THE IREDELL EXPRESS,
PUBLISHED WEEKLY,
E. B. DRAKE. BY W. P. DRAKE.
EUGENE B. DRAKE & SON,
Editors and Proprietors.
TERMS OF THE PAPER,
$2 a Year, in Advance.

THE IREDELL EXPRESS.

A Family Newspaper---Devoted to Politics, Agriculture, Manufactures, Commerce, and Miscellaneous Reading.

Vol. III. Statesville, N. C., Friday, January 20, 1860. No. 7.

TERMS OF ADVERTISING.

One Dollar a square for the first week, and Twenty-five Cents for every week thereafter Sixteen lines or less will make a square.—Deductions made in favor of standing matter as follows:

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Poetry.

[From the Southern Field and Fireside.]

A Dream of Locust Dell.

A PRIZE POEM.

By Mrs. Julia L. Keyes.

What spell of enchantment is that which enthralls me,
When winding the mystical mazes of dreams?
What spirit is that which alluringly calls me,
And leads me away, over mountains and streams?

I see from afar a rich landscape unfolding—
A beautiful grove—a lake sleeping below—
'Tis my own Locust Dell once more I'm beholding,
As on wings of the zephyr, then, floating, I go.

I have reached it again, and the misty reflection
Of childhood o'er powers me with pleasure and pain;
These musings, they seem but a dim recollection
Of something I've lost, that I cannot regain.

I wander along, in this Lethean existence,
I weep, and my tears fall like dew on the grass;
I see a white mansion, not now in the distance;
I touch my own gate latch, and entering, I pass.

So lightly and cautiously treading, I enter
The hall where my voice in its infancy rung—
I pause for a moment, when reaching the centre,
And list for the sound of some welcoming tongue.

The quivering moonbeams and shadows are falling,
Like ghastly illusions along the dark floor.
Why suddenly, thus, is that vision appalling?
Why throbs my wild heart as it never throbbed before?

I open the chambers, I now am unwilling;
No farther the mansion I wish to explore;
I feel a strange dampness the atmosphere filling—
The chill wind is rushing within the hall door.

Oh! where are the loved ones? oh! where have they wandered?
Why stands the dear homestead thus bared to the blast?
'Twas thus, while weak fainting with anguish, I pondered
That memory appeared with a scroll of the past.

The spirit of slumber still did not forsake me;
Again as on wings of the zephyr I flew.
The fond, rapturous breath of the morn did not wake me;
I treaded the labyrinth of dreaming anew.

I saw, in a clear gushing fountain, a flower—
On its bosom a drop of the crystaline spray;
I stooped! but the spell of some magical power
Prevented my taking the blossom away.

I watched the bright pearl drop, it slowly distended—
The blush of the rose stained the hue of the sky;
I saw a new world in the other secluded—
Its groves and its lakes I could fancily espy.

A solid clustering tree—a white mansion was gleaming—
Two wandered together beneath the soft shade;
The pearl drop has fallen—I wake from my dreaming
To see the long shadows the sunbeams have made.

Oh! I know 'tis the place I have seen in my sleeping!
Yonder mansions our Saviour prepared the saints to—
Love's vigilance still o'er their child they are keeping,
When I pass the dark valley I'll not be alone.

Miscellaneous.

A Capital Union Letter.

To VICTOR HUGO:

SIR—Your letter to the London Star has found its way into the American press, for which it was doubtless intended. If ardent enthusiasm could win justice from her strict course, yours might had some effect upon the destiny of John Brown. But all eloquence of genius cannot take the blackness from treason, or the crimson stain from murder. It requires something more than an outburst of the fine poetry to turn crime into patriotism—something more than impetuous denunciations to check the solemn footsteps of justice.

Before this time you will have learned that Virginia has vindicated the majesty of her laws; and that John Brown and his unhappy confederates have passed to a higher tribunal for judgement. You will learn, also, that out of nearly thirty millions of people, spreading over a great continent, there is but a handful of men and women who have received the news of this execution with disapproval. North and South the great body of our people acquiesce in the fate of John Brown, as an inevitable necessity—a solemn obligation to the laws. Like you, we may feel compassion for the man who was brave even in his crimes; but he was a great criminal, and so perished. God have mercy upon his soul!

