibit the influence that Evangelical Christianity might exercise over all classes of society, from the highest station of arrogant affluence, to the lowest stage of degraded poverty.  

Mrs. Ricord wrote about insurrections from first hand knowledge. Her father-in-law fled to the West Indies in order to escape the guillotine during the French Revolution. She married her husband, Jean Baptiste Ricord, in 1810, and accompanied him on his scientific expeditions in the West Indies. The insurrection described in Zamba occurred on the island of Martinique shortly before their arrival at the island of Gaudelope. In 1829 she opened a seminary for young ladies in Geneva, New York, in the heart of the district which was swept by religious fires, and, in fact, one biographer goes so far as to claim that "the great religious revival that spread through western New York in 1832 originated in her seminary."  

Although Mrs. Ricord maintains that she will not be diverted by antislavery propaganda, she does digress to other issues to some extent, since there is a strong anti-Catholic bias to her play, another aspect of the Great Revival of the thirties, and of the Burned-over district in particular. The presence of a Protestant missionary during the slave uprising on Martinique she acknowledges to be "entirely fictitious."

Could this however have been true, no doubt the
treatment he might have received from many of the planters would be analogous to what is here imagined. A private proposal was at that period made from proper authority, in the City of New York, to sound them on the subject of a mission from a society there, and this answer was returned by one of the best educated and freest from Sectarian prejudice, "God forbid that the American Republic should here disseminate its religious and political opinions! We cannot admit them."58

Both romantic leads of the play are Protestant, another fact so singular for the Catholic West Indies that Mrs. Ricord must explain. Zelia, the daughter of the Count de Nouville, a Martinique planter, was sent to America as a young girl. It was while under the tutelage of her American guardians, "adorned with every grace to fit for heaven," that she met Augustus, the heir of Clermont's noble house.

The Gospel's holy precepts, faithfully
Instilled into our minds, sacred we held.
When Reason scanned the creed of Romish faith,
And beams of Heaven's own Light burst o'er the page
Of Truth Devine, our doubts removed: casting
Aside doctrines our fathers held, we two
Opposed, in heart and principle,
What we accounted error in our kindred.
(I.ii.24-25)

Zelia's homecoming, however, is marred by signs of violence.

A servant announces to the Count:

... Six oxen,
Of the finest breed, are dead, and the slaves,
So choice, from Guinea's coast, just purchased,
Are seized with dying agonies. (I.iii.34)

Zamba announces the hour of vengeance:

The hour draws nigh, the hour of vengeance comes!
Vengeance, too long delayed, so much desired. (I.iv.35)
Zamba plans to poison Zelia, stab Nouville, then commit suicide. It is significant, however, that his is a personal vendetta. Zamba is not planning a general slave uprising; he merely aims to dole out an eye for an eye. He traces his background for the real villain of the plot, the mulatto freeman, Alphonse, and in so doing, repeats the same story heard before in previous plays:

On Benin's coast, there, where the mighty Niger
Divides its waters through a hundred channels,
With cooling and with fertile influence;
There was I chief. A band of daring warriors
Obeyed my voice, and followed me to fight
Against a hostile herd of fierce Ashantes,
Descending on our hamlets; these repelling,
In the hot chase, too far we wandered;
We were surrounded and made prisoners.

During the night they saw their village fired and heard the death cry of their parents and children. The dawn brought a train of prisoners.

... Mothers, in prime
Of womanhood, stood with their sons and daughters,
Active youths, and comely maidens... .

Among the prisoners was Zamba's own wife, Amaba.

... As frightened bird
Darts to its nest, so rushed she to my arms.
Encircled thus she stood, and heedless seemed
Of the hard fate that waited her and me.
She cared not, while side by side we walked,
Wither her footsteps tended. Alas,
'Twas to the cruel sea they bore us,
Grave of the helpless! pathway to despair.
(I.iv.41)

Zamba, however, does not want revenge because he has been sold into slavery:
Nay,
Slavery in our land is but common lot,
The fate of warfare, a game, in which the strong
Or skillful win the prize. (I.iv.43)

It is something far, far worse than slavery. Both he and his wife
were sold to Count de Nouville, and the Count took Amaba as his mis-
tress.

... Torn from my arms, Amaba
Died! slain by her bitter grief, and I live!
Dragging through years of woe the maddening hope
To wreak upon the head of Count De Nouville,
Tyrant licentious, the woes he heaped on mine.
(I.iv.46)

Alphonse, a free mulatto, has entirely different motives, and plans. He points out the difference between Zamba and himself:

Of human kind he hates but one, while I
Hate all: born of mingled blood, to no one
Race belong; over them all I'd triumph.
My father white, even in his grave I curse him!
A menial he left his only son.
My mother, 0, I blush to own her name;
A low, enslaved, untutored African!
What then am I? a monster; ay, and I
Will do such acts of unheard villany,
That Nature shall cast me off, a blot
On her fair face, or Fame exalt me
To a hero. (I.iv.47)

He plans to bring on a general insurrection, and offers Zamba a key
position in the new regime.

Our revolt
Shall be the signal for a general one.
The slaves, timid and indolent though they be,
Are restless in their chains; they want a chief
Of metal firm, and courage daring,
To stir them up to action; then will they
Bold deeds and cruel do; like tigers roused,
They are savage in their wrath: fit tools for us
To work our dire revenge, and triumph too. (I.iv.39)

Alphonse wants power, but not to ameliorate the condition of the
slaves. He especially wants power in order to lord it over his own
half-sister, the Baronne of Belfont.

Alphonse is a skilled agitator. In making his indictment
against slavery, he lists those specific grievances we have already
seen Jack Cade exploit: overwork, poor food, and disregard for the
old.

Yes, thus it is; all work, work, work! no time
For rest. They tell us of a holy day
When men in other lands from labor cease:
Such custom not for us. Good friends, dear friends!
Much I pity you; myself I pity too.
The rich man sleeps, we wake to toil;
When he rises from his couch of ease,
Some hours have passed, since from the flinty bed,
Our limbs, weary with short repose, have risen.
On our bare heads the sun falls vertical,
And shelter none we find from wind and storm.

When he sees the slaves murmuring among themselves, he presses his
advantage, using an approach similar to Jack Cade's:

Murmur not, good friends;
Why should we? this is trifling: we were made
To serve the white man; we must be patient
And submissive. True, scorn is hard to bear,
But scorn will hurt us not. Would it were food!
Then might we have withal our mouths to fill!
Of this no need to speak, food does not lack;
Coarse it is true, but suffices hunger.
Why then complain? What to you is it
That the dainty stomach of the white man
Craves daintier nourishment? Has he not gold
To satisfy his wants? Be content, my friends;
Why should ye murmur? (IV.i.90)
Finally, he reminds them of old Canda, the aged one, who, when old and sick, was turned out into the fields to die. This sets the slaves on—they cry out for their share of gold and for their freedom. But Alphonse is not yet done.

Vain is your boast, for coward blood
Runs in your veins! When this tongue is silent
Basely will ye return to servile toil.

To prove him wrong, the slaves all throw down their tools, crying out, "we'll have the white man's blood! Give us a leader!" Fortunately, there is one handy:

In me behold him. Your wrongs are mine. Trust
To my care your lives and liberty, dearer
Than my own. (IV.i.90-95)

There is, however, a counter-force at work on the island: the Protestant missionary, Lawton. Scene iii of Act IV opens with a carefully laid setting: "Seashore; Cottage, negroes outside, in the attitude of worship; among them is Zamba, in deep attention. Mr. Lawton standing at the porch. Augustus and Zelia, at a little distance, approaching the cottage." After his prayer, Lawton begins his sermon:

My children!
Hear the words from Heaven, speaking good-will.
Burdened are ye? Sweet rest to you they bring;
Rest in your God from sorrow, guilt, despair.
Hungry are ye? Here is the bread of life.
Thirsty? A spring from the fount eternal,
Sends out pure water; drink and live for ever.
Are ye in want? Treasure is freely given,
Treasure unfailing; more than the whole store
From old Golconda's mine: the pearl of price,
More precious than the product, all amassed
Of ocean in its twice ten thousand caves.
Enslaved are ye? The jubilee is come,
The price is paid; return ye ransomed ones.
Do bitter sorrows press around the heart?
Come, then, and cast them at the feet of Him,
Who bore our sorrows and who shares our griefs.
No friend have you? He is a friend unfailing;
Brother is not so near, mother so kind.
No home? Look then away from earth, see, far
Beyond the confines of this narrow world,
Higher than yonder stars and the pure sky,
A dwelling is prepared, in which the light
Of our own sun would be but darkness; for
It is lighted by the smile of Him, who,
In light unconceived, doth dwell. My friends;
Such is the home prepared in Heaven, for those
Who love and serve the blessed Son of God.
There tears are shed no more, and every chain
Is broken. (IV.iii.106-107)

Zamba is touched, and "shows great agitation." Lawton then concludes:

Your mansion is prepared; a few more tears,
A few more sighs, your Saviour calls you home;
Press on, look upwards, and obtain the prize!
(IV.iii.108)

The Count, ironically, thinks Lawton has been preaching insurrection, and orders him to be borne off to jail. Zelia and Augustus are naturally upset, but Lawton welcomes this chance for martyrdom:

Welcome are these bonds; I receive them
With joy, as tokens of the honor, which
On me is conferred: counted worthy
To suffer in the cause dearer to me
Than life. I go, led by Him on whom my hope
Is stayed. Be it to prison, his presence
There will bless; be it to death, for ever
Shall I be with Him. (IV.iii.118-19)

Zamba, however, has been converted, and plans to aid the missionary:
To him will I go,
This blessed man! unbind him, set him free!
If ever upon man the Christian's God
Has set him image, it is on this man.
My heart is bound to him: I'll to his feet,
And pour out all my soul. I could almost
Adore him. From crime he yet may save me.
(IV.iii.119)

Luckily, Lawton wins. Zamba arrives at the Nouville estate just in time to warn the Count that Alphonse has begun the march. Immediately the insurgents are swarming all over the house; all is confusion. Alphonse cries out, "Revenge, revenge! Let our oppressors fall!" Lawton, however, arrives with some loyal slaves, and remarks, "God, in this hour of need, doth succour send." Nevertheless, Alphonse is determined to kill at least the old Count. But Zamba "arrests the stroke, by piercing the breast of Alphonse." For this, Zamba, like Gambia, in Morton's The Slave, secures his freedom:

Virtue and truth triumphant in this hour
Shall o'er us reign for ever. Zamba, friend!
No more a slave, as nature's freeman honor
I thee, preserver of my house: this debt
My means can never cancel. Injured much
Wast thou, but God avenged thee. On my head,
Like coals of living fire, hast thou, for wrongs,
Rewarded benefits. Forgiveness prove
By the acceptance of my friendship here.

Zamba is magnanimous in victory:

Bonds stronger than my former chains unite
Me to your house. My lord, you henceforth
May command the heart and hand of Zamba.
God that heart has changed: with heart, with hand,
With tongue I'll serve him ever. (V.iii.136-137)

Mrs. Ricord appears to maintain that insurrection is even
less justifiable than Bird and Conrad would advocate. While Bird and Conrad develop heroes who are the major spokesmen for revolt—but who ultimately fail—Mrs. Ricord clearly implies that personal ambition is the primary motivation for such agitation, and that the agitators consider the slaves merely "fit tools" to work their "dire revenge." Her hero, on the other hand, has no particular complaint against slavery; he comes from a land which, he claims, considers slavery the common lot, a "game" in which "the strong or skillful win the prize." One can assume that if his wife had not been separated from him, Zamba would have continued to support his master's peculiar labor system. By the same token, the Protestant missionary, Lawton, does not advocate overthrow of the institution. Rather, he urges the slaves to accept their fate, "press on," and prepare for their heavenly mansion.

The 1830's and early 40's was a period filled with violence, insurrection and fears of insurrection. The dramatists of the period who dealt with the problem of slavery, however, could claim, as Garrison did, that any charge that they were instigating the slaves to revolt was "foul slander." Their plays indicate, as Garrison maintained, that they sought peaceful means to relieve the burden of the slaves. A major distinction arises, however, in the means being advocated. Garrison and his followers were taking a radical line when they claim that immediate emancipation could alone save the nation from "the vengeance of Heaven." On the other hand, if the present
analysis of the drama of the 1830's is correct, the playwrights were clearly within the traditional camp of gradual emancipation, and even perhaps colonization. The methods they advocate or imply to reduce the danger of insurrection, and to relieve the psychology of crises were the methods which had been advocated at least since the eighteenth century. That is, they would maintain that not all slaves were ready for freedom, and that only through education could they become acceptable to society. Or, as Mrs. Ricord argues, Evangelical Christianity has the power within it to soothe the embittered heart of the slave, to make his existence more tolerable, and thus has the power to forestall insurrection.

Both education and religious preparation are time consuming processes, however, and there developed in the 1830's a new breed of men and women impatient with such traditional approaches to the problem of slavery. They covered the North with abolition arguments, and sought to persuade their Southern brethren insofar as they were permitted to debate the problem below the Mason-Dixon line. Regardless of doctrinal differences, it is clear that they sought to infuse new life into the antislavery movement, and to convince their listeners that something had to be done, and that it had to begin.

One result of this increased agitation, however, was that the South became a closed society, in which even a discussion of the possibility of emancipation became more and more difficult. This meant, of course, that abolitionists had lost an audience. Indeed,
they lost the audience which, presumably, could affect the most practical changes in the institution, and perhaps eventually abolish it peacefully. It became necessary, therefore, to make abolition more meaningful to their fellow Northerners, many of whom were, if not neutral or anti-abolition, actually pro-slavery. However, before taking up the methods which were used by such abolition playwrights to broaden the base of the antislavery impulse, it will be appropriate first to examine this new breed of abolitionists which sprang up in the 1830's and early 40's. The attempt to understand more fully such abolitionists and the reason why they decided to commit themselves to the cause will perhaps make more understandable the kind of plays which some of them wrote and the kinds of arguments they employed to achieve their goals.
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER IV


2. Quoted in Aptheker, p. 306.


6. Quoted in Aptheker, p. 82.


8. Filler, p. 22


10. Ibid., September 3, 1831, p. 143.


12. Quoted in Arthur Hobson Quinn, A History of American Drama, I, 230. Quinn also notes that Bird's earlier play, Pelopidas (1830), concluded "with a denunciation of slavery which was a bit pronounced in 1830." I, 228.

13. C. E. Foust, The Life and Dramatic Works of Robert Montgomery Bird (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1919), p. 51. That this was an unfounded fear is seen by the fact that the play was seen in New Orleans (1833, 1839, 1844), St. Louis (May 1839), and even in Charleston (1841 and 1847). It was, however, never as popular in the South as it was in the North, and few performances have been recorded. See John S. Kendall, The Golden Age of the New Orleans Theatre (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), pp. 157, 258; William G. B. Carson, The Theatre of the Frontier; The Early Years of the St. Louis Stage (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932), p. 281; W. Stanley Hoole, The Ante-Bellum Charleston Theatre

15. Francis Grund, in his Aristocracy in America (first published in 1839), records a "conversation" which took place at the Park after Forrest’s return from England, at the height of his popularity. Forrest is being praised as a homegrown star, who wisely hesitated before appearing in any Shakespeare during his London engagement. A companion objects: "Come, none of your English prejudices, Tom! You seem to forget that Forest [sic] declined being run for representative in Congress; or, as I heard the story, that he was run and elected without his consent, and that he refused to take his seat." Tom thinks this a wise move: "So would I have done in his place. . . . What man of talent would forsake a respectable position in society, in order to earn eight dollars a day in Washington by making or listening to dull speeches?" Grund, Aristocracy in America (New York: Harper & Bros., 1959), p. 80.

16. Quoted in Moody, Edwin Forrest, p. 347. Grund, however, would have us believe (though with tongue in cheek) that even Forrest’s Othello could be interpreted as being, as Whitman would have said, "full of abolition." During the same visit to the Park the play is denounced for "preaching a regular amalgamation doctrine! The play ought not to be allowed to be performed before our negroes." Someone tries to assure the speaker that Othello "was not a negro," but a Moor, and there is, after all, "an immense difference between these two races. I am sure no lady would fall in love with a negro." Grund, Aristocracy in America, p. 79.


22. Parrington points out that "the movement of Locofocoism in particular absorbed Leggett and drew Bryant after him"—two of Forrest's New York friends. Parrington goes on to describe the movement:

Set on foot by a combination of reforming economists opposed to banks, paper money, and monopolies, and the rising proletarian movement then beginning its long struggle to unionize the city workers, Locofocoism represented the extreme left wing of democratic equalitarianism, the avowed objective of which was to take government out of the hands of bankers and lodge it in the hands of the producers. (Vernon L. Parrington, *The Romantic Revolution in America, 1800-1860*, Vol. II of *Main Currents in American Thought*, New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1954, p. 236).

23. Moody, for instance, points out that the play was criticized for inciting class warfare: "A few timid critics suggested that the play encouraged class hatred; Forrest's democratic disciples, never known for their caution, cheered the bondsmen's revolt. They welcomed another drama glorifying the common mass, and Forrest was delighted to add another democratic tract to his repertoire." (Edwin Forrest, p. 198).

24. Bryant was, for instance, one of the most outspoken critics of the attempt to suppress labor unionism. When twenty-one tailors of New York City attempted to organize they were heavily fined for "conspiracy," and Bryant attacked the judgment:

Can anything be imagined more abhorrent to every sentiment of generosity and justice, than the law which arms the rich with the legal right to fix,
by assize, the wages of the poor? If this is not slavery, we have forgotten its definition. Strike the right of associating for the sale of labor from the privileges of a freeman, and you may as well bind him to a master, or ascribe him to the soil. (Quoted in Nevins, The Evening Post: A Century of Journalism, New York: Bond & Liveright, 1922, p. 165).

The relationship between Forrest and Bryant, and Bryant's family, was close, and, after the sensational Forrest divorce trial, a bit sticky. Soon after Forrest became the leading American star he was drawn into the circle of William Leggett, William Cullen Bryant, and Parke Godwin, Bryant's son-in-law (a circle which also included the aging William Dunlap). (See Moody, Edwin Forrest, p. 78). During his first European tour, in 1834-36, Forrest spent some time with Bryant in Rome, before going to Moscow. It was while in Moscow that Forrest made his only recorded public utterance concerning slavery included in Moody's biography. Forrest noted in his diary that "he supped with an English couple, Mr. and Mrs. Priestly, and 'had a long chat about Negro slavery"' (p.120).

On Saturday, April 28, 1849, Forrest turned his wife, Catherine, out of his home--a situation which had developed because he had read the so-called "Fourier letter." "So-called because she adapted her text from Charles Fourier's free wheeling doctrines, which had been widely circulated by Parke Godwin, Horace Greeley and the Brook Farm crowd" (p. 246). It was Fanny Godwin, Parke's wife, who took Catherine in, when she had no other place to go. After the Godwins closed their home for the season, Catherine moved in with the Bryants for a short time, at Roslyn on Hempstead Bay, Long Island, during the summer of 1849 (p. 286). During the divorce trial Anna Flowers, a maid in the Forrest home, testified that Godwin "had once stayed all night in the library" (p. 305). Godwin, however, was in Europe during the trial (p. 397).

Parrington characterized Godwin as "a radical of the imported school, an ardent disciple of Fourier, deeply concerned with communistic experiments at Brook Farm and elsewhere, and an assistant editor of The Harbinger, the mouthpiece of Brook Farm after it passed from transcendental to Fourieristic control. His Democracy, Pacific and Constructive, was accounted by Horace Greeley the best of the contemporary studies of collectivism. Less militant than Leggett, his radicalism ebbed with the years and growing prosperity, but it sufficed to instruct Bryant in the elements of the current Utopian philosophies" (p. 235).
Incidentally, the "Fourier letter" written by Catherine Forrest had been prompted by the "Consuelo letter," from George Jamieson. Jamieson also figures in the slavery debate, only as a spokesman of the pro-slavery forces. He was the author of The Old Plantation, written as a refutation of such plays as Uncle Tom's Cabin and The Octoroon (in which he had earlier appeared).

25. Quoted in Nevins, Evening Post, p. 171.

26. Leggett was even more radical than Bryant. Parrington characterizes Leggett as "a man of immense vitality and boundless sympathies, to whom social justice was a religion."

A left-wing equalitarian democrat, Leggett hated all tariffs, subsidies, monopolies, credit manipulation, everything that the new capitalism represented. His sympathies were enlisted on the side of the new proletarian movement, and with the zeal of a knight-errant he greeted every opportunity to do battle for the cause. (Parrington, p. 235).

Leggett, who was William Cullen Bryant's assistant editor on the New York Evening Post (among other jobs), began his life-long friendship with Forrest on the night of Forrest's New York debut as Othello, November 6, 1826 (Moody, Edwin Forrest, p. 69). It was to Leggett, then editor of The Critic, that Forrest wrote when he wanted to announce his famous American drama contest—the contest which drew forth, among other plays, The Gladiator. On November 22, 1828, Leggett printed the offer. Confident that the announcement would evoke an immediate response, Forrest had already enlisted his judges: William Cullen Bryant, Fitz-Greene Halleck, James Lawson, William Leggett, Prosper M. Wetmore, and J. G. Brooks. (Moody, p. 88).

Apparently Forrest also gave Leggett the opportunity to adapt Conrad's original 1835 script for him, even before he entered into negotiations with Conrad. Alger reprints a letter from Leggett to Forrest, dated October 25, 1837, received by Forrest while he was in Boston, on his spectacular homecoming tour. Leggett tells him, "I have been turning over the Jack Cade subject; but I confess I am almost afraid to undertake it. The theme is a grand one, and I warm when I think of it; but I must not mistake the ardor of my feelings in the sacred cause of human liberty for ability to manage the mighty subject." (William R. Alger, Life of Edwin Forrest, The American Tragedian, Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1877, I, 324). Leggett never got a chance to change his mind. He died the following year, as Alger says, "in the midst of his chivalrous warfare against
slavery, a sacrifice to his heroic toils and the over-generous fire of his enthusiasm." (I, 372). He would not have received such praise from the conservatives. Allan Nevins indicates the indictment made against Leggett:

He was charged with Utopianism, agrarianism, Fanny-Wrightism, Jacobinism, and Jack Cadeism. His writings were said to set class against class, and to threaten the nation with anarchy. (Nevins, Evening Post, p. 152).

27. Quoted in Dumond, Antislavery, p. 207.
28. Ibid., p. 145.
29. Parrington, pp. 94-97.
30. Robert T. Conrad, Jack Cade, in Representative Plays by American Dramatists, 1815-1858, ed. Montrose J. Moses (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1925). Jack Cade, like The Gladiator, was a favorite in New York. Before 1843, only two years after Conrad's version for Forrest was first produced at the Park Theatre (May 24, 1841) it had eight different engagements, one of which lasted six nights. (See Odell, IV, 460, 548, 549, 550, 636, 641, 644). The original Jack Cade was first seen in Philadelphia, according to Moses, December 9, 1835 (p. 436) and was repeated December 11 and 12. It continued to be popular in Philadelphia, and was seen several times during the 1830's and 40's: 1836 (three nights); 1841 (thirteen nights); 1842 (six nights); 1843 (four nights); 1844 (seven nights); 1845 (one night); 1846 (three nights); 1847 (ten nights); 1848 (four nights); 1849 (two nights). Like The Gladiator, Jack Cade continued in Forrest's repertory throughout the 1850's. (See Arthur Herman Wilson, A History of the Philadelphia Theatre, 1835-1855, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1935, pp. 58, 594).
32. William Dunlap, Diary, I, 120.


38. Taylor, p. 98.

39. Ibid.


42. William W. Clapp, Jr., *A Record of the Boston Stage*, p. 294. The Slave was again revived, this time in New York, on January 10, 1838, at the National; and again on August 5, 1841, at the Chatham. (Odell, IV, 221, 493).


44. Odell, III, 636-37; 675.

45. Review of *A Narrative of four Voyages to the South Seas. . . 1822-1831. Comprising. . . an account of. . . the Massacre Islands, where Thirteen of the Author's crew were massacred and eaten by cannibals, by Captain Benjamin Morrell*, *American Quarterly Review*, XIII (1833), 330, 333.


47. Wilson, pp. 59, 61, 620.

48. Odell, IV, 364.


50. Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-over District; The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New


52. Cross, p. 185. Mrs. Trollope, who attended one such camp meeting, found the sight too horrible to behold:

I know no words which can convey an idea of it. Hysterical sobbing, convulsive groans, shrieks and screams the most appalling, burst forth on all sides. I felt sick with horror. As if their hoarse and over-strained voices failed to make noise enough, they soon began to clap their hands violently. (Frances Trollope, Domestic Manners of the Americans, ed. Donald Smalley, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949, p. 172)

53. Quoted in Cross, p. 238.

54. Cross, p. 238.

55. Mrs. Elizabeth Ricord, Zamba; or, the Insurrection (Cambridge, Massachusetts: John Owen, 1842), p. 1.


58. Ricord, p. 6.
Chapter V

MILITANT ABOLITIONISTS AND THE "DOUBLE CRUSADE"

Why would the Northern agitators begin to attack the Southern slaveowners? If freedom for the slave was the only reason for abolitionist propaganda, why should they alienate the only people who obviously were in the position to ameliorate and finally to abandon their peculiar labor system? Several historians have recently suggested that while abolitionists may well have been sincere in their concern about the plight of the slave, there was another, perhaps even more urgent, motivating force behind the antislavery movement; indeed, behind the general reform movement of 1830-60. And if correct, an examination of this motivation may help to explain, at least in part, why and how abolition drama helped to broaden the base of the antislavery impulse in the North, why the playwrights found it necessary to shift the attack to the Southerner and the South's "slave power," as well as to attack slavery itself. Finally, the suggestion of a "double crusade" may help to illuminate the abolitionist's attitude toward the Negro, and even toward his own society, at least as manifested in the militant abolition drama.

In 1906 Professor Frank T. Carlton wrote that "every great economic revolution in the modern world brings forth class development and class decay; it results in increasing the strength and power in hands of one class, and in decreasing the influence of other clas-
ses and interests. A class which is losing its hold upon social and economic supremacy invariably produces humanitarian leaders." This phenomenon, labeled "status revolution" by Richard Hofstadter and applied by him to the progressive movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, occurred, according to Carlton, for the first time in this country during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. "In New England, the social and political center of gravity was shifting from commerce and the ministry to the developing manufacturing interest. Thus economic and social changes produced the humanitarian movement and made it a powerful factor in the history of the period." Carlton describes the leaders of this period as coming "as a rule from the old New England stock; they were the sons of ministers, farmers, or commercial men, and were usually men who had received a college training. They were men only remotely and indirectly connected with the great industrial changes which had been sweeping over the northern and eastern sections of the country." The result of this "diversion of business into new channels and the rise of new political and social ideals left a portion of the old leaders and their families stranded and outside the active business and social current of events."¹

The old ruling class, which was "dying out in a blaze of intellectual fireworks,"² were the heirs of New England Puritanism and Federalism, and with this heritage came the Calvinistic traditions of stewardship and benevolence. "The core of American trusteeship,"
explains Clifford S. Griffin, "was the obligation to make people conform to a particular Protestant interpretation of the gospel." Federalism, he goes on to explain, "was the political means through which the stewards tried to rule others. . . . For the trustees the party was a means of controlling society and insuring that those who were fit to rule would rule." 3

However, the "structural equilibrium" which had been established by the time of the Revolution began breaking down by the turn of the century, and by the 1830's was almost completely shattered. The democratization of the frontier, improved transportation and new markets, the growth of small factories, the "economic madness" of the 30's which "dazzled thousands into a whole new range of opportunities and aspirations," all contributed according to Stanley M. Elkins, to the collapse of institutions which had been fostered and nurtured by the Puritan-Federalists. By the 1830's "the church had fallen into a thousand parts. . . . In New England the Congregational church, which had once functioned as a powerful state establishment," had been deprived of last secular supports. The bar had been "democratized," resulting, according to Elkins, in an inevitable decline in standards and deterioration of its institutional controls. Although the old mercantile and banking structures were not in a state of decline, "the reasonably stable economic organizations maintained by the great trading families of the East were being challenged by a rising class of petty industrialists everywhere," and, as a result,
in a "relative sense their power and leadership . . . no longer carried the decisive weight of former times." In fact, "the very tone of business life assumed a character peculiarly indicative of what was happening." 4

The new "culture-hero," Elkins explains, "was being fashioned on the frontier of the Old Northwest: the young man on the make, in whose folklore the eastern banker, bulwarked by privilege and monopoly, would become a tarnished symbol." Finally, by the 1830's the Federalist Party was "utterly dead." The Federalists had taken for granted "the tradition that politics was an occupation for men of affairs, property, and learning," and had provided "a clear institutional nucleus for the loyalty and commitment of other vested interests in society—the intelligentsia, the ministry, the bar, the propertied class." 5

The humanitarian leaders produced as a result of this loss of control were nonetheless determined that the Elect would exert their traditional leadership. "If the stewards could no longer make men behave through political action," claims Griffin, "they might persuade them to be good through reform societies." 6 It was thus no accident that "the rise of Andrew Jackson's popularity coincided with the founding and early years" of all the major benevolent societies of the age of reform. And, "with the success of the Jacksonians and the general continuance of the Democratic party in power after 1829, benevolent men began to deplore unchristian policies and to claim that
the perpetuity of the republic depended on the maintenance of evangelical Christianity in the land."^7

By the 1830's the trustees of the Lord... had eight national organizations to save men from folly, vice, and sin. The Sunday School Union promoted the moral and religious welfare of children. The Education and Home Missionary societies provided ministers to watch over adults. The Bible Society issued the fundamental basis of all Protestantism, and the Tract Society distributed works designed to apply the teaching of Holy Writ to everyday life. The Temperance, Peace, and Antislavery societies worked against what many trustees considered men's most heinous sins. Together the societies could take Christians from their cradles to life beyond the grave. Between birth and death, the societies' officers hoped to impose on the turbulent American people a set of ideas which, the trustees felt, but few men held.^8

David Donald, writing fifty years after Carlton, arrives at the same conclusion. He asks: "Why were some Americans in the 1830's for the first time moved to advocate immediate abolition? Why was this particular seed bed ready at this precise time?"^9 In answering his question he gives statistical support to Carlton's generalization, and suggests why many of the old New England stock eventually came to support antislavery. Donald analyzed the leadership of the abolition movement, based on 106 biographical sketches, including those found, for instance, in the Dictionary of American Biography and Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography. He found that most of the leaders were born between 1790 and 1810, so that the median age in 1831 was 29. They were indeed predominantly New Englanders: 85% came from the
Northeastern states, 60% from New England, and 30% came from Massachusetts alone, while many of the non-New Englanders were originally from New England families.

He notes that time after time the biographers mentioned that their subject was "of the best New England stock," or "of Pilgrim descent." Their parents were from "a clearly defined stratum of society": doctors, preachers, teachers, some farmers; but few merchants, no bankers, and only one ordinary day laborer. Only three manufacturers, two of whom were on a small scale, committed themselves to the cause. Virtually all of the parents, he says, were staunch Federalists. They were generally enthusiastic for higher education. Of 89 white male leaders, at least 53 had attended college, university, or theological seminary. Harvard and Yale were favored schools in the east, while Oberlin was favored in the west. There was, for the times, an "extraordinary proportion of women in the abolition movement." Although the Grimké sisters were probably the most famous exception, most of the women also came from New England. While Donald concludes that "it is correct to consider humanitarian reform and Congregational-Presbyterianism as causally interrelated," he also notes that abolition leaders were often "troubled by spiritual discontent, and they wandered from one sect to another seeking salvation."10

Of the 106 leaders, only one had much connection with the rising industrialism, and only 13 were born in any of the principal
cities of the country: "abolitionism was distinctly a rural movement." This would partially explain their lack of "sympathy or understanding for the problems of an urban society. Reformers though they were, they were men of conservative economic views." They were not so much hostile to the workers, however, as they were indifferent: "The factory worker represented an alien and unfamiliar system toward which the antislavery leaders felt no kinship or responsibility." Since they were mostly "sons of the old New England of Federalism, farming, and foreign commerce, the reformers did not fit into a society that was beginning to be dominated by a bourgeoisie based on manufacturing and trade." Thus, "Jacksonian democracy, whether considered a labor movement or a triumph of laissez-faire capitalism, obviously had little appeal for the abolitionist conservative." Only one was a Jacksonian; nearly all were strong Whigs.11

From this data, Donald then draws "a composite portrait" of abolitionist leadership:

Descended from old and socially dominant Northeastern families, reared in a faith of aggressive piety and moral endeavor, educated for conservative leadership, these young men and women who reached maturity in the 1830's faced a strange and hostile world. Social and economic leadership was being transferred from the country to the city, from the farmer to the manufacturer, from the preacher to the corporation attorney. Too distinguished a family, too gentle an education, too nice a morality were handicaps in a bustling world of business. Expecting to lead, these young people found no followers. They were
an elite without function, a displaced class in American society.

"Agitation," he concludes, "allowed the only chance for personal and social self-fulfillment." While "some fought for prison reform; some for women's rights; some for world peace. . . ultimately most came to make that natural identification between moneyed aristocracy, textile-manufacturing, and Southern slave-grown cotton." Thus, "an attack on slavery was their best, if quite unconscious, attack upon the new industrial system." Such agitation "offered these young people a chance for a reassertion of their traditional values, an opportunity for association with others of their kind, and a possibility of achieving that self-fulfillment which should traditionally have been theirs as social leaders. Reform gave meaning to the lives of this displaced social elite." Donald thus concludes:

Viewed against the backgrounds and common ideas of its leaders, abolitionism appears to have been a double crusade. Seeking freedom for the Negro in the South, these reformers were also attempting a restoration of the traditional values of their class at home. Leadership of humanitarian reform may have been influenced by revivalism or by British precedent, but its true origin lay in the drastic dislocation of the Northern society. Basically, abolitionism should be considered the anguished protest of an aggrieved class against a world they never made.12

Stanley M. Elkins perceives a possible difficulty in such a conclusion. After all, he points out, this group (and he is referring specifically to the Transcendentalists, who he believes exerted con-
siderable intellectual influence on the abolition movement) "were men of high ability and learning; there was no inherent reason why they should have been 'prevented' from occupying' or pursuing their traditional careers--"the careers per se were actually more numerous than ever. There were more factories, more businesses, heightened demands for politicians and lawyers with the democratization of politics and the bar, and new churches were springing up every day." But this, Elkins believes, was the very reason for discontent. Because of the availability of such careers there was a resultant "relative devaluation of the roles associated with them. The respect which such roles once carried in the community had been downgraded. Thus the young man of talent, learning, and sensibility with ties to an earlier era--either of family or simply of local tradition--was just not attracted to those careers in the way he might once have been." He mentions the career of Henry Adams--a product of the second generation of the 'status revolution'--as "the most poignant symbol" of this alienation. It is in this sense, then, that Elkins agrees that the intelligentsia of the 1830's "could quite properly be called a 'displaced elite.'"  

Lawrence Lader, who apparently bases much of his book, The Bold Brahmins, on this theory, emphasizes the "conservatism" of these radicals. Like Donald, he notes that "almost every abolitionist came from original Puritan stock" and believes that the old Calvinist concern with sin was manifested in a generation which was "tortured by
one overwhelming sin—the sin of a nation, the devouring stain of slavery."

Like an endless drum, *sin*, *guilt*, and *purification* reverberate through the abolitionist litany. It was the ultimate battle for the true abolitionist. He was not just opposing a system. He had taken God's side against the Devil.

While it was "a cause worth dying for," as Angeline Grimké claimed, it was also a means of salvation. "I seemed transformed, 'regenerated,'" Dr. Henry Bowditch wrote, after spending months trying to save a single slave from his Southern master. "It was a curious psychological phenomenon never to be forgotten by me." Lader points out, in fact, that "we might even suspect that many abolitionists were as much concerned with saving themselves as the slave."

But while the abolitionists raved against the "lords of the lash," they also turned their guns against the "lords of the loom" and the "lords of State Street who ruled Boston, Lynn, and Worcester"; the new "industrial colossus" which had "swept away many New England values." While Massachusetts had once "prided itself on being the only State without a slave within its borders," now "the textile magnates and merchants had solidified a happy partnership with the South, little concerned with the horrors of slavery as long as it enlarged their bank accounts." "It is high time," Emerson demanded, "our bad wealth came to an end." "Our great capitalists are speculating . . . in the liberties of the people," claimed William Jay. "It was a re-
volt echoed constantly in literature and speeches, and from the pulpit where Theodore Parker thundered against greed and corrupt morality,\textsuperscript{15} and it is echoed also in the plays written by the abolitionists.

Lader believes, however, that this attack was "directed not against aristocratic wealth but the hustling and ambitious men just coming to power"; the abolitionists were thus engaged in "a conservative revolt." The "old rich" had "few connections with textiles, Southern trade, or any business profiting from slavery." While the Lawrences and Appletons were giants in the textile industry, for the most part the "old" money "stemmed mainly from importing, shipping, finance, real estate, and particularly the China trade." Men like John P. Cushing, Thomas Perkins, Robert G. Shaw, Nathaniel P. Russel and Peter Chardon Brooks, among the richest in New England, had made their fortunes in trade, insurance and real estate, and quite often the old aristocracy "developed strong links" to antislavery. The Shaws, for instance, became "militantly abolitionist," while Charles Francis Adams, Josiah Quincy and John Murray Forbes had connections with both wealth and antislavery.\textsuperscript{16}

There is an even further complication. William R. Taylor notes that the New England gentry was not the only group in the early nineteenth century to voice dissatisfaction with the "direction progress was taking and about the kind of aggressive, mercenary, self-made man who was rapidly making his way in their society." For in-
stance, the complaints of such New Yorkers as William Cullen Bryant and William Leggett concerning the exploitation practiced by the new industrial capitalists have been noted in Chapter IV. Taylor also mentions, however, writers like Sarah Hale and James Kirke Paulding as representatives of a large group who had "began to develop pronounced longings for some form of aristocracy." This latter group, however, looked to the South for a native American aristocracy, while the "acquisitive man, the man on the make, became inseparably associated with the North and especially with New England. In the end, the Yankee—for so he became known—was thought to be as much the product of the North as the planter-Cavalier of the South."17

This was not, however, the solution found by the native New England gentry themselves. While the gentry was aware of such men on the make in their own section, they were precisely the people under attack, for they were identified with the new money of industrialism and pro-slavery. Furthermore, the class that the New Yorkers upheld as an "aristocracy" was also under attack by New England, for the new "culture hero," scorned by the New Englanders, was the very sort of hero being developed by the spokesmen for the "new" aristocracy. "Paulding," for instance, "unlike so many of his countrymen, was never in doubt about Jackson. From the first he thought of him as the model of the natural gentleman."18

We have already seen this distinction between hereditary and "natural" aristocracy at work in the discussion between Clifford,
Buckingham and Say, in *Jack Cade*. Indeed Edwin Forrest himself was an example of a Jacksonian democrat--of the new "culture hero"--and, when he built his "castle" overlooking the Hudson, he moved into the ranks of the "natural" aristocracy. Further, Taylor considers the career of novelist-editor Sarah Hale a close parallel to the career of Daniel Webster; but Webster had come to terms with the new industrialism, and, after his 7th of March speech was soundly vilified by the radical New England abolitionists. The New England gentry, the "displaced elite," the old money, looked askance at these upstarts. Especially were they horrified by the attempt to make out of the Southerners a kind of native "natural" aristocracy--an aristocracy with links to the new western "culture hero" and the new power of New York. To them, the cotton planters (and the Northern industrialists who supported them) who turned their plantations into factories and exploited the land and their labor, were no better than the Northern capitalists who exploited the natural resources of the country and their working force.

In a sense, Harriet Beecher Stowe reflects not only the tension between the New England gentry and the Northern industrial-Southern cotton "factory" axis, but also the tension within New England itself. Born in 1811, she would have been, in 1831, among the younger members of the group described by Donald. However, she did not become an abolitionist as early as many of her contemporaries. In
1832 the Beecher clan moved to Cincinnati, where Beecher had been appointed President of the Lane Theological Seminary. There Harriet found her husband, Calvin Stowe, who had been a professor of Greek at Dartmouth before joining the faculty at Lane. While at Cincinnati Harriet was exposed to the dynamic Theodore Weld, and, although she remained a colonizationist, she was nevertheless influenced by Weld and claimed that his *Slavery as it Is* had provided some of the inspiration for her first antislavery novel.

Although Beecher was usually identified with the Orthodox Puritans, Harriet was unable to maintain such an unswerving course. Like most abolitionists, as Donald has pointed out, she was "troubled by spiritual discontent," and wandered from church to church. Her biographer, Charles H. Foster, points out that from orthodox New England Puritanism, she "flirted" with spiritualism, "tried out" Catholicism, at least "in imagination," and ultimately sought "in the Episcopal Church a stay against religious and moral confusion." In 1832, when many of the militant abolitionists were beginning their life-long commitment to the cause, Mrs. Stowe wrote to a friend that "as this inner world of mine has become worn out and untenable, I have at last concluded to come out of it and live in the external one. ... I have come to a firm resolution to count no hours but unclouded ones, and to let all others slip out of my memory and reckoning as quickly as possible." She reinforces this notion in the concluding remarks of her first novel:
For many years of her life, the author avoided all reading upon or allusion to the subject of slavery, considering it as too painful to be inquired into, and one which advancing light and civilization would certainly live down.\textsuperscript{21}

It was only after having been "propelled by maternal loss, by religious commitment," and "by the urgency arising from the Fugitive Slave Law" that she "assumed the role of spokesman for the New England conscience and imagination."\textsuperscript{22}

In this sense, then, Mrs. Stowe serves as a representative for such abolition playwrights as Lydia Marie Child, Daniel Whitney, J. T. Trowbridge, Sophia Little, Elizabeth Ricord, Mrs. J. C. Swayze, the anonymous authors of The Captured Slave and The Honorable Anodyne Humdrum, and even perhaps William Wells Brown, who in some ways at least identified himself and some of his fictional characters with the New England group. And, if Donald's thesis of a "double crusade" is correct, in reflecting the New England conscience and imagination, not only would Mrs. Stowe (and her fellow abolition dramatists) be "seeking freedom for the Negro in the South," they would also be "attempting a restoration of the traditional values of...\textsuperscript{23}

class at home."

