

issue, almost the entire South, following the lead of Calhoun, pronounced slavery in the United States a positive good. This change was partially due to conviction; but undoubtedly it arose in part from the fact that the slaveholder grew weary of defending what he confessed to be an evil, and, in answer to the cry of the Abolitionist, he veered around, took the offensive, and pronounced slavery a good thing. The question was also, as we have seen, an economic one. If slavery was an economic good, as the people of the South believed, it must also be a moral good; and if both, it ought to be defended and extended. In these latter days, since the institution is a thing of the past, the universal verdict is that which antedated the career of Calhoun—that slavery was an evil, an unmitigated evil.¹⁴²

Nevertheless there were pleasant features in connection with slavery, especially in the border states, where it existed in a mild form. Many a slave was better kept by a humane master than he could have kept himself had he been free. In many a home the attachment between the owner and his slave was a sincere one; the slave was educated and taught religion, and was practically a member of the family. Many of this class had little desire for freedom. But the great majority of slaves were not of this class. Except the house servants, coachmen, and the like, the slaves of the cotton states were toilers in the field. They spent their lives in unrequited toil; and to one who had a spark of the consciousness of manhood or womanhood, what a dreary, cheerless, hopeless life it must have been!

¹⁴² That slavery was a great drawback to the South, from an economic standpoint, is shown very forcibly, with many statistics, in the first chapter of Helper's "Impending Crisis." This book, written by a southerner and published in 1857, was an unanswerable arraignment of slavery.