The impulses of humanity which prompted your letter meet with sympathy from every true heart. But no outburst of compassion, no denunciation from abroad, is likely to influence a people who have learned to govern their passions while they protect their rights.

When, in the ardor of your fancy, Washington stood before you—immortal with heavenly greatness—your intellect should have gone a step farther, and informed itself more correctly regarding the Constitution, to establish which he gave the best years of a glorious life. You would have learned that each State of this Union is sovereign in itself.

To establish the distant sovereignty of these States and link them in one beautiful confederation, concessions were made and obligations of forbearance were entered upon to which the sacred honor of our Revolutionary fathers was pledged—not for themselves alone, but for their children and children's children. These obligations make slavery with us a forbidden subject.

Washington himself was born in a slave-holding State—lived and died the master of slaves. Neither on the battle field, the floor of Congress nor in the Presidential chair, did he suggest the possibility of revolt against the solemn compact made in the Constitution.

Had treason like that of Old John Brown, broken out in this time, he would undoubtedly have done what James Buchanan is doing now. Maintaining his august position as the chief of a great confederation, our President respects the rights of a sovereign State, over whose internal laws he has no authority, and leaves to her courts the punishment or pardon of the treason which broke out on her territory.

Washington could have done no more than this, crown him with the halo of poety as you will.

Virginia a sovereign State, has maintained her authority. John Brown is dead. Proven guilty of treason, condemned for atrocious murders, he has atoned for these crimes on the scaffold. It is impossible for a man to stand upon the verge of eternity, into which he must be launched by a violent death, without filling every good heart with grief and compassion. But when he is brave, when his path of blood has been lighted by the lurid torch of fanaticism or insanity, such minds as yours, affluent, earnest, and poetical may be expected to clothe his crimes in white garments, and forgetting the murderer in the brave man, sing pæans to the martyr of a vivid imagination only.

I am of a sex and of a nature to whom these feelings are kindred. I cannot think of old John Brown upon the scaffold without a shudder through all my being. I cannot think of a man made in the image of God, suffering an ignominious death without thrills of pain. But I find it impossible to fix my mind on the scaffold of this old man. It goes back to his victims at Harper's Ferry—to the women made widows by the outbreak of a single morning—to the orphans who had never wronged him so cruelly bereaved by his crime. I see the two sons who blindly followed his lead, fall martyrs to his rebellious spirit.

I look beyond all this, far away into the beautiful South, and instead of an old man on the gallows, I see thousands of my own country women, gentle, good and lovely, given up a prey to wild insurrection—I see those murderous pikes, manufactured with such cruel forethought, piercing their bosoms—I see proud, strong men struggling against the brute strength of their own household servants. This picture strikes my compassion dumb, and I can only cover my face and pray God to have mercy on the old man's soul!

John Brown was tried, condemned, and executed as a traitor—a guard of American citizens stood around the scaffold; sad at heart, but steady in their devotion to the laws. The legislature of the great Commonwealth sat, deliberately, after his sentence, and pronounced it just. The Federal Union, in which thirty millions of souls throb, stood by in solemn silence while the treason of this man was expiated.

Out of all those thirty millions not one hundred thousand can be found to join with you in condemning the execution of John Brown, while every good heart among them must sympathize in the pity for his fate, which mingles so eloquently with your denunciations.

Some there may be—nay, certainly are—who would add bitterness to your words, and wing them, like poisoned arrows, far and wide, if they had the power. But these are the very men and women who instigated his crime, who urged him on to revolt, and shrunk away into safe places when the gloom of his deeds settled around him—men and women who make money by incendiary books, sermons, and lectures; and while they incite crimes which coin gold for themselves, have no courage to meet the danger when it arises. But thousands and tens of thousands share your pity for the old man—guilty and mad as a he was—while they put your demonstrations aside with calm forbearance, feeling how little knowledge you possess on a subject which agitates you so deeply.