The suggestion that abolitionists were engaged in a "double crusade" is particularly helpful, I believe, in the following interpretation of the abolition drama of 1845-1861. A "double crusade" illuminates the motivation behind the creation of the vicious stereo-
type of the ante-bellum Southerner (a stereotype which still exists); it gives a fuller understanding of the attitude taken toward the Negro characters in such plays; and it indicates the kind of hero which was advanced as an alternative to the new "culture hero"--a hero which not only represents the "displaced elite" but also suggests the ways which viewers or readers of the drama could take in the crusade against the sinful, tyrannical Southern slave power.
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER V


2. Ibid., p. 52.


8. Griffin, Their Brothers' Keepers, p. 43.


10. Ibid., pp. 28-29.

11. Ibid., pp. 29-32.

12. Ibid., pp. 33-36.

13. Elkins, pp. 166-67. And, in a sense, Hector Dunbury voices the plaint of the alienated in J. T. Trowbridge's Neighbor Jackwood. He points out to Camille that he has no real friends, not even his old schoolmates: "Their talk is of oxen, horse trades, and fat hogs--conversation agreeable enough in its way, but unsatisfactory on the whole. If I wish to lead their minds to poetry, art, or the miracles of life and growth, they branch out on the subject of onions, and tell what beds of 'em 'me and father' raised last year!" He finds himself alienated even from the young ladies of his village. "Some of them are pretty and intelligent. But see how our modern village girls are educated! Conventionality and expediency are their two hands. The principal use of their ears seems to be, to catch the answer to the important question, What will the world say? But the worst
of all is, they have been taught by their wise mammas to subordinate all their motives and aspirations to a low matrimonial ambition. This is, in fact, the nose they follow, with one eye on convenience, the other on respectability. And they are so sharp at this practice that it is dangerous for an unmarried fellow, like myself, to approach them." (II.i.20-21)

While Hector's lament is obviously one which could easily appear at any period, the "modern" girls Hector avoids are described in terms similar to those used to describe the "young men on the make."


15. Ibid., p. 109.

16. Ibid.


18. Ibid., p. 245.


20. Ibid., p. 7.


22. Foster, p. 63.

23. Donald, p. 36.
Chapter VI

THE SLAVE POWER CONSPIRACY:
CIVIL LIBERTIES AND THE SIN OF SLAVERY

By the early 1840's it appeared that organized antislavery activity was floundering. The national society had apparently outlived its usefulness, and the Philanthropist suggested that it "quietly dissolve itself."

What... is the use of the national society? Annually it is convened at New York; discusses ambiguous points in its own constitution; is agitated by the discrepant views of its members on topics not immediately connected with the antislavery cause; considers proposed amendments; votes that it will not be held responsible for the reports of the Executive Committee from the wide field of antislavery operation; and leaves it without providing it... resources. 1

James Birney had a year earlier suggested that a new society, one which would "condemn immediatism and advocate the amelioration of slavery and its gradual abolition," be organized under the leadership of William Ellery Channing and John Quincy Adams. Adams agreed that immediate emancipation was unworkable:

Let me ask those of you... who believe the immediate emancipation of the slaves of this country to be a practical thing, whether the success of your moral suasion upon the minds of the slaveholders hitherto has been encouraging to your hopes or expectations... Have you converted many to the true faith of immediate emancipation without indemnity? Is the temper with which your arguments are received; nay, is the temper with which they are urged, of that character which conciliates acquiescence
and ripens hesitancy into conviction? With what feelings toward you is the heart of the slaveholder impressed? With what feelings are your hearts impressed towards the slaveholder? "Do you gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"^2

Adams himself submitted, in the tradition of the eighteenth century approach, a plan of gradual emancipation, considered by one recent historian as "eminently practical." It was ignored, however, and "with it probably disappeared one of the last comprehensive chances for a peaceful settlement of the crisis."^3

Although the organized antislavery movement seemed to be disintegrating, at least on a national level, the fact is that abolition sentiment was gaining throughout the North. Stanley M. Elkins explains the popular growth of antislavery on the basis of the "fellow traveler principle," in which "functional substitutes" were provided for those who felt the pressures of conscience against slavery, but were as yet unprepared to take a definite stand.

The process operated somewhat as follows: Relatively few were actually prepared to take unequivocal abolitionist positions, but moral pressures, coming from everywhere in the civilized world and reflected intensely from our own abolitionists, were more and more insistent that Northerners recognize in some form the evils of slavery. Functional substitutes for abolitionism, that is, were coming increasingly into demand. And this growing need for some satisfactory mode of self-expression was in fact being provided for by the appearance of other issues and other forms of action—in some cases broader, and in all cases more acceptable—to which abolitionism could be linked but in which more and more persons could participate.^4

One of the more acceptable arguments used by abolitionists to
broaden the antislavery impulse was the contention that a Southern slave power (and its Northern sympathizers) was attempting to destroy the civil liberties of the white man, just as it had already denied such liberties to the black. Elkins suggests that the first major step toward accepting such a contention was the death of Elijah P. Lovejoy in 1837 at the hands of a mob in Alton, Illinois. "This was deeply shocking to a major portion of the American public," says Elkins, "and marked something of a turning point in sentiment." Mass meetings were held throughout the North in protest, but the most famous was held at Faneuil Hall in Boston. The news of Lovejoy's death was felt in New England like "a shock as of any earthquake throughout this continent," according to John Quincy Adams, while Bryant's *Evening Post* warned: "To say that he who holds unpopular opinions must hold them at the peril of his life... is to strike at all rights, all liberties, all protection of law." Lawrence Lader indicates the lesson learned even by those opposed to abolition: "Not freedom of the press, nor any constitutional liberty, was secure against the demands of slavery."

An even far more reaching issue was the right of petition. In 1836 the House resolved to table all antislavery petitions without debate. John Quincy Adams took up the cause to fight the gag rule, and introduced petition after petition. Indeed, Barnes points out that just at the time of the breakdown of organized activity Adams noted "a greater number of petitions than at any former session." The
attempt to censure Adams in 1842 failed, as did the attempt to censure Joshua Giddings, of Ohio. Giddings, in fact, returned to his district and was re-elected by an overwhelming majority. Barnes considers the victory of Adams and Giddings of the utmost of importance. "Now the slavery question was outside the control of the Whig party leaders: it was an issue in the House. Its insurgent spokesmen made up an antislavery bloc within their party, a rallying point for the antislavery host throughout the North." This antislavery bloc would henceforth raise all sorts of issues. "Some were vital, others were trivial, and still others had small measure of reality. They all derived their importance from the fact that they provided an occasion for a fresh assault on slavery." Barnes concludes that "such operations would naturally lead to a further deepening of the split between sections:

Inevitably the time must come when this broadening impulse would escape its party bounds and divide the nation. The victory of insurgency was thus a true turning point in history, the nucleus of a new movement in national affairs."

Abolition propagandists exploited all such issues dealing with civil liberties as they attempted to persuade the Northern yeoman that his own interests were bound up with those of the Southern slave. When James G. Birney's abolition press was destroyed by Cincinnati mobs, for instance, the Executive Committee of the New York Anti-Slavery Society declared that such occurrences made it abundantly clear "that slavery cannot stand, except it be upon the ruins of the
free press. Further, just as the struggle over the gag rule was getting underway, in 1836, the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society issued an address "to the People of the United States, or, to such Americans as value their rights, and dare to maintain them," which pointed out that not only the rights of the abolitionists were at stake:

The right of petition and the freedom of debate are as sacred and valuable to those who dissent from our opinions, as they are to ourselves. Can the Constitution at the same time secure liberty to you, and expose us to oppression--give you freedom of speech, and lock our lips--respect your right of petition, and treat ours with contempt? No, fellow countrymen! we must be all free, or all slaves together.

This, then, was the key issue. Both the Southern and Northern "aristocracy" "aim at REVOLUTION: they trample the CONSTITUTION under foot, they bid defiance to the sovereign people and their laws!" And all such violations of Constitutional rights ought "to convince the hardy yeomanry" that "their own interest and liberties are identified with those of the slave--that American freedom is no longer a question of geography or of color--that AMERICANS MUST BECOME ABOLITIONISTS OR SLAVES."

The logical outcome of this "aristocratic" revolution would be the ultimate enslavement of whites. This fear is exploited, for instance, by William Goodell: "Whites are enslaved. Several known instances have occurred already of the successful kidnapping of free whites, without a drop of negro or Indian blood in their veins."
That such a thing could happen was due to the difficulty in establishing a clear-cut definition of a Negro. Thomas Cobb, in his *Law of Negro Slavery*, discusses the sensitive issue:

As all the negroes introduced into America were brought as slaves, the black color of the race raises the presumption of slavery, contrary to the principles of the common law, which would presume freedom until the contrary is shown. This presumption is extended, in most of the States, to mulattoes or persons of mixed blood, casting upon them the onus of proving a free \textit{maternal} ancestor.\footnote{14}

Goodell lists several instances of fugitive slaves advertised as white, and concludes that "a 'perfectly white complexion, light blue eyes, and flaxen hair,' are scarcely a presumptive evidence of freedom." He visualizes for his audience what might easily happen:

Persons thus described are advertised as runaway slaves; are liable to be pursued with muskets and bloodhounds, shot, maimed, captured, brought before United States Marshals, sworn to be slaves, given up and sent to the rice and cotton and sugar plantations of the South, \textit{without trial by jury}, and by a 'summary' process that precludes any thing deserving the name of an investigation.\footnote{15}

Just such a sensational development came to light in New Orleans in 1843. The family of Daniel Müller had emigrated to America from Germany in 1818. Since they arrived penniless they, like many others aboard the ship, were sold as redemptioners. While most of the Germans were able to work themselves out of bondage, the family of Daniel Müller, sent to Attakapas, either died or disappeared from sight. In 1842, however, Madame Eva Schuber, a cousin of the lost Salome Müller (or Sally Miller), was startled to see her working in a New Orleans
cabaret owned by Louis Belmonti. When she demanded that Belmonti release the slave, he threatened imprisonment, chain-gang and the auction block. When the case came to court, on May 23, 1844, "it had already become famous." But, as George W. Cable, who told the story some forty years later, pointed out, the sympathy held by the public was extremely tenuous. "It rested not on the 'hardship, cruelty, and oppression' she had suffered for twenty years, but only on the fact... that she had suffered these things without having that tincture of African race, which, be it ever so faint, would entirely justify, alike in the law and in the popular mind, treatment otherwise counted hard, cruel, oppressive, and worthy of the public indignation." At the trial it appeared that Salome might not be the only such victim:

[John Fitz Miller, her former owner] had other slaves even fairer of skin than this Mary Bridget, who nevertheless... looked like a white girl... Miller was... heedless enough... to hold in African bondage for twenty years a woman who, his own witnesses testified, had every appearance of being a white person, without ever having seen the shadow of a title for any one to own her, and with everything to indicate that there was none. Whether he had any better right to own the several other slaves whiter than this one whom these same witnesses of his were forward to state he owned and had owned, no one seems to have inquired.

Much of the case thus obviously hinged upon Sally's color. One of Belmonti's witnesses was asked that if he saw Sally among white ladies whether he would think her white or not. He replied, "I cannot say. There are in New Orleans many white persons of dark complexion
and many colored persons of light complexion." He was then asked, "What is there in the features of a colored person that designates them to be such?" The witness replied: "I cannot say. Persons who live in countries where there are many colored persons acquire an instinctive means of judging that cannot be well explained." Sally's case ended happily, however. Although the lower courts held her as a slave, the decision was overruled by the State Supreme Court, July 1845. In the judgment it was declared that "persons of color are presumed to be free. . . except as to Africans in the slave-holding states. . . and the burden of proof is on him who claims the colored person as a slave." The judge was not convinced that it had been proven that she was colored, while, on the other hand, Sally had been able to present evidence that she was in fact the missing Sally Miller.

In 1845, the same year that Sally was released from slavery, an anonymous play entitled The Captured Slave appeared in Buffalo. It seems to be clear that, if the author was not aware of the developments in New Orleans, he was certainly taking advantage of the fears already expressed by such abolition propagandists as William Goodell. In this case, David Paul Brown, a white man (or extremely light Negro) from Buffalo, New York, arrives in New Orleans on a leg of a cross-country journey:

Well, well!—I am now twenty-five hundred miles from home—that land of freedom, where the rights of man are duly recognized, and respected. Twelve days ago
I left New-York State, and the people of Buffalo, to see, and learn what—(turning to the slaves) a tale of wrong that would make the most brutalized savage upon earth shudder at its recital.

In the same speech he indicates the point of view taken toward the "slavocracy" in their attempt to extend their "servile power":

That people, who are the first,—when a foreign power taunts—to unfurl to the breeze the banner of liberty, that people, who profess to lay the axe at the root of despotism, that people, who are the first in our legislatures, and in the halls of Congress, to herald forth the proud declaration of freedom, to indulge a connection like that—(pointing to the slaves)—is what I little anticipated. (I.i.1-2)

Brown's trip is suddenly interrupted, however, when he is apprehended as a runaway slave. The man who claims to be his master sees Brown on the levee, sends for a policeman, and arrests him on the spot. He is immediately lodged in jail. All this on the testimony of the owner, Johnson, without any corroborating evidence.

When he is taken to jail, however, the colored keeper, Toby, puts Brown in with the white prisoners. Coleman, the jailor, soon arrives and wants a look at Brown, but can't find him with the slaves. When the error is discovered Coleman must agree: "I don't wonder old Toby made the mistake, for by my soul, I believe the fellow is white" (II.i.8). The following morning Brown is taken to the Mayor's court, where he protests against the complete lack of legal procedure in the whole affair:

I was last evening surprised while on the Levee, by these land pirates, dragged through the streets of your city like a felon, and thrown into prison among
the vilest of the human species, covered with filth and vermin, by whom I was well nigh robbed of the last drop of blood that my body contained. And had it not been for your kindness in summoning me before you at this early hour, I doubt whether my life would have been spared. Your officers have taken me from the dungeon, and brought me here. I have been allowed no opportunity to procure witnesses. I am a stranger in a strange land, without counsel.

The mayor is in fact sympathetic with Brown's story. He cannot believe, in the first place, that this man is a slave: "Can it be, that so light, and fair a young man is a slave!'" But, even though "I could wish that the discharge of my duties did not call me to undertake this very unpleasant task... I am placed here by the people of this city to transact their business." (Mrs. Stowe later makes the same point: even the kindest, most sympathetic slaveowner cannot exercise his tendencies in the face of the system itself). The mayor has no choice but to bring Brown "in subordination to the black code" (II.ii.10-11).

The owner's witnesses are sworn in to testify. Mr. Riddle says that he has not seen Johnson's runaway slave for six and a half years, but is certain that Brown is the man. The mayor asks him how he recognizes Brown. "Is there any mark about him, by which you can be certain that he is the same man?" Riddle's reply rests largely on the same kind of instinct relied upon by the witness in the Salome Müller case: "Nothing farther, than the general expression of the countenance." Mr. Jackson supports Riddle's conclusion:
I know that this man Brown, six years and a half since, was the slave of Mr. Johnson. He ran away about that time, which caused some talk, and considerable search. I have never seen him from that time to this, until I entered this court room. I am confident he is the same man. (II.ii.13)

The playwright is now able to present his case; a case which is sure to drive the point home. Brown remarks that "I am convinced from the course that this trial is taking, that I cannot have justice, but that a sentence will be passed upon me." Because of this, he is determined to make his speech:

I arrived in this city yesterday morning, direct from the State of New York, that land which has proved an asylum for the oppressed. When I left that free and healthy atmosphere, I was a freeman. Could I have anticipated, while gratifying a wish to observe the peculiarities incident to the land of my birth, that the sacred constitution of my country which pledged as my right, this privilege, and led me to expect it, was to be violated, and I made the victim of oppression. . ..My mother was born in England, as free as the waters of yon proud river. My father was born in Spain, as free as the air that you breathe. I was born in America, that land that professes to afford protection to each and every one. But, is my liberty respected?--No! I am robbed of all rights, I am made the slave of one who neither respects himself, his country, nor his God, and my happiness is at once, and for ever destroyed. If you, by your sentence, make me the slave of that man, do not shudder if the spectred spirits of the illustrious patriots of '76 should haunt you in your moments of repose. I again assert that I am no slave. I was born a freeman, and by the God who made me I will die a freeman. Your honour, I have done. (II.ii.14)

The dilemma is made even more agonizing by the point of view given to the mayor. Even though he has "never... in my life, been so
strongly impressed with the belief, that I was jeopardizing the life, liberty, and happiness of a fellow-creature, and committing an act of wilful injustice," there is nothing he can do. He must pass judgment and in doing so he visualizes for the audience Brown's predicament:

Your liberty, the free gift of your God, is about to be taken from you, to meet the demands of this country's black code. If you have friends, they are called upon to mourn the loss of one no doubt they dearly cherish. All your plans for future action, if any you have, are at once destroyed. Your habits of former life, and the tender associations that you have contracted, and for years sought to preserve with the utmost tenacity with the great family of the world, you must now bid adieu to. It is a severe pang to me, I assure you, that I am called upon to pass a sentence that must render you hereafter a blank in society; but the evidence in this case, Mr. Brown, is so positive, that I cannot avoid the unpleasant alternative, that compels me to pronounce you the property of Mr. George Johnson. Mr. Brown, you are his slave. (II.ii.15-16)

Subsequently Brown escapes from the man he is sold to, and makes his way back north to Buffalo, where the play ends. The grand finale takes place with about twenty couples dancing and singing. "After the dance Brown comes forward," thanks the audience for their cordiality, and then makes his plea for abolitionism:

As I am about to bid you good night, I can only wish that when you reflect that the scenes you have witnessed this evening, are but the shadows of facts, and may perhaps have some sympathy with abolitionism, you will also remember that the circumstances connected with this history would admit of no other arrangement. (III.1.40)
It is significant that the author should feel called upon to explain his choice of presentation. This play, and Sophia Little's *The Branded Hand*, both published in 1845, mark the first full-blown propagandistic abolition drama. In the preceding chapters those sections of the plays which have been considered as contributing to the antislavery debate have often been relatively minor parts of the works. Indeed, even in the plays which contained some of the most outspoken antislavery sentiments, such as David Everett's *Slaves of Barbary* and Jonathan Smith's *The Siege of Algiers*, there were portions which had nothing at all to do with the problem of slavery. Usually, there was an interest in a romantic plot, a plot which frequently overshadowed the playwright's attention to slavery.

In *The Captured Slave*, however, there are no elements which do not bear directly on the abolition of slavery. While there is a romantic interest in this and in most of the other abolition plays, this becomes one of the major vehicles for the attack on slavery. Thus, while I have here extracted those speeches from the play which deal directly with the problem of civil liberties, I have retained in treating them the significance they bear in context. In fact, this and subsequent plays which will be considered (with the possible exception of Brougham's version of *Dred*, Trowbridge's *Neighbor Jackwood*, Boucicault's *The Octoroon*, and Mrs. Swayze's *Ossawattomi Brown*) have no other context. While they may differ in technique or perhaps even in doctrine, they were apparently written in order primarily to use
the power of the drama to publicize the plight of the slave, and to agitate for the downfall of the nation's "peculiar institution."

Another antislavery agitator who apparently felt that his material called for a similar arrangement, was Daniel Whitney, who published his *Warren: A Tragedy* in 1850. That the problem of civil liberties is the major theme throughout the work is indicated in the author's remark that his play is "Designed to Illustrate the Protection which the Federal Union Extends to the Citizens of Massachusetts." Joseph Warren, "a free citizen of the State of Massachusetts" is the hero of the piece, and finds himself in opposition to a strong component of the "slavocracy." The cast includes such characters as John Calhoun, George McDuffee, Col. Hayne, Col. Pinckney, Col. Waugh, Col. Perkins, Mr. Rankin, Col. Hamilton, Gen. Sumpter, and other "distinguished citizens of the State of South Carolina."

The work apparently has to do with a law very similar to the Act of 1835 which forbade free Negroes or persons of color access to the State of South Carolina. In 1845, for instance, one Fitzsimons was charged with having violated such a law, even though he claimed to be white. The jury found "the defendant to be a mulatto." Warren, on the other hand, does not claim to be white. Rather, he bases his defense on the ground that while he may be a Negro, he is also a free citizen of Massachusetts, and, as such, is entitled to all Constitutional rights guaranteed him. Calhoun, McDuffee, and Hayne spot Warren on a street in Charleston and hail him into Justice Winthrop's office
for violating the black code. McDuffee tells Winthrop to see to it that the law is strictly enforced. Winthrop assures him to have no fear:

No known infraction of our wholesome laws, (and especially the one recently enacted,) shall ever pass unnoticed. Better by far that a score of such straggling vagabonds should perish, than, that the least danger should come near our fair city, and most glorious state of South Carolina. (I.ii.7)

The justice wants to know the name of Warren's master, where he came from, and why he was out on the streets after dark. Warren, who had been taken completely by surprise, and who accompanied Calhoun's party to the judge's chambers without objection because "I felt conscious of innocence" (I.i.7), tries to explain his situation:

I am, your Honor, from the State of Massachusetts, a free born citizen of the State; and never was a slave. I am here, as I have been before, upon honorable traffic with your people. I knew not till this evening, that any law of the city of Charleston, or state of South Carolina was violated by my presence in your city. I wish ever to demean myself peaceably in whatever place I reside, and if permitted to pass at this time, I will give satisfactory guarantees not to give you further trouble. (I.ii.8)

There is no sympathy for Warren to be found in Charleston. Winthrop replies:

Well, cuffee, you talk large. I must inform you, however, that all woolly headed boys are here presumed slaves. Free blacks from other States are forbidden to come within the borders of South Carolina at all. Under this law you stand committed. If you can obtain any responsible white man, who will give bonds in a sufficient sum to take you immediately out of the State, and pay the expenses of your imprisonment you will be discharged. Otherwise, the law provides,
that you shall be sold at public auction to satisfy
the just claims of the state for the expense of your
arrest and commitment. (I.ii.8)

With that Warren is hauled off to jail.

Warren tries to fulfill the requirements of the law by obtaining
bond. He writes two letters, fearing that they will not be delivered
--one to John Quincy Adams and one to William Lloyd Garrison. He ex-
 plains the situation to Garrison:

Dear Garrison. Should I have the good fortune of
getting this letter into your hand, you will be sur-
prised to learn that my life is in the utmost peril.
I say my life, because I can not be a slave. I was
born free, I have known a higher liberty than what
passes commonly by that name; and neither life nor
death, neither principalities nor powers shall de-
prive my soul of this freedom. My body and its life
are at the disposal of man's deadliest foes,--the
advocates and upholders of human slavery. (I.v.12)

He goes on to explain how he came to be arrested, and the necessity
for bond, and then closes on a note calculated to touch the hearts of
the spectators or readers:

Let my family know of my situation. Poor Aurelia!
God defend her and her little ones! I know not
whether I shall ever again be permitted to be their
comfort and support. But whatever betides me, I can
not be a slave. (I.v.14)

Needless to say, the letters never get out of the hands of his
capturers. McDuffee, in fact, believes "them ample evidence to
warrant immediate proceedings against the fellow as an emissary of
Northern fanatics, to stir up insurrection in our midst" (I.v.15).
He thinks Warren ought to be hanged forthwith. Calhoun, however,
disagrees. Although Warren deserves hanging, he thinks they will be able to get more information out of him by allowing Warren to continue his correspondence. We see here Whitney trying to dramatize the extent to which the slave power is willing to go in order to extend their grasp on the country. In a "luxurious" Charleston hotel room, Whitney stages a formal meeting of the Slave Power organization. In an essentially realistic and under-played treatment, the scene carries with it all the impact of a "You Are There" approach; visualizing for his audience a fictional conspiracy which many Northerners were willing to believe really existed.

Calhoun indicates the general strategy which ought to be taken against the threat to their position:

I have marked attentively, gentlemen, that gathering cloud since first it showed its livid form in the Eastern sky. It began in meanness, was nurtured long in the obscurest places, and by the obscurest persons; but being of such a nature as it is, it cannot be mooted at all by whomsoever done, without bringing to its support better men; and at last the sympathies of the multitude will be aroused upon it, and then all is lost.

There are, he continues, "but two things which will save us." The first was the passage of the recently enacted law forbidding free Negroes to enter the state. In addition, "we must... cut off one or more of the fanatical leaders in this vile plot. That canting vagabond, Garrison, must be secured." Referring to the events of October 21, 1835, Calhoun decides that "dragging him through the streets of Boston with a halter on, does not do the work. The halter
must be drawn, gentlemen, drawn tight enough to stop his prating."

Therefore, extreme measures must be taken: "Let a reward befitting South Carolina and the cause (now in imminent peril) be offered for his head" (I.v.11). Such a reward had actually been posted by some Southern fire eaters ever since Garrison had been charged with inciting the Nat Turner revolt. As for Adams: "The position in the nation which that old hoary headed traitor... holds, makes it in­judicious to set a public price upon his head. Trusty men must be found in our midst, who will undertake to see that he does us no more mischief" (I.v.15).

Warren will also be neatly disposed of:

There is to be a large sale of slaves about Christmas, at which he may be disposed of; and falling into proper hands all future danger from him will be avoided. Should he be executed privately, or publicly, the fact would get into the newspapers, and his death used against us. But the quiet operation of the law authorizing his sale, will put him into a safe place without the possibility of his employers ever knowing what has become of him. (I.v.16)

The others agree to this course, and Col. Pinckney nominates a committee, composed of Calhoun, McDuffee, and Col. Hayne "to attend to the proper execution of this whole plan; and that they be authorized to draw upon the treasury for such sums as are needful for the immediate execution of the same" (I.v.16). The motion is seconded by Mr. Leiner and passed unanimously. Hayne then moves for an adjournment for one week; seconded by Pinckney and carried. Thus, a meeting of the "slave power" concludes.
Russell Nye, in his study of "The Great Slave Power Conspiracy" (in *Fettered Freedom*) points out that "at an early stage in the controversy the abolitionists made it clear that they considered their struggle to free the slave as part of a much greater contest against the machinations of a well-organized 'Slave Power' plot to subvert American liberties."^24 William Goodell, for instance, in *Slavery and Antislavery*, claimed that the slavery question involved far more than the right of Negroes:

> It involves in it the question of the civil and political liberties of the nominally free, . . . the question of whether liberty shall be relinquished, for the security of slavery, or whether slavery shall be overthrown by the spirit of liberty. It is the question of whether civil government shall secure and protect human rights, or whether a ruthless despotism, displacing civil government (properly so called) shall be wielded by the Slave Power for the subjugation of freemen.^25

Nye goes on to say that "by thus fusing their cause with a broader one, the abolitionists gained support from neutral and conservative Northerners. The exposure of a plot against American freedom naturally attracted more public attention than did the relatively academic question of the right or wrong of Negro slavery." That such an organized power never had any real existence was almost irrelevant:

In the sense of the term as used by Wilson, Goodell, Bailey, Garrison, and others—a secret and highly organized group with conscious aims of imposing restrictions upon traditional liberties—the "Slave Power conspiracy" had no real existence.

The important point, in terms of antislavery agitation, was the
ability to exploit such a threat:

The "Slave Power Threat" personified the pro-slavery argument, made it vivid and concrete, and dramatized the controversy into a contest between the forces of good and evil, of freedom and repression, of democracy and aristocracy.\(^{26}\)

We can thus see how Whitney's approach would have been an extremely effective one, for he is making such a conflict even more personified. By actually dramatizing a "meeting" of the conspirators, as they plot and decide the fate of not only a relatively insignificant citizen of Massachusetts, but also of John Quincy Adams, Whitney is able to make the threat even more real.

But Whitney is not content to make Warren an "insignificant" citizen. He makes him the grandson of a Revolutionary War hero, who, like Attuks, the Negro war hero, killed March 5, 1770, fell at Bunker Hill defending those very liberties which are now summarily taken from him. Alone in his cell Warren tells his audience of his illustrious ancestor, the servant of Gen. Warren, in a speech which, in this rather remarkable propaganda piece, takes up the entire third act.

Often in my childhood have I knelt by my father's side upon the very spot where the illustrious Warren poured out his heart's blood for liberty, and consecrated myself to the same glorious cause--vowed eternal hostility to slavery. On that very spot, too, fell my own grandfather. His progenitors had been owned by the Warren family; my grandfather was given to Joseph. But the gushing fountain of liberty in his great heart forbade him to hold any man as a slave. He freely acknowledged the right of my grandfather to equal liberty with himself; and by this act of justice forever attached him
to his person and interests.

He goes on to describe the servant's own death, trying to protect his ex-master:

At all points of duty and danger he was ever ready. On the morning of the 17th of June he was early at his general's side. He watched his motions, carried his orders, dealt death shots at the foe, and when his beloved friend and general fell, covered with wounds, and faint from loss of blood, he stood unmoved by the fallen hero. He heeded not the advance of the British column; and when the soldiers were about to finish the wounded general, he threw himself upon them, sheathed their bayonets in his own body, and died upon the bosom of the expiring hero.

Even Warren's own father was wounded, and was only saved from death because the British officer pitied his youth. But, had their blood been shed for nought?

Yes, the government that grew out of that terrible day at Bunker's Hill, now sells the descendants of the men, who there fought for liberty, into perpetual slavery! O Massachusetts! where is the spirit that could not brook a three-penny tax? Shall a descendant of the man who covered the dying body of thy most favored hero with his own perforated bosom, be sold at public auction as a slave? Shall the same weapons that there struck down the British power now be turned against the weak and defenceless, to force them into a "bondage one hour of which is fraught with more horrors than whole ages of that, which our fathers rose in rebellion against!"

And yet that slave power uses "the very bayonets that broke the British yoke" to "force a yoke upon a number of God's children equal to the colonists at the time of the Revolution" (III.i.28-30).

There is nothing, however, that Warren can do to save himself,
except to steel himself for the inevitable. He cannot be a slave, even if it means his death. Warren is sold at auction to Dr. Judas Smythe, a Protestant minister, who is determined that Warren will submit or die. "Lenity in such a case," he declares, "is the greatest possible cruelty. The least insubordination, works our ruin at once. We must enforce submission, or submit ourselves." He thinks it a pity that "Massachusetts' laws and customs should so mislead men" from their natural duty. He has no choice, but to correct Warren's mistaken notions: "there is no way of escape from this" (V.iv.54-55). He orders Warren whipped until he submits. When he passes out, Smythe has salt brine thrown on the wounds. Warren momentarily regains consciousness; long enough to make a final plea to his fellow citizens of Massachusetts:

O God! touch the hearts of the millions of freemen in the land, to withhold their hands from this accursed thing. O! dash in pieces, as a potter's vessel, the unhallowed Union of States, and the foul combination of Churches, by which this monster wrong is upheld. O! my dear God! as the light of earthly life fades away, I seem to catch blessed glimpses of a coming deliverance to the pining millions. O! delay not the rumbling of thy chariot-wheels! (V.iv.58)

There is no doubt that the temper of abolition drama has been drastically altered. At the end of the 1830's, and even into the early 1840's, the plays which have been examined have generally adhered to a moderate position. While it is often difficult to determine with precision the exact position, it is probably fair to conclude that they maintained the doctrine espoused by "gradual" emancipation-
ists. Not so Daniel Whitney. Like Garrison and his fellow militant abolitionists, Whitney's spokesman demands immediate emancipation, if not secession from the union. To exclaim that the hallowed union of American states ought to be dashed into pieces is a radical statement indeed.

Not only has the doctrine been altered, but Warren exhibits an unfamiliar dramatic structure, a structure which Whitney, like the anonymous playwright of The Captured Slave, apparently believes to be called for by the material he deals with. In this chapter only two of the five acts of the play have been examined—those sections which deal most directly with the issue of civil liberties. It is significant, however, that each of the acts takes up a separate issue. Thus, while civil liberties appears to be the major theme throughout, and is dealt with specifically in the speeches in acts I and III, Whitney also deals with other aspects of the abolition debate. Although these elements will be discussed in the appropriate chapter, it should be noted here that one act is entirely devoted to a slave auction scene. Heretofore we have seen that this has been a favorite device of playwrights who hope to introduce an antislavery bias to their dramas. Never before, however, has a playwright presented such an elaborate and extended dramatization of one of the most effective arguments against slavery. Furthermore, Whitney devotes an entire act to the problem of religious liberties, an issue which will be
discussed later in this chapter. Thus, it is clear that with the advent of militant abolitionism there eventually emerge playwrights who believe that the drama can be the most effective method to present their case; that, for instance, the slave power conspiracy, which "personifies" for many the pro-slave argument, as Nye points out, can be further exploited by placing actual representatives of the plot on the stage.

Another martyr to the cause of freedom, and another "popularizing incident" was the celebrated case of Captain Jonathan Walker. On June 22, 1845 Walker, the captain of a small craft, attempted to aid a group of Negroes to escape from the area of Pensacola, Florida. On July 8, however, he was captured by a patrolling Navy vessel and hauled back to Pensacola. His "martyrdom" came on November 11 when, after being tried and sentenced to a jail term and fined, he was pilloried and branded on the hand with the initials "S. S."--Slave Stealer. While he was serving his term Garrison wrote:

If Walker can only be suffered to return to the North, THAT BRANDED HAND must be held up in the presence of all people; and the effect will be to fill their bosoms with indignation and horror, and to unite them for the overthrow of the diabolical slave system. Northern Freemen! swell the cry--NO UNION WITH SLAVEHOLDERS.

Among the many tributes paid to Walker in the pages of the Liberator was John Greenleaf Whittier's "The Branded Hand," which appeared on August 15, 1844. Like Warren, Whittier includes a plea to the men of Massachusetts:
Hold it up before our sunshine, up against our
Northern air--
Ho! men of Massachusetts, for the love of God
look there!
Take it henceforth for your standard--like the
Bruce's heart of yore,
In the dark strife closing round ye, let that
hand be seen before!

And the tyrants of the slave-land shall tremble
at that sign,
When it points its finger Southward along the
Puritan line:
Woe to the State-gorged leeches, and the
Church's locust band,
When they look from slavery's ramparts on the
coming of that hand.²⁸

Sophia L. Little, an abolitionist from the Rhode Island society,
joined the publicists of the Walker episode in publishing a "A Drama­
tic Sketch, Commemorative of the Tragedies at the South in the winter
of 1844-5" entitled, The Branded Hand.²⁹ She explores the career of
the Negoes who, pushed to the limit by the cruelty of their masters,
finally ask "Philander" (Captain Walker) to aid them to escape. At
sea, on the fourth day out, they are overtaken by an American "ship
of war" and tricked into surrender. There is aboard the navy vessel,
however, a potential convert to abolitionism. When the Captain of
the ship of war reveals that the craft they are towing is full of
fugitive slaves, the First Officer immediately thinks of the price
they will bring (thus recalling Lt. Gedney of the Amistad case): "It
will be a capital speculation for us; and the reward for these negroes
and their holy knave of a leader will put us in funds for a month or
two." The Second Officer, Arthur, a New Englander, is appalled by
such an attitude:

Are these men? Soon as I reach the shore I will leave the service. I cannot stay where honor and humanity are thus outraged. Poor, poor fellows! would to God I could save you. (II.iii.27)

Once back on shore Arthur (slipping into blank verse) explains to a friend why he made his decision to throw up his commission:

What if I see beneath a Christian flag
Deeds that the Turkish Crescent never saw!
What if I know that Freedom's boasted banner
Screens and protects the demon Slavery?
What if I know our noblest armaments
Are but the Jackals of the Slavery Power?
On their demand! Shall I there seek for glory? (II.v.28)

Arthur visits the captain in his cell and tells him that "in a few hours I leave for free New England" (II.vi.31). Although New England may still be a land of freedom, the Southerners know full well that the majority of the North are indifferent to the cause of freedom—or at least Mrs. Little would jar her audience into such a belief. On the day of the branding, for instance, one of the bystanders asks:

"Do you think this affair will make much noise at the North? You have been among them, and know." The traveler replies:

No. The North does not care, so we help fill her purse, how many of her sons we imprison and brand. All the North wants is riches and luxury. There's a great deal of talk there, but it means nothing. The masses care for nothing but themselves. (IV. i.40)

It is not enough to pillory and brand Walker--some of the crowd decide to humiliate him further--a fact which plays right into the hands of
a propagandist. One of the planters declares, after the iron has been pressed down and released: "I will give you ten dollars to tear the handkerchief from the criminal's face and throw these eggs at him. I could drink his heart's blood" (IV.i.41). (Mrs. Little carefully notes at this point, "Fact"). When he gets no takers, the planter does the deed himself. A bystander, not without feeling, is repulsed: "How could he throw the eggs into that meek face, from whence was dropping the sweat of torture! 'Tis like the Jews mocking and taunting the Savior of men" (IV.i.41-42).

While The Branded Hand and The Captured Slave appeared in the same year, the authors, to a certain extent, take opposite approaches toward their material. Thus, while the story of the capture and subsequent escape of David Paul Brown is presented in relatively realistic terms, the martyrdom of Captain Walker is given poetic stature through the use of blank verse. Even the Negro slaves are given elevated characterizations. Although her dramatic technique differs, she maintains essentially the same view in The Branded Hand toward the slave power conspiracy as exhibited in both The Captured Slave and Warren. To her it is imperative that the Northern masses awaken to the fact that they are mere tools in the hands of the slavocrats; that, indeed, the United States Navy itself is merely the "jackal" of the Slavery Power.

However, Mrs. Little does not consistently utilize blank verse to present her arguments. In the branding scene--with the
accompanying egg-throwing incident--she strives to catch the flavor of real conversation among real representatives of the slavocracy. While this inconsistency may be an artistic fault, it probably would not hinder the play's propaganda value. Not only has she been able to create a character which would have "inspirational" qualities for the audience, she dramatizes the threat to civil liberties. It should be noted, however, that the medium of verse is not utilized by the abolition dramatists who follow her. For the most part they choose the more realistic prose medium (although at times the prose becomes highly charged). This would tend to support the conclusion presented in Chapter XI--that abolition drama generally attempts to achieve a sense of probability--the same kind of probability which rhetoric strives to establish.

The problem of maintaining the civil liberties of America was thus no longer confined to one color or to one area of the country; it was becoming vital for Northerners to realize that their interests were identical to those of the slave. Not only were the civil liberties of a Negro, like Joseph Warren, completely withheld, but the Constitutional rights of white men were being violated by the slave power. Indeed, a white skin was no longer a safe guarantee of freedom in the United States. However, not only had the state been captured by the slave power. Abolitionists maintained that the American churches, by and large, had also become nothing more than
handmaidens to the Southern aristocracy. Jonathan Walker, who published an account of his trial and imprisonment in 1850, recognizes this unholy combination:

Instead of trying to check and diminish the gigantic power of the destroying monster, the church and state have combined with their physical and intellectual, their political and religious influence and power to keep down and control and long abused, oppressed, plundered and outraged objects of their oppression, and to place every possible obstacle in the way of the few unflinching friends of the slave, and their efforts to benefit mankind. 

In fact, the attack on the slave power invariably embraced the issues of both civil and religious liberties. It was thus no accident that Mrs. Little, in referring to the humiliation of Jonathan Walker--a martyr to the cause of civil liberties at the hands of a haughty Southern aristocrat--alludes to the greatest of all martyrs: "'Tis like the Jews mocking and taunting the Savior of men."

The relationship between civil and religious liberty is explored by Rev. J. R. Balme: "Of all the blessings which Christianity brings with it from God to man, there is no blessing in its bestowment more sweet, lovely, or precious, than liberty--liberty personal and relative--temporal and spiritual--civil and religious." But what happens when liberty is taken out of Christianity?

It is then robbed of its life-blood, vitality, value. It then ceases to be true, and becomes spurious and false. Such a Christianity never goes from bad to good, but invariably from bad to worse. It then becomes an engine by which deceit is engendered, morality inverted, liberty suffocated, and virtue heathenised. . . . If you throw such a Christianity as the one
referred to into the conscience of the "Christian" slaveholder, trader, broker, or negro-hater, so called, what effect will it have in separating him from his sins, or in changing his habits, practices, and institutions in these respects?\textsuperscript{31}

Obviously, Balme would imply, none.

Anti-institutionalism was a feature of Transcendentalism, according to Stanley M. Elkins, which had "reached heights of extravagance in the speeches and writings of the radical abolitionists." Wendell Phillips, for instance, complained that "the difficulty of the present day and with us is, we are bullied by institutions." And one of the major institutions under attack—along with the state—was the church. "This was," Elkins claims, "one of the central features of abolitionist doctrine." The church, both North and South, was condemned as "the refuge and hiding-place of slavery," and "to attack the church would thus be to strike at the 'monster' itself—slavery." A British pamphlet on Slavery and the Internal Slave Trade in the United States of America in 1841 declared that "the abolitionists of the United States... have been fully convinced that the American churches were mainly answerable for the continuance of American slavery."\textsuperscript{32}

James Birney, for instance, addressing a British audience in his pamphlet entitled The American Churches the Bulwarks of American Slavery, claimed that "the extent to which most of the churches in America are involved in the guilt of supporting the slave system is known to but few in this country," and proceeded to enlighten them.\textsuperscript{33} Garrison
called the Methodist denomination "a cage of unclean birds," Stephen Symond Foster said it was "more corrupt than any house of ill-fame in the city of New York," and the Anti-Slavery Bugle accused it of being "the most diabolical of all the associations of our nations." Foster went so far as to condemn the entire clergy as a "brotherhood of thieves," and Garrison extended his attack to the Congregationalists, charging that "the Congregational ministers stood 'at the head of the most implacable forces of God and man,' toward whom 'the most intense abhorrence should fill the breast of every disciple of Christ.'" Even relatively "moderate" abolitionists, such as William Goodell, who attempted to present his evidence in a calm and objective fashion, had to conclude, in his Slavery and Anti-Slavery, that the churches could not hold to their position "without being brought, of necessity, into a state of hostility to any body of earnest, preservering, and consistent men and christians, who should seek, from high moral, religious and benevolent considerations the present and entire abolition of slavery."36

Such attitudes are reinforced in some of the abolition plays of the 1840's and 50's. We have already seen, in Mrs. Little's play, The Branded Hand, how civil liberties had been flouted by the slave power, and how this abolitionist playwright hoped to awaken Northerners to their danger by charging them with apathy. During the same scene, while the preparations for the branding of Captain Walker are proceeding, the bystanders have a conversation about the relationship
of churches to slavery. One of the witnesses says: "I think we are much indebted to the Church and clergy for the noble stand they have taken, so many of them, for Slavery. If the church and clergy had come out for emancipation, the burning execution of this day could not be." A second agrees: "The church has done its duty—we owe it to religion. How could we prevent it without keeping the balance of society." In order to reinforce her point, Mrs. Little repeats the whole thing:

First Bystander. The Church and State are connected here by a line as strong, though more secret than in other countries. I rejoice in it, and repeat we never could keep our slaves but by the church's aid.

Professor. Yes, the Church is becoming powerful. No greater indication of it than our worldly great men becoming honorary members of Bible Societies and churches. It looks as if the Millenium was at hand.

Then, referring to Walker, the "Professor" says: "This fellow, the criminal, pretends to some sort of religion." He is "some of the chaff," admits the other, but "the respectable, influential part of the Church at the North are with us" (IV.i.39-40).

Mrs. Little makes clear that those clergymen who do have critical reservations concerning slavery are not permitted to remain in the South. When a sympathetic bystander condemns the humiliation of Capt. Walker, the Professor tries to apologize for the planter who threw rotten eggs into the face of Walker, claiming that "he is a
good hearted man, but hasty when excited—We should have charity.

