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Cotton Whigs and union: the textile manufacturers of Massachusetts and the coming of the Civil War

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Dissertation

COTTON WHIGS AND UNION:

THE TEXTILE MANUFACTURERS OF
MASSACHUSETTS AND THE COMING OF
THE CIVIL WAR.

By

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INTRODUCTION

In 1941, Philip Foner, in his Business and Slavery, made an appeal for a more detailed study of the Northern business man and his reaction to the coming of the Civil War. Countering the popular interpretation that the war was the product of two conflicting economic systems, Professor Foner presented his own observations regarding the concerted efforts of the New York financial interests to check any and all movements which tended to precipitate an intersectional struggle. The documented reactions of this particular group of Northern business men could not be explained in terms of an oversimplified economic interpretation of the Civil War, and for this reason Professor Foner pointed to the need for more intensive research into the economic sources and materials of the ante-bellum period.¹ Foner's challenge has failed to arouse very much historical enthusiasm, apparently, for many recent historical treatments of the critical years before the Civil War continue to generalize upon the essential economic antagonisms of the North and the South, and still look upon the Northern industrialist as the catalytic agent which propelled the sections into bloody warfare.

One of the most distinctive presentations of this

¹ Philip Foner, Business and Slavery (Chapel Hill, 1941), pp. 318-323.

economic point of view came into the twentieth century with the writings of Charles Beard. The South, according to Beard, was an area of "planters operating in a limited territory with incompetent labor on soil of diminishing fertility," in contrast to the industrial men of the North who "swept forward... exulting in the approaching triumph of machine industry, [and who] warned the planters of their ultimate subjection."¹ Not only did Beard consider the Civil War to be an "irrepressible conflict" resulting from the clash of these two conflicting economies, but attributed the immediate cause of the war to Northern "capitalism."² So intense was Beard's criticism of the materialistic greed of Northern "capitalism" and its immoderate demands upon the South, that one commentator remarked that "the Southern planters very nearly became the heroes of the narrative, and Beard very nearly became the ally of John C. Calhoun."³

This economic interpretation was carried into the twenties by the work of Vernon Parrington, who maintained most of the essential ideas of Beard regarding the origins of the

¹Charles and Mary Beard, The Rise of American Civilization (2 vols.; New York, 1927), II, 6-7.

²Ibid., p. 10.

³Thomas J. Pressly, Americans Interpret Their Civil War (Princeton, 1954), p. 208.

Civil War. Enthusiastic about the "agrarian democracy" of the West, sympathetic at times toward the interests of the South, Parrington had little regard for the ideals of a middle class which was busily engaged in "creating a plutocracy."¹ In the decades before the war, claimed Parrington, the major parties of the United States chose to follow the economic interests of "master groups, heedless of all humanitarian issues"; and once the war was over, the "slave economy could never again thwart the ambitions of the capitalist economy."²

Widely circulated during the late twenties and early thirties, the age of the Great Depression, the economic interpretations of Beard and Parrington found obvious acceptance at a time when hostility to American capitalism and business methods was unusually strong. Many Southern historians, in particular, seized upon these ideas to lend support to the thesis that war had been thrust upon an unwilling South. Frank L. Owsley, for example, constantly emphasized the conflict between the agrarian South and the industrial North, which resulted in bloodshed when the industrial "plutocracy" of the North tried to force its way of life upon the South.³ The philosophy of the North was intolerant, crusading and standardizing, wrote Owsley, and as a result, "Juggernaut drove his car across the South."⁴

¹Vernon L. Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought (3 vols.; New York, 1927-30), III, xxiv.

²Ibid., pp. xxiii, 3.

³Frank L. Owsley, "The Fundamental Cause of the Civil War: Egocentric Sectionalism," Journal of Southern History, VII (1941), 4-6.

⁴Frank L. Owsley, "The Irrepressible Conflict," Twelve Southerners, I'll Take My Stand (New York, 1930), p. 91.

Although in recent years many of the extreme conclusions of the Beard thesis have been somewhat modified, and concessions have been made in the direction of admitting certain points of similarity between North and South, many historians continue to stress the elements of sectional "divergence" in the years preceding the Civil War.¹ Writers continue to generalize upon New England's "hatred of Southerners and their institutions," and often describe this hatred as so intense that New England would "do everything possible to destroy slavery."² The South is still depicted as a "static, agrarian, debtor section," as opposed to a North which was a "dynamic, commercialized, industrializing, creditor section"; and that because of the presence of these conflicting economic tendencies, there existed a "profound and irrepressible clash of material interests" which would inevitably lead to "warfare between the slave industrial system and the free industrial system."³ Industrial capitalism, "with the banners of righteousness, patriotism and progress over its head," marched

¹Kenneth Stampp, And the War Came (Baton Rouge, 1960), p. 2.

²Roy Nichols, The Disruption of American Democracy (New York, 1948), p. 24.

³Charles W. Thompeon, The Fiery Epoch, 1850-77 (Indianapolis, 1931), p. 25; Henry H. Sims, A Decade of Sectional Controversy, 1851-61 (Chapel Hill, 1942), p. 107.

out to triumph over the agrarian ideals of the South.¹

"Bourgeois acquisitiveness...was in the saddle. Democracy, like the rest of the hindmost, was left for the devil."² In short, to what Professor Charles Grier Sellers has aptly called the "myth of the Monolithic South," there has been added another myth--that of the Koloch of the North, a huge, mechanical automaton, breathing flame, and moving inexorably forward to devour the hapless planters of the South.³

In reviewing the various economic interpretations regarding the clash of economic interests and the role of the Northern capitalist as the prime mover, one cannot help but compare the sweeping generalities regarding the pre-Civil War business man, with the actual amount of factual data concerning his influence in the history of the period. In recent years the market has been flooded with book titles indicating a widespread interest in almost every aspect of the American business man. Hereditary influences, social

¹Avery Craven, The Repressible Conflict, 1830-61 (Baton Rouge, 1939), pp. 26-7.

²Avery Craven, Democracy in American Life (Chicago, 1941), pp. 13, 111-12.

³Charles Grier Sellers, "Who Were the Southern Whigs?" American Historical Review, LIX (1954), 333-346.

backgrounds, intellectual qualifications and psychodynamic motivations have all been statistically recorded, and have provided the background for a plethora of novels, plays and motion pictures dealing with the dramatic involvements of the American man of business.¹ American historiography, too, has shown a remarkable trend toward re-evaluating and re-assessing the contributions of the American entrepreneur.² It is almost impossible to recognize the old "robber barons" of Ida Tarbell, Matthew Josephson and Henry Demarest Lloyd in Allan Nevins' treatment of John D. Rockefeller, or in the recently published study on the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey.³

Unfortunately, however, very little of this modern interest in economic operations has been projected back into the pre-Civil War period. The American business man is apparently regarded by many historians and social scientists as a comparatively new phenomenon which made its appearance

¹B. C. Forbes, ed., America's Fifty Foremost Business Leaders (New York, 1948); Frank Taussig and Carl Joslyn, American Business Leaders: A Study in Social Origins and Social Stratification (New York, 1932); William Henry, "The Business Executive: The Psychodynamics of a Social Role," American Journal of Sociology, LIV (1949), 288-291; William Miller, "American Historians and the Business Elite," Journal of Economic History, IX (1949), 184-200.

²Dexter Perkins, "We Shall Gladly Teach," American Historical Review, LXII (1957), 306.

³Allan Nevins, John D. Rockefeller: The Heroic Age of American Enterprise (2 vols.; New York, 1940); George Gibb and Evelyn Knowlton, The Resurgent Years: History of the Standard Oil Company, 1911-27 (New York, 1957).

after 1870. As a result, the ante-bellum industrialist continues to remain an obscure figure, half-hidden in the mists and shadows of history.

The field of business history, and the more recent school of entrepreneurial history, to be sure, have made outstanding contributions to historical knowledge, by furnishing a wealth of source material on the financial and industrial operations of early American business enterprises, especially those of New England origin. The Pepperell Company, the Whitin Machine Works, and the Saco-Lowell Shops are only a few of the many local ventures whose histories have been recorded by excellent business historians.¹ Such studies, however, tend to focus attention almost exclusively upon the financial structure and corporate operations of the individual companies involved, make little attempt at historical interpretation, and fail to analyze the interplay of those powerful social and political forces which were an integral part of the historical background of the pre-Civil War economy.²

It is in the hope of contributing additional in-

¹ Evelyn H. Knowlton, Pepperell's Progress (Cambridge, 1948); Thomas R. Nevin, The Whitin Machine Works Since 1831 (Cambridge, 1950); George S. Gibb, The Saco-Lowell Shops: Textile Machinery Building in New England (Cambridge, 1950).

² See Louis M. Hacker, review of Gibb and Knowlton, Resurgent Years, in The New York Times Book Review, Jan. 27, 1957.

sight regarding the reactions of the American business man toward the coming of the Civil War that the author has chosen to study one particular group--the cotton textile manufacturers of Massachusetts, as particularly typified by the Lawrence family. In order to more fully appreciate the influence of these men upon the political life and institutions of the United States in the years preceding the Civil War, it will be necessary to analyze not only their industrial capacities and material productivity, but to re-assess their influence upon the society in which they lived, and to consider the important demands which that society made upon them.

In introducing the "colonial mind" to his readers, Vernon Farrington cautioned that "the Puritan and the Yankee were the two halves of the New England whole," and that to overlook or underestimate the contributions of either "is grossly to misinterpret the spirit and character of primitive New England."¹ With Farrington's observation in mind, then, this present study is the story of what happened, later in the history of the Bay State, when the Puritan conscience collided head-on with the Yankee zeal for profit--when the moral desire to uproot the evils of slavery had to be weighed against the economic demands for more slave-grown cotton.

¹Farrington, Main Currents, I, 3-4.

CHAPTER I

LORDS OF THE LOOM

Boston had always been noted for its gentlemen of property and standing. Officers of the Crown, young English bloods, prosperous colonial merchants, conservative Federalist squires--all these and many others had been a part of the long aristocratic heritage that started with European traditions and continued on into the post-revolutionary years. There were, it is true, other towns of the Commonwealth where fortunes were evident and where first families were prominent, but Boston overshadowed them all.

And yet, even Boston had never seen anything like the new aristocracy of wealth which now characterized the fashionable society of Beacon Hill and set the economic patterns of State Street. During the early years of the nineteenth century, old established mercantile classes, grown rich on the profits of Europe and the Orient, had begun to merge with the manufacturers of cotton cloth. The association produced an economic and social elite whose influence would be felt throughout the Commonwealth and the nation.¹

¹Arthur B. Darling, Political Changes in Massachusetts, 1824-1848 (New Haven, 1925), pp. 7-8, 17-18.

The new manufacturing interests had unexpectedly emerged out of the disasters which confronted New England during the Napoleonic struggles. The mercantile empire of the Bay State had first been seriously shaken by Jefferson's crippling Embargo in 1807; and had then been completely devastated in the course of the War of 1812.¹ Caught in the crossfire of economic warfare, her ships rotting at the docks, her specie rapidly diminishing and her entire economy crumbling, New England had been forced to seek safety, not in wooden hulls, counting houses or captains' cabins--but in crude factories. As an alternative to commercial oblivion, manufacturing seemed a practical solution, since it would not only provide a necessary outlet for the surplus capital of Boston, but would also meet the increasing demands of the interior sections of the country which were literally begging for the luxury of manufactured goods.²

¹Louis A. Sears, Jefferson and the Embargo (Durnas, 1927), pp. 145-153; Samuel E. Morison, Maritime History of Massachusetts (Boston, 1921), pp. 205-6.

²Washington Expositor, March 19, 1808, cited in Sears, Embargo, p. 164. JOHN Gould Curtis, "Industry and Transportation," Commonwealth History of Massachusetts (5 vols.; A. B. Hart, ed.; New York, 1929) (hereafter cited as "Com. Hist."), IV, 413-14.

The production of American cotton goods had just begun when the end of the War brought stiff foreign competition and unexpected domestic jealousies.¹ England dumped her stockpiles of textiles on the world market as soon as possible, and threatened to suffocate the "infant" industry. Desperately the Northern manufacturer called upon the national government for protection; and in the light of the enthusiastic national spirit which marked the character of the Fourteenth Congress, there was every reason for the factory owner to expect that assistance would soon arrive.²

The high hopes for federal assistance were soon rudely shattered as the weaknesses of the eventual Tariff of 1816 disclosed to the harassed cotton manufacturers the existence of a more subtle enemy at home--the shipping interests. At the very moment when the cotton men were demanding tariff and protection, New England sea captains, merchants and traders were straining every nerve and muscle to keep alive in a hostile world market. The

¹Nathan Appleton, Introduction of the Power Loom (Lowell, 1858); Caroline Ware, Early New England Cotton Manufacture (Boston, 1931).

²Wiles Register, VII (1818), 338-9; James Ford, "Social Conditions and Social Changes," Comm. Hist., III, 510-11; Robert G. Albion, The Rise of the New York Port (New York, 1939), pp. 60-1.

last thing they wanted was a national program of restriction and control. Angrily they fought against protection, and eventually they succeeded in modifying the tariff proposals of 1816 to the point where they promised everything and yielded nothing.¹

And so the fight between the merchant and the miller--the wharf versus the waterfall--was in full force, with the cotton men getting the worst of it. Foreign competition, high commodity prices, phenomenal cotton prices, discouraging production costs and high wages between 1816 and 1819 raised the question as to whether or not the manufacturer could possibly continue to operate.² Only the disastrous economic crash of 1818-19 saved the situation. When the British manufacturer suddenly rejected the fantastic American cotton prices and imported the less expensive East India product, American cotton came crashing down from more than thirty cents a pound to less than

¹Edward Stanwood, American Tariff Controversies in the Nineteenth Century (2 vols.; Boston, 1903), I, 131-3; Frank Taussig, Protection to Young Industries (Cambridge, 1883), p. 34; John Sly, "Massachusetts in the National Government, 1820-1861," Conn. Hist., IV, 285.

²Harold U. Faulkner, "Political History of Massachusetts," ibid., pp. 76-7; George Dangerfield, Era of Good Feelings (New York, 1962), pp. 178-9.

fourteen. Commodity prices collapsed, and agricultural staples toppled as European harvests improved and the British corn laws went into operation. The bottom had fallen out of the market, and a crippled economy plummeted to earth, splintered and broken.¹

Amid the shambles of the economic debacle, it was the manufacturer, ironically enough, who emerged, not only unscathed, but in better shape than before. As the prices of cotton, foodstuffs, raw materials, wages and rents fell, the prospect for the manufacturer looked much brighter. Now, for the first time, he could produce at a profit and take advantage of the fallen market to handicap his foreign competition.² Profits led to prosperity, and prosperity led to self-confidence, as cotton manufacturing experienced an unprecedented growth and development during the early twenties, to the point where the cotton men could now assume an air of relative indifference to the tariff question.³ New factories were being built every

¹Dangerfield, Era of Good Feelings, p. 178. England imported 117,955 bales of cotton from the Orient in 1817, and 227,300 bales in 1818.

²Taussig, Protection, pp. 24-5; Stanwood, Controversies, I, 174-5.

³Niles Register, XXI (1821), 39; Amos Lawrence to Abbott Lawrence, April 28, May 28, 1819, William R. Lawrence, Extracts from the Diary and Correspondence of the Late Amos Lawrence (Boston, 1858), pp. 72-3.

day, and mill towns were rising throughout the Bay State, as two distinctive industrial areas gradually took shape.

In the southern part of the State, the cotton industry spread from the Providence-Pawtucket area up along the Blackstone River and moved northeast into Massachusetts, where it exploited the phenomenal water powers of the Fall River. Throughout the twenties and thirties the number of mill towns multiplied, extending along the various small rivers, identical with their rows of workers' houses, the small water power site, the factory, and the ever-present "big house on the hill" where the owner lived.¹ The characteristics of multiplicity and decentralization, typical of the physical aspects of the southern New England manufacturing area, were carried over into the financial operations as well. Ownership was usually by individual or by partnerships, with certain prominent families exerting considerable influence. Capital funds continued to be fairly limited, seldom extending beyond the original financing and re-invested small profits.²

¹Edward C. Kirkland, A History of American Economic Life (New York, 1949), pp. 334-5; Louis Hacker, Triumph of American Capitalism (New York, 1940), pp. 261-2.

²Ware, Cotton, pp. 30, 138, estimates average capitalization at not more than \$30,000.

To the north of Boston, however, industrial operations developed in a much more highly organized and centralized manner. The "Boston Manufacturing Company" at Waltham with which Francis C. Lowell, Nathan Appleton and Patrick Tracy Jackson had been associated during the war, had proven so successful that the investors decided to expand. In 1820 they decided that the splendid water power of the Pawtucket Falls on the Merrimac River, with its thirty foot drop, would be ideally suited for the type of manufacturing they had in mind. Moving quickly and quietly, the enterprisers bought up the titles to most of the water power sites and real estate in the locality, and on December 1, 1821, formed themselves into the "Merrimac Manufacturing Company" with a capital stock of six hundred shares. Patrick T. Jackson and Nathan Appleton were the principal stock-holders with 180 shares apiece; while 150 shares were distributed to the Boston Manufacturing Company. The wheels of a new plant began to roll on September 1, 1823, turning out not only increased amounts of the regular cloth and sheeting which the facilities of the Waltham plant could not provide, but also manufacturing fancy fabrics and printed calicoes on a scale never seen before in the United States.¹

¹Appleton, Power Looms, pp. 17-23. Also see Nathan Appleton and John A. Lowell, Correspondence in Relation to the Early History of the City of Lowell (Boston, 1848), pp. 10-11, 17-19.

The dominant characteristics of these "northern" manufacturing developments, even during the initial decade of their industrial development, were their high degree of capital organization and the corporate structure of their administrations. The original capitalization of the Lowell Mills, for example, had already passed the million dollar mark, as increased amounts of Boston capital began to see the possibilities in widening the scope of their investments. With increased liability and the further complexity of managerial responsibility, however, neither partnerships nor joint-stock arrangements were considered adequate or safe, and so the corporation form, authorized by State charter, came into greater use. With this financial system, not only were the liabilities of the shareholders themselves limited, but more important to the enterprisers, much larger amounts of capital stock could be obtained through the sale of corporate securities.¹

So successful were the operations of the new plants, and so rapidly did the new industrial locality build up--due in great part to the organizing genius of Francis C. Lowell and his ideas regarding a paternal mill community--that by 1824 the district was incorporated into

¹Edwin M. Dodd, American Business Corporations until 1860: With Special Reference to Massachusetts (Cambridge, 1954), pp. 338-9. Darling, Massachusetts, p. 11, estimates capital investment in the late 50's at \$12,000,000.

a town which was named, appropriately enough, "Lowell." As the new town prospered and the Merrimac Manufacturing Company paid out encouraging dividends (one hundred dollars a share in 1825), other companies began to spring up. The Merrimac Company was selling land and water rights to the Hamilton Manufacturing Company as early as 1825, and that company started operations with a capitalization of \$600,000. By 1828 the Appleton Company and the Lowell Company had been incorporated. In 1830, the Suffolk and Tremont Mills had selected sites along the Merrimac, and by 1839 the Boott Mills and the Massachusetts Mills were starting production.¹

It was during this period that the Merrimac Company gave reduced rates to two brothers who had been operating a most successful dry goods business in Boston, but who now wished to expand into textile manufacturing. Amos and Abbott Lawrence entered the field of industrial enterprise in 1830; and although Amos was forced to retire from active business the following year because of a recurrent illness, the foresight and acumen of his younger brother, Abbott, caused the name of Lawrence to become as

¹Ferry Walton, The Story of Textiles (Boston, 1912), pp. 208-9; Appleton, Power Loom, pp. 25-9; Dodd, Corporations, p. 384.

well known as that of Lowell itself.¹ Amos would become prominent in a variety of charitable and philanthropic works throughout Massachusetts; Abbott would shortly gain renown as a millionaire industrialist and Congressman; while their eldest brother, Luther, would not only become president of the Bank in Lowell, but be elected Mayor of that city in 1838.²

This movement of the Lawrences from trade to manufacturing was only one example of a significant transfer of shipping capital into cotton factories by the mid-1830's. An increasing number of ship owners, merchants, importers and exporters, exasperated by falling profits, threw in their lot with the Lowells, the Appletons, and the Lawrences. Using their stores as local outlets for their own manufactured goods, the new investors found that they could use the profits from their commercial enterprises

¹Lawrence, Diary, pp. 147-9; Hamilton Hill, Memoir of Abbott Lawrence (Boston, 1883), pp. 23-6. Almost all the private papers and correspondence of Abbott Lawrence were destroyed in the great Boston fire of 1872.

²An imaginative German author wrote a fictionalized account of the "secrets" of Abbott Lawrence's success. See Ralph Anders, Der Weg zum Glück, oder die Kunst Millionär zu Werden (Berlin, 1836). See also Boston Courier, July 3, 1838, for a critical review of the book by George Ticknor.

to keep the factories running, and even pay their factory workers in store goods when times were slow.¹ With new wealth released for additional investment, and the American consumer relying on a home industry, New England manufacturing received a greater impetus than ever before. This is not to suggest, of course, that ship-owners and mill-owners immediately put aside their differences of opinion on matters of economic policy. Shippers still wanted free trade, and manufacturers continued to believe in the principles of protection. But while these points of contention continued to exist, the bitterness and intensity of feeling which had existed prior to 1824 gradually diminished. The ship-owners, for their part, modified their opposition to the nation's tariff policy when they saw that their foreign trade did not necessarily suffer. The mill-owners, on the other hand, no longer fearing foreign competition now that production costs and more efficient power machinery permitted them more influence in the domestic market, placed much less emphasis on the importance of high protective duties. They continued to favor a general national protective policy, but assumed an almost indifferent attitude on the subject of specific rates and duties.

¹Sarah Forbes Hughes, ed., Letters and Recollections of John Murray Forbes (2 vols.; Boston, 1889), I, 116-117. Also see Morison, History, p. 225; Albion, New York, p. 63.

Nathan Appleton, the manufacturer, expressed the opinion that after 1825 the cotton industry would have been highly profitable "even without protection at all." Once the power loom was introduced, he wrote, "a tariff was of little or no importance."¹ Abbott Lawrence agreed with his colleague's appraisal of the situation, and when he represented the State of Massachusetts at the Harrisburg Convention of 1827, called to formulate a tariff program, Lawrence insisted that the cotton men recommend that Congress merely pass "adequate duties."² As far as the cotton men were concerned, the crisis had been passed.

And so, with their formerly divergent interests gradually moving in the direction of a more harmonious relationship, the merchants, the shippers and the manufacturers of Boston began to build a financial empire. They still did not always see eye-to-eye, but at least by 1828 they were all looking in the same direction. Additional capital and eager investors produced a rash of

¹Nathan Appleton, Speech on the Bill to Reduce and Otherwise Alter the Duties on Imports, January 23, 1833 (Washington, 1833), p. 22. Also see Susan M. Loring, ed., Selections from the Diaries of William Appleton, 1786-1882 (Boston, 1922), pp. 40-1.

²Abbott Lawrence to Amos Lawrence, Feb. 2, 4, 8, 14, 1828, Amos Lawrence Letters, Mss, Massachusetts Historical Society (hereafter cited as "M.H.S."), I, 30; Robert Means to Amos Lawrence, Sept. 24, 1828, Amos Lawrence Papers, Mss, M.H.S., Box 1.

new mills and factories all over New England; and this steady concentration on manufacturing resulted in the phenomenal growth of industrial cities and towns. Established enterprises were expanding profitably, new factories were developing additional markets and customers, and the manufacturing interests of Massachusetts found that they had built up a total capital investment of some \$12,000,000 by 1840, with every indication that the figure would go much higher.¹

Not satisfied to rest on their economic laurels, however, the cotton men were constantly exploring every opportunity for additional investment. When a Daniel Saunders of Andover suggested a new source of power on the Merrimac, the Lawrences, the Lowells, the Lymans, together with Nathan Appleton and Patrick T. Jackson were soon busy buying up the land, laying out the sites and drawing up the papers for a new company. The "Essex Company," as it was called, was incorporated in 1845 with a stock of a million dollars, and the new town was named "Lawrence," after the company's first president and outstanding stockholder, Abbott Lawrence. Branching out from

¹See A. L. Letters, M.H.S., II, 222 (1837), for statistics on Lowell manufactures and a list of major factories.

here, Lawrence became president and principal stockholder of the Atlantic Cotton Mills which were started in 1845; and when the Pacific Mills were incorporated in 1853, with an original capitalization of two million dollars, its president was also--Abbott Lawrence.¹ Although other individuals were permitted to buy stock in the various manufacturing enterprises of Massachusetts as they were established during these middle years, it is noticeable that few were taken into active partnership. Control of the expanding industry always remained in the hands of the Lawrences, the Lowells, the Appletons and their immediate associates in Boston, so that before long, a small group of some twelve or fifteen Boston capitalists was actually controlling most of the great corporations of the State.²

As the interests of the merchant and the manufacturer grew closer, the profits from both the production and the sale of cotton cloth began to mount. Quite naturally the interested parties began to look for cheaper

¹Hill, Abbott Lawrence, pp. 23-6; Walton, Textiles, pp. 218-220.

²Hunt's Merchants' Magazine, XLIV (1861), 173-6. See also Vera Schlakman, "Economic History of a Factory Town: A Study of Chicopee, Massachusetts," Smith College Studies in History, XX (1934), 35 ff.

and more efficient means of transportation between the sales and exchange center of Boston and such inland points of market and production as Lowell, Lawrence, Providence, Fall River, Worcester and Springfield. It is not too surprising, therefore, to find the manufacturers interesting themselves in the prospects of railroad transportation during its formative years. In order to develop railroad connections between Boston warehouses and the cotton factories, the leading textile manufacturers, in 1830, voted \$100,000 as a bonus to the Boston and Lowell Railroad.¹ Abbott Lawrence was one of the most active promoters of various trunk lines and continued to be a liberal subscriber to such projected developments as the Boston and Providence Line as well as the more elaborate and daring undertaking of the great "Western Railroad" which would go from Worcester to Albany.²

The technique of combining foreign trade with domestic manufacturing and overland transportation, however, only added to the complexities of the financial problems. The conversion of foreign currency, the expense

¹Hunt's Merchants' Magazine, XLV (1861), 114-130; Dodd, Corporations, pp. 281-2.

²Boston Daily Atlas, Oct. 6, 10, 16, 1836; Hill, Abbott Lawrence, pp. 10-11.

and inconvenience of redeeming notes from the various local banks, and the general instability of the State's decentralized currency situation, served to convince the economic leaders of the Commonwealth that they must take a hand. The Suffolk Bank, therefore, was the answer-- established in 1818 under the leadership of the original group of Waltham manufacturers, including the Lowells, the Lawrences and the Appletons, closely followed by members of Boston's oldest merchant families, with John A. Lowell and William Lawrence serving on the Board of Directors. Remaining almost completely under the surveillance and control of the same closely knit group which was already well on the way to controlling the prominent features of the Massachusetts economy, the Suffolk Bank provided a financial stability that was beneficial to both its investors and to the State. At the same time, by rigidly controlling the extension of credit and the payment of specie, the Suffolk was able to suppress speculative local banking and check expansion of undesirable and less organized forms of economic enterprise.¹

¹ Sister M. Grace Madeleine, Monetary and Banking Theories of Jacksonian Democracy (Philadelphia, 1943), pp. 147-151; Davis R. Dewey, State Banking before the Civil War (Washington, 1910), pp. 82-96.

With interlocking financial interests now fusing the profits of manufacturing, transporting, selling and financing cotton textiles, the new aristocracy of the Commonwealth commanded both economic allegiance and social acceptance. Like a great magnet Boston not only displayed its own glittering aristocracy, but exerted a powerful attraction upon the various local societies scattered throughout the Bay State, gradually drawing them into its own orbit where they would be absorbed and integrated with "Boston's own." Every day new families were moving down from Salem and Newburyport, from Worcester and New Bedford to blend their social and economic fortunes with those of the Boston groups. Nathan Appleton had come down from New Hampshire as a merchant to become a leader in the textile industry. The Lawrence brothers had moved in from Middlesex County to set up in the importing business before they engaged in manufacturing. The Lowells, already associated with such prominent mercantile families as the Cabots, the Higginsons and the Russells, had now linked up with the Jacksons through the marriage of Francis C. Lowell to Patrick Tracy Jackson's sister, Hannah. John Amory Lowell's son, Augustus, was married to Abbott Lawrence's daughter, Katherine; and in 1842 Abbott's nephew, Amos Adams Lawrence, married Sarah Elizabeth Appleton, the niece of Nathan Appleton. Thus the cycle was complete. Not only were the

Lowells, the Lawrences and the Appletons partners in industry and colleagues in business, but now had further integrated their interests through the powerful agency of kinship and marriage.¹

Moving into Boston society, the new manufacturer was gradually accepted into the higher social echelons with the older members of Boston's mercantile aristocracy. By the 1830's the industrialists were taking up residence in the fashionable red-brick houses in Louisburg Square and Mount Vernon Street, receiving their guests in the long high-studded rooms which were such a characteristic part of Back Bay homes. In 1836 Abbott Lawrence moved into the old Amory house at number eight Park Street, to be situated, conveniently enough, right next door to the residence of his daughter's father-in-law, Mr. John Amory Lowell.²

On Sundays, the Lawrence brothers would join with such prominent figures as Nathan Hale, the noted editor, Harrison Gray Otis, the magnificent Federalist,

¹Amos Lawrence to Abbott Lawrence, September, 1832, A. L. Papers, M.H.S., Box 1; Kenneth W. Porter, The Jacksons and the Lees (2 vols.; Cambridge, 1937), I, 88 ff.; and Ferris Greenslet, The Lowells and their Seven Worlds (Boston, 1946).

²Robert M. Lawrence, Old Park Street and its Vicinity (Boston, 1922), pp. 79-80.

and various members of the Perkins family, on their way to Unitarian services. Carefully they would make their way past "Erimstone Corner" at the junction of Park and Tremont Streets, where one of the latest ministers from orthodox Yale College would be upholding the traditions of the Bible and the Trinity. Finally arriving at the Brattle Square Church of Boston, these Unitarians could settle back in their pews and find a more reasonable and intellectual approach to Christian theology. This predominance of the Lawrence family in Unitarian circles led Ralph Waldo Emerson to caustically describe the Christianity of the Brattle Square Church as "the best diagonal line that can be drawn between Jesus Christ and Abbott Lawrence."¹

The rest of the week was spent in a fairly constant routine of work, conversation, coffee and commating. Early in the brisk mornings the business men walking down from their homes on Beacon Hill would nod pleasantly to those who were just arriving from their suburban dwellings in Brookline, Milton and Newton.²

¹Lawrence, Diary, pp. 184-6. See Edward E. Hale, "Religious and Social Changes," Comm. Hist., IV, 254, and Darling, Massachusetts, p. 26.

²Hughes, Forbes, I, 6-7; William Lawrence, Life of Amos A. Lawrence: With Extracts from His Diary and Correspondence (Boston, 1898), pp. 59-60.

First they would go to their respective offices to spend most of the morning preparing their correspondence, surveying the latest financial statements and issuing whatever instructions were necessary for the operations of the day. About noon-time, the gentlemen of business and trade would gather up their hats, sticks and gloves, and make their way to the "Change" to discuss some of the more informal (yet extremely important) aspects of economic enterprise with their relatives and associates.¹ This mid-day walk took them to the "old" State House on the corner of State Street and Washington, where the center of attraction was the famous "Topliff News Room" on the first floor overlooking State Street, a combination club and reading-room for Boston's leading merchants and business men. Anything and everything pertaining to their interests was available--newspapers and periodicals from all over the world, listings of the entrances and clearances of vessels from every port, and information bulletins from foreign correspondents.² Here, during the noon hours, the business elite would discuss matters

¹T. L. Nichols, Forty Years of American Life, 1821-1861 (New York, 1937), pp. 84-5.

²In 1842 Topliff's News Room was moved to the new Merchants Exchange Building which was erected on State Street. See Morison, History, pp. 239-40.

of mutual interest, until it was time for them to return home. Back up the Hill, or out into the "country" they would go for dinner, which would be served at two or three o'clock, followed by recreation or exercise. In the warmer weather, riding and hunting were favorite pastimes, while in the winter, sleighing and skating were delightful ways of passing the afternoons, as the office staffs, back in Boston, carried on the details of the business.¹

As the factory owner assumed positions of greater economic importance and social prominence, it was inevitable that he should begin to desire a corresponding amount of political power. The first significant step came in the Congressional elections of 1830, when Nathan Appleton, the well-known manufacturer and protectionist, defeated Henry Lee, merchant and free-trader.² From this point on, protection took precedence over free-trade, and the Yankee manufacturers proceeded to move into positions of political power. Utilizing the resources of a strong National Republican Party, the conservative elements of the Bay State saw their interests being sponsored at

¹Hughes, Forbes, I, 6-7; Lawrence, Amos A. Lawrence, pp. 60-62; William Lawrence, Memories of a Happy Life (Boston, 1926), pp. 4-5.