But if the great mass of my countrymen join in your pity for the unhappy man, it is not because they condemn his execution or sympathyze with his revolt. Probably twenty-nine millions and nine hundred thousand of our people look upon execution as a full and solemn atonement for crimes in which they have no sympathy. Our country is now divided into three political parties, none of which will endorse this rebellion or condemn the course justice has taken. When you call upon the Federal Union to interpose its authority against the laws of Virginia, there is not a schoolboy throughout the land—for to all such our Constitution is a text book—who would not smile at your idea that the general government has any right to interfere with the legal acts of an independent Commonwealth, or that the majority of a single State would interfere, if it had the power.

Your picture of John Brown's trial is a painful one. It must be a hard heart which does not swell with compassion as it presents itself; "Upon a wretched pallet, with six half gaping wounds, scarcely conscious of surrounding sounds, bathing his mattress with blood, and with the ghostly presence of his two dead sons forever before him." Thus you place the unhappy man before the world, forgetting that those ghastly wounds are but the evidence of a more ghastly crime—the fearful witnesses by which the guilt was confirmed.

It is, indeed, a terrible picture you have drawn, but the streets of Harper's Ferry had one more terrible still. There, innocent men, all unconscious of danger, were shot down like wild animals. There widows, newly bereaved, knelt moaning over their dead, and orphan children cried aloud for the parents that John Brown had so ruthlessly murdered. This picture you have forgotten to place side by side with the other; but we who love our countrymen have sympathy for the innocent as well as pity for the guilty.

You complain that his trial was hurried, that the jury sat only forty minutes, and that all the proceedings were indecorously urged forward; but were they so swift as the rifle balls that shot down unarmed men in the streets at Harper's Ferry? Were they so ruthless as John Brown's midnight descent upon a sleeping village in Kansas, where husbands and sons were dragged out of their beds, and shot down within hearing of their wives and mothers? Is this the man whom you speak of as "pious, austere, animated with the old puritan spirit, inspired by the spirit of the Gospel;" while you call his companions "sacred martyrs?"

This, sir, is the blasphemy of a highly-wrought imagination—excuse me saying—not original with you; for wilder and more irreligious men than I trust you are have gone to greater lengths, and blasphemed more eloquently than this. They have pronounced John Brown's gallows holier than the cross, and held up his rebellion as a rebuke to the unfinished mission of the Savior.

"At this moment," you say, "America attracts the attention of the whole world."

Not at this moment only, but ever since she became a free nation this has been a truth. To all the kingly governments of Europe she has always been a contrast and an irritation—a subject for criticism, and, whenever an opportunity for blame arose, of denunciation. It is not strange that, then, a rebellion in part fostered in Europe should call forth bitter remarks there.

"Let the judges of Charlestown and the slaveholding jurors, and the whole population of Virginia ponder on it well—they are watched—they are not alone in the world."

They have pondered on it well, and the execution of John Brown has taken place.

If the whole American Republic were responsible for his death, as you say it is—it would simply be responsible for a most painful duty, solemnly performed; and received with mourning resignation even by the most merciful, because of its imperative necessity. Justice demanded the life of this man, for he had taken human life—necessity demanded it, for he was the spirit and soul of a treason that threatened the foundations of our nationality—that would forever have been plotting more bloodshed so long as lived on earth.

You call the execution of Brown a "brotherhood of blood"—you say that "the fasces of our splendid republic will be bound together by the running noose that hangs from the gibbet."

If this were true—if any brotherhood of blood is connected with this painful event, it rests neither with the "whole" American republic nor with the State of Virginia; but its red track may be found across the foam of the Atlantic, linking Exeter Hall with the sensation pulpits on this side of the ocean. The weight of John Brown's blood lies with England and the confederates of England who have by their teachings, their money and crafty sympathy, led the old man on to death. What but this "hand of blood" did the people of England expect when they gathered penny contributions throughout the length and breadth of their land, in order to urge this incendiary spirit forward in America? Penny contributions—as if Liberty were a Tyrant or a Pauper, to be intimidated or bribed by their infamous copper.