This brings the "Second Bystander," however, to declare that he will no longer attend any of the meetings held by the Professor; rather he will "go to Loveman's church." The Professor retorts: "I understand he is compelled to leave the city, being suspected of anti-slavery principles." Mrs. Little has brought the sympathizer to the verge of doubt:

If all ministers were time-servers, I would never stir again into a church. I want a Christian to be a Christian—a minister a true minister. But some have the true gospel trumpet, while others have only a dancing pipe set to the tune of every man's occasion. I am sick of this day's business, altogether; is this slavery? Let me consider.

(IV.i.42)

Not all can see the light, however; or, having seen it, can follow it.

One of the slaveholders sees a vision of the branded hand in his dreams, and awakens horrified: "Oh fearful fate! Must I—Oh, must I thus be haunted ever!" A Voice replies: "Forever, if thou wilt not yield to me." The play ends with the planter's reply—a direful prophecy of things to come:

Then will I headlong rush
From pleasure on to pleasure madly on:
I cannot yield this will of mine: 'tis strong
And up in arms against Omnipotence.
Stay, I may be deluded by a dream.
Do not God's ministers for slavery plead,
And prove it holy from the sacred text?
Sleep then, Oh, foolish conscience, sleep again!
The anthems of a thousand churches lull thee.

(IV.iii.46)
While Mrs. Little's work can easily be criticized on aesthetic grounds, she has hit upon at least one effective persuasive device in her handling of the material. Note, for instance, that she makes use of two characters who react to this high-handed disregard of civil and religious liberties. Both Arthur, the naval officer, and the bystander present at the ordeal of Captain Walker are moved to doubt for the first time the justice of such a system. Their reaction is the kind of reaction the playwright would hope to achieve in the audience. Not only does she portray such injustice, she provides her audience with speeches which crystallize the issue, which would reinforce similar reactions within the audience, and which could provide them with arguments for future use.

Daniel Whitney, in *Warren*, provides an entire act to further convince American audiences that Christianity without liberty is "robbed of its life-blood, vitality, value." In his play, however, he allows the major characters to speak for themselves, without comment, assuming that the audience will see for themselves how such a religion has become an engine of deceit. Act IV opens in Dr. Judas Smythe's dining room, where the slaves have been collected for their religious exercises. The time, Whitney notes, is "Sunday, 25th of December." Dr. Smythe is lecturing on obedience.

*Servants, be obedient to your own masters--not only to the good and pious, but to the froward and evil also. This is your duty. This do, and ye shall live. God has placed you entirely in*
our power, and it is your duty to obey your masters and mistresses as God to you. God will punish you severely, even with everlasting burning in hell, if you are unfaithful to your masters and mistresses. Then God bestowed upon you rich and precious privileges in the pious counsel and religious instruction which they give you to help you on your way to Heaven. I have called you together this morning to explain to you the interest which you have in the Son of God, whose birth angels announced more years ago than any of you can count. He came to save the souls of poor black men, as well as rich white men. You insure your salvation by being perfectly obedient and faithful to your masters and mistresses. (IV.i.35)

Such instruction was, in fact, no exaggeration on Whitney's part, but an integral part of the Southern defense of slavery. Whitney is merely allowing Smythe—at least from the point of view of growing numbers at the North—to damn himself with his own words. One can find examples of such instruction in almost any work of Southern propaganda. Here, for instance, is a sermon supplied by the Reverend Mr. William Meade, Bishop of the diocese of Virginia, in a book of sermons "for masters and slaves, and recommended ... to all masters and mistresses to be used in their families":

In the first place, you are to be obedient and subject to your masters in all things. ... And Christian ministers are commanded to 'exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things, not answering them again, or gainsaying'. ... You see, also that you are not to take any exceptions to the behavior of your masters and mistresses, and that you are to be subject and obedient, not only to such as are good, and gentle, and mild toward you, but also to such as may be froward, peevish, and hard. For you
are not at liberty to choose your own masters, but into whatever hands God hath been pleased to put you, you must do your duty, and God will reward you for it. . . . And pray do not think that I want to deceive you, when I tell you that your masters and mistresses are God's overseers; and that if you are faulty towards them, God himself will punish you severely for it in the next world, unless you repent of it, and strive to make amends by your faithfulness and diligence for the time to come, for God himself hath declared the same.37

It is almost as if Whitney had used this very sermon as the model for Dr. Smythe's instructions to his slaves. We see another parallel in the same scene. Dr. Smythe tells his servants that he will explain any passage of the Bible that may be confusing them. Sampsey is puzzled over one such passage: "Wid massa plees 'splain what de word ob God say 'bout doing to others as we would hab them do to us?" First off, the preacher wants to know where he ever heard that read--"I never read such word to you." Sampsey replies that he's heard about it somewhere, "and it rest on he mind and trouble him; so he thought he ax massa 'bout it." So Smythe explains:

Well, Sampsey, I am sorry that anybody should read to servants those portions of the word of God that are above their comprehensions; but as you have heard it, and it troubles your weak mind, I will do what I can to set your mind at rest upon the subject. If it had pleased God, Sampsey, to make you a white man, and give you black slaves, why, you would wish them to be obedient, and industrious, and honest, would you not, Sampsey?

Sampsey supposes he would.
Well, then, Sampsey, as it has pleased God to make you a black slave, he expects you to be faithful to your master, industrious, honest, and contented.

Sampsey is satisfied: "O massa! dis bery plain; dis not 'bove poor brack man nonprehension. It berry good word ob God, massa!" (IV.i.35-36). Reverend Meade's sermon includes a similar interpretation of the "golden rule."

All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them; that is, do by all mankind just as you would desire they should do by you, if you were in their place and they in yours. Now to suit this rule to your particular circumstances; suppose you were masters and mistresses and had servants under you, would you not desire that your servants should do their business faithfully and honestly, as well when your back was turned as while you were looking over them? Would you not expect that they should take notice of what you said to them? That they should behave themselves with respect towards you and yours, and be as careful of everything belonging to you as you would be yourselves? You are servants, do therefore, as you would wish to be done by, and you will be both good servants to your masters, and good servants to God, who requires this of you, and will reward you well for it, if you do it for the sake of conscience, in obedience to his commands.38

Following the Bible lesson, the scene shifts to "the interior of a church, with congregation seated in worship." After the opening hymn comes the pastoral prayer. Smythe calls upon the Lord to bless the Union of the States, the President, Congress, State Legislatures, judges, "and especially, O God, let thy best gifts and graces be upon our beloved and glorious State of South Carolina."
Give: permanence and strength to her prosperity; let her domestic institutions, with all their beauty and power be under they special care. They are made reverent by patriarchal example, and rendered sacred by confirmation of holy Writ. Lord, secure them to us and our children to the latest posterity." On the other hand, he has a request for the abolitionists:

Oh Lord, send thy terrible rebuke and swift destruction upon those sons of Belial who are laboring to destroy our most sacred domestic rights,—who are striving to set up those whom thou hast appointed to serve, and to introduce confusion and bloodshed into thy precious heritage. Let them be destroyed, utterly cut off, and that right early. (IV.ii.37-40)

One of the major scriptural arguments used by pro-slavery propagandists was that the Negro race had the curse of Ham on it; thus they were destined to serve out their time eternally as servants to the descendants of Shem and Japheth. Such, for instance, is the line that Thomas Cobb takes--only one among countless writers to touch on the subject. He opens his study of the Law of Negro Slavery with a historical sketch:

Its beginning dates back at least to the deluge. One of the inmates of the ark became a 'servant of servants;' and in the opinion of many the curse of Ham is now being executed upon his descendants, in the enslavement of the negro race.\(^39\)

Rev. Mr. Smythe takes up this aspect in the course of his Christmas day sermon:
We are to remember that the descendants of Ham were appointed of God to perpetual servitude. It is God's appointment, and, under the circumstances of the case, a very merciful one. The blasting fury of God's displeasure so rested upon Ham, that his posterity are utterly unable to take proper care of themselves, and must have utterly perished, had not God in compassion appointed their brethren to take care of them in all generations. They are dependent upon their more enlightened brethren for care and those directions needful to supply their wants; and, of course, the pittance of service which they are able to render ought freely to be rendered, seeing it is impossible for them to discharge a tithe of the obligation that they are under to their masters and mistresses for their care and attention about them. (IV.ii.42)

But what happens if some of the descendants wish to change their condition? Dr. Smythe has an answer for this, also:

Do any of you wish to know (addressing the servants in the back) how you may escape such a doom,—be translated into the regions of heavenly delight when you die? Let me tell you. It is by being faithful to your masters and mistresses here; by serving them faithfully; by being contented and happy in the condition which a wise Providence has assigned you, never thinking or caring about getting away from your present condition. He who seeks to change his present situation, who thinks about freedom, does it at the peril of his precious soul. These thoughts of liberty, which spring up in your minds, are the suggestions of the devil, who is seeking to get your souls to torment in hell forever. Be faithful then, to your masters and mistresses, avoid all thoughts of freedom, which is a state unfit for you, and God will save your precious souls from hell, and take them to himself in heaven when you die. (IV.ii.44)
After the service, old Billy is worried: "Massa preacher say de debel put it in our hearts to tink of freedom, Sampsey, and old Billy been tinking ob him ebber since he lettle boy." Sampsey, who has already given Smythe a start with his question about the golden rule, has learned his Bible from "preacher Nat"—quite possi­bly an allusion to Nat Turner, who was known to the Negroes as "preacher" or "prophet" Nat. He tells Billy not to worry about such thoughts of freedom: "De word ob God say--where de spirit of de Lord be, there be liberty, Billy. . . . Lub God, and lub man, even de vile buckra dat slaves you all your lifetime; tink of freedom as sure in heaven, and (whispering) if you get a good chance, old Billy, take it on earth, and be sure, good Billy, that God will one day make de ly­ing preacher smart in his own brimstone, for de false reading ob his holy word" (IV.iii.46-47).

The most devastating indictment of Smythe comes later in the Act. Warren, now owned by Smythe, trying to find some honorable way out of slavery, pleads with him for justice. Dr. Smythe does not deign to answer Warren directly, but rather tells his overseer:

Dawson, put up this boy for fifty cats well laid; I can't away with the least impertinence or insubordination. It is our communion season this afternoon, Deacon, and so we will go, and leave this saucy boy with Mr. Dawson till after the meeting. It grieves me that unruly servants deprive our managers of the privileges of the sanctuary.

When Warren tries to explain that he was born free, Smythe interrupts:
It matters not where he was born or reared, he bears the mark of Ham upon his brow, whom God appointed to servitude in all their generations; it is not for us to interfere with God's appoint­ments. If his false training in Massachusetts makes it hard for him to bear the condition to which God appoints him, why, the fault is not ours. Dawson, do your duty, sir. (V.i.48-50).

So Smythe goes off to perform the rites of the Last Supper. "Breaks up the bread and hands it to Deacons Soulriver and Slavecatcher, who distribute it among the communicants." Then he "pours out the wine and hands it to the Deacons" (V.ii.52-53). After they sing a hymn, they go out, and Smythe goes home to attend to the unruly slave.

Having no success with the whip, Smythe applies the bob cat: he "takes the cat by neck and tail, and putting his extended claws to Warren's flesh, tears it off, baring the spine and ribs" (V.iv.59). Such a means of torture was apparently not unknown, and was naturally exploited by antislavery propagandists. Dumond, for instance, includes "one of the few pictorial representations" in his *Antislavery: The Crusade for Freedom*, noting that it was "one barbarity often talked about," and Theodore Weld uses the description of such a punishment in his massive collection of "testimony" in *American Slavery as It Is*. Rev. Horace Moulton, the minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Marlborough, Massachusetts, reports:

> Some, when other modes of punishment will not subdue them, *cat-haul* them; that is, take a cat by the nap of the neck and tail, or by its hind legs, and drag the claws across the back until satisfied; this kind of punishment, as I have understood, poisons the flesh much worse
than the whip, and is more dreaded by the slave. It is somewhat too effective in Warren's case—he dies. Dr. Smythe remarks:

Well, give orders to some of the people to bury him during the night, and then come to the parlor; (looking at his watch), I perceive it is time for evening prayers. (V.iv.60)

The play ends with Dawson's aside: "Ay, ay, sir. I think the devil will take uncommon delight in your prayers this evening" (V.iv.60).

Whitney's play is, at least from our vantage point, one of the most effective propaganda works included in this study. He claims that his drama is "designed to illustrate the protection which the federal union extends to the citizens of Massachusetts," but he does far more than "illustrate." He actively engages in the antislavery debate, and makes use of many means of persuasion. He includes scenes of hair-raising barbarity and inserts speeches which appeal to the emotions and sympathies of the audience. Act II, for instance, is made up entirely of one long speech which appeals to the men of Massachusetts to rise up against this unholy combination of states which allows such disregard of Constitutional rights to occur, just as Garrison was doing in the Liberator. Finally, his hero dies—not as the result of leading a slave insurrection, as did Spartacus or Jack Cade—but because he would not submit to illegal enslavement. In choosing death over submission Warren anticipates the fate of Uncle Tom.

In this resolution there is a striking difference between
Warren and Zamba. Both Smythe and Lawton take similar positions, but the author's purpose in using such sermons is entirely opposite. Mrs. Ricord indicated that she hoped that her play would illustrate the power of evangelical Christianity over all levels of society, and, in doing so, indicated a way to reduce the threat of slave insurrection. Whitney is more concerned with the hypocrisy of such sentiments, as was Mrs. Little, and attempts to prove to his audience that the organized church and Christianity as practiced in the South, were in fact the bulwark of American slavery.

Such a slaveholding clergyman as Smythe was far more scandalous than the preacher who merely advocated the doctrine of pro-slavery, especially when he engaged in such barbarous forms of torture. James Birney, for instance, informed his English readers about the extent of the slaveholding clergy:

Ministers and office-bearers, and members of churches are slaveholders--buying and selling slaves (not as the regular slave-trader), but as their convenience or interest may from time to time require.\(^2\)

Other antislavery playwrights besides Whitney made use of this inconsistency. Both of Mrs. Stowe's antislavery novels and her own dramatization of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, for instance, are to a large extent concerned with the relationship of the American churches to the problem of slavery, and in the following discussion only some of the more typical passages referring to the subject have been included. In John Brougham's dramatization of Mrs. Stowe's novel, *Dred*, \(^43\) for in-
stance, Father Bonnie, who is conducting a camp meeting, asks Jim Stokes, a slave-trader, "how's business?--got a good cook in your lot?" Jim replies, "A prime one--number one cook, and no mistake--picked her up real cheap. I'll let you have her for eight hundred dollars, seeing as you're a minister." The bargaining begins. Bonnie tells Jim that he "must think preaching a better trade than it is, if you imagine a minister can afford to pay such a price as that." Jim insists that "it's dirt cheap, I tell you. A sound, strong, hearty woman, a prudent, careful housekeeper, and a real pious Methodist, I ought to get a thousand for her; but I always think right to make a discount to ministers." Bonnie wonders if he'd take seven fifty. Jim couldn't do it; besides, "she's got a child about four years old, suppose I shall want a hundred for him." That is out of the question: "I don't want any more children about my place." Jim tries to point out the advantage: "But he's a fine likely fellow, and you might as well keep the two together. You won't miss his keep, and before you know it, you'll have a thousand dollar hand grown on your own place." Father Bonnie can see the logic in that: "Well, that's something. I'll talk to you about it after the camp meeting's over" (IV.i.33). After the two leave, Dred, who is based on the myth of Nat Turner, mysteriously appears out of his Dismal Swamp to utter another dire prophecy:

Oh, ho! camp meeting and driver's camp right alongside of each other! Shepherds that sell the flock, and pick the bones: ye oppress the
poor and helpless, and hunt the stranger. Hear this, ye that swallow up the needy, and make the poor of the land to fail: The Lord hath sworn, saying, I will never forget their works; I will surely visit you. Blow ye the trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm in the holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the earth tremble—for the day of the Lord cometh. (IV.i.34)

In William Wells Brown's The Escape, written by the ex-slave in 1858, there is another attack on such preachers who, according to James Birney, buy and sell slaves, "as their convenience or interest may from time to time require." While Brown does not devote as much attention to the hypocrisy of American Christianity as does Mrs. Stowe, he does include a scene in his play which not only shows that Negroes are considered second class Christians, but further dramatizes the point made by James Birney. In this case Rev. Mr. Pinchen is invited by Mr. Haskins, a slave-trader, to accompany him down river: "I allers likes the company of preachers." The preacher, however, has to attend a camp-meeting in Natchez for four or five weeks, and, in order "to pay my travellin' expenses," he plans to "buy up five or six niggers, and take 'em down and sell 'em" (II.4.-23).

There is, then, an economic interest involved in the defense of slavery on the part of the Southern clergy—or at least the abolitionists attempt to exploit such a "conflict of interest." Mrs. Stowe, who spends a good deal of the time in her novel making this point, also chooses to include a discussion of this aspect in her own
dramatization of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, entitled, *The Christian Slave*.45

When Marie, St. Clare's wife, returns from church, she exclaims that
the minister "preached a splendid sermon! . . . It expressed all my
views exactly."

The text was, "He hath made everything beautiful
in its season;" and he showed how all the orders
and distinctions in society came from God; and
that it was so appropriate, you know, and
beautiful, that some should be high and some
low, and that some were born to rule and some to
serve, and all that, you know; and he applied it
so well to all this ridiculous fuss that is
made about slavery, and he proved distinctly
that the Bible was on our side, and supported
all our institutions so convincingly, I only
wish you'd heard him.

St. Clare, however, is not impressed by such "sanctified stuff." He
thinks that,

When anyone speaks up, like a man, and says
slavery is necessary to us, we can't get along
without it, we should be beggared if we give
it up, and, of course, we mean to hold on to it
--this is strong, clear, well-defined language;
and, if we may judge by their practice, the majority
of the world will bear us out in it. But when
he begins to put on a long face, and snuffle
and quote Scripture, I incline to think he
isn't much better than he should be.

Marie thinks he is being "very uncharitable." But St. Clare explains
the economics involved:

Suppose that something should bring down the
price of cotton once and forever, and make the
whole slave property a drug in the market; don't
you think we should soon have another version
of the Scripture doctrine? What a flood of
light would pour into the church, all at once,
and how immediately it would be discovered that everything in the Bible and reason went the other way!

Marie believes that "it's just because he don't like religion that he's always running out in this way he's been doing." St. Clare, however, makes it clear that he's not attacking "religion," but rather, what is passing as religion:

Religion! Is what you have been hearing at church religion? Is that which can bend and turn, and descend and ascend, to fit every crooked phase of selfish, worldly society, religion? Is that religion which is less scrupulous, less generous, less just, less considerate for man than even my own ungodly, worldly, blinded nature? No! When I look for a religion, I must look for something above me, and not something beneath. (II.iv.31-33)

If the American churches were the bulwarks of slavery, as playwrights like Whitney, Little, Stowe, and Brown maintained, what was the alternative? If the public could not hear "religion" in their churches, where could they go? Elkins suggests that Christians were not being asked by the abolitionists "to dissolve their own fellowship or to raze their buildings, but they were exhorted to throw out as much of their institutional baggage as possible so that they might approach closer to God; they were urged to consider themselves as forming not so much an institution as an assembly of individual souls seeking purification." The greatest sin which stained their souls was slavery. That slavery was a sin had been preached even in the seventeenth century, and had motivated the Quakers, for instance, to
insist on manumission. Barnes points out, however, that "in the propaganda for the nation," this doctrine "was not widely emphasized, partly because many abolitionists contended that slavery was an evil and not a sin, and partly because the conversion of the South was hopeless as long as the sin of slavery was maintained." The Lane Seminary Rebels, however, had maintained "from the first that slavery was not only an evil but a sin, and on that account ought immediately to be abandoned."^47

By the 1840's the doctrine of the sin of slavery had become, according to Barnes, "the leading tenet of the official gospel of abolitionism."^48 Elkins has shown how such a work as Uncle Tom's Cabin had the power to persuade its readers of the truth of this gospel. When William Henry Channing contemplated the problem of slavery in the early 1830's, he recorded in his journal: "Not excitement. Calm, deep solemn question. Sympathy with slave-owner. What can he do? Sympathy with the slave."^49 After reading Uncle Tom's Cabin, however, his guilt was multiplied:

O Heaven. How patient are God and nature with human diabolism! It seems to me that I have never begun to do anything for antislavery yet. And now, with one's whole heart bleeding, what can we do? . . . How this book must cut a true-hearted Southerner to the quick!--cut us all, for we verily are all guilty together.50

According to William Lloyd Garrison, who saw Aiken's version of the novel produced at the National Theatre in New York, even the "ragged, coatless men and boys" who frequented the National cheered the anti-
slavery sentiments and "went out of the house as gravely and seriously as people retire from a religious meeting."^51

In a way, attempting to convince audiences that slavery was a sin relieved the abolitionists—and abolition dramatists—of a very real problem. We have already noted, for instance, that early anti-slavery playwrights seek immediate relief for the slave, primarily by convincing slaveholders to ameliorate conditions of slavery. As Southern masters became less inclined to listen to the advice of outsiders, however, abolitionists were forced to address themselves primarily to the North, and the possibility of a practical—and peaceful—solution of the problem dimmed. Yet, Barnes points out that by promoting the doctrine of the sin of slavery abolitionists were relieved of the necessity of developing practical plans for carrying out emancipation, "since sins required no plan for their abandonment."^52

Elkins, in fact, uses William Henry Channing to show that many abolitionists opposed the "eminently practical" kind of plan advocated, for example, by John Quincy Adams. One such program, involving compensated emancipation, "threw Channing into great alarm because he was afraid it might really succeed. Such was the matter-of-factness of the plan, and so intense was Channing's absorption with penitence and atonement rather than policy, that he was actually moved . . . to write a long and agitated letter to Salmon P. Chase urging some means of preventing it—some nobler plan of 'common sacrifice' for slavery's removal, shared equally ('We are all guilty'),
in which sacrifice of course the slave-holder must bear their full proportion."53

In the attempt to broaden the base of the antislavery impulse abolition dramatists thus made use of most acceptable "functional substitutes" available. In dramatizing the conspiracy of the slave power against the civil and religious liberties of the Northern yeomen the playwrights attempted to convince their audiences that, as one propagandist put it, "American freedom is no longer a question of geography or of color—that AMERICANS MUST BECOME ABOLITIONISTS OR SLAVES." Furthermore, relying on the doctrine of the sin of slavery meant that there was no need to supply a resolution of the problem within the drama itself. In fact, Reardon and Foxen, in their study of the propaganda play, believe that one of the characteristic marks of propaganda drama is this very lack of resolution. It is not the purpose of the propaganda play, they maintain, to advocate a particular solution; rather, it is the primary function to show that a need exists. Thus, the audience leaves the play, not with the sense that the problem has been solved, but that there is need for definite action. In the case of abolition drama, of course, this is a particularly happy situation, since the lack of resolution was integrally related to the leading tenet of the movement itself.

Civil and religious liberties, together with the doctrine of the sin of slavery, are the major themes of the antislavery debate
which emerge from an analysis of the abolition drama. In the following two chapters the examination will focus on the relationship between these themes and abolition propaganda concerning the condition of slavery and the issue of fugitive slaves. However, these two themes are not only exploited as the major issues of the debate; they are personified in the characterization of the Southerner, so much so that they take on the quality of a stereotype. Thus, the way in which the themes of civil liberties and the sin of slavery become fused with the characterization of the Southerner will also be examined. Finally, the effect of this abolition stereotype on the general literature of the period will be discussed at the end of Chapter VIII.
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER VI


2. Quoted in Barnes, p. 166.


5. Ibid., p. 186.

6. Quoted in Lader, p. 82.

7. Lader, p. 82.


10. Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society, "Address to the People of the United States, or, to such Americans as value their rights, and dare to maintain them," in *A Collection of Valuable Documents*, pp. 64-65.


12. Ibid.


17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., p. 65.

19. Ibid.


21. Anonymous, The Captured Slave (Buffalo: By the author, 1845). The hero’s name may have been a testimony to the lawyer-playwright, David Paul Brown, of Philadelphia, who was, according to Wilbur H. Siebert, one of the "well-known" veteran attorneys "ready to defend the slave wherever and whenever called upon to do so." Once, when offered a fee for his assistance, Brown was highly offended: "I shall not now, nor have I ever, accepted fee or reward, other than the approval of my own conscience." See Wilbur H. Siebert, The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom (New York: Macmillan Co., 1898), pp. 284-85. Brown apparently considered his devotion to the cause of freedom for the slave the high point of his career. "I ask no prouder inscription for my humble tomb," he wrote, "than 'Here lies the Friend of the Oppressed.'" See Julia Griffiths (ed.), Autographs for Freedom (Auburn, New York: Alden, Beardsley & Co., 1854), p. 160.


25. William Goodell, Slavery and Anti-Slavery, pp. 583-84.


27. Liberator, December 6, 1844, p. 195.

28. Reprinted in Poems by John G. Whittier (Boston: Ben-
jamin B. Mussey & Co., 1854).


34. Quoted in Elkins, pp. 175-76.


42. Birney, p. 8.

43. *Dred; or, The Dismal Swamp* (New York: S. French, 1856). Broughton apparently had more than a passing interest in the
problem of slavery. David S. Hawes points out that "Brougham's attitude on the question of Abolition was first presaged by his sympathetic treatment of the negro slave in The Pirates of the Mississippi (July 21, 1856)," an attitude which "became much stronger when he made his dramatic adaptation of . . . Dred." Finally, "using a medium in which he often spoke with brilliant effectiveness, in his extravaganze, Columbus et Filibustero (1857), Brougham donned his comic mask to make a stirring appeal, with ironic undertones, for a reconciliation between North and South." See "John Brougham as Playwright," Educational Theatre Journal, IX (1957), 186.

44. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, an extreme militant abolitionist, claimed that Nat Turner, in a sense, "transcended" mere revenge: "He is the only American slaveleader of whom we know certainly that he rose above the ordinary level of slave vengeance, and Mrs. Stowe's picture of Dred's purposes is then precisely typical of his. 'Whom the Lord saith unto us, 'Smite,' then will we smite. We will not torment them with the scourge and file, nor defile their women as they have done with ours. But we will slay them utterly, and consume them from off the face of the earth,'" See "Nat Turner's Insurrection," Atlantic Monthly, VIII (1861), 176.


46. Elkins, p. 175.

47. Barnes, The Antislavery Impulse, p. 103.

48. Ibid., p. 104.

49. Quoted in Elkins, p. 172.

50. Ibid.


52. Barnes, p. 103.

Chapter VII

SLAVERY AS IT WAS

When Theodore Weld began his operations for the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1834, he had been instructed to "insist principally on the SIN OF SLAVERY, because our main hope is in the consciences of men, and it requires little logic to prove that it is always safe to do right." He was at the same time told to make extensive use of incontestable proof:

You will make yourself familiar with FACTS, for they chiefly influence reflecting minds. Be careful to use only facts that are well authenticated, and always state them with the precision of a witness under oath.

During the early 1830's, however, in approaching his audiences, he never "related instances of cruelty." In a report to the New York Young Men's Anti-Slavery Society, in 1836, he explained why:

1st. However numerous or well authenticated, they would either be scouted as incredible, or met with the cry of "deceptions," "exceptions!"
2. If believed, to give much prominence to them now, would have a tendency to turn the public mind from the crowning horror of slavery, to a mere incidental. Treatment, however bad, is but an appendage of slavery.

By the late thirties, however, the strategy of the national organization had to be changed, in large part because of the success of the "Lane Seventy," a group of young agents chosen and trained by Weld, assisted by Henry B. Stanton and John Greenleaf Whittier. "For elucidation and instruction," the volunteers recruited by these agi-
tators "turned to the national society. For the first time a demand for antislavery tracts in quantity reached the New York office"; not, however, for newspapers and short appeals, "but for solid treatises upon antislavery doctrine." Weld, having lost his voice, and in impaired health, labored at the New York office between 1837 and 1840, turning out some of the most influential antislavery tracts of the movement.

His most famous tract, *Slavery As It Is*, was "the handbook of the movement for more than a decade," and is considered by Dwight L. Dumond as "the greatest of the antislavery pamphlets." Although Weld had hesitated to relate "instances of horror" in 1836, partly because they would not be believed, and partly because the time was not yet ripe, by 1838 the demand for "a series of tracts refuting the main objections to abolition sentiments . . . from all quarters is urgent." The first of the series, Weld continued, "will consist mainly of facts and testimony as to the actual condition of the Slaves."

It turned out to be, as Dumond puts it, "a book of horrors."

A multitude of such facts never yet published, facts that would thrill the land with horror, are now in the possession of abolitionists, or can with little trouble be gathered from the immediate circle of their acquaintance.

The time had come for such facts to be broadcast throughout the land:

Shall such facts lie hushed any longer, when from one end of heaven to the other, myriad voices are crying "O Earth, Earth, cover not their blood." The old falsehood, that the slave is *kindly treated*,
shallow and stupid as it is, has lullabied to sleep four-fifths of the free north and west; but with God's blessing this sleep shall not be unto death. Give facts a voice, and cries of blood shall ring till deaf ears tingle.

Although his 200 page tract "sold more copies than any other antislavery pamphlet ever written: more than 100,000 copies within a year," Weld's earlier misgivings is a point well taken. The series of personal narratives is highly repetitive, and the enormity of horror is soon so overwhelming that a reader is likely to become numb to the effect. Such is the danger of a book of horrors. The abolitionist turned playwright, on the other hand, is relieved of some of these problems. In dramatizing the condition of the slave, he can be far more "representative" in his choice of cruelty, weaving such barbarities into his over-all pattern of a general indictment of the system. At the same time, the sensational quality of such horror is quite likely to effect the audience with great impact, if, as Weld repeatedly insisted, the reality of horror is maintained.

While abolition playwrights frequently make use of selected instances of horror to strengthen their case against slavery, they were far more likely to exploit the propaganda value of another aspect of the institution. At the beginning of his book of horrors Weld told his reader that they were being empanelled as a jury "to try a plain case and bring in an honest verdict."

You have a wife, or a husband, a child, a father, a mother, a brother or a sister--make the case your own, make it theirs, and bring in your verdict.
Thus, while playwrights do reveal the condition of slavery in terms of poor food, overwork, lack of medical care, and the cruelty of masters and overseers, they more often emphasize the domestic chaos which results from slavery. As a result, they are able to gain sympathy for the Negro slave families, but they also accomplish a second goal: they dramatize what could very well be the fate of Northern families if the Slave Power is successful in their aim of establishing slavery throughout the United States.

The necessity of maintaining a sense of credibility was recognized by abolition dramatists, just as it had been emphasized by Weld. Indeed, the popularity of Weld's handbook of facts was extremely useful to all abolition agitators. Here was the testimony of a thousand reputable witnesses denying "the old falsehood, that the slave is kindly treated." It was useful in another way, at least to Mrs. Stowe, who acknowledged that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* "crystalized out" of Weld's *Slavery As It Is*. At all points the dramatists could refer to the already established facts when they reproduced the conditions of slavery in their plays. The scarcity and poor quality of food, for instance, was one of the most frequent complaints against the masters. Horace Moulton was only one of many who claimed that the slaves received "one peck of corn per week." Thus, no one could cry "deception" or "exception" when the anonymous playwright of *The Captured Slave* brings up this topic in his drama.
When the jailer hands David Paul Brown his dinner, he gives him "some boiled corn on a barrel head, and two mouthfuls of bull's beef." Brown asks him: "Haven't you got some old beef bones to put with it?" and throws the meal away, remarking, "You don't catch me eating any such dinner as that. Why, I would as soon make a meal of you, as to eat that stuff. When I can't get better living than that, I will lie here in jail and suck my fingers" (III.i.16). Only because his cell-mate, Philip, is allowed visits from his wife, a free Negro, who brings in a decent meal and shares with Brown, is he saved from the fate of finger sucking. This prison fare is as good as the field hands receive, however, even though the latter have spent a long day picking cotton. For instance, Mrs. Stowe's Christian Slave has a scene in which Lucy, who has without ceremony become the woman of one of the Negro slave-drivers, is given her rations—a bag of corn. Her newly acquired husband also throws down a similar bag at the feet of Uncle Tom, and says: "Thar, yo nigger, grab! thar's yer corn; ye won't git no more dis yer week!" (III.ii.50).

The most elaborate discussion of the food of slaves was written by the ex-slave, William Wells Brown, who, in many ways, follows quite closely the pattern used by Theodore Weld in his pamphlets. Brown's play, The Escape, is in large part a series of episodes, each taking up a separate aspect of the slave's conditions. In one such episode, Mrs. Gaines, the wife of the slaveholder under attack, wants to know if her domestic slave, Hannah, is fit to go to the
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Lord's Supper on the next Sabbath, since she was recently guilty of stealing a goose. Brother Pinchen believes that if she is truly penitent she may go, but Mrs. Gaines just can't understand why Hannah should steal a goose in the first place: "We give our niggers plenty of good wholesome food. They have a full run to the meat tub, meat once a fortnight, and all the sour milk about the place, and I'm sure that's enough for any one. I do think that our niggers are the most ungrateful creatures in the world, that I do" (I.iv.16).

Abolition playwrights were also certain to exploit the slave's long working hours. Again, their dramatizations were supported by the many examples recorded, for instance, in Weld's *Slavery As It Is*. In *The Christian Slave*, Uncle Tom reads a biblical verse to one of his fellow slaves: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." She thinks these are "good words enough," but she wants to know who said them. Tom replies, the Lord.

I jest wish she replies I know'd whar to find Him; I would go. 'Pears like I never should get rested again. My flesh is fairly sore, and I tremble all over, every day, and Sambo's allers a jawin' a me, 'cause I don't pick faster; and nights it's most midnight 'fore I can get my supper; and then 'pears like I don't turn over and shut my eyes 'fore I hear de horn blow to get up and at it again in the mornin'. If I know's whar de Lord was I'd tell Him. (III.iii.50)

One of the reasons why the major figures in Brown's *The Escape* were driven to seek the North Star was the long hours and hard work. Cato,
the comic Negro in the play, even composed a song on the subject:

Now, freemen, listen to my song, a story I'll relate,
It happened in de valley of de ole Kentucky State:  
Dey marched me out into de fiel', at every break of day,  
And work me dar till late sunset, widout a cent of pay.  

(III.iii.44)

Cassy, in Mrs. Stowe's *The Christian Slave*, tells Uncle Tom, after he has arrived at the Legree plantation: "I could make any one's hair rise, and their teeth chatter, if I should only tell what I've seen and been knowing to hear" (III.iv.53). And she tells her young friend Emmeline: "You wouldn't sleep much, if I should tell you things I've seen,—things that... Legree tells of, sometimes, for good jokes. I've heard screams here that I haven't been able to get out of my head for weeks and weeks" (III.v.60). When abolition dramatists turned to the horror of slavery, they were likely to dwell on the excessive amount of flogging to which slaves had to submit. Great care is often taken to include "realistic" details, so as to make the plays more authoritative. For instance, one of David Paul Brown's fellow prisoners, in the anonymous play, *The Captured Slave*, reports that slaveholders often send their trouble makers to the "calaboose" for punishment: "They tie men upon a ladder here, and whip them till their backs are raw, and fill up the gashes with ashes. Yes, Sir, some times they whip them to death." In fact, the speaker, Jonathan, had himself "been whipped with a handsaw, and... his poor back shows now too plainly, the marks of that brutal outrage" (III.i.16). Sending slaves to the jail to be whipped was also
the method advised by Marie St. Clare (in Mrs. Stowe's play), when Ophelia arrived in New Orleans to manage the household. She points out that she will have no end of trouble in such a household as hers, as a result of St. Clare's benevolence: "A household without any rule; where servants have it all their own way, do what they please, and have what they please, except so far as I, with my feeble health have kept up government." She has, she continues, sent 'them to the calaboose, or some of the other places, to be flogged. That's the only way' (II.ii.28).

It was often the overseer who was blamed for the cruelties inflicted upon the slaves in order to get out more work. In one antislavery play, Wilfred and Mary, written by an Englishman, Theodore St. Bo', the relationship between overseer and master is explored. Swanston, Wilfred's overseer, reports how he manages:

I calculate I can make them niggers
Do whate'er I want. I take no sauce, you see;
That's my tarnation method, don't you know.
Work they must, or feel the balance of that fist;
That's the way I reason with them lubbers. (I.ii.7)

When Mary, Wilfred's daughter by a slave, urges him to hire a new overseer, a kind one like Colonel Munro has, Wilfred points out that such kindness doesn't produce the results Swanston achieves:

That man, at times--
At certain seasons of the year--can do--
That is, can make the niggers do--double
The work that Colonel Munro's overseer
Can possibly get out of his darkies.
Wilfred even agrees that Swanston must be "harsh and cruel" in order to do this; but, "I don't think that of him."

What else can I do?
I find fault, and caution him be gentle:
I can do no more.

Mary suggests that he could manage his own farm. This is a preposterous idea:

What say you, child? Me manage my own farm!
I know nothing about crops or seasons,
The management of rice or sugar-cane. (I.i.3-4)

He recalls that his neighbor, Tom Clarkson, once foolishly tried to do this, out of feeling for his slaves, but he "hurried on to ruin," as a result of his mismanagement.14

The abolition dramatists were eager to maintain that there was no escape from the control of the master, even if the slave were allowed to "hire his own time." Stampp points out that, although rare, "a small group of slaves obtained from their masters the privilege of 'hiring their own time.' These bondsmen enjoyed considerable freedom of movement and were permitted to work for themselves."15

Such was the case, for example, of George Harris, in Uncle Tom's Cabin, who had, in fact, made quite a name for himself in a local rope factory. Another example is given in The Captured Slave. Philip, one of David Paul Brown's cell mates, relates his story:

Some three years since, my master said to me, Philip, how would you like to work for yourself?
0, says I, very well. Well, says he, I can buy an old horse and dray, for twenty-five dollars. I
think I will do it, and let you try your luck at financeering. Let us see how well you can do for the next three months.

Philip was, in fact, a success:

At the expiration of the three months, I had paid my master eighty-eight dollars in cash, and traded off my horse and dray for a good horse, and comparatively new dray. My master was much pleased with my success, told me go ahead, and do the best that I could. I did so, and when three months more had passed, my master was still better satisfied with adding a little every three months to the annuity that fell to my master; and converting the balance of profits, resulting from my business, into the purchase of drays, until a few days since, when I had succeeded in establishing twelve drays, which afforded a very handsome income.

But Philip had no guarantee that he could keep the fruits of his labor:

On the day that I was thrown into this place, my master took offense at something, accused me of purloining the money, and using it for my own benefit, took from me all my property, and told me that I could stay here the rest of my days. (III.i.20-21)

One of the most shocking abuses of such absolute power, and one of the most dreadful threats to the sanctity of Northern homes was the control of the masters over the bodies of their female slaves. The threat which the master posed to the happiness of the Negro family was often the final cause for flight, and some of these cases of debauchery will be taken up in the next chapter in that context. Only one of many alleged instances of the licentiousness of Southern planters was recorded in the personal narrative of Mr. Nehe-
miah Caulkins, who had been employed as a carpenter on many Southern plantations. One of the planters, he writes, had a "female slave who was a member of the Methodist Church"; and, for a slave, "she was intelligent and conscientious."

He proposed a criminal intercourse with her. She would not comply. He left her and sent for the overseer, and told him to have her flogged. It was done. Not long after, he renewed his proposal. She again refused. She was again whipped. He then told her why she had been twice flogged, and told her he intended to whip her till she should yield. The girl, seeing that her case was hopeless, her back smarting with the scourging she had received, and dreading a repetition, gave herself up to be the victim of his brutal lusts.

A similar case is exploited in Mrs. Little's Branded Hand. Ellenore, the sister of one of the slaves who later attempts to gain his freedom with the help of Philander, is the victim of an attempted rape. When she refuses to submit, the planter determines to whip her:

... I will tear her flesh—
I'll spoil her beauty—I will mar her pride—
I'll make her but one hideous heap of scars!

He is outraged to think that a slave could "dare to be chaste!" Yet she has simply tried to follow the teachings of her Lord:

Oh mother, mother—what, what can I do!
Oh, could I die! I am all one bleeding wound.
I faint: dear mother, lay me gently down.

Just God! why am I thus all bruised and mangled?
Only because I love my God and virtue.

The planter decides to sell her away from her family for revenge:
A slave like her
To dare oppose my will as she has done.
Why, I have lashed her till her quivering flesh
Fell from her back--then asked her for submission,
And still she sobbed out no! Such stubbornness
Deserves my vengeance. I'll sell her for requital.

He is, in fact, looking forward to the separation:

... I shall love to see
Her agony at being torn away
From her old doting mother, and that boy,
Her brother Virez. She shall feel my power:
I'll have a sweet, complete revenge upon her.

His companion cannot understand the contradiction involved:

Why thou'rt a savage, who could think, to see
Thy courtly manners to thy lady peers,
Thou could'st so roughly to a woman bear thee.

The planter, however, does not consider Ellenore a "woman":

She is a slave--a chattel--that's enough
To excuse my rage that she should dare oppose me.

(I.iv.11-14)

Mr. Gaines, in William Wells Brown's The Escape, tries a more subtle method. He has removed Melinda, one of his slaves, to a deserted cabin on the outskirts of his plantation in order to seduce her. Melinda, however, is secretly married to another slave, Glen. Thus, when Gaines tells her that "if you will give up all idea of having Glen for a husband, I will set you free, let you live in this cottage, and be your own mistress, and I'll dress you like a lady," Melinda calls down upon him the curse of all outraged women:

Sir, let me warn you that if you compass my ruin, a woman's bitterest curse will be laid
upon your head, with all the crushing, withering weight that my soul can impart to it; a curse that shall cling to you throughout the remainder of your wretched life; a curse that shall haunt you like a spectre in your dreams by night, and attend upon you by day; a curse, too, that shall embody itself in the ghastly form of the woman whose chastity you will have outraged. Command me to bury myself in yonder stream, and I will obey you. Bid me do any thing else, but I beseech you not to commit a double crime—outrage a woman, and make her false to her husband.'

(III.v.33)

When Gaines learns she is already married, he threatens to buy her husband and "roast him at the stake."

Such licentiousness is bad enough, but when coupled with incest, the indictment is even more damning. Earlier in this same play a scene takes place between two planters, Walker and Wildmarsh (a name which may well have been an allusion to Daniel Webster, who, many abolitionists thought, had turned traitor to the cause when he supported the Fugitive Slave Act. His famous farm was called Wildmarsh). Wildmarsh tells his friend that one of his slaves had to be sold the previous week, and had brought the price of $1800. Walker declares that "she must have been a screamer to bring that price."