²Darling, Massachusetts, p. 12.

hose and in the nation's capital by an imposing array of talent. With the State administration headed by such men as the popular Levi Lincoln, and later, the handsome, polished Edward Everett, reputed to be the wealthiest man in Boston, Massachusetts was bound to follow the "right" path. "Honest John" Davis represented the protectionist point of view in the United States Senate, consistently supporting the position of Senator Daniel Webster, to whom Nathan Appleton and Abbott Lawrence had sold shares in their corporations and for whom these gentlemen would later lead subscriptions of \$100,000, in order to maintain the renowned orator in public life. Appleton, already in the House of Representatives, was joined by his fellow-manufacturer in 1834, when Lawrence was elected as Representative from Massachusetts.¹

With so many representatives of industry, capital and protection moving into such key positions of political power, it is small wonder that the business interests of Massachusetts could feel certain that before long the political atmosphere would reflect that same stability and order which already characterized

¹Hill, Abbott Lawrence, pp. 56-8; Faulkner, Massachusetts, Comm. Hist., IV, 88-9.

the economics and society of the State. Many, certainly, would agree with the words of Amos Lawrence to his son, who was just entering Harvard College, as he wrote complacently: "Our local affairs are very delightful in this state and city. We have no violent political animosities; and the prosperity of the people is very great."¹

Political affairs, however, were to prove anything but "delightful" as the age of Jacksonian democracy began to raise disturbing ideas at both the national and state levels. In local politics, new parties were already popping up almost everywhere. A rich druggist by the name of David Henshaw (who had never been accepted into Boston's social elite) had helped form a Jackson party in Massachusetts made up of rural and urban democrats, and including a number of so-called "silk-stocking democrats" who represented those die-hard shippers who still refused to make peace with the manufacturers. Although the Republicans succeeded in preventing these Jackson men from gaining control of the Bay State, the political

¹Amos Lawrence to Amos A. Lawrence, Jan. 16, 1831, Lawrence, Diary, pp. 103-104. See also Appleton, Diaries, p. 38.

problem became more difficult when federal patronage passed into the hands of the local Democrats after "Old Hickory's" election in 1828.¹

In 1828, too, a third party came into existence, known as the "Antimasons," who by 1830 had elected three State senators and a score of house members. A polyglot group, made up of former Federalists, dissatisfied Republicans and unrewarded Democrats, the Antimason party became extremely popular for a time, representing all things to all men. Particularly disturbing was the tendency of this new group to absorb elements of existing parties by combining appeals for protection and internal improvements with demands for reform and "general welfare" legislation. Eagerly and confidently the Antimasons were looking forward to the elections of 1833 as a true test of their power.²

As if the political picture in the Bay State were not sufficiently confusing, a fourth political

¹Faulkner, "Massachusetts," Comm. Hist., IV, 79-80, and Darling, Massachusetts, pp. 36-9.

²Ibid., pp. 85-9; Faulkner, "Massachusetts," Comm. Hist., IV, 81-3.

party now put in its appearance--the Workingmen's party. Although it did include such "workingmen" as mechanics, masons, ship caulkers and urban laborers, the new party drew its chief supporters primarily from the agricultural proletariat of the rural districts who had decided to put their hostility to the "idle city rich" and the "accumulators" of wealth into political form. Amos Lawrence was furious at this development. "We are literally all working men," he wrote to his son; "and the attempt to get up a 'Working-Men's Party' is a libel upon the whole population, as it implies that there are among us large numbers who are not working men!"¹

Undaunted by such criticism, the Workingmen's party, too, was looking forward to the elections of 1833 with much enthusiasm, encouraged by its rapid success in the inland towns of the western counties and in the sea-port towns of the east.²

The elections of 1833, then, produced not only four political parties, but a flurry of excitement and campaign oratory the like of which had not been seen in

¹Amos Lawrence to Amos A. Lawrence, Jan. 16, 1831, Lawrence, Diary, pp. 103-4.

²Boston Post, Sept. 7, Oct. 9, 1832.

Massachusetts for many years. And the results were as exciting as the preliminaries! The Gubernatorial race ended in a deadlock. Davis, the Antimason candidate, received the largest number of votes, but failed to get a majority. He was followed by John Quincy Adams, Republican, with Marcus Morton, the perennial Jackson candidate, in third place. It was Adams, now, who held the balance of power, and he made up his mind, with calm deliberation, as everyone watched and waited. After consulting with Davis, Adams publicly withdrew from the race in favor of the Antimason--Jackson was not going to get the benefit of his vote!¹

This virtual merger of the Republicans with the Antimasons (they now began to call themselves "Whigs," because of their opposition to "King Andrew") caused the latter party to rapidly lose its distinguishing characteristics; and it gradually ceased to be a possible threat to the established community of the Bay State. The year 1833 also marked the decline of the Workingmen's party as a separate political movement, as the losses sustained in the elections convinced many of the leading members that success lay in combining with the national party of Andrew Jackson.² Before long, then, a large number were filing

¹Faulkner, "Massachusetts," Comm. Hist., IV, 84; Darling, Massachusetts, pp. 115-116.

²Boston Post, Oct. 29, 1835.

into the ranks of the Democratic Party, leaving the "Whigs" holding the local field.¹

The only other dark cloud on the political horizon during the thirties, was the annoying issue of the Bank. When Jackson issued his famous Veto Message in the summer of 1832, refusing to agree to a re-chartering of the Second National Bank, Boston society had reacted in alarm.² Not that the closing of the Bank itself caused undue panic. Boston business had long ago taken the precaution of creating its own private banking system which, by this time, controlled as much capital as Mr. Biddle's Bank, and which was actually a financial rival of the national banking system. Indeed, Nathan Appleton, the Lawrences, and other leading Boston businessmen had been trying to get Nicholas Biddle to modify his stand on the Bank issue. For a long time many Bay State business leaders had been convinced that Biddle was deliberately manipulating finances as a counterattack against Jackson.³ In 1834,

¹Judge Henry Adams Bullard to Amos Lawrence, Dec. 6, 1834, A. L. Letters, M.H.S., III.

²Abbott Lawrence to Amos Lawrence, June 2, 6, 9, July 2, 1832, A. L. Papers, M.H.S., Box 1.

³Boston Courier, March 30, 1837. Also see A. L. Letters, M.H.S., IV, for a lengthy appraisal of the Jacksonian economic program, written by Abbott Lawrence, March 27, 1837.

in hopes of putting an end to this dangerous feud, Nathan Appleton headed a committee of Boston financiers who joined with a similar New York group to demand that Biddle cease his capricious policy which was playing havoc with their financial credits.¹

No, it was not the monetary situation itself which disturbed Boston's men of property--it was the apprehension that Jackson's widely publicized Veto was only the initial step in an all-out attack on property and position, a prelude to class warfare. "This is the most wholly radical and basely Jesuitical document that ever emanated from any administration, in any country," protested the conservative Daily Atlas, deploring the public stand of the President. "It falsely and wickedly alleges that the rich and powerful throughout the country are waging a war of oppression against the poor and the weak...."²

Undoubtedly, many Bostonians experienced the same apprehensions as the cynical Whig who felt that Jackson would eventually suppress all banks, destroy all

¹Appleton, et al., to Board of Directors of the United States Branch Bank at Boston (draft), June 21, 1834. Also see Appleton to Nicholas Biddle (draft), July, 1834, Appleton Papers, Mss, M.H.S.

²Boston Daily Atlas, July 17, 19, 21, 1832.

paper currency, and return to the "barter of the patriarchal age."¹ It was more on a basis of principle, then, rather than enthusiasm for the bank or regard for Biddle, which led Boston business leaders to support the Bank against Jackson's determination to destroy it.

The repercussions of the Bank fight, however, proved more disastrous than even New England had anticipated. With Jackson withdrawing public deposits, and with Biddle contracting and expanding credit almost at will, the financial situation throughout the country became alarmingly unstable. As the Government money now in "pet banks" was put into fabulous land speculations and expansive internal improvements, scarcity of funds caused a new crop of banks to appear. Larger issues of paper money came pouring out, prices spiraled upward and credit was stretched to the breaking point. The business community watched in horror and held its breath.² Then came the crash.

Hardly had the portly Martin Van Buren carefully seated himself in the Presidential chair in 1837 when the

¹Darling, Massachusetts, p. 143.

²Amos Lawrence to his sister, March 16, 1835, Lawrence, Diary, p. 130. See Also Sly, "Massachusetts," Conn. Hist., IV, 289.

financial crash precipitated the worst depression the nation had ever seen. Banks everywhere suspended payments, the most important mills in Lowell were practically closed, nearly half the spindles of Massachusetts ceased operations, and scarcely a manufacturer in the boot and shoe industry escaped bankruptcy. Almost unable to believe his eyes, Amos Lawrence called it "the most violent pecuniary revulsion that has been anticipated for more than a year," and said it was "more severe than our worst fears."¹ Massachusetts business held on tight, trimmed its financial sails, and rode out the frightening storm. Special scrip was issued by the State of Massachusetts during the crisis and commanded higher prices in loans overseas than any other State in the Union. Over a million dollars in State bonds were issued and the proceeds appropriated to railroad construction all through the Commonwealth. Gradually Massachusetts banks began to resume specie payment on a limited basis as the amount of specie on deposit in the vaults started to slowly increase.²

¹Lawrence, Diary, p. 141. See also James Means to Amos Lawrence, May 15, 1837, A. L. Papers, M.H.S., Box 1.

²Darling, Massachusetts, pp. 203-204, 236-7.

Unexpectedly, however, it was the Jackson party and its associates who suffered some of the worst effects of the financial panic in Massachusetts. The officers of the local "pet" bank, the Commonwealth Bank, had, like so many others, engaged in land speculations which involved the bank funds. By the fall of 1837, the first director died, personally bankrupt, the second director was found to be \$80,000 in debt to the Bank, and the Bank itself was falling to pieces. With almost dramatic irony, the Whigs themselves were able to supply the coup de grâce--when the Commonwealth Bank applied to the Suffolk Bank for financial assistance. The Suffolk refused: The Commonwealth was forced to close January 11, 1838, and brought down with it such affiliated corporations as the Commonwealth Insurance Company and the Warren Association, whose funds had been invested in the Bank.¹

Delighted beyond words, the local Whigs swarmed all over the Jacksonians--directing their sharpest attacks at David Henshaw, local Democratic manager, who had been a leading figure in the defunct Bank and the bankrupt corporations. Down in Washington, Daniel Webster was thundering for a special investigation by the Secretary

¹ Darling, Massachusetts, pp. 224-5.

of the Treasury and demanding a report to Congress. Back home, the Massachusetts Whigs continued to torment the Democrats with the responsibility for causing bank failures and business depression. Hit from every side, the Jackson men did not have a chance, and in the elections of 1837, Edward Everett beat Marcus Morton by nearly five to three.¹ During the entire period of over twenty years, from 1828 to 1850, the Jackson Democrats campaigned successfully only twice. Marcus Morton took the Governorship in 1839, but had both Houses against him. In 1842, Morton won the post a second time, and had the support of the Senate--but was ousted the following year by George W. Gibbs, the conservative Whig candidate, who held office for the next seven years.²

Boston business men settled back to review their position by the close of the 1830's--and found it good. In spite of the jealous pretensions of silk-stocking Democrats, the competitive ambitions of Antimasons, the levelling tactics of Workingmen, and the absurd theories of Jacksonian Democracy, the men of wealth and influence seemed to be seated more firmly in power than ever before.

¹Boston Daily Atlas, Nov. 17, 1839.

²Faulkner, "Massachusetts," Comm. Hist., IV, 88-94.

"The result of the election in Massachusetts is a matter of devout and grateful feelings to every good citizen," wrote Amos Lawrence gravely; and there were many "good" citizens who would agree with him.¹ Everything, once again, seemed to be normal, orderly and quiet.

Quiet, that is, if one chose to ignore the outbursts of that madman up at Merchants' Hall, William Lloyd Garrison, and his ridiculous attacks against slavery!

¹Amos Lawrence to Jonathan Chapman, November [?], 1844, Lawrence, Diary, p. 193.

CHAPTER II

BROADCLOTH AND COTTON

His Honor, Harrison Gray Otis, Mayor of the City of Boston, did not understand it at all. On his desk were explosive letters from the Governor of Virginia and the Governor of Georgia, demanding that he take action against some "incendiary" newspaper, published in Boston, that was being circulated among the plantations, inciting the black people to riot and revolt. Nat Turner's abortive uprising in August, 1831, had recently struck terror into the heart of the entire South, and many Southern leaders were now blaming this fiery sheet, the Liberator, for inciting the Negro rebellion. Although Turner and his associates denied ever having seen the paper, the South demanded an end to such outrageous publications. Senator Hayne had just sent a blistering letter insisting upon action against the editor, and the National Intelligencer even now was publicly inquiring of "the worthy mayor of the City of Boston" whether any law could be found to prevent publication of such "diabolical papers."¹

¹ Samuel Eliot Morison, The Life and Letters of Harrison Gray Otis, Federalist, 1765-1848 (2 vols.; Boston, 1913), II, 259-281.

Mayor Otis was at a complete loss. Although the Liberator had been making its appearance for almost a year now, he had never heard of it--nor had any of his friends or acquaintances. Obviously, however, this was a matter that must be looked into; and so the Mayor ordered an investigation of the offending publication. In due time His Honor was informed that the paper called the Liberator was edited by a man named Garrison, whose office was nothing but an "obscure hole," whose only "visible auxiliary" was a Negro boy, and whose supporters were only a few "insignificant persons of all colors."¹

Otis breathed a sigh of relief--only a tempest in a teapot--and sat down to assure his friends in the South that this unfortunate incident was of no consequence. This new "fanaticism," he wrote, had no influence whatsoever among persons of consequence in the Bay State. "Nor was it likely," he emphasized, "to make proselytes among the respectable classes of our people."

"In this, however," sighed a bewildered Harrison Gray Otis, some years later, in a masterpiece of understatement, "I was mistaken."²

¹ Morison, Otis, II, 261-2.

² Ibid., p. 262.

Just how mistaken he had been, even Otis himself would never know. This "obscure" little paper and its "fanatic" editor were destined to completely revolutionize the whole process of the anti-slavery movement in the United States, and tear apart what has been significantly called the "great conspiracy of silence."

There had been anti-slavery agitation long before America had ever heard of William Lloyd Garrison; but for the most part the approach had been rational, the technique gentlemanly, and the demands moderate and gradual.

Furthermore, plans and programs did not seem to matter very much during the 1820's, with issues like the Bank, Nullification, the tariff, party battles and Western lands occupying the center of the national stage. Who could blame Mayor Otis for underestimating the efforts of William Lloyd Garrison? The editor himself complained that he found "contempt more bitter, opposition more active, detraction more relentless, prejudice more stubborn, and apathy more frozen" in New England, even more "than among slave owners themselves." The early issues of his papers caused hardly a ripple upon the smooth surface of Boston. "Suspicion and apathy," moaned Garrison, were the reactions to his Liberator, as the rent became harder to meet each day. Even when apathy

gave way to curiosity, and Boston did begin to take notice, the results were anything but encouraging. Looked upon generally as agitators, cranks and "queers," Abolitionists were not socially acceptable in any respectable circle.¹

Garrison seemed to thrive on opposition, however. With the imperturbability of a saint, the self-assurance of a martyr, and the vocabulary of a devil, Garrison struck back, blow for blow, gradually gathering a small band of followers about him. Encouraged even by this meager indication of support, Garrison enthusiastically proposed the formation of some sort of organization in order to formulate policy and gain new adherents. By the opening of the year 1832, the New England Antislavery Society had been formed, as the Abolitionist organized his crusade for immediate and unconditional emancipation.²

Up to now, conservative Bostonians could laugh at Garrison, sneer at his newspaper, and ostracize those who saw fit to follow the movement. But by the mid-thirties, things had developed to the point where the

¹Liberator, No. 1, Jan. 1, 1831; Wendell Phillips Garrison and Francis Jackson Garrison, William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879: The Story of his Life Told by his Children (4 vols.; New York, 1885-1889), I, 224. Also see Robert C. Winthrop to Susan Appleton, Feb. 5, 1847, Robert C. Winthrop Papers, MSS, M.H.S., LXXVI, 115.

²Garrison, Life, I, 277-9.

Abolitionists simply could not be scoffed out of existence--stronger measures were necessary. Boston business men in general--and cotton manufacturers like the Lawrences in particular--were outraged by what they considered to be an irrelevant issue, dragged in by the heels, which might upset the peace and the prosperity of the Commonwealth. Boston's men of property and standing had their own ideas regarding the perplexing problem of slavery and its eventual solution--but they did not include the fanatical proposals of Garrison. If a Christian gentleman felt the need of putting his moral opposition to slavery into some tangible form, the "Colonization" plan proposed by the American Colonization Society offered an attractive solution.¹ The opportunity to donate sufficient funds to send Negroes off to Africa made it possible for a gentleman to assist the individual Negro, without involving himself in an unsavory controversy regarding the nature of the institution itself. "I have never countenanced these abolition movements," old Amos Lawrence wrote to a friend in South Carolina, assuring him that the Abolitionists did not represent the views of the general community. He did go on to explain, however, that he had often "lent a hand" in the Colonization movement, which he was convinced would "make a greater change in the condition of the

¹Boston Daily Atlas, Dec. 23, 1835.

blacks than any event since the Christian era."¹ "Liberia," he told Elliott Cresson of Philadelphia, "now promises to be to the black man what New England has been to the Pilgrims, and Pennsylvania to the Friends."²

Lawrence's son, Amos A. Lawrence, too, expressed a similar interest in the Liberian experiment, both in his capacity as trustee and director of the Episcopal Mission in Africa, and as a personal subscriber to the Colonization program. On one occasion young Lawrence donated a thousand dollars to the cause, from "a young merchant" to which his father added another thousand, from "an old merchant"; and both were constantly called upon for private assistance to some worthy Negro individual or family seeking to gain freedom.³

Many other prominent citizens of the Bay State worked with the Lawrences in trying to gain acceptance for the Colonization program. Mayor Harrison Gray Otis,

¹Lawrence, Diary, pp. 317-18.

²Amos Lawrence to Elliott Cresson, June 12, 1851, ibid., pp. 299-300.

³ibid. Also see Lawrence, Amos A. Lawrence, pp. 53-4; J. K. Douglas to Amos Lawrence, August 7, Sept. 10, 1846, A. L. Letters, M.H.S., VII, 53, 61; Stephen Fairbanks to Amos A. Lawrence, June 16, 1851, A. A. L. Letters, M.H.S., IX, 41.

himself was a heavy investor in cotton manufacturing. He had purchased a majority interest (about \$100,000) in the Taunton Manufacturing Company, and held additional blocks of stock in at least half a dozen other large manufacturing corporations.¹ Writing to his friend, Nathan Appleton the manufacturer who was then serving in the House of Representatives, Otis pleaded for a program of Federal colonization. He favored a plan which would divide an annual appropriation among the various plantation states, and would then be used by each of the states "in its own mode" for colonization. Such an arrangement would, argued Otis, cut the ground away from the violent demands of the Abolitionists.² Writing to Daniel Webster in the Senate, the Mayor of Boston repeated his proposals, and added ominously: "there will be no peace or security for us untill [sic] you buy up the Virginia negroes and send them off...."³

The Abolitionists, however, were quick to condemn what Garrison sneeringly labeled "that popular

¹ Morison, Otis, II, 281-3.

² Ibid., pp. 288-9.

³ Ibid., pp. 285-6. Also see Boston Courier, Feb. 16, 1832, for an appeal for a national colonization program, written by Otis under pseudonym of "Suggestor."

but pernicious doctrine of gradual abolition," and went out of their way to attack the policy of colonization which was known to have the active support of prominent Bostonians. Charging the American Colonization Society with being a secret agency for slaveholders, Garrison claimed that it was "solemnly pledged not to interfere with a system unfathomably deep in pollution," nourished on "fear and selfishness," and encrusted with "corroding evil."¹

Seriously disturbed about the unsettling effects which the Abolitionist movement was having at home, the Northern cotton interests began to be genuinely alarmed concerning the possible repercussions which Garrison and his followers would have on the slaveholding South. Already there were dangerous signs from the South as outraged planters threatened serious economic sanctions unless the Northerners put an end to the abolitionist agitation. "The people of the North must go hanging these fanatical wretches if they would not lose the benefit of Southern trade," threatened the Richmond Whig;

¹William Lloyd Garrison, Thoughts on African Colonization (Boston, 1832), passim. See also Garrison, Life, I, 290-314.

while the prominent editor, James DeBow began to conjure up the awful picture of grass growing in the streets of Broadway.¹ Learning of an outburst of pro-Abolitionist sentiment among the workers in the Lowell Mills, the Southern press flew into a rage. Lamenting the fact that Abolitionism had made such inroads into the working class, a boycott was proposed which would cause Lowell to "wither or be forced to expel the Abolitionists."² Colonel William Sparks, a prominent Louisiana planter hastened to warn Amos Lawrence of the latest sentiments below the Mason-Dixon line. "There is much excitement in the whole South upon the subject of Abolition," he wrote, "and I fear the very worst for the prosperity of the Country...." Then, as if to add to the urgency of his appeal, the planter included a thinly veiled warning: "There will be strong measures taken in this state during the winter, some which I can not now mention but which will be alarming to the people of the North...and I fear the late Lowell affair will cause some resolutions which will be acted on aimed at her manufactures."³

¹DeBow's Commercial Review, XXIX (1860), 318; Philip Foner, Business and Slavery (Chapel Hill, 1941), p. 4; Albion, New York, pp. 98-9.

²Hiles Register, XLVIII, Oct. 3, 1836; Bernard Mandel, Labor: Free and Slave (New York, 1955), pp. 74-5.

³William Sparks to Amos Lawrence, Oct. 17, 1836, A. L. Letters, M.S.S., IV. Also see Oswald Garrison Villard, "The Anti-Slavery Crisis in Massachusetts," Comm. Hist., IV, 310-312.

Boston manufacturing and shipping interests sought some way out of this frightening situation. The businessmen of Massachusetts were now inextricably bound up with the fortunes of the Cotton Kingdom--and the South knew it. The manufacturing, the financing and the transportation of cotton had become such an integral part of the industrial and financial life of the New England area, that it was considered nothing short of economic suicide to tamper with the mutually advantageous arrangements.

Within ten years after the appearance of Eli Whitney's famed "cotton gin" the cotton crop of the South had quadrupled itself. With the vast cultivation of the inexpensive and hardy "upland" or short-staple cotton (superseding the more expensive "sea-island" or long-staple cotton), production grew at phenomenal rates. Sprawling white fields in the South grew larger and larger each year, keeping pace with the increasing demands of British machines and American factories.¹

As the world's first great industrial power, it was obvious that Great Britain would absorb by far the

¹David Cohn, The Life and Times of King Cotton (New York, 1958), pp. 3-38; William E. Dodd, The Cotton Kingdom (New Haven, 1920), pp. 25-6; Avery Craven, The Coming of the Civil War (New York, 1942), pp. 94-117.

larger part of the South's valuable output during the early part of the nineteenth century.¹ Gradually, however, the fluffy product found its way into the expanding mills and factories of the North. With cotton spindles increasing from one million to over two million between 1830-1840, American factories were soon using over one hundred million pounds of Southern cotton.² By 1830 the industrial North had become wedded, not only to the South's production of cotton, but to the institution of slave labor which made such valuable production possible. Northern factories depended upon a steady flow of cotton upon which to base their profits. Northern bankers who grew rich by extending liberal (but risky) credit to Southern planters against next year's crop, insisted on good relations and a stable economy.³ Northern shippers looked forward eagerly to increasing cotton production as one of America's chief items of export. In 1821 cotton was already America's leading export, constituting over thirty-five per cent of

¹In 1825, the U. S. raised three-quarters of the 228,000,000 pounds of cotton imported by Britain. Jeannette Mirsky and Allan Nevins, The World of Eli Whitney (New York, 1952), p. 91.

²Amos A. Lawrence estimated the amount of cotton consumed by New England alone, in 1850, at 150,000,000 pounds. Amos A. Lawrence to H. J. Ward, Feb. 10, 1851, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., I, 264.

³Clement Eaton, History of the Old South (New York, 1949), pp. 406-7.

the total; by 1850 Southern cotton would account for nearly sixty per cent of total exports--a major factor in the consideration of Northern shipping interests. Yankee shipping not only looked to the busy looms of Lawrence and Lowell for one of its valuable export commodities, but depended upon the raw cotton from the South to provide the most important medium of the Massachusetts carrying trade.¹

The growth of the cotton manufacturing industry in Massachusetts had brought the influential business and commercial classes of New England into close relationship with the powerful cotton-raising, slave-owning class of the South. The result was that the economic interests of the otherwise disparate sections drew both parties into an unusually tolerant, friendly and cordial relationship. The New England mills were accustomed to following the practice of either sending Northern purchasing agents southward to purchase cotton at such centers as Memphis, Mobile, New Orleans or Galveston; or else of contacting Southern factory representatives who selected the grades of cotton specified by the mill owners back North.²

¹ Morison, History, pp. 215, 231-2; Albion, New York, pp. 98-9; Foner, Business, p. 4.

² Evelyn Knowlton, Pepperell's Progress (Cambridge, 1948), pp. 37-8; Dane Yorke, The Men and Times of Pepperell (Boston, 1945), pp. 30-1.

In addition to the official employees and purchasers sent into the South, the Northern manufacturers also utilized the talents and the influence of close friends and relatives to ascertain the exact status of the economic situation, and to further suggest the personal relationships that were being steadily developed. One of the best examples of this combination of market research and public relations can be seen in the extended tour that was conducted by young Amos Adams Lawrence through the South and West, as a commission agent for various Boston firms--most notably that of "A & A Lawrence." Determined that at least one of his sons should take over the business in order to preserve the "good name" of the Company, Amos had arranged with his brother Abbott to supply his son with letters of reference, and to send him around the country to learn the business from the ground up.¹

When Amos A. Lawrence graduated from Harvard in 1835, he set out on an intensive survey of business prospects in the West and the South. His first stop was Washington, during the first part of January, 1836. Attending sessions of the Congress, he was particularly

¹Amos Lawrence to Abbott Lawrence, September [], 1832, A. L. Papers, M.H.S., Box 1, folder 2.

attracted to the Senate, and sent a ten-page letter back to his father outlining the serious debates he had heard in the Senate over the question of slavery. Carefully he emphasized the fears of many of the Southern Senators concerning the incendiary nature of the Abolitionists in the North. Senator Calhoun, wrote young Lawrence, insisted that the South must have some "testimony" that would "soothe the anger of the slaveholders against the whole North: They required pacification and must have it!"¹

Leaving the Nation's capital, Lawrence headed South, and nothing but hospitality and good will seemed to greet the young New Englander as he visited Charleston, South Carolina and then made his way back up to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.² Commenting on the "solid wealth" of this latter city, Lawrence carefully sent his father back a list of the best commercial prospects, and expressed the hope that an "inexhaustible source of wealth" could soon be diverted to "our city."³ Down to Wheeling, Virginia, across to Cincinnati, over to Louisville, Kentucky, lining up wholesalers, jobbers and

¹Amos A. Lawrence to Amos Lawrence, Jan. 7, 8, 1836, A. L. Letters, M.H.S., 1, 410, 411.

²Amos A. Lawrence to Amos Lawrence, Jan. 18, 1836, A. L. Papers, M.H.S., Box 1, folder 2.

³Amos A. Lawrence to Amos Lawrence, Oct. 23, 1836, ibid.

buyers; then down to Florence, Alabama, went the young traveling salesman, making new contacts and adding to his list of future "prospects." Cutting straight across to Memphis, he then took the boat down the Mississippi to Natchez, taking a little time out to stop in at the crowded little taverns and admire the "pretty ladies" who were traveling the same route.¹

Arriving at New Orleans, Lawrence was given a warm reception by the prominent cotton planters and merchants of the city who were close friends of his father and uncle. "I like your New Englanders," boomed a prosperous Mr. Pritchard expansively; and one of the old cotton planters chuckled and suggested to the novice that if the Northern manufacturers and the Southern planters could get together and find a way to by-pass the New Yorkers, "it will be a great benefit to us both." "Yes," added Pritchard, "and when we get our line of packet ships to Europe we will save another slice of our own loaf!" Plans were obviously being formulated below the Mason-Dixon line, and Lawrence lost no time in telling his father all about them.²

¹Amos A. Lawrence to Amos Lawrence, A. L. Letters, M.H.S., II, 118.

²Amos A. Lawrence to Amos Lawrence, Dec. 22, 1836, A. L. Papers, M.H.S., Box 1, folder 2. Also see Henry Adams Bullard to Amos Lawrence, Jan. 25, 1837, A. L. Letters, M.H.S., II, 196.

From New Orleans, Lawrence went to Mobile, and from there by railroad to Macon, Georgia, early in 1837. The young merchant was appalled at the lack of thrift among the planters, their careless handling of accounts and receipts, and their general lack of savoir faire. "What I had imagined a Southern planter is a very rare sight," he told his father; "I mean a well educated gentleman."¹ Setting out from Macon, the young man took time to visit the cotton mills along the Chattahoochee, just north of Milledgeville. "Everybody called upon us," he wrote, "because we brought letters from A & A L & Co., who have a great reputation here." By way of indicating the value of the personal relations which the New Englanders had been careful to cultivate, Lawrence told his father: "Every man here who knows anything about Boston says he feels under great obligations to Mr. Abbott Lawrence (or to you sometimes) that he was very civil to them in Boston, and that they attended a party at his house." Then he added, "I never saw the good results of politeness so plainly before...."²

¹Amos A. Lawrence to Amos Lawrence, Jan. 7, 1837, A. L. Papers, M.H.S., Box 1, folder 2.

²Amos A. Lawrence to Amos Lawrence, Jan. 11, 1837, ibid.

By the following week Lawrence was making his way through the city of Charleston, South Carolina, meeting with such noted Southerners as James Hamilton, former governor and political leader of the State, and dining with the Rutledges, the Ogelthorpes, the Reids and the Gilchrists. Although the young man was pleased by the fact that men complimented him for the "political consistency of Massachusetts," he was careful to describe to his father the almost hysterical fear which gripped the city because of the Abolitionist threat. Imagining the dreaded Abolitionists to be "very powerful" in the North, wrote Lawrence, the authorities had placed a special patrol on duty in the city at eight o'clock every night, and had set up a guard house where arms and ammunition were kept "in case of any disturbance."¹

A week later, the young merchant was crossing into Virginia, and he was much more enthusiastic about prospects for manufacturing in the Petersburg area. Riding out with a group of Virginians, he inspected a cotton mill which had just been erected. Obviously impressed, the young man wrote to his father: "If manufacturing coarse cotton can succeed in this part of the country, it will be here."²

¹Amos A. Lawrence to Amos Lawrence, Jan. 21, 1837, A. L. Papers, Box 1, folder 2.

²Amos A. Lawrence to Amos Lawrence, Jan. 24, 1837, ibid.

Arriving back in Washington, Lawrence found Congress in as much of a turmoil over the slavery issue as it had been a year earlier. Describing the contest in the House over the gag rule, Lawrence noted a significant change of attitude which had taken place. "Our members are no longer disposed to tolerate the insults of the South," he pointed out to his father, "and instead of opposing abolition as they have done, they will advocate the Right of Petition and the freedom of speech."¹

The multiplicity of such professional and personal contacts between the enterprisers in the North and their counterparts in the South led to the most amiable of relations. Southern planters vacationed at Boston hotels as they might at summer resorts, and were warmly received into the best private homes in the city. Their sons at Harvard, with generous allowances and dashing manners, courted the young ladies of the North, attended dinners and parties in Beacon Street homes, and reported regularly to such gentlemen as the Lawrences on their marks and deportment, which would be duly reported to their fathers in the South. In short, so many warm and happy friendships

¹Amos A. Lawrence to Amos Lawrence, Feb. 10, 1837, A. L. Letters, M.H.S., II, 218.

were formed, that is was almost impossible for prominent Boston families to regard all slaveholders as inherently evil.¹

A complementary economic system between the North and the South, a tolerant regard for the rights and privileges of the other, and a warm social relationship which augmented the close economic ties--these were the valuable contributions to national unity and harmony which conservative Bostonians like the Lawrences felt were now being jeopardized by the immoderate demands and dangerous threats of the Abolitionists. The Northern businessman, they felt, must reassure his Southern friends that the disturbing elements were only a small lunatic fringe which was not at all representative of Northern views, and at the same time, take positive steps to curtail the activities and the influence of the offending elements themselves.