What was this contribution intended for? An insult, or a fund for incendiary uses? If sent to the United States for the purpose of inciting insurrection, or in any way opposing our laws, then that money has been the price of John Brown's blood, and was the first strand of the halter that hung from his gallows.

What did the people of Scotland expect when they rent the American flag in twain, and hung it, tattered and quivering beneath the dignity, over the head of an American woman, who smiled benignly under the insult, and received alms after it was offered? Out of such acts and such insults, the halter of John Brown was woven; to such insidious encouragement the old man owes his death.

Was there an English man or woman living who supposed that a great nation would allow the treason thus instigated on a foreign soil to ripen in her bosom, and fail to punish it with all the force of her just laws?

It is the people of England, then, with a very small party in the United States, who are united by this "bond of blood." It reddens the vestments of our sensation ministers, not the ermine of our judges. The sacramental tables of our political churches are encrimsoned with it, and the places once sacred are overshadowed by the old man's crime. In these places when you call John Brown "the champion of Christ," it may be considered meek and holy language; but the great mass of our American people will turn from such impiety with a shudder.

Your letter closes with an appeal to our republic, calling it the sister of the French ripublic. How little you know of the great land you compliment and revile in the same breath. Liberty with us subjects herself to the laws which she has inspired, and he who revolts against those laws sins against her and the whole people whom she protects. She sprang another Minerva from the minds of patriot statesmen, modestly clad, serene and beautiful; she presides over our republic, and has so far protected it from anarchy or oppression.

It is that our republic may have no sisterhood with those of France that such insurrections as you denominate "a sacred duty" are met with the whole force of our laws. Were they permitted to obtain a foothold in the land, our Republic might indeed become sister to those of France, and perish as they did.

Had the insurrection at Harper's Ferry succeeded, the scenes of anarchy which left France lying like an unnatural monster satiated with the blood of her own children might have been repeated here. But we are not yet prepared to see innocent babes shot down in battallions, or fair girls compelled to drink blood frothing from a yet warm human heart, in order to redeem their fathers from the hatchet. We are not prepared to see our pastors slaughtered at the foot of their own altars, or hear coarse songs thundering through the solemn arches of our temples. It is to save our country from consanguity with republics sounded on atrocities like these, that our laws crush rebellion when it first crests itself.

Rest, sir, upon your knees before the star-spangled banner. While our pulpits are turned into political forums, and their ministers preach rapine and bloodshed, the foot of our flag-staff is, perhaps, the most sacred place for devotion that we have to offer you.—There, certainly, a pure spirit should inspire your prayers. Yes, kneel reverently, and plead that the great country protected by its folds may fling off the poison so insidiously circulated in her bosom by foreign nations. The spirits of our immortal statesmen will be around you when that prayer is uttered; and, if you are in truth a patriot, one heavenly voice will whisper, in tones that must be changed if they do not penetrate to the depths of your soul—"I know no North, no South, no East, no West; nothing but my country."

Kneel, kneel, I bessech you, sir, and let this patriotic sentiment be the burden of your prayer! Millions of souls on this side the Atlantic will swell the breath, as it passes your lips, into a cloud of sacred insense, which the spirit of Washington and the mighty ones who have joined him, shall waft to the feet of Jehovah and grow holier from the work. ANN S. STEPHENS.

NEW YORK, Dec. 27, 1839.

Slave and Free Labor.

Extract from an Address by Hon. A. H. H. STUART, before the Agricultural Society of Virginia, at Richmond, October 28, 1859.

"I proceed now to the consideration of the second topic to which I propose to invite your attention, viz: the relation of agriculture to the labor of the country.

In treating this branch of my subject I do not propose to limit my observations to the labor which is directly employed in agricultural pursuits, but to present a brief review of its relations to the whole system of American labor, in all its departments; and in this connexion I desire to make some remarks on the two systems of labor, free and slave, which exist in the two great geographical divisions of our Confederacy; and to inquire whether it be true, as has been asserted in various quarters, and on high authority, that there is an inherent, necessary, and continuing antagonism between the two systems.