He then recalls that he had seen a "pretty little gal" on Wildmarsh's farm recently, and wonders if she were the same one. She was indeed, and her beauty had been the cause of the sale: Wildmarsh's wife was getting jealous of this slave with "straight hair, blue eyes, prominent features," and who was, in fact, "almost white." Not only was
the girl his mistress, she was also his daughter—or at least this is strongly implied. Walker remarks about their close resemblance, and asks: "She was your daughter, wasn't she?" Wildmarsh evades the question: "You know, Mr. Walker, that people will talk, and when they talk, they say a great deal; and people did talk, and many said the gal was my daughter; and you know we can't help people's talking" (II.i.18-19).

Mrs. Child, in The Stars and Stripes, makes use of a similar incident. In this case, Ellen tells her husband, William, about the improper advances which her owner, Mr. Masters, has made.

When I am at the big house, sewing for missis, as sure as she goes out to ride, he comes into my room and asks me to sing, and tells me how pretty I am. And--and--I know by his ways that he don't mean any good. He gave me this breast-pin, and I was afraid not to take it. You know why poor Peggy's husband was to be sent off to Georgia, and how he tried to poison massa, when he found it out. Now massa says if I make him angry, he will sell you to the traders.

William is outraged: "The old villain! and he knows all the while that you are his own daughter!" Ellen replies that "I told him that, but he paid no attention to it. My poor, poor mother! I suppose she was afraid, too; for I remember she always seemed so modest."

William tries to assure his wife that Masters will not succeed in his plans, but Ellen reminds him that there is nothing they can do: "We are slaves: and there is no law to protect us" (III.i.142-44).

One of the most extended stories of love and lust was re-
lated by Cassy, in Mrs. Stowe's dramatization of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Although the narration takes up five pages of uninterrupted monologue, since the work was intended for platform reading such a device would actually be well adapted to the medium.18 Throughout her tale Cassy keeps well in the foreground her complete domination, thereby reinforcing Mrs. Stowe's major thesis—that the system of slavery itself was a sin largely because of the lack of restraint placed on the masters. Cassy had been brought up in luxury, even though she was the daughter of a slave woman. Her father sent her to a convent where she learned all the accomplishments of a lady. When she was fourteen, however, her father died, and, because he had failed to set her free, her name was entered in the inventory list. The young lawyer appointed to settle the estate captured her heart. "He told me that he had seen me before I went to the convent, and that he had loved me a great while, and that he would be my friend and protector; in short, though he didn't tell me, he had paid two thousand dollars for me, and I was his property." However, she became his willingly, "for I loved him." She wanted him to marry her, but he convinced her it was impossible; finally she agreed that "if we were only faithful to each other, it was marriage before God." He was faithful for seven years, during which time two children—Elise (Eliza Harris) and Henry—were born. But then her lover's cousin came to New Orleans, tempted him to gamble away his money, and he finally was forced to sell his "family" to pay his debts. "Then he came, the cursed wretch! he came to
take possession." The cousin, Butler, confessed that he had planned the whole thing because he had wanted Cassy from the beginning. Henry's spirit would not be quelled, however, so Butler sold both children, secretly. There was nothing she could do. "One day, I was out walking, and passed by the calaboose; I saw a crowd about the gate, and heard a child's voice; and, suddenly, my Henry broke away from two or three men, who were holding him, and ran, screaming, and caught my dress."

They came up to him, swearing dreadfully. O, there was one man!—I shall never forget that man's face! He told him that he wouldn't get away so; that he had got to go in with him and get a lesson he'd never forget. The poor child screamed, and looked in my face, and held on to me so that, when they tore him off, they tore the skirt of my dress half away; and they carried him in screaming "mother, mother, mother!" I turned and ran; every step I heard him scream.

She managed to make her way back to the house, but once there, something in her head snapped—"snapped, you know! It's never come right since. I saw a great knife—I caught it—and then all grew dark, and I didn't know any more for days and days."

Butler had not been killed, but he had left her to be sold. "They made me dress up, every day; and gentlemen used to come in and stand and smoke their cigars, and look at me, and ask questions, and debate my price." She was so uncooperative, however, that they threatened to whip her unless she became more agreeable. Finally, Stuart came, paid her several visits, and eventually managed to break
through her sorrow. He promised to try to retrieve her children, but all he could do was to find their location. Henry had been sold to a planter on the Pearl river; "that was the last that I ever heard of him." Elise was being kept by an old woman for Butler, and when he found that Stuart wanted to buy her for Cassy, "he sent me word that I should never have her."

Captain Stuart was very kind to her; and after a year a child was born. "Oh, that child! how I loved it! How just like my poor Henry the little thing looked! But I had made up my mind—yes, I had—I would never again let a child live to grow up! So, when he was two weeks old, I took the little fellow in my arms, and I gave him laudanum. It didn't hurt him; it made him so quiet, and I held him close—close to my bosom, and he slept to death!" This, Cassy believes, is all that slaves can do for their children. Cholera came again, and killed Stuart as it had killed her father; "everybody died that wanted to live, and I—I, though I went down to death's door—I lived! Then I was sold, and passed from hand to hand, till I grew faded and wrinkled, and I had a fever; and then this wretch bought me, and brought me here—and here I am!" (III.iv.54-58).

The separation of families which had plagued Cassy throughout her life was probably the most touching theme that abolition playwrights had to work upon. Of all the evils of slavery probably nothing could so move an audience as to dramatize the breakup of a home. "What a curse slavery is!" says Glen, in Brown's The Escape. "It
separates husbands from their wives, and tears mothers from their helpless offspring, and blights all our hopes for this world!" (IV.iii.38). Stampp indicates the dilemma of the slave family when he points out that although slaves were "encouraged to live as families and to accept white standards of morality," it was "only outwardly that the family life of the mass of southern slaves resembled that of their masters."

Inwardly, in many crucial ways, the domestic regimes of the slave cabin and of the 'big house' were quite different. Because the slaves failed to conform to the white pattern, the master class found the explanation, as usual, in the Negro's innate traits. Actually, the differences resulted from the fact that slavery inevitably made much of the white caste's family pattern meaningless and unintelligible--and in some ways impossible--for the average bondsman. Here, as at so many other points, the slaves had lost their native culture without being able to find a workable substitute and therefore lived in a kind of cultural chaos.\textsuperscript{19}

The most "obvious difference," Stampp points out, "was in the legal foundation upon which each rested. In every state white marriages were recognized as civil contracts which imposed obligations on both parties and provided penalties for their violation. Slave marriages had no recognition in the state codes; instead, they were regulated by whatever laws the owners saw fit to enforce."\textsuperscript{20} Marriages, such as they were, were brought together on an extremely informal basis. William Wells Brown maintained, for example, that "the marriage ceremony, as performed in the second act" of his play, The
"Escape, "is still adhered to in many of the Southern States, especially in the farming districts." In this "ceremony," called "jumping the broom-stick," Brown portrays the plight of a Negro who had hoped to live with a mate of her own choosing, but who is forced to join with another, one of her owner's choosing. Hannah's husband, Sam, has just been sold, and Mrs. Gaines is determined that she will now marry Cato. Hannah refuses, and is led off to the cellar to be whipped. Cato, on the other hand, is perfectly willing: "I'll jump de broomstick wid every woman on de place, ef missis wants me to, before I'll be whipped." Mrs. Gaines manages to convince Hannah, and when they return, the ceremony begins:

Now, Cato, take hold of Hannah's hand. . . .
Now get ready, and when I count three, do you jump. Eyes on the broomstick! All ready.
One, two, three, and over you go. There, now you're husband and wife, and if you don't live happy together, it's your own fault; for I am sure there's nothing to hinder it. (III.ii.29)

The contrast between "parlor and cabin" is dwelled upon at length by Mrs. Little, in The Branded Hand. Aboard Philander's ship the escaping slaves are full of hope. Irvan even believes that if he works hard he can some day free his love, Ellenore:

How sweet 't would be to worship with her as a freeman's wife
At our own native altar, none to harm us.
Oh home! Oh blessed home--most sacred spot!
The poor slave knows thee not--made like a beast--
All his affections rudely crushed to death.
Wife, child they have not. Forced despite
their will.
To vile concubinage, love sinks to vice.

His friend, and Ellenore's brother, Virez, has often compared the white man's home to the black man's fate.

... . . . And when I looked
From the proud planter's palace to the hut
Of the poor negro, how the contrast grew
Between the pillared dome and lofty halls
And the poor tattered boards scarce knit together:
Between the couch and down velvet seat
And the dark litter on the humid earth:
Between the sumptuous board with viands piled
And the weighed, stinted morsel all defiled.

But the worst contrast:

To see the new born white babe, and the smiling mother,
And then to think with what a stealthy joy
The poor slave-father sees his first-born boy.

My poor, poor child, of many stripes the heir,
Thou comest into life unconsciously;
Ready to smile on all that thou may'st see.
Alas! the yoke it soon will bring thee down;
Even now thou tremblest at the white man's frown,
Scanning thee o'er to see if God has made,
His image in a form that suits the trade. (II.i.21-22)

Beder, a third member of the escaping band, is only "glad I have no wife or child to leave."

One day slave came to me, light all over his face. Beder, says he, I have a little son of my own. (Not your own, thought I, and went on hoeing.) Master is so pleased with it, said he. (So much the worse, thought I, and said nothing.) An't you glad? said he. I could not speak one word--my eyes big full of tears. He looked at me and went away. One month after he came to me tearing his hair. Oh I never saw such a desperate crazy wild man. He rolled upon the ground and foamed. I asked him what the matter. They took my boy,
said he, my pretty little boy; and sold him to
the soul-drivers. And the mother too? No, they
sold him away from her because he would not give
the price for Anne. Oh! I willing to part with
Anne for poor baby's sake, but they would not
take her. She cry her heart out, and they flog
her till she stop. (II.1.23-24)

Probably the most famous separation of families occurs when
Uncle Tom must leave his cabin. Mrs. Stowe has added some touches
in her version of the play which might well make the scene even more
effective. On the morning that Tom is going, Aunt Chloe busies her­
self with fixing breakfast for Tom and the children, just as on any
other morning. Then she must pack Tom's clothes, even though she sus­
pcts Haley will confiscate them.

Jest like as not he'll take 'em all away. I
know thar ways--mean as dirt, they is! Wal,
now, yer flannels for rheumatis is in this
corner; so be careful, 'cause ther won't
nobody make ye no more. Then here's yer old
shirts, and these yer is new ones. I toed
off these yer stockings last night, and put
de ball in 'em to mend with. But Lor! who'll
ever mend for ye? (Sobbing.) To think on't!
no critter to do for ye, sick or well! I don't
really think I ought ter be good now! (Baby
crows.) Ay, crow away, poor crittur'. ye'll
have to come to it, too! Ye'll live to see yer
husband sold, or mebbe be sold yerself; and
these yer boys, they's to be sold, I s'pose,
too, jest like as not, when dey gets good for
somethin'; an't no use in niggers having
nothin'! (I.x.19)

It was probably far from coincidental that abolitionist
playwrights emphasized this contrast. Regardless of doctrinal dif­
fences which may have existed among the playwrights, regardless of
the different plots which might have been employed to carry the line of action, and regardless of the focus each author places on the various issues of the debate, the one common denominator seems to be this interest in the domestic difficulties of the Negro slave families. By focusing on these difficulties the playwrights come to the heart of the matter, for it is not only the cabin which has been degraded by the Southern masters, it is also the parlour which is threatened. A conspiracy exists, they maintain, which has not only stolen Texas, opened the territories to slavery, and hopes to engulf the entire Caribbean, but which also threatens the home of Northern farmers and workmen. Aristocrats who think nothing of taking away from loving parents their pretty little boy, who think nothing of lusting for their own daughters, who can enjoy seeing virgins flogged when they refuse to submit to their desires, could obviously be capable of destroying the hope of the American way—the home and family. The complete injustice of encouraging slaves to "live as families and to accept white standards of morality" is brought home with telling force in the simple lament of Aunt Chloe, who spent her last night with her husband mending the toes of his stockings. Indeed, why should she be good? With the constant threat of separation confronting such people, the playwrights argue, the "family pattern" of the white man is "meaningless and unintelligible."

Although abolitionists had argued against the slave trade from the beginning of their agitation, there had been little effective
control of the commerce, especially of the domestic slave trading. Even the Southerners felt justified in condemning the slave traders, while at the same time they often profited from their existence. "This trade is a sore subject with the defenders of slavery," said one English visitor to the South. "It is difficult to weave it handsomely in among the amenities of the patriarchal institution. They fain would make a scape-goat of the 'trader,' and load all the iniquities of the system on his unlucky back." The slave market was one of the major means for making the arrangements between trader and planter, and it was in scenes of slave auctions that the playwright could well produce one of the most dramatic and tragic instances of the evil of slavery.

The slave market was certainly a major subject of abolition agitation. The testimony of Silas Stone, for instance, who witnessed a sale of slaves in Charleston, South Carolina, was only one such incident included in Weld's Slavery As It Is.

The arrangements of this place appeared something like our northern horse-markets, having sheds, or barns, in the rear of a public house, where alcohol was a handy ingredient to stimulate the spirit of jockeying. As the traders appeared, lots of negroes were brought from the stables into the bar room, and by a flourish of the whip were made to assume an active appearance. 'What will you give for these fellows?' 'How old are they?' 'Are they healthy?' 'Are they quick?' &c., at the same time the owner would give them a cut with a cowhide, and tell them to dance and jump, cursing and swearing at them if they did not move quick. In fact all the transactions in buying and selling
slaves, partakes of jockeyship, as much as buying and selling horses. There was as little regard paid to the feelings of the former as we witness in the latter.

On a stage built in front of Charleston's Exchange Building, Stone saw an even more pitiful sight.

On the left side of the steps, as you leave the main hall, immediately under the windows of that proud building, was a stage built, on which a mother with eight children were placed and sold at auction. I watched their emotions closely, and saw their feelings were in accordance with human nature. The sale began with the eldest child, who, being struck off to the highest bidder, was taken from the stage or platform by the purchaser, and led to his wagon and stowed away, to be carried into the country; the second, and third were also sold, and so until seven of the children were torn from their mother, while her discernment told her they were to be separated probably forever, causing in that mother the most agonizing sobs and cries, in which the children seemed to share. The scene beggars description; suffice it to say, it was sufficient to cause tears from one at least 'whose skin was not colored like their own,' and I was not ashamed to give vent to them.\(^\text{23}\)

Such scenes, so difficult to describe, are perfect for the stage. We have already seen such attacks on slavery in the earlier plays concerning the Algerian situation, and they were continued in the later periods. The Captured Slave, for instance, includes one such scene, as does Uncle Tom's Cabin and Wilfred and Mary. Perhaps the most remarkable slave auction, however, appears in Whitney's Warren, in which the auction takes up the entire second Act. Again, however, the playwright has deftly combined the amplification of this idea with the career of Joseph Warren, his hero, from whose point of
view we see a gigantic slave power conspiracy not only grinding down the liberties of the Negro, but also threatening the families of Northern freemen. Auctioneer Mammon opens the sale with a lot of thirty-five "boys and girls," ranging from babies to sixty year old men. Mammon assures his audience, however, that "the oldest of them are as hale and strong as common boys at forty. They have never been over-worked, or underfed. They are in fine health, all of them." He explains that the reason they must be sold together is "from a tenderness on the present owner's conscience"; he doesn't want to see the families separated. Earlier, however, one of the prospective buyers had declared that "I'll buy them in a lump to suit his conscience, and sell them as I best can to suit my own interest--aw, yes, damme! I like these conscience scruples." Colonel Waugh thus buys them for $300 a piece, and will, according to Mammon, make "at least five thousand by the bargain!" (II.ii.17-19).

Mammon then offers "the finest boy and girl, I ever saw paired, without any exception. The boy stands six feet seven inches, with his shoes off, and the girl five feet eleven--look at their graceful proportions--no superfluous flesh--solid muscle--they are about twenty-six years old--alone or together." The girl's accomplishments include acquaintance "with all kinds of household affairs--washing, ironing, mending--is a first rate cook." When only $450 is offered, Mammon adds that she is "warranted every way healthy--is of an unblemished moral character--can be trusted to any extent with per-
fect safety." The bidding continues until she is sold to Colonel Perkins. The boy, who "is in good standing in the Presbyterian church" brings $1100, the average price for a prime field hand in 1850. However, he has been purchased by Major Bliss. Whitney's stage directions indicate that "at this point the man rushes from the stand, casting aside with his powerful arm the officers that attempt to stop his progress, till he places himself beside his weeping wife." He is determined that he will not be separated from his wife, and declares: "Almighty God has joined our hearts, our happiness, our lives, and no man shall separate us alive. Now, take your choice—we go and serve together, or, this hour ends our service." Major Bliss decides that he "can't afford to risk the reducing of him by force," so they draw lots for choice. Col. Perkins wins the draw, and "sends the noble pair away" (II.ii.19-22).

Mammon is replaced by Auctioneer Letcher, who introduces the best buy of the day:

Now gentlemen, we offer you a rare chance. What can be found short of a Circassian that will compare in beauty with this Quadroon girl. She is sixteen years old, has had vast pains bestowed upon her training in all manner of nice needle work, besides being well acquainted with all kinds of ordinary house-hold duties. She is warranted entirely chaste. See, gentlemen, what a fine head of light auburn hair is here, (strok-ing it with his hand.) Did you ever see a finer turned ancle /_sic/ than that? (Lifts up her clothes to show her ancle,—she covers her face with her hands and sobs and weeps.) Look, gentlemen, did you ever see a more voluptuous bosom?
(Squeezes it—her sobbing and crying increase.)
See how modest she is, gentlemen? What am I offered for this beautiful girl?

The bidding starts at $1000, but Letcher reminds them that "there isn't a fancy girl in the state that will compare with her, either in grace and elegance of person, or extent of accomplishment." When the bidding reaches $2700 Letcher remarks:

We are getting into pretty high latitudes I confess, and I will not hurry the sale, yet we can't delay very long. Does any one advance from twenty-seven hundred dollars for this rare girl? I will not go over with you her accomplishments, again, for I see that they are appreciated; and as for her charms, they speak for themselves. Have you all done? Going at twenty-seven hundred dollars. Going--going--gone. Esq. Pinckney, Jr. has her at twenty-seven hundred dollars, and a rare chance at that. (She is handed over to the purchaser--weeping and trembling in a most frightful manner, shrinking from him in the greatest horror.) (II.i.23-24)

Frederick Law Olmstead remarked, while travelling through Virginia, that "a slave woman is commonly esteemed least for her laboring qualities, most for those qualities which give value to a brood-mare," and added, as a footnote, a comment from a slaveholder:

In the States of Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri, as much attention is paid to the breeding and growth of negroes as to that of horses and mules. Further south, we raise them both for use and for market. Planters command their girls and women (married or unmarried) to have children. A breeding woman is worth from one-sixth to one-fourth more than one that does not breed. 24

Several instances of selling breeders are included in Weld's tract,
and George Bourne, in his work especially devoted to the effect that slavery had upon women and domestic society, naturally condemned the practice:

The rearing of human creatures expressly for the degradation of slavery, now is as regular and systematized a traffic among American citizens, as the culture of the farm. In countless instances, many of the southern families live in sloth and voluptuousness and 'frolic,' solely from the annual sales of the colored people as they arrive at the ordinary age of manhood.25

Letcher introduces one such breeder: "A fine girl, nineteen years old, with a lusty cub of eighteen months--she promises well for a breeder--you can raise some fine stock, gentlemen, from this wench, only give her a likely boy for a mate." The girl goes to Mr. Rankin for $500, but Mr. Hallett buys her child for $50. "The mother, who had been watching intently the bidders, rushes forward and seizes the child, holding it convulsively in her arms." Letcher tells the officers to "take away that sniveling jade," and "they tear the child from her by main strength, and as the mother, frantic with grief, pursues them, she is prostrated by a blow from a heavy whip" (II.ii.25-26).

Whitney's extension of the idea of dramatizing a slave auction26 has allowed him to combine the original force of such a dramatization with several of the other key issues which have been discussed in this section. He shows, for instance, how Southern masters pay lip service to the scruples of their conscience while making a scape-goat of the slave trader. Such an evasion of responsibility,
as we have seen in Whitney's drama, plays right into the hands of Colonel Waugh, who will be able to make $5000 as a result of such "conscience scruples." The sale of the sixteen year old fancy girl and the "breeder" reinforces the notion of a completely corrupt society, whose fondest dream was the corruption of the entire country. And finally, the separation of a nineteen year old mother from her infant child shows that the weak cannot hope for mercy from such brutal monsters. The only solution, clearly implied by Whitney in the case of the young married couple, is to meet force with force.

"The question at issue," said Theodore Weld, at the beginning of his "book of horrors," is one of fact—"What is the actual condition of the slave in the United States?" Weld included in his work the testimony of hundreds of witnesses, all going to disprove the "shallow and stupid" belief that the slave was kindly treated. Authenticity was demanded above all else—Weld would not have allowed even a small flaw to be "seized and trumpeted as a sample of the whole argument." It cannot be denied that Weld has succeeded in gathering together an impressive document; yet he succeeds almost too well. The reaction to this small book of horrors could well be similar to a long list of atrocities committed against the Jews in WWII, a recital of facts which pounds home the point again and again. It was, however, a necessary piece of propaganda. The fact that slaves were not treated with paternal care had to be established, just as the fact that Nazis were attempting to exterminate all the Jews in Europe had
to be established. There was a time when many people refused to be­
lieve that such a thing could happen. The established fact meant a
great deal to the abolition playwrights, for the analysis of such
tracts as those published by Weld and of the abolition drama indicates
that both means of persuasion are necessary. Works like Slavery As It
Is and plays like Warren, The Captured Slave, The Escape and Uncle
Tom's Cabin were both integral elements in one of the most effective
propaganda campaigns in history.

Much of the effectiveness of relating instances of horror
and the innate cruelty of the system of slavery depends upon the abil­
ity of the playwright to achieve a sense of actuality, and it should
be noted that all points which are discussed concerning slavery as it
was had been verified by the testimony of others. However, most of
the playwrights who touched upon the treatment of slaves in their dra­
mas apparently agreed with Weld's earlier warning against "related
instances of cruelty." Although there are certainly instances of al­
most unbelievable torture included in some of the plays, as the cat­
hauling of Warren, for instance, by far the greatest attention is
given to a subject which probably would have been much more meaning­
ful to Northern audiences--the absolute control of Southern masters
over the Negro families. Furthermore, by focusing primarily on this
issue, the playwrights accomplish two things at the same time. Not
only do they emphasize the most effective means to move their audi­
ence against slavery itself, but they have also reinforced the warn­
ings against the slave power conspiracy, thus maintaining one of the major themes of the abolitionist propaganda.

We have already noted the growth of a new breed of militant abolitionists during and following the turbulent decade of the 1830's, and the way in which they reflected the New England conscience and imagination in their attempt to maintain the values of their way of life in the face of growing industrialism. Avery Craven believes, in fact, that as abolitionists broadened the base of the antislavery impulse, in order to make the crusade against slavery more meaningful to Northern audiences, they were making their cause the focal point of all reform. "Because," Craven explains, antislavery "combined in itself both the moral and democratic appeal, and because it coincided with sectional rivalry, the abolition movement gradually swallowed up all other reforms." He concludes his chapter on the Northern attack on slavery by indicating the phenomenal success of this relatively small group of agitators--a group which must include the abolition playwrights here under investigation--in molding the opinions of the mass of Northerners:

Against early indifference and later persecution, a handful of deadly-in-earnest men and women slowly built into a section's consciousness the belief in a Slave Power. To the normal strength of sectional ignorance and distrust they added all the force of Calvinistic morality and American democracy and thereby surrounded every Northern interest and contention with holy sanction and reduced all opposition to abject depravity.27

The way in which the slaveholder "began to do scapegoat
service for all aristocrats and all sinners," making the South "the
great object of all efforts to re-make American society,"^{28} is illus­
trated and reinforced by the abolition drama. In Craven's discussion
of two assumptions underlying the abolitionist's indictment of the
slaveholder, he touches upon aspects of the debate which we have al­
ready seen at work in the plays. In the first place, the slaveholder
was presented as the "arch-aristocrat," a characterization used to re­
inforce the argument that a vast slave power conspiracy had not only
taken from the Negro his civil liberties, but was consciously attempt­
ing to destroy the liberties of the Northern yeomen.

He was the great enemy of democracy. He was un­
American, the oppressor of his fellow men, the
exploiter of a weaker brother. Against him could be
directed all the complaints and fears engendered
by industrial captains and land speculators. He,
more than any other aristocrat, threatened to destroy
the American democratic dream.^{29}

We have already seen such a characterization in the chapter
dealing with the slave power conspiracy. In this chapter, however,
we have seen another aspect of the Southern slaveholder. Not only
were these characters who so flagrantly abused their absolute power
over their Negro slave families the "arch-aristocrat"; they were also
the most infamous of sinners.

His self-indulgence was unmatched. His licentious
conduct with Negro women, his intemperance in the
use of intoxicating liquors, his mad dueling, and
his passion for war against the weak were enough
to mark him as the nation's moral enemy number one.
The time for dealing moderately had passed. Immediate
reform was imperative.^{30}
Thus, not only did the image of the ante-bellum Southerner serve as a "scapegoat" in the general reform activity of mid-nineteenth century, this image personified two of the specific issues of the antislavery debate. The following chapter will suggest the way in which this stereotype was exploited to make the plight of fugitive slaves more meaningful to Northern audiences.
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER VII


2. Ibid., p. 126.

3. Ibid., p. 296.

4. Ibid., p. xii.

5. Ibid., p. xiii.


11. Weld-Grimké Letters, p. xxv.

12. Weld, American Slavery As It Is, p. 18.

13. The Escape; or, A Leap for Freedom (Boston: R. F. Wallcut, 1858).

14. Theodore St. Bo', Wilfred and Mary; or, Father and Daughter (New York: Appleton, 1861). When George, in Boucicault's The Octoroon, suggests that he might go to work, Zoe is shocked. "Work! I thought none but colored people worked." George, who is not really a "typical" Southern gentleman, assures her that work "is the salt that gives savor to life" (II.i.443).

15. Kenneth Stampp, The Peculiar Institution, p. 43. A similar attack on the practice of "hiring out" was seen in The Gladiator.


18. The title page to Mrs. Stowe's *The Christian Slave* indicates that she dramatized the novel "expressly for readings of Mrs. Mary Webb."


20. Ibid., p. 266.


22. Quoted in Stampp, p. 266.


26. Even Dion Boucicault's play, *The Octoroon*, ostensibly a non-propaganda work, included a slave auction scene, which, according to Joseph Jefferson, who played Salem Scudder, functioned as an indictment against slavery. "When the action revealed," he points out, that Zoe "could be bartered for, and was bought and sold," the audience "cheered for the North as plainly as though they had said, 'Down with slavery.'" Joseph Jefferson, *Autobiography* (New York: The Century Co., 1889), p. 215.


28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., p. 118.

30. Ibid.
Chapter VIII
FUGITIVE SLAVES AND THE SLAVE POWER CONSPIRACY

The Fugitive Slave Act of 1793, according to Southerners, had not effectively insured recovery of runaway slaves; hence, as a part of the 1850 Compromise, a stronger Act was legislated. Abolitionists, however, objected to the bill as another attack on constitutional rights:

The claimant could procure a warrant or seize without one. Proof could be presented orally or in writing. No testimony by alleged fugitives was allowable. A maximum fine of $1,000 and imprisonment not exceeding six months was provided for anyone who hindered the arrest of a fugitive, attempted to rescue him from the custody of the claimant or marshal, or in any manner hampered the process of rendition. Such persons were liable also for civil damages up to $1,000 for each slave lost.¹

Daniel Webster, one of the major supporters of the 1850 Compromise, thought the South was justified in resenting the laxness on the part of the North in enforcing the previous fugitive act. "Every member of every Northern legislature," he declared, "is bound by oath, like every other officer in the country, to support the Constitution which says to these States that they shall deliver up fugitives from service. . . ." They had no right, by enacting "personal liberty" laws, for instance, "to endeavor to get round this Constitution, or to embarrass the free exercise of the rights secured by the Constitution to the persons whose slaves escape from them."² He was especially
disturbed by appeals to some kind of "higher law" invoked by abolitionists to circumvent the authority of the Constitution. "I profess to love liberty as much as any man living," he said, but only "constitutional liberty," and not "that other and higher liberty which disregards the restraints of law and the Constitution."³

Many abolitionists, however, were not overly concerned with what they considered fine distinctions of man-made law. Richard Hofstadter, for instance, points out that "the abolitionist movement was based upon a moral frenzy," its "philosophy was essentially a theology," and its enterprise, as Weldell Phillips declared, was "eminently a religious one, dependent for success entirely on the religious sentiment of the people."⁴ This "higher law" was admirably fitted to such a philosophy, appealing especially "to that element of idealists who are quick to fancy themselves above certain laws. Clergymen, religious editors, reformers, and other zealots during the next few years excused a vast deal of illegal and even unconstitutional activity by this dubious abstraction."⁵ Only four days after Webster's speech supporting the Compromise, Senator Seward delivered a refutation, "the most memorable part" of which was "its almost defiant statement of the doctrine of the higher law." There is, he declared, "A higher law than the Constitution, which regulates our authority over the domain, and devotes it to the . . . noble purposes of union, justice, welfare and liberty."⁶

Although Larry Gara points out that "probably not more than
a dozen cases\(^7\) were prosecuted under the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, it served as an invaluable source of propaganda, and, as Elkins would say, as a "popularizing event." Lewis Tappan claimed, for instance, that "the Fugitive Slave Bill is awakening the country to the horrors of slavery & creating widespread sympathy for the slaves," and Horace Greeley concurred: the Act "produced a wide and powerful feeling among all classes averse to the institution itself."\(^8\) Dumond believes that in the sense that "it provided a common ground upon which anti-slavery men of all shades of opinion and men who had never taken an active part in the movement could meet," it served as "a continuation of the civil rights issue, because lawyers emphasized the impossibility of protecting free persons from kidnapping without a jury trial." Further, the law "was a threat" to the Constitutional rights "of all men. It provided a constantly recurring reminder of the evils of slavery little less effective than the petition campaign."\(^9\) Gara concludes that "Fugitive Slave Law incidents and the uses abolitionists made of them contributed immensely to the growing antislavery sentiment in the North."\(^10\)

The most dramatic development to come from the Fugitive Slave Act was the increased propaganda value of the legendary Underground Railroad. Wilbur H. Seibert reports that Northern opposition to the law resulted in greater efficiency, and according to the nineteenth annual report of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, January 1851, "applications for assistance were never more frequent."\(^11\)
The number of "applications," Gara believes, was highly distorted by abolitionists. Rather, "such help as fugitives received came sometimes from abolitionists, sometimes from other groups, and was often casual and temporary," while Nevins has indicated that the actual loss of slaves was minute in comparison with the total slave population. In fact, "in the period of the slavery controversy the underground railroad was more important as a propaganda device than as an aid to the fleeing slave." It was, Elkins believed, the "'fellow-traveller' movement par excellence."

One may suspect that the real importance of the U. G. R. R. lay not in what it did for the slaves--the total number who were transported into Canada was hardly overwhelming--but rather in what it did for the people involved in the transporting. On the one hand, it gave an opportunity for substantial numbers of people to move beyond the stage of talk and agitation in opposing slavery, and, on the other, it drew in, willy-nilly, a great many who were not by temperament agitators and talkers. The transport of a single slave across New England or the Midwest might involve hundreds of people, if only in the knowledge that a neighbor was breaking the law; and to offer one's assistance in the slightest way could make the difference between doing nothing and a decisive emotional commitment to the entire antislavery cause.

Although Mrs. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was the most famous propaganda piece resulting from the Fugitive Slave Act, almost all of the plays written after 1850 deal in some way with fugitives, and the attempts to aid them. J. T. Trowbridge's *Neighbor Jackwood,* however, has the most extensive treatment of the Act, as such. This
play, which had been adapted by Trowbridge from his own novel, is one of the many "Yankee plays" of the nineteenth century which were made famous, for instance, by George "Yankee" Hill. In this play there is a good deal of domestic comedy, relating the difficulties Jackwood has with his mother-in-law. At the same time, however, Trowbridge portrays the defiant attitude taken by the strong, independent Yankees toward Southern slave-catchers who dared "invade" New England. In justifying Jackwood's, and his neighbor's, disregard of the Constitution, Trowbridge makes a plea to his audience to invoke that law higher than the Constitution--the law which will not deny a man's "conscientious convictions."

Not only does Trowbridge try to represent a plea for the "higher law," he includes some realistic details of the machinery of the Fugitive Act itself. Rev. Mr. Rukely serves as a spokesman for the conscientious citizen, worried about breaking the law of the land—the position, for instance, of Daniel Webster. Rukely explains to his wife that he has just finished the fourth draft of his first sermon on the slavery question, and asks if she would listen to it. He has decided that "the great danger consists in taking narrow and sectional views of a subject which should only be regarded in a broad, national light. . . . We have no right to peril the welfare and happiness of a nation, by espousing the cause of one person against the laws made to protect and regulate all." Bertha Rukely agrees that this is conclusive enough, but asks: "We are not to assist fugitives?" Rukely is
determined: "Certainly not! Is it not just?" (IV.i.i.51). Bertha supposes so, and falls asleep, bored with such dry opinions.

Just as Rukely goes on to explain that "the laws are sacred," Neighbor Jackwood, who has been harboring a fugitive slave, Camille, breaks in and exclaims that "the kidnabbers are arter her," and appeals to the clergyman to keep her until she can make her way into Canada. Rukely is naturally worried about his sermon and about "the laws of the country." Neighbor Jackwood's humanitarianism, however, affects a startling conversion.

I tell ye what! I respect the laws, and I don't think I'm a bad citizen, gen'ly speakin'. But, come case in hand, a human critter's of more account than all the laws in Christendom. When He was on 'arth (points upward), He never stopped to ax whether it was lawful to do a good deed, but went and done it!

Rukely replies: "Neighbor Jackwood, you are right! You can depend upon me!" In a scene between Rukely and his wife, Trowbridge drives home his point. Rukely builds a fire with his sermon to heat some brandy for Camille, remarking that "I hope it will do good." He explains to his wife that "Neighbor Jackwood has taught me a lesson. I have written out cold theories, and you have assented to them drowsily; but now they are both awake:

How have we talked, and written, and fallen asleep, with our cold, dead theories, like the thoughtless world around us! But there is a living soul in that room! We are responsible for her to our Divine Master! We will save her! (IV.i.i.53-54)

Unfortunately, Camille is captured, and must appear before
the Commissioner. Oliver Dole, the local marshal, has been requested by the slave catcher, Dickson, to serve the arrest warrant, and there is nothing he can do, even though he sympathizes with the fugitive. In fact, his solicitation causes Dickson to remark: "If that ain't a perty marshal! It's enough to make a man sick" (V.vi.69). Dole is not the only sympathizer. The whole town has turned out, and is milling around the court room—a scene reminiscent of the attempt to save the fugitive Sims in Boston. Finally the Commissioner, Squire Greenwich, arrives, who has been represented by Trowbridge as a haughty aristocrat. The proceeding takes only a few seconds, and Camille has no chance to speak for herself.

Mr. Greenwich. Order in the court! (Raps on his desk.) Marshal Dole!
Dole. Here!
Greenwich. You have procured the person named in your warrant?
Dole. She is here, your honor.
Greenwich. Bring forward the girl Camille.

Lawyer. Here are the papers, your honor. The girl's identity will be sworn to by these men.

(Mr. Greenwich takes the papers in an agitated manner, and writes.)
Dole. Be on hand, gentlemen. As soon as the word is given, have your pistols ready.
Greenwich. Take the girl.
Dickson. Shoot down the first man!

At this point, Hector, a white man who fell in love with Camille while she was still in the South, bursts in, "with fury in his looks," and declares:

She is mine! (Seizes Camille as she is falling,
flings Dole aside, knocks Dickson down, and bears her to the front of the stage, L; holds her upon his bosom with his left arm, and throws up his right with a gesture of triumph and defiance."

Mine!!

Dickson begs to differ: "Marshal! what are ye about? She is mine, by the laws of the country!" and calls upon the Marshal to do his duty. Hector, invoking the "higher law," retorts: "She is mine, by the one Eternal law" and calls upon "all to do the duty of Men!"

Dogs! bloodhounds! You mocker of justice, in the form of a judge! hear me! (Mr. Greenwich rises up and bends forward, agitated. All eyes are bent upon Hector.) Under an unhuman law, you have hunted down a human soul! It is recorded! (Points upward.) As ye have done it unto one of these, ye have done it unto Him! (V.vi.70)

Actually, Hector's histrionics are unnecessary—he has purchased Camille from her former owner, aided by Jackwood and other townspeople. As one of them pointed out, "of course her owner wants his pay, and it's nat'ral" (IV.ii.58). Jackwood is particularly glad that Camille has been freed "accordin' to law; . . . that's the way always to do a good thing, when ye can" (V.vi.72). In fact, Jackwood had quite a stake in the affair, since he was liable to a $1,000 fine for aiding a fugitive. Dickson had warned him: "I reck'n your farm an't none too big to cover this little business o' yourn--ye understand? Harborin' and rescuin' that gal! The wuth of a fine, han'-some piece of property, like her, an't less 'n fifteen hundred, in the fust place. These yer white ones comes mighty high. Then there's
fines, and imprisonment—all" (IV.vii.54-55). Now, however, that Camille has legally been disposed of, Jackwood can tell Dickson:

Go home and tell your folks what ye think of old Vermont, and our New England manners and customs. Then, if ye want my farm, that you was goin' to have so f'erce, you're welcome to come and git it! Our people believe in law and order; but, le'me tell ye, show yer face here agin and you'll find a wus night's lodgin' than the top of a haystack! (V.vi.71)

The lines had been fairly drawn by 1857, the year New York audiences saw this play. From our vantage point, it seems remarkable that a play could have been produced which advocated violence, if necessary, against the officers of the law, and in defiance of the Constitution of the United States. Yet, that small band of agitators, met in the 1830's with mob violence all across the land, had become so successful in their mission that such sentiments seem not out of place. As Nevins has pointed out, for years "clergymen, religious editors, reformers, and other zealots" had "excused a vast deal of illegal and even unconstitutional activity" by the "dubious abstraction" of the Higher Law.15 This roll call of the respectable elements must include playwrights.

Less remarkable is the support given in these abolition dramas to the victims of this inhuman system who fled their aristocratic and sinful masters. In at least three of the abolition plays extant, the escape of the fugitives itself takes up a large share of the action, and in a fourth, Uncle Tom's Cabin, the flight of George
and Eliza serves as a minor plot. Gara has pointed out that little help was given to runaway slaves until they crossed the Mason-Dixon line. Actually, none of the abolition playwrights make any such claim for the Underground Railroad. All of the slaves portrayed make their own way, following the North Star.

The playwrights were not interested in praising the activities of the Underground Railroad, as such. Rather, the slaves' decision to escape is the logical result of the conditions of slavery as portrayed by the dramatists. Given such intolerable conditions under which to live, there was no other recourse but flight—unless it was death. It would thus behoove the audience to aid and abet these refugees, insofar as possible. At the same time, in portraying the flight of the helpless slaves, the playwrights provided a dramatization of the "common ground" where antislavery men of all shades of opinion could meet with those who would not consider themselves abolitionists. In this sense, attending the theatre itself, if not reading the drama in published form, became a "functional substitute" for those unwilling to commit themselves entirely to the abolitionist platform.

In addition to Uncle Tom's Cabin, two plays published in 1858—The Escape and The Stars and Stripes—emphasize the flight of fugitives, and a fourth—the English play Wilfred and Mary—can be examined for contrast. All four of the plays are arranged in a similar pattern, a pattern which will be followed in this analysis. Thus,
after a careful preparation of the justification for flight, a scene is usually included which shows the fugitives following the North Star. Finally, the actual rescue from the pursuers is usually dramatized. Not only is this a logical pattern for the writers to use, but the very structure of the work helps to accomplish its purpose. Having witnessed the justification in some detail, the audience, if at all sympathetic, must agree that such action—which was, after all, illegal in its own right—was reasonable. Then, after seeing the heroic flight and sharing, as it were, in the ordeal, it becomes easier to accept the use of violence against the officers of the law who "have hunted down a human soul."

In three of the plays the immediate cause for flight has been a threat to the chastity of the wife or intended wife of the hero, a threat, it has been pointed out, which may well be aimed at the audience also. We have seen, for instance, how Dr. Gaines, in William Wells Brown's The Escape, attempted to seduce Melinda, not knowing that she was already married to Glen; and, when he did find out, threatened to have Glen whipped to death. When the overseer, Mr. Scragg, goes to the dungeon to remove Glen to the tobacco house, where the punishment is to be administered, Glen manages to escape. Later, after he has met his wife again, he relates what happened:

Yes, I struck him over the head with his own club, and I made the wine flow freely; yes, I pounded his old skillet well for him, and then jumped out of the window. It was a leap for freedom. Yes, Melinda, it was a leap for
freedom. I've said "master" for the last time. I am free; I'm bound for Canada. Come, let's be off, at once, for the negro dogs will be put upon our track. Let us once get beyond the Ohio river, and all will be right. (IV.iii.39)

Similarly, in Mrs. Child's play, The Stars and Stripes, we have seen how Masters, Ellen's owner, has made improper advances, even though she is his own daughter. Since there is no legal protection of any sort, the only thing to do is flee. We learn, however, that William has already been inspired with thoughts of freedom. His master was enraged when he found an abolitionist newspaper from Boston. "He tore it into fifty pieces, and ground them under the heel of his boot."

William hid the pieces in his shoes, however, and has even memorized one of the verses:

Oppression should not linger
Where starry banners wave;
The swelling shout of Freedom
Should echo for the slave. (III.140)

But now they must be off, to-night, while Masters is still gone, and before his brother comes to take charge of his estate. Ellen is worried about the road patrols and the blood-hounds, but William assures her that "it is better to die by dogs, than live to be treated as dogs." The deadly swamp must be traversed, she protests. "Snakes may sting your body," says William, "but they will not sting into the soul, like the brutal overseer's lash" (III.145). No; it must be tonight. They plan to use the same disguise used by the famous real-life William and Ellen Crafts, who managed to escape from
Macon, Georgia, in 1848. William pretends to be the servant of Ellen, who disguises herself as a young white planter. If they can only get through their own country, where people are most likely to recognize them, "I trust the Lord will help us to arrive safe in Canada" (III. 149).16

Finally, Southern licentiousness also drives Mary and her fiancé north in St. Bo's Wilfred and Mary. The beautiful and nearly white Mary is in danger of falling into the hands of the lecherous old Vellum, a crafty lawyer who has managed to get hold of Wilfred's estate. Mary does not blame her father for his mismanagement, however, pointing out that he "conferred on me the best of education," even "at the risk of imprisonment and fine" (II.i.34). St. Bo' seems to confuse the Southern laws against educating Negroes with the Fugitive Slave Act, for Mary declares:

> It is not the father at blame, it is the law:
> The law denominated 'Fugitive,'
> That prevents him from some decided step. (II.i.35)

Since the auction is only seven days away, Mary decides to act instantly, and goes to her fiancé, whose name happens to be Wilberforce, for help.