In virtually all his appeals to his Southern brethren, the Northern businessman emphasized the fact

¹ Robert Means to Amos Lawrence, Beaufort, So. Carolina, March 10, 1823, May [?], 1824, A. L. Papers, M.H.S., Box 1; H. A. Bullard to Lawrence, New Orleans, Jan. 28, 1832, April 5, 1838, A. L. Letters, M.H.S., III; John L. Toomer to Lawrence, Charleston, June 24, June 28, 1840, ibid., IV; William Sparks to Lawrence, Bonaventure, La., Nov. 1, 1841, Aug. 29, 1842, ibid., V.

that any solution to the slavery problem was to be accomplished only in accordance with the wishes of each of the Southern states. This was one of the most significant points of the conservative argument against abolition. Slavery, the average Boston businessman would concede, was an integral part of the American historical process, given specific sanction by the terms of the Constitution of the United States itself. While he might personally deplore the institution of slavery itself, he felt that any solution of the issue was only constitutionally possible by and with the consent of the respective states. Although Webster, in his famous "Reply to Hayne," might publicly castigate slavery as a moral and political evil, he was, at the same time, forced to admit that the Federal Government could have nothing to do with an institution which "has always been regarded as a matter of domestic policy left with the States themselves."¹

Amos Lawrence made it clear to Robert Rhett of South Carolina that he would never interfere in the question "unless requested by my brethren of the Slaveholding States"; and his son, Amos A. Lawrence, expressed

¹ Fletcher Webster, ed., The Writings and Speeches of Daniel Webster (18 vols.; National Edition, Boston, 1903), VI, 12.

the opinion that as a Whig he was honor-bound to preserve the original compact of the Union by which slavery was recognized.¹ "we must be magnanimous to the South," he wrote. "Slavery cannot be extended. Whether it can ever be got rid of in this country is doubtful. It is a curse imposed by the sins of our ancestors, and we must bear it patiently."² When Harrison Grey Otis wrote to Benjamin Faneuil Hunt, a prominent lawyer of Charleston, he indicated his willingness to leave the emancipation of slaves "to yourselves, to time, to the Providence of God." Otis assured him that he "never doubted that the states of this union are inhibited by the federal compact from interfering with the plantation states in the management of their own slaves. The letter and the spirit of the constitution are opposed to it...."³ The majority of conservatives in Massachusetts would seem to agree with Jared Sparks the historian, who considered slavery a

¹ Amos Lawrence to Robert B. Rhett, Dec. 12, 1849, Lawrence, Diary, pp. 274-6.

² Ibid., p. 112.

³ Harrison Grey Otis to Benjamin Hunt, Oct. 17, 1831, Morrison, Otis, II, 262-3.

great calamity but a problem which was impossible of solution. "Slavery exists," he wrote, "by the Constitution and the laws."¹ As far as Boston businessmen were concerned, that ended the matter.

But to the Abolitionist, the mere fact that the Constitution of the United States countenanced the institution of slavery settled nothing. It only meant that the Constitution was wrong, and must either be changed--or abandoned. "The ballot box," charged Garrison in his Liberator, "is not an anti-slavery, but a pro-slavery argument, so long as it is surrounded by the U. S. Constitution"--a Constitution, moreover, which he classified as "a covenant with death and an agreement with hell."² Wendell Phillips agreed that one of the "primary objects" of Abolitionists was "to dissolve the American Union."³ Any compact with slavery was evil, the Abolitionists argued, and such a union must necessarily be dissolved

¹Darling, Massachusetts, p. 152.

²Liberator, XIV, Feb. 8, April 12, 1844.

³Ibid., May 24, 1844.

in accordance with the principles of the "higher law." Dissolution of the Union of the States, then, was the only possible solution in America, especially since it would not only end the complicity of the Northern states in maintaining the immoral institution of slavery; but would also eliminate once and for all, the dangers of the extension of slavery into the territories of the North.¹

A shudder of horror ran through the conservative North at this latest evidence of political blasphemy. To preach Abolition was one thing--there was just no accounting for personal idiosyncracies--but to publicly denounce the sacred Constitution and to preach disunion was quite another thing.² There was too much at stake to let a disorganized group of maniacs and anarchists continue to go their way unchallenged and unopposed. The time had come for action, if the friendship of the South were to be retained. Conservative Northerners made a desperate and concerted effort to convince the South that the Abolitionists were not a true reflection of Northern sympathies.³ Constantly the Whigs pleaded

¹Garrison, Life, III, 96-133.

²Boston Post, Nov. 20, 1835.

³See Webster, Writings, X, 38.

with their Southern brethren to make a sharp distinction between the Abolitionist and the remainder of the North. "The Whigs were the first to denounce the Abolitionists," the Boston Daily Atlas pointed out, as it warned the South-land not to associate Abolitionists like Garrison and Tappan with the Whig Party.¹ Excited petitioners flooded Congress with their memorials, and in Boston, a huge mass meeting of some fifteen hundred citizens was called for Faneuil Hall on August 21, 1835. Presided over by Mayor Theodore Lyman, Jr., and Abbott Lawrence, the assembly was attended by the best elements of Boston society.² Invitations had been sent out to prominent slaveholders to come and witness the good intentions of Boston's men of business; and as the hall began to fill up, Mr. Benjamin Robbins Curtis noted with satisfaction the "numerous Southern gentlemen [who] came from all parts of the country to be present at the meeting."³ The assemblage listened to the words of the venerable Harrison Gray Otis, now seventy

¹Boston Daily Atlas, Sept. 30, Oct. 10, Oct. 17, 1835.

²Ibid., Aug. 22, 1835. See also George Benson to George W. Benson, Aug. 7, 1835; J. Farmer to Francis Jackson, Aug. 21, 1835, Garrison Papers, Rare Book Department, Boston Public Library (hereafter cited as "B.P.L."), V, 36, 41.

³Benjamin Curtis to George Ticknor, Aug. 23, 1835, Benjamin R. Curtis, A Memoir (2 vols.; Boston, 1879), I, 72.

as he warned that slaveholders would regard any attempt at abolition as "war in disguise upon their lives, their property, their rights and institutions, an outrage upon their pride and honor, and the faith of contracts." By the close of his eloquent oration, the elderly statesman had his audience on its feet cheering his appeal that the "Thirteen stripes may not be merged in two dismal strains of black and red!"¹

Even the most sanguine of the visitors from the South should have been satisfied by the Boston meeting; and the conservative Atlas took pleasure in reprinting a lengthy editorial, taken from a New Orleans newspaper, which praised the speech of Harrison Gray Otis, and indicated that his words were universally commended throughout the South.² Denunciations of Garrison and his colleagues had come so fast and furiously that Garrison's friends, fearing for his life, pleaded with him to leave the city. Reluctantly he consented, and for about a month he and his wife stayed away from Boston. In October, however,

¹ Morison, Otis, II, 271-2. See William Lloyd Garrison to Henry E. Benson, Aug. 29, 1835, Garrison Letters, B.P.L., I, 65.

² Boston Daily Atlas, Oct. 17, 1835.

Garrison made known his return, and the Liberator announced the regular meeting of the Boston Female Antislavery Society to be held at three o'clock, October 21, 1835.¹ The recent Faneuil Hall meeting, he felt, might well prove to be a boomerang. The "fiery spirits" of the South would certainly be satisfied with nothing short of suppressing abolitionism by legal enactments--or "mobocratic violence," and the latter he dismissed as a practical impossibility.² But trouble was brewing. The rumor spread quickly through the city that George Thompson, a prominent British emancipationist (that "infamous foreign scoundrel" one placard called him), would address the gathering.³ A menacing crowd was already at the doors of 46 Washington Street when Garrison arrived at his office, which adjoined the small lecture hall, but the preparations inside went on as scheduled. Promptly at three o'clock, however, the mob burst in, broke up the ladies' meeting, and began a fruitless search for Thompson. Pushing into Garrison's office, a group of the intruders started after the editor himself,

¹Boston Daily Atlas, Oct. 14, 1835; Boston Post, Oct. 21, 1835.

²William Lloyd Garrison to Henry E. Benson, Aug. 25, 1835, Garrison Letters, B.P.L., I, 64.

³Boston Daily Atlas, Oct. 16, 1835.

until Mayor Lyman and the Sheriff who had just rushed upon the scene, helped him to escape through a rear window. A shouting mob finally caught up with Garrison, however, threw a rope around him and dragged him triumphantly through the streets.¹ Ragged and torn, he was being hauled toward Boston Common by his howling captors, when two burly brothers, Daniel and Aaron Corley, elbowed their way through, rescued Garrison, and fought their way into the safety of the City Hall. As the angry mob demanded its prey, Garrison was quickly spirited out, shoved into a waiting hack, and driven off to the Leverett Street jail for his own protection--after being booked as a "rioter." The next day, Mayor Lyman dismissed the charges, advised Garrison to leave town, and released him. Garrison decided to follow the Mayor's advice and journeyed to Providence with his wife for a much needed rest.²

Of the nature of the mob which had attacked him,

¹Boston Post, Oct. 22, 1835. See Garrison, Life, II, 10-30, for a complete account of the "Boston mob." Also see George W. Lyman to Rev. Benton Smith, June 30, 1879, Miscellaneous Mss, M.H.S.

²Boston Post, Oct. 23, 1835. William Lloyd Garrison to George W. Benson, Oct. 26, 1835, Garrison Letters, B.P.L., I, 76; George Thompson to Garrison, Oct. 22, 1835; George W. Benson to Garrison, Oct. 27, 1835, Garrison Papers, B.P.L., V, 60, 62; Garrison to Samuel E. Sewall, Oct. 24, 1835, Grenville H. Norcross, Mss, M.H.S.

Garrison had no doubt. "It was planned and executed," he insisted, "not by the rabble, or the workmen, but by 'gentlemen of property and standing from all parts of the city.'"¹ Wendell Phillips, who had been a non-partisan witness to the event, later gave a classic description of the assault being conducted by the "gentlemen" of the city--in "broadcloth and in broad daylight"; and James L. Homer, editor of the Commercial Gazette, described the mob as "gentlemen of property and influence."² The conservative character of the rioters was confirmed by a visitor from Baltimore, Mr. T. L. Nichols, who chanced to see the historic outburst as he walked through the city. "Merchants and bankers of Boston, assembled on 'Change in State-Street," he related, "and believing him [Thompson] to be at the office of Garrison's Liberator, they gathered tumultuously, and came around from State-Street into Washington Street, determined to put a stop to the eloquence of the English

¹Garrison, Life, II, 30.

²Wendell Phillips, Speeches, Lectures and Letters (Boston, 1892), p. 214. Cited from a speech he made, twenty years later, in commemoration of the "Boston Mob." See also James Homer to George Rand, Aug. 19, 1852, Garrison, Life, II, 10-11.

Abolitionist."¹ Although the evidence is circumstantial, there would seem to be little doubt that some persons close to Boston's leading merchants and businessmen had decided to demonstrate their good will to their Southern brethren by deeds as well as by words. Even the newspapers of Boston, regardless of party affiliation, showed little sympathy with Garrison. Although they deplored mob violence and pleaded for law and order, they made it quite clear that they considered that Garrison and his colleagues had brought retaliation upon themselves.² By the first of the following year, young Amos Lawrence could write back to his father from the nation's capital, his opinion that the attacks against the Abolitionists had achieved their purpose. Senator Benton declared that the "indignation manifested at the North during the last summer" was proof that Northerners were as hostile to Abolition doctrine as any "reasonable Southerner could wish." Mr. Buchanan of Pennsylvania, reported the young merchant, also approved of the steps taken against the Abolitionists, and said he had "no doubt that the Senators of the North were as

¹ T. L. Nichols, Forty Years of American Life, 1821-1861 (New York, 1937), pp. 84-8.

² Boston Daily Advertiser, Oct. 22, 1835; Boston Daily Atlas, Oct. 23, 1835; Boston Post, Oct. 22, Oct. 24, 1835.

indignant as the South at such black proceedings...."¹

If there were many, like young Lawrence, who expected that the years of "terror" would intimidate the Abolitionists into inactivity, they were doomed to disappointment. The violence of 1835-6 not only failed to halt the Abolition movement--it acted as a fatal boomerang by providing more sympathy and more converts than the movement had ever been able to gain through its own exertions.² The list grew alarmingly, as men of wealth, background and position joined themselves to Garrison's cause. Wendell Phillips, Harvard '51, a member of a leading family, and Edmund Quincy, son of a noted Harvard president, joined the ranks.³ The prominent Dr. Henry Ingersoll Bowditch became an Abolitionist after witnessing the attack on Garrison. Even the influential merchant, John Murray Forbes, long indifferent to the problem of slavery, "changed my whole feeling with regard to it" after the

¹ Amos A. Lawrence to Amos Lawrence, Jan. 8, 1836, A. L. Letters, M.H.S., I, 411.

² Dwight Dumond, Antislavery Origins of the Civil War in the United States (Ann Arbor, 1939), p. 68; Hilary Herbert, The Abolition Crusade and its Consequences (New York, 1912), pp. 84-5; Garrison, Life, II, 188-9.

³ Ibid., p. 185. Also see Wendell Phillips, Speeches, pp. 1-10.

murder of Elijah Lovejoy in Illinois.¹ James Russell Lowell and Ralph Waldo Emerson soon added their literary talents to those of John Greenleaf Whittier and before long, became influential factors in the drive for emancipation.² Membership was increasing every day, and by 1838 there were over two hundred anti-slavery societies in Massachusetts alone, with enough funds to send out propagandists and literature to all parts of the country.

To make matters worse, the slavery question was becoming an important political issue. Up to now, Massachusetts had witnessed its own version of the Victorian Compromise as both Whigs and Democrats uniformly side-stepped the issue of slavery and refused to sponsor either Garrison or his unpopular program. This was perfectly agreeable to Garrison himself, since he resisted all attempts to involve his Abolition movement in politics, and emphasized his ideal of "non-resistance."³

¹Hughes, Forbes, I, 100; Villard, "The Antislavery Crisis," Conn. Hist., IV, 324.

²Greenleaf, Lowells, pp. 253-4. Also see Charles Sumner to Dr. Lieber, Jan. 3, 1836, Edward Fierce, Memoir and Letters of Charles Sumner (4 vols.; Boston, 1877-93), I, 173.

³Parling, Massachusetts, pp. 156-7; Garrison, Life, II, 200-202; Liberator, Dec. 15, 1837; Boston Post, Nov. 18, 1835.

But the question of slavery could hardly be kept out of the turbulent political arena. Western Abolitionists, headed by James G. Birney and Theodore Weld had already gone into political action; and the New York group, led by William Jay and the Tappan brothers, was beginning to ignore Garrison's "no-government" order.¹ In Massachusetts, too, such men as Henry B. Stanton and John Greenleaf Whittier had decided that political action was of greater value than Garrison was willing to admit. "Passive Abolitionism" was fast becoming a thing of the past, as Abolitionists came to believe that future success lay in the political pressures which could be created; and they swung in behind the newly-formed Liberty Party which had nominated Birney for the Presidency in 1840.²

All of this was most disturbing to men like Abbott Lawrence and Nathan Appleton, who still controlled the conservative policies of the Whig Party in Massachusetts. While it was true that the situation had not yet become critical, and there seemed to be no immediate danger to

¹ Garrison, Life, II, 333 ff.

² Villard, "Antislavery Crisis," Comm. Hist., IV, 335-5.

Whig fortunes in the Bay State, something would have to be done. Obviously trying to retain their political status, the men of wealth and influence fought against what they considered to be divisive influences. Protesting against "misgovernment and maladministration," the "Cotton Whigs" sponsored a series of meetings, rallies and processions, and urged the nation to follow their leadership as the only means of maintaining "true democracy."¹ To show their good intentions to their Southern brethren, they invited visitors from the South to attend their gala celebration of Bunker Hill Day, and the gentlemen of Boston were delighted to receive delegates from as far South as Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee and Louisiana.² Such steps were considered necessary, in view of the alarming political developments within the Bay State and in Washington.

For one thing, the slavery issue was drawing greater popular interest than ever before in state and local elections. What about the morality of slavery?

¹ Boston Daily Atlas, Nov. 9, 1840; Boston Daily Advertiser, Nov. 9, 1840.

² Boston Daily Atlas, Sept. 11, 1840; Boston Daily Advertiser, Sept. 12, 1840. Also see Lawrence, Diary, pp. 154-5.

What about the extension of slavery? What about slavery in Texas? What about the slave trade in the District of Columbia? Candidates of both leading parties were amazed at the number, and appalled at the intricacies of the questions on slavery with which they were confronted. Party leaders were shocked into the realization that slavery had already become a serious campaign issue.¹

Then too, all was not harmonious within the local ranks of the Whig Party in the Bay State. Rising young political leaders like Charles Francis Adams, John G. Palfrey, Charles Sumner and Horace Mann, were chafing at the bit, demonstrating an ambition to capture influence in the party and direct it into different channels. Nothing serious had occurred yet--but it was a development that needed watching. The new Abolitionist-sponsored Liberty party was slowly picking up votes in the State--not many, of course, compared with the major parties, but enough to give the antislavery elements an uncomfortable advantage in a close election, and a dangerous edge if the Whig Party should splinter!²

¹ Robert C. Winthrop, Jr., A Memoir of Robert C. Winthrop (Boston, 1897), pp. 24-6; Darling, Massachusetts, pp. 248-9.

² Ibid., pp. 289-93, 317-18; Faulkner, "Massachusetts," Comm. Hist., IV, 90-1.

Most disturbing of all, however, was the alarming rate at which the slavery issue was being brought into national prominence. If the South had been outraged and dishonored by the activities of one lone man and his puny newspaper, what would happen if the same sort of vituperation were brought into the very halls of Congress itself? If the long white thread which stretched from the plantation to the mill had been endangered by the ravings of a single reformer, what would happen if the Capital resounded to the voices of dozens of national legislators?¹

This consideration became all the more frightening as national events during the 1840's forced the issue of slavery even further into the forefront of political debate. Westward expansion, rebellion in Texas, and war with Mexico were destined to focus the eyes of the nation upon the complexities of slavery and its Constitutional right to exist and to expand. It was in trying to find a moderate and workable solution to these explosive developments that the Northern manufacturers began their search for a way to balance their economic security with their moral principles.

¹Amos A. Lawrence to Amos Lawrence, July 29, Sept. 15, 1840, A. L. Papers, M.H.S., box 1, folder 2.

CHAPTER III

COTTON VERSUS CONSCIENCE

The Boston manufacturer did not like slavery-- as a matter of fact, he personally abhorred it as a grievous sin--but he had made repeated efforts to reassure the Cotton Kingdom that he would not lift a finger to interfere with that institution where it already existed under the sanction and protection of the Constitution of the United States.

The extension of Negro slavery outside of these limits, on the other hand, was an entirely different matter; and many industrialists and their colleagues felt no compunction in taking issue with territorial expansion wherever and whenever it foreshadowed the simultaneous expansion of slavery. "While...I feel it to be my duty distinctly to say that I would leave to the masters of slaves every guaranty of the Constitution and the Union...",¹ said Rufus Choate to a meeting of the Young Men's Whig Club of Boston, "I still controvert the power, I deny the morality, I tremble for the consequences, of annexing an acre of new territory, for the mere purpose of diffusing this great evil, this great curse, over a wider surface of American earth!"¹

¹ Samuel G. Brown, ed., The Works of Rufus Choate with a Memoir of His Life (2 vols.; Boston, 1862), II, 274.

When Amos Lawrence wrote to a friend in South Carolina, it was quite consistent with the conservative policies of the Northern businessmen that he assured his correspondent that the "peculiar institution" would never be interfered with by "sober, honest men."¹ Equally significant, however, was the fact that Lawrence made it a point to add his conviction that the same institution would "never be allowed to be carried where it is not now under the Federal Government."² Since this question of territorial expansion was regarded as completely outside the original Constitutional provisions which had insured the security of slavery in the states, men like the Lawrences felt that the South could have no possible grounds for thinking that her Constitutional rights and prerogatives were being assailed.

The greatest threat to this conservative desire of restricting Negro slavery within the prescribed limits of the Constitution, came during the late 1830's with the movement for Western expansion in general, and the issue of Texas, in particular. Once the American

¹Amos Lawrence to a friend in South Carolina, June 12, 1832, Lawrence, Diary, pp. 317-19. Also see William Sharp to Amos Lawrence, Jan. 25, 1844, A. L. Letters, VI, for a letter indicating Southern appreciation of conservative Northern principles.

²Lawrence, Diary, pp. 317-18.

settlers in Texas had declared their independence from Mexico, sentiment in favor of immediate annexation began to grow increasingly strong on the part of the northern Republic. Soon there were many who were not only talking about adding Texas to the Union, but speculating upon the possibilities of the vast western lands beyond.¹

There were many other Americans, however, who flatly opposed the admission of Texas, convinced that such a step would not only upset the balance of political power, but would permit the institution of slavery to spread beyond its prescribed constitutional limits. As one might suspect, violent Abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison immediately set themselves against annexation, and even went so far as to demand secession if Texas were admitted to the Union.² The more moderate anti-slavery groups also took up the cry, and thrilled to the words of the Reverend William Ellery Channing who thundered in protest:

¹ John D. P. Fuller, The Movement for the Acquisition of All Mexico, 1846-48 (Baltimore, 1936), pp. 15-16.

² Liberator, XIV, April 12, April 19, 1844. See William Lloyd Garrison to John Farmer, June 6, 1837, and Garrison to George W. Benson, June 14, 1837; Garrison Letters, B.P.L., II, 59, 60.

"The Free States declare that the very act of admitting Texas will be construed as a dissolution of the Union!"¹

But by now apprehension had struck deep into even the most conservative elements of the Boston community. Abbott Lawrence, the leading cotton manufacturer and capitalist in New England, warned that the movement for Texas was the most significant crisis for the Union since the days of the Constitution. The ramifications of the Texas question, he felt, were enormous. With the admission to the Union of a slave-holding territory whose size was sufficient to create six future states, the threat to the political future of the free states was undeniable. "Where will be the patronage and Executive power of the Government?" he asked. "Will it not be gone, forever departed, from the Free States?" Such a thing must not happen, Lawrence insisted. The North must "resist every attempt at the acquisition of territory to be inhabited by slaves!"²

Abbott's brother, Amos Lawrence, expressed similar views, and stated that he regarded all other

¹William Ellery Channing, "A Letter to the Hon. Henry Clay," August 1, 1837, Works (Boston, 1875), p. 773.

²Lawrence to friends, March 25, 1837, Hill, Abbott Lawrence, p. 21.

questions of the day as "insignificant in comparison with this." Writing to Jonathan Chapman, former Mayor of Boston, and member of the Whig Committee, Amos Lawrence emphasized his belief that the annexation of Texas and the subsequent extension of slavery would be the first step toward national destruction. "Let us work," he urged, "in a Christian spirit as we would for our individual salvation, to prevent this sad calamity befalling us."¹ From New Orleans, Lawrence's friend, Judge Henry Adams Bullard, agreed most heartily. A transplanted Yankee, Bullard had first gone south to fight for the liberation of Mexico, and then stayed on to practice law in New Orleans, where his fluency in languages and his cultured manner made him a popular figure. Now Judge of the Supreme Court of Louisiana, Bullard corresponded with Lawrence frequently and provided him with first-hand evidence of the Southern point of view.²

"The greatest hubbug in this life of hubbuga is that Texas business," he growled. "Only think of a scattered population which never exceeded 25,000 men, women, children, vagrants, runaways, outthroats and all, absolutely without resources, asking the United States first to recognize their independence as a nation and then to admit them into the Union." The fact that most of the new citizens would be

¹Amos Lawrence to Jonathan Chapman, Nov. [?], 1844, Lawrence, Diary, p. 192.

²selvin Jenneon white, "Henry Adams Bullard," Dictionary of American Biography, III, 254-5.

leaving American creditors "with the bag to hold," only made the prospect more dismal than ever.¹

Private opinions such as these were given open political expression in Daniel Webster's widely discussed address at Hiblo's Saloon when he condemned the extension of an institution which he denounced as "a great moral, social and political evil." Asserting his own personal opposition to any such expansion, Webster was convinced that "the people of the United States will not consent to bring into the Union a new, vastly extensive, slaveholding country.... In my opinion," he added, "they ought not to consent to it."² In the House, Robert G. Winthrop, close friend of the Lawrences and the Appletons, added his protests against the annexation of Texas. It would, he charged, "break up the balance of our system, violate the Compromises of the Constitution, and endanger the permanence of the Union." "Above all," he concluded, voicing the opinion of Boston's men of business, "because I am uncompromisingly opposed to the extension of domestic slavery, or to the addition of another inch of slave-holding territory to this nation."³

The issue of expansion, then, proved to be unusually troublesome; and in the face of such influential

¹Henry A. Bullard to Anna Lawrence, Jan. 25, 1837, A. L. Letters, M.H.S., II, 196.

²Webster, Writings, II, 193-230, March 15, 1837.

³Winthrop, Speeches, p. 36, Jan. 6, 1845.

opposition, most politicians hesitated to commit themselves publicly on the issue. While Martin Van Buren endeavored to side-step the explosive issue during most of his term as President, Whig party leaders were hard at work on a plan to unseat the Democrats from national power in the coming elections of 1840. Deciding to bypass their nominal leaders, Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, the Whigs chose, instead, the aged but august hero of Tippecanoe-- William Henry Harrison.¹ After a raucous campaign which saw log cabins and cider jugs play a conspicuous part, the old general swept into office by an even greater electoral majority than had been expected. Jubilant Whigs everywhere were delighted that "the wicked Administration of the last twelve years" had at last been overthrown, and were thankful for "the deliverance that has at last appeared."² Confident that the "old fellow" would quietly collapse into the Presidential chair and "sit still" while conservative Whigs like Clay and Webster guided the nation's destiny, most party leaders assumed that the question of Texas was a dead issue.³ "We believe Mr. Webster and

¹ Boston Daily Atlas, Dec. 25, Dec. 29, 1835.

² J. W. Patterson to Amos Lawrence, London, Dec. 1, 1840, A. L. Letters, M.H.S., V, 185.

³ Amos A. Lawrence to Amos Lawrence, Sept. 15, 1840, A. L. Papers, M.H.S., Box 1, folder 3.

yourself are to be of the Council," wrote Abbott Lawrence to Senator John J. Crittenden of Kentucky, "and we feel that the success of General Harrison's Administration depends upon those who are to be his Ministers; and the appointments made through them of the Federal officers throughout the Country."¹ Certainly things were starting out beautifully. Henry Clay was getting his legislative program ready for Congress, while his friends took over their new Cabinet posts. Daniel Webster had just received his appointment as Secretary of State; and Abbott Lawrence was named as one of the Commissioners to discuss the Maine boundary dispute with Great Britain. It looked as though the age of expansion were definitely a thing of the past.

The Whig victory celebrations were short-lived, however, when the elderly President died soon after taking office, and was succeeded by the Vice-President, John Tyler of Virginia. A confirmed Democrat who hated the tariff and the Bank, but who loved western expansion, Tyler had been nominated for the second position merely as a matter of political expediency; and his unexpected appearance now threw the Whigs into a frenzy of despair. Denouncing Tyler's defection from party principles in no uncertain

¹Abbott Lawrence to John J. Crittenden, Jan. 7, 1841, Crittenden Mss., Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. (hereafter cited as "L.C.").

terms ("a traitor, a base traitor," one Southern planter called him), the Whig hierarchy began to look around almost immediately for a candidate to groom for the next elections.¹

One of the hardest workers in this program was Abbott Lawrence of Massachusetts, who had completed his work on the Maine boundary dispute and who now took time out from his numerous manufacturing interests to add his voice and influence to the campaign against Tyler, convinced that the coming election was "the most important since the adoption of the Constitution."² Presiding at the State Whig Convention in the fall of 1842, Lawrence publicly came out in support of the candidacy of Henry Clay--much to the disgust of the devoted followers of Daniel Webster.³ Although he admitted the great local appeal of Webster and praised his contributions to the nation, Lawrence nevertheless considered Clay not only as the nominal head of the Whig Party, but of much more "national influence" than the Senator from Massachusetts.⁴ As a member of the

¹William H. Sparks to Amos Lawrence, Nov. 1, 1841, A. L. Letters, M.H.S., V, 391.

²Abbott Lawrence, "Letter to the Whigs of Essex County," Aug. 20, 1844, Hill, Abbott Lawrence, pp. 76-7.

³Abbott Lawrence to John J. Crittenden, Apr. 5, 1844, Crittenden Mss, L.C.; Hill, Abbott Lawrence, pp. 73-4.

⁴Lawrence, "Letter to Whigs," ibid., p. 76.

of the National Whig Convention, and as an elector from the state of Massachusetts in 1844, Lawrence continued to voice his support of Clay, and called upon the voters of the Bay State to do likewise. "How any man...in New England can cast his vote for Mr. Polk, with his ultra view of national policy, is more than I can comprehend," said the noted manufacturer. "Upon the subjects of Texas and the Tariff, Mr. Polk entertains the views of the State of South Carolina....Mr. Polk has come out boldly in favor of the extension of slavery." Opposing Polk, free trade, and South Carolina "abstractions," Lawrence led the fight for Clay. "Let us go," he cried, "for Clay and Prelinghuysen--the American System--and the Union as it is!"¹

The election of 1844 proved to be close and exciting, with the question of Texas always a critical campaign issue. Trying to keep a foot in both electoral camps, Henry Clay, the unanimous choice of the Whigs, straddled the question of annexation.² The Democrats, on the other hand, came up with a vocal, pro-Texas

¹Hill, Abbott Lawrence, pp. 77-8. Also see Abbott to Amos Lawrence, May 12, 1844, A. L. Papers, M.H.S., Box 1, folder 3.

²See Abbott Lawrence to John J. Crittenden, April 5, 1844, Crittenden Mss, L.C.

Southerner in the person of James K. Polk of Tennessee who campaigned on an open enunciation of the doctrine of Manifest Destiny. It was a neck and neck race down to the finish line, with Polk nosing out Clay by less than 50,000 popular votes, as many anti-slavery votes were switched to the Liberty party in reaction to Clay's vacillating tactics. Although it was a hair-line finish--with the electoral votes, 170 to 105, indicating the precarious political balance--the results provided a sufficient margin of safety for most politicians.

When President Tyler recommended the possibility of annexing Texas by a joint resolution of both Houses, this time the Congress did not hesitate to take up the question, and a series of violent debates began. In the Senate, Rufus Choate of Massachusetts argued vehemently against the resolution as both unconstitutional and inexpedient; while Robert C. Winthrop continued the fight against annexation in the House.¹ Back home Amos Lawrence pleaded with the Bay State Congressmen to hold the line--"if Texas can be kept off, there will be hope for our government"--and kept in constant touch with the proceedings.²

¹Brown, Choate, I, 98-100; Winthrop, Memoir, p. 38; Boston Daily Advertiser, Feb. 21, 1845.

²Lawrence, Diary, p. 192. Also see Abbott Lawrence to Joan J. Crittenden, April 5, 1844, Crittenden Mss., L.C.

Winthrop kept the manufacturer up to date on the latest information in the capital, the local newspapers printed all the rumor and gossip available, and Faneuil Hall was filled to capacity with delegates from the various towns who came to attend the highly publicized "Anti-Texas" convention.¹ All their hopes were in vain, however, for both Houses finally passed the resolution, and on March 1, 1845, just three days before he left office, President Tyler signed the document admitting Texas to the Union.²

With the admission of Texas an accomplished fact, Northern Whigs began to warn that this was merely the opening gun in an all-out assault upon the Western lands. War with Mexico was the inevitable result of such a policy, they prophesied, and declared that they would have no part in the consequences. "If any battles and wars shall grow out of this affair," warned the Lowell Courier, "Massachusetts will let those do the fighting who brought the war upon us.... The Bay State will send no militia to the South to fight the battles of slavery or to suppress Negro insurrections."³ "Texas is not yet annexed!" protested

¹Boston Daily Advertiser, Feb. 27, March 1, 1845.
Ibid., Jan. 25, 27, 30, 1845.

²Ibid., March 3, 1845; Boston Post, March 3, 1845.

³Lowell Courier, April 11, 1845.

the Advertiser; and the Atlas circulated a pledge committing citizens of Massachusetts not to "countenance or aid the United States Government in any war which may be occasioned by the annexation of Texas."¹ The Massachusetts legislature, with a Whig Senate and a Whig-controlled House, passed resolutions stating that an act of Congress admitting Texas to the Union had "no binding force whatever on the people of Massachusetts."²

Especially outspoken in their condemnation of annexation were the younger members of the Whig party--men like Henry Wilson, Charles Francis Adams, Charles Sumner and Charles Allen--who were already dissatisfied with their obscure position and nebulous influence in political circles, and who had begun to rattle the bars of party conformity. Known as the "Conscience Whigs," they challenged the leadership of the old "Cotton Whigs" and were now demanding that the Whig Party take a definite stand against Negro slavery.³ Already they had produced a

¹Boston Daily Advertiser, March 15, 1845; Boston Daily Atlas, June 16, 1845.

²Boston Post, March 14, 18, 1845.