As preliminary to this inquiry, it may be proper to glance at the origin of the system of slave-labor in the United States.

History informs us that more than a century elapsed after the discovery of America before any successful effort was made to establish permanent settlements of the white race on the eastern coast of our country. The first colony was founded at Jamestown, in 1607, but for many years it had to struggle against such discouraging difficulties that it barely maintained a precarious existence. A few years later the Pilgrims landed on Plymouth Rock, and by degrees sparsely populated colonies spread themselves along the coast from Maine to Georgia. The dangers and privations incident to the settlement and subjugation of a new country prevented rapid immigration to it; and, notwithstanding the strong inducements that were offered, in the form of liberal grants of land, the growth of the colonies was by no means satisfactory to those interested. The number of laborers was inadequate to the efficient settlement and cultivation of the fertile lands. To supply this demand the Mother Country, about the year 1620, resorted to the expedient of introducing into these colonies a class of involuntary immigrants, in the persons of Africans, who had been captured in the wars between hostile tribes, in their native country, and, according to their usages, sold into slavery. This policy was approved and practiced by the colonies for more than a century.

At the date of the declaration of our national independence this system of involuntary servitude, or slavery, had become engrafted on the institutions of all the colonies. I use the term *all* the colonies advisedly, for, although an impression has very generally prevailed that slavery never existed in some of the New England States, the fact is otherwise, as may be seen by reference to the census tables. According to the census of 1790, there were 158 slaves in New Hampshire and 17 in Vermont, and the official returns of 1830 show that there were slaves at that time in every New England State except Vermont.

At the commencement of our national existence, therefore, a compound system of labor—partly free and partly slave—pervaded the whole Confederacy.

This system continued in all the States until the drudgery of subduing the primeval forests, and clearing the country for cultivation and comfortable habitation, had been accomplished. Then the citizens of the Northern and Middle States began to turn their attention to other branches of industry, and the discovery was soon made that while negro labor may be profitably employed in pursuits which require mere physical strength, it cannot compete successfully with white labor in those avocations in which skill, ingenuity, and intellect constitute important elements. Experience also demonstrated at an early day that the negro race were physically unfitted to endure the rigors of a Northern climate. These considerations led to a general conviction in the Northern colonies that negro labor was unprofitable, and induced them to adopt measures to rid themselves of the incumbrance of an unproductive population.

And here it may be instructive to pause and contemplate the means by which that object was accomplished.

Some of our brethren of the North are disposed, like certain of the Pharisees of old, to thank God "that they are not as other men are," and to assume to themselves and their States great credit for disinterestedness and benevolence in liberating their slaves. I am as little disposed as any other man to withhold from them the praise to which they are justly entitled for their many acknowledged virtues. I take pleasure in bearing testimony to their intelligence, integrity, industry, frugality, public spirit, and general benevolence. But respect for the truth of history constrains me to deny their right to be regarded as the benefactors of the negro race.

A general impression prevails, both in the North and South, that the people of the Northern States, influenced by a generous spirit of philanthropy, and a noble devotion to the cause of human liberty, voluntarily emancipated their slaves by legislative enactments. If their legislation had been such as is generally supposed, it might well be questioned how far it would establish their just claim to any high degree of merit in a moral point of view; because, as I have already stated, it had become manifest, before any such laws were adopted, that the slaves of the Northern States were a burden rather than a benefit. The policy of those States might, therefore, be fairly attributed rather to a disposition to rid themselves of an ignorant, improvident, and unprofitable population than to a desire to do justice to a "down-trodden" race.