> Can'st thou not save me, Wilberforce,—rescue
Your own dear Mary from her shame; transport
Me from the land that gave me birth, to breathe
The invigorating air of liberty.
I cannot breathe in such a pestilence
As slavery--vile, wicked slavery.

We need not fear that Wilberforce is without a plan:
Go, Mary, and make haste—my words attend—
Get thee arrayed in man's attire, denude
Thee of thy flowing locks, though hard to bear;
Thou know'st how great the danger of escape,
How great the risk I run, as well as thee.
Bethink thee, then, of thy most secret plans,
While I, too, shall assume disguise, and quit,
For ever quit, this horrid land of blood.

Wilberforce thinks that if they can only get to the North, they will be safe. When Mary asks where they are going, he replies,

Why, to the city of Cincinnati,
In the far-off state of Ohio, where
Slaves are scarce, and slavery little known.

(Ii.ii.40-42)

The major exception to this pattern in the four plays under consideration, is Uncle Tom's Cabin.17 While there is no actual threat to the person of Eliza Harris, nevertheless, George Harris' master has threatened to separate the couple, and to force George to marry another woman. This, coupled with the fact that George's master has caused him to leave his job at a local factory to return to the plantation, where he puts George "to just the hardest, meanest and dirtiest work" (I.i.616) possible, results in George's determination to leave for Canada, where he hopes to be able to buy Eliza and their boy out of bondage. When Eliza discovers that Mr. Shelby has sold her little boy, she decides to join her husband.

Uncle Tom's Cabin is also an exception to the second part of the pattern, since the pursuit of Eliza and her famous leap across the ice have been compressed into a few scenes in Act I. Her rescue is entirely visual:
The entire depth of the stage, representing the Ohio River, filled with Floating Ice. Bank on right hand. Eliza appears, with Harry, on a cake of Ice, and floats slowly across—Haley, Loker and Marks, on bank, right hand, observing.—Phineas on opposite shore. (I.vi.627)

The other three plays, however, do include a scene in which we see the travel weary fugitives following the North Star. Brown, in The Escape, sets the scene in a "forest at night." Glen and Melinda, tired and hungry, cannot find the North Star on this cloudy night. Finally Glen cries out, "But, see! the clouds are passing away, and it'll soon be clear. See! yonder is a star; yonder is another and another. Ah! yonder is the North Star, and we are safe!" (V.ii.42). Since Brown apparently intended this drama for platform reading, such a long poem as follows was not out of place.

Star of the North! though night winds drift
    The fleecy drapery of the sky
Between thy lamp and me, I lift,
    Yes, lift with hope my sleepless eye,
To the blue heights wherein thou dwellest,
    And of a land of freedom tellest.

Star of the North! while blazing day
    Pours round me its full tide of light,
And hides thy pale but faithful ray,
    I, too, lie hid, and long for night:
For night: I dare not walk at noon,
    Nor dare I trust the faithless moon—

Nor faithless man, whose burning lust
    For gold hath riveted my chain,—
Nor other leader can I trust
    But thee, of even the starry train;
For all the host around thee burning,
    Like faithless man, keep turning, turning,

I may not follow where they go:—
Star of the North! I look to thee
While on I press; for well I know
Thy light and truth shall see me free:—
Thy light, that no poor slave deceiveth;
Thy truth, that all my soul believeth.

Thy beam is on the glassy breast
Of the still spring, upon whose brink
I lay my weary limbs to rest,
And bow my parching lips to drink.
Guide of the friendless negro's way,
I bless thee for this quiet ray!

In the dark top of southern pines
I nestled, when the Driver's horn
Called me to the field, in lengthening lines,
My fellows, at the break of morn.
And there I lay till thy sweet face
Looked in upon "my hiding place."

The tangled cane-brake, where I crept
For shelter from the heat of noon,
And where, while others toiled, I slept,
Till wakened by the rising moon,
As its stalks felt the night wind free,
Gave me to catch a glimpse of thee.

Star of the North! in bright array
The constellations round thee sweep,
Each holding on its nightly way,
Rising, or sinking in the deep,
And, as it hangs in mid heaven flaming,
The homage of some nation claiming.

This nation to the Eagle cowers;
Fit ensign! she's a bird of spoil;—
Like worship like! for each devours
The earnings of another's toil.
I've felt her talons and her beak,
And now the gentler Lion seek.

The Lion, at the Monarch's feet
Crouches, and lays his mighty paw
Into her lap!—an emblem meet
Of England's Queen, and English law:
Queen, that hath made her Islands free!
Law, that holds out its shield to me!
Star of the North! upon that shield
Thou shinest,—Oh, for ever shine!
The negro, from the cotton field
Shall, then, beneath its orb recline,
And feed the Lion, couched before it,
Nor heed the Eagle, screaming o'er it! (V.ii.42-44)

Mrs. Child shows the runaways in flight as they reach "a swampy island in the midst of a dense forest, the trees profusely hung with Virginia moss," a setting which strongly resembles the Dismal Swamp. "Twilight is settling into evening," she continues, "when William and Ellen creep stealthily toward the borders of the wood. They both look travel-worn and weary" (IV.149). They have heard screams of fugitive slaves in the swamps, and have been pursued by the hounds. They now pause to ask the Lord's blessing, with what Mrs. Child entitles, "THE FUGITIVE'S PRAYER."

Father of all! To Thee we bend;
On Thee alone can we depend;
Guiltless of wrong, yet shunning light,
When others to their rest have gone,
We wander through the world alone.
Thou, who created all,
Oh, hear our anxious call,
And guide us right,
Through the dark night.

Weary, and worn, and full of fear,
We travel through the forests drear;
Fierce wolves may seek us for their prey,
And cruel men, more fierce than they.
Help us to put our trust in Thee!
Our efforts bless, and make us free!
On earth we have no friend,
Oh, guide us to the end,
From ev'ry snare,
Hear thou our prayer! (IV.151-52)

St. Bo' also includes a scene which shows the fugitives in
the midst of their flight. As they pause on the "prairies of America,"

Wilberforce speaks:

O'er hill and dale, and through open prairies,
Through pine and cypress, and through forest glade,
We've made our way, and steadfast our escape Thus far.

Their pursuers, however, are still on their trail:

I feared, one time, that in yon hickory
And mulberry thicket, that we were gone;
Something tells me they were not far behind.
Methought I heard the yelp of dogs, the howl
Of savage men in hot pursuit. (III.vii.65)

He thought they would never get through "yon river swamp," nor extricate themselves from the "dogwood of yon forest wild." One reason their journey seems so long is that St. Bo' has had them follow a rather circuitous route. The play opened in Milledgeville, Georgia, and now we learn:

We've passed through Alabama,
And through Tennessee. Once passed the confines
Of the city Frankfort, in Kentucky,
And we bid adieu to all our dangers
And alarms. There the Abolitionists
Will give us succour and protection sure. (III.vii.66)

Wilberforce was sure that once safe in Cincinnati, they would be free. This is not to be the case. The last scene of the play opens in the Queen City (where Wilberforce and Mary, incidentally, have been married), and a character called Jeremy Doodle breaks the bad news in extremely poor verse:

I could have wished your troubles all were o'er,
But I'm afraid you've yet to meet some more;
Detective officers are yet on your scent,
And on your seizure they are keenly bent.
Blessed beyond compare, above all other state,
No slavery exists within this state.
To me it seems your danger yet is great,
And as an Abolitionist I'd state
You still are liable to be arrested,
And then you, sir, would be quite fallen crested.
This district promises you no protection
Against all troubles that you choose to mention;
For if they found you, they could her arrest,
And tear her, ay, e'en from your wedded breast.

The only advice Jeremy can give them is to continue their journey:

   Bundle up your traps, and in a trice
   Get on the lakes and make for Canada,
   Or you'd better be in Trinidad. (III.viii.68-69)

The play ends with the fugitives still on the road, and apparently unaided.

The other three plays include a visualization of the final rescue, and in two of them, The Escape and The Stars and Stripes, this rescue forms the climax of the play. In Uncle Tom's Cabin, however, the sub-plot of the flight of George and Eliza Harris is disposed of by the end of Act II. After the runaways have been reunited, with the aid of the stout-hearted Phineas Fletcher and a family of Quakers, they learn that the slave-hunters are closing in on them. They get as far as "a Rocky Pass in the Hills," before their pursuers, Loker and Marks, catch up with them. When they demand the surrender of the fugitives, George Harris announces his determination to fight: "We have arms to defend ourselves, and we mean to do it. You can come up if you like, but the first one that comes within range of our bullets is a dead man."
Loker nevertheless "dashes up the rock.—George fires.—He stagers for a moment, then springs to the top.—Phineas seizes him.—A struggle." Phineas remarks, "Friend, thee is not wanted here!" and throws Loker "over the rocks." Marks and the rest of the party run off, and the fugitives are safe. "George and Eliza kneel in an attitude of thanksgiving, with the Child between them.—Phineas stands over them exulting" (II.vi.647-48).

Brown and Child go further, and bring to the aid of the escaping slaves the Underground Railroad. Glen and Melinda, in Brown's The Escape, are also sheltered by a Quaker family, once having reached the relative safety of the North. After a good night's rest, they sit down to breakfast while Mr. Neal, the Quaker farmer, reads his anti-slavery paper, Horace Greeley's New York Tribune. Meanwhile, Thomas, the hired hand, goes out to harness up horses to the covered wagon which will take the fugitives to the next station. He takes so long, however, that they all begin to get anxious. It turns out that Thomas has been composing "the prettiest song that was ever sung. I call it 'The Underground Railroad.'"

Oh, where is the invention
Of this growing age,
Claiming the attention
Of statesman, priest, or sage,
In the many railways
Through the nation found,
Equal to the Yankees' Railway under-ground?

Chorus.—No one hears the whistle,
Or rolling of the cars,
While negroes ride to freedom
   Beyond the stripes and stars.

On the Southern borders
   Are the Railway stations,
Negroes get free orders
   While on the plantations;
For all, of ev'ry color,
   First-class cars are found,
While they ride to freedom
   By Railway under-ground.

Chorus.—No one hears the whistle, &c.

Masters in the morning
   Furiously rage,
Cursing the inventions
   Of this knowing age;
Order out the bloodhounds,
   Swear they'll bring them back,
Dogs return exhausted,
   Cannot find the track.

Chorus.—No one hears the whistle, &c.

Travel is increasing.
   Build a double track,
Cars and engines wanted,
   They'll come, we have no lack.
Clear the track of loafers,
   See that crowded car!
Thousands passing yearly,
   Stock is more than par.

Chorus.—No one hears the whistle, &c.
   (V.iv.47-48)

Since Neal has told them that "thee will not be safe until
thee gets on British soil" (V.iv.46), Glen and Melinda must make for
the Great Lakes. Even as they reach the Niagara River, with freedom
almost in their grasp, who should appear but their master Gaines, his
overseer, Scragg, and a whole bevy of officers. One official announces
himself: "I am the United States Marshal. I have a warrant from the Commissioner to take you, and bring you before him. I command assistance." However, a rather mysterious character, Mr. White from Massachusetts, appears, and lends his assistance to the fugitives. Brown describes this rather abrupt conclusion:

The fight commences, in which Glen, Cato, Dr. Gaines, Scragg, White, and the Officers, take part.--Ferryman enters, and runs to his boat.--Dr. Gaines, Scragg and the Officers are knocked down, Glenn, Melinda and Cato jump into the boat, and as it leaves the shore and floats away, Glen and Cato wave their hats, and shout loudly for freedom. (V.v.51)

While Brown has credited the Underground Railroad with assisting the fugitives, he has made very little mention of the efforts of the abolition societies. On the other hand, Mrs. Child, in *Stars and Stripes*, includes a relatively long section in which organized abolitionists are linked with the UGRR. Although a minor point, this does indicate somewhat the occasionally strained relationship between the major Negro spokesmen and the abolition societies. In 1851, for instance, Frederick Douglass broke completely with the Garrisonians over the issue of political action, while in his autobiography he minimized the effect of the Underground Railroad. Although he honored "those good men and women for their noble daring," he believed the publicity they gave to their efforts was harmful. "It may kindle an enthusiasm, very pleasant to inhale; but that is of no practical benefit to themselves, nor to the slaves escaping." Moreover, "it made
escapes even more difficult, since it put the slaveholder on guard and added 'to his facilities for capturing his slaves.'\textsuperscript{18} Larry Gara also points out that the "value to the antislavery movement of such talented fugitives . . . was sometimes offset by conflicts and misunderstandings in which some of them were involved." Samuel May Jr., for instance, in a letter to Dr. John Bishop Estlin, in 1849, remarked that although William Wells Brown was a "very good fellow, of fair abilities," he especially liked to make "popular and taking speeches," and kept a "careful eye upon his own benefit."\textsuperscript{19}

Returning to the third element of the pattern, Mrs. Child moves to the climax of the play, the rescue of the fugitive slaves. Having eluded their pursuers, William and Ellen reach the Ohio river, but Ellen is worried: "Even if we succeed in crossing the river, we are not sure of reaching Canada. They say our masters have made a law, obliging people in the free States to catch runaway slaves, and send them back." William bitterly replies, "and they call themselves free States!" Still, "they say that slaves have friends in Ohio, who help 'em on toward Canada, by some kind of underground railroad. I wish I knew how to find them" (V.161). Somehow they manage, for they turn up next in Detroit, at an abolition picnic. Mrs. Child describes the scene:

Fields near Detroit. . . . Picnic tables are spread under an evergreen arch, with the word, EMANCIPATION, formed of dahlias. All the women wear veils, that Ellen, who is among them, need not be easily recognized,
in case of an emergency. William has a neat new dress, and wears a brown wig. (VI.163)

Even with such precautions, Ellen, who is a worrier, fears that Masters may have traced them. To assure her, Mr. Freeman tells her that he will have the hotels checked. Meanwhile, there is the Underground Railroad, which, from this description, seems literally to be underground. Freeman tells Ellen that, "to make your mind perfectly easy, I will tell you a secret. In that ice-house, covered with straw, yonder, there are steps that lead to the underground railroad." He asks her if she has ever heard of the underground railroad, and Ellen smilingly replies, "O, yes, sir, we came by that road." Freeman goes on to explain their precautions:

I shall keep spies on the watch. If any strangers approach, I will begin to sing, "Get out of the way old Dan Tucker!" Then the women will run for ice, and you and your husband will run with them. There's one slave under the ice-house already. He's so black, that it won't do for him to show his face here; but you and your husband are both so light, that you would attract no attention. As for you, no one unacquainted with your history would believe that you were not a white woman. (VI.164-65)

Unfortunately, Masters does turn up in Detroit, and the abolitionists learn that he is calling in the police to search the area for his escaped slaves. They devise a rather elaborate scheme to get the fugitives out of the country.

There's a store of ready-made coffins near by, and the man who sells them is an Abolitionist. The colored minister, Mr. Dickson, died yesterday, and we can get his family to help us.
William and Ellen must be stained black, and go among the mourners. Jim, who can't be stained any blacker, must be carried in the coffin. They can all be locked up in a tomb; a place which the police will not think of searching. In the darkness of the night we can bring 'em near the ferry. The police will, doubtless, be on the watch during all the hours that the boat runs; but you know the ferryman is willing enough to oblige us, if he can do it without being found out. We must be scattered here and there, round the ferry, in numbers sufficient to divert the enemy's forces, if they take it into their heads to be stirring too early. (VI.176-77)

Although the strategy seems unnecessarily complicated, everyone agrees it is the best plan.

They do manage to get the coffin past the police and a group of rowdy-looking anti-abolitionists, but on the morning that William and Ellen are to cross into Canada, the plan almost fails. Mr. Freeman appears, and, "after looking all round carefully, knocks three times" on the door of the ferryboat, tied up only a half a mile from the Canadian shore. William and Ellen hasten aboard and the fastenings are loosened. "The boat is an oar's length from the shore, when Mr. Masters and Mr. North come running, out of breath, followed by ten or twelve Abolitionists." Masters orders the ferryman to stop the boat, threatening to "blow your brains out!" and calls for the police. For an instant, the Ferryman holds his oars suspended in hesitation, but decides that "If I must die, I'll die doing my duty." As he pushes off, someone knocks the pistol from Masters' hand, and the boat swings out into the water.
The Ferryman and William row with all their might. The Abolitionists swing their hats, and hurra. The Police come in time to see the boat half way across. An American vessel is on the stocks near by, with the name of Henry Clay, floating on its banner. The workmen on board catch the contagion of the scene. They wave their caps, and hurra. The noise attracts people on the Canada side. They see a negro in the boat, and guessing the rest, they hurra.

From shore to shore is heard a mighty hurra, and, as the Canadians strike up "God save the Queen," the American Abolitionists respond:

Blow ye the trumpet aloud o'er the sea!
Freedom hath triumphed! The slaves are now free! (VIII.182-85)

Although the whole scene appears to be quite fantastic, Mrs. Child assures her readers that "the scene here described did really occur at Detroit, some years ago, while a vessel, named the Henry Clay, was on the stocks; and the Ferryman made the exclamation here attributed to him" (VIII.185).

Dumond has suggested that the agitation concerning the Fugitive Slave Act was in large part a continuation of the issue of civil rights, a position accepted by Larry Gara: "The law seemed a threat to civil liberties. It denied jury trials to the fugitives and provided for a fine and imprisonment for any person who refused to assist in the arrest of a slave."20 As we have already seen, however, the abolitionists, in their attempt to appeal to a wider audience, were also quick to exploit the fear that a Southern Slave Power was attempting to destroy the Constitutional rights of the whites.
as well as of the Negroes, and, indeed, if possible, to extend slavery into the North. These same issues are dealt with in the two plays published in 1858, The Escape and The Stars and Stripes, by which time the most extreme militant abolitionists had become convinced that the only solution to their problem was the secession of the North. They were aided in their attempt to persuade their fellow Northerners by William Wells Brown and Lydia Marie Child, two of the most radical abolition dramatists.

Brown, for instance, is careful to include the issue of civil rights in The Escape, even though it has nothing to do with the plot itself. Mr. White, from Massachusetts, turns up at the Bar-Room of the American Hotel, not far from the Gaines plantation, just after Glen and Melinda have made their escape. As soon as the loungers at the bar learn where White comes from, he is in trouble: "Cuss Massachusetts!" "There is where the fanatics live; cussed traitors. The President ought to hang 'em all." When White objects to such comments they reply that this is a free country—they can say what they please. White points out that it is not so free for the Negroes, and they agree: "it's free for white people." White tries to defend the rights of the Negroes, but is stopped by cries of "treason," and "rebellion," and he is forced to flee from the mob. He appeals to the bar keeper to save his life, but is told that "you ought to hold your tongue when you come into our State." White reminds him that "the Constitution gives me the right to speak my sentiments, at all times
and in all places." Brown makes his point clear with the bar-keep's reply: "We don't care for Constitutions nor nothin' else. We made the Constitution, and we'll break it" (V.i.39-41). If this is not enough, Brown brings Mr. White on stage again, "glad to be once more in a free State." He swears that "if I am caught again south of the Mason and Dixon's line, I'll give them leave to lynch me." Then, to the point: "This is the way our constitutional rights are trampled upon. But what care these men about Constitutions, or any thing else that does not suit them?" (V.iii.44).

The overweening ambition of the slavocracy, in trampling upon Constitutional rights, and in extending their power wherever it suited them, is the subject of a song entitled "The Fillibusters' Song," written by Masters, in Mrs. Child's Star and Stripes.

What nation can with us compare,  
In brav'ry, skill, or worth?  
Was ever a people like to us,  
Upon the wide, wide earth?

Chorus: John Bull! you'd better not set bounds  
Unto our bold career!  
A whipping they will surely get,  
That dare to interfere.

We'll take and keep whate'er we like,  
And ask no leave of man;  
For they should take who have the power,  
And they should keep who can.

We've set our foot on Mexico,  
And got her mines of gold,  
And land enough for twenty States,  
Where niggers may be sold.

The isle of Cuba we will wrest  
From the weak hand of Spain;
On Hayti, too, we'll get strong hold,
   And rule the Central Main.

And if it suits our sov'reign will
   T' annex the planet Mars,
What business need it be to you
   How we increase our stars?

'Tis plain that Fate marks us to be
   The masters of the world!
O'er Sandwich Isles, and far Niphon,
   Our flag shall be unfurled. (I.128-30)

In fact, such sentiments were frequently put into the mouth of the Slave Power. In Horace Greeley's *The American Conflict*, we find the same idea presented in a dialogue between slaveowners and compliant Northerners:

"Why can't you let Slavery alone?" was imperiously or querulously demanded at the North, throughout the long struggle preceding [*Fort Sumter*], by men who should have seen, but would not, that Slavery never left the North alone, nor thought of so doing. "Buy Louisiana for us!" said the slaveholders. "With pleasure." "Now Florida!" "Certainly." Next: "Violate your treaties with the Creeks and Cherokees; expel those tribes from the lands they have held from time immemorial, so as to let us expand our plantations." "So said, so done." "Now for Texas!" "You have it." "Next, a third more of Mexico!" "Yours it is." "Now, break the Missouri Compact, and let Slavery wrestle with Free Labor for the vast region consecrated by that Compact to Freedom!" "Very good. What next?" "Buy us Cuba, for One Hundred and Fifty Millions." "We have tried; but Spain refuses to sell it." "Then wrest it from her at all hazards!" And all this time, while Slavery was using the Union as her cats paw—dragging the Republic into iniquitous wars and enormous expenditures, and grasping empire after empire thereby—Northern men (or, more accurately, men at the North) were constantly asking why
people living in the Free States could not let
Slavery alone, mind their own business, and expend
their surplus philanthropy on the poor at their
own doors, rather than on the happy and contented
slaves.21

Another "Filibustering" scene, showing the advancing power
of the slaveowners, takes place in the extremely clever but anonymous
Hon. Anodyne Humdrum.22 Apparently written as campaign literature for
the election of 1860, this play indicates the contempt held for any
consideration of compromise. When Humdrum, "the very soul of the
Constitutional Union Party," arrives in Richmond to address a gather­
ing of supporters of the Party, he is a guest of Mr. Dough Olive­
branch, a New England merchant living in Richmond, who, "like the
generality of our New England merchants settled here, is infected
with the distemper of Union-saving" (I.i.5). When the two men meet
for the first time, they perform a sort of ritual before the bust of
Daniel Webster, at whose shrine they worship. The litany is, in fact,
almost echoed in the later work by Horace Greeley. "They both throw
themselves down before the bust, striking the floor three times with
their heads, then rise again" (I.ii.19), as they chant in unison,
"There is but one Union, and Dan is its prophet!"

Humdrum. "Dan!" said the Union, "give me Texas."
Olivebranch. —And he laid down Texas on the
altar of the Union, 50,000 square
miles,—
Humdrum. Four new Slave States! "Dan!" said
the Union, "let me have Utah!"
Olivebranch. "I will bring it."
Humdrum. "And New Mexico."
Olivebranch. "As thou commandest."
Humdrum. "And be thou my dog, Dan; and my bloodhound, to hunt after men."

Olivebranch. "I will be thy dog, and thy bloodhound. Not one shall escape; nay not one."

Humdrum. That is, Sir, as he understood devotion.

Olivebranch. No North, no South, but one common hunting ground!

Humdrum. And that is, as I trust, as we shall always understand it. (I.ii.20-21)

The whole issue of fugitive slaves and the advancing power of the Southern slavocracy culminated in the Dred Scott decision in 1857, just a year before the publication of Brown's *The Escape* and Mrs. Child's play, *The Stars and Stripes*. William Goodell considered the complex decision which declared the Missouri Compromise unconstitutional by returning Scott to slavery despite his residence in free territory, another fetter upon liberty; another turn of the screw. "Taney's opinion meant, he believed, that slaves might go anywhere with masters and state laws could not liberate them; that state laws abolishing slavery were now unconstitutional; and that all congressional acts barring the slave trade were now set aside." After the Dred Scott ruling, "the connection between fugitive slaves and human and civil rights was fully established, the lines of conflict drawn."

While Anodyne Humdrum is seeking the nomination of the Constitutional Union Party against "John Fol-de-rol-dol" (or "John sounding-brass") and "Edward Fol-de-rol-laddy" (or "Edward Tinkling-cymbals")—that is, John Bell and Edward Everett, who, in fact, did secure the nomination—the Democratic Party is also seeking a candidate for the Presidency. The leading contender, of course, was Stephen
Douglas (or, as he is called in this play, "Senator Stephen Patrick McDougal"). He was opposed, at least for a time, by Virginia's governor, the "brilliant and erratic" Henry A. Wise, who is, in the play, referred to as "Governor Whizz." Allan Nevins points out that Wise "proclaimed a remorseless vendetta against Douglas, whose platform he described as a short cut to all the ends of Black Republicanism." Although Wise was eventually eliminated from the running, in this play we see the two locked in mortal combat in the Public Square of Richmond, Virginia.

They are discovered, "standing on opposite boxes," each haranguing the crowd with the key points from his own platform. McDougal, defender of popular sovereignty, declares, "Let the people of each Territory decide for themselves, whether they want slavery or not. I say: liberty for the people to decide for themselves!" While the crowd is momentarily swayed in favor of McDougal, Whizz retorts quickly: "Let the property of the Southern people be protected in the Territories as well as the property of the Northern people. I say: equality for all the citizens of the Union, or the Union is a failure" (II.iii.45). This drives the crowd back into Whizz's camp. But McDougal, now that the Dred Scott decision has been handed down, sees a way out of the dilemma:

Friends and fellow-citizens, equality is a great principle; but liberty is a great principle too. I say: let us not only have equality but also liberty: let us not only have liberty but also equality. First: let the people of each terri-
tory decide whether they will exclude slavery or not; there's liberty for your Northern citizens. And then let the Supreme Court of the U.S. decide that they can't exclude slavery; there's equality for your Southern citizens. I cannot see for the world why, on such a platform I ought not to unite the votes of both North and South upon myself! (II.iii.45-46)

Each of the combatants in this remarkable verbal duel assures the crowd that he has the method to bring the North to its knees, and, as they work themselves and the crowd into a frenzy, this very effective scene, combining propaganda and political satire, erupts into a general battle:

McDougal. I pledge myself over head and ears, I will make the North submit... I will enact a sedition law, suppressing all declarations that slavery is wrong and ought to be resisted,—shutting the public halls to any but pro-slavery meetings,—placing the press and the pulpit under a pro-slavery censorship,—and establishing a system of espionage over the private expression of anti-slavery sentiments. That is what I pledge myself to; that is, you know what I am pledged to, over head and ears.

Crowd. Liberty, equality, and the sedition law! McDougal's our President!

Gov. Whizz. Gentlemen of the South! To establish slavery all over the Union, under the false pretence of law, and by the thimble-rig of popular sovereignty, may do well enough for such a cross-breed of a pettifogger and greasy mechanic, as only the servile population of the North can spit forth. I am a Southern gentleman, born not to overreach, to command; not to cheat, but to force the North into submission. And I hereby pledge myself I'll seize upon the treasury, get possession of the army and navy, and shiver
the Union from turret to foundation stone. Perhaps the gentleman asks how I'll do it? I'll do it with ten men; with these my ten "Homespun's" I'll bring the North to submission.

Crowd. Shiver the Union! Bring the North to submission! Governor Whizz's our President!

McDougal. And I'll make it criminal for the pulse of the North to beat, for the brains of the North to think, for the heart of the North to throb a pulsation, a thought, a throb of liberty! And how'll I do it? I'll do it by law, gentlemen!

Crowd. McDougal and the law!

Gov. Whizz. And I'll burn the British fleet, seize upon Cuba and Canada, ally myself with Russia and Brazil, and ask Louis Napoleon to occupy the Ohio line. And how'll I do it? With these my ten Homespuns I'll do it.

McDougal. And I'll erase from the memory of the North, every cherished tradition of ancestral liberty, stifle its every moral instinct, and strike dead its every religious aspiration, after the better, the higher, the more humane, the more godlike! And how'll I do it? I'll pass a law against it, gentlemen!

Gov. Whizz. And I'll make war upon the British Empire; upon all the five great powers, not to speak of the minor principalities of Europe. I'll conquer the whole of Africa, overthrow on my passage the Ottoman, Persian, Chinese and Japanese Empires, and come home by the Sandwich Islands, after having spread the blessings of slavery to the utmost limits of the earth, and having hewn its bright way through all the opposing legions—with these my ten Homespuns!

McDougal. And I'll cheat all human nature, and I'll cheat human history out of its course, and I'll cheat the divine reason out of its purpose,
and I'll cheat the devil out of his due. Man, God, Devil—Earth, Heaven, and Hell! Time and Eternity! I'm in for it! I'm pledged to it! I'll cheat-- I'll cheat them all. And how will I cheat them? By calling it LAW, gentlemen.

Crowd. Cheat, cheat, cheat! McDougal's our President!

Gov. Whizz. And I'll make war upon all three kingdoms of Nature--the animal, the vegetable, and the mineral. War upon all creation, without exception. I'll spread the blessings of slavery beyond the stars, and through the infinitude of space—with these my ten Homespuns.

Crowd. War—war—war! Whizz's our President!

McDougal. And I'll make war upon this blustering Southern braggart! And I'll fight him down from his box—together with his ten Homespuns, or any number of them I'll fight, if he don't stop his insolent bragging.

Gov. Whizz. Then, down with the rebel, the traitor, who pretends to set up as candidate for the presidency, against the permission of his Southern masters! Up, my ten Homespuns, and at him!

(Sound of trumpets, and drums beating.—General fight.—McDougal attacked by the Homespuns, throws them successively from his box, when the latter is suddenly overthrown from beneath by Humdrum. McDougal falls forward on his nose.) (II.iii.46-50)

There is an almost classical quality to the structure of this scene by "Aristophanes, Junior"—no doubt consciously intended. The intent here, however, is not only to satirize the political campaign of 1860. Rather, it is clearly a work of propaganda, the intent of which is to show just how far the Republican party will go in order to stop
the encroaching imperialistic power of the slavocracy.

The process of broadening the antislavery impulse which had begun in the 1830's, and which became more and more intensified during the 40's and 50's, was approaching its inevitable resolution—civil war. The approaching conflict had become irrepressible, however, not because the nation had eliminated all other alternatives, but because, as Norman A. Graebner and the other essayists in the recent study on Politics and the Crises of 1860 have suggested, "the nation had reached an impasse from which it could no longer escape without some measure of violence." And as the antislavery impulse broadened, it became increasingly useful to Northern politicians, for, as Graebner points out, the "concept of an aggressive slavocracy" was "essential for the ultimate triumph of the Republican Party." Frank Sterling, for instance, in The Honorable Anodyne Humdrum, dramatizes the fact that "Republican campaigning by 1860 created the impression that time was running out—that the struggle between freedom and slavery had to be resolved promptly in one way or another." Yet the politicians came no closer to a solution of the problem than had the abolitionists. As many antislavery men turned to political action during the 1840's, to form the Liberty Party, they urged their fellow citizens to "organize for efficient action." Unfortunately, as Graebner points out, "the party gave no indication what 'efficient action' would achieve the objectives of its platform." Later, when the original political actionists had been joined by defecting "con-
science Whigs" and free-soil Democrats in the organization of the Republican Party, they were still without any "realistic formula for achieving the peaceful elimination of slavery against the South's determination to maintain it." Thus, Graebner concludes, "neither Lincoln nor any other antislavery politician of the North could present to the nation any genuine alternative but civil war to indefinite coexistence with slavery."26

At one point of the play, Anodyne Humdrum is mistaken for the hero, Frank Sterling, and is denounced as a representative of all the various movements which grew out of New England's age of reform. We can probably assume, however, that the anonymous playwright intended the denunciation as a kind of compliment for the variety of reforms which were being undertaken by his contemporaries. Thus, Sterling is regarded as "the famous higher-law fanatic, who figures at all the black republican, anti-union, anti-constitution, anti-law, anti-slavery, meetings of Massachusetts!" He is "the prodigious villain who goes in for free soil, free land, free postage, free Kansas, free territories, free love, free press, free schools, free thought, free bran-bread!" He is "the horrible outcast who preaches abolitionism, tee-totalism, spiritualism, mesmerism, communism, free Quakerism, Mormonism, Mahometanism, Paganism, Theodore Parkerism, Helperism, sectionalism, incendiariism, irrepressible-conflictism," and, finally, "the most dangerous and detestable ism of all--ABE LINCOLNISM!" (II.iii.49-50).
Stanley M. Elkins has remarked that the kind of transcendental thinking out of which were born many of the more significant "isms" catalogued by Sterling's Southern foes, was strongly marked with the quality of abstractness which led away from "realistic formulas" and practical solutions for the problem of slavery. The tendency, as we have noted before, was, in fact, "in every sense away from concreteness"; abolitionism, among other such isms, became "not really a social problem but a moral abstraction." Margaret Fuller, he notes, lamented, after she became embroiled in "the thick life of Europe and in a love affair amid the passions of the Italian revolution of 1848," that she wished she had gone to Europe only ten years earlier. "Now my life must be a failure, so much strength has been wasted on abstraction, which only came because I grew not in the right soil." There is, by the same token, a touch of absurdity in the very multiplicity of isms mentioned by Sterling's detractors; an absurdity, however, which has a tragic undercurrent, especially when we recall that "Abe Lincolnism" is considered the epitome of all such movements.

Russel B. Nye has suggested that the fugitive slave question, an issue which was culminated by the Dred Scott decision, "was undoubtedly a major factor in the development of antislavery opinion in the North." It was, further, one of the final links in the argument that the arch-aristocratic, sinful slaveholder was attempting not only to extend slavery into the territories, but ultimately to restrict the liberties of the white man himself—an argument which had been gaining
momentum from the time of the Mexican War. Nye's remarks on the slave power issue is a particularly appropriate summary of the persuasive rationale which we have seen at work in this and preceding chapters:

Through an appeal to the humanitarian sympathies of the moderate and neutral segments of the free-state population, it provided abolitionists with a potent propaganda weapon by which the basic injustices of slavery might be concretely illustrated. The passage of the fugitive slave act of 1850 and the result of the test case of Dred Scott in 1857 provided abolitionists with seemingly irrefutable proof of the plot they had always suspected and of which they had repeatedly warned—that a slave-power conspiracy intended to gain control of the Federal government, reach into the states, and extend and perpetuate the system of slavery on a nationwide basis. This 'conspiracy' threatened, said the abolitionists (and more than a few previously anti-abolitionist and neutral Northerners believed them), the natural, civil, and constitutional rights not only of Negroes, but ultimately those of every freeborn American.29

We have seen how an issue which—at least in the opinion of one historian—never had any basis in fact, the so-called slave power conspiracy, was exploited by abolition dramatists to produce the fear that "the natural, civil and constitutional rights not only of Negroes, but ultimately those of every freeborn American" were threatened. Further, we have seen how testimony, claiming to tell the full story of slavery as it was, was carefully selected by the dramatists and woven into plots well calculated to "appeal to the humanitarian sympathies of the moderate and neutral segments of the free-state population." Such testimony of reality, however, at least in the opinion of another historian, was mistaken, if in good faith, for a symbol—a symbol
created by "inflamed imaginations." This symbol, however, became even further personified in the image of the Southerner as "arch-aristocrat" and "infamous sinner."

In the plays written before the growth of militant abolitionism, however, there were few attacks on Southern slaveholders. While there may have been personal diatribes against slaveholders in general, until well into the nineteenth century such attacks could have been directed toward Northerners as well. Even in the early stages of militant abolitionism slavery, and not the slaveholder, was attacked as sinful. Most historians acknowledge that abolitionism was not sectional until well into the 1830's. In fact, there were still several abolition societies in the South, even into the 1830's, and as late as 1827 three-fourths of all abolition societies were in the slave states.30

Before the break-down of organized national abolition societies, the major aim of most adherents to the New York-Western doctrine, including all of Finney's converts, had been to save Southerners from the sin of slavery, and to convince the North of the sin of slavery—all in the spirit of "loving kindness." With the burning out of the Great Revival, coupled with the growing aggressive resistance of the South (stemming, in part, from the identification of Garrison as the major symbol of Northern abolition), loving kindness turned more and more to hatred—not of the sin, but of the sinner.

The portrait of the antebellum South which is still common
today developed largely in New England. The characterizations of Southerners which have emerged from the plays written in the 1840's and 50's were, for the most part, written by New Englanders, and represent the popular image of the South for many Northerners. Robert M. T. Hunter commented that "for nearly an entire generation men in the non-slaveholding states must now have grown up in the constant habit of hearing such denunciation of slaveholders and slaveholding states as were calculated to infuse into their minds a spirit of hatred toward the South." The Savannah Republican, December 18, 1860, asks, "Have they Southerners written books and newspapers . . . to make you appear odious in the eyes of mankind? Have they reared up their children in the belief that you were a sinful and degraded race, far beneath them in all that constitutes a patriot, a citizen and a christian gentleman, and taught them to abhor and despise you?" While these complaints are obviously tinged with sectionalism themselves, they do represent, from an objective point of view, a legitimate complaint. As Elkins, for instance, has pointed out, the Southerner's moral tradition was, after all, "not so very different from Weld's and Garrison's."  

Yet William Lloyd Garrison had for thirty years before the war hammered out his vilifying denunciations week after week, "creating a picture of Southerners and their section which abolitionists accepted as the inevitable product of slaveholding," an image which "took for granted brutal, licentious aristocrats in a tumble-down so-
cial-economic order." Wendell Phillips, product of the flowering of New England, a leading intellectual of the day, one to whom the nation might hope to turn for a way out of the "irrepressible conflict," spoke of proud Southern "barons," living more like remnants of the middle ages than of representatives of the progressive nineteenth century. "Yet he saw the Old South as a land of desolation and ruin--'the vulture and the wolf returning to the homes once tenanted by women and children; . . . churches with roofs fallen in and proudly emblazoned oak carvings covered with moss'; planters giving up 'raising cotton and . . . taking to the breeding of men.'"^33

Howard R. Floan, who has put together the writings of the Northern literati as they refer to the South, reports that "the image of the South" found in Whittier, Lowell, Longfellow, Emerson, and Thoreau "is essentially the same image of evil which was portrayed by Garrison and Phillips in their fight against slavery." He goes on to conclude that the propagandist writing of the abolitionists was the source of this image, and not any personal contact they had with the South. ^34 On the other hand, Hawthorne, Melville, Bryant and Whitman did not conform to the stereotype of the South--Hawthorne, according to Floan, because of his conception of evil, and the New York writers because they "understood the problem of the South more accurately and more deeply than did their contemporaries in New England." Yet, "there can be little doubt that the image projected by the New England group was more vivid, less complex, and therefore more acceptable to
the popular mind."\textsuperscript{35}

It is often pointed out, however, that Harriet Beecher Stowe had, for the times, a very sympathetic attitude toward the South. One can read, for instance, that "for all her abolitionist fervor, Mrs. Stowe had an appreciation of the Southern way of life, and it is worth noting that the villain, Simon Legree, is a Yankee."\textsuperscript{36} William R. Taylor also mentions that the contemporary review in the \textit{Southern Literary Messenger} "noted with surprise" that "almost all of her villains and monsters are of Northern birth." Indeed, Mrs. Stowe herself wrote to a friend in 1852 that she had attempted to portray "what is really good" in the Southern character.\textsuperscript{37} Upon closer inspection, however, certain serious qualifications must be made concerning these claims of "sympathy" for the South.

Although Simon Legree is the only fully developed Northern villain in either of Mrs. Stowe's antislavery novels, all such Yankees included are representatives of "the acquisitive man, the man on the make." Such men had been under attack by the New England "elite" for a generation and, while there are actually few Yankee villains in her novels, there are several Southerners who are examples of the hustling and ambitious men who were then coming to power--Southern capitalists whose investments were in human beings, and whose factories were cotton plantations. Such men as Dan Haley and the lawyer Jekyl, in \textit{Dred}, place a cash-value on all human affairs and consider religion and humaneness simply as a means to an end--profit. Thus, if the suggest-
ion of a "double crusade" has merit, Mrs. Stowe not only reinforces her attack against slavery in such characterizations, but she also criticizes the representatives of the capitalistic system which was undermining her—and her fellow New Englanders'—way of life.

Furthermore, those members of the Southern gentry who Mrs. Stowe believed were a portrait of what was "really good"—people like Augustine St. Clare or Nina Gordon, for instance—had been reared in the North and had been deeply influenced by New England institutions. On the other hand, the "pure" Southerners, those "untainted" by Northern influence—like Marie St. Clare and Tom Gordon—were as baldly representative of the Southern stereotype as anything that Garrison or Phillips, or for that matter, any of the other major New England men of letters, would have created. Finally, even such an exception to the rule as Edward Clayton was not accepted by his fellow Southerners as a leader. Indeed, he was seriously alienated from his own society and was ultimately forced to flee the South as an exile.38

Thus, even though Mrs. Stowe maintains that she has presented "what is really good" in the Southern character, she would have to admit that this goodness has little opportunity to manifest itself in the South she has portrayed. They are helpless in the face of the system which they helped to create or maintain, even when they realize that the system is essentially sinful. But, further, not only are they helpless, they are gone from the South. St. Clare and Nina Gordon (who had been strongly influenced by New England in the first
place) are both dead at the end of the novel and Edward Clayton, who represents the only hope for the South, has been forced into exile. There is no one to lead the South out of its sinful ways, there is no salvation, there can only be retribution.

However, even if we accept the contention that Mrs. Stowe presented in her works a sympathetic treatment of the South—and it must be admitted that her novels do attempt to examine the complexities of the problem of Negro slavery—it must also be noted that when her works found their way into dramatic adaptations there was little to distinguish them from any other propaganda play, with all of its attendant over-simplification.

Although The Christian Slave does include, or at least touch upon, many of the issues which she apparently considered significant, these elements have almost without exception been removed from Aiken's adaptation of the novel. Especially pertinent is the discussion between Shelby and his wife, and her attempt to dissuade Shelby from selling his slaves. Although this does indicate sympathy for the Southern dilemma, it also reinforces Mrs. Stowe's argument that not even the kindest master can soften the cruelty of the system itself. The long comic scene which shows "Black Sam" exercising his oratorical powers (which is, I believe, an oblique attack on one of the arch enemies of New England federalists, the Jacksonian stump speaker) is removed by Aiken, who finds other characters for his comic effect. The discussion between Ophelia and Marie St. Clare, on the "faculties"
of Marie's mammy has been deleted, as has St. Clare's attack on the Southern clergy. Further, the discussion between St. Clare and Ophelia, in which the paternalistic system of Southern chattel slavery is pitted against the exploitative system of Northern wage slavery is also removed. The discussions on the South's failure to humanize the slave were cut by Aiken, and thus the full significance of the Ophelia-Topsy-Eva episode is lost. In short, the discussions which might complicate Aiken's simplified version have been removed. However, it should be recalled that Mrs. Stowe's dramatization was meant "expressly for the readings of Mrs. Mary E. Webb" and such discussions would not obstruct the action of the play.