³Henry Wilson, Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America (Boston, 1874), II, 123-5.

dynamic, young leader in the person of Charles Sumner who had become famous (or infamous--"the young man has cut his throat!" sputtered former Mayor Eliot) as a result of his independence day oration in 1845, in which he had publicly denounced national glory and territorial expansion in general, and the United States armed forces in particular.¹

Seeing the possibility of their traditionally conservative party being taken over by young firebrands and hotheads, leading "Cotton Whigs" like Abbott Lawrence, Nathan Appleton, Robert C. Winthrop and Rufus Choate became more apprehensive than ever at the latest political trends which threatened the future of the Whig party.² Already a new and extremist political party had made an appearance--the American Republican party--and had shown surprising strength in recent elections. It had already elected a mayor in Boston and was now threatening to cut even further into local Whig votes by offering a State ticket calling for the restriction of Irish immigration.³

¹Pierce, Sumner, II, 341-356; Charles Sumner, Works (20 vols.; Boston, 1900), I, 29 ff., 59 ff.; Boston Daily Advertiser, March 13, 1877.

²Winthrop, Memoir, p. 31.

³Pierce, Sumner, II, 332; Derling, Massachusetts, pp. 327-9.

Things had become so serious that even the sacrosanct name of the god-like Daniel Webster failed to produce the same reverence and respect as in former days. When Rufus Choate retired from the Senate early in 1845 and offered his seat to his friend Webster, party managers had all they could do to scrape together the subscription of \$100,000 (the third time such a collection had been taken up), which would allow the great man to leave his personal financial arrangements and return to public life.¹ This was just one more outward manifestation of the fact that the "Cotton Whigs" were beginning to lose their hold upon a State which had hardly even questioned their superior position. The appearance of a new party, the growing dissatisfaction of the younger elements within their own party, and the obvious loss of much local political support now prompted the "Cotton Whigs" to redouble their efforts to maintain themselves in power.

As one means of readjusting their precarious political situation, the "Cotton Whigs" endeavored to establish closer and more personal economic ties with the South. A more friendly political understanding with the planting community might conceivably produce unexpected dividends. Watching the interplay of economic interests with cynical amusement, Ralph Waldo Emerson sneered:

¹Dughey, Forbes, I, 118.

"Cotton thread holds the union together; unites John G. Calhoun and Abbott Lawrence....cotton thread is the union."¹ Emerson was nearer to the truth than even he himself possibly suspected, for even as he was writing these lines, Abbott Lawrence was negotiating for a personal loan to John G. Calhoun of \$30,000. A group of New Englanders would advance the sum, Lawrence proposed, in return for an annual payment of 100,000 pounds of Calhoun's best cotton. Although Calhoun eventually declined the offer--feeling that he might not be able to meet the payments, as well as fearing that the too generous advance might be misinterpreted in some quarters--his reply indicates no irreparable conflict over economic issues. "I am no opponent to manufactures or manufacturers," he wrote in closing, "but quite the reverse. I rejoice in their prosperity."²

The "Cotton Whigs" pressed on. Was there anything else they could do to relieve sectional tensions? Calhoun had mentioned the tariff question, and had expressed his view that duties on manufactured items should

¹E. W. Emerson and W. H. Forbes, eds.; Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson (10 vols.; Boston, 1909-14), VII, 232.

²John G. Calhoun to Abbott Lawrence, Fort Hill, May 13, 1845, "Correspondence of John G. Calhoun," Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1899, II, 654-6.

be lowered.¹ Possibly something could be done here! In a letter, marked "Private and Confidential," Abbott Lawrence confided to Calhoun that although New England manufacturers considered a high tariff as an economic necessity, nevertheless a suitable working arrangement could be worked out. "We are quite ready," assured Lawrence, "at a proper time to meet the question in a spirit of compromise, and settle it upon such a basis, as will insure repose for ten years."² Adding his influence to this point, Edward Everett, former Minister to Great Britain and now President of Harvard, wrote to Calhoun, urging him to make "some equitable compromise between the tariff and anti-tariff parties. If it is possible to be effected," he added, "it can only be done by you."³ A short time later, Lawrence cautioned his friend and fellow manufacturer, Congressman Nathan Appleton, not to push the South too far on the tariff issue. "We can afford

¹"When that is accomplished," wrote Calhoun, "all conflict between the planter and the manufacturer would cease...." Calhoun to Abbott Lawrence, May 13, 1845, "Correspondence of Calhoun," A.H.A. Annual Report, 1892, II, 684-6.

²Abbott Lawrence to Calhoun, Boston, July 14, 1846, ibid., pp. 1096-7.

³Edward Everett to Calhoun, Cambridge, April 6, 1846, ibid., pp. 1090-81.

to yield something to the prejudices of the people," wrote Lawrence, "and I am ready for a new bill with discriminations and specific duties at lower rates than those of '42."¹

Not even recent Southern proposals to industrialize the South and produce its own cotton cloth could dampen the efforts of the Northern industrialists in trying to arrive at an amiable and harmonious working arrangement with the South. Here was another potential clash of interests which Northern Whigs were convinced could be peacefully settled to the mutual advantage and satisfaction of both parties.

For some time there had been a small but vocal group below the Mason-Dixon Line who were trying to impress upon the leaders of the South the necessity of developing a "home" economy. One of the most representative of these early Southern industrialists, William Gregg of South Carolina, was vehement in his protest against the ideas of his political contemporaries who were urging nullification as a weapon of protest. Instead of embittering "our indolent people," against the North, wrote Gregg, these extremists would do well to encourage "the same zeal" in "promoting domestic industry and the

¹Abbott Lawrence to Nathan Appleton, Aug. 4, 1846, Hill, Abbott Lawrence, p. 32.

encouragement of the mechanical arts."¹ From Georgia came similar sentiments on the part of Congressman J. H. Lumpkin who called upon the South to rise above its traditional prejudices against manufacturing and develop an industrial economy which would, in turn, stimulate an even greater agricultural production in the South.²

James D. B. DeBow, the famous Southern economist and editor, added his voice to the movement for Southern manufactures going so far as to advocate the employment of Negroes in Southern factories.³ While on a visit to Boston, Mr. K. L. Allen, a planter from South Carolina, repeated these views to Amos Lawrence. If the South continued to oppose domestic manufacturing, and hold on to their "fooleries [sic] and nonsense... the whole state in fifty years will not be worth as much as the parchments on which to draw title deeds...." Even their "frugal file leader in folly," said Allen in a bitter reference to Calhoun, "will require aid for his support unless he allows his

¹Broadus Mitchell, William Gregg, Factory Master of the Old South (Chapel Hill, 1928), p. 21.

²Henry H. Simms, A Decade of Sectional Controversy (Chapel Hill, 1942), pp. 23-4. Also see Hudson Strode, Jefferson Davis (New York, 1955), p. 214.

³DeBow's Review of the Southern and Western States, V, (1847), 182-5.

Negroes to make their own cloth."¹

Far from being angered, indignant, or fearful at the prospects of Southern industrial competition, businessmen of the North actually offered their Southern counterparts advice and assistance. Charles T. James of Rhode Island, former superintendent of the Slater Mills and considered one of the greatest factory engineers in the country, gave public support to the demands of Southern industrialists. Writing in 1849, James pointed out the great waste in sending cotton "abroad" to be manufactured, when it "might well be done at home."²

It fell to the son of old Amos Lawrence, young Amos Adams Lawrence, to provide a more complete and formalized answer to these Southern demands for factories in the South. A more typical example of the Yankee entrepreneur and industrialist could hardly be found than this young man, now in his mid-thirties, who had established himself in his own business after graduating from Harvard in 1836. As a senior, poised eagerly on the threshold of

¹R. L. Allen to Amos Lawrence, January, 1849, A. L. Letters, W.H.S., IX, 463.

²Hunt's Merchants' Magazine, XXI (1849), 492-502.

his future, he candidly admitted: "to be rich would be my delight." Although he realized with perfect frankness that with the successful "machine" which his father and uncle had painstakingly created, "my advantages for becoming rich are great," the mere accumulation of wealth for its own sake was far from being his life's ambition. He was not going to be a "blodding, narrow-minded" merchant, cooped up in the noisy city with his mind chained to the counting-room; no, he was going to be a man of the world, a literary man "in some measure," and a farmer too, with a happy, rustic cottage somewhere in the suburbs. In an exposition of ideas which were to re-emerge a generation later in the writings of his own son, William Lawrence, the future Episcopal Bishop of Massachusetts, noted proponent of the "gospel of wealth," young Amos Adams Lawrence considered that a man should be "willing and glad to be rich." "A good man will willingly endure the labor of taking care of his property for the sake of others whom he can so much benefit by it," he wrote, anticipating the idea of the "stewardship of wealth" by half a century.¹

Now, some twenty five years later, the young man was President of the Cocheoc Mills, Treasurer of the Salmon Falls Mills, and held directorates in such important

¹Lawrence, Amos A. Lawrence, pp. 23-4. See Rt. Rev. William Lawrence, "The Relation of Wealth to Morals," World's Work, I (January, 1901), 286-292, for a classic statement regarding the relationship of personal wealth to the common welfare.

corporations as the Suffolk Bank, The American Insurance Office, the Boston Water Power Corporation, and the Middlesex Canal.¹ Replying to James through the columns of Hunt's Merchants' Magazine, Lawrence took issue with the engineer by indicating his belief that immediate prospects for Southern textile mills seemed dim because of the absence of sufficient capital and a "radical defect" in steam power. Nevertheless, the New Englander assured his friends in the South that with sufficient skill, industry, perseverance, and capital, "success will follow at the South as well as at the North."² Young Lawrence, however, was particularly disturbed by what he considered the general Southern notion that the Northern textile manufacturer did little work, suffered few risks, and made fabulous profits over night. "General James," he wrote to a friend, "is doing considerable harm by writing to the Southern market, stating the great profits which we make by manufacturing at the North," and expressed his fears that this would lead to a rash of hastily constructed factories throughout the South which

¹Lawrence, Amos A. Lawrence, pp. 87-8.

²Hunt's Merchants' Magazine, XXII (1880), 26-36.

would only add to the "over-growth of factories which already presses us down."¹

In a similar vein, young Lawrence wrote to the Southern industrialist, William Gregg, commenting favorably upon several articles which Gregg had written for Hunt's, advocating industry in the South. Praising the calmness and objectivity with which the Southerner viewed the relative advantages of the North and the South for manufacturing cotton, Lawrence went out of his way to demonstrate the risks and dangers of industrialization. Business is not good in the North, he warned: cotton is high, labor is high, prices are low, and goods have stock-piled alarmingly. "At the present time," he complained, "we are in a sad condition."² Gregg's personal reply to Lawrence was equally candid. Although Gregg felt that Lawrence did not fully appreciate the "Southern character and the capacity of the poor of our country to compete with the Yankees in manufacturing," he acknowledged that the New Englander's treatment of the economic problem was substantially correct.

¹Amos A. Lawrence to N. Silsbee, Nov. 19, 1849, A. A. S. Letterbook, H.H.S., I, 15.

²Lawrence to William Gregg, Aug. 21, 1850, ibid., p. 174.

Despite the difficulties in the path of Southern industrialism, Gregg maintained, the South would achieve its goal. This did not mean, he hastily assured Lawrence, that economic conflict would necessarily result. On the contrary, Gregg continued, "I don't think that you Eastern manufacturers need have any fears of serious competition from the South, for such investments are slowly made in all countries where manufactures are introduced...."¹

Gregg's opinion, that neither section had anything to fear from the other, had its echo in the North. In a personal letter to Robert Barnwell Rhett, of South Carolina, old Amos Lawrence insisted that New England would never stand in the way of the South's industrial progress. In response to Rhett's boast that in ten years South Carolina would be spinning its own cotton crop, Lawrence offered nothing but encouragement, and indicated that there was plenty of room for everybody. "We of Massachusetts," he wrote, "will gladly surrender to you the manufacture of coarse fabrics and turn our industry to making fine articles."²

¹William Gregg to Amos A. Lawrence, Sept. 2, 1850, A. A. L. Letters, W.H.S., VIII, 120.

²Amos Lawrence to Robert B. Rhett, Dec. 12, 1849, Lawrence, Diary, pp. 274-6.

So well known in fact, had the conciliatory and encouraging attitude of prominent New England manufacturers become in the South, that in 1846 a number of the leading citizens of Richmond, Virginia, most of them members of the State Legislature, requested Abbott Lawrence to come down and establish a manufacturing town at the Great Falls of the Potomac, just as he had founded the city of Lawrence at the great falls of the Merrimac. "We look to New England's noble, intelligent and enterprising sons and daughters," they wrote, "to rear those industrial and truly national monuments of labor in the 'Sunny South,' which now add so much to the energy, sagacity and wealth of our Eastern brethren...."¹ Although Abbott Lawrence found it impossible to accept the offer, due to the heavy responsibilities of his enterprises in New England, the flattering invitation itself indicates the fact that neither the industrial interests of the North nor those of the South considered that their respective economic interests precluded intersectional aid or mutual assistance.

The leaders of Boston capital obviously could see no conflicting economic problems--personal, sectional or national--which could not be compromised to the satisfaction

¹Hill, Abbott Lawrence, pp. 32-4. The formal invitation was transmitted to Lawrence through the Hon. William S. Archer, U. S. Senator from Virginia.

of all concerned. This was not merely a temporary policy of convenience and expediency, but a matter of permanent economic survival. Northern industrialists did not look upon the economy of the North as competing with, or essentially antagonistic to, the economy of the South--rather, they regarded both economies as complementary. The South produced the raw materials, the North manufactured them--and one section was an economic non-entity without the other. To preserve political unity within the United States, then, was to preserve the balance of sectional production. The subordination of sectional interests and regional desires to the greater interests of national unity now became the chief goal and end of the "Cotton Whigs" in the decade to follow. Only by means of compromise, concession, mutual understanding and forbearance, could the unity of the nation be maintained and the northward flow of cotton go on uninterrupted.

Meanwhile, however, the rapid progress of national events was running counter to the feverish attempts of the "Cotton Whigs" to develop sectional harmony and national peace. Ever since the annexation of Texas, war with Mexico was only a matter of time. On May 11, 1846, President Polk sent his famous message to Congress, stating that American blood had been shed "on American soil" and

asking that all means for "prosecuting the war with vigor" be placed at the disposal of the Executive. The answer was prompt enough: The next day war was declared, as Congress provided an appropriation of \$10,000,000 and authorized an army of 50,000 volunteers. The war with Mexico was on!¹

The Mexican war was far from popular with large segments of the American populace--both in the South as well as in the North--although the reasons varied greatly.

In the South, Democrat as well as Whig party leaders feared the consequences of a long war prosecuted by the Federal Government. With the increased national costs which would arise from an enlarged military establishment and the higher number of federal office-holders, a demand for a higher tariff would be sure to result. Alexander H. Stephens and Robert Toombs of Georgia denounced the war in open terms, the Charleston Mercury consistently opposed hostilities, and John C. Calhoun, the great pro-slavery leader, was unsparring in his criticism of both the justice and the wisdom of the war.²

¹James D. Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the President (11 vols.; Washington, 1896), IV, 437-443; Congressional Globe, 29th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 796-804.

²Charleston Mercury, May 25, 1846. See Wilson, Slave Power, II, 11, and Fuller, Mexico, pp. 35-6.

From New England, too, came the uproar and clamor of outspoken opposition to the policies of the Polk administration. Convinced beyond argument that this war with Mexico was the direct outgrowth of slavery's greed for empire, an amazing array of politicians, abolitionists, pacifists, reformers and anti-expansionists set up a fearful din. Anti-slave elements in the Bay State now found themselves joined by a party of young Whigs--Charles Sumner, Henry Wilson, James G. Palfrey, Charles Francis Adams and Horace Mann--who had finally bolted the old conservative party leadership and were adding their voices to oppose violently every aspect of the war which they ascribed to a diabolical slave-holding plot.¹

Reluctant to go to these extremes because of their sensitive associations with the South ("Further actions would only embarrass our Southern Whig friends in Congress," Abbott Lawrence told Crittenden of Kentucky); yet sincerely opposed to further territorial expansion, the "Cotton Whigs" cautiously tried to base their opposition to the war with Mexico on what they hoped were the less explosive and more rational grounds of constitutional

¹Wilson, Slave Power, II, 7-17; Derling, Massachusetts, p. 334.

principles.¹ Daniel Webster accused President Polk of having usurped the Constitutional powers of Congress: "What is the value of this Constitutional provision," he asked, "if the President of his own authority may make such military movements as must bring on war?"² In the Senate, John Davis, a "Cotton Whig" choice from Massachusetts, conscientiously provided one of the two negative Senatorial votes against the war.³ Back in Massachusetts, Governor Briggs steadfastly refused to commission officers of a company of volunteers unless they promised not to march beyond the boundaries of the State.⁴ Amos Lawrence sneered at Massachusetts volunteers as "the most miserable, dirty and worn-out wretches that can be scraped up this side of the infernal regions," and even refused to give a young friend, on his way to the war, enough money to buy a pistol. "I could not wish them success in Mexico," the elderly man

¹Abbott Lawrence to John J. Crittenden, April 5, 1844, Crittenden Mas., L. C.

²Webster, Writings, IV, 31-2.

³Congressional Globe, 29th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 796-804.

⁴Derling, Massachusetts, pp. 334-5; Faulkner, "Massachusetts," Cosm. Hist., IV, 95-6.

wrote gravely, "but gave him some books, a Bible, and good counsel."¹ Congressman Robert C. Winthrop summed up the conservative position quite well: "So far as we have power--constitutional or moral power--to control political events, we are resolved that there shall be no further extension of the territory of this Union subject to the institution of slavery."² This did not mean, he was quick to emphasize, that he was being "false to the North or to the South," but that, on the contrary, he was trying to combine "that sense of the evils of slavery which is common to the Free States" with "that respect for the Constitution and the Union which would infringe on no right of the Slave States."³

To the young radicals and eager abolitionists of Massachusetts, however, the passive resistance and the constitutional gestures of the "Cotton Whigs" were regarded as nothing more than an obvious subterfuge for maintaining economic relations with the South. The Boston Whig, a leading party organ controlled by the "Conscience Whigs," openly denounced the war as a by-product of the alliance

¹Amos Lawrence to Mark Hopkins, July 19, 1848, A. L. Letters, M.H.S., IX; and Lawrence, Diary, p. 236.

²Winthrop, Memoir, pp. 58-9, "Speech on War with Mexico," Jan. 8, 1847.

³Robert C. Winthrop to John P. Kennedy, Jan. 21, 1848, ibid., pp. 79-80.

between the "Cotton Whigs" and the Slave-expansionists of the South. The Massachusetts legislature went so far as to state that the war had been "unconstitutionally commenced by the order of the President to General Taylor...",¹ and accused the United States of acting like an aggressor and a conqueror. It was a Christian and patriotic duty, stated the legislature, "for all good citizens to join in efforts to arrest this war."¹

Sectional opposition to the war with Mexico appeared to be confined to isolated pockets of resistance, however, as these grave tones of disapproval from the Northeast were virtually drowned out in the wild enthusiasm which came rolling in from the Western plains. Spurred on by visions of conquest, gold and glory, thousands of western volunteers eagerly joined the colors. The Mississippi Valley and Texas together supplied almost fifty thousand volunteers--as compared with the thirteen thousand who came marching out from the seaboard states.²

¹H. V. Ames, ed., State Documents on Federal Relations (Philadelphia, 1906), pp. 241-2.

²Ray Allen Billington, The Far Western Frontier, 1830-60 (New York, 1956), pp. 174-5; Justin Smith, The War with Mexico (2 vols.; New York, 1919), I, 194-5; Fuller, Mexico, pp. 35-6.

Once the war was actually begun, and American troops were meeting the enemy on the field of battle, even hostile public opinion took on a decidedly different complexion. There was, after all, no point in continuing to hurl hypothetical arguments at a fait accompli; and so most of the opposition shrugged hopelessly and admitted no other alternative but to prosecute the war to a victorious conclusion. Care would have to be taken, however, to see that this undesirable conflict did not produce equally undesirable consequences.¹ Beaten in its attempts to prevent the war itself, the opposition adopted a "watch-dog" attitude pledged to eliminate the evil results of an unwarranted aggression. Regarded as especially disastrous would be the acquisition and annexation of the vast stretches of Mexican lands in the far West. In the House, Winthrop denounced the idea that "it is worthy of us to take advantage of this war to wrest it [territory] from Mexico by force of arms and to protract the war until she will consent to cede it to us by a treaty of peace."²

Southern slaveholders again formed a rather incongruous alliance with Northern Whigs in opposing this

¹Winthrop, Memoir, p. 51.

²Ibid., pp. 58-9, "Speech on War with Mexico," Jan. 8, 1847.

possibility--although for completely different reasons. The South feared that free states would be formed out of conquered territory, and thus upset the precarious balance of power; the North feared that slave states would result from expansion and that slavery would be extended into the Western lands. Emotion proved more powerful than logic, then, as Northern Whigs and Southern Democrats stood shoulder to shoulder, agreed that the indestructible force of Manifest Destiny would dash itself to pieces upon the immovable object of intersectional accord.¹ "We believe that this war ought never to have been begun," declared Robert C. Winthrop in the House, summarizing the convictions of his colleagues back in Boston, "and we do not wish to have it made the pretext for plundering Mexico of one foot of her lands."²

But they argued in vain. The voices of restraint and moderation were practically unheard amid the mounting and almost hysterical demands that the victorious United States should stop at nothing less than the acquisition of all of Mexico. Mounting public opinion was chanting the

¹ Charleston Mercury, Feb. 1, 1847; Arthur C. Cole, The Whig Party in the South (Washington, 1913), pp. 104-134.

² Speech of Robert C. Winthrop, Jan. 8, 1847, Winthrop, Memoir, pp. 61-2. Also see Diary Fragment, Jan. 19, 1848, Winthrop Papers, M.S.S., XXXVI, 118.

theme of Manifest Destiny, urging that the pending treaty be scrapped, and demanding that the lands of Mexico be seized without further notice or negotiation.¹ President Polk, however, anxious to head off an "all-Mexico" campaign, accepted the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and sent it immediately to the Senate for ratification. In March, 1848, with a stroke of the pen, the United States relieved Mexico of about two-fifths of her lands.²

The "Cotton Whigs" were appalled at the enormity of the crime, and terrified at the consequences--especially if the victory over Mexico were to be the signal for the opening of all the Western lands to the institution of slavery. "I do not believe as individual men, that one fourth of our people would sanction in their neighbor's conduct towards their fellow men, such as they vociferously approve in the Government towards poor Mexico," wrote William Sharp to Amos Lawrence from his plantation in Louisiana. "Nothing good can come of this. You and I may not live to see it, but our children will," he prophesied.

¹See Smith, Mexico, II, 127-139, 233-240, and G. L. Rives, The United States and Mexico, 1821-1848 (2 vols.; New York, 1913), II, 423 ff.

²Allan Nevins, ed., Polk: Diary of a President, 1845-9 (New York, 1952), pp. 308-15. See U. S. Senate, 30th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Executive Document No. 52, passim, for debates over the Mexican Treaty.

"Retribution will come in some shape at some day."¹ Yes, indeed, agreed Lawrence, "God's curse will assuredly rest upon the iniquity of our nation. We have acquired military renown in this war," the old man sighed, "at the cost of our national character for justice and truth. The whole course of our Government from the admission of Texas to the present time has been such as to make me feel that our foundation (the virtue and intelligence of the people) is not a sure one for us to rest upon."²

Although the Whigs were relieved that the movement for the acquisition and absorption of all Mexico had been checked, they continued to remain concerned at the prospects of the unconditional expansion of slavery. There was only one way in which the evil consequences of the war might be mitigated satisfactorily--and at the same time assure the continued friendship and co-operation of the South: That was for the "right" Whigs--the "Cotton Whigs"--to gain political control in the approaching elections of 1848. With the right kind of a President and a sufficient number of the right kind of votes in Congress, the possibility of

¹William Sharp to Amos Lawrence, Oct. 1, 1845, A. L. Letters, M.S.S., VII.

²Amos Lawrence to Rev. Mark Hopkins, July 19, 1848, ibid., IX, 257.

uncontrolled slavery in the Western territories might at least be postponed--if not prevented. With a zest and enthusiasm proportionate to what they conceived to be the seriousness of the occasion, the "Cotton Whigs" began elaborate preparations for the campaign of '48. Slavery must be kept out of the territories--but not at the cost of secession, disunion and war.

CHAPTER IV

GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT

The noise of the war with Mexico had hardly subsided, and the excitement over the Treaty had barely abated, when the nation began to prepare for the coming Presidential election. James K. Polk, exhausted by the experiences of his hectic single term, refused to stand for re-election in 1848; and so the Democrats chose Lewis Cass of Michigan, a well-known and outspoken advocate of expansion, to carry out the ambitious demands of Manifest Destiny.¹

The "Cotton Whigs" made their preparations carefully, conscious of the disastrous effects which would follow a defeat at the polls. Should the Democrats win, the subsequent discussions in Congress regarding the future of the Western lands would undoubtedly be controlled by a pro-slavery element which might throw all Western lands open to unrestricted slavery. If, on the other hand, the "Conscience Whigs" should succeed in getting a slate of candidates into office, slavery in the territories would certainly be opposed--but by a group so openly hostile and

¹ Nevins, Polk, pp. 323-6.

so obnoxiously out-spoken, that the friendship and co-operation of the Southern states would be lost. No, the only possible alternative was for the "Cotton Whigs" to control the state and national political conventions, elect men of property and standing to public office, and eventually work out a national policy regarding Western lands which would place restrictions upon slavery in the territories, but which would, at the same time, assure the South that neither her social nor economic well-being would in any way be impaired.¹

With this thought in mind, Whig party leaders at the national convention which opened at Philadelphia in June, 1848, passed over such regular candidates as Clay, Webster, Scott and McLean, and nominated, instead, the new military hero of the day, General Zachary Taylor, the colorful hero of Buena Vista.² The "Conscience Whigs" were furious. Taylor, they charged, was a "favorite candidate of the slave-holders," and was selected because he was the "only Southern man who could be elected."³

¹Abbott Lawrence to John J. Crittenden, Sept. 18, 1848, Nov. 7, 1848, Crittenden Mss., L. C.

²J. J. Crittenden to A. T. Burnley, July 30, 1848, Chapman Coleman, The Life of John J. Crittenden: With Selections from His Correspondence and Speeches (2 vols.; Philadelphia, 1871), I, 322-3.

³Wilson, Slave Power, II, 138.

The fiery Charles Allen was on his feet to denounce "the perpetual surrender" by Northern whigs to their "Southern confederates" of the "high offices and powers of the Government." "You have even presumed," he continued, turning in the direction of Abbott Lawrence, who was rumored to be the next Vice-President, "that the state which led the first revolution for liberty will now desert that cause for the miserable boon of the Vice-Presidency." "Sir," he roared out, "Massachusetts will spurn the bribe."¹ Seconding his colleague, Henry Wilson labelled Taylor's nomination as "another and a signal triumph of the Slave Power," and publicly vowed--"so help me God"--to do "all I can to defeat the election of that candidate." In the midst of uproar and wild disorder, the two "Conscience whigs," Allen and Wilson, strode out of the convention hall.²

The "Cotton whigs" went ahead, however, disregarding the outbursts of their younger members, and proceeded to the work of selecting their Vice-Presidential candidate. One of the most prominent candidates was Abbott Lawrence, the nationally known industrialist and textile

¹Wilson, Slave Power, II, 136-8. See J. J. Crittenden to Moses H. Grinnell, Dec. 9, 1848, Coleman, Crittenden, I, 329-30.

²Wilson, Slave Power, II, 138.

manufacturer of Massachusetts; and the usually reliable sources had long ago agreed that it was going to be a Taylor-Lawrence ticket, with Robert G. Winthrop mentioned as the new Secretary of State.¹ Certainly there was much to be said for the nomination of Lawrence. He had served in the House of Representatives, held a position on the Maine Boundary Commission, had been an active Whig party worker for many years, and was more than acceptable to most Southern Whigs. Judge Henry Adams Bullard of New Orleans assured his old friend, Amos Lawrence, that the delegates from Louisiana would certainly back Taylor and his brother Abbott. "A stronger ticket could not be formed for the South," he declared.² Similar word came from H. M. Judge of South Carolina, who told Amos Lawrence that "it would please us all very much" to see Abbott elected. "He would not only be ornamental," he added, "but useful in Washington in these times of trouble."³

Abbott Lawrence was to find, however, that he had more enemies in the North than in the South. His active

¹Winthrop, *Memoir*, pp. 90-1; Hill, *Abbott Lawrence*, pp. 78-9. See Abbott Lawrence to S. Draper, Jr., S. Loudon and H. M. Blatchford, Esquires, May 12, 1848, A. L. Letters, M.H.S., IX, 207.

²Henry Adams Bullard to Amos Lawrence, New Orleans, June 4, 1848, *ibid.*, p. 219.

³H. M. Judge to Amos Lawrence, Eutaw, May 2, 1848, *ibid.*, p. 191.

support of Henry Clay in '42 and '44 had angered the die-hard Webster men, and now his support of General Taylor at the '48 convention had turned the Clay men against him.¹ Free-soil men and "Conscience-Whigs" sullenly opposed the manufacturer, growling that cotton should not be put at both ends of the ticket--a bitter reference to Taylor's background as a Louisiana slaveholder.² It was a hard core of these pro-Webster, anti-slavery Whigs who steadfastly refused to yield a crucial bloc of six votes to Abbott Lawrence, with the result that Millard T. Fillmore of New York was brought forward to receive the nomination as Whig candidate for the Vice-Presidency. This was sweet revenge, and with obvious satisfaction, Henry Wilson took pride in the fact that he and his Free-Soil colleagues were primarily responsible for Lawrence's defeat. "Unquestionably the declarations and actions of Mr. Allen and Mr. Wilson led to this result," Wilson wrote, "and gave to New York the honor which was intended for their own Commonwealth."³ Burning

¹Hill, Abbott Lawrence, pp. 78-9.

²Glyndon Van Deusen, Thurlow Weed (Boston, 1947), pp. 160-1. Also see Amos Lawrence to President Hopkins, June 12, 1848, Lawrence, Diary, pp. 258-9.

³Wilson, Slave Power, II, 137.

with rage, Robert G. Winthrop denounced the "Conscience men" who had turned against their own party. "First they tried to defeat me as Speaker," he told Nathan Appleton. "Second, they tried (and succeeded) to defeat Mr. Lawrence as Vice President."¹ Lawrence, however, accepted the defeat with good grace--he had not looked upon the obscure office very highly, anyway--and went on to fight what he considered the greater battle, the maintenance of moderation and co-operation between the sections. "I intend...to abandon all business of a private character and give myself up entirely to the great and more important business of the country in the election of General Taylor," Lawrence told Senator Crittenden of Kentucky. "I have already made engagements to address the people, and as far as writing, speaking and paying, my friends will not find me wanting."² "I am willing to spend and be spent," he wrote to Nathan Appleton, to promote "the great cause of conservatism."³ He worked hard and long for the success of the Taylor-Fillmore ticket

¹Robert G. Winthrop to Nathan Appleton, July 23, 1848, Winthrop Papers, M.H.S., XXXVI, 129.

²Abbott Lawrence to John J. Crittenden, Sept. 18, 1848, Crittenden Mss., L. C.

³Abbott Lawrence to Nathan Appleton, Aug. 11, 1848, Hill, Abbott Lawrence, p. 80.

unaware that destiny had just passed him by; for Mr. Abbott Lawrence might have become the twelfth President of the United States but for the margin of those six votes.

The election of 1848 was marked by the appearance of a third national party, the Free-Soil party, which was formed by a combination of those who already disapproved of the Democratic platform of pro-slavery expansion, and those who had now come to regard the regular Whig party as too vacillating and compromising to any longer commend their political allegiance.¹ Abolitionists, members of the Liberty party, anti-slavery Democrats, the dissatisfied "Conscience Whigs" of Massachusetts, and the radical "Barn-burners" of New York, all banded together under the slogan: "Free Soil, free speech, free labor and free men."² Moving forward with all the fervor of an evangelistic crusade, the Free-Soilers selected the former New York Democrat, Martin Van Buren, as their new Presidential candidate, and chose Charles Francis Adams, a prominent Bay State "Conscience Whig" as their Vice-Presidential candidate.³

¹Mary Lawrence to Amos Lawrence, Nov. 4, 1850, A. L. Letters, M.H.S., X, 645.

²Wilson, Slave Power, II, 373-8.

³Darling, Massachusetts, pp. 362-3, and Faulkner, "Massachusetts," Comm. Hist., IV, 97-8.