But what are the facts of the case? My professional duty has led me to investigate the legislation of some four or five of the Northern States on the subject of slavery; and I have yet to find a law of any one of them by which a single slave has been made free. I think I may safely challenge the production of any such law from the archives of any colony or State of this Confederacy. This is a bold proposition, but I believe it to be true. As far as I have observed the whole system of Northern legislation has been directed, not to the emancipation of slaves, but to the removal of the slave population beyond their limits. All their laws on the subject were prospective. None of them, as far as I have been able to discover, operated to confer freedom on the slaves in being. They simply provided that the offspring of female slaves who should be born within the jurisdiction of the States passing such laws after specified dates should be deemed free. All who were slaves at the time remained slaves.—The laws were intended to operate only on the after-born children, and the rights secured to these were altogether contingent, and could never vest without the concurrence of the owner of the female slave. There was no prohibition of the removal of the females. If the owner thought proper to retain them in the State which had adopted such laws, her offspring, born after the appointed day, became free. Freedom, therefore, even to the after-born children was not the effect of legislation alone, but of legislation and the concurrent action of the master in retaining the female in the State until the law could take effect on the children.—Without the consent of the master, indicated by retaining her in the State until after the prescribed date, the law would have been inoperative.

It requires no great sagacity to see that the whole object and tendency of their legislation was, as I have already stated, not the emancipation of slaves but their removal to other States. It amounted, simply, to a notice to the owner to sell his female slaves before a given day, under penalty of forfeiting her increase. The practical effects were such as might have been reasonably anticipated. The owners of the females took especial care to sell them Southward before the laws took effect, and in this way the unprofitable slaves were transferred to the South, where the climate was more propitious and the productions better adapted to their peculiar capacities for labor.

This view of the effects of these laws is strongly fortified by facts derived from the census tables. We have no authentic means of ascertaining the number of slaves in any of the States prior to 1790, and we cannot therefore institute all the inquiries which we might desire, but we do know that the policy of removal, miscalled emancipation, was adopted between 1775 and 1790, and was in full operation at the latter date. A reference to the census of 1790 shows that the whole number of free negroes in the nine Northern States (including Maine) at that date was but 27,109. The fact that the number of free negroes in those States was so small in 1790 is very persuasive, at least to prove that under this much lauded system of legislation freedom accrued to a very small proportion of the slaves in the Northern States. Much the larger number were sold to the people of the South, and the descendants of those slaves, now held under the warrant of title given by Northern venders, constitute a large portion of the slave population of the Southern States; and the purchase money paid for them by citizens of the South contributed in no small degree to build up the manufactures and commerce of the Northern and Middle States.

It is also instructive to observe how the anti-slavery legislation of the North has kept pace with the increase of the growth of the great staples of the South. "It was not until the latter part of the eighteenth century, after Hargraves and Arkwright had invented the spinning-jenny and the cotton-gin, that cotton became one of the important crops of the Southern States. As late as 1794, when Gen. Pinckney, of South Carolina, enumerated to John Jay the exports of South Carolina, cotton was not included in the list.

The inventions of the great machines above referred to gave a vigorous impulse to the culture of cotton, and it has now become the most important article of American commerce.

Cotton is an article peculiarly adapted to negro labor. Its culture is simple, and requires but little skill. It can be produced profitably only in the Southern States, where the almost vertical rays of the sun and the debilitating influences of the climate render it impossible for the white race to perform the labor necessary to till and secure the crop. The physical peculiarities of the negro, on the other hand, fit him admirably for the work. Created with a system of pores and glands adapted to the tropical climate of his native country, he thrives and grows strong under the sultry heat of the planting States, which would cause the most athletic of the Caucasian race to sink into hopeless prostration.

When cotton became an important crop in the South it opened a wide field for negro labor and created a large demand for negro laborers. The opposite condition of things in the Northern States, where it had been ascertained by actual experiment that negro labor could not be profitably employed, naturally led both sections to adopt a policy which would tend to the transfer of the slave population from the Northern to the Southern States.

In view of these historical facts and logical deductions from them, it is idle to pretend that the legislation of the North was dictated by any sentiment of negrophilism. It was the offspring of an enlightened self-interest, and of those natural and economic laws which lead the adjustment of all things according to their just relations and affinities.

Having thus examined the principles by which Northern policy in regard to slavery was guided, it is proper that I should now advert to the changes which have taken place in public opinion at the South on the same subject.