In Aiken's version the converted Quaker, Phineas Fletcher, takes on added importance, not only in aiding the escaping George and Eliza, but also as a comic character. Marks, Haley and Tom Loker become more important, and are carried throughout the drama. Major additions to the play are Gumption Cute and Deacon Perry, both of whom are comic figures. Thus, not only does the play become less complex, in terms of issues and characterization, it adds a good deal of humor.

The same kind of change takes place in Brougham's version of Dred. Thus, the serious nature of Nina Gordon has been taken from her, and we see primarily a somewhat flighty example of a "Southern belle," concerned with male conquests. Her dilemma, for much of the play, is the fact that she has become engaged to three men at the same time (one more, in fact, than appears in the novel). The significance
of Clayton has been entirely removed, except as the "strong silent" type who finally wins Nina and who comes to her rescue when they are forced to flee the South. In fact, Nina's death (which, in the novel, inspires Clayton to increase his antislavery agitation) has been changed to a happy ending. Why Clayton (now accompanied by Nina) had to escape the South in the first place must have been completely unintelligible to the theatre audience unless they were familiar with the novel. The only explanation provided by Brougham is that Nina's brother Tom, a blatant example of the common Southern stereotype, has been stirring up trouble for Clayton—for some unknown reason. Again, more comic elements have been added. The comic Negroes, Tom Tit, Tiff and Old Hundred, have been given more space, proportionally, than in the novel; Aunt Nesbit and Uncle Jack emerge primarily as comic figures; and the comic possibilities of the poor white trash—the Crippses—have been exploited. Finally, we again find that in order to maintain a high level of action it has been necessary to strip away all the complex discussions which appeared in the novel.

In spite of such alterations, however, Dred appeared to touch the hearts of the audiences. Although the New York Times reviewer believed Brougham's version was "hurried" and "loosely threaded together," it would, if properly excised, "prove an exciting and popular drama." C. W. Taylor's version (now lost), which opened at Captain Purdy's National Theatre a week before Brougham's Bowery production, was even more highly praised. Thus, although the work "has
been stripped of its artistic beauties, wherever even the substance of the original has been retained, there is much which touches the heart of the people and renders the whole a success." In this case, the "people" referred to are the "'roughs' of the National" who especially responded to "the heart-tone of 'Dred.'"40

Of course, to find a propaganda play oversimplifying basic issues and creating stereotypes is not remarkable. It is the nature of such drama to oversimplify, to draw only black and white characters, and to select only that material which supports its position. Even if Aiken and Brougham cannot be charged with engaging in the antislavery debate, they would have been aware as dramatists--and especially as creators of melodrama--that action, and not discussion, is demanded by their audiences. Heroes and villains, plots and counter-plots, spectacle and music--this is the stuff of melodrama, whether it be propagandistic or not. Further, given the "normal strength of sectional ignorance," as Craven has pointed out, together with "all the force of Calvinistic morality and American democracy," it is not surprising that playwrights and audiences would view slavery and the South in essentially melodramatic terms by reducing "all opposition to abject depravity" while surrounding "every Northern interest and contention with holy sanction."
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER VIII


6. Ibid., p. 300.


8. Quoted in Gara, p. 131.


15. Nevins, Ordeal of the Union, I, 302.


22. "Aristophanes, Jr.," *The Honorable Anodyne Humdrum; or, The Union Must and Shall Be Preserved* (Boston: Stacy and Richardson, 1860).


State University Press, 1953), pp. 188-89. Craven has synthesized many of Garrison's writings to draw a composite portrait of the Southerners:

Their career from the cradle to the grave . . . is but one of unbridled lust, of filthy amalgamation, of swaggering braggadocio, of haughty domination, of cowardly ruffianism, of boundless dissipation, of matchless insolence, of infinite self-conceit, of unequalled oppression, of more than savage cruelty. They were monsters, whose arguments . . . were the bowie knife and revolver, tar and feathers, the lash, the bludgeon, the halter and the stake. . . . What is the South, . . . but one vast graveyard in which lie buried all noble aspirations, all reverence for human rights, all freedom of speech, all respect for justice? Their character was a blending of the conceit of the peacock with the ferocity of the tiger. Their condition was the most hopeless of any portion of the human race. (pp. 188-89).

34. Howard R. Floan, The South in Northern Eyes (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958), pp. 184-85. "These men of letters," Floan concludes, "for the most part, did not know the South. Having no conception of the fullness and variety of Southern culture, their attitudes toward the South were in reality attitudes toward slavery. Their emotional and imaginative attitudes arose from the awesome gap between their ideas of what life ought to be and their view of life in the South as colored by abolitionism. Since benevolent slavery seemed to these writers a contradiction in terms, their eyes could see only the abuses of slavery. Instances of cruelty, privation, and wickedness were equated with slavery, and the totality of these extreme instances in turn was, for them, the South."

35. Ibid., p. 186. Floan tries to identify the "average" Southerner of 1850, on the basis of statistical norms. He would be, "at least by plurality of numbers, a non-slaveholding white farmer who cultivated a few acres with the help of his wife and children. Of eight million whites, less than four hundred thousand owned slaves, about half of whom owned as many as ten. A small nucleus, about 4 per cent of all slaveholders, held one hundred or more slaves. Yet it was the large slaveholder, fictionalized by partisan pens, that has constituted popular portraits of the South," and which, he adds, "stubbornly persists even in our time (p. viii)."


38. In fact, Clayton strongly resembles the Southern counterpart to the "displaced elite" of New England, described by William R. Taylor. He refers to these men as Southern "Mugwumps"—a term normally applied to that generation of men which Hofstadter claims experienced a "status revolution." Curiously, Taylor invokes the career of Henry Adams as the "symbol" for the displaced elite of the ante-bellum South, just as Stanley M. Elkins had done for their contemporaries in New England. Like Adams, Taylor points out, the Mugwumps "came to feel that history in some sense had passed them by." (William R. Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee*, p. 59).

They had political and religious views similar to their New England contemporaries. "Mostly, they seemed to represent the residual Federalist sentiment existing in the South. During the nullification crisis in South Carolina, for example, they characteristically held strong Unionist views; in Virginia during the thirties they were apt to be among those who opposed Jackson and participated in the formation of the Whig party." (Taylor, p. 59). They were also, as Prof. Donald has put it, describing the New England gentry, "troubled by spiritual discontent." (Donald, p. 29). Taylor points out that "it is evident that in a period of awakening religious consciousness and evangelical humanitarianism many Southerners were unable to find an adequate moral basis for their lives within the official Southern credo." (Taylor, p. 61). Some, like Edward Coles and the Grimkës, left the South. Others attempted to find a place for slavery in their old way of life.

Further, there was a similar reaction to the "revolution" which culminated in the 1830's. "Agitation," for instance, in Stanley M. Elkins' terminology, was a major "functional substitute" for leadership. Prof. Donald has pointed out that the displaced New England gentry found in antislavery agitation "a chance for a reassertion of their traditional values, an opportunity for association with others of their kind, and a possibility of achieving that self-fulfillment which should traditionally have been theirs as social leaders. Reform gave meaning to the lives of this displaced social elite." (Donald, p. 35). By the same token, many of the Southern Mugwumps, unable to cope with the aggressive "young men on the make" in their own section, left the field of active, practical politics, "to seek other means of making themselves felt, often as propagandists and agitators." (Taylor, p. 59). In fact, they were often agitation against those very same forces which the New England gentry felt to be disrupting the old
way of life. In the North these forces were represented by the new industrialists. In the South they were represented by the "plantation magnates," the new Cotton planters who exploited the land and a captive labor force for profit, just as the Northern capitalists were exploiting the raw material from the land and "wage slaves."

Finally, the "idealism" of both the New England and Southern gentry ultimately became "useful" to the New Men. Just as the Northern politicians found the issue of slavery--and the Slave Power conspiracy--necessary, so did the Southern politicians find that they were able to exploit the agitation of the Mugwumps. Taylor, for instance, warns against confusing men like William Grayson, William Campbell Preston, Edmund Ruffin and Nathaniel Beverly Tucker--members of the old gentry--with men like the "young Hotspurs" Robert Barnwell Rhett and William Loundes Yancey.


40. Ibid., September 23, 1856, p. 4.
Chapter IX

THE NEGRO DEBATE

In order to accomplish emancipation, the abolitionists had to present convincing proofs that the slave was capable of freedom. They had to prove that the natural condition of the Negro was one of freedom, and that once the bonds were loosed he would be able to function in a free society. In this they faced awesome opposition. Du-mond indicates the force and scope of this opposition:

The belief in the biological inequality and racial inferiority of the Negro not only sustained slavery and colonization, but also determined the attitude of the public, the zeal of law-enforcement officials, the reasoning of judicial bodies, the efficiency of administrative functionaries, and the definition of policies by legislatures and Congress in all matters pertaining to Negroes and abolitionists.

Following the demise of the old Southern gentry (most of whom considered slavery an evil), and following the establishment of the "positive good" doctrine in the ante-bellum South, apologists for the institution claimed that slavery was the natural condition of the Negro. "Slavery... was really the only state in which such a creature could exist. 'He is happier... as a slave than he could be as a freeman. This is the result of peculiarities of his character.'"  

The contention that the Negro race could not survive in freedom because of its incapacities was widely supported by eighteenth and nineteenth century science. The "Negro debate" essentially cen-
tered around the issue of separate creation, as opposed to the tradi-
tionally accepted interpretation of the Scriptures advocating the
unity of the human race, the brotherhood of man. John C. Greene's
study of the debate of the Negro's place in nature reveals that many
eighteenth century scientists upheld the notion of separate creation
in support of the concept of "the great chain of being." Lord Kames,
Edward Long, Charles White, and John Augustine Smith, for example,
all maintained that the Negro was either created separately or formed
the bottom link in "a steady gradation of forms," while Smith criti-
cized those works which maintained the doctrine of a single creation
as "distinguished more for piety than for sound philosophy." 3

Nineteenth century scientists continued to lend support--
even if unintentionally--to the belief that Negroes were biologically
inferior. George Morton's comparative study of white and Negro skulls,
Dr. E. Jarvis's study of the federal census of 1840, J. C. Nott's
study of mulattoes, Ephrim G. Squier's study of the origin of the
Indian mound builders, Charles Pickering's findings on the Wilkes
maritime expedition, Louis Agassiz's papers on separate creation, and
Nott's and George R. Gliddon's Types of Mankind (1855), all tended
to prove--or were exploited by pro-slave propagandists to prove--that
slavery was the appropriate state for the Negro race.

Butressed by such scientific proof, it is not surprising
that anti-Negro feelings were held by the vast majority of Americans
during the ante-bellum period. Obviously they were not restricted to the South. Foreign visitors were quick to notice the discrepancy between the lip service paid to equality and the fact. The Marquis de Lafayette, visiting the United States in 1825, looked back with fond memories to the Revolution, when, he claimed, "black and white soldiers messed together without hesitation." But now he was dismayed by the amount of anti-Negro prejudice to be found in the North. De Tocqueville believed that prejudice was even stronger in the North than in the South. In Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Iowa, strict "black laws" restricted Negro settlement and suffrage. The 1862 Illinois Constitutional clause prohibiting Negroes from entering the state won by over 100,000, almost two and one-half to one. Although Oregon voted against slavery in 1859, it voted 8,640 to 1,081 to exclude Negroes from the newly formed state.5

Benjamin Wade, one of the earliest antislavery Congressmen, and ally to John Quincy Adams in the petition fight, as late as 1860 advocated colonizing Negroes in Central America because of the prejudice against them.6 Even the Great Emancipator himself believed that colonization was to be the ultimate solution of the race relation problem, and during his term of office entertained schemes which would colonize Negroes in Liberia or South America. And, on occasion, Lincoln indicated belief in white supremacy. In the Lincoln-Douglas debates he declared:
I will say, then, that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races; that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of making voters or jurors of Negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to inter-marry with white people; and I will say, in addition to this, that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together, there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race. 

The abolitionists were, in many respects, as "abstract" in their attempt to dispel such anti-Negro sentiments as they were in trying to solve the problem of slavery itself. "They accepted," says Elkins, "the argument on the Southerner's terms by reversing it, and attempted to refute it with that logic of individual perfectibility upon which the humanitarianism of the day drew so deeply." Thus the "Negro debate," "focusing as it did upon the Negro's 'nature' and 'innate capacities' in effect bypassed the nature of the institution within which he acted out his daily life." 

The question was not so much what the institution had made of him but what it prevented him from being—his naked, inviolate self. Thus, referring to "faculties," "moral genius," and "intellect," they asked whether the Negro were naturally "inferior" and decided that, as James Freeman Clarke insisted, it was "a mistake to speak of the African as an inferior race to the Caucasian."
Benjamin Rush, who had engaged in the debate during the eighteenth century, maintained, for instance, that their moral "faculties" had been debased by slavery; that "all the vices which are charged upon the Negroes in the southern colonies and the West Indies, such as Idleness, Treachery, Theft, and the like, are the genuine offspring of slavery, and serve as an argument to prove that they were not intended, by Providence, for it." In 1838 S. B. Treadwell claimed that "if all the slaves in the United States should have their shackles knocked off, and endowed with the privileges of freemen tomorrow . . . they would at once be as capable, from the honest avails of their labour of supporting themselves and their families, in their accustomed mode of living, as any class of people in the world. Of this there can be no question.

We find a similar concern with "faculties" and "innate capacities" in the antislavery plays of the 1840's and 1850's, as abolitionists enlisted the support of the drama in their attempt to overcome the widespread belief in Negro racial inferiority. Mrs. Little, for instance, stated the problem involved in trying to counteract the commonly accepted Negro stereotype in the Introduction to The Branded Hand:

"I have given to the slaves that exaltation of character, which, though rare, yet is seen among them. I preferred the intelligent slave, because the world is full of exaggerated caricatures of the African as slavery has made him--and I wished to contrast it by what I had seen under favoring circumstances."
Mrs. Ricord maintained a similar position:

Zamba, who is represented so passionate, tender, and elevated, is a character nevertheless true to nature. In those Islands, native Africans are sometimes seen, beautiful in person, proud in bearing, delicate in tenderness, and of surprising acuteness of intellect.

She asks: "That Nature has her noblemen among every race of the human family, who can doubt? Even in the most degraded rank— the rank of the slave— is sometimes found a soul more free and noble than many a one inhabiting the form of royalty."¹³

One of the most common ways to show that the Negro had all of the sensibilities of a white man was to show that he was as capable of true love as the white. Although all of the plays considered introduced this concept at some point, there are some which consciously attempted to refute the anti-Negro position. In this sense, Cowper's quotation, included on the title page to St. Bo's Wilfred and Mary, is emblematic of the approach:

Fleecy locks and dark complexion
Cannot forfeit nature's claim;
Skins may differ, but affection
Dwells in white and black the same.

Both the Uncle Tom-Chloe and George-Eliza episodes in Uncle Tom's Cabin are intended to portray this faculty for affection. Mrs. Stowe not only shows the faculty in action in The Christian Slave, she includes several discussions about it. Marie St. Clare's Mammy is, she believes, "the best I ever knew." But, while she does have
"a sort of goodness" about her, she's selfish--"it's the fault of the whole race."

She never will be done fidgeting and worrying about that husband of hers. You see, when I was married and came to live here, of course I had to bring her with me, and her husband my father couldn't spare. He was a blacksmith, and, of course, very necessary; and I thought, and said at the time, that Mammy and he had better give each other up, as it wasn't likely to be convenient for them ever to live together again. . . . I told Mammy at the time that she mustn't ever expect to see him more than once or twice in her life again, for the air of father's place doesn't agree with my health, and I can't go there; and I advised her to take up with somebody else; but no--she wouldn't. Mammy has a kind of obstinacy about her, in spots, that everybody don't see as I do. (II.i.23-24)

Ophelia suggests that Mammy probably also feels the separation from her two children, but Marie thinks this absurd: "Putting them on any sort of equality with us, you know, as if we could be compared, why, it's impossible."

Now, St. Clare really has talked to me as if keeping Mammy from her husband was like keeping me from mine. There's no comparing in this way. Mammy couldn't have the feelings that I should. It's a different thing altogether--of course it is; and yet St. Clare pretends not to see it. And just as if Mammy could love her little, dirty babies as I love Eva! Yet St. Clare once really and soberly tried to persuade me that it was my duty, with my weak health, and all I suffer, to let Mammy go back, and take somebody else in her place! That was a little too much, even for me to bear. (II.i.27)

William Wells Brown, understandably enough, is even more
concerned with showing the depth of feeling the Negro is capable of.

In *The Escape*, Melinda relates, in language which is sure to prove the point, how she and Glen met:

> I shall never forget when first I saw Glen. It is now more than a year since he came here, with his master, Mr. Hamilton. It was a glorious moonlight night in autumn. The wide and fruitful face of nature was silent and buried in repose. The tall trees on the borders of Muddy Creek waved their leafy branches in the breeze, which was wafted from afar, refreshing over hill and vale, over the rippling water, and the waving corn and wheat fields. The starry sky was studded over with a few light, flitting clouds, while the moon, as if rejoicing to witness the meeting of two hearts that should be cemented by the purest love, sailed triumphantly along among the shifting vapors.

After she reaffirms her love for Glen, she exclaims: "Oh, how I would that those who think the slave incapable of the finer feelings, could only see our hearts, and learn our thoughts,—thoughts that we dare not utter in the presence of our masters!" (I.iii.12-13). Glen has a similar speech:

> Oh, God! thou who gavest me life, and implanted in my bosom the love of liberty, and gave me a heart to love, Oh, pity the poor outraged slave! Thou, who canst rend the veil of centuries, speak, Oh, speak, and put a stop to this persecution! What is death, compared to slavery? Oh, heavy curse, to have thoughts, reason, taste, judgment, conscience and passion like another man, and not have equal liberty to use them! (III.iv.32)

In order to reinforce this notion, the disinterested Mr. White delivers an oration in the bar-room of the American Hotel—a speech
which results in his forcible removal, in spite of civil and Constitu-
tutional rights:

The worst act that a man can commit upon his fellow-man, is to make him a slave. Conceive of a mind, a living soul, with the germs of faculties which infinity cannot exhaust, as it first beams upon you in its glad morning of existence, quivering with life and joy, exulting in the glorious sense of its developing energies, beautiful, and brave, and generous, and joyous, and free,—the clear pure spirit bathed in the auroral light of its unconscious immortality,—and then follow it in its dark and dreary passage through slavery, until oppression stifles and kills, one by one, every inspiration and aspiration of its being, until it becomes a dead soul entombed in a living frame! (V.i.40)

While the abolitionists tried hard to elevate the Negro, they were not always able to cut themselves off from their own time and its prevailing prejudices. One manifestation of this is that the Negro lovers in the abolition dramas are invariably light skinned, while the comic Negroes, when they appear, are always dark skinned. Virez and Ellenore (in The Branded Hand), David Paul Brown (in The Captured Slave), George and Eliza (in Uncle Tom's Cabin), Harry and Lisette (in Dred), Camille (in Neighbor Jackwood), William and Ellen (in The Stars and Stripes), Zoe (in The Octoroon), and Mary (in Wilfred and Mary) are all nearly white. Even when Africans were portrayed in their native environment, they were likely to be light skinned. Such, at least, was the case in Dunlap's version of The Afri-
cane:

We Foulahs are the prettiest of the negroes;
For the same sun that dyes our neighbours black,
(Peooops, Mandingoes, Jaloops, and the rest,)
Has dipt us Foulahs lighter by ten shades.
   (I.i.89)

(The major exception to this pattern is, significantly, Glen and Me­
linda, in The Escape, by the Negro playwright, William Wells Brown).
Such a portrayal is to admit, at least in part, that there was a dif­
ference between the races, and that blackness was a mark of the in­
fierior one. The suggestion has been made, in the context of the civil
rights issue, that it would have been easier for Northern audiences
to "identify" themselves with such "white-Negroes," especially when
the playwright was attempting to exploit the fear of a Slave Power
conspiracy whose ultimate goal it was to enslave Northern whites.
This, however, does not contradict the present position. Indeed, in
a sense, it supports the notion that the audiences (if not the aboli­
tionists themselves) were more concerned about the extension of
Southern power than they were about the plight of the slave.

William Couch, in "The Problem of Negro Character and Dra­
matic Incident," suggests that "serious dramatic situation neces­
titates consequential action committed by a protagonist with whom we
can sympathize and admire." However, "the assumptions of American
culture . . . are not congenial to emphatic and uncompromising action
on the part of a Negro. This is especially true when white interests
are involved." Thus, "a dramatic situation, capable of producing a
powerful effect, will usually suffer a distortion of that effect when the agent of action is a Negro character." On the one hand, then, audiences could not have accepted, sympathized with, or identified themselves with black lovers. While Couch points to the difficulty of achieving such an effect today, it would have been even more difficult in the mid-nineteenth century. On the other hand, the "distortion of effect" is a partial result of the distortion of the character; a manifestation of what Allan Nevins refers to as the "sentimental exaggeration of the Negro's immediate potentialities (something very different from his ultimate capacities)" which was "particularly common among abolitionists who knew little of the slave at first hand, and who by an easy process of generalization fancied nearly every field hand a Robert Purvis or Frederick Douglass." Such an exaggeration has the effect of producing a second stereotype to combat the more generally accepted stereotype of the comic Negro.

Further, Couch believes he sees a connection between the "submissive suffering" of the Negro and the relationship between the white and black races; a relationship which may well underlie the attitude taken toward the Negro characters in the abolition plays.

The suffering often goes on without reference to and in excess of causes established within the particular work, and is endured without resistance or investigation on the part of the protagonist. Indeed, he anticipates it. Suffering is to be accepted in expiation of his sin, the sin in being what he is--black. Black, in the persistence of a medieval
morality, is unclean, the color of evil. But there is salvation in suffering, and (with the contemporary issues posed in terms of black and white) he shall be washed white as snow.

He suggests, for instance, that "Harriet Beecher Stowe becomes the first writer to rescue Christian white conscience in America. In Uncle Tom's Cabin, Simon Legree administers extreme unction to Tom, who in anguish rises purified while the reader weeps in joy with angels at the throne of grace." ^16

Certainly Uncle Tom has learned to endure his suffering. When he is first sold down river by the Shelbys, he explains to his wife why he cannot, like Eliza, try to escape:

The Lord's given me a work among these yer poor souls, and I'll stay with 'em and bear my cross with 'em till the end. . . . Him that saved Daniel in the den of lions—that saved the children in the fiery furnace—Him that walked on the sea and bade the winds be still—He's alive yet! and I've faith to believe He can deliver me! (I.iii.622)

Again, when his beloved little Eva dies, Tom, the man of sorrow, comforts his new master:

Oh, mas'r, when I was sold away from my old woman and the children, I was jest a'most broken up—I felt as if there warn't nothing left—and then the Lord stood by me, and He says, "Fear not, Tom," and He brings light and joy into a poor fellow's soul—makes all peace; and I's so happy, and loves everybody, and feels willin' to be jest where the Lord wants to put me. (IV.ii.660)

The Lord works in strange ways, and Tom eventually finds himself placed in mortal combat with the Yankee, Simon Legree. His
ability to endure is sorely tried, for Legree is determined to break him once and for all.

You've always stood it out agin me; now, I'll conquer ye or kill ye! one or t'other. I'll count every drop of blood there is in you, and take 'em, one by one, 'till ye give up.

Tom's reply indicates, as Couch maintains, that he is concerned about the soul and conscience of the American whites; that he is anxious to rescue them from the sin of slavery.

Mas'r, if you was sick, or in trouble, or dying, and I could save, I'd give you my heart's blood; and if taking every drop of blood in this poor old body would save your precious soul, I'd give 'em freely. Do the worst you can, my troubles will be over soon; but if you don't repent your's won't never end. (VI.v.691)

Even after the beating Tom manages to rise "feebly on his hand" and tells Legree: "There ain't no more you can do! I forgive you with all my soul." Tom rises purified from his passion: "Solemn music. George covers Uncle Tom with his cloak, and kneels over him. Clouds work on and conceal them, and then work off" (VI.v.692-93).

Another striking example of a Negro who is willing to endure such suffering—indeed, who anticipates it—is Joseph Warren in Whitney's play, written two years before Uncle Tom's Cabin. Warren, who investigates the alternatives more than Uncle Tom does, sees clearly how such suffering might be evaded:

By feigning submission, by affecting stupidity, by cringing and hypocrisy, I might gain upon the confidence of my purchaser, and so, in fine,
find means of escape. Ah! how seductive and enchanting is the thought, while I forget the price. (III.i.32)

The price is too high for the true Christian.

He may not cover his soul with a mass of hypocrisy; he may not cringe and cower before a fellow worm; he may not deny his God by obeying man, even to save his life. Whatever else the enlightened Christian must do, he must not become a slave! How could I meet my most beloved ones with my life preserved at such a price? Ah! how could I meet my God, in whose hands are body and soul? God has given those who joyfully suffer for the truth's sake, abundant assurance that he will take care of their concerns, be a father to the fatherless, and the widow's strength, but no promise to bless hypocrisy and man-serving, for whatever purpose they may be resorted to. (III.i.32-33)

He is convinced "that in choosing death to slavery" he has the cordial approbation" of his wife and children, and, as he sleeps on his bed of straw in the prison, "his wife and children, as shadowy forms in a dream, come to him, kiss him, embrace him." In his anticipation Warren feels the joy of the righteous:

How do the blessed angels minister to the joys of them who suffer for righteousness' sake. How tender and loving were their embraces! How cheerful their countenances! How soft and touching their words of cheer! All had the same word to say at last, "Be ye faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life." Yes, I accept this sweet vision of home, as a divine sanction of my determination to die, rather than be one moment a slave. This gives strength. If God be for me, who shall be against me? (III.i.34)

When Warren's hour of trial comes, he is not found wanting. He tells the men who have been appointed by the Reverend Dr. Smythe
to administer the whipping that he must do all he can to purify their souls of the great sin they are about to commit:

I am prepared for the worst, and cannot suffer the guilt upon my own soul, which I feel I should incur, did I not testify to you of the wickedness, and even meanness of the offices which you seem about to perform. I might, you know, avoid this suffering by becoming a slave. This I cannot do. Neither can I, for fear of anything which you can do, refrain from pointing out to you the wrong which you inflict upon your own souls by inflicting this wrong upon me. (V.i.50)

After the communion service Smythe returns, and wants to know how Warren is coming along. His tormentors are amazed to report that he is praying, and "stranger still, for us, and you especially" (V.iv.54).

Even at this moment of death Warren can forgive:

O, my dear God! I now come to thee. I have fought a good fight--I have kept the faith, I have found thy grace sufficient for me, and it shall not fail my beloved wife and children. Forgive, I pray thee, these blinded fellow men. Deliver; and that right quickly, the pining millions from slavery. O! let thy good angels attend me through the moment of darkness! Into thy hand I commit my spirit. (V.iv.60)

After that moment of darkness will come the "salvation in suffering," and, if Couch is right, "he shall be washed white as snow."

Even more awareness of the sin of being black is seen in Boucicault's The Octoroon. When George declares his love for Zoe he learns that even though she loves him in return it cannot be: there is a "dark, fatal mark" about her, in the bluish tinge in her finger nails, in the whites of her eyes, and in the roots of her hair--the
"ineffaceable curse of Cain."

Of the blood that feeds my heart, one drop in eight is black--bright red as the rest may be, that one drop poisons all the flood; those seven bright drops give me love like yours--hope like yours--ambition like yours--life hung with passions like dew-drops on the morning flowers; but the one black drop gives me despair, for I'm an unclean thing--forbidden by the laws--I'm an Octoroon! (II.443-44)

Later, Zoe tries to convince Dora that she ought to marry George in spite of the fact that he doesn't love her, in order to save the plantation. She explains that it doesn't really matter if she is loved by George--she is an Octoroon:

You know you can't be jealous of a poor creature like me. If he caught the fever, were stung by a snake, or possessed of any other poisonous or unclean thing, you could pity, tend, love him through it, and for your gentle care he would love you in return. Well, is he not thus afflicted now? I am his love--he loves an Octoroon. (III.447)

George believes that they can overcome the obstacle, that they could leave the country, where no one would know of her "sin." Zoe refuses, pointing out that his aunt could never "see you wedded to the child of her husband's slave. . . . She would revolt from it, as all but you would." But, he implores, "must we immolate our lives on her prejudice?" Zoe's answer indicates the way to her salvation: "Yes, for I'd rather be black than ungrateful! Ah, George, our race has at least one virtue--it knows how to suffer!" (II.444). After she has taken poison, we see, in Couch's terms, extreme unction adminis-
tered by George. "Lift me," she tells him, "let me look at you, that your face may be the last I see of this world. O! George, you may, without a blush, confess your love for the Octoroon. (She dies. George lowers her head gently and kneels beside her)" (V.iv.458). Her uncleanliness has been purged.

Perhaps Boucicault was more willing to admit what many abolitionists attempted to suppress—that the black man, after all, was somehow different, that he would not fit into the white man's world (unless he could "pass" for white). Although abolitionists—notably the Garrisonians—achieved some success in racial equality in Massachusetts by ending the ban on interracial marriage, by ending segregated seating arrangements in railway cars, by establishing integrated lyceums and integrated public schools in Boston, they were hindered by opposition and division within their own ranks. Many abolitionists, for instance, opposed mixed antislavery societies, and abhorred mixed social intercourse. Leon F. Litwack suggests that "the aversion to social relations with Negroes might be ascribed in part to the fact that most whites, whether abolitionists or not, acknowledged the existence of vast differences—physical and mental—between the two races."17 They were, furthermore, differences which could not be overcome. Garrison himself lamented this fact. "The black color of the body, the woolly hair, the thick lips, and other peculiarities of the African forms so striking a contrast to the Caucasian race,
that they may be distinguished at a glance. ... They are branded by the hand of nature with a perpetual mark of disgrace." Other abolitionists contributed to the common stereotype. Litwack, for instance, notes that William Ellery Channing, Charles Stuart, and spokesmen for the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society all added their share "to the popular conception of the Negro," in referring "to his meek, servile, comical, minstrel-like qualities." While several abolitionists believed (or said they believed) that associating with Negroes would actually make the Negro's position more difficult in the community, Litwack suggests that the acceptance of the Negro stereotype might well have led the abolitionists to conclude that social intercourse with the blacks was not only impolitic but "unnatural."

Many of the abolition dramatists also seemed to accept the "striking contrast" between the Negro and white races. While the serious Negroes were almost without exception extremely light in color, the comic Negroes were inevitably portrayed as black-faced minstrel characters. While it may be true that the dramatists achieve a certain benevolent sentiment for the lovable "Sambo," at the same time they evince a patronizing assumption; indeed, an assumption of inferiority. In The Branded Hand, The Captured Slave, and Warren there is no comedy, unless it be in a certain strain of bitter satire. In Neighbor Jackwood and Ossawattomi Brown we find comedy, but without comic Negroes. In all the other plays, however, comic Negroes appear,
and in many of them they are the major vehicle for the laughing comedy.

Aiken's Topsy became, of course, one of the most memorable characters of the American stage, and, in the hands of a Mrs. Howard--the original Topsy--was able to bring alternating tears and smiles, even to Mrs. Stowe. In his use of Topsy as one of the major vehicles for comedy, however, Aiken somewhat obscured her function as a "specimen" for Ophelia to train, as a sample of what Northerners might do for the emancipated Negroes. While Mrs. Stowe retains in her dramatization many of the humorous aspects of Topsy's character, her major comic figure is "Black Sam," a character who dominates much of the first Act of The Christian Slave.

When Sam learns that Uncle Tom is to be sold down river he sees his opportunity to move up: "Yes, it's an ill wind blows no-what. Now, dar, Tom's down--wal, course der's room for some nigger to be up; and why not dis nigger?--dat's de idee" (I.iv.12). He is even anxious to help hunt down Eliza until he learns that Mrs. Shelby wants to see her escape. Upon this knowledge, Sam manages to delay Haley's departure, and to send him off on the wrong road, but he is anxious to relate his success to his fellow slaves. Here we see a federalist's view of the Jacksonian stumper in action.

Mrs. Stowe remarks in the novel that Sam "had a native talent that might, undoubtedly, have raised him to eminence in political life,--a talent of making capital out of every thing that turned up, to be invested for his own especial praise and glory." This talent
had been developed by attending "all kinds of political gatherings"
with his master, where, "roosted on some rail fence, or perched aloft
in some tree, he would sit watching the orators." Sam himself "con­sidered oratory as his vocation, and never let slip an opportunity of
magnifying his office." After his successful encounter with Haley,
Sam goes to the kitchen and manages to get some of Aunt Chloe's spe­
cial ham. "No poor, simple, virtuous body," she explains,"was ever
cajoled by the attentions of an electioneering politician with more
ease than Aunt Chloe was won over by Master Sam's suavities." Then,
"flourishing a greasy bone," Sam takes the floor, and presents him­
self as the champion of Negro rights:

Yer see, fellow-countrymen, yer see, now, what
dis yer chile's up ter, for 'fendin' yer all—
yes, all on yer. For him as tries to get one
o' our people, is as good as tryin' to get all;
yer see the principle's de same—dat ar's clar.
And any one o' these yer drivers that comes
smelling round arter any our people, why, he's
got me in his way; I'm the feller he's got to set
in with—I'm the feller for ye all to come to,
bredren—I'll stand up for yer rights—I'll 'fend
'em to the last breath! (I.ix.17)

Andy points out a slight contradiction of fact: "'Why, but Sam, yer
telled me, only this mornin' that you'd help this yer mas'r fur to
cotch Lizy; seems to me yer talk don't hang together." Sam quickly
explains that "dat ar war conscience, Andy; when I thought of gwine
arter Lizy, I raily 'spected mas'r was sot dat way. When I found
missis was sot the contrar, dat ar was conscience more yet— 'cause
fellers allers gets more by stickin' to missis' side." All such matters of principle, he declares, depends upon persistence:

Dis yer matter 'bout persistance, feller-niggers, dis yer 'sistency's a thing what an't see into very clar, by most anybody. Now, yer see, when a feller stands up for a thing one day, and right de contrar de next, folks ses (and nat'rally enough they ses), why, he an't persistent. . . . But let's look inter it. I hope the gen'lemen and der fair sex will 'scuse my usin' an or'nary sort o' 'parison. Here! I'm atryin' to get top o' der hay. Wal, I puts up my larder dis yer side; 't an't no go; den 'cause I don't try dere no more, but puts my larder right de contrar side, an't I persistent? I'm persistent in wanting to get up which ar side my larder is; don't yer see, all on yer? (I.ix.18)

Aunt Chloe sees clearly enough that getting up is "the only thing ye ever was persistent in, Lord knows" (I.ix.18).

Because of the way Brougham has reproportioned Mrs. Stowe's second abolition novel, *Dred*, Tom Tit, Old Hundred and Tiff take on added significance as comic figures, although much of the humor depends on their use of comic Negro dialect. While William Wells Brown makes the Southern "aristocracy" in general the butt of ridicule, he also rather surprisingly includes a comic Negro, Cato, Dr. Gaines' "assistant." In one scene, which points out the casual attitude taken toward medical care for the slaves, Dr. Gaines instructs Cato to "see to them. Feel their pulse, look at their tongues, bleed them, and give them each a dose of calomel. Tell them to drink no cold water, and to take nothing but water gruel" (I.ii.8). When a slave enters
with a tooth ache, Cato pulls the wrong tooth and receives a sound drubbing as a result. Cato's reaction is similar to that of many other comic Negroes (compare, for instance, an earlier Cato, found in Samuel Woodworth's *King's Bridge Cottage*, written twenty-five years earlier). Cato talks big, but has little inclination to carry out his threats. "But wasn't I mad?" he asks himself. "When I is mad, nobody can do nuffin' wid me" (I.ii.11)

Mrs. Child, in *The Stars and Stripes*, includes in her cast of characters Jim, "a merry looking Black lad," who brightens the otherwise grim escape of William and Ellen by singing "Blue-Tailed Fly" throughout. Old Pete, in Boucicault's *The Octoroon*, serves a similar function. "Aristophanes, Junior" is primarily interested in satirizing the political situation in 1860 in *The Honorable Anodyne Humdrum*, but he also includes a traditional Negro "mammy," in this case Sally, and her comic lover, Sambo. Theodore St. Bo' goes so far as to include something resembling a minstrel act, inserted without much rhyme or reason. Tanto, a "berry happy nigger," sings and cracks jokes. He asks, for instance, "Where am de candle when Moses am out?" His audience suggests that it might be "in 'im pocket," or, perhaps, "in 'im socket." Tanto points out, that on the contrary, "it am in de da'k," and goes on to expand his theme:

All de white ladies must be da'kies
When de candle am put out. See de point?

(II.iii.46)
The use of comic episodes within serious drama has frequently been used to relieve tension, on the one hand, and to heighten the impact of the serious theme being developed, on the other. Perhaps abolition playwrights considered such a technique, especially after the apparently successful use of comedy in Uncle Tom's Cabin, to be particularly useful in these terms, which it may well have been. Especially would this seem to be the case, since even the Negro writer William Wells Brown made use of it. Certainly the attack on slavery itself is not obscured in these plays which include comic Negroes. Indeed, while such comedy appears to help relieve some of the horror of slavery, at the same time even the "happy" scenes usually include or are immediately followed by grim reminders of "slavery as it is."

Thus, the innocent "minstrel act" included in St. Bo's play is broken up by men wielding whips, as is a similar evening of merriment in Mrs. Child's The Stars and Stripes. The opportunism of Black Sam in The Christian Slave is also a reminder of the debasing effects of slavery, while Cato's comic scene in The Escape is a grim joke in itself.

At the same time, however, the appearance of comic Negroes may also lend support to the contention that even abolitionists were not completely able to accept black skinned Negroes as proper subjects for their serious theme—practically all such characters are white. "The assumptions of American culture," says William Couch, "are not congenial to emphatic and uncompromising action on the part of a Negro." Thus, "a dramatic situation, capable of producing a powerful effect,
will usually suffer a distortion of that effect when the agent of action is a Negro character." Garrison maintained that Negroes "are branded by the hand of nature with a perpetual mark of disgrace." Topsy could only reply, when asked why she did not try to be good: "If I could be skinned and come white, I'd try then" (III.i.651).
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER IX


6. "There is," Wade said, "in these United States a race of men who are poor, weak, uninfluential, incapable of taking care of themselves. I mean the free Negroes, who are despised by all; outcasts upon the face of the earth, without any fault of theirs I know of; but they are the victims of a deep-rooted prejudice and I do not stand here to argue whether that prejudice be right or wrong. I know such to be the fact. It is there immovable. It is perfectly impossible that these two races can inhabit the same place, and be prosperous and happy." Quoted in Simms, p. 130.

7. Quoted in Simms, p. 132.


10. Quoted in Mary S. Locke, Anti-Slavery in America, p. 56.


13. Elizabeth Ricord, Zamba, p. 3.


18. Quoted in Litwack, p. 60.

19. Litwack, pp. 60, 61.


Chapter X

EXEMPLARY CHARACTERS AND APPEALS TO ACTION

If the abolitionists considered the South doomed, there was still hope for the North, if only it could be saved from the overwhelming guilt caused by the sin of the nation—slavery. According to Lawrence Lader, this was "the ultimate battle for the true abolitionist. He was not just opposing a system. He had taken God's side against the Devil." Writing in the 1830's, Harriet Martineau attempted to describe to her English audience the difficulties facing the new breed of American abolitionists. "It is a totally different thing," she said, "to be an abolitionist on a soil actually trodden by slaves, and in a far-off country, where opinion is already on the side of emancipation, or ready to be converted; where only a fraction of society, instead of the whole, has to be convicted of guilt." It was her belief that American abolitionists "are the greatest people now living and moving" in the world; this because of the graces which "flourish among this martyr company." Her work, entitled The Martyr Age of the United States, characterizes the abolitionist as the Christian hero, eager to purify his and his fellows' souls of the sin of slavery, at almost any cost. In order to fully appreciate the greatness of these abolitionists, one must be among them.

One must witness the eagerness with which each strives to bring down the storm upon his own head to save his neighbor, and to direct any
transient sunshine into his friend's house rather than his own, to understand their generosity. One must see the manly father weeping over his son's blighted prospects, and the son vindicating his mother's insulted name, to appreciate their disinterestedness. One must experience something of the soul-sickness and misgiving caused by popular hatred, and of the awful pangs of an apprehended violent death, to enter fully into their heroism. Those who are living in peace afar off can form but a faint conception of what it is to have no respite, no prospect of rest, of security, of success, within any calculable time. The grave, whether it yawns beneath his feet, or lies on the far horizon, is, as they well know, their only resting-place; adversity is all around them, like the whirlwind of the desert.2

It was as if they welcomed the martyrdom of the grave. Dr. William Ellery Channing, in fact, indicated the propaganda value of a true martyr before Lovejoy's death:

One kidnapped, murdered abolitionist would do more for the violent destruction of slavery than a thousand societies. His name would be sainted. The day of his death would be set apart for solemn, heart stirring commemoration. His blood would cry through the land with a thrilling voice, would pierce every dwelling, and find a response in every heart.3

Miss Martineau goes on to show what did happen:

The anniversary of Lovejoy's death will be a sacrament day to his comrades till slavery shall be no more: and as for the community,--the multitudes who were too busy eating and drinking, planting, trading, or amusing themselves, to know the pangs that were rendering the very heart of their society,--those who considered abolitionism too 'low' a subject for their ears, and the abolitionists too 'odd' a set of people for their notice,--the shock of murder has roused even these from
their apathy, and carried into their minds some notion that they are living in remarkable times, and that they have some extraordinary neighbors.

Abolition agitators—including playwrights—who tried to convince their audiences of the sin of slavery, also attempted to portray the Christian hero, the martyred saint, in action. His is the noble plan of sacrifice, his is the burden of guilt, brought on by the sin of slavery. He is the martyr falling at the hand of the slave power in order to save the soul of the nation.