Although the new Free-Soil party failed to carry a single state, it succeeded in taking so many New York votes away from the Democratic candidate, Cass, that the Whigs were able to capture that state. In 1848, as New York went, so went the nation, and the Whigs victoriously put General Zachary Taylor in the White House.¹ But this was destined to be one of the classic Pyrrhic victories of American political history. With its subterfuge candidate, Taylor, who knew nothing about politics and less about the slavery issue, the old-time Whigs may have succeeded momentarily in disrupting the Democratic machine, but they had also succeeded in providing the basis for their own destruction. For, regarding Taylor's nomination as the final outrage, the "Conscience Whigs" could restrain themselves no longer, and bolted the Whig party for good. Condemning the "conspiracy" between the "cotton-planters and flesh mongers of Louisiana and Mississippi" and the "cotton spinners and traffickers of New England," Charles Sumner branded Taylor's election as the result of the union of "the Lords of the Lash and the Lords of the loom."²

¹Abbott Lawrence to John J. Crittenden, Nov. [?], 1848, Crittenden Mss., L. C.

²Nathan Appleton and Charles Sumner, Correspondence, July-September, 1848, Mss., Rare Book Department, B.F.L., from the original letters in the possession of William S. Appleton, copied by P. B. Perkins, 1874.

The Whig Party had lost the dynamic young "Conscience Whigs" forever, and without young blood in its veins it would only be a matter of time before political rigor mortis set in.

For the time being, however, the old-line whigs were content to accept their victory at face value, and use the precious time to get as many of their own men into key positions as quickly as possible. Although Senator John J. Crittenden of Kentucky had been offered any Cabinet post in return for his staunch support of Taylor, he preferred to accept his election to the Governorship of Kentucky.¹ Nevertheless, Crittenden carefully scrutinized every new Cabinet appointment, to be sure that only moderate, pro-Taylor whigs were admitted to the magic circle. Clayton of Delaware, Meredith of Pennsylvania, Johnson of Maryland, Preston of Virginia and Crawford of Georgia were Cabinet appointees whose views were consistent with the conservative whig tradition.²

For his part in Taylor's victory, Abbott Lawrence of Massachusetts was first considered for the post of Secretary of the Treasury, and then offered the position of

¹W. P. Gentry to J. J. Crittenden, Nov. 20, 1848, and Alexander H. Stephens to Crittenden, Dec. 5, 1848, Coleman, Crittenden, I, 326-8, 329-9.

²Robert Toombs to J. J. Crittenden, April 25, 1850; Jefferson Davis to Crittenden, Jan. 30, 1849, ibid., pp. 366, 339-340.

Secretary of the Navy.¹ When Lawrence declined the offer, apparently because it involved too much administrative work, the new administration saw fit to honor the prominent manufacturer with the post of Minister to the Court of St. James, which Lawrence proudly accepted as a more suitable tribute to the name of his family and his own brilliant career.²

With the new administration in the hands of moderates and conservatives, it was anyone's guess what the outcome would be, and when the Thirty-First Congress assembled in December of 1849, the electricity of crisis could be felt everywhere as men hunched forward in their seats, waiting, expectant. It took sixty-three ballots to elect a Speaker of the House, and tempers had been filed down to a hair trigger by the time the explosive issues created by the Mexican War came up for discussion. Northern sentiment was determined to keep slavery out of the newly won territories, frowned upon slave trade in the nation's capital, and was clearly hostile to the idea of returning fugitive slaves. Southerners were equally determined that slavery should be permitted in

¹Amos Lawrence to Abbott Lawrence, Feb. 28, March 3, March 5, 1849, Lawrence, *Diary*, pp. 267-8. Also see Robert C. Winthrop to Nathan Appleton, Jan. 2, 1849, Winthrop Papers, M.H.S., XXXVI, 128, and Nathan Appleton to Millard Fillmore, Feb. 6, 1849, Nathan Appleton Papers, M.H.S.

²Amos Lawrence to a friend, July 18, 1849, Lawrence, *Diary*, p. 269.

the territories, that slave trade in the District of Columbia was perfectly permissible, and that the Northern attitude toward fugitive slaves was morally and constitutionally indefensible. Flare-ups were common and fist-fights were frequent, as taunts, jeers, charges and countercharges reverberated through the chambers. "Upon the whole," wrote Robert C. Winthrop to Nathan Appleton, "a seat in Congress is a most undesirable possession."¹

It was against a background of debate and furious recrimination that the elderly Henry Clay rose slowly in his place in the Senate to provide a solution which might salvage some semblance of national unity and restore some measure of sectional harmony. Clay's famous plan was a compromise, pure and simple, designed to appeal to as much of the moderate sentiment of all parties as possible. "Taken altogether, in combination," he explained, "they propose an amicable arrangement of all questions in controversy between the free and slave states, growing out of the subject of slavery."² Peace and conciliation were the basic

¹Winthrop, Memoir, pp. 91-2; Winthrop to Nathan Appleton, Washington, Jan. 6, 1850, Winthrop Papers, M.N.S., XXXVI, 131. Also see Holman Hamilton, "The Cave of the Winds and the Compromise of 1850," Journal of Southern History, XXIII (1937), 331-353.

²Congressional Globe, 31st Congress, 1st Session, Appendix, pp. 117-127, 567-573. Also see George Poage, Henry Clay and the Whig Party (Chapel Hill, 1936), pp. 199-204; Olyndon Van Deusen, Life of Henry Clay (Boston, 1937), pp. 394-413.

ingredients of the famous Compromise of 1850--but the question was, would any leading political figure second the proposals of Clay?

On March 7, 1850, Senator Daniel Webster of Massachusetts, defender of the Union, statesman of national renown, and spokesman of the interests of tradition, property and respectability, rose to speak. In the last great speech of his life, the aging Senator gave an eloquent defense of the proposals of Clay, and added his own plea for compromise and peace. Urging a national policy of tolerance and mutual concession, Webster condemned the inflexible attitudes of radical abolitionists as well as radical secessionists as of equal danger to the future of the Union.¹

Antislavery elements in Massachusetts rose as a man to attack Webster in violent and outraged indignation. Condemned in newspapers, magazines, speeches, and sermons, the "god-like" Daniel was now excoriated as a self-seeking traitor and an opportunistic rascal. Theodore Parker called him another Benedict Arnold, Horace Mann likened him to a fallen Lucifer, and James Russell Lowell more prosaically characterized him as a statesman "whose soul had been absorbed

¹Webster, Writings, X, 56-99. Also see Richard W. Current, Daniel Webster and the Rise of National Conservatism (Boston, 1968), pp. 162-171.

in tariff, banks and the Constitution, instead of devoting himself to the freedom of the future." He believes that "government exists for the protection of property," sneered Ralph Waldo Emerson; while Whittier sadly lamented "...the light withdrawn which once he wore!"¹ Even some of Webster's staunch supporters could follow the great man no longer. Old Amos Lawrence angrily compared him to Lord Bacon and growled: "I do most sincerely believe him among the wickedest men I ever knew...;" and John Murray Forbes broke with the Whig Party forever because of what he considered to be the defection of its leader.² The Boston Atlas, usually a reliable index of conservative opinion, reported that Webster's speech caused "dissatisfaction," and the editor took occasion to assure his readers that these were not the sentiments of the Whigs of New England.³

But to the New England business community as a whole, to a majority of the men of wealth and property and

¹Parrington, Main Currents, II, 314-315; Claude Fuss, Daniel Webster (2 vols.; Boston, 1950), II, 218-227.

²Amos Lawrence to Amos A. Lawrence, Sept. 23, 1850, A. A. L. Letters, M.H.S., VIII, and Amos A. Lawrence to Mr. Woodburn, March 14, 1850, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., I, 92. Also see Hughes, Forbes, I, 142-3.

³Boston Daily Atlas, March 11, 1850; David Van Tassel, "Gentlemen of Property and Standing--Compromise Sentiment in Boston, 1850," New England Quarterly, XXIII (1950), 307-319.

standing, Senator Daniel Webster was the man of the hour. Having appreciated the seriousness of the national situation, and having realized how close the South had really been to secession ("the future historian will pause with astonishment and terror when he comes to record it," prophesied Rufus Choate) the merchants and businessmen of the North had been prepared to clutch at almost any plan which offered even the slightest measure of national peace.¹ This was by no means the best solution, most businessmen agreed, but it was far better than disunion and war.² As the conservative Daily Advertiser expressed it: "The Boston public fully support Mr. Webster--not with an enthusiastic rush of blind admiration, but with a calm belief that he has placed a vexed question in a position in which it can be and must be fairly settled...."³ Webster's speech, commented the Advertiser, was "a monument of his power of analyzing public affairs, and of his devotion to the interests of the Union, and the defence of the Constitution that is the heart

¹Brown, Choate, II, 313, speech delivered at the Constitutional Meeting in Faneuil Hall, Nov. 26, 1850.

²Robert C. Winthrop to Edward Everett, March 17, 1850, Everett Papers, M.H.S., and Robert C. Winthrop to George Morey, March 10, 1850, Winthrop Papers, M.H.S., XXXVI, 33. Also see Diary of William Appleton, p. 143.

³Boston Daily Advertiser, March 12, 1850.

and life of that Union."¹ As for the "dissatisfaction" reported by the Atlas, the Advertiser told its readers that it had conducted its own "extended inquiry" and found that the "general disposition" was to receive Webster's speech with favor. Moreover this feeling "has gained ground and is gaining ground as the speech is read and re-read."² In order to impress upon its readers the beneficial effects that the speech was having upon the nation, the Advertiser cited the Journal of Commerce which reported that "Mr. Webster's views are acceptable to the South, who are [sic] willing to carry them out by legislation."³ The following day, the Journal expanded further upon the importance of Webster's statesmanship. "Mr. Webster's views have opened to us a new and cheering prospect," said the influential organ. "He has inspired confidence in the future which was not felt before.... The position of Northern conservatives is gloriously vindicated by Mr. Webster. A conservative may breathe freely in the North after this."⁴

¹Boston Daily Advertiser, March 11, 1850.

²Ibid., March 12, 1850. See Daniel Webster to Edward Everett, March 10, 1850, and Edward Everett to Daniel Webster, March 12, 1850, Everett Papers, M.H.S.

³Journal of Commerce, Washington, March 7, 1850; Boston Daily Advertiser, March 9, 1850.

⁴Journal of Commerce, March 8, 1850; Advertiser, March 12, 1850.

The free-breathing, exhilarated, conservatives of Boston could hardly withhold their gratitude and appreciation. All through the State "Union Meetings" were organized in support of Webster and the Compromise, and eight hundred of the most prominent citizens of the city promptly rushed to add their well-known signatures to a public letter to Daniel Webster.¹ Approving the Senator's actions and endorsing his opinions, the letter concluded: "...In a time of almost unprecedented excitement, when the minds of men have been bewildered by an apparent conflict of duties...you have pointed out to a whole people the path of duty, have convinced the understanding and touched the conscience of a nation." Merchants such as Lawrence, Appleton, Perkins and Amory; lawyers such as Choate, Lunt, and the Curtises; scholars such as Ticknor, Everett, Prescott, and Sparks--all added their voices to the peans of praise for the great man whose speech they regarded as a milestone on the road to intersectional harmony.² "I hope soon to hear of the settlement of the slavery question," wrote Abbott Lawrence from his new post in England, and added confidently: "I entertain no fears for the safety of the Union."³ A month

¹Brown, Choate, I, 162, 173-4, II, 310 ff.

²Boston Daily Advertiser, April 3, 1850. For Webster's reply to the "Boston Letter," see ibid., April 13, 1850.

³Abbott Lawrence to General Dearborn, April 2, 1850, Hill, Abbott Lawrence, p. 79. Also see Abbott Lawrence to Edward Everett, March 18, 1850, Everett Papers, M.H.S.

later the Advertiser could survey the national situation and confidently assure its readers that "...it seems to be admitted that this crisis is to be passed by judgement and reason instead of the old fashioned method of tomahawks and daggers."¹

As the "Gotton Whigs" were making every effort to bolster their defenses in support of Webster and the compromise program, summer brought the tragic news of President Taylor's death. Abbott Lawrence called the President's death a "National calamity," and Robert C. Winthrop referred to the news as a "thunderclap."² "Poor old Zack!" Winthrop moaned irreverently. "He died in the best time for himself, but in the worst for everybody else."³ Uncertain as to Vice-President Fillmore's exact sentiments, the Whigs waited nervously. "Fillmore is an amiable, excellent, conscientious fellow," wrote Winthrop to a friend. "what he will do remains to be seen."⁴ The immediate grief of the Whig party leaders was soon turned

¹Boston Daily Advertiser, April 6, 1850. Also see ibid., April 11, 1850.

²Abbott Lawrence to Amos Lawrence, Aug. 16, 1850, A. L. Letters, M.H.S., X, 585, and Winthrop, Memoir, p. 127.

³Robert C. Winthrop to Nathen Appleton, July 26, 1850, Winthrop Papers, M.H.S., XXVI, 13b.

⁴Winthrop, Memoir, p. 129.

into joy, however, when Fillmore proved to be even more conservative than Taylor himself.¹ Daniel Webster was elevated to the post of Secretary of State in the new President's cabinet, and Robert C. Winthrop assigned to Webster's Senatorial chair for the remainder of the summer. When the fall elections in Massachusetts sent Samuel A. Eliot, a strong "compromise" man, to Congress, to be joined the following year by William Appleton, Webster was delighted: "When Boston has been represented by commercial men, she has always been better represented than at any other time."² The New England statesman was placed in a stronger position of political power than he had been for many years, and expressed his pleasure at seeing the pendulum of public sympathy moving in what he considered to be the direction of compromise and union.³ To make matters even better, President Fillmore, who had been impressed by the arguments in favor of the Compromise to which he had listened as presiding officer

¹Robert C. Winthrop to J. C. Warren, Aug. 16, 1851, Warren Papers, M.H.S., XXIX. Also see Abbott Lawrence to Amos Lawrence, Aug. 16, 1850, A. L. Letters, M.H.S., I, 585.

²Hill, Abbott Lawrence, p. 58. See also Pierce, Memoir of Sumner, III, 217, and G. S. Morehead to J. J. Crittenden, March 30, 1850, Coleman, Crittenden, I, 361-6.

³Boston Daily Advertiser, Sept. 7, 1850.

of the Senate, now came out publicly in support of the Compromise--to the disgust of the New York antislavery leaders, William H. Seward and Thurlow Weed--but to the delight of the moderate Whigs. Abbott Lawrence was now convinced that Fillmore's new Cabinet would "command the confidence of the Country" and eventually settle the "agitating question."¹ Robert C. Winthrop assured Nathan Appleton that such "ultra" Southerners as Stephens and Toombs (the "duo fulmina belli") were certain to be recalled and repudiated; and was quite convinced that "the Union is safe, notwithstanding the occasional gasconading of Ultra-ists at both ends of the Union."² Southern Whigs agreed with their Northern brethren as to prospects for the future. Judge Ogden of New Orleans congratulated old Amos Lawrence that "the danger with which we have been menaced has passed;" and from Washington, D. C., Judge Bullard expressed similar sentiments of confidence.³ "There is no serious agitation here," he told Lawrence. "The Administration is immensely popular,

¹Abbott Lawrence to Amos Lawrence, Aug. 16, 1850, A. L. Letters, M.H.S., X, 585.

²Robert C. Winthrop to Nathan Appleton, Aug. 18, 1850, Winthrop Papers, M.H.S., XXXVI, 139; Winthrop to John C. Warren, Aug. 16, 1851, Warren Papers, M.H.S., XXIX.

³R. N. Ogden to Amos Lawrence, Dec. 29, 1850, A. L. Letters, X, 709.

without, indeed, any formal opposition; and public affairs go on very smoothly and harmoniously.¹

With the benediction of President Fillmore, the direction of young Senator Douglas from Illinois, and the loyal support of Northern and Southern Whigs, Clay's "Omnibus Bill" was finally passed. California was allowed to enter the Union as a free state; the principle of popular sovereignty was established in the territories of New Mexico and Utah; ten million dollars in claims was paid to Texas; the slave trade was abolished in the District of Columbia; and more effective fugitive slave legislation was provided. By a narrow margin, Clay, Douglas, Webster and other moderates were convinced that they had averted secession and prevented the disruption of the Union.²

But the moderates had little time to celebrate their triumph, for within Massachusetts an important contest of political strength was in process, with the conservative advocates of compromise pitting their strength against the radical proponents of Free-Soil and free men.

¹Henry A. Bullard to Amos Lawrence, Jan. 26, 1851, A. L. Letters, M.H.S., X², 21.

²James Ford Rhodes, History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850 (7 vols.; New York, 1893-1906), I, 168-9, 181-3, and Foote, Henry Clay, pp. 244-264.

For the "Cotton Whigs" it was Armageddon--the last desperate battle against the forces of lawlessness and greed, the last hope for peace and harmony. Anything less than victory at this crucial point, they feared, would mean the end of the Union, secession and war. The subsequent withholding of cotton supplies, the disruption of credit, and the stock market collapse that would inevitably follow, would bring financial ruin to every textile mill in the New England area. Desperately, the chairman of the Massachusetts Whig State Committee called upon every business man in the area "to use all the influence he can over those in his employ, or in any way under his control "to bring a crushing defeat down upon the heads of Free-Soilers and Democrats."¹

The Whigs were doomed to disappointment in the fall elections of 1850, however, as their opposition--"Conscience Whigs," Free-Soilers and Democrats--decided to join forces and pool their voting strength.² Ordinarily, although they commanded less than forty-nine per cent of

¹Whig circular, Nov. 8, 1850, signed by George Morey, Chairman of the Whig State Central Committee, W.H.S.

²Boston Post, Sept. 19, 1849.

the State vote, the Massachusetts Whigs had usually been able to control the State government through the solid Boston delegation they sent to the legislature.¹ In 1850, however, the "coalition," as it was called, united on candidates for the legislature in practically every city and town in Massachusetts and, as a result, overpowered the Boston bloc. By informal agreement, the victorious Democrats took over most of the State offices and put Robert Rantoul, Jr., into Webster's unexpired Senatorship; while their Free-Soil partners began their preparations to send Charles Sumner to the United States Senate in the spring to take over Webster's seat on a permanent basis.²

The "Cotton Whigs" were outraged at the prospect of this notheaded firebrand going to Washington to upset the national equilibrium that Webster and Clay had worked so hard to maintain. "For heaven's sake keep him home!" Congressman Samuel Eliot pleaded with Amos A. Lawrence. "You can hardly imagine the disgust and loathing with which such men as Sumner, Hale of New Hampshire, Giddings

¹See Henry Greenleaf Pearson, "Preliminaries of the Civil War," Conn. Hist., IV, 477-8, and Faulkner, "Political History," ibid., pp. 98-100.

²Amos Lawrence to Mark Hopkins, Nov. 11, 1850, Lawrence, Diary, p. 287, and Hopkins to Lawrence, Nov. 27, 1850, A. L. Letters, M.H.S., X, 863. Also see Wilson, Slave Power, II, 338-351; Boston Post, Jan. 7, 8, 1851; Boston Daily Advertiser, Jan. 21, Feb. 8, 19, 24, 1851.

and that set are looked upon by honest men here."¹ Leading conservative Whigs of Boston, including Lawrence, the Appletons, Robert Gould Shaw, George Lyman, and the others, needed little urging, and began to engage in elaborate plans to defeat Sumner. The State Central Committee began contacting the major manufacturing companies for contributions, wards and districts were polled with expert care, and arrangements were made for a specific number of men "good and true" in every town to hunt up all Whigs--and any man who could cast a Whig vote--and "carry them to the ballot box."² Although Amos A. Lawrence objected strenuously to the custom of exacting political contributions from corporations, he took a prominent role in the battle to defeat Sumner, conscious of the effect which such a defeat would have in Southern circles.³ During the months of February, March and April, 1851, Lawrence conducted numerous private subscription drives among the most prominent men of Boston in order to prevent Sumner

¹Samuel A. Eliot to Amos A. Lawrence, Jan. 23, 1851, A. A. L. Letters, M.H.S., VIII, 200. Also see Robert C. Winthrop to Nathan Appleton, Jan. 17, 1851, Winthrop Papers, M.H.S., XXXVI, 144.

²John E. Tyler (Whig State Central Committee) to Amos A. Lawrence, Feb. 11, 1851, A. A. L. Letters, VIII, 210.

³Lawrence to Tyler, Feb. 12, 1851, A. A. L. Letter-book, I, 266, and Lawrence to Samuel Eliot, Jan. 20, 1851, ibid., I, 245.

from reaching Washington.¹

In addition to economic pressures, the Whigs attempted a political coalition of their own by allying themselves with a small group of "old guard" Jackson Democrats to whom Sumner was loathsome, and who disapproved of the Free-Soil combination.² Convinced that Sumner's election would be a national catastrophe, the Democrat Caleb Cushing, used all his influence against Sumner in the Democratic caucuses; and when he failed there, he took the fight to the floor of the House.³ Between January 14 and April 24, 1851, political fortunes hung in the balance while twenty-six ballots were taken--until Charles Sumner was finally elected by the majority of a single vote. The winners were jubilant, while the following day the "Cotton Whigs" appeared on the streets of Boston with wide bands of black crepe on their arms.⁴

¹Lawrence to William Appleton, Feb. 10, 1851, Lawrence to Ezra Lincoln, Feb. 10, 1851, and Lawrence appeal for funds to defeat Sumner, March 14, 1851, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., I, 261, 263, 296. Lawrence: Subscription "to defeat Sumner," March 14, 1851, and Lawrence: Subscription to Anti-Sumner Fund, April 24, 1851, A. A. L. Letters, M.H.S., IX, 11, 25.

²Robert C. Winthrop to George Morey, Jan. 25, 1851, Winthrop Papers, M.H.S., XXXVI, 145, and Lawrence to Dr. Green, Nov. 16, 1850, A. A. L. Letterbook, I, 211.

³Boston Daily Advertiser, Jan. 16, 17, Feb. 8, March 11, 13, 1851. Also see Claude M. Fues, The Life of Caleb Cushing (2 vols.; New York, 1923), II, 98-106.

⁴Advertiser, April 25, 1851; Boston Post, April 25, 1851. Also see Miles Nason, The Life and Times of Charles Sumner (Boston, 1874), pp. 138-140; Faulkner, "Political History," Comm. Hist., IV, 99-100.

This coalition of anti-slavery Whigs and anti-slavery Democrats had jumped party lines to put into the Senate the brilliant orator who would lead the Free-Soil cause. But equally significant, in terms of local politics, this coalition had also succeeded in breaking the power of the "Cotton Whigs." For the first time the government of the State of Massachusetts was in the hands of a group of politicians who were openly and aggressively opposed to the principle of slavery.

Disheartened, but not discouraged, mindful of their solid core of political support in the city, the "Cotton Whigs" continued to fight on--concentrating their efforts on developing a breach in the ranks of their combined enemies. The opposition press laughed at the picture of Abbott Lawrence "going about the State drenching his pocket-handkerchief with tears," and at the noted manufacturer "dragging his wallet and contents out to 'feed' forty-one perambulating Whig orators,"--but the results of such canvassing were soon¹ to produce results.

It would appear that in the year or so following the passage of the Compromise of 1850, a growing majority

¹William S. Robinson, "Warrington" Pen-Portraits (Boston, 1877), pp. 203-5.

of the American people had come to look upon that piece of legislation as the only practical solution of a complex and otherwise insoluble problem.¹ By 1852 the Democratic Party itself had come to recognize this feeling, and nominated the non-committal and uncommitted Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire as their Presidential nominee, heading up a party program which formally accepted the Compromise of 1850 as the final settlement of the slavery problem. With something like a national sigh of relief, the bulk of the American people cast their vote for the Democratic party as a means of pushing the extravagant slavery issue into the limbo of lost causes. Southern Unionists too, fearing that the Northern Whigs would all be converted to the "Conscience" cause, threw the weight of their votes to the Democratic ticket.² The New York "Barnburners" broke off their connections with the Free-Soilers and returned to their native Democratic party.³ And in Massachusetts, these latest developments caused almost immediate dissolution of the powerful anti-Whig coalition. The local Democrats could hardly take a

¹Boston Daily Advertiser, Sept. 7, 1850; Rhodes, History, I, 277.

²See Edward Stanwood, History of the Presidency (2 vols.; Boston, 1916), I, 243-257.

³Van Deusen, Thurlow seed, pp. 191-2.

different stand from that of their national party, and so had no alternative but to campaign for Pierce and the Compromise. The Free-Soilers, on the other hand, could never bring themselves to accept the outrageous Compromise plank--and so the short-lived partnership was dissolved.¹ Although the local Whigs actually gained few additional votes, the break-up of the coalition meant that the Whigs could regain control of the State legislature with their solid Boston vote. With a majority of ten votes the Whigs put in a slate of State officers and sent Edward Everett off to the United States Senate to offset the effects of Sumner.² This would show the South that "radicalism and rascality has not made so much progress here as the newspapers would have led them to believe," said Amos A. Lawrence happily; "the prospect is good."³ But the opposition could hardly agree. "The coalition is dead....," moaned a prominent anti-slavery journalist. "The Whig party remains in the complete control of Boston, and the money-bags of Boston rule the State."⁴

¹Wilson, Slave Power, II, 361-2, 373-4.

²Amos A. Lawrence to A. A. Richards, Nov. 20, 1852, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., II, 3. Also see Pearson, "Preliminaries of the Civil War," Comm. Hist., IV, 481-2.

³Lawrence to Samuel Eliot, Jan. 20, 1851, A. A. L. Letterbook, I, 245.

⁴Robinson, Pen-Portraits, pp. 203-5.

The "Gotton Whigs" were proud and happy at what seemed to them to be their present victory and their future hopes and dreams. For the present, they could disregard the defeat of their presidential candidate, General Winfield Scott, as of little consequence (Winthrop dismissed it as "laughably overwhelming"), and hail the election of the New Hampshire Democrat, Franklin Pierce, as the start of a new era of national accord.¹ "Frank" Pierce was not only a relative, but a close personal friend of Amos A. Lawrence, ever since he had taken the young Lawrence to see President Andrew Jackson when he was on a tour of Washington during a summer vacation from Harvard.² Lawrence, now a wealthy and influential financier, immediately offered the new President-elect his services--"pecuniary or otherwise"--while his father, Amos Lawrence, insisted that the Pierce family come to Boston and accept his hospitality after the strenuous campaign.³

¹Winthrop, Memoir, p. 161; New York Tribune, Nov. 13, 1852, Jan. 14, 1853.

²Lawrence, Amos A. Lawrence, pp. 21-2, and Lawrence, Diary, pp. 335-6.

³Amos A. Lawrence to Franklin Pierce, Nov. 11, 1852, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.S., I, 407; Lawrence to Mr. Conant, Dec. 6, 1852, ibid., II, 407. Lawrence, Diary, pp. 335-6.

Sensing the political opportunities which could be exploited as a result of this close personal relationship, young Lawrence urged his friend, Congressman William Appleton, to use his influence in Whig circles and play along with Pierce for the time being, obviously anticipating a break in the Democratic ranks. "If the conservative part of the Whig party will support him," he wrote, "it will make the sacrifice easier when he comes to make a break with some of his present supporters."¹

Party alignments and political nomenclatures had ceased to have the same importance they once did, as far as the "Cotton Whigs" were concerned. They were more interested in issues and results than in party affiliations. Unmindful of the long-term consequences that their new political attitude foreshadowed, and apparently unaware of the fact that their own political structure was dissolving about them, the "Cotton Whigs" were happy in the confidence that they had just secured enough valuable time for the entire nation to become adjusted to the prospects of inter-sectional harmony and national accord. Having already repudiated the ultra-ism of such fanatical groups as the Abolitionists, the Liberty Party

¹Amos A. Lawrence to William Appleton, Dec. 28, 1852, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., II, 23.

and the Free-Soilers, the "Cotton Whigs" were sure that in the following four years the people of America would likewise repudiate the ultra-ism of Southern plans for nullification and secession. At the end of four years, then, this would mean that the people of the United States would be ready for a real "National" party--a party which the true Whig party had represented all along--an American party--above sectionalism and localism--a party "knowing no North and no South."¹ Robert C. Winthrop felt that it augured well for the future that the electoral vote of the Whig candidate, General Scott, was divided between two widely separated sections of the Union--Massachusetts and Vermont; Tennessee and Kentucky. "Let us hope," he prayed earnestly, "we shall learn a little wisdom during the next four years."²

¹ See W. O. Lynch, "Anti-Slavery Tendencies of the Democratic Party," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, II (1924), 319-331.

² Winthrop, Memoir, p. 161.

CHAPTER V

AWAKE THE SLEEPING TIGER

The opening years of the new Administration exceeded the fondest hopes and expectations of the "Cotton Whigs" as President Franklin Pierce, smiling, confident, looking even younger than his fifty years, assured the nation in his Inaugural Address that he personally considered the Compromise of 1850 to be the final settlement of the issue of slavery. "I fervently hope that the question is at rest," he concluded, "and that no sectional or ambitious or fanatical excitement may again threaten the durability of our institutions or obscure the light of our prosperity."¹ And at the close of the year in his First Annual Message, the President again promised the American people that "this repose is to suffer no shock during my official term, if I have the power to avert it."²

Some folks called it another "Era of Good Feelings." The nation was at peace, the Administration had the support of both Houses, the Treasury was overflowing, foreign relations

¹Richardson, Messages and Papers, VI, 2730-2736.

²Ibid., pp. 2740-2759.

were relatively peaceful, and business was getting better every day. The great Compromise of 1850 had apparently solved all the political nightmares which had almost driven the country into a state of national hysteria. North and South congratulated each other on the future prospects for mutual harmony and accord. Judge Ogden of New Orleans was convinced that the danger of war had passed, and told Amos Lawrence of Massachusetts that "the sterling intelligence, integrity and patriotism of our countrymen will prevent any such suicidal madness as secession or disunion."¹

Lawrence's old friend and long-time Whig, Judge Henry Adams Bullard, had just been elected to Congress, and from Washington assured Lawrence that affairs in the nation's capital were proceeding "very smoothly and harmoniously."²

Nathan Appleton later recalled that as a result of the Compromise of 1850, the free states were "satisfied and content-- in a state of perfect repose."³ The slavery question

¹K. J. Ogden to Amos Lawrence, Dec. 20, 1850, A. L. Letters, M.H.S., X¹, 709.

²Henry Adams Bullard to Amos Lawrence, Jan. 24, 1851, *ibid.*, X², 21.

³Nathan Appleton, Letter to the Hon. William G. Rives of Virginia on Slavery and the Union (Boston, 1860), p. 10.

seemed virtually forgotten as the country plunged itself into an exciting orgy of building and spending.

Over in London, at the fabulous "Crystal Palace" Exhibition, Yankee inventions were the talk of the town-- from such prosaic exhibits as picks and shovels to the more complicated intricacies of American sewing machines and reapers. As Ambassador to England, Abbott Lawrence had cooperated whole-heartedly with his British hosts in the preparations for this great international exhibit, and in his dispatches to the Department of State had urged that the United States be adequately represented. Europeans were egot at the latest evidences of the material progress of their trans-Atlantic cousins.¹ Not to be outdone, America held its own industrial exhibition at New York's version of the "Crystal Palace" during the steaming hot summer and fall of 1853.² To hosts of interested spectators, displays from all over Western Europe provided a glittering backdrop against which America proudly displayed her own amazing wares. To many, this was only one more evidence of the fact that the United States was passing out of its adolescence of sectionalism and parochialism and was beginning to forge an even more

¹Abbott Lawrence to Edward Everett, London, March 21, 1850, Everett Papers, M.H.S. Also see Hill, Abbott Lawrence, pp. 94-7.

²Reporting in Harper's Magazine, November, 1853, George William Curtiss called it "Aladdin's Palace." Also see Boston Daily Advertiser, July 14, 1853.

perfect Union.¹

Restricted markets gave way to country-wide selling areas as Northern manufacturers found customers all through the middle West and down into the Gulf States. McCormick reapers, Seth Thomas clocks and Colt revolvers became household words. Day by day America was becoming more national in its transportation, communication and business markets than ever before. The 1850's witnessed such a tremendous expansion in the railroad system crisscrossing the nation that in the first eighteen months of 1853, America was sadly forced to record sixty-five fatal railroad accidents.² Every morning an avid American public eagerly read about the latest records established by the new Yankee "Clipper" ships, as the tonnage of American ocean traffic increased to the point where in 1853 it exceeded British tonnage by fifteen per cent.³ Newspapers everywhere testified to the increasing size and wealth of the nation. Capital invested in manufacturing had already doubled, and cotton growers were enjoying an unaccustomed prosperity as the price of cotton pushed upwards from its 1845

¹ Journal of Commerce, Aug. 12, Sept. 13, 1853.

² DeBow's Review, October, 1853, p. 429. Also see Boston Daily Atlas, Aug. 13, 1852.