At the date of our Revolution the agriculture of the South was in a languishing condition, and many of our wisest men attributed its want of prosperity to the existence of slavery.—Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Mason, Edmund Randolph, and other sages of that day were deeply imbued with anti-slavery sentiments. Jefferson, in his first draft of the Declaration of Independence, and George Mason, in the preamble to the constitution of Virginia, made it one of the grave causes of complaint against the British sovereign that he had, "by an inhuman use of his negative, refused us permission to exclude negroes by law from Virginia." In his Notes on Virginia, and other productions of his pen, Jefferson expressed his opposition to slavery in the strongest terms, and faithful to his principles, after long and untiring efforts, he succeeded in excluding it from the Northwestern Territory by the ordinance of 1787.

In 1788 George Mason, who had been a member of the Convention which framed the Constitution of the United States, in his letter to the Legislature of Virginia explaining his reasons for withholding his signature from that instrument, assigned, as one of them, its failure to place an immediate interdict on the African slave trade.

I allude to these facts in no spirit of unkindness to either section, but for the purpose of showing that neither section has been governed in its policy by the high principles of benevolence to which they sometimes lay claim. The history of the world will prove that, while individuals may be and often are influenced by the nobler impulses of our nature, communities are controlled by their interest. The Northern and Southern divisions of the Union constitute no exception to this rule. This fact should teach us a lesson of natural, charity and forbearance.

The fact having been established that negro labor is indispensable for the cultivation of cotton, and that white labor can be economically substituted for it in the production of the cereals, live stock, and things that are grown in the Northern and Middle States, there has been a uniform tendency of the labor of the country to adjust itself according to this standard. Slave labor is rapidly concentrating itself in the planting States; while free labor is fast taking possession of the grain-growing and grazing States.

Planting and negro labor have a natural affinity which, legislate as we may, will eventually assert its power. Labor, like every other commodity, will seek the best market. It will go where it will command the highest price. This great principle of political economy withdrew slave labor from the wheat and rye fields of the North, and it is this principle which is now draining the slave population from the border or provision States to the planting States.

The high prices of the products of Southern plantations enhances the value of slaves, and they are being rapidly sold to the planters. The interest on the prices they now command in market is almost equal to the annual value of their labor when employed in farming the farmer finds it to his interest to sell them.

The operation of this cause will be felt more sensibly every day. The acquisition of Texas and the reclamation of the swamp lands of the Southern States, by enlarging the area of the cotton and sugar region, has tended greatly to enhance the price of negroes, and to withdraw them from Virginia and the border States. Should additional territory be acquired in that quarter the exportation of slaves will be accelerated, and at no distant day it may become the pecuniary interest of Virginia to follow the lead of the Northern States, and send her slaves to the South. Every thing seems to indicate a steady advance in the price of Negroes. The demand for cotton is constantly increasing, and the failure of attempts to produce it elsewhere has shown that the world must be dependant on the United States for its supply. By a wise provision of nature every country has the capacity to produce the food necessary for its population. The price of food must, therefore, be regulated and restrained by the general production of the world. But only a limited district of country is adapted to the production of cotton. It can, therefore, have but little competition in the market, and as the demand increases more rapidly than the supply, the price of cotton, and the labor necessary to produce it, must continue to advance. No one can yet predict the effect which the extension of commercial relations with China, Japan, and the East Indies is to have on the prices of the great staples of the South.

These facts lead thoughtful men to inquire whether, at a future day, the line between the free and slave States may not be more sharply and distinctly defined than it is at present, and the institution of slavery be restricted exclusively to the planting States.

The tendency is certainly in that direction at present, and a rise of twenty per cent. on the present value of slaves will lead to such an exodus as has never yet been witnessed in Virginia and the other grain-growing States. In this aspect it is time that our people should consider whether the interests of Virginia will be advanced by the acquisition of additional territory adapted to the culture of cotton, when that acquisition is to be followed by the loss of a large portion of her effective labor.

This brief review of the history and progress of slavery is, I think, sufficient to show that, for the last seventy-five years, the tendency of the labor of our country has been to adjust itself with reference to the productions of the different sections; free labor having acquired the ascendency in all the mechanical, commercial, and farming departments of industry, and slave labor in those connected with the production of rice, sugar, cotton, and tobacco.