The Protestant missionary, Lawton, in Mrs. Ricord's Zamba, is the first to offer himself as a sacrifice to the cause. When he is arrested for preaching "insurrection," his friends offer to rescue him, but Lawton refuses aid:

Welcome are these bonds; I receive them
With joy, as tokens of the honor, which
On me is conferred: counted worthy
To suffer in the cause dearer to me
Than life. I go, led by Him on whom my hope
Is stayed. Be it to prison, his presence
There will bless; be it to death, for ever
Shall I be with Him. (IV.iv.118-19)

It is not as easy, however, for Philander (Captain Jonathan Walker), in Mrs. Little's The Branded Hand, to decide upon the course of martyrdom. He thinks of his wife and children at home—can he sacrifice their happiness for the sake of a few Negro slaves? He struggles to push down such fearful thoughts:

At evening time, returning, oft I pause--
Some influence to the slave my spirit draws,
And then the question comes as clear again,
As Jesus stood beside me on the plain,
"Wilt thou for me endure reproach and pain?"
Yes Jesus—yes I will obey thy call,
I yield myself, my wife, my babes, my all.
The martyr I will be, and well I know
The precious recompense thou wilt bestow,
For art thou not thyself, my gracious Lord,
"My shield and my exceeding great reward!" (I.ii.11)

Philander has a vision of his reward, even as he sails with his cargo of escaping slaves. After he offers a prayer for the success of their venture, "a crystal light melts through the blue." A voice is heard, asking Philander what he sees:

A cross, and one who hangeth bleeding there:
The extended hand a heavenly crown doth bear—
Glorious and radiant to intensity.
But flames of ten-fold fire that crown surround,
Guarding its beauty, like the flaming sword
With which the angel guarded Eden's bound.

His soul pants for that crown, but he is told:

The crown thou canst not win from that pierced hand,
Save thou wilt plunge thine own through that strong flame,
And, linking it, all reeking with the fires,
With that nail-pierced hand—shall draw it down
On thy own head. (I.vi.17-18)

Philander even looks like a martyr. After the ship is returned to the Florida coast, he is described by his sympathetic naval friend:

I saw the mob, and marked
The heaven-like aspect of the prisoner,
Not bold, and yet not drooping: a sustained
And a most sweet serenity of meekness
Dwelt on his brow, and in the holy glory
On his pure eyes. Straightway it took my mind
Back to the martyr minds of other days. (II.v.29)
Philander fears, however, that he will be unable to bear the ordeal. In his prison cell, the night before the branding, the vision of the cross reappears, and he is told to reach out his hand through the flames to grasp it. This is more than he has strength to do. The Voice replies:

I know it well. But I will work in thee
A constancy and patience not thy own:
A spirit of endurance shall be given,
And meek resolve and pure fidelity.
Such faith as in those ancient worthies dwelt,
Who conquered kingdoms and wrought righteousness,
And stopped the mouths of lions through their faith. (II.vi.31)

He is sustained. Only a low groan escapes Philander as the letters "S. S." are burned into his hand. As he lies sleeping in his cell afterwards, "a vision appears at the bed-side, and appears to place the crown within the Branded Hand." The vision speaks:

Thou hast won the crown--thy hand this day
hath plucked it.
Through burning flames the branded hand is clasped,
Into the pierced in fellowship divine--
Jesus, Salvation's Captain, helped thee on:
He gives the crown, the crown of martyr love. (IV.i1.43)

These martyrs have a joy unknown to the multitudes. "Nowhere," says Miss Martineau, "can an array of countenances be beheld so little lower than the angels."

Ordinary social life is spoiled to them; but another which is far better has grown up among them. They had more life than others to begin with, as the very fact of their enterprise shows; and to them that have much shall more be
given. They are living fast and loftily. The weakest of them who drops into the grave worn out, and the youngest that lies murdered on his native republican soil, has enjoyed a richer harvest of time, a larger gift out of eternity, than the octogenarian self-seeker, however he may have attained his ends.\(^5\)

Thus, when the navy lieutenant comes to the prison to sympathize with Philander, he is told:

... Know this, young man—
I have a freedom here I would not change
For all the liberty that tyrants know.
There is an Eden in my very soul—
And oh, the tree of life is in the midst.
Whose balmy blossoms and restoring leaves
And holy fruit refresh and heal my heart. (II.vi.32)

The force of Philander's conviction is enough to convert Arthur on the spot. And the force of Philander's victory ought to resound throughout the land, just as Lovejoy's martyrdom had done, less than ten years earlier.

When that brand presses into his hand,
A maddening shriek should fill the whole wide land
For every Christian's heart should feel, as 'twere Driven through the live pulsations of their heart.
Nor should one Christian rest till they have wakened The eternal echoes to condemn the deed:
Those echoes that repeat the voice of truth Through the wide universe. (III.ii.37)

In the legend of John Brown abolitionism found "its ultimate martyr." While modern historians have taken pains to point out that much of the legend is myth, that myth was no less potent to the 12th Massachusetts Regiment as they went singing through the streets of Boston a song improvised by four of its own members: "His soul
goes marching on." Apologists for Brown appeared at every point of his career. While James C. Malin, in his definitive *John Brown and the Legend of Fifty-Six*, has shown that the massacre at Pottawatomie, in May 1856, in which five pro-slave men were murdered, was apparently committed without cause, Bernard A. Weisberger points out that the reporters who provided Eastern readers with the news of the affair were all supporters of Brown. James Redpath, for instance, made of it a "pro-slavery outrage, asserting that Allen Wilkinson, William Sherman, and the Doyles were shot in the act of stringing up a Free State man."8

Mrs. J. C. Swayze, whose play, *Ossawattomie Brown; or, The Insurrection at Harper's Ferry*, appeared in New York December 17, 1859, only two weeks after Brown's death, goes even further. In her version of the story, Brown was not even involved in the murders. Only after his own son had been murdered, did Brown take up arms against a gang of border ruffians led by "Black Jim." But, after the massacre, he is blamed unjustly:

To what extremity am I driven? Hunted down, pursued, accused of the blackest of crimes by those whose homes I hold as sacred as my own. In the pursuit of vengeance, we drove those lawless ruffians to further deeds of violence and bloodshed. Whilst still evading our pursuit, they drew the inhabitants from their beds, brutally murdered, and then left them to be counted as our victims. (II.i.10)

His daughter cannot understand why he should be so hounded or hated. What crime did he commit? she asks. Brown explains that "the crime
I have committed against those men is not the bloody deed with which they charge me, but worse, far worse, for I have told them to their teeth, that I hold not with their creed which teaches them to barter human souls" (II.ii.11).

Mrs. Swayze even implies that Brown did not originate the plan to raid Harpers Ferry, but that he was "chosen" by an unnamed and vague organization led by a Mr. Cook. Brown's daughter, in fact, pleads with Cook to choose another leader, explaining that Brown's "mind has been so tried with suffering, I fear 'tis overbalanced."

His "mind has warped and cramped until he can see nothing but through the glass of his revenge, and lives but to redress his wrongs" (I.v.15). But at no time did Brown wish to see blood shed. In a scene at the Maryland farm house where the band waited for the time to be ripe, Brown explains that "we are not here for purposes of blood and riot. He among us who would strike a blow, except in self-defence, falls at once from a martyr and a hero, to grovel among the lowest felons of the earth." He emphasizes this conviction after the arms arrive. "Those weapons," he tells his son, Oliver, "are for self-defense— to guard the passage of our rescued band to shores of greater safety-- and I have no fear in leaving to all humanity to justify the act" (II.i.18). Again, when Brown learns that one of his party has killed a man (and the irony of the fact that he was a free Negro has often been pointed out) he calls it "a mad, a ruinous act! . It never had my sanction. It would give them an excuse, should our cause fail, to
disregard the rules of open warfare, and shoot us down like dogs" (II.iv.22).

Like other abolitionists, Brown knows that the grave, as Harriet Martineau put it, is his only resting-place, since his whole career has been surrounded by adversity "like the whirlwind of the desert." But, when his time comes, he is prepared:

We look upon ourselves as workers in a great and good cause, to which we have sacrificed our lives. I would have wished it otherwise, but being so, we lay them down freely, and trust that the future will beam on more successful efforts. (II.vi.24)

Channing and Martineau had recognized that the shock of murder could inspire the apathetic; that a martyr's blood "would cry through the land with a thrilling voice." Abolition playwrights were also aware that dramatizing the martyrdom of such heroes as Walker and Brown could awaken the "eternal echoes" of truth; could urge the Christians of the land to join the great and good cause.

Obviously, however, not all who witnessed or read an abolition drama were prepared to sacrifice their lives. Nor were the dramatists advocating any such thing. Those who did portray such martyrs no doubt hoped that such examples would inspire an audience and convince them that theirs was, indeed, a guilty land. However, other alternatives were offered those who, moved by abolition propaganda, asked, "What can I do?" There were, in fact, several ways which the Northerner could join the ranks in the battle against the Devil, and
these ways had also been suggested by abolition drama. He could, like Mr. Freeman in Mrs. Child’s *The Stars and Stripes*, become active in an abolition society and help transport slaves out of the country via the Underground Railroad. Or, if he disliked societies, he could, like neighbor Jackwood, invoke the "higher law" whenever necessary against those who tried to drag innocent souls back into bondage.

After the collapse of the national abolition societies, however, more and more of the antislavery host turned to political action as the means of saving the country from sin; as the way to stop the encroaching power of the Southern slave masters. Eventually, Republicans hoped to convince their fellow Northerners that a vote for their party was a vote against further compromise. Thus, according to "Aristophanes, Junior," both the Constitutional Union Party and the Democratic Party were made up of dishonorable appeasers, while the Republican Party was the party of principle, determined to yield not one more inch of ground to the Slave Power. In fact, Frank Sterling, the stalwart young editor of the *New England Republican* and spokesman for the party, assumes that the South, too, is ready to accept such a position—that both sides are done with compromise. In the middle of the enemy ground, in Richmond square, he makes his stand:

> You are but haunted by the nightmare visions of an evil conscience in imputing to the people of the North designs of invading your soil, or interfering in a hostile manner with your con-
cerns. It is not you but we who are interfered with. The slave-power having taken possession of our national government, wherever the flag of the Union waves, the safeguards of our liberty are secretly undermined or openly broken through, its principles cynically derided, its defenders insulted, persecuted, struck down. And unless the Union be thus continued and confirmed as a cover for the spread of despotic practices and the degradation and corruption of liberty, you threaten to separate from it. And it is in this demand that the wretches who affect to monopolize the love of our country and the respect for its institutions vie with each other to encourage you. Gentlemen, they treat you like spoiled children, whose irritation must be appeased by ever new concessions to the ever increasing demands of an imperious temper. We, on our part, propose to treat you as men. We owe it to you not less than to ourselves to make a stand upon our dignity as men, and upon our principles as freemen; to preserve intact the institutions and the area consecrated to liberty by our fathers; nor to allow one further inch of either moral, or territorial ground to be diverted from the legitimate uses of human progress and civilization. Do you understand, gentlemen? Not one inch! That is our platform. Upon it we make our stand, be the consequences what they may. (II.iii.56)

Sterling has weighed the situation correctly. When Humdrum denounces the speech as treason, Judge Tawney (alluding, no doubt, to Judge Taney, who had written the majority report in the Dred Scott decision) tells him to "go and hide your face, you whining old babbler! I like to hear a man talk—next to having 'him hung" (II.iii.56).

Women, of course, had to find other outlets for their anti-slavery impulse since they were barred from direct political action. One of their most important contributions was the powerful moral in-
fluence they could exert, an influence which was of particular con-
cern to Harriet Beecher Stowe. In Uncle Tom's Cabin she appeals to
the "many good people at the north, who in this matter need only to
be taught what their duty is, to do it." In one of her most fully de-
veloped episodes she proposes what ought to be done, and attempts to
persuade her audience—especially the women—to do it.

The problem is one of education and moral training for the
Negroes—either as slaves or as freemen. This was, in fact, one of
Mrs. Stowe's major concerns in both of her antislavery novels, and,
while it takes rather close reading to see this interest continued in
the dramatic adaptations, there are hints here and there. When, for
instance, Aunt Nesbit, in Dred, shows dismay at the impudence of one
of Nina's servants, Nina remarks: "What do you expect from him aunty?
Pray, be reasonable; we keep the means of education from them, and
then very consistently [sic] wonder that they are not Ethiopian Ches-
terfields" (I.i.6). Yet, Mrs. Stowe argues, the South does have a
responsibility to educate their slaves. Ophelia, for instance, tells
Marie St. Clare, in The Christian Slave: "I think you slaveholders
have an awful responsibility upon you. I wouldn't have it for a
thousand worlds. You ought to educate your slaves, and treat them
like responsible creatures, like immortal creatures" (II.ii.29).

However, the Southerners, according to this view, have no
intention of instructing their slaves. When Ophelia voices her sus-
picion that St. Clare's servants are not "strictly honest," she laugh-
ingly replies: "Honest!—why, of course they aren't. Why should they be? What upon earth is to make them so?" She reminds him that he could instruct his slaves, but St. Clare is dumbfounded: "Instruct? O, fiddlestick! What instructing do you think I should do?" In the face of the system of slavery instruction would accomplish little.

St. Clare explains:

> From the mother's breast the colored child feels and sees that there are none but underhand ways open to it. It can get along no other way with its parents, its mistress, its young master and missie playfellows. Cunning and deception become necessary, inevitable habits. It isn't fair to expect anything else of him. He ought not to be punished for it. As to honesty, the slave is kept in that dependent, semi-childish state, that there is no making him realize the rights of property, or feel that his master's goods are not his own, if he can get them. For my part, I don't see how they can be honest. (II.iii.37)

It is against this background that Mrs. Stowe advances the proposition that the Northern (and particularly the New England) system of education and moral training is the solution to this problem, and that it is the duty of the "good people" at the North to see that it is applied.

For this purpose, Mrs. Stowe develops the Ophelia-Topsy-Eva episode in the central part of her novel. We see how Ophelia tries, but fails, to train Topsy "in the way she should go," until she learns the lesson little Eva has to offer. Then, inspired by the example of Eva, Ophelia finds success. Having set forth what must be done, Mrs. Stowe then makes an appeal to the North to do it. One
need not martyr himself for the cause, but, moved to the point of action by such abolitionist appeals, there is an answer to the question: "What can I do?"

When this argument is transferred to the stage by Aiken, however, there are certain significant changes. For one thing, he has eliminated all of the discussions concerning the need for education, and one day St. Clare suddenly announces: "I have made a purchase for your department. . . . Here, Topsy, give us a song, and show us some of your dancing." Ophelia is stunned, and demands to know "what in the world have you brought that thing here for?" St. Clare explains: "For you to educate, to be sure, and train in the way she should go. I thought she was rather a funny specimen in the Jim Crow line." When he adds that Ophelia is "always preaching about educating" (which is not quite accurate, at least in the play), Ophelia refuses: "I have more to do with 'em now than I want to." St. Clare's reply, however, touches Ophelia's sense of duty:

That's you Christians, all over. You'll get up a society, and get some poor missionary to spend all his days among just such heathens; but let me see one of you that would take one into your house with you, and take the labour of their conversion upon yourselves.

Ophelia must agree that "it might be a real missionary work. Well, I'll do what I can." Topsy reveals at once that Ophelia has her work cut out for her. The "permiskus" scamp can't help but steal, and explains: "I's knows I's wicked!" (II.ii.632-35).
This scene sets a pattern followed by Aiken throughout his play. While he indicates the main features of Mrs. Stowe's argument in the scenes between the three major characters involved, he invariably follows the point with an extended scene "in the Jim Crow line." Mrs. Stowe, of course, was not unaware of the humorous possibilities in Topsy's character, but Aiken often goes further, and invents new situations to display her talents for farce. In fact, he carries this character throughout the play—something which Mrs. Stowe, in her dramatization, fails to do. He is thus able to show the influence which Ophelia eventually exerts upon Topsy, in her efforts to "be good." Aiken, of course, had been faced with the very practical problem of providing a role for his cousin's wife, Mrs. Howard; one which the actress no doubt hoped to see continued throughout. Mrs. Stowe, however, brings the whole episode to a close by the end of Act II in The Christian Slave. She is at a disadvantage in the form she chose to dramatize her novel. In the book, this particular episode takes on added significance, for in her final chapter she uses the happy results of Ophelia's efforts to lead into a general appeal to the North to make similar efforts. In The Christian Slave she is unable to pick up this thread and use it in her peroration.

In spite of Ophelia's good intentions, she finds that she is unable to cope with Topsy. She tells her cousin that "I don't know what to do. I've taught and taught--I've talked till I'm tired; I've
whipped her, I've punished her in every way I could think of, and still she's just what she was at first." St. Clare has only one question:

If your doctrine is not strong enough to save one heathen child, that you can have at home here, all to yourself, what's the use of sending one or two poor missionaries off with it among thousands of just such? I suppose this girl is a fair sample of what thousands of your heathen are.

Ophelia pleads with Topsy: "If you'd only try to be good, you might."

Topsy's answer comes right to the point: "Couldn't never be nothing but a nigger, if I was ever so good. If I could be skinned and come white, I'd try then" (III.i.651).

The reason for Ophelia's failure is her prejudice against Negroes. St. Clare had already pointed out to her that such prejudice was much stronger in the North than in the South: "You loathe them as you would a snake or a toad, yet you are indignant at their wrongs. You would not have them abused, but you don't want to have anything to do with them yourselves" (II.i.632). Topsy has, in fact, long been aware of this loathing. She tells St. Clare that Ophelia could never love her, "'cause I'm a nigger--she'd's soon have a toad touch her. There can't nobody love niggers, and niggers can't do nothin'!" (III.i.651). Ophelia must confess that "I've always had a prejudice against negroes, and it's a fact--I never could bear to have that child touch me, but I didn't think she knew it." St. Clare warns her not to underestimate the sensitivity of a child--even a black one--
and goes on to state the problem facing Ophelia. "I believe all the
trying in the world to benefit a child, and all the substantial favours
you can do them, will never excite one emotion of gratitude, while
that feeling of repugnance remains in the heart. It's a queer kind of
fact, but so it is" (III.i.652).

Yet, how can she overcome this disgust? St. Clare points
out that Eva has never developed any such prejudice. "Well," Ophelia
replies, "she's so loving. I wish I was like her. She might teach me
a lesson." St. Clare reminds his cousin that "it would not be the
first time a little child had been used to instruct an old disciple."
Eva, in fact, tried to convince Topsy that she loved her. "I love
you," she tells Topsy, "because you haven't had any father, or mother,
or friends. I love you, and I want you to be good. I wish you would
try to be good for my sake" (II.iv.643). Topsy had tried, but her
"wickedness" caused continual backsliding. After Eva's death, however,
the relics left Topsy by the little saint give her spiritual inspira-
tion. When Ophelia discovers "a lock of hair, and a small book, with
a bit of crape twisted around it" she assumes the little thief has
been at it again. But, when Topsy sobbingly pleads with Ophelia to
allow her keep them, she agrees. St. Clare, who has observed the
scene, remarks: "I really think you can make something of that girl.
Any mind that is capable of a real sorrow is capable of good. You
must try and do something with her." Ophelia admits that Topsy has
already shown signs of improvement; "I have great hopes of her"
In the novel Mrs. Stowe also explains how Ophelia had been affected by Eva's death:

Miss Ophelia felt the loss of Eva; but, in her good and honest heart, it bore fruit unto everlasting life. She was more softened, more gentle; and, though equally assiduous in every duty, it was with a chastened and quiet air, as one who communed with her own heart not in vain. She was more diligent in teaching Topsy, taught her mainly from the Bible, did not any longer shrink from her touch, or manifest an ill-repressed disgust, because she felt none. She viewed her now through the softened medium that Eva's hand had first held before her eyes, and saw in her only an immortal creature, whom God had sent to be led by her to glory and virtue. Topsy did not become at once a saint; but the life and death of Eva did work a marked change in her. The callous indifference was gone; there was now sensibility, hope, desire, and the striving for good, a strife irregular, interrupted, suspended oft, but yet renewed again. 10

Unable to provide such details, Aiken must content himself with a series of speeches which attempt to show that Topsy's improvement is the result of Ophelia's softened heart. After Ophelia and Topsy have moved North (an event described in the novel, but not represented), Topsy says:

By golly! she's been dre'ful kind to me ever since I come away from de South; and I loves her, I does, 'cause she takes such car' on me and gives me dese fine clothes. I tries to be good, too, and I's getting 'long 'mazin' fast. I'se not so wicked as I used to was. (V.ii.671)

Again, after Topsy has refused Gumption Cute's proposal that he exhibit Topsy as a "woolly gal" to compete against P. T. Barnum's
"woolly horse," she tells Ophelia: "I tole him I wouldn't leave you, Miss Feely, no how." Ophelia replies: "That's right, Topsy; you know you are very comfortable here--you wouldn't fare quite so well if you went away among strangers." Topsy agrees:

By golly! I know dat; you takes care on me, and makes me good. I don't steal any now, and I don't swar, and I don't dance breakdowns. Oh! I isn't so wicked as I used to was. (V.iv.676)

Although Topsy says such things, Aiken was much more likely to portray her in those moments when her "striving for good" had been interrupted and suspended. The last time we see Topsy and Ophelia, for instance, indicates the kind of comedy she has been good for. After Ophelia announces that she intends to marry Deacon Perry, and orders Gumption Cute out of her house for good, Cute determines to "serve him out first."

Cute makes a dash at Deacon, who gets behind Ophelia. Topsy enters with a broom and beats Cute around stage.--Ophelia faints in Deacon's arms.--Cute falls, and Topsy butts him, kneeling over him.--Quick drop. (V.iv.681)

Mrs. Stowe had intended to use the "specimen" of Topsy to show her readers what they could do for the plight of the Negro. In the novel St. Clare asks Ophelia what would happen if the South should suddenly emancipate their slaves. "Who would educate these millions, and teach them how to use their freedom?" The South would never do it--"we are too lazy and unpractical, ourselves, ever to give them much of an idea of that industry and energy which is necessary to
form them into men." The only hope lies in the Northern system: "They will have to go north, where labor is the fashion--the universal custom." But the North was obviously suffering from the same prejudice which had hindered Ophelia's effectiveness. "If we emancipate," he asks, "are you willing to educate?"

How many families, in your town, would take in a negro man and woman, teach them, bear with them, and seek to make them Christians?

If they wanted to learn trades, would the workers accept them? If they wanted an education, would the schools admit them? Would the townspeople board them? "You see," he concludes, "I want justice done us. We are in a bad position. We are the more obvious oppressors of the negro; but the unchristian prejudice of the north is an oppressor almost equally severe." Ophelia believes that there are such people in the North willing to do their duty. "It would certainly be a greater self-denial to receive heathen among us, than to send missionaries to them; but I think we would do it." 11

Mrs. Stowe, however, was not an abolitionist--at least in the sense that Garrison or Weld were. Rather, she was a colonizationist; a position which had not only been discredited by the militant abolitionists, but which was condemned by the Negroes themselves. Thus, the purpose of this education was not to prepare all these millions of emancipated slaves for a productive life in this country, but rather to train them for future citizenship in Liberia. In the novel she anticipates those who would object to bringing Negroes up
North to educate by pointing out "that the providence of God has provided a refuge in Africa." However, freed slaves could not be directly transferred to Liberia:

To fill up Liberia with an ignorant, inexperienced, half-barbarized race, just escaped from the chains of slavery, would be only to prolong, for ages, the period of struggle and conflict which attends the inception of new enterprises.

But, she has an answer to this problem; this is what the North can do:

Let the church of the north receive these poor sufferers in the spirit of Christ; receive them to the educating advantages of Christian republican society and schools, until they have attained to somewhat of a moral and intellectual maturity.

"And then," she concludes, "assist them in their passage to those shores, where they may put in practice the lessons they have learned in America." 

One of the greatest ironies in literary history, however, is that this final plea does not appear in the most famous of the stage versions. Rather, it ends with the death of Uncle Tom—a moving plea to end slavery, but without any of Mrs. Stowe's own qualifications attached. Garrison, in fact, objected to the novel on the grounds that it emphasized the submissiveness of Uncle Tom and included what he considered an insidious appeal for colonization. Yet, when he saw a production of the play at the National Theatre, he was delighted: "If the shrewdest abolitionist amongst us had prepared the drama with a view to make the strongest antislavery impression,
he could scarcely have done the work better." And, in the final analysis, gone was the comedy of Topsy, Gumption Cute and Deacon Perry; gone was the subtle argument in favor of colonization. "It was noticeable," Garrison concluded, "that the people, after witnessing the death of Uncle Tom, went out of the house as gravely and seriously as people retire from a religious meeting."  

There were things to do for the great and good cause, and abolition drama suggested some of the ways one could join the crusade against the Devil. However, the impression which the death of Uncle Tom made on Garrison is symbolic of the major function of abolition drama: to cause those who saw it or read it to exult, as did Garrison, that "when haughty pharisees will not testify against slavery, the very stones are crying out."  

To exult, and to join in the cry "with a thrilling voice"; one which "would pierce every dwelling, and find a response in every heart."
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER X


3. Quoted in Martineau, p. 66.


15. Martineau, p. 66.
Chapter XI

THE PLAYS AS PUBLIC ADDRESS

In preceding chapters we have seen how abolitionists attempted to extend antislavery tendencies by working out issues which would appeal to their Northern audience. We have seen how the abolition drama reflected and exploited these issues, issues which were being developed in other media as well. Since the conception and execution of this study have placed principal emphasis on the plays as mirrors or repositories of the arguments, it may be desirable to re-emphasize the achievement of the playwrights in exhibiting and enforcing the arguments and to assess the plays as functioning public address. In making this assessment, Ross Scanlan's doctoral dissertation, "Drama as a Form of Persuasive Communication," and the Reardon-Foxen analysis of the propaganda play will be used for a general frame of reference.

There are at least three advantages inherent in the drama which would aid an author seeking to persuade. For one thing, the very fact that people are brought together into groups in the theatre appears to heighten the possibility of powerfully affecting their emotions. Furthermore, for the mise-en-scene, the power to excite thought and emotion inherent in all the other arts may be used by an author who attempts to influence opinion and action. Finally, the dialogue can easily be adapted to persuasive purposes. The clashing views of the protagonists worked out in argumentative form is itself a kind of "internal rhetoric." But, "in the hands of a propagandist the
dialogue easily becomes a kind of spurious dialectical form, premeditated, controlled, and biased by the author's intention." And, "in the hands of a competent dramatist, it may have at the same time an adequate appearance of spontaneity and 'reality.'" Closet drama obviously loses the first two of these advantages but perhaps gains in the third, since it can allow a more sophisticated and subtle form of "dialectic."¹

Indeed, each of the Aristotelian elements of drama can be adapted to persuasive ends. "The actions of the agents, the moral traits they exhibit, and the thoughts they express, in short, all the formative elements of the drama . . . assume a rhetorical as well as a dramatic significance," when an author employs "these agents to effect some kind of persuasion with his audience."²

One of the persuasive functions of the plot (which Scanlan defines as "a representation of a sequence of incidents or events") is to serve as a vehicle for "logical structures." Thus, "the plot may serve as an inductive instance, i.e., it may conduce to inference of a general proposition."³ In abolition drama, both of the major themes which have pervaded throughout--the sin of slavery and the slave power conspiracy--were served by such a sequence of events tending to imply general propositions. In such plays as The Captured Slave and Warren, for instance, we see events which "illustrate" the complete disregard of Southerners for the civil liberties of Northerners. Further, such plays as Warren and The Branded Hand not only aim at the proposition
that the slave power intends to extend its grasp to Northern liberties, but they also argue, through the incidents included, that the system of slavery is inherently sinful.

J. T. Trowbridge's *Neighbor Jackwood*, for instance, has been arranged in this movement from particular to general. He introduces his audience to a sensitive and sincere young girl, and although we learn that she is in some kind of trouble, he gives no indication that she is a fugitive slave. Indeed, there is no reason to suspect that such a beautiful girl is even a Negro. He includes several events which show that she fits well into the society of this small New England town. Not until the climax of Act III, when the slave-catcher Dickson arrives with his warrant for arrest, do we learn that Camille has escaped from her master in New Orleans. Having created such a situation, Trowbridge turns to a discussion of the fugitive slave act between the Reverend Mr. Rukely (who has already been established as a bloodless sort of man) and his wife. They decide that the law of the land must be upheld; that one cannot take a sectional view of the Constitution. Rukely—whose view is typical of many Northerners—is then forced to make a decision, aided by the folksy rhetoric of neighbor Jackwood. The preacher decides that he cannot sacrifice a living soul (who is, after all, just like everyone else) to such an inhuman law. Having provided a particular application of the "higher law," invoked by a responsible member of the community, Trowbridge goes on to make a more general appeal for the law in Hector's courtroom speech, a speech
which is obviously directed at the theatre audience as well as the courtroom audience, when Hector cries out: "I call upon all to do the duty of Men!" Fortunately, in this case, Camille is legally purchased, so it is not necessary to make use of the force which had been gathered—but it is clear that New Englanders would use force if they had to.

The point here is that Trowbridge's very arrangement of events lends support to the proposition that the "higher law" ought to be invoked against the fugitive slave act. By not informing his audience that he is dealing with an escaped slave, he disarms their prejudice, since no one could be more charming than Camille. The prospect that she might be turned over to the horse-whip wielding Dickson thus becomes even more repulsive. Then, by moving from a particular application of the "higher law" to a more general appeal, within the play itself, he reinforces the point. Thus, the plot has carried the playwright's argument and tends to further the "inference of a general proposition." It might be argued that such an arrangement is, after all, the most logical one for a playwright to use. But this simply says the same thing. Trowbridge chose to use this arrangement apparently in the belief that it was the most effective one.

While all of the plays after 1845 are arranged in this "inductive manner," the earlier antislavery plays took the opposite approach and the plots promoted "deductive inference"; that is, they
moved from a condemnation of slavery in general to an inferred particular application. This can best be seen in the plays which exploited the Algerian situation. In *Slaves of Algiers*, for instance, Rebecca rebukes Sebastian when he proposes enslaving his ex-master, by pointing out that "by the Christian law, no man should be a slave." Mrs. Rowson never mentions American slavery, but obviously the same "Christian law" applies to her audience as well as to Sebastian. Mrs. Rowson and the other early playwrights allow their audience, however, to apply the general discussions of antislavery principles to the particular form of slavery found in their own country.

Plot also has the inherent capability "to express an issue in concrete form, to give it emphasis and even a prejudiced expression." This function has, in fact, already been touched upon, in both the chapter dealing with the issue of fugitive slaves and the chapter which discusses the slave power conspiracy. Thus, while the slave power threat was, in itself, a "personification" of the pro-slavery argument, one which, according to Nye, "made it vivid and concrete," plays which portray such threats, like *The Captured Slave*, *Warren*, *Neighbor Jackwood*, *The Escape*, *The Stars and Stripes*, and *The Honorable Anodyne Humdrum* further "dramatized the controversy into a contest between the forces of good and evil, of freedom and repression, of democracy and aristocracy."

Closely related to the function of plot as it serves as a vehicle for "logical structures" is its ability to control the alter-
natives presented in the rhetorical counterpart to the traditional concept of "conflict." The alternatives, as a result of the selection of arguments, became increasingly restricted. The early anti-slavery plays suggested that if slavery was not to be immediately abolished, at least the system could be made more tolerable. By the end of the 1850's violence was presented as the only alternative to complete "submission" by the North to the Southern slave power. Thus, in *The Honorable Anodyne Humdrum*, Frank Sterling couches his arguments in such terms that compromise becomes the mark of the charlatan. Another alternative lacking in later plays was the possibility of a "model slaveholder." Even Mrs. Stowe seems to lose hope, in her later antislavery work, that the possibility of kindly slaveholders could exist.

Perhaps the most effective function of the plot is its ability to arouse emotions. In the *Poetics* Aristotle ranks the plot "first in the excitation of pity and fear," while in the *Rhetoric*, "under the topic of Narration," which Scanlan maintains serves as a rhetorical counterpart to the plot, "Aristotle tells the orator to 'make use of the emotions. Relate the familiar manifestations of them. . . . These details carry conviction: the audience takes the truth of what they know as so much evidence for the truth of what they do not."

The power of the plot— or action—is testified to even in such a "non-committal" play as *The Octoroon*. Joseph Jefferson (Salem Scudder in the original cast) commented on this power in his *Auto-
biography. He pointed out that while "the dialogue and characters of the play made one feel for the South," the "action proclaimed against slavery, and called loudly for its abolition."

When the old negro, just before the slave sale, calls his colored "bredrin" around him and tells them they must look their best so as to bring a good price for the "missis," and then falling on his knees asks a blessing on the family who had been so kind to them, the language drew further sympathy for the loving hearts of the South; but when they felt by the action of the play that the old darky who had made them weep was a slave, they became abolitionists to a man.

Further, "when Zoe, the loving octoroon, is offered to the highest bidder, and a warm-hearted Southern girl offers all her fortune to buy Zoe and release her from the threatened bondage awaiting her, the audience cheered for the South; but when again the action revealed that she could be bartered for, and was bought and sold, they cheered for the North as plainly as though they had said, 'Down with slavery.'"

This, Jefferson concludes, "reveals at once how the power of dramatic action overwhelms the comparative impotency of the dialogue."

As Aristotle has declared that the plot ranks first "in the excitation of pity and fear," so would the propaganda play by necessity have to place foremost reliance on plot in carrying out its purpose. At least this would be the case if the Reardon-Foxen analysis of propaganda plays is correct. They maintain, for instance, that the purpose of the propaganda play "is to arouse an audience to action through incidents arousing fear and hate (or an emotion allied to hate) with-
out permitting the fear and hate to be resolved within the play itself.\textsuperscript{8} The plot—"the sequence of incidents or events"—is the primary means for carrying out the purpose of the propaganda play. In the preceding chapters we have seen that purpose achieved. Not only do the abolition dramas evoke the traditional pity (in this case for the slaves held in inhuman bondage) we have also seen the attempt to arouse unmitigated hate toward the Southern slavocrat. Furthermore, the playwrights have utilized the emotion of fear primarily as a means of securing belief in the existence of a huge slave power conspiracy, eagerly seeking to extend that power which Southern masters wield so unabashedly over the families of their Negro slaves. By concentrating on the domestic chaos produced by slavery the playwrights utilized "familiar manifestations" of the emotions to secure conviction on matters often unfamiliar to Northern audiences.

However, in order to secure belief in unknown matters—and the ignorance of the North concerning Southern life has frequently been noted in this paper—both the rhetorician and dramatist strive for "truthfulness." Not only must the plot as a whole convey the appearance of truthfulness, or "probability," each single event or incident within the series must also maintain an air of actuality. Thus, while Aristotle believes that fables, one of the invented types of examples, are "suitable" in securing belief, especially for "popular assemblies," it is "more valuable for the political speaker to supply parallels" by quoting what has actually happened, since in most respects the
future will be like what the past has been." There is also a relationship between the narration in a speech--"a survey of the actions that form the subject-matter of the speech"--and plot. Thus, just as the orator seeks to convince his hearers of the truth, quality and extent of the actual events narrated, the dramatist tries "to establish their credibility, their quality and extent." Abolition playwrights took pains to establish the credibility of their plots and of certain single events within the plot. To a certain extent, this is seen operating even in the early antislavery plays. Jonathan Smith (The Siege of Algiers) apparently hoped to achieve a sense of reality as his Citizen Yankoo went about gathering information about the state of slavery in Algiers. Further, some of the early plays were also based on actual events. King Shotaway and Obi, produced in 1823 by the African Company in New York, were both based on real occurrences, as were The Cannibals; or, Massacre Islands (1833) and The Black Schooner; or, The Private Slaver Armistad (1839). Even The Gladiator and Jack Cade could make this claim, and quite possibly their basis in fact aided their persuasive ends. The argument, for instance, that slavery helped bring about the downfall of Rome achieved almost official recognition in the history books of the period, while the belief that feudal bondage was in any sense paternalistic--as many Southern pro-slavery advocates maintained--was denied by the events in Jack Cade.

Even more to the point, however, are the attempts of abolition
dramatists to achieve an appearance of truthfulness. Both of the earliest fully developed abolition tracts in play form claim factual backgrounds. Mrs. Little points out in the introduction to The Branded Hand that "this poem is founded on certain well known facts which have lately much affected the writer," and at the instant a Southerner throws an egg at the pilloried Captain Walker she includes a footnote to remind her reader that the incident was a fact. Similarly, the anonymous playwright of The Captured Slave takes his hero, David Paul Brown, downstage to address the audience at the end of the play: "As I am about to bid you good night, I can only wish that when you reflect that the scenes you have witnessed this evening, are but the shadows of facts, you may perhaps have some sympathy with abolitionism. . . ." Further, coming as it did during or on the heels of the sensational Salome Müller "white slavery" trial in New Orleans, the playwright's attempt to arouse the fear that Constitutional rights were being threatened was undoubtedly aided.

Other examples can be given from the entire fifteen year span of militant abolition drama. William Wells Brown, for instance, notes that "the main features in the Drama are true. GLEN and MELINDA are actual characters, and still reside in Canada. Many of the incidents were drawn from my own experience of eighteen years at the South." He is particularly concerned with adding credibility to the episode which portrays the slaves "jumping the broom-stick." "The marriage ceremony," he claims, "as performed in the second act, is still adhered to in many of the Southern States, especially in the farming
districts." Furthermore, "the difficulties created in the domestic circle by the presence of beautiful slave women, as found in DR. GAINES family, is well understood by all who have ever visited the valley of the Mississippi." Again, the playwright focuses attention on the effects which slavery has on the family circle.

Even the play which is perhaps furthest from achieving a sense of reality, Theodore St. Bo's Wilfred and Mary, claims to be rooted in fact. In his preface St. Bo' points out that "the raw material out of which I have spun the following simple, but, I should hope, telling little Comedy, was a trifling newspaper paragraph of the 2nd February last." Even at that, he believes such reports are but shadows of fact.

The scraps we occasionally meet with in that form are sometimes truly harrowing--nor will any one doubt the truth of these heart-rending details. I, at all events, am persuaded they are but meagerly told to what they might be, and that, too, with a strict adherence to truth.

"Ay," he concludes, even Uncle Tom's Cabin, "touchingly pathetic" as it is, is but a "feeble picture of the stern reality." And yet Mrs. Stowe, in order to quiet the charges that such things as she portrayed were too fanciful, produced a Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin in which she gives in full detail all of the real characters and events used in her novel.

Not only do the authors say that they are concerned about establishing credibility, either in explanatory prefaces or footnotes,
they attempt to represent the reality in the plays themselves. The stage directions or the texts indicate that the settings are frequently "realistic" in nature. David Paul Brown is handed "beef on a barrel head," Warren is seen flogged and cat-hauled, Zoe is seen on top of the auction table, bartered for like an animal. Whitney uses real names in his attack on the slave power; "Aristophanes, Jr." uses the thinly disguised names of the candidates in the 1860 election; Dred is based on the life of Nat Turner; the career of John Brown is depicted on stage—all of this making it clear to the audiences that these things really happened. This was an urgent matter to them—these were not fables or fairy tales represented on stage; these were the things that Southern masters did to their slaves; and these were the things that they would do to Northerners, if they had the chance.

Related to this appearance of reality is the kind of cause and effect relationship the playwrights attempted to establish.

Aristotle, in the *Rhetoric*, writes:

There are few facts of the "necessary" type that can form the basis of rhetorical syllogisms. Most of the things about which we make decisions, and into which therefore we inquire, present us with alternative possibilities. . . . It is evident . . . that the propositions forming the bases of enthymemes, although some of them may be "necessary," will most of them be only usually true.

And in the *Poetics* he writes:

From what we have said it will be seen that the poet's function is to describe, not the thing
that has happened, but a kind of thing that
might happen, i.e., what is possible as
being probable or necessary.  

However, abolition dramatists attempt to establish the sense of a
"necessary" relationship between slavery and its effects, and thus
its need for eradication by stating probability in terms of necessity.
Chattel slavery, Mrs. Stowe argues, for instance, "necessarily" will
ultimately end in cruelty at best, and sin at worst. "So long as
the law considers all these human beings," she maintains, "only as
so many things belonging to a master, . . . so long is it impossible
to make anything beautiful or desirable in the best regulated adminis-
tration of slavery." Eventually, either "failure, misfortune, impru-
dence, or death of the kindest owner may cause /the slaves/. . . any
day to exchange a life of kind protection and indulgence for one of
hopeless misery and toil." The career of Uncle Tom is amplifica-
tion of this basic position.

Not only is sin the probable, if not the necessary, result
of slavery, but loss of civil liberties for whites will almost surely
follow in the wake of the loss of rights and privileges already taken
from the Negroes. As early as 1823 Jonathan Smith argued "that when
personal liberty suffers the least encroachment, it may, it time,
blunt the finest feelings of the human mind!" (I.i.27). By the
1840's and 1850's it was no longer a matter of "feelings." Aboli-
tionists, as we have seen, maintained that liberty itself was at
stake. "Whites are enslaved," claimed William Goodell; "American
freedom is no longer a question of geography or color--AMERICANS MUST BECOME ABOLITIONISTS OR SLAVES."15

But what of the second half of the "double crusade," if indeed such a crusade existed? How does the plot in any of its persuasive functions further the argument that New England abolitionists were not only concerned about freeing the slaves but were also anxious to regain—or at least maintain—their cultural and political leadership of the nation, if not their economic leadership. If the attack against the Southern cotton planters was in part motivated because of their connection with the new captains of industry, the ability to control the alternatives, to emphasize portions of an issue by careful selection of details, and to express an idea in concrete form—indeed to personify further—placed the playwright in a superb position to attack the new industrial system; to "protest . . . against a world they never made."16 The impact of such manipulation leaves little doubt that the Southern aristocracy is unable to manage its own, much less serve as responsible leaders for the rest of the nation.

If the reason for attacking the Southerners was simply to further the attack against slavery, the inclusion of incidents which are aimed against the Southern aristocracy, as such, seem superfluous. Further, if the New Englanders are attempting to call back into existence a society which flourished in their father's generation, it seems particularly felicitous that the society which exists in most of the abolition dramas—at least by the end of the play—is noticeably
lacking in Negroes. Indeed, even the appeal Mrs. Stowe makes for Northerners to educate the freed slaves is ultimately for the purpose of filling up Liberia—not New England.

It is often difficult to distinguish between selection of incident and manipulation of character. Both have been utilized by the abolition dramatists to develop an over-all impression of character and issue, and, as a result, issues and characterizations become so interwoven it is nearly impossible to separate them. Thus, not only is slavery, as such, sinful and tyrannical, but the Southerner is sinner and tyrant.

There is, of course, an inherent danger in such manipulation, if it becomes too obvious. When the characters become too implausible, the playwright defeats his dramatic purpose as well as his persuasive end. "Drama demands the appearance of autonomous characters; ethical persuasion the avoidance of apparently inaccurate or unfair characterization."17 From our vantage point it may seem that the abolition playwrights are obviously guilty of this charge. It may be apparent, for instance, that most of the abolition dramatists ascribed to the Southern character all of the theoretical ills of the system without any of the softening touches applied, for instance, by the noncommittal Dion Boucicault. And yet, at the time, such characterizations were accepted by many as accurate and fair. Even the wise old New England literati were swayed by abolition propaganda, and thus contributed to the common stereotype of the ante-bellum Southerner. It is
not surprising then, that many Northerners succumbed to the over-simplification presented not only by known propagandists but by preachers, politicians, newspaper editors, intellectuals—by all the responsible elements of the community. Playwrights alone cannot be charged with inaccuracy and unfairness. In this respect they helped to popularize and crystallize the stereotype, but such a characterization was as much a mirror of their own culture as it was a calculated manipulation.