³ Ibid., July 2, July 4, 1853.

low of six cents a pound to over twelve cents during the early 50's.¹

The same optimism and enthusiasm which marked the national attitude was reflected at the state and local levels. Proud residents of Massachusetts took delight in displaying the latest in local developments at a series of fairs and expositions. At the Boston Fowl Show in 1852, three Cochin Chinas sold for \$100; and at the great Horse Show at Springfield the following year, sales of blooded horses varied between \$500 and \$1,500.² The Mechanics Fair at Faneuil Hall in September of 1853 drew thousands of excited spectators from miles around; and Robert G. Winthrop, who went to the Cattle Show at Lowell, expecting to talk about "bullocks and manure" was amazed at what he classified as "a sort of miniature World's Fair."³

Boston's fifteen families, united in the "Boston Association," by 1850 controlled one-fifth of the nation's cotton spindles, a third of the State's railroad mileage, and about two-fifths of Boston's banking capital as the value of

¹William E. Dodd, The Cotton Kingdom (New Haven, 1920), p. 26; Allen Nevins, Ordeal of the Union (2 vols.; New York, 1947), II, 245, 265-6.

²Bant's Merchants' Magazine, XXXII (1855), 583-5.

³Boston Daily Atlas, Sept. 21, 1853; Winthrop, Memoir, pp. 149-150.

Massachusetts manufacturing had risen to almost three hundred million dollars.¹ "We are all at work in New England, and now feel a twinge from too fast driving in some branches of business," reflected Amos A. Lawrence, "but in the aggregate, our country is rapidly advancing in wealth, power and strength...."² With state-wide attention focused on local prosperity and national progress, re-assured that the Compromise of 1850 had already predestined the future freedom of the Western lands, Boston's "Cotton Whigs" relaxed in the firm belief that the possibility of sectional conflict had long since passed. "Since it has turned out that the whole of the vast territories hereafter to be admitted as States are to be free," wrote Lawrence in obvious complacency, "it seems most unwise to be quarreling about abstractions."³

"Men spoke softly not to rouse the sleeping tiger," Allan Nevins has dramatically written, "but in his sleep he stirred and growled."⁴ It would be absurd, of course, to

¹Salzman, "Chicopee," Smith Studies, XX (1935), 36-7.

²Amos A. Lawrence to Rev. Dr. Secresby, Bradford, England, Aug. 19, 1851, Lawrence, Amos A. Lawrence, p. 307.

³Amos A. Lawrence to J. S. Tyler, Feb. 12, 1851, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., I, 266.

⁴Nevins, Ordeal of the Union, II, 78.

suggest that every last vestige of the extreme bitterness which the slavery question had engendered over the past two decades had completely died out. The emotional repercussions that the Fugitive Slave Act was producing in the Bay State alone was sufficient evidence of this fact. First in February, and again in April, 1851, law enforcement officials had outraged the sympathies of Boston by trying to enforce the obnoxious law. A Negro called Shadrach had the good fortune to be rescued and spirited off to freedom by irate Bostonians; but the next victim, a waiter named Thomas Sims, was not so fortunate. He was marched off to a waiting vessel before day-break on the morning of April 12, 1851, with an armed escort of over a hundred city police.¹

This Fugitive Slave Law had been carried into effect as an integral part of the Compromise of 1850 and had been reluctantly accepted by the Whigs as the only alternative to nullification and secession. Local "Cotton Whigs" had put themselves on record as opposing this vicious law as a matter of principle, had labelled it a "disgraceful act," and worked

¹Harold Schwartz, "Fugitive Slave Days in Boston," *New England Quarterly*, XXVII (1954), 191-212; Pearson, "Preliminaries," *Comm. Hist.*, IV, 476-80. Also see *Boston Daily Advertiser*, Feb. 17, 18, 20, 1851, and *ibid.*, April 14, 1851.

constantly for its repeal.¹ Old Amos Lawrence condemned what he called the "skunk peculiarities" of the South in passing the law, and insisted that the legislation was unconstitutional.² His son, Amos A., declared with equal vigor that "Massachusetts never can be made a hunting ground for masters to pursue their run-aways."³ And yet, although voicing almost unanimous disapproval of the moral principles, or lack of them, upon which the law was based, the "Gotton Whigs" made every effort to abide by the letter of the law in practice. Robert C. Winthrop assured Senator Crittenden of Kentucky that although he personally never regarded it as "a wise piece of legislation," the conservative North would support the Fugitive Slave Law. "There is not an agitator in the whole Whig party here--no one who cares to disturb anything that has been done."⁴

¹William Means to Amos Lawrence, Nov. 7, 1850, A. L. Letters, M.H.S., X, 649, and Amos A. Lawrence to Samuel Eliot, Feb. 18, 1851, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., I, 272.

²Amos Lawrence to Amos A. Lawrence, Sept. 25, 1850, A. A. L. Letters, VIII, 127, and Amos Lawrence to Mark Hopkins, Nov. 11, 1850, Lawrence, Diary, p. 287.

³Amos A. Lawrence to Giles Richards, June 1, 1854, A. A. L. Letterbook, II, 338.

⁴Robert C. Winthrop to John J. Crittenden, May 13, 1852, Coleman, Crittenden, II, 36.

In vain did Ralph Waldo Emerson condemn the "poor-smell" of Beacon and Mt. Vernon Streets, and Theodore Parker execrate those who dressed of "orders from the South."¹ With no result did Wendell Phillips publicly denounce the Fugitive Law as the means of determining whether "the mills of Abbott Lawrence make him worth two millions or one"; and to no purpose did the old Federalist, Josiah Quincy, shake his head sadly and think back to the Boston of 1776.² "Boston has now become a mere shop--a place for buying and selling goods; and I suppose," he added mournfully, "also, of buying and selling men."³

All of this had no effect. Boston's men of wealth refused to be stampeded into facing another serious breach with their Southern brethren like that which had occurred after the Mexican War. Although they did not like the Fugitive Slave Law, they considered themselves honor-bound under the Constitution to obey it to the letter until it was

¹Emerson, Journals, VIII, 363, and Theodore Parker Additional Speeches, Addresses and Occasional Sermons (2 vols.; Boston, 1855), I, 89.

²Wendell Phillips, Speeches, Lectures and Letters (Boston, 1892), p. 65. Speech before the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, Faneuil Hall, Jan. 30, 1852.

³Garrison, Life, III, 328.

repealed. "It is lamentable to have such a triumph given to Nullification and Rebellion," wrote Robert C. Winthrop in reference to the Shadrach episode; while Daniel Webster agreed that the Negro's rescue was, "strictly speaking, a case of treason."¹ "Revolution is a terrific remedy," warned Professor Packard of Bowdoin. "I should never resist an unjust law...until the proper method of repealing it had been long tried in vain."² Young Amos A. Lawrence summed up the uncomfortable Whig position by asking the crucial question: "Shall we stand by the laws or shall we nullify them? Shall we uphold the Union or shall we break it up?"³ As if in answer to his own question, he went off to offer his services to the United States Marshal in Boston, to serve "in any capacity 'during the war'."⁴ "If we must knock these fellows [Abolitionists] on the head (and it must be done)," he told Congressman Samuel Elliot, "we should prefer to do it according

¹Winthrop, Memoirs, p. 147. Also see Pearson, "Preliminaries," Conn. Hist., IV, 480.

²A. S. Packard to Amos Lawrence, Oct. 28, 1850, A. L. Letters, M.H.S., X, 641.

³Amos A. Lawrence to Dr. Green, Nov. 18, 1850, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., I, 211.

⁴Amos A. Lawrence to Marshal Charles Devens, Feb. 17, 1851, ibid., p. 269.

to law...."¹ This was not a case, he emphasized, of loving the Negro less--but of loving the Union more. In replying to a story by Garrison that Congressman Eliot supported the Fugitive Slave Act because he hated the Negro, Lawrence defended Eliot by saying "he loves the black race more than most men.... But he loves the perpetuity of this Government and the Union of these States (even under the present system)-better."² The "Cotton Whigs" continued to hold the line, maintaining the same devotion to the Union and to the goal of inter-sectional harmony which had characterized their national attitude during the past twenty years. The Union was indivisible, the Constitution infallible, and the Compromise indissoluble--this was the Creed of those who hoped to escape the dire consequences of nullification and secession.

And then it happened. On January 4, 1854, the beautiful dream ended. "We went to bed one night, old-fashioned, conservative, compromise, Union Whigs," wrote Amos A. Lawrence, "and waked up stark mad Abolitionists."³

¹Amos A. Lawrence to Samuel Eliot, Feb. 18, 1851, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., I, 272.

²Amos A. Lawrence to William Lloyd Garrison, Feb. 16, 1851, ibid., p. 267.

³Amos A. Lawrence to Giles Richards, June 1, 1854, ibid., II, 338.

On that day, Stephen A. Douglas, Senator from Illinois, reported a bill into the Senate which called for the organization of the territorial government of Nebraska. Suggesting that the Compromise of 1850 had, for all practical purposes, superseded the Missouri Compromise of 1820 by granting popular sovereignty to New Mexico and Utah, the bill proposed that when Nebraska should be admitted to the Union, it should enter "with or without slavery" as fixed by its constitution at the time.¹ It was a simple statement--but one which was destined to have the most far-reaching consequences, as it virtually brought the entire North to its feet in one great indignant protest. "It aroused and alarmed the whole North," wrote Nathan Appleton to Rives of Virginia, still unable to grasp what had happened.²

As expected, leading anti-slavery men like Salmon P. Chase of Ohio, William Seward of New York, and Charles Sumner of Massachusetts led the attack upon the measure as further proof of an insidious conspiracy to extend the Slave Empire.³

¹33rd Congress, 1st Session, Senate Report #15, p. 3.

²Nathan Appleton, Letter to Rives, p. 10.

³Congressional Globe, 33rd Congress, 1st Session, Appendix, pp. 262 ff.

But among the groups in the North which set themselves against this "Nebraska infamy" none were more outraged and resentful than the "Cotton Whigs." On February 23, 1854, they held a great protest meeting at Faneuil Hall, attended by some three thousand of the "solid" men of the city, and headed by Abbott Lawrence, Robert G. Winthrop and Samuel Eliot.¹ These men of standing and property believed that they had shown their good faith by having upheld and protected the institution of slavery where it was sanctioned by the Constitution; and expected that the South, in return, had guaranteed that the territories would remain free. Fully convinced that the Compromise of 1850 had unequivocally decided the future of the West and had ended the matter once and for all, Boston merchants and businessmen now felt cheated and ridiculed by what they considered to be the machinations of a cheap demagogue.² "If I could have prescribed a recipe for reinflating Free-soilism and Abolitionism, which had collapsed all over the country," Winthrop wrote in utter frustration, "I should have singled out this precise potion from the whole materia

¹Boston Daily Advertiser, Feb. 23, 1854; Boston Times, Feb. 23, May 30, 1854.

²Amos A. Lawrence to George S. Park, Jan. 23, 1857, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., IV, 1.

medica of political quackery."¹ Business interests, which had always deplored public anti-slavery agitation, now began to add their mighty influence to the ground-swell of public opinion. Angrily, Amos A. Lawrence condemned the political stupidity which had caused the great social gap to be breached. "where is the spirit that led us to volunteer to shoot the abolitionists and free-soilers and support the Law...?" he wailed, referring to the past history of the "Cotton Whigs." "it's pretty much gone already: this will 'crush it all out'."² As he felt himself being borne along with the tide, Lawrence was apprehensive as to the future of the Union. After all, if the large merchants and the "retired gentlemen who go into State St. for an hour or two every day" were being converted to the anti-slavery cause, then who else was left? "These constitute pretty much all the 'slave power' in this community," he confided to a friend, "and if they give up the Compromises and say that they have been cheated, we all know that sympathy for the South and their 'institution' must be gone."³

¹Winthrop, Memoir, p. 165-6, Feb. 24, 1854.

²Amos A. Lawrence to Hon. Samuel H. Walley, May 12, 1854, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., II, 325. Also see Lawrence to William Appleton, March 11, 1854, ibid., p. 272, and Lawrence to Hon. J. W. Edmonds, March 18, 1854, ibid., p. 273.

³Amos A. Lawrence to Mr. Andrews, May 28, 1854, ibid., p. 335. Also see Edward Everett, Diary, Mss, M.H.S. May 27, 1854.

There was only one thing to do--and that was to defeat Douglas and destroy his nefarious Bill. To this end the "Gotton whigs" directed their attention and their energies, assuring their close friends below the Mason-Dixon line that the "Nebraska business" would be a failure, and pleading with their Southern colleagues to "pause before they proceed farther to disturb the peace which we hoped the Compromise measure of 1850 would have made perpetual."¹ Constantly they urged their political representatives to "pour in the volleys of red hot shot" upon the Nebraska Bill and make sure that "Douglas' day is over."² Nowhere, perhaps, is the startling metamorphosis of the Boston business man so well demonstrated than in connection with the seizure of the Negro, Anthony Burns, on May 26, 1854. So great was the opposition of the people of Boston, that the authorities considered it necessary to escort Burns to the wharf under the protection of a special "marshal's guard," the entire city police force, twenty-two companies of the Massachusetts militia and over a thousand Federal troops complete with muskets, artillery and cavalry. Amos A. Lawrence exploded with rage and told the Mayor that he would prefer to see the court house burned to the ground

¹Amos A. Lawrence to H. A. Crafts, New Orleans, March 7, 1854, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., II, 270.

²Amos A. Lawrence to S. H. Walley, Representative from Massachusetts, May 12, 1854, *ibid.*, p. 325, and Lawrence to Hon. J. W. Edmonds, March 16, 1854, *ibid.*, p. 273.

than have Burns returned to slavery. When he was finally forced to witness the victim's march to the dock, he was convinced that only the preliminary preparations and the immense display of military power "prevented the total destruction of the U. S. Marshal and his hired assistants."¹ These were the words of a man who only two years before had offered his own services to the U. S. Marshal as a means of enforcing the same law! "The commercial class have taken a new position upon the great question of the day," reported the Boston Times; and it rejoiced that now "there is a North at last."²

The consummate political skill of Senator Douglas, however, proved more than a match for the irate protestations of his Whig opponents in the North. Borne along by the furious energies of young Douglas, supported by administrative approval from the White House and sustained by jubilant Southerners--Whigs and Democrats alike--the Nebraska bill swept aside the Northern Whig opposition, and was signed into law by President Pierce on May 30, 1854. Providing for the new territory to be divided into two separate units, the Kansas-Nebraska Act called for the outright repeal of the Missouri Compromise and provided a clear-cut defense of the

¹ Amos A. Lawrence to Samuel Lawrence, June [], 1854, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., II, 340. Also see Lawrence, Amos A. Lawrence, pp. 75-6.

² Boston Times, May 30, 1854.

doctrine of popular sovereignty.¹

With the passage of the Douglas bill, the whole question concerning the extension of slavery was broken open once again, leaving the moderates and conservatives of the North aghast. In a panic of bewilderment they desperately tried to think of a way to heal this latest breach of national unity in a manner which would be consistent with their policy of non-extension of slavery. This was precisely the dilemma in which the Cotton Whigs now found themselves: As realistic men of business and capital, the Yankee manufacturers felt obligated to retain the faith and good will of a Southern plantation economy whose production of cotton created personal fortunes already being reckoned in millions of dollars.² As men of political principle, the New England Whigs felt constrained to preserve the Union which Marshall had defined, Webster had defended and which the Whig party had labored so hard and so long to maintain. But as men of honor and integrity, the keepers of the Puritan conscience felt themselves consumed by righteous wrath at what they considered to be the selfish designs of unscrupulous politicians who had

¹Congressional Globe, 33rd Congress, 1st Session, Appendix, pp. 180 ff.

²Amos A. Lawrence to Moses Grinnell, June 21, 1854, A. A. L. Letterbook, N.H.S., I, 353.

gambled with the stakes of national unity for the sake of railroad ties and caucus votes. The "Cotton Whigs" had pledged their word that they would never interfere with the South or any of her institutions where the Constitution provided sanctions; but they had also gone on record as opposing the extension of that "peculiar institution" beyond those prescribed Constitutional limits. So, by God, Douglas or no Douglas, Bill or no Bill, the New Englanders determined that if population was to be the determining factor in deciding the fate of Kansas--then there would be a flood of "free citizens" to the new territories the like of which had not been seen since the waters of the flood overflowed the earth.

"Anger hath no mercy, nor fury when it breaketh forth. And who can bear the violence of one provoked!" states the Book of Proverbs. With all the fervor of an evangelistic crusade, the New England conscience went into action, with the battle cry of William Seward ringing out: "God give the victory to the side that is stronger in numbers, as it is in right!"¹

The earliest response to the Kansas challenge centered about the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Company which had been created early in the spring of 1854 by Eli Thayer of Worcester, a member of the Massachusetts Legislature.

¹Wilson, Slave Power, II, 464.

Preparing a charter, Thayer obtained an act of incorporation in February, 1854, and after the legislature adjourned began stumping New England to sell stock in his enterprise, pointing out the dual opportunity of aiding the cause of free men, and at the same time making a sound profit.¹ Thayer proposed to pre-empt blocks of land with Company funds, sponsor whole villages of settlers to develop the fertile soil of Kansas, and then divide up the profits between the homesteaders and the investors.² Assisted by the monetary contributions of such prominent men as Amos A. Lawrence and J. M. S. Williams of Massachusetts, and of John Carter Brown of Rhode Island, the association was successfully organized, and by the end of July, 1854, a company of twenty-four free-soil settlers had already arrived at Kansas City, Missouri.³

¹Eli Thayer, The Kansas Crusade (New York, 1889), pp. 25-30; Robert S. Moody, "The First Year of the Emigrant Aid Company," New England Quarterly, IV (1931), 148-9; Samuel A. Johnson, "The Genesis of the New England Emigrant Aid Company," New England Quarterly, III (1930), 90-100.

²Organization, Objects and Plan of Operations of the Emigrant Aid Company: Also a Description of Kansas for the Information of Emigrants (Boston, 1854). Copy in Eli Thayer Manuscripts, I, 3 (John Hay Library, Brown University) (hereafter cited as "Brown Univ.").

³Amos A. Lawrence to Moses Grinnell, June 21, 1854, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., II, 352. Also see Lawrence to Rev. Edward Cook, Appleton, Wisconsin, June 20, 1854, ibid., p. 350.

Loading their tents, equipment and baggage--including a printing press--onto wagons, the emigrants set off along the historic Santa Fe trail for about fifty miles, until they came to an elevation of land, just south of the Kaw River, from which they could look out for miles in all directions. Here they pitched camp and decided to settle permanently on what they called "Mount Oread," after Eli Thayer's well-known "castle" in Worcester. After setting up a collection of tents, thatched huts and crude log cabins in the weeks that followed, the settlers named their new city "Lawrence" in honor of the New Englander who had invested so much of his personal income in their dreams of the future.¹ During the remainder of the summer of 1854, the Emigrant Aid Company sent out five more groups under the direction of Doctor Charles Robinson, an experienced colonist, a practicing physician and an ardent free-soiler, who had been selected as the Company's agent in Kansas. All in all, a total of some six hundred had settled either in Lawrence, or in such nearby settlements as Osawatimie, Manhattan, and Topeka by the time the freezing winter closed in.²

¹Eli Thayer, Kansas Crusade, pp. 69-73; Charles Robinson, The Kansas Conflict (New York, 1889), pp. 90-1.

²Amos A. Lawrence to Rev. Edward Cook, June 20, 1854, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., II, 350; Lawrence to Charles Robinson, Aug. 9, 1854, ibid., p. 398. Ibid., p. 399 contains a letter of recognition for Robinson as the "Agent of the Emigrant Aid Society," signed by Lawrence as Treasurer.

Back in Boston, however, things were not going quite as smoothly. Hardly a month had passed before Thayer's Emigrant Aid Company began to be labelled as a crass, money-making scheme, and the motives of its membership were ascribed to selfish greed masquerading behind the glittering façade of humanitarianism.¹ Amos A. Lawrence, already disturbed by the various ugly rumors which he himself had heard, and hard pressed by many of the influential investors who had suddenly become fearful of the amount of liability which they had incurred in Thayer's project, demanded that the Company be reformed.² Although Thayer objected strenuously, Lawrence would brook no opposition, threatening to withdraw his name and his money if a change was not forthcoming.³ Thayer yielded, and the organization was renamed the "New England Emigrant Aid Company," with Thayer's plans for paying dividends discontinued and with contributions now exclusively for "charitable" purposes.⁴ The new company was

¹ Thayer, Kansas Crusade, pp. 88-9.

² Patrick T. Jackson to Amos A. Lawrence, June 10, 1854, A. A. L. Letters, M.H.S., XI, 149. Also see Lawrence to Eli Thayer, July 5, 1854, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., II, 365.

³ Lawrence to Thayer, July 6, 15, 1854, ibid., pp. 367, 373.

⁴ Thayer to Lawrence, July 16, 1854, A. A. L. Letters, M.H.S., XI, 176.

established as a purely local organization, separate and distinct from similar emigrant societies in other states; and wary investors were assured of limited liability under the careful hand and expert direction of Mr. Lawrence who was now one of the three Trustees. Henceforth, "aid" would consist of free information and a fifteen per cent reduction in railroad and steamship fares through quantity purchase. No political questions were to be asked of emigrants, since the avowed purpose of the organization was to get people to Kansas, and there let them make their own free choice--to oppose the establishment of slavery "by all legal and constitutional means."¹

Lawrence was extremely careful to make it clear that the reorganized Company was not a speculative venture. When two of the Trustees proposed to buy real estate in Kansas, to the amount of twenty-eight million dollars, Lawrence vetoed the idea. Such a purchase, he wrote in a memorandum, "is for the purpose of speculating, to make a profit; and it is not necessary in order to accomplish the objects for which the Society was formed."² Writing to

¹Revised Constitution and By-Laws of the Emigrant Aid Company, A.A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., II, 377, 378. Also see Edward Everett Hale to Charles Hale, August 10, 1854, Edward E. Hale, Jr., ed., The Life and Letters of Edward Everett Hale (Boston, 1917), p. 237.

²Memorandum to Messrs. Williams and Thayer, Aug. 26, 1854, A.A.L. Letterbook, M.H.S., II, 401.

Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, Lawrence denied that the funds of the Company were used for any other purpose but to provide for the basic needs of the emigrants; and insisted that the Company stock was worthless and meaningless. Furthermore, continued Lawrence, the emigrants were not Abolitionists-- "so far as we know not one known to be of that stamp has gone in our parties. They are free to vote and do as they please. The Society has no agreement with them, nor pledge, nor are they asked any questions." The Emigrant Aid Society was created solely for the purpose of promoting freedom--not money.¹

With the Company reorganized, Lawrence not only received the additional backing of such men as his prominent uncle, Abbott Lawrence, and of William Appleton and Joseph Lyman, but was contacted by such leading New York businessmen as Moses Grinnell who sought to join forces with the New England group.² Collecting money, writing letters, encouraging friends and denouncing foes, Lawrence demonstrated the enthusiasm which motivated many Northern whigs to work so zealously for a free-soil Kansas. He had letters sent to

¹Amos A. Lawrence to Thomas Hart Benton, Jan. 2, 1844, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., III, 1.

²Amos A. Lawrence to Eli Thayer, July 31, 1854; Lawrence to Hon. John Goodrich, Aug. 2, 1854, ibid., II, 388, 392.

every minister in New England, explaining the nature and purpose of the Emigrant Aid Society and soliciting their support. "We beg you," he urged, "to consult with your most influential and patriotic parishioners and townsmen, and with them take such measures as shall carry forward this undertaking to a successful issue."¹ So convinced was he of the righteousness of his cause that Lawrence told Governor Gardner that if he were a member of the Massachusetts legislature he would go so far as to vote "in favor of placing at the disposal of the Governor and Council a liberal sum to be used in case an attempt is made to drive our people from the Territory [of Kansas] by force."² Assuming that there was no question as to the legitimate status of the free-soil inhabitants of Kansas, Lawrence formally requested the President of the United States to recognize the free settlers as the legally constituted Government of Kansas.³

The New Englanders, however, reckoned without the hostile attitude of the pro-slavery settlers just across the border in Missouri. Angered at what they considered to be an unwarranted interference by outsiders in the normal course

¹Letter to be sent to every Minister in New England, September, 1854, A.A.L. Letterbook, M.H.S., II, 415.

²Amos A. Lawrence to Governor Gardner, March 7, 1856, *ibid.*, IV, 26.

³Amos A. Lawrence to President Franklin Pierce, April 17, 1856, *ibid.*, III, 89.

of events, Missouri bordermen--bull-whackers, buffalo hunters and Indian fighters--prepared to take whatever steps were necessary to prevent free-soil Yankee imports from creating an artificial free state.¹ The first opportunity for such action came in the fall of 1854 when the Governor, Andrew Reeder, called for elections for territorial delegates. Into Kansas swarmed a roaring horde of Missouri "ruffians" to stuff the ballot boxes in favor of slavery. When Reeder called for the election of a territorial legislature the following March, the Missourians once again carried the day for pro-slavery candidates.²

Outraged at what he considered to be an unfair and illegal interference with a perfectly constitutional procedure Amos A. Lawrence wrote directly to Franklin Pierce. Informing him of the activities of these Missouri agitators, Lawrence warned the President that if the United States Government did not take immediate steps to protect the free settlers, they would have to take matters into their own hands.³ Against the current accusations that the free soil emigrants were

¹National Intelligencer, June 22, 1854.

²Jay Monaghan, Civil War on the Western Border, 1854-1865 (Boston, 1955), pp. 13-15.

³Amos A. Lawrence to President Franklin Pierce, July 15, 1855, Lawrence, Amos A. Lawrence, p. 95.

traitors because they refused to recognize the new territorial government of Kansas, Lawrence condemned the government as fraudulent, and flatly denied that the emigrants would ever resist or even question the laws of the United States--when executed by "the proper officers." But, he concluded, the free-soil settlers would never recognize the present pro-slavery legislature, "nor its enactments, nor its officers."¹ Lawrence also took time out to write to Senator Atchison, and demanded that the gentleman from Missouri see that the contest be conducted according to the rules of fair play. The Kansas-Nebraska Act had decreed that the future of Kansas was to be dependent on the factor of population, and it was to be a wide open race--so let the best man win! These New England settlers, Lawrence pointed out, were not abolitionists, but continued interference on the part of the pro-slavery elements, he warned, "may make them abolitionists of the most dangerous kind."²

Even as he wrote, threatened and argued, Lawrence came to the apparent conclusion that stronger measures would have to be taken in order to provide adequate protection for

¹Amos A. Lawrence to President Franklin Pierce, Dec. 10, 1855, Lawrence, Amos A. Lawrence, p. 104.

²Amos A. Lawrence to Senator David Atchison, March 31, 1855, A.A.L. Letterbook, M.H.S., III, 78.

the emigrants. Charles Robinson, the free-soil leader in Kansas had been pleading for guns since the spring elections. "Cannot your secret society send us 200 Sharps rifles as a loan till this question is settled?" he begged Eli Thayer on May 2, 1855; and a few days later, sent a letter off to Edward Everett Hale urging that two hundred rifles and two field pieces be sent to Kansas.¹ Not content with waiting, Robinson sent George Washington Deitzler to New England to obtain as many weapons as possible for the free-soil cause. A month later Robinson was in possession of a letter signed by Thomas H. Webb, Secretary of the Emigrant Aid Society, acknowledging the arrival of Deitzler, and assuring Robinson that one hundred "machines" were on their way.² The first shipment of "machinery" arrived at Lawrence, Kansas in the middle of May, and when the emigrants tore open the crates variously stamped "hardware," "machinery" or "books," they found themselves in possession of a hundred of the latest and most advanced type of breech-loading weapon--the Sharps rifle.³ With increased fire-power and accuracy,

¹ Charles Robinson to Eli Thayer, April 2, 1855, and Robinson to Edward Everett Hale, April 9, 1855, W. H. Isley, "The Sharps Rifle Episode in Kansas History," American Historical Review, XII (1907), 511,552.

² Thomas H. Webb to Charles Robinson, May 8, 1855, ibid., pp. 552-3.

³ Winston G. Smith, The Sharps Rifle: Its History, Development and Operation (New York, 1943), pp. 11-12; Lawrence, Amos A. Lawrence, pp. 97-8.

the free-soil settlers of Lawrence were, for the first time, in a position to offset the numerical superiority of the hostile Missourians across the border, most of whom were still armed with antiquated muzzle loaders and buffalo guns.

Up until recently Amos A. Lawrence had refused to consider the idea of sending weapons to the emigrants, but after the fraudulent elections and the attacks of the "border ruffians" he changed his mind. Writing to Robinson, Lawrence told him of his decision. "You must have arms, or your courage will not avail," he admitted. "We must stir ourselves here tomorrow and see what can be done."¹ But Lawrence did not wait for the next day to "stir" himself, for on the same day he sent out a letter to the secretary of the Emigrant Aid Company, ordering: "Write to Hartford and get their terms for one hundred more of the Sharps rifles at once."² As far as the manufacturer was concerned, the course was clear-- "when farmers turn soldiers, they must have arms."³ "Up to this time," he wrote to President Pierce accusingly, "the government has kept so far aloof as to force the settlers to

¹ Amos A. Lawrence to Charles Robinson, July 20, 1855, A.A.L. Letterbook, M.H.S., III, 203.

² Amos A. Lawrence to Dr. Webb, July 20, 1855, ibid., 204.

³ ibid.

the conclusion that if they would be safe, they must defend themselves; and therefore many persons here who refused at first (myself included), have rendered them assistance by furnishing them means of defense."¹

Undoubtedly encouraged by the extraordinary encouragement and assistance they were receiving from their patrons in the East, the free settlers of Kansas took things into their own hands, and followed the precedent recently set by California, of establishing a state government in advance of Congressional permission. They elected delegates to a constitutional convention at Topeka, Oct. 23, 1855 and proceeded to draw up a free-state constitution. Submitted to a totally free-soil electorate, the constitution was adopted, Charles Robinson was named "Governor," and a free-soil Legislature was elected. Congress was formally requested to admit Kansas as a free state.²

The question was now thrown back into the collective lap of official Washington. Which was the lawful government of Kansas? Which votes were legitimate and which were fraudulent? Who would make the final decision?

¹ Amos A. Lawrence to President Pierce, July 15, 1855, Lawrence, Amos A. Lawrence, p. 95.

² Monaghan, Western Border, pp. 32-5.

President Pierce personally denounced the action of the free-soil settlers as treason, and declared that the Government of the United States would support the pro-slavery territorial government as the only lawful government of Kansas.¹ Senator Douglas of Illinois denounced the action of Pierce and argued that it was not a question for Congress to decide--the question would have to be settled in the territories themselves; and was supported by Crittenden of Kentucky.² Congress itself could not arrive at any decision, and in March, 1856, sought to clarify matters by appointing a three-man committee to investigate conditions in Kansas. In midsummer this committee only further confused the issue with a majority and minority report which served to bring tempers to white-hot heat.³ As the debate on the Kansas issue reached its climax in the Senate in May, 1856, Charles Sumner of Massachusetts rose to give his famous speech on the "Crime against Kansas." Infuriated, a Representative from South Carolina, Preston Brooks, lashed the Yankee unmercifully with his cane and left

¹Richardson, Messages and Papers, VI, 2860-2863, esp. 2877.

²Congressional Globe, 34th Congress, 1st Session, p. 639. See J. J. Crittenden to Archibald Dixon, March 7, 1854, and Abbott Lawrence to Crittenden, April 26, 1856, Coleman, Crittenden, II, 102-3, 119.

³Monaghan, Western Border, pp. 48-52; Milton, Eye of Conflict, pp. 218-24; Nevins, Ordeal of Union, II, 419-24.

him lying on the floor of the Senate, unconscious and bleeding.¹

Possibly no more striking example of the powerful psychological reaction which the attack upon Sumner produced in the North was the fact that Amos A. Lawrence, one of Sumner's greatest political foes, and the man who had spared no effort in his attempt to defeat him in 1850-51, now invited Sumner to rest at his Cottage Farm home on his way back to Boston. "You may prefer to be with some one of those who agree with you in regard to party politics," wrote Lawrence to the injured Senator; "but I assure you that no one will give you a more cordial welcome."² Sumner accepted the invitation, and on his triumphal return to Boston, spent the weekend at the Lawrence home.³ So far, in fact, had Lawrence's attitude toward Sumner changed, that in 1859 he suggested that it was "high time" that Sumner be given an honorary L.L.D. from Harvard!⁴

¹ Congressional Globe, 34th Congress, 1st Session, Appendix, pp. 522-44; Sumner, Works, IV, 137-249.

² Amos A. Lawrence to Charles Sumner, Oct. 10, 1856, Lawrence, Amos A. Lawrence, p. 141.

³ Amos A. Lawrence to Mrs. Charles Robinson, Oct. 30, 1856, Robinson Papers, Folder IV, 4 (Archives, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas) (hereafter cited as "Univ. of Kansas"). Also see William Lawrence, Memories, p. 7.

⁴ Lawrence to Judge Hoar, May 10, 1859, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., IV, 329.

Violence beget violence, for while blood began to flow in the Nation's capital, the situation among the factions in Kansas had degenerated from opposition of legislatures and constitutions to the crack of rifle fire and the thud of bowie-knives. Even as Sumner was sent crashing to the floor of the Senate, a pro-slavery "posse" of about a thousand men came riding into the "Boston abolition town" of Lawrence, Kansas, arrested "treasonous" free-state leaders, and sacked the town.¹ Three days later, a "kanger" named John Brown, who had been hired to protect the free settlers, struck at Pottawatomie Creek, murdering five pro-slavery settlers to avenge the five free men already killed. The lid was off, and the "little civil war" was on in Kansas.²

Back in Boston, supporters of the freedom struggle shipped out more rifles, wrote more checks, called for more action--and gave only one warning: avoid trouble with the Federal authorities! Kick "Calhoun and his adherents out of the territory," "put an end to their operations at once," don't let your "boys" permit a "handful of scoundrels" to embarrass the Government and breed ill will throughout the

¹ Monaghan, Western Border, pp. 52-6; Nichols, Bleeding Kansas, pp. 105-109.

² New York Tribune, May 31, June 9, June 10, 1856. Also see Charles Robinson, The Kansas Conflict, pp. 265-6, and James C. Malin, John Brown and the Legend of Fifty-Six (Philadelphia, 1942), p. 569.

Country, urged Mr. Lawrence.¹ But--and this was a large "but"--this violence must be employed by "volunteers" who have no connection with the free-state Government--and never, under any circumstances, must it be directed against the Federal authorities.² Lawrence repeated this again and again in his personal correspondence with "Governor" Robinson. "We would be pleased to hear of their expulsion in any informal [sic] way," he wrote the free-state leader. "But it is very important that they should be the action of independent corps of men and not of the free state Government or any of its members."³ Lawrence was prepared to sanction any activity as long as it did not impugn "the direct authority of the Federal Government."⁴

In this respect, the only danger that Lawrence could see was the unpredictable and irresponsible actions of John Brown, and he cautioned Robinson to keep a close watch

¹ Amos A. Lawrence to Charles Robinson, Dec. 17, 1857, and Jan. 29, 1858, Robinson Papers, Univ. of Kansas, Folder III, 12, 14.

² Amos A. Lawrence to Charles Robinson, Aug. 16, 1857, Jan. 2, 1858, ibid., pp. 9, 13.

³ Lawrence to Robinson, Jan. 29, 1858, ibid., p. 14.

⁴ Lawrence to Robinson, Dec. 17, 1857, and Feb. 3, 1858, ibid., pp. 12, 15. Also see Lawrence, Journal, N.E.S., Nov. 5, 1856.

on the "ranger." "Old Brown will be your humble servant and an efficient one," he wrote, "but he requires some coaxing, as well as some controlling power near him."¹ See to it that Brown reports to you regularly, the New Englander urged. "It is bad policy to have a ranger like him with money and arms at his disposal, and only accountable to people here."²

Even in the midst of riot and bloodshed, Amos A. Lawrence clung steadfastly to the strict constitutionality of his position--as he saw it. A man was free to act on slavery in the territories, as long as he did not transgress the authority of the National Government, or infringe upon the rights of Southern states where they were protected by the Constitution. It was the only way to obey the letter of the Compromise of 1850 and still prevent the territorial expansion of slavery. This was a supreme effort to make freedom in Kansas consistent with the national unity of the States.³

¹Amos A. Lawrence to Charles Robinson, March 31, 1857, Robinson Papers, Univ. of Kansas, III, 3.

²Amos A. Lawrence to Charles Robinson, Aug. 16, 1857, *ibid.*, p. 9.

³James G. Malin, On the Nature of History (Lawrence, Kansas, 1954) p. 201. Lawrence "understood the issue of Federal Nationalism and advised the free-state men repeatedly against any course in Kansas that would compromise their position of loyalty to Federal Nationalism."⁴

It was against this background of tense violence that the national elections of 1856 were conducted, which were won by the Democratic candidate, James Buchanan. Anxious to quiet the fearful Kansas uproar as soon as possible, the new President appointed Robert J. Walker of Mississippi to the post of Governor, and promised administrative support of an impartial settlement.¹ Walker called for a constitutional convention and urged settlers of both local parties to cooperate in electing delegates. The free-state men, however, suspicious of the Administration's motives, refused to participate in the convention; and as a result, in the fall of 1856, the pro-slavery delegates at Leecompton were able to draft a constitution which guaranteed the protection of slave property in Kansas.² It was then decided that the entire constitution would not be submitted to the people. Instead, the Kansans would be given the opportunity to vote either for "the constitution with slavery" or for "the constitution with no slavery." Even if the free-state party voted for "no slavery," the resultant constitution would provide for the protection of all the slaves which were already in the Territory.³

¹Richardson, Messages and Papers, VII, 2961-2967. First Inaugural, March 4, 1856.

²Amos A. Lawrence to Charles Robinson, May 16, 1857, Robinson Papers, Univ. of Kansas, Folder III, 7.

³House Reports, 35th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. III, report 377.

Amos A. Lawrence was loud in his protests against this latest action. "The whole country has become tired and disgusted with the perpetuation of frauds," he complained, and denounced the fact that the "principles of Constitutional liberty" had been "crushed down by those who have destroyed the elective franchise in Kansas." "The time for keeping the settlers out of their Constitutional rights is past. Any attempt at coercion will result in disastrous defeat to the Government, and will bring on a crisis such as we never have seen!"¹ "All reasonable measures for ridding the Territory of the renegades who have disgraced it will be sanctioned by the people of the country," he wrote to Robinson angrily.²

Governor Walker himself was outraged at this flagrant political trickery and announced that he would have no part in such a stratagem. "I consider such a subversion of the question a vile fraud, a base counterfeit and a wretched device to prevent the people from voting," he declared--and was promptly removed from his office by President Buchanan.³

¹Amos A. Lawrence to John W. Geary, March 19, 1857, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., IV, 32-3; Lawrence to Charles Robinson, January 29, 1858, Robinson Papers, Univ. of Kansas, III, 14.

²Amos A. Lawrence to Charles Robinson, Jan. 2, 1858, ibid., 13.

³House Reports, 35th Congress, 1st Session, vol. V, Report 110, Testimony of Walker.

The pro-slavery plan went according to schedule: In the voting of December 21, 1857, the pro-slavery voters pushed through their "with slavery" clause with little difficulty as the indignant free-soilers refused to participate in what they regarded as a fraud. The victory was short-lived, however, for two weeks later the newly-elected free-state legislature re-submitted the entire Leecompton Constitution to the people of the Territory, and it was rejected by a free-state vote of well over ten thousand ballots. Popular sovereignty had spoken!¹

But President Buchanan would not have it! Announcing his unqualified support of the Leecompton Constitution, the Chief Executive urged Congress to accept the pro-slavery document.² Again in February, Buchanan personally relayed a copy of the Leecompton Constitution itself to the Congress and requested that Kansas be immediately admitted to the Union as "an independent State."³

¹Amos A. Lawrence to Charles Robinson, Feb. 3, 1858, Robinson Papers, Univ. of Kansas, Folder III, 15. Also see Monaghan, Western Border, pp. 99-100.

²Richardson, Messages and Papers, VII, 2983. First Annual Message, Dec. 8, 1857.

³Ibid., p. 3002. Message to the Senate and House of Representatives, Feb. 2, 1858.

Hardly had the President made his position clear, when Senator Stephen A. Douglas arose to attack the administration policy and condemn the pro-slavery Lecompton Constitution as a violation of popular sovereignty. Again supported by Senator Crittenden who condemned the Constitution as "a gross violation of principle and good faith," Douglas demanded an honest vote on the entire constitution.¹ From Boston, Amos A. Lawrence sent a letter to Crittenden, congratulating him upon his forthright stand. "Permit me to express my gratitude for the important part which you have taken in opposition to the Lecompton scheme," he wrote. "In doing so, I am impelled by the natural desire which every Northern man has, to prevent the extension of slavery over Territory which we have always considered devoted to free labor."²

Although Buchanan was able to secure the support of the Senate, Douglas brought about the defeat of the Kansas Admission Bill in the House; and the issue was deadlocked.³ A House-Senate compromise, known as the English Bill, was

¹John J. Crittenden to Abraham Lincoln, July 29, 1858, Coleman, Crittenden, II, 162-4; Milton, Eye of Conflict, pp. 271-293.

²Amos A. Lawrence to John J. Crittenden, May 4, 1858, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., IV, 179.

³Congressional Globe, 35th Congress, 1st Session, Appendix, pp. 194 ff.

adopted May 4, 1858, as a means of fulfilling the technical requirements of popular sovereignty while at the same time assuring passage of the LeCompton Constitution.¹ The people of Kansas were to vote for a third time on the constitution. If a majority accepted it, the State would be admitted to the Union immediately. If the constitution were voted down, then Kansas would have to wait until her population was large enough to justify admission--the obvious expectation being that the voters of Kansas would be so anxious for Union status that they would swallow the otherwise unpalatable features of the pro-slavery document.² In this respect, however, the administration plans were thwarted, as the Kansans overwhelmingly rejected the compromise in August, 1858 and voted to remain a territory.³ Although slavery continued to remain legal in Kansas for the time being, the free-soilers kept control of the Legislature; and it was apparent to all that slavery would be abolished as soon as Kansas achieved statehood on its own terms.

For all practical purposes, the battle for Kansas had been won, and the "Cotton Whigs" back in New England

¹Amos A. Lawrence to Charles Robinson, May 6, 1858, Robinson Papers, Univ. of Kansas, Folder III, 18.

²See Frank H. Hodder, "The English Bill," Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1906, I, 201.

³Amos A. Lawrence to Charles Robinson, May 3, May 4 1858, Robinson Papers, Univ. of Kansas, Folder III, 17, 19.

congratulated themselves upon the fact that by their prompt action they had achieved a complete moral and political victory in the territories, without either impugning the authority of the Federal Government or infringing upon the constitutional rights of the Southern States.¹

The various leading participants in the struggle to make Kansas free were certain that they had preserved the Union, and were convinced that it was the Emigrant Aid Company which had turned the tide. Eli Thayer took pride in recalling a meeting with Congressman Henry J. Blow of St. Louis in 1862, when the Missourian introduced himself and enthusiastically hailed the consequences of the Kansas victory. "Your success in making Kansas a free state had kept Missouri in the Union," said Blow, pumping the New Englander's hand warily. "If she had seceded, Kentucky and Tennessee would have gone also.... Your Kansas work has made it possible to save the Union!"² "Governor" Charles Robinson, in reviewing the success of the free-state movement, said that "the people of Kansas almost made the Republican party. They have furnished most of the

¹Boston Daily Advertiser, Feb. 4, 1862. Also see John C. Underwood to Eli Thayer, February, 1857, Thayer Manuscripts, Brown Univ, I, 27.

²Ibid., p. 57.

material to make it what it now is...."¹ Robinson was especially expensive in his praise of the role of Amos A. Lawrence. "Without your name," he told the Yankee financier, "the Emigrant Aid Company would have been a cipher, and without your encouragement, courage and support, what little I have been able to do would have been left undone."² Lawrence, too, felt confident that the crisis of the Union was over, and that the work for which the newly created Republican Party had been formed had already "been effectually accomplished" by the Emigrant Aid Company. As Lawrence saw it, Charles Robinson, Eli Thayer, and all the other free-state leaders in the Kansas crusade had "in reality carried off the day, and all real danger of the extension of slavery had passed."³

Now, reflected the Whig leadership, there was only one other thing to do--and that was to return the political system of the United States back into the hands of men of good will: men of wealth, property, standing and intellect, whose

¹Speech of Gov. Charles Robinson of Kansas in favor of the election of Hon. Eli Thayer, delivered in Mechanics Hall, Worcester, Nov. 3, 1860, Thayer Manuscripts, Brown Univ. I.

²Lawrence, Amos A. Lawrence, pp. 112-13.

³Speech of Amos A. Lawrence in support of the Election of Eli Thayer, November 7, 1860 (MS, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts).

principles had not been compromised by the petty jealousies of party politics and selfish interests. The "Cotton Whigs" now went in search of a political party which would represent the interests not of a section, nor of a cause, nor of an individual; but a Party which represented the interest of the nation as a whole. In short, they were looking for an "American" party.

CHAPTER VI

THE ELEVENTH HOUR

In the course of the eventful years during which Amos A. Lawrence and his colleagues expended their money and their energy to make Kansas free, these same "Cotton Whigs" were also seeking to create a new and moderate political party in the United States.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act had the explosive effect of a bombshell upon the structure of American political parties. Not only did it cause widespread havoc, but it made a status quo ante arrangement a practical impossibility. The most badly damaged of all the political groups were the Whigs, who saw their organization twisted and broken as a result of Douglas's bill. The Southern branch of the Whig party, which had leaned dangerously in the direction of the Democrats in 1852, in opposition to General Winfield Scott, went over completely in 1854 by siding with Senator Douglas on overthrowing the Missouri Compromise and upsetting the Compromise of 1850.¹ When it was revealed that prominent Southern Whigs had contributed their support to the Kansas-Nebraska Act,

¹R. P. Letcher to John J. Crittenden, Dec. 26, 1857; George T. Gurtis to Crittenden, July 10, 1856, Coleman, Crittenden, II, 141-2, 130-1.

Horace Greeley concluded: "It was clear enough to all discerning vision that old party distinctions were superseded and meaningless!"¹

For all practical purposes, the dreaded "firebell in the night" had sounded the death-knell of the old Whig party. Split asunder, their program repudiated, their principles ridiculed, and their leadership dying off (Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, Harrison Gray Otis, Samuel Eliot, John Davis, old Amos Lawrence, Samuel Appleton--all gone), the old-line Whigs were in a panic of uncertainty. Where could they go? With whom could they ally themselves? Certainly not with the Democrats! Any vestige of integrity that party had possessed was considered by the Whigs to have been completely dissipated by the gross misconduct of its leaders.² For some the only apparent alternative was fusion with the new political party which was even now rising up out of the rubble and debris of the Kansas debacle--the "Republican" Party. Already there was an alarming movement of former Whigs into the ranks of the new

¹ New York Tribune, Oct. 16, 1854.

² Commercial Advertiser, June 28, Sept. 19, 22, 23, 1855.

organization, as a series of union and fusionist conventions throughout the Northern states began to establish party tickets and even win local victories during the autumn of '54.¹

And yet, to one group of men--to Lawrence, Winthrop, the Appletons, and many of the other "Cotton Whigs" of Massachusetts--there was one more political possibility which would avoid alliance with the recreant Democrats, but which would also eliminate the necessity of joining with the fanatics and extremists who composed the rank and file of the Republican party. The answer was: a complete re-alignment of the entire party structure and the subsequent formation of a new party, with a new name and with new personnel--but which would represent the old-time-honored Whig traditions.² Although the Whig party had not always been the best, wisest or most discreet political party in American history, admitted Robert C. Winthrop, it had been "more pure, more patriotic, more faithful to the principles of the Country and the true principles of the Constitution."³ In a public letter written in response to Republican leaders who had asked him to abandon

¹Springfield Republican, July 21-25, Sept. 8, 1854; Boston Traveler, Sept. 8, 1854.

²Amos A. Lawrence to Dr. Green, Nov. 16, 1850, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., I, 211.

³Winthrop, Memoir, p. 173.

the Whigs and lead a "fusion" ticket in Massachusetts, Winthrop stoutly defended the Whig party as a constitutional party which was pledged to uphold law and order, and which had always advanced the national prosperity and welfare. The Whig party, moreover, Winthrop pointed out in a direct reference to the recent Free-Soil-Democratic coalition which had sent Sumner to the Senate in 1851, had never stooped to any "bargain," and "tolerates no traffic, as a means of securing office...." Above all, Winthrop concluded, his was a party which "deplores the existence of domestic slavery within the limits of the American Union," and which would "omit no legal effort to arrest and prevent its extension"; but at the same time, it was a party which scrupulously "abstains from all unconstitutional and illegal interference with it whatever...."¹ These were the political characteristics and traditions which, to men like Winthrop, had made the Whig party a great American institution. Now that that institution had, for all practical purposes, ceased to have any further political existence, where could there be found any other political party to express the hopes and aspirations of men who sought a middle road out of the dilemma of slavery?

¹Winthrop, Memoir, pp. 172-9.

There had been developing for some time in the United States a political grouping which had focused its attention upon the alarming growth of foreign immigration into the United States, and which was particularly incensed at what it considered to be the rebirth of the Roman Catholic threat in the new world. Fledging themselves to the work of isolating and suppressing these undesirable imports--particularly those of Irish and German extraction--local societies with elaborate names sprang up. By 1852-3 various of these local nativist groups had combined to form themselves into a single party, known officially as the "American" party--and unofficially as the "Know Nothings" because of the lack of information which could be elicited about its organization and membership.¹

When the Kansas-Nebraska Act caused the "Cotton Whigs" to disown their own traditional party, despise the Democrats and reject the Republicans, the presence of a pre-fabricated political machinery presented unlimited possibilities. While in many individual instances the "nativist" planks of the American platform were quite appealing to the type of conservative and aristocratic person who composed the ranks of the industrial and commercial classes, these

¹Boston Pilot, Dec. 10, 1853, May 13, Jan. 20, 1855. See Ray Allen Billington, The Protestant Crusade (New York, 1938), pp. 193-220, 238-262; Carl Hille, The Irish in America (Baton Rouge, 1938), pp. 114-124.

nationalistic and religious prejudices held essentially a secondary and incidental appeal when compared to the political and constitutional potential of the party. Many of the conservatives regarded the American party as a ready-made organization which could be taken over, deprived of its more obnoxious social characteristics, and utilized as a political wedge to splinter and destroy the existing parties. "The leaders of the American party are neither my friends nor acquaintances," said Amos A. Lawrence when he first approached the party; and J. V. C. Smith, Know-Nothing Mayor in 1854, not only continued to maintain close business relations with his Irish-Catholic friends, but as an amateur sculptor, executed a fine bust of John Bernard Fitzpatrick, Catholic Bishop of Boston.¹ As Henry Wilson pointed out, "hundreds of thousands" did not believe in the principles and purposes of the American party, but were "willing to use its machinery to disrupt the Whig and Democratic parties...."² This was of the essence, and this was one practical way of by-passing the necessity of organizing and developing an entirely new political party with a minimum of effort.

In addition to the organizational factor, the basic

¹ Lawrence, Amos A. Lawrence, p. 140; George H. Haynes, "Know-Nothing Legislature," Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1896 (Washington, 1897), I, 178.

² Wilson, Slave Power, II, 49.

tenets of the American Party offered the possibility of a national appeal which might drive the divisive elements of sectionalism and slavery back into the obscurity of forgotten causes. Conjuring up a national platform of peace, prosperity, Protestantism and no-Popery, many "Cotton Whigs" felt they could envision the possibility of a new basis of understanding with their Southern friends. With a united North-South crusade to fight the terrifying spectre of foreign-bred Catholicism, possibly the immediate menace of the slave problem might be lost in the shuffle.¹

Both of these appeals--political convenience and national pride--were evident in a letter written by Amos A. Lawrence to Moses G. Cobb, outlining the advantages to be gained in supporting the new party.² The American party, wrote Lawrence, cherished a "purer nationality," and although it would certainly assure toleration for all, would "never allow the diversion of the public funds for the support of sectarian schools," because "we love the Protestant religion." This new party would refuse to foreigners the right to choose

¹ Amos Lawrence to George W. Briggs, Oct. 6, 1859, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.S.S., IV, 349. Also see W. D. Overdyke, The Know-Nothing Party in the South (Caton Rouge, 1930), pp. 1-127.

² Amos A. Lawrence to Moses G. Cobb, July 8, 1857, A. A. L. Letterbook, IV, 93-5, 100-101.

the rulers and the right to make laws. Foreigners had never enjoyed those rights in their own countries and should not be entrusted with them in America, said the financier. That power belonged to "those alone who were educated to exercise it." In this way, those principles of the fathers of the Republic, as handed down by George Washington, and as carried on by the Whig party, might be perpetuated by the American party.¹

Of more immediate importance, of course, was the critical issue of slavery. Here again, said Lawrence, the American Party was prepared to make a unique political contribution. The Democratic party could offer no solution because it was "indifferent" to the moral issues involved in the institution of slavery. The Republican party was equally useless, he argued, since it was essentially "sectional," and its organization and membership limited to the states north of the Mason-Dixon line. Only the "Americans" were willing and able to take a stand on slavery which was consistent with the moral law and constitutional principles. "I believe it should be treated like a polite highwayman," wrote Lawrence. "We must ride along with him, always keeping an eye out, and when we see he meditates an overt act, then seize him by the throat and down with him." Then, as if he suddenly realized that his vehemence might alarm his correspondent, Lawrence continued in

¹ Lawrence to Cobb, July 8, 1857, A. A. L. Letter-book, M.H.S., IV, 93-5, 100-1.

a more affable vein. The Southerners are not highwaymen, he hastily assured Cobb, "they are members of the same family with ourselves and we must live on good terms with them; in order to do so we must use kindness, we must feel it, and we must not irritate them by words; nor must we let them bully us."¹

Almost overnight, the Whig power in such major urban centers as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and St. Louis, took a sudden and decided swing toward the policies and the politics of the American party. Spring of 1854 saw a Know-Nothing sweep in Pennsylvania; New York was estimated to have upwards of 70,000 registered "American" voters by fall of the same year; and in Massachusetts, the newly-formed American party came out of nowhere and ran away with the State by an overwhelming margin. In less than a year the party had been able to absorb enough power to poll over 80,000 votes--which put it 50,000 votes ahead of its nearest rival. With the active support of such prominent ex-Whig leaders as Amos A. Lawrence, and Robert C. Winthrop, the "Americans" were able to repeat their performance in the elections of 1855 by once again sweeping the board.²

¹Lawrence to Cobb, July 8, 1857, A. A. L. Letter-book, M.H.S., IV, 93-5, 100-1.

²Boston Atlas, Nov. 14, 1854; Commercial Advertiser, Oct. 18, 23, 1855; Journal of Commerce, Oct. 18, 1855; Winthrop, Memoir, pp. 167-8.

it was a losing fight, however, because the cause was nebulous and the issues completely artificial. The cause of "nativism" sputtered violently and died quickly in the South for lack of sufficient substance to keep the flame bright. Not only was the total number of immigrants comparatively small, but outside of Maryland and Louisiana, Catholics were few, and their influence trifling. Any hopes that an "American crusade" could be organized on a national level and serve to obscure the over-riding issue of slavery in the South, were soon extinguished.¹

In the North, too, the American party was steadily losing adherents after its brief and gaudy triumph. Despite attempts to divert public interests into other channels, national events were forcing men to take a definite stand on the slavery issue. The attack on Sumner, the sack of Lawrence, the massacre at Osawatomie, the Lecompton constitution--these were symbolic of the issues that were causing men either to join the anti-slavery standards of the Republican ranks, or to add their influence to the cause of the Democrats.² "It looks

¹Avery Craven, Growth of Southern Nationalism, 1848-1861 (Baton Rouge, 1953), pp. 233-45; Overdyke, Know-Nothing Party in the South, pp. 263-265.

²Winthrop, Memoir, pp. 185-6, July 6, 1856. Also see Wilson, Slave Power, II, 433. Joel Parker, The True Issue and the Duty of the Whigs (Cambridge, 1856). Address before the citizens of Cambridge, Oct. 1, 1856.

as if Brooks's bludgeon has given a sort of coup de grâce to the Whig party," admitted Robert C. Winthrop realistically.

By the summer of 1856, many leading "Americans" had already given up all hope of success, and now occupied their time trying to decide whether to give their votes to James Buchanan and his "dough-face" program, or to vote for the Republican candidate, John C. Fremont. "I cannot go Buchanan and his platform," wrote Robert C. Winthrop, as he tried to decide which was the lesser of two evils. "Personally, I could look with complacency upon the election of Fremont and Dayton...but whether I can see my way clear to giving aid and comfort to the Republican party...is another matter."¹

After pondering the question for some time, Mr. Winthrop decided to vote for whoever "stands the best chance of defeating the Republican ticket."² Apparently there were many other voters who followed Winthrop's example, for James Buchanan won the election of 1856 with comparative ease.

And yet, there were many old-line Whigs who continued to cling to the last vestiges of hope which the

¹ Winthrop, Memoir, p. 186 (July 11, 1856). Also see ibid. (Aug. 17, 1856), and ibid., p. 187 (Aug. 18, 1856).

² Winthrop to Col. J. W. Sever, Oct. 16, 1857, ibid., p. 199. Also see Winthrop Papers, M.H.S., XXXVI, 156-9, Fragment of Diary, 1856, and George T. Curtis to John J. Crittenden, July 10, 1856, Coleman, Crittenden, II, 130-1.

American party represented, and dutifully gave their vote to Willard T. Fillmore, the "American" candidate. In New York City, the remnants of the old powerful "mercantile" Whigs, continued to oppose fusion with the "sectionalist Democrats" and Republicans; and in Massachusetts, Amos A. Lawrence rejected offers of support in the gubernatorial race from both Americans and Republicans, in order to support Fillmore and work for the defeat of Buchanan.¹ Even after the elections had clearly demonstrated the weakness of the American party, Lawrence continued to be an "American" stalwart in the Bay State, although by this time he too realized the futility of the cause.² Lawrence, however, had little time to brood about political defeat, nor little inclination to meditate about the vagaries of human misfortune, for another problem had suddenly appeared which put the issues of slavery and sectionalism into a secondary position for the time being. Disaster had struck--in the form of a financial panic, the "Panic of 1857."

Another dangerous curve in the series of arcs

¹Draft of Refusal of Know-Nothing nomination for Governorship, Aug. 26, 1856, A. A. L. Letters, M.H.S.; Amos A. Lawrence to Jefferson Davis, Dec. 22, 1859, A. A. L. Letter-book, M.H.S., IV, 368-9; Lawrence to Charles Robinson, Aug. 1, 1858, *ibid.*, 223-4.

²Amos A. Lawrence to Charles Robinson, Sept. 16, 1856, June 6, 1857, Robinson Papers, Univ. of Kansas, Folder III, 1, 8.

which had already begun to characterize the cyclical movement of the American economic structure, the Panic of 1857 was the product of multiple forces. Over-expansion of railroads, over-production of manufactured goods, over-speculation, together with an unstable banking system--all these factors had served to inflame the economy to the point of bursting. With the crash of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company, the panic was on, as good businesses followed bad ones into bankruptcy and ruin. Although the crisis itself was soon ended, the economic reverberations continued for several years, as depression, unemployment and financial indolence provided ample evidence of how seriously the American economy had been disrupted.¹

Upon Northern capitalists, manufacturers, industrialists, merchants, and investors--and upon the "Cotton Whigs" of Massachusetts in particular--the Panic of 1857 produced a startling transformation. Pre-occupation with their immediate financial and industrial affairs now forced them to relegate their political interests to a secondary position until such time as they should once again regain some measure of stability

¹George W. Van Vleck, The Panic of 1857 (New York, 1943); Samuel Henshaw, "The Influence of Depression upon American Opinion, 1857-9," Journal of Economic History, II (1942), 1-23.

and security.¹ "Commercially, we have been so distressed as hardly to be able to consider anything deliberately, but how to save ourselves from total prostration," wrote Amos Lawrence to "Governor" Charles Robinson out in Kansas.² Decidedly worse than the panic of '37, the New Englander explained, "the financial derangement in the country now absorbs everything. Here it has spread ruin over every interest.... Our manufacturing interest is for the present completely broken down and discredited."³

As a result of this financial upheaval, and the necessity of having to plunge once again into the economic complexities of supply and demand, the "Cotton Whigs" found it necessary to take stock of their position with regard to their "Southern brethren." In the years following the introduction of Douglas's Nebraska bill back in 1854, the Northern business interests had grown highly critical of and intensely hostile to the aims and the institutions of the Southern

¹ Amos A. Lawrence to Eli Thayer, July 29, 1858, Thayer Manuscripts, Brown Univ. I, 67.

² Lawrence to Charles Robinson, Nov. 26, 27, 1857, Robinson Papers, Univ. of Kansas, Folder III, 10, 11.

³ Lawrence to Robinson, Oct. 19, 1857, *ibid.*, 10. Also see John Murray Forbes to Edward Gunningham, Sept. 28, 1857, Hughes, *Forbes*, I, 167-8.

states. Business opposition to Douglas, its outright support of free-soil in Kansas, and its growing approval of Senator Sumner, were all indications of a much more outspoken and independent attitude than the financial North had ever before dared to express.

The Panic changed all this. The cotton belt had not been as seriously affected by the crisis as had been the industrial areas of the East, and the wheat belt of the West.¹ With industrial production falling off alarmingly, and with western markets drying up everywhere, Northern manufacturers realized that they had no alternative but to rely upon the relatively prosperous markets of the South as the only means of weathering this serious financial storm.² The South realized this too, however, and took full advantage of her momentary position of power to demand a "new deal" for the Southern planter from the financial interests of the North. Denouncing the "money changers" of Wall Street who were bleeding the planters of their just profits, the South called for a complete readjustment of financial policies--or else!³ The

¹Journal of Commerce, Dec. 1, 1858, Aug. 18, 1859; Commercial Advertiser, April 1, 1859.

²Journal of Commerce, April 2, Aug. 28, Sept. 25, Oct. 2, 1858.

³Charleston Mercury, Oct. 14, 1857.

North, it said, could not possibly survive without Southern markets, and unless changes were forthcoming, the South would boycott "any article or merchandize [sic] or manufacture, purchased directly or indirectly in any of the Northern States."¹ Furthermore, not only would the North find itself shut out of Southern markets, but would also find itself cut off from the precious bales of Southern cotton--until it was willing to come to satisfactory terms. "What would happen," asked Senator Hammond in a speech on the floor of the Senate, "if no cotton was furnished for three years?" Conjuring up the awful possibilities of idle mills and empty spindles, Hammond hurled defiance at the Northern states. "Cotton is King!" he cried exultantly, as the Southland applauded his battlecry.²

The dire threats of the South were not lost upon the business interests of the North. In haste, indeed, in panic, they tried to disassociate themselves from those political connections which the South might construe as hostile to its interests, and once again began to assure their "Southern brethren" of their good intentions. The cry of the

¹New York Herald, Dec. 5, 12, 1859, Jan. 30, 1860.

²Congressional Globe, 35th Congress, 1st Session, Appendix, pp. 70-71 (March 4, 1858).

New York Herald, that people must forget about "Bleeding Kansas" and the "Nigger Agitation," was taken up in earnest by the manufacturers of New England.¹ "Will the vast commercial manufacturing interests of the North indorse this horrible and suicidal war on the South?" asked the Boston Post. Such an "irrepressible conflict" can bring no good to our New England manufactures. Vote it down!² "I shut my eyes and ears to politics, sick of the very sound of brawling and bickering about slavery," complained Robert G. Winthrop, who announced his intention of stopping the abolitionist Republicans by voting Democratic in the elections of 1858.³

In 1858 Amos A. Lawrence was again approached by the Americans and the Republicans to run on the ticket either for Congress or for Governor. Lawrence still could not stomach the Republicans and their "slogans" about ending slavery and their policy of "crying and abusing the South," and so refused their support--"I cannot desert my friends," he told "Governor" Robinson.⁴ Thinking over the American offer,

¹New York Herald, October, 1857.

²Boston Post, March 13, 1860; May 19, 1860.

³Winthrop Memoir, p. 201 (Feb. 8, 1858), and ibid., pp. 202-203.

⁴Amos A. Lawrence to Charles Robinson, Aug. 1, 1858; Amos A. Lawrence to Charles Hale, Oct. 17, 1858, A. A. L. Letterbook, N.H.S., IV, 223-4, 259-60.

Lawrence was faced with a choice of two evils. Although he might win the Congressional election, he would be forced to go off to Washington and spend his time and energy in functions in which he had little interest.¹ Regarding the Governorship, Lawrence was equally uncertain, since he feared certain defeat.² The number of men in Massachusetts who now held "American" views was so small that they could well be "left out of the account without being missed," said Lawrence, and was convinced that if he ran for the Governorship "I shall be beat [sig] soundly."³

Swallowing his pride, Lawrence reluctantly offered to run as "American" candidate for Governor, only to be completely swamped, as he had expected, by the anti-slavery votes that swept Nathaniel Banks into office. "Amos A. Lawrence, the 'American' candidate," laughed Greeley's Tribune, "is left so out in the cold that he will one day be obliged to procure affidavits that he was ever a candidate at all."⁴

¹A. A. Lawrence to Eli Thayer, July 29, 1858, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., IV, 222.

²A. A. Lawrence to Charles Robinson, July 24, 1858, ibid., pp. 220-1.

³A. A. Lawrence to George H. Briggs, Oct. 6, 1859, ibid., p. 349.

⁴Winthrop, Memoir, p. 207. Also see Boston Daily Advertiser, Nov. 3, 5, 1858.