If this is true, then the playwrights cannot be charged with falsely creating "sentimental exaggerations" of Negroes without taking into account the contemporary situation. Nevins, who accuses the abolitionists of creating such exaggerations, also points out that most abolitionists did not know what a field hand might be like. The Negroes they knew and associated with—the Frederick Douglasses and the William Wells Browns—were perhaps not typical, but they were obviously "prepared" for freedom. Thus, when Brown "apologizes" to his reader in the preface because "the play, no doubt, abounds in defects," most people will be willing to forgive him. Especially will they forgive him after reading his additional comment that, "as I was born in slavery, and never had a day's schooling in my life, I owe the public no apology for errors." Amen, echoes the reader. Even at that, many of the playwrights, as we have seen, included appeals in their prefaces that such Negroes as they portrayed did exist. Even within the text itself we can find comments which "explain," for
instance, why William and Ellen, in The Stars and Stripes, do not talk like field hands: "Being favorite personal attendants upon their master and mistress, they have caught the language of genteel white people" (III, 136).

Finally, the proponents of the debate do not emerge as too godlike or inaccessible. While inspirational characters like Captain Walker and Captain John Brown were included in these dramas, by and large the exemplary spokesman for abolition were "realistically" treated, or at least appeared more like "every-day folks" than sainted martyrs. We can see this from first to last. David Paul Brown—whether he was white or Negro—was, after all, simply a tourist who suddenly found his freedom taken from him, and reacted in a natural fashion. Ophelia is a typical New Englander, while Phineas Fletcher, who helps the escaping George and Eliza Harris, is a simple man of principle. The same can be said of neighbor Jackwood—he means no harm to any man, but he will not, nor will his neighbors, stand by idly as an innocent girl is forced to return to slavery. Mr. White of Massachusetts (in The Escape) and Mr. Freeman of Michigan (in The Stars and Stripes) have no untoward heroic aspirations, but they will fight for what they think is right. Even John Brown himself is "humanized" to a certain extent in Mrs. Swayze's play, especially in the scenes where his daughter pleads with the mysterious Mr. Cook to spare this tired, old man, whose soul has been almost torn asunder by the weight of his own personal tragedies. And finally, Frank Sterling,
upright young editor of a New England abolition newspaper and advocate of political action, also has his own, very human difficulties. At least a portion of the drama is devoted to the common problem of wooing and winning the girl of his choice.

"Dianoia," Scanlan maintains, "furnishes the most direct avenue of persuasion available in drama. It most closely approximates the conditions and methods of public speech." There are, however, at least two faults which might hinder the persuasive value of dianoia. The intellectual elements may be emphasized at the expense of emotional impact, or the long speeches used to convey the thought may impede the flow of action. Lack of emotion does not seem to be a serious problem in abolition drama. The plays abound with emotional stimulation, not only in thought, but in the other formal elements as well.

The second possibility—that the use of long speeches results in insufficient action—may be more of a problem for some of the abolition dramas considered in this study. The Branded Hand includes long soliloquies, while The Captured Slave is marked by several long speeches on the subject of civil rights. Warren has speeches and sermons which take up entire acts, and, in addition to the long "intellectual" discussions in The Christian Slave, the recitation of Cassy's career takes up five pages. Both William Wells Brown and Lydia Marie Child insert long poems and songs, while Brown is especially anxious, through his use of "purple passages," to convince
the audience that slaves have all the faculties of thought and passion. Finally, much of *The Honorable Anodyne Humdrum* is taken up with political speeches, not only by the major candidates, but by Frank Sterling himself.

Such passages might well seem to present a serious obstacle to the smooth and continuous flow of action. However, such criticism already has been qualified. In the first place, there is no evidence that *The Branded Hand*, *The Captured Slave*, *Warren*, *The Stars and Stripes*, or *The Honorable Anodyne Humdrum* were ever produced. In reading, these long passages which halt the action would probably not mar the over-all effect. *The Branded Hand* was probably intended as closet drama, while *The Stars and Stripes* appeared in an abolition magazine, not in regular book form, and was similarly meant to be read rather than produced. *The Captured Slave* does give the impression that it was meant for the stage and, if so, would have been rather slow moving in spots.

It is difficult, however, to say with certainty just what the effect of *Warren* might be if produced. It gives the appearance of being almost entirely without action. Yet, we see Warren as he moves from his arrest, to the slave power meeting which determines his fate, to the auction block, to his prison cell where he delivers a speech appealing to the men of Massachusetts, to the Smythe plantation and his ultimate death. While the play is static within each unit this is compensated for by the inherent dramatic quality of the scene itself.
The almost brilliant stroke of portraying a meeting of the slave power, the extension of the dramatic nature of a slave auction, the stirring speech of Warren, and the irony of the Christmas day sermon, juxtaposed with the torture and death of Warren, all overcome the play's inertia. The author of *The Honorable Anodyne Humdrum* has also gone far toward solving the problem of long speeches. The use of the choral device by this playwright who calls himself "Aristophanes, Jr." not only breaks up otherwise lengthy speeches, but in fact contributes to the comic effect. On the other hand, when Frank Sterling finally makes his appeal, his more dignified, set speech adds to the "ethical" proof of his character, especially in contrast to the comic treatment of the previous speeches.

Finally, the long passages in *The Christian Slave* and *The Escape* are more suitable for public readings. Certainly *The Escape* was not criticized for lack of action, if the "opinions of the press" included in the text are any indication of its acceptance. The *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, for example, noted that "a novel Dramatic Reading took place last evening at Sansom Street Hall, by Wm. Wells Brown, the colored dramatic writer, which was highly entertaining, and gave the greatest satisfaction to an intelligent and appreciative audience." The *Auburn Daily Advertiser* gives a similar recommendation:

> The Dramatic Reading of Mr. W. Wells Brown, last evening, was well attended, and gave the most unbounded satisfaction. Mr. Brown's Drama is, in
itself, a masterly refutation of all apologies for slavery, and abounds in wit, satire, philosophy, argument and facts, all ingeniously interwoven into one of the most interesting dramatic compositions of modern times.

In fact, the Seneca Falls Courier reports that so highly pleased were the citizens of Auburn "that twenty-eight of the leading men of the city, over their own signatures, extended an invitation to him, through the Daily Advertiser, to return and repeat the Drama."

Long speeches, as such, however, are not the critical point, but rather "speeches which seem independent compositions, imperfectly coordinated with plot and character." The interaction between formal elements must thus be considered before long speeches or lack of action in itself can be pronounced a fault. Indeed, the "plot serves as the means of motivating the intellectual element just as the intellectual element serves to motivate the plot. A dramatic situation created by the dramatist provides the occasion for speaking, and a 'weak' or unsatisfactory situation must be rhetorically as well as dramatically ineffective." Thus Brown, for instance, at least in the eyes of his contemporaries, managed to "ingeniously" interweave "wit, satire, philosophy, argument and facts." For the most part, the other abolition dramatists managed also to compensate for the presence of long speeches and lack of action, when this occurred, either through the method of presentation or through the situation created within the play itself.

When long speeches are included in abolition drama there is,
not surprisingly, an accompanying elevation of language. Aristotle has drawn, for instance, a distinction between the language of prose and poetry, and further suggests "a 'middle' style for rhetoric, 'avoiding both meanness and undue elevation,' and a more elevated language for poetry." Scanlan notes, however, that "such a distinction must be very flexible, especially now that drama has largely discarded the heroic figures and metrical composition of earlier times." Indeed, in abolition drama, only two playwrights, Mrs. Little and St. Bo, chose to use verse as the medium. In any case, appropriateness emerges as the major factor in deciding the level of diction in both drama and rhetoric, and the playwright must supply the proper occasion and motivation for the use of elevated language.

Such occasions are provided by abolition dramatists, for example, in David Paul Brown's appeal to the court in The Captured Slave, in Warren's appeal to the men of Massachusetts, and in Frank Sterling's address to the Southerners in Humdrum. Further, the use of elevated language by Negroes, even if not strictly "appropriate," supported the argument that they were endowed with all human "faculties." The impact of such elevated language would have been even more heightened in many plays by the contrast to the "mean and vulgar" language employed in comic portions—especially when compared to the comic Negro dialect.

"Melody," as Scanlan suggests, may "include the tonal qualities of language," and, indeed, the "orchestration" of the tonal
qualities accompanying each level of language, for instance, could effectively contribute to the total impression of staged abolition plays. Further, music itself has an emotional power, and was inevitably employed in "melodrama." In Aiken's version of Uncle Tom's Cabin, for instance, the stage directions indicate that music was introduced eleven times. At one point music is used to punctuate the blows struck by Simon Legree upon the back of Uncle Tom: "Three blows --Music chord each blow" (V.iii.675). Music was also used to add suspense and anticipation to a scene. For instance, the stage directions in Brougham's version of Dred indicates that music always accompanied the entrance and speeches of Dred.

The emotional power of music also becomes "a possible source of persuasion when accompanied by words or actions to give that emotional power a persuasive focus." Some abolition dramatists were apparently well aware of this possibility, and made use of such a source of persuasion in a variety of ways. Whitney, for instance, employs church music during Dr. Smythe's service to add to the irony. After the preacher explains to Sampsey the intricacies of the Golden Rule, he asks Nelly to "strike up my favorite hymn." The first two stanzas are common enough: the Lord is asked to bring salvation to these poor blind and wicked souls, and to offer a crown. But then Whitney turns the last two stanzas so as to reinforce the irony of Smythe's "golden rule."
Help us in word and deed
Our duty to fulfill,
By serving massa faithfully,
And doing all his will.

Thus shall thy blessing come
To every faithful slave;
And when our work on earth be done,
Our souls in heaven doubt save.

(IV.i.37)

Mrs. Stowe achieves two distinct effects by the juxtaposition of two entirely different kinds of songs in The Christian Slave. After Uncle Tom has been sold to Legree, he knows that his chances of ever again seeing his wife and children are now impossible. As he sits in the moonlight after a long day in the field he sings:

Way down upon the Swanee river,
Far, far away,
Dere's whar my heart is turning, ever,
Dere's whar the old folks stay.
All the world am sad and dreary,
Everywhere I roam;
0, Chloe, how my heart grows weary,
Thinkin' of ye all at home!

But then there is a pause. Tom "looks up"; his "face brightens," and he sings:

When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies
I bid farewell to every fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes.

Should earth against my soul engage,
And hellish darts be hurled,
Then I can smile at Satan's rage,
And face a frowning world.

At this point Satan's emissary, Legree, enters, unseen by Tom, and
overhears the final stanza:

Let cares like a wild deluge come,
    And storms of sorrow fall,
May I but safely reach my home,
    My God, my heaven, my all!

Tom does not allow his sorrows to overwhelm him. He looks to his mansion in the sky and sets his face determinedly against any hellish dart that could be hurled by Legree. All of this accomplished by the use of two songs. The scene immediately ends, but only after Tom has again been beaten by Legree. (III.vi.60-61).

William Wells Brown also puts his songs to effective use. In the first one (sung by Cato to the air, "Dandy Jim") he summarizes the major issues, and, at the same time, mirrors the entire plot, up to the moment of the escape.

Come all ye bondmen far and near,
Let's put a song in massa's ear,
It is a song for our poor race,
Who're whipped and trampled with disgrace.

Chorus
My old massa tells me, Oh,
This is a land of freedom, Oh;
Let's look about and see if it's so,
Just as massa tells me, Oh.

He tells us of that glorious one,
I think his name was Washington,
How he did fight for liberty,
To save a threepence tax on tea. (Chorus.)

But now we look about and see
That we poor blacks are not so free;
We're whipped and thrashed about like fools,
And have no chance at common schools. (Chorus.)
They take our wives, insult and mock,
And sell our children on the block,
They choke us if we say a word,
And say that "niggers" shan't be heard. (Chorus.)

Our preachers, too, with whip and cord,
Command obedience in the Lord;
They say they learn it from the big book,
But for ourselves, we dare not look. (Chorus.)

There is a country far away,
I think they call it Canada,
And if we reach Victoria's shore,
They say that we are slaves no more.

Now haste, all bondmen, let us go,
And leave this Christian country, Oh;
Haste to the land of the British Queen,
Where whips for negroes are not seen.

Now, if we go, we must take the night,
And never let them come in sight;
The bloodhounds will be on our track,
And wo to us if they fetch us back.

Now haste all bondmen, let us go,
And leave this Christian country, Oh;
God help us to Victoria's shore,
Where we are free and slaves no more!

(III.ii.27-28)

After we have seen Glen and Melinda make their way to relative safety beyond the Ohio River, we again meet Cato. This time the song he sings (to the air "Dearest Mae") relates his adventures after deciding to escape; a decision in part brought on by the amount of work he had been forced to do, as we have already seen in the chapter on "Slavery As It Was." Cato picks up the tale in the second stanza:
Massa gave me his ole coat, an' thought I'd happy be.
But I had my eye on de North Star, an' thought of liberty.
Ole massa lock de door, an' den he went to sleep,
I dress myself in his bess clothes, an' jump into de street.

Chorous.--Dey work me all de day,
    Widout a bit of pay,
    So I took my flight, in the middle of de night,
    When de sun was gone away.

Sed I, dis chile's a freeman now, he'll be a slave no more;
I travell'd faster all dat night, dan I ever did before.
I came up to a farmer's house, jest at de break of day,
And saw a white man standin' dar, se he, "You are a runaway."

Chorus.--Dey work me all de day, &c.

I tole him I had left de whip, an' bayin' of de hound,
To find a place where man is man, ef sich dar can be found;
Dat I had heard, in Canada, dat all mankind are free,
An' dat I was goin dar in search of liberty.

Chorus.--Dey work me all de day, &c.

I've not committed any crime, why should I run away?
Oh! shame upon your laws, dat drive me off to Canada.
You loudly boast of liberty, an' say you State is free,
But ef I tarry in your midst, will you protect me?

Chorus.--Dey work me all de day, &c.

(V. iii.44-45)

In addition to these two songs adapted to a persuasive purpose, Brown includes, as we have already seen, a song celebrating the success of the Underground Railroad.

Although both these songs are delivered by Cato, there is a curious change of dialect from one to the other. Perhaps Brown believed that the subject matter of the first called for a more elevated language while in the second, after Cato had made good his
escape, he could relax and aim for a slightly more comic effect. St. Bo', however, in his "minstrel act," appears to be primarily concerned with achieving a comic effect, although he too manages to put in a word for Negro "faculties." After Tanto tells his joke about Moses and the candle, Timbo urges him to sing one of his songs, while accompanying himself on the banjo. Timbo joins in with the bones.

1

De gal I lub be tall an' han'some,
    Tall an' han'some,
Wild de spa'kling jet-black eye.
And when she smile, she smile so winsome,
    Smile so winsome,
I abmise her modesty.--(bones.)

When she and me go walking, courting,
    Walking, courting,
Me take her round de waist jist so,
Smack her lips so sweet and pouting,
    Sweet and pouting,
Den me strike up de old banjo--
    Oh! my lubly Yuckan Danah,
Yuckan Danah, Yuckan Danah
    Oh! my lubly Yuckan Danah.

2

One day we walked by the Alatamaha,
    Alatamaha,
"What ab you tinking, lub," said she,
"Jist dat you war my lub for eber,
    Lub for eber,
And back aden to Tennesse."--(bones.)

"La! dat war jist what I war tinking,
    I war tinking,
So modestly she did reply,--
"Den, ib you hab no great objection,
    Great objection,
Our hearts we'll join in unity."
    Oh! my lubly Yuckan Danah, &c.
"Wid all my heart, I am agreed lub,
     Am agreed lub,
But fust our freedom we must buy."
So now an' den I go a strolling,
     Go a strolling,
An' sing dis song to raise money.--(bones.)

Den when we hab got plenty dollars,
     Plenty dollars,
We'll get married right joyously,
And lib so happy all our life-long,
     All our life-long--
What tink you ob my minstrelsy?
    Oh! my lubly Yuckan Danah, &c.

Ethiopian serenaders,
     Serenaders,
Ab not such fools as you suppose,
For dey hab hearts to feel what lub is,
     Feel what lub is,
As well as eyes, an' mouth, an' nose.--(bones.)

So all you white men who tink diff'rent,
     Who tink diff'rent,
Put dat in your long pipe and smoke,
Dis nigger tell you berry plainly,
     Berry plainly,--
Dat slabery is past a joke.
    Oh! my lubly Yuckan Danah, &c.
(II.iii.47-49)

St. Bo's efforts, while perhaps admirable in conception, falter: in
execution, and fails to achieve the effectiveness of the American
dramatists.

The most extensive use made of music comes in Mrs. Child's
The Stars and Stripes. She not only employs music for the purposes
already discussed--irony, comic effect, nostalgia and pathos, and for
inspirational purposes—she also uses "Blue-Tailed Fly" and "Sons of Columbia" as a sort of *leitmotiv*. The play opens, in fact, with an ironic use of music. As Masters and his guest enjoy a Fourth of July celebration, they strike up a verse of "Adams and Liberty." "At the close of the verse," Mrs. Child explains, "they rise, touch glasses, and swinging them triumphantly, sing, 'Ne'er shall the sons of Columbia be slaves!'" An American flag is brought on, but the Liberty Cap which is on top of the flag staff falls to the ground. When William tries to put it on his head, "excited by the general exhilaration," he is boxed on the ear for his impudence. This scene is followed by a rendition of *The Star Spangled Banner*. At the same picnic the young fire-eaters sing the song Masters composed for the occasion: "The Fillibusters' Song." Not, however, before Masters' overseer has had a chance to sing a number indicating his hatred for any abolitionist who might foolishly try to spread his doctrine within old Carolina:

We'll feather him,
And ride him on a rail,
Then black his ugly face,
And lock him up in jail.
If he speaks, we'll pull the trigger,
And shoot him dead as any nigger.

(I.128)

On the evening of the Fourth of July the slaves gather about their cabins for a night of merriment. "Half tipsy," they begin to sing:
Hurra fur Dependent Day!
Hurra! de nigger may play!
Ole hoe on de groun he lay,
Ole massa gib rum to day.
Drink, boys, drink! fur we no pay,
Hurra fur Dependent Day!

Jim then strikes up his latest song, as he accompanies himself on the banjo:

Come, broders, let us leave
Dis Buckra lan for Yayti;
And dar we be receive
As gran as Lar-fay-i-tee.

Dar we'll make a mighty show,
In gran-hus, as you'll see;
I shall be all the go,
And you like Gub'nor Shootsy.

Dar no more barrow wheel;
And dat's a mighty jerkus;
Dar no more 'bliged to steal,
And den be sent to work-hus.

We'll dance in great big hall,
Will hole full half a million;
We'll dance togeder all
What white man call cotillion.

We'll lead our partners out,
Forward two, and backy;
Cross hans, an wheel about,
And den go home in hacky.

(II.131-33)

Under the shadow of slavery, however, even such innocent joys can suddenly end. When Jim swings into a mock rendition of "Fur ne'er shall de sons of Columby be slaves," white men rush in among them, "brandishing whips." "If one of you is seen out again tonight," they warn, "he'll be tied up and get thirty-nine, well laid on." (II. 135).
As William and Ellen make their escape plans, Jim strolls by, singing "Blue-Tailed Fly," and, if he hadn't been so noisy, Jim would have been invited to join them in their flight to freedom. Even though they are forced to flee, William and Ellen are sorry to leave their beloved South. As they reach the shores of the Ohio, on a beautiful moonlit night, Ellen remarks that the same moon shines in Carolina, and "on the tree, where we used to sit and sing, on Sundays, after meeting. If our situation hadn't been so dreadful, I never could have left it to seek a home among strangers." William agrees: "I, too, was thinking what a pleasant home Carolina might be, if there was no Slavery there." Then, joining their voices softly, they sing a song which combines their reluctance to leave their home with their determination to breathe free air, even "if it be the coldest blasts of a Canada winter."

O, moonlight, deep and tender,
You shone thus silv'ry bright;
Or veiled in misty splendor,
Where first we saw the light.

Those scenes of youth have vanished,
We return to them no more;
For we are aliens, banished
From our own native shore.

O, river, brightly glancing,
How beautiful to see!
Beneath the moonbeams dancing,
So joyfully and free!

And yet to us how dreary!
Who see it through our tears;
So lonely, sad, and weary,
And trembling with our fears.
Although the river might be beautiful, they have no way to cross it. Just then, from out of the dark, they hear the strains of "Blue-Tailed Fly." William replies, with "Ne're shall the sons of Columbia be slaves," and Jim appears. His brother, Dick, has been hired out by his master to haul lumber down the river on a barge, and is willing to hide all three in a barrel, until they are able to swim for safety. Dick arrives, rings the bell three times, sings out "Heigho! de boatmen row!" The fugitives dash aboard, and soon after, receding voices are heard:

Heigho! de boatmen row!
Floatin down riber Ohi-o!
(V.160-62)

This somewhat "operatic" line continues as William, Ellen and Jim reach the abolitionist picnic being held in Detroit. Ellen sings a song she has learned just the night before, "written by an Abolitionist, in Boston."

Oh, sunny South, the pride of lands,
Whose joyous spring as Eden blooms,
Whose rivers sweep o'er golden sands,
Whose harvests feed a million looms;
Why looks an anxious world on thee,
In sorrow for thy destiny?

William sings in response:
It is, that when the joyous sea
Bore from West Indian Isles the song
Of earth's most glorious jubilee,
Of right, triumphant over wrong,—
Midst a world's welcome, thou alone
Answered the tidings with a groan.

(VI.166-67)

Freeman suggests they all join in a chorus, "in honor of our mother country."

Blow ye the trumpet abroad o'er the sea!
Britannia hath triumphed, the negro is free!

Just then the danger song is heard: "Get out of the way, Old Dan Tucker!" Mr. Masters and Mr. North have arrived. As Mr. North testifies to the happiness of the Southern slave, Jim, who cannot resist, replies from the depth of the ice-house:

Dis nigger he know dat tings no go,
Jus as massa tole 'em, O!

Masters is quite taken aback, but Mr. Freeman quickly explains: "This is just an Ethiopian melody: they are very popular here"

(VI.171).

On the road outside Detroit, as the abolitionists are attempting to skirt the fugitives out of the country, they run into a road-block set up by the police and manned by some rowdy-looking Truckmen. One of the Truckmen steps forward and declares that they aim to catch the slaves: "We've got the law on our side." Freeman replies that "as I have no wish to earn blood-money by turning slave-hunter for any of our Southern masters the information does not particularly interest me." At that, several of the abolitionists begin
singing:

No slave-hunt in our borders!
No pirates on our strand!
No fetters in the free States!
No slave upon our land!

Mr. Freeman continues to tongue-lash the dough-faced Truckmen, and while "some slink away," some damn his impudence. The abolitionists laugh, and go off singing:

Bring garlands for the free and brave!
Bold hunters of the flying slave!

(VII. 180-81)

Finally, as the ferry shoves off victoriously from the American shore, Jim's voice is heard from across the water: "Jim crack corn, I don't care! Ole massa's gone away!" And, as the Canadians strike up "God save the Queen," the abolitionists respond:

Blow ye the trumpet aloud o'er the sea!
Freedom hath triumphed! The slaves are now free!

(VIII.185)

Not only has Mrs. Child combined words and actions to give the emotional power of music "a persuasive focus," she uses her musical score to help carry the plot line to such an extent that her work might well be considered a "musical-drama." By the same token, the other abolition dramatists who chose to include music in the text --with the possible exception of St. Bo'--have managed to adapt this formal element to persuasive purposes.

Even spectacle, the final formal element, can be adapted to persuasive ends. The subject matter treated by the playwrights of
abolition especially lends itself to the purpose noted by Aristotle in his discussion of narration: "Further, we must speak of events as past and gone, except where they excite pity or indignation by being represented as present." When the conditions of slavery are being attacked, the very sight of those conditions will act as testimony, if the playwright is able to convince his audience (through all the formal elements and through other forms of propaganda) that these conditions are a fair representation.

The sight of auction stands, which one of Theodore Weld's witnesses admits "beggars description," loudly proclaims the inhuman cruelty of such a system. The block becomes a symbol of the whole institution. Even in the avowed neutral play by Boucicault, the sight of Zoe on top of the table used by the auctioneer "revealed that she could be bartered for, and was bought and sold," as Jefferson pointed out. The action, combined with the spectacle, "proclaimed against slavery, and called loudly for its abolition." The Captured Slave, Warren, Uncle Tom's Cabin, and Wilfred and Mary also utilize this visual reminder of the absolute power of the Southern masters. Even when the play was not staged, the mind's eye could sketch in the details of the scene being represented.

The many scenes which took place in prison cells also serve as a reminder of the plight of the slave, as would the sight of slave cabins. Particularly effective would be the movement back and forth from jail cell or slave hut to the luxurious parlors of
the masters, a situation which occurs in almost all the plays. The case against slavery is further strengthened by the sight of the devices of torture, the floggings, cat-haulings, and, in cases of slave escapes, blood-hounds used to track down human beings.

The use of "visions" allows the playwright to utilize the symbolism connected with Christianity. While these often occur in the plays which apparently were not meant for production, in a sense this could work in their favor. One of the limiting factors in the use of spectacle when used on stage is that the "very quality of being present limits the dramatist's range of probability. More incredible events, if necessary to the story, must be kept off the stage." In the closet drama the "range of probability" is broadened, at least on this score. Mrs. Little, in The Branded Hand, makes considerable use of "visions," not only to further demonstrate the plight of the slave, but to symbolize the martyrdom of Walker, and, finally, to act as a warning to the pleasure-maddened planters.

After Ellenore is torn away from her family by her revenge-seeking owner she has a vision of the slave's only hope.

The heavens are opened.  
In the parting air  
A vision, manifest, supremely fair  
I see—a heavenly being.  Oh, the grace,  
The love, all flowing from the illumined face!  
Fear not—he says—ere long thou shalt ascend,  
And reach the martyr's rest through martyrdom.  
(I.v.16)

Philander also has visions. Although he is unable to comprehend the
meaning of the cross and the extended crown, surrounded by "flames of ten-fold fire" he is told that he cannot win the crown from the pierced hand "save thou wilt plunge thine own through that strong flame" and draw it out. As Philander awaits the ordeal, his prison cell "fills with light" and the "vision of the Cross re-appears." This time Philander is given the strength to meet his trial by fire, and he falls into a "sweet sleep." After the searing flame has burned the letters "S. S." into his hand, the vision returns "to place the crown within the Branded Hand." Finally, as the play ends, the planter "sees the vision of the branded hand," and is told by an evil spirit:

The brand so lately given by hellish might
Has won for him that blessed crown of life
Which thou or I shall never, never gain.

Doomed, the planter sees no alternative:

Then will I headlong rush
From pleasure on to pleasure madly on:
I cannot yield this will of mine: 'tis strong
And up in arms against Omnipotence.

(IV.iii.45)

Other "closet dramatists" make use of the same technique. Whitney, for instance, includes a vision of Warren's wife and children which is interpreted by the martyr "as a divine sanction of my determination to die, rather than be one moment a slave. This gives strength" (III.1.34). Mrs. Stowe also adapts the device to a public reading. Thus, after Uncle Tom tries unsuccessfully to comfort one of the old slave women owned by Legree, a woman who is certain that the
Lord could not be there to give her rest, even Tom is moved to the verge of doubt. He cries out: "O Lord God! Where art thou? Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour!"

But as he sleeps, "music" and a "voice in the air" assures him:

Where thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and the rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee; for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour. (III.iii.50-51)

The staged version of Uncle Tom's Cabin was not without spectacle, and, as the scars of the Civil War healed and the "Tom shows" crossed the country it became more spectacle than propaganda. Before the war, however, spectacle to "excite pity or indignation" was effectively utilized. The sight of Eliza, clutching her baby in her arms, slowly "floating" across the ice-jammed Ohio River remains one of the most memorable events of the play. The sight of George making his determined stand on the rocks above the slave-hunters could excite audiences, while the tableau of George and his family "in an attitude of thanksgiving" could inspire them. As the long vigil at the side of Eva's deathbed ends, Aiken's staging itself heightens the pathos:

Eva discovered on a couch.—A table stands near the couch, with a lamp on it. The light shines upon Eva's face, which is very pale.—Scene half dark.—Uncle Tom is kneeling near the foot of the couch.—Ophelia stands at the head.—St. Clare at back.—Scene opens to plaintive music.— (III.iv.656)
Stage pictures are used throughout to end a scene, and these pictures reinforce the persuasive content of the other formal elements. For instance, Act III, scene iii has this tableau:

Sambo and Quimbo seize Tom and drag him up stage. Legree seizes Emmeline, and throws her.--She falls on her knees, with her hands lifted in supplication.--Legree raises his whip, as if to strike Tom.--Picture. (V.iii.676)

Finally, after the clouds work on and conceal the body of the dead Uncle Tom, the play ends:

Gorgeous clouds, tinted with sunlight. Eva, robed in white, is discovered on the back of a milk-white dove, with expanded wings, as if just soaring upward. Her hands are extended in benediction over St. Clare and Uncle Tom, who are kneeling and gazing up to her. Impressive music.--Slow curtain. (VI.vii.693)

Spectacle, in concert with the other formal elements of the mise-en-scene, contributes to the emotional impact of the play and, like the other elements, has the power of persuasion in its own right.

A playwright might employ persuasion for a variety of purposes. He may be concerned with advocating a specific solution for a particular problem or he may simply present a problem without offering a solution. He may be concerned with influencing opinion or he may hope to achieve action. If he is primarily interested in affecting opinion his position could be either positive or negative, persuasive or dissuasive; to defend or accuse, to praise or blame. He may attempt to make an audience sympathetic or hostile to his thesis;
he may gratify or invigorate. He may emphasize different aspects of a problem, dealing, for instance, with only the particular and temporary, or with the universal and permanent. Finally, the proposition he advances may be unified, with all elements of the drama supporting a single thesis, or he may present a "variety of loosely related or even unrelated theses." 27

In the antislavery drama we have seen practically all of these purposes at work. Generally, the playwrights did not advocate a specific solution, but were primarily concerned with presenting the problem. They were more intent on affecting opinion than prompting action, although they did at least suggest a variety of ways in which the antislavery impulse could lead to action. They were both positive and negative in position and attempted to gain sympathy and generate hostility. While early antislavery drama dealt with universal and permanent aspects of the problem of slavery, later abolition plays were concerned with the particular and temporary. Finally, the propositions were both unified, as in Warren, with all elements of the drama supporting a single thesis, and loose, as in The Escape or The Stars and Stripes, in which a variety of issues were touched upon; and, if the theory of a "double crusade" is creditable, even unrelated theses were exhibited.

Throughout, the formal elements of drama were exploited by the playwrights to contribute to their persuasive purposes. The plot served as a vehicle for logical structures, helped express an issue in
concrete form, controlled alternatives, and was especially effective in arousing emotion—particularly if the playwrights were able to maintain a sense of credibility. If properly manipulated, character became symbolic of the issues under debate while, at the same time, served as examples for those who wanted to help. Thought, when effectively conveyed, reinforced through logical discussion and emotional speeches the argument of the play, while elevated language, often the medium for such thought, became in itself a refutation of inferiority when used by Negroes. Music was used to encourage pathos, to point up irony, to inspire; it was employed symbolically; it served as comic relief; and, in one instance, it became almost operatic in function. Finally, spectacle served as a constant reminder of the evils of slavery.

While it is necessary to examine the "elements" of a play separately for purposes of academic discussion, such examinations do not substitute for the total impression of the drama, especially in the context of the contemporary situation. Fictional characters became real; real characters became mythical; issues merged into characterizations. Objectivity and nonpartisanship became wellnigh impossible. Oliver Wendell Holmes has indicated the power of the kind of images produced by antislavery literature:

All through the conflict, up and down
Marched Uncle Tom and Old John Brown,
One ghost, one form ideal;
Abolition drama took advantage of and contributed to such a mixture of reality and myth; indeed, in such a situation, it was an ideal tool in the hands of those who joined in the crusade against slavery.
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER XI


2. Ibid., p. 372.

3. Ibid., pp. 377-78.

4. Ibid., p. 383.


12. Wilfred and Mary, p. i.


17. Scanlan, p. 386.

18. Ibid., p. 395.


22. Scanlan, p. 399.

23. Ibid.

24. Rhetoric, 1417a; quoted in Scanlan, p. 400.


27. Ibid.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation demonstrates that antislavery plays reflected and reinforced the crusade against slavery; that antislavery playwrights influenced and were influenced by their society. This interaction is seen, for instance, in the way the plays accurately gauged popular interest in the antislavery debate. Before the War of 1812 there were two such "waves" of increased agitation, corresponding to two distinct clusters of antislavery drama. Beginning shortly after the War of 1812, and continuing into the 1820's and 1830's, there was a steady interest maintained in the subject, and at least twenty-one plays were written which touched upon—or seem to touch upon—the problem of slavery and antislavery. Although a period of fifteen years lapsed after the beginning of militant abolitionism before important dramatic expression of abolitionism arose, between 1845 and 1861 at least eight extant plays were written which can be considered abolition tracts in dramatic form, while four others appeared which in some way included antislavery doctrine.

This study has also established a close relationship between the pattern of issues found in the plays and the pattern within the agitation generally, although this relationship is not always so obvious as the chronological similarity. Thus, one of the
contributions of the paper—in terms of the history of the anti-
slavery movement—has been to indicate the importance of the
Algerian situation as a major vehicle for early antislavery argu-
ments. In attacking Barbarian slavery the playwrights exploited
the incongruity of a nation ready to go to war to free a hundred en-
slaved seamen while it held in bondage a whole race of men. A
smaller group of authors dealt directly with domestic slavery.
Their plays encouraged internal reform of the institution and indi-
vidual manumission of slaves—two of the major goals of the early
movement. There were, however, other lines of action popular at
this time which did not receive attention by antislavery playwrights.
They did not, for instance, touch upon colonization, political
action or the "free produce movement"—a scheme which tried to make
slavery unprofitable by using only the products of free labor. This
analysis, however, has suggested that the appeal to humanitarian
sentiments prevalent in the early drama was more adaptable to the
general aims of amelioration and eventual manumission than to the
more specific goals. The lack of specific solutions to the problem
of slavery has been, in fact, one of the major characteristics of
these plays, and the later abolition drama was even less likely to
offer specific lines of action.

During the "middle period" of this study—roughly 1820 to
1840—the plays again reflected one of the major concerns of the
country: slave insurrection; a concern which led, for instance, to the popularity of the Colonization Society. It has been suggested that one of the contributing factors to the general underlying anxiety and apprehension of this period was the growing fear about the presence of increased numbers of Negro slaves. This concern was also manifested in the theatre by the appearance of fourteen plays which appear to have dealt directly with the theme of violence and revolt. The analysis of the four extant plays of this period finds that while slavery was generally condemned, one of the major functions of the drama was to reassure audiences that insurrection would not succeed, since such revolt inevitably breeds its own destruction. Thus, although the militant abolitionists began agitating for immediate emancipation ten years before the end of this period, these plays were well within the tradition of gradual emancipation and colonization.

Dwight L. Dumond lists five issues of particular concern to militant abolitionists: the capacity of the Negro for intellectual and moral improvement; the probable consequences of complete emancipation without colonization; the conditions of slavery itself; the status of slavery in relation to the Constitution; the nature and limits of the power of the federal government and the residual authority of the states.\(^1\) Abolition drama reflected or extended the antislavery position on all five of these major issues, while it
emphasized two of the specific indictments against slavery: its
sinfulness and its violation of civil rights.

Abolition drama does not deal with the technical aspects
of the issue of slavery and the Constitution to any great extent.
Certainly it does not touch upon the complex compact theory of the
Constitution or attempt to refute Calhoun's doctrine of concurrent
majority. One play, Neighbor Jackwood, does appeal to the higher
law doctrine, although the emphasis is placed upon the authority
from God and not that which rests in the Declaration of Independence.
Several plays, however, exploit the antislavery position on the
issue of the nature of the federal government. These plays attempt
to further the belief that the Southern slave power was well along
in its plot to capture the powers of the federal government, and
would soon extend that power to include the state authority, ultimate­
ly for the purpose of enslaving Northern whites. In this sense,
the issue is closely related to the specific indictment that slavery
had subverted the civil rights of Negroes. This argument was extend­
ed in abolition drama, however, to exploit the fear that the civil
rights of Northern whites were also endangered.

Dumond catalogues the specific wrongs charged against
slavery: miscegenation, slave breeding, separation of families,
prostitution, mutilation and inhuman treatment, criminal neglect of
injured, ill, and diseased for the sake of economy, and the use of
blood hounds to chase fugitive slaves. Again, abolition drama portrayed all of these ills in its attempt to support the antislavery case. For the most part, however, the plays emphasized the threat which slavery posed against the sanctity of the home and family. It has been suggested that the reason for this emphasis was two-fold: not only did the playwrights gain sympathy for the Negro slaves by concentrating on aspects of life which were familiar to Northern audiences, they were also able to exploit the fear that the same domestic chaos would result in the North if the slave power conspiracy succeeded.

The attempt of abolition drama to counteract the stereotype of the Negro which had become current in America by the nineteenth century was essentially unsuccessful. Some abolitionists themselves apparently did not believe in racial equality as such. These qualifications were manifested in abolition drama through the appearance of "white Negroes" and traditional comic Negroes. Furthermore, abolition playwrights did not take a firm stand on the consequences of emancipation. While several plays imply that Negroes are fully capable of functioning in a white society, the fact remains that by the end of these plays most of the Negroes—including the "white" ones—have either left the United States or are dead.

The characterization of the Southerner, however, took on an extremely important function in abolition drama. His portrait as
arch-aristocrat and mortal sinner not only served as a "scapegoat" for the general reform movement of the nineteenth century, it served as the personification of the two major themes which emerged from this analysis: the sin of slavery and the slave power conspiracy. On this point, as on several others, the present interpretation of abolition drama both reflects and reinforces several recent theories on the nature of the antislavery movement.

It has been suggested, for instance, that the antislavery crusade was part of a more general attack against those forces which the abolitionists believed were subverting the traditional values of America. The second aspect of the "double crusade" had as its goal the restoration of the New England elite as national leaders; an elite which had been displaced as the result of an unholy combination of Northern industrialists and Southern cotton magnates. This theory has been useful in the interpretation of the drama, especially in examining the rationale for the attack on the Southerners and the paradoxical position of the Negro in these plays. Thus, this analysis suggests that the attack on the Southern aristocracy, as such, had little relevance to the evils of slavery, unless it was in part motivated by the desire to discredit the capacity of Southern leadership. However, if the abolitionists were successful in convincing the nation that the "traditional" way of life of their forefathers--as
interpreted by the New Englanders—ought to be restored, all traces of the nation's greatest sin also should be removed. The white Anglo-Saxon world should not be stained by the presence of those whose skins were black—the "color of evil." Such a position is implied in the drama.

Further, the concept of "popularizing events" and "functional substitutes," especially those dealing with civil liberties, helped locate and categorize one of the major themes of abolition drama, while the suggestion that the sin of slavery became the major doctrine in the abolition gospel aided in crystallizing the second major theme. At the same time, however, the findings of this study have also amplified and reinforced these ideas. Indeed, attending the theatre itself took on the aspect of a "functional substitute." Uncle Tom's Cabin, for instance, drew people who had previously condemned the theatre as a den of vice. Even Quakers could be found in the audiences of Purdy's National Theatre, where Aiken's version of the play was produced. Audiences were often composed of large numbers of church members and clergymen, and such notables as Henry Ward Beecher and Horace Greeley recommended the play. Indeed, Purdy took to advertising his National Theatre as "the Temple of the Moral Drama." Only a few years before Uncle Tom's Cabin was dramatized, an anti-slavery meeting at the Chatham Street Chapel had been mobbed; now, according to Garrison, "ragged, coatless men and boys in the pit (the
very material of which mobs are made)" cheered "the strongest and the sublimest anti-slavery sentiments." While cheering resistance to the Fugitive Slave Act in itself did little to aid such refugees, attending such a performance—perhaps even reading the drama—did provide a "satisfactory mode of self-expression" to relieve the increasing pressure exerted against slavery created by world public opinion.

By investigating, for instance, the adaptation of formal elements to persuasive ends, this study has also indicated how drama can function as public address. In addition, it has suggested that exemplary characters were used to advocate—if indirectly—certain lines of action for those members of the audience who wished to join the cause. However, while the dramatists were relatively successful in adapting drama to serve as abolition propaganda, there are certain obvious limitations. In some plays, for instance, the emphasis on comedy could well have lessened the impact of the antislavery message. Further, most plays only indirectly suggest things to do, if they do that much; and some possibilities have been entirely neglected. Only one play indicates that political action was the most effective weapon against the slave power, and none of them mention one of the most popular means of agitation—the petition campaign. The oversimplification of issues and characterizations, and the selection of alternatives are two of the most effective aspects of propaganda drama. However, they did not lend themselves to a calm appraisal of the
problem of slavery, nor did they indicate the responsibility which the North shared in trying to solve that problem, especially in terms of racial adjustment. Indeed, the whole atmosphere of abolition drama is charged with emotion. While the pity and sympathy for the Negro slave is related to the appeal to humanitarian sentiments which appeared in early antislavery plays, these emotions are more often overshadowed by the hate and anger generated against the Southern masters. The hatred for the sin of slavery, advocated by such early militant abolitionists as Theodore Weld, soon became hatred for the sinner, and the plays often exhibit an unwarranted self-righteousness.

Such limitations, however, are inherent in the form itself; there was no pretense of objectivity. While abolition dramatists were concerned with establishing credibility and a sense of probability, they were also eager to present the strongest possible case against slavery. The reformer, says Arthur M. Schlesinger, "has always had his day in court, and if his case was good enough, he has won the verdict." Although the cost of the verdict on slavery was high, and although the value of the battle itself has been questioned, abolition playwrights, along with all antislavery agitators, carried the case to the people: the decision was theirs.

Although this study, by taking advantage of one of the few remaining sources of untapped primary material, has filled a gap in the prodigious knowledge of the antislavery movement, it also suggests
several future studies. The few extant pro-slavery plays could, for instance, be examined in a similar manner. Further, it has already been suggested that the antislavery movement, and its accompanying drama, was part of a more general reform movement; a movement which also produced several plays. Thus, a study which would place abolition drama in the context of reform drama would extend our knowledge of this important area. Close rhetorical analysis of a body of drama--either plays by a specific author, or the plays in a specific movement or period--would add to our knowledge of drama as functioning public address. This investigation also suggests that plays can be used as social documents to illustrate the history and movement of ideas; at least of popular ideas. Finally, this study confirms the idea that an important function of American drama has been actively to engage in major national debates, and to take a stand on moral, political, social and religious problems. Continued study in this area will increase our appreciation of this function, and broaden our precise understanding of American dramatic literature.
FOOTNOTES: CONCLUSION


2. Ibid., pp. 39-40.


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