But Lawrence regarded his personal defeat as insignificant compared with the importance of every man throwing his influence against the progress of sectionalism and disunity. In fact, he expressed relief when the news from Illinois recorded the re-election of Stephen A. Douglas, apparently feeling that this Democratic victory in the West had offset the Republican victory in Massachusetts.¹ When Mr. John Henry Vessey of England was dining with the Lawrences in the Beacon Street home in the spring of 1859, he was amazed to find both Mrs. Lawrence and her husband "express their sympathy with the Southerners on the slave question, a subject," he added, "I should have never dreamt of mentioning in Boston, which I had always considered to be the very hotbed of abolition."²

One rather surprising demonstration of the extent to which this new spirit of tolerance and conciliation had filtered into the business community may be seen in the enthusiastic reception given to Jefferson Davis during the autumn of 1858. Returning from a visit to Maine, the Davis family was forced to remain in Boston when their baby came down

¹ Amos A. Lawrence, *Journal, Ms., M.H.S.*, Nov. 12, 1858. Also see *Boston Daily Advertiser*, Nov. 6, 1858.

² Brian Waters, ed., Mr. Vessey of England: Being the Incidents and Reminiscences of Travel in a Twelve weeks' Tour through the United States and Canada in the Year 1859 (New York, 1958), p. 184 (May 20, 1859).

with the group. Never had Boston extended a more gracious welcome. Mrs. Harrison Gray Otis came over in person to nurse the infant through the night, while the citizens of Boston prepared an ovation for their prominent visitor from Mississippi. On October 11, 1858, Faneuil Hall was packed--standing room only--while on the platform men like Edward Everett, Robert C. Winthrop and Caleb Cushing took pleasure in introducing their guest as the personification of "intellectual cultivation and of eloquence, with the practical qualities of a statesman and a general." The audience was completely captivated; and when Davis made his appearance, the audience rose en masse to give the Southern statesman a deafening ovation.¹

By the fall of 1859, then, there were many reasons for thinking that relations with the South were readjusting themselves into a more normal pattern. Politics had been pushed into the background, old friendships were being renewed, and even now Amos A. Lawrence and other leading conservatives in the Bay State were speculating about the possibilities of forming a new compromise political party that

¹ Boston Daily Advertiser, Oct. 12, 14, 1858. Also see Hudson Strode, Jefferson Davis: American Patriot (New York, 1955), pp. 309-311. Elizabeth Gitting, Jefferson Davis: Political Soldier (New York, 1930), pp. 124-5, provides a facsimile of the Davis speech.

would transcend sectional jealousies and local prejudices.¹ Although the American party had fallen to pieces, perhaps a fresh attempt might meet with more success at this particular time! "We must now look for some original and comprehensive policy which will commend itself to the patriotism and good sense of the people," wrote Eli Thayer to Amos Lawrence, "and shall be in accordance with the origin and spirit of our government."²

From Philadelphia, Edward Joy Morris, former Whig Congressman from Pennsylvania, sent word to Amos A. Lawrence that a "national organization" was being created in that state, and "Americans" and moderate Republicans were combining their forces in an effort to down the Democrats. More such unions were being created in New Jersey and Delaware, and news from Kentucky pointed to the development of a similar movement there. "Would it not be well," asked Morris, "to start such a movement in Massachusetts?"³ Lawrence

¹Amos A. Lawrence to George N. Briggs, Oct. 6, 1859, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., IV, 349.

²Eli Thayer to Lawrence, Nov. 16, 1859, A. A. L. Letters, M.H.S., XVII, 114.

³Edward Joy Morris to Amos A. Lawrence, Nov. 20, 1859, ibid., p. 117.

apparently thought so, for with a hasty ejaculation of "Blessed are the Peacemakers," he immediately set to work to form "a party of conciliation in the country," and announced himself ready for "any sort of combination that will unite the opposition."¹ "God grant...that national strife may cease," he prayed, "while a union is made of the opposition all over the country, that our people may learn to discriminate between hatred of slavery and hatred of the South."² Contacting his influential friends and colleagues throughout Boston, Lawrence pleaded with them not to be stampeded into the extremes of the Democratic or Republican positions, but to hold fast to the time-honored Whig principles.³ When he heard rumors that George Lunt and George S. Hillard, editors of the Boston Courier, were thinking about going over to the Democrats, Lawrence wrote and asked that they help form a new party. The Democrats, argued Lawrence, favored a low tariff, sponsored indefinite

¹ Lawrence to Charles Robinson, Jan. 7, 1859, Robinson Papers, Univ. of Kansas, Folder III, 20. Also see Lawrence, Life of Lawrence, p. 148.

² Anna A. Lawrence to _____, A. A. L. Letter-book, M.S.S., IV, 276-7. This letter was probably written sometime during early December, 1858, but Lawrence neglected to include the name of his correspondent.

³ Lawrence to Charles Hale, Oct. [?], 1858, ibid., pp. 259-60, and Lawrence to J. M. S. Williams, Aug. 18, 1858, ibid., pp. 239-40.

territorial expansion, and had engineered the "unjust and disgraceful" Kansas affair. For conservatives to give aid and support to such a party and to such principles was unthinkable. The real answer, said Lawrence, lay in a new coalition, a national party, which would unite all those who opposed the policies of the Buchanan administration--excluding, of course, the extreme Republicans, because of their agitation over the slavery question. "Without such a union," the financier concluded, "we may as well abandon the government to the Democratic party."¹

Convinced that such a political coalition was the only possible alternative to disunion and war, Lawrence worked energetically to construct the framework of an organization as soon as possible. He pressed into service many of his closest friends--the cotton manufacturer Nathan Appleton and his cousin William Appleton, George Peabody, famous merchant and financier, Benjamin F. Butler, lawyer and investor who was one of the largest stockholders in the Middlesex Mills of Lowell; as well as such prominent "Cotton Whig" political stalwarts as Robert C. Winthrop, George Willard

¹Asos A. Lawrence to George Lunt and George S. Willard, Aug. 17, 1858, A. A. L. Letterbook, W.H.S., IV, 235-7, and Lawrence to J. W. S. Williams, Aug. 18, 1858, *ibid.*, 239-40.

(of the Courier), George Ticknor Curtis and Rufus Choate. Known as the "Constitutional Union Party," the new political party, headed by Levi Lincoln, former "Cotton Whig" Governor of Massachusetts, began to make its shaky appearance toward the end of 1859.¹

It was just at this point that John Brown launched his famous attack at Harper's Ferry, October 18, 1859, which sent a shiver of horror throughout the entire Southland and caused the "Cotton Whigs" to throw up their hands in despair. Mournfully, Edward Everett warned Robert Winthrop that this would surely pave the way for the "final catastrophe."² Fearing that the South would interpret Brown's ill-timed attack as proof that the entire North had turned "abolitionist," the business community desperately sought a way out by trying to convince the leaders of the South that this was the work of a single, unsupported madman, and was in no way sanctioned by the conservative gentlemen of the North. Writing to William W. Seaton, co-editor of the influential National Intelligencer, Amos A. Lawrence labeled Brown as a "mono-maniac" who was not mentally responsible, dismissed the

¹Amos A. Lawrence to Levi Lincoln, March 21, 1860, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.S.S., IV, 388-9. See Boston Advertiser, March 30, 1860; Caroline Ware, Political Opinion in Massachusetts During the Civil War and Reconstruction (New York, 1916), pp. 33-5.

²Everett to Winthrop, Nov. 13, 1859, Everett Papers, M.S.S. Also see Boston Advertiser, Feb. 24, 1860, and June 19, 1860.

attack as "quixotic," and pleaded with the leaders of the South not to create a martyr out of a madman.¹ To Senator Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, Lawrence sent formal assurances that neither he nor his associates had been connected with any of Brown's plans outside of Kansas; and to Governor Wise of Virginia, Lawrence issued a direct plea for a fair trial in virtue of the fact that Brown's mind had "become disordered by hardship and illness."²

Fearing that the latest catastrophe would wreck his well-laid plans, Amos A. Lawrence contacted such leading "unionists" in the South as John J. Crittenden of Kentucky and John Bell of Tennessee, seeking to form political connections with compromise movements in other states so as to organize the Constitutional Union Party on a national scale before the elections of 1860.³ Lawrence particularly singled out Senator Crittenden to be the national figure-head of the new party. A close friend of the famous Abbott Lawrence, long-time supporter of Whig principles, outspoken

¹Amos A. Lawrence to W. W. Seaton, Oct. 25, 1859, A. A. L. Letterbook, W.H.S., IV, 352-3.

²Amos A. Lawrence to Senator Jefferson Davis, Dec. 22, 1859, *ibid.*, pp. 368-9; Lawrence to Gov. Henry Wise, Oct. 26, 1859, *ibid.*, p. 355.

³Albert Morgan to Lawrence, Dec. 13, 1859, A. A. L. Letters, W.H.S., XIX, 21, Lawrence to John J. Crittenden, Dec. 21, 1859, A. A. L. Letterbook, IV, 365, and Lawrence to H. and B. Douglas, Dec. 22, 1859, *ibid.*, pp. 366-7.

opponent of the Kansas fiasco, Crittenden was considered to possess all the necessary personal and political qualifications to capture the votes of responsible, thinking moderates, North and South. "What is wanted is a programme," Lawrence wrote to the *Kentuckian*, urging hasty action. "If you will send me two notes of three lines each in your own handwriting, asking me whether the Union-loving men of Massachusetts are ready to unite with the opponents of the Democratic party in the other States for the defeat of that party and of all extremists, I will promise to organize this whole State in eight weeks."¹ Senator Crittenden himself, Lawrence pointed out, was the new party's biggest asset, and assured the Senator from Kentucky that if he would be the party's candidate, even the conservative Republicans of Massachusetts would vote the Union ticket--especially since the party's platform was already calculated to appeal to the wealthy industrialists of the North.² This was an unparalleled opportunity for the manufacturing classes of the North to join with the slaveholders of the South to oppose

¹Amos A. Lawrence to John J. Crittenden, Jan. 6, 1860, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., IV, 375-6. Also see Coleman, *Crittenden*, II, 183-4.

²Ibid.

the "irrepressible conflict."¹

For a short time, hopes ran high as prospects for North-South accord seemed to be taking a turn for the better. The "Union of the States" was more important than anything else, said Rufus Choate, who insisted that all America's troubles would be ended when union was preserved.² Amos A. Lawrence himself took a brief tour through the South early in 1860, and upon his return to Boston confidently assured his apprehensive neighbors that he had incurred no risk whatsoever. "How mistaken the opinion is of the two sections of the country in regard to the feelings of each other," he philosophized. "May God make them more friendly and more emulous and excel in promoting the great cause for which our government was made."³ Seeking to impress his Southern friends with the need for a united opposition against the inroads of the Republican party, Lawrence continued to plead the cause of national unity. "However badly we think of slavery (and the Northern sentiment is pretty much alike on that subject)," he wrote to Emerson Etheridge, Whig

¹ F. H. Walker to Amos A. Lawrence, Feb. 24, 1860, A. A. L. Letters, M.H.S., XIX, 92. Also see Joseph Parks, John Bell of Tennessee (Baton Rouge, 1860), pp. 366-7.

² Brown, Choate, II, 303; Boston Courier, May 28, 1860.

³ Lawrence, Amos A. Lawrence, pp. 163-4.

Representative from Tennessee, "we cannot jeopardize the Union of the States by strengthening a sectional organization."¹

This same appeal for national harmony was echoed, in a more formal and public manner, by Lawrence's friend and fellow-manufacturer, Nathan Appleton. Appleton had just read an article in the Richmond Whig by the Honorable William C. Rives of Virginia, and was so impressed by the peaceful sentiments and reasonable approach of the Southerner, that he immediately wrote an "open letter" to Mr. Rives, reviewing the mutual problems of the North and the South, and pleading that the Union be preserved.² Addressing himself to his fellow-Northerners, Appleton asked them to give up their attempts to abolish slavery. Amalgamation was impossible, emigration was impractical, and annihilation was unthinkable. Since this exhausted the possibilities of any probable solution of the slavery question, further actions, he concluded, "are utterly idle and futile."³

Turning to the Southerners, Appleton made a similar appeal to reason. "Why continue this useless agitation on mere abstractions?" argued the manufacturer, when the South

¹Amos A. Lawrence to Hon. Emerson Etheridge, April 2, 1860, A. A. L. Letterbook, W.H.S., IV, 391-2.

²Nathan Appleton, Letter to Hon. William C. Rives of Virginia on Slavery and the Union (Boston, 1860), pp. 4-9.

³ibid., pp. 12-13.

already has possession of all the land where slavery can be profitably employed. Why discuss theories of political power when the North is already outstripping the South in terms of population? Why discuss the possibilities of secession when the South cannot even control a presidential election? The time has come to face cold, hard facts. "Your true palladium is the Constitution of the United States," stated Appleton. "This is your ark of safety....there is in reality nothing between the North and the South to quarrel about."¹

W. C. Rives was delighted to find that his own expressions of sympathy and affection had produced such a responsive reply from the Bay State, and immediately had copies made of the lengthy letter which he then distributed to prominent men and newspapers throughout the state of Virginia.²

With such sentiments and expressions of friendship being exchanged between reasonable gentlemen of the North and the South, Amos A. Lawrence and his friends in Boston hastened to organize their new "Constitutional-Union" party. Headed by Levi Lincoln, and backed by such leading citizens as Amos A. Lawrence, George Peabody, George Ticknor Curtis,

¹ Appleton, Letter to Rives, p. 14.

² W. C. Rives to Nathan Appleton, March [], 1860, Nathan Appleton Papers, A.H.S.

Benjamin Butler and Benjamin Bates, the new party made its appearance in December, 1859, basing its platform on national unity and declaring an unchangeable union indispensable to the prosperity of all.¹

Despite the fanfare of optimism, and the initial enthusiasm which accompanied the first weeks of the new party's appearance on the political scene, however, there was little hope for the Constitutional-Union party. Lacking grass-root support, bitterly assailed from all sides as "simple-minded" snobs and mercantile "Brahmins," the Unionists could not even prevail upon Crittenden to be a candidate, and as a result had to settle for John Bell of Tennessee and Edward Everett of Massachusetts as their standard-bearers, much to the disgust of Amos A. Lawrence who considered the talents and reputation of Crittenden indispensable.²

Robert G. Winthrop was forced to admit, grudgingly, that the Republican candidate, Lincoln, had "some ability and some amiability," and even Amos A. Lawrence could see the handwriting on the wall with painful clarity.³

¹Amos A. Lawrence to Levi Lincoln, March 21, 1860, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., IV, 388-9; Boston Advertiser, March 30, 1860.

²Amos A. Lawrence to John J. Crittenden, May 25, May 26, 1860, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., IV, 400, 401. Also see Coleman, Crittenden, II, 206, 207, and the Boston Advertiser, Sept. 19, 1860.

³Robert G. Winthrop to Nathan Appleton, June 15, 1860, Nathan Appleton Papers, M.H.S.

Conceding as early as May, 1860, that "Old Abe and his split rails" had won the public support of Massachusetts, he denounced the timidity of his erst-while friends--"the intelligent conservative men, the great merchants and manufacturers"--who had expressed elaborate approval of the Union ticket, and then voted for someone else!¹

Lawrence's pessimism was well founded. Abraham Lincoln was elected in November, 1860, and the Constitutional-Union party went down to defeat. The first reaction of the Northern manufacturer was to heave a disgusted sigh, shrug his shoulders in annoyance, and then proceed to endure life under a Republican administration with stoic calm. After all, he rationalized, it had been a fair election, and under the circumstances it was a part of the American political tradition to co-operate with a duly elected government--regardless of who was running it.² Besides, what did the election of one man mean? What could he do with both Houses of Congress against him?³ "It is too early, as yet, to judge of the result"; wrote Robert C. Winthrop, "but as Mr. Lincoln is a much more moderate person than any of the leaders of his

¹Amos A. Lawrence to John J. Crittenden, May 26, 1860, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., IV, 400.

²Boston Courier, Nov. 10, 17, 1860.

³Lawrence, Amos A. Lawrence, p. 156.

party, I hope for the best."¹ There was no great cause for alarm, so why not wait and see what developed? Anxiously, the Northern conservatives pleaded with their Southern neighbors to adopt the same attitude.²

The South, however, could not bring itself to look upon the election of Abraham Lincoln with such calm indifference. As soon as the results were known, the South Carolina legislature called for a State convention, which, on December 20, 1860, adopted an Ordinance of Secession. Before the end of February, 1861, six other states of the lower South had marched defiantly out of the Union, and were organizing themselves into the "Confederate States of America."³

The North was stunned at the swiftness with which these events had taken place and outraged at the idea of secession. Lawrence's friend John Bell, presidential candidate of the Constitutional-Union party condemned the idea in no uncertain terms. "By no principle of public law, by no code of morals, by no law of earth or heaven," he declared, "would Mississippi or any other State be justified, under

¹Robert G. Winthrop to Count Circourt, Nov. 10, 1860, Winthrop Papers, M.H.S., XXVI, 168.

²Boston Advertiser, Nov. 12, 15, 1860.

³See Henry Adams, "The Secession Winter, 1860-1," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, XLIII (1910), 660-697.

existing circumstances, in withdrawing from the Union."¹

The Union was "a government of the people instituted by the people of all the States," stated the conservative Advertiser, and not a compact between the states which any state may rescind at pleasure.²

But of special concern to industrial Massachusetts was the initial impact of secession upon the Bay State economy. As early as December, 1860, an agonizing wall went up from the manufacturing centers throughout the State as North-South trade came to an abrupt halt--and all for what Nathan Appleton contemptuously referred to as "an impracticable idea, a nonentity, connected with the institution of slavery."³ Charles Eliot Norton commented on the "universal alarm, general financial pressure and great commercial embarrassment" which resulted from numerous business failures and factory shut-downs.⁴ "Our money people here have been badly frightened,"

¹Boston Daily Advertiser, Dec. 13, 1860.

²Ibid., Jan. 23, 1861.

³National Intelligencer, Jan. 1, 1861. Speech of Nathan Appleton, Dec. 13, 1860.

⁴Sarah Norton and Mark DeWolfe Howe, Letters of Charles Eliot Norton (2 vols.; Boston, 1913), I, 213.

wrote John Murray Forbes to Charles Sumner, "and many decent-looking men...would try to have a kind of compromise made that would promise to patch up difficulties and their pockets."¹ In southern Massachusetts, reports told of "hundreds" being thrown out of work; and in the western counties observers predicted that the mills would shut down completely in ninety days.² The Courier reported that the "Boston streets today are full of discharged workmen," as the number of business failures began to mount up.³ The manufacturing interests, now badly frightened, watched the average prices of a share of stock in cotton sheeting drop from \$518.34 down to \$304.22 while sales were falling off at an alarming rate.⁴ Some measure of the degree to which hysteria gripped Boston may be seen in the frenzied way in which popular wrath was turned upon local abolition groups, who were blamed for having forced the slavery issue to such a critical and uncompromising state of affairs. On Dec. 3, 1860, a howling band of businessmen and office clerks, "solid and respectable men," invaded

¹John Murray Forbes to Charles Sumner, Dec. 22, 1860, Sumner MSS, Harvard University.

²L. B. Holbrook, North Bridgewater, to Charles Sumner, Dec. 22, 1860, ibid. Also see Boston Courier, Dec. 16, 1860.

³ibid., Dec. 3, 1860.

⁴Yorke, Pepperelli, pp. 44-5. Also see Stamp, And the War Came, pp. 124-5.

Tremont Temple and broke up a meeting commemorating the execution of John Brown.¹ Wendell Phillips publicly lashed out at this "broadcloth mob" the following month, and in a thinly-veiled reference to the younger Lawrence, condemned the "snobbish sons of fathers lately rich, anxious to show themselves rotten before they are ripe."² So great was public reaction against the orator, that the combined efforts of regular policemen, special detectives and his own private bodyguard were required to keep the Abolitionist from being lynched as he left the hall.³

But obviously, this was a situation which demanded steady hands and clear minds. Once again the "Cotton Whigs" of Massachusetts were caught up in a frenzied effort to forestall bloodshed and restore harmony to the Union. While compromise proposals were being presented to the Congress by such men as William H. Seward of New York in the Senate and Charles Francis Adams in the House, back in Boston, Union meetings were once again being held in Faneuil Hall in an attempt to arrive at some mutual understanding with the South.⁴

¹Springfield Republican, Dec. 3, 1859.

²Wendell Phillips, Speeches, Lectures and Letters, pp. 319-342.

³Garrison, Life, IV, 1-10.

⁴Congressional Globe, 36th Congress, 2nd Session, Appendix, pp. 126-7; Boston Courier, Feb. 6, 1861; Boston Post, Feb. 6, 1861. Also see Charles Sumner to John Murray Forbes, Jan. 13, 1861, Hughes, Forbes, I, 196.

William Appleton, the manufacturer, hurried down to the nation's capital in the middle of December, to ascertain the seriousness of the political situation, and to use his considerable influence as an outstanding industrialist and former Congressman to foster the cause of inter-sectional peace. Despite his seventy-five years, the slender old gentleman received numerous callers, visited both Houses of Congress, had dinner with President Buchanan, and discussed national affairs with his business colleagues from various parts of the country. The prospects were not bright, and he was disturbed by what he saw--although he was not yet certain what it all meant. "No parties of any kind, all anxiety and gloom," he wrote in his Diary, trying to fathom the strange mood of the city; "yet not without hope, but no present light."¹

Reports of the growing seriousness of the situation convinced Appleton's fellow manufacturers back in New England that greater efforts were demanded of them. A Committee of leading conservatives of Massachusetts, headed by Amos A. Lawrence, William Appleton, Edward Everett, Benjamin Curtis and George Curtis Ticknor, all former Constitutional-Unionists, circulated a petition through the State calling for the passage of the Crittenden compromise. One petition, designed to appeal

¹Diary of William Appleton (Dec. 13-20, 1860), pp. 230-2.

to Republicans, was phrased in general terms and merely called for the "pacific settlement of our present difficulties."¹ Labeled the "Doughface Petition" and described as about a hundred yards long, a foot in diameter "when rolled up," this petition accumulated about fourteen thousand signatures. A second petition specifically endorsing the Crittenden Compromise was circulated throughout the Massachusetts communities and gathered over twenty two thousand signatures. Both the documents were soundly denounced by the Republicans as containing the fraudulent signatures of persons who were thoughtless, ignorant and uninformed.²

Nevertheless, a group of "union-savers," led by Amos A. Lawrence, Edward Everett and Robert C. Winthrop left for Washington, D. C., bringing with them their highly touted petition which Senator Crittenden presented to the Senate on February 12, 1861.³ Only a small part of a gigantic wave of

¹Boston Courier, Feb. 7, 1861; Springfield Republican, Jan. 19, 24, 1861. Also see John J. Crittenden to Amos A. Lawrence, Dec. 18, 1860, A. A. L. Letters, M.H.S., XX, 193; Robert C. Winthrop to Crittenden, Dec. 24, 1860, Winthrop Papers, M.H.S., XXXVI, 169.

²Springfield Republican, Jan. 28, 1861; Boston Daily Advertiser, Feb. 23, 1861. Also see David M. Potter, Lincoln and his Party in the Secession Crisis (New Haven, 1942), pp. 124-5.

³Robert C. Winthrop to Edward Everett, Jan. 21, 1861; Everett to Winthrop, Jan. 22, 1861, Everett Papers, M.H.S. Also see Robert C. Winthrop, Ms. Diary Fragment, January, 1861, Winthrop Papers, XXXVI, 170-2.

business delegations which poured into Washington during the last week in January, 1861, the Bay State leaders called upon President Buchanan, Vice-President Breckinridge, General Scott, Mr. Seward, Mr. Sumner, and practically any other prominent political figure who would listen to them.¹ Desperately, they tried to impress the leaders of the Government with the urgency of their appeal for national unity, as cotton-conscious New England held its breath in expectation. But it was a losing fight; for the delegates found hospitality and sympathy--Ex-President John Tyler offered "sincere sympathy" with their mission and Millard Fillmore prayed that "you will do all you can to save the Union"--but no action.² Perhaps Senator Charles Sumner expressed the cold realities of the situation when he told the crestfallen committeemen, with a cynical smile, that their efforts were "of no more use than a penny whistle in a tempest."³ Their purpose a failure, Everett and

¹Lawrence, Amos A. Lawrence, pp. 166-7. National Intelligencer, Jan. 24, 26, 1861, and Journal of Commerce, Jan. 30, Feb. 9, 1861. Foner, Business and Slavery, p. 250, suggests that it might have been called "Businessmen's week."

²John Tyler to Edward Everett, Jan. 29, 1861; Millard Fillmore to Everett, Feb. 16, 1861, Everett Papers, M.H.S.

³Robert C. Winthrop, Ms Diary Fragment, January, 1861, Winthrop Papers, XXXVI, 170-2, and Lawrence, Amos A. Lawrence, p. 167.

Lawrence were forced to make their way back to Boston in the face of ridicule and laughter. "Only to think of it!--the great Boston petition has come to nought," crowed the Springfield Republican. "The mission of Everett has failed; Lawrence hasn't saved the Union. And why? Simply because their petition didn't mean anything. Just imagine Mr. Everett administering a bread-pill to the invalid Union; and Amos Lawrence carrying a pint of cold water to extinguish the great conflagration which is already licking the pillars of the grand Temple of Liberty!"¹

The only hope, now, that war might be averted, rested with the "Peace Convention" that was assembling at Willard's Hotel on the corner of Fourteenth Street in Washington, even as the despondent business men of Boston were leaving the city. First suggested by Virginia as a means of averting hostilities, the Peace Convention received favorable response from a number of Northern and border states, and was scheduled to meet early in February, 1861.² Although Governor John Andrew of Massachusetts, long a bitter foe of slavery, was reluctant to give any sign of support or recognition to the

¹Springfield Republican, Jan. 24, 1861.

²Dwight Dumond, The Secession Movement, 1860-1 (New York, 1931), pp. 239-48; Margaret Leech, Reveille in Washington, 1860-5 (New York, 1941), pp. 8-9.

Convention, the fear that men like Lawrence and Everett, who "scarcely represent our class of opinion" might "volunteer" their own services, led him to send a group of prominent anti-slavery Republicans to join the delegations from fourteen other states in a last-minute attempt to stop the clock.¹

Hopes ran high in business circles, stocks began to rise, and financial journals reported the disappearance of "panic" and the quieting of "commercial fears." The "political difficulties," it was promised would soon be settled, and the crisis ended "within a short time."² The momentary optimism that war might be averted was even reflected in the upward swing in textile sales during late February and early March.³

It was no use. A meeting with President Buchanan yielded nothing; and a session with the President-elect, Abraham Lincoln, who had just arrived in Washington, only confirmed the worst fears of the Southern delegates, and convinced the Northerners that the new man was inflexible in

¹ Charles P. Adams to John A. Andrew, Jan. 28, 1861, Henry Greenleaf Pearson, Life of John Andrew (2 vols.; Boston, 1904), I, 155.

² Hunt's Merchants' Magazine, XLIV (1861), 196-7; Journal of Commerce, March 1, 1861; New York Tribune, Feb. 26, 28, 1861; Boston Daily Advertiser, March 20, 1861.

³ Yorke, Pepperell, p. 45.

his purpose to preserve the Union.¹ The situation was even more depressing behind the doors of the conference room at Willard's, as it became more evident, day after day, that compromise was impossible. All attempts to resurrect the Crittenden proposals were regarded by Northerners as outright "surrender," while the Southern representatives were determined to accept nothing less.² Just before Inauguration Day, the ineffectual Convention concluded its sessions, with most of the departing members convinced that all hope of reconstructing the Union was gone, and that Civil War was imminent.³ With the news that the highly touted "Peace Congress" had failed, the stock market collapsed, and New England sales plummeted to an appalling new low.⁴ By Inauguration Day, the mood of the nation matched the raw, biting chill of that memorable day in March which saw the new President promise no conflict, unless the South provoked it; but which left everyone as tense and as uncertain as before.

¹ Hughes, Forbes, I, 187 ff; Lucius S. Crittenden, Personal Reminiscences, 1840-90 (New York, 1893), pp. 391-3; L. S. Crittenden, Report of the Peace Convention in 1861 (New York, 1864), pp. 485 ff.

² Hughes, Forbes, I, 200; Crittenden, Reminiscences, pp. 391-3.

³ Hughes, Forbes, I, 200; Dumond, Secession Movement, p. 258.

⁴ Journal of Commerce, March 4, 5, 7, 1861; Yorke, Paperwall, p. 45.

Hardly had Abraham Lincoln taken the solemn oath of office, when the problem of the Federal forts put an end to any further indecision on the issue of Union. Fort Sumter, in Charleston harbor, was without provisions and reinforcements--but any attempt by Federal warships to relieve the fort would undoubtedly mean war.¹ What would the President do? Even as Lincoln pondered his deadly dilemma, and as the nation watched and waited, Mr. William Appleton was sailing out of New York harbor, aboard the steamer Nashville, bound for Charleston.² This trip to the South was for reasons of health, insisted the elderly industrialist; but there were many of his Bay State neighbors who accused him of other motives. Apparently convinced that Appleton intended an eleventh hour attempt at compromise, Charles Hale, editor of the Boston Daily Advertiser publicly criticized Appleton's visit, on the grounds that it would be unjust to "cruelly deceive" the South into believing they would find an "active sympathy" in the North.³

On the evening of Thursday, April 11, 1861, the Nashville lay off the Bar outside Charleston harbor, awaiting

¹Roy Meredith, Storm over Sumter: the Opening Engagement of the Civil War (New York, 1957).

²Diary of William Appleton, p. 236.

³Charles Hale to James S. Amory, April 24, 1861, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, M.H.S.

the turn of the morning tide. About four o'clock the next morning the crash of cannon brought startled passengers rushing from their cabins. Through the darkness before them they could see the exchange of fire between the guns of Fort Sumter and the shore batteries of Fort Johnson. "Every flash we could see," wrote Appleton, breathless with excitement, "then the smoke; then followed the report; the bombshells we saw ascend and would anxiously watch whether they fell in Fort Sumter."¹ As soon as he could reach land, the old gentleman elbowed his way through the cheering crowds and the marching squares of the "seven or eight thousand troops in this vicinity," and telegraphed the electrifying news to his colleagues in Massachusetts.² The guns of Sumter had spoken. The war was on.

There was no doubt at all in the minds of the cotton manufacturers that their place was with the Union--"we must stand by our country," John Whitin told a customer somewhat ruefully.³ Robert C. Winthrop could see no alternative but

¹Diary of William Appleton, pp. 236-7.

²William Appleton to Nathan Appleton, April 19, 1861, Nathan Appleton Papers, M.H.S. Also see L. F. McDowell to Edward Everett, Columbia, So. Carolina, April 20, 1861, Everett Papers, M.H.S.

³Thomas R. Navin, The Whitin Machine Works (Cambridge, 1950), pp. 54-5. Also see Boston Daily Advertiser, April 17, 1861; Boston Post, June 18, 1861; Boston Courier, April 15, 16, 1861.

to "support the powers that be...in their measures for defending the Capital and upholding the Flag of the Country."¹

Amos A. Lawrence assured William Appleton that in the North there was now "unanimity of sentiment about sustaining the government," and he immediately went off to offer his own services to the State.² Turning all his resources over to the disposal of the Federal Government, Lawrence now devoted all his extra time to drilling regiments of local volunteers, and instructing young Harvard undergraduates in the manual of arms. The manufacturer had now become as enthusiastic in the cause of winning the war as he had been in preserving the peace--indeed, he was disappointed that Lincoln had only called for 75,000 volunteers; 500,000 would be more like it!³ And yet, although war was an accomplished fact, and he himself had made his own position clear, Lawrence felt morally bound to make at least one last effort to preserve what was still left of the Union. In hopes of prevailing upon his friends and associates in the border states to remain loyal, Lawrence

¹ Robert C. Winthrop, Diary, April 19, 1861, Winthrop Papers, M.H.S., XXXVI, 173.

² Amos A. Lawrence to William Appleton, April 15, 17, 20, 1861, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., IV, 415, 420, 422. Also see Lawrence to Colonel Henry Lee, April 17, 1861, *ibid.*, p. 421.

³ Amos Lawrence to William Appleton, April 15, 1861, Lawrence to Senator Douglas, April 16, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 415, 416. Also see Lawrence, Amos A. Lawrence, pp. 167-9, 173-7.

dispatched a flood of letters, stressing the factor of unanimity in the North, and emphasizing the determination of its war effort. "The North is becoming one great army," he wrote to Senator Crittenden of Kentucky. "Every man is for supporting the government at all hazards, and there will be no delay in moving vast masses of fighting-men down to the border."¹ Other letters begged prominent persons in the various border states to stay with the Union at all costs. Senator John Bell of Tennessee, the Honorable James Guthrie of Louisville, His Honor, Mayor Brown of Baltimore, the Reverend R. J. Breckinridge of Kentucky, and Robert Ridgeway of Virginia, were all recipients of appeals from the Yankee mill owner. "Every man is a volunteer...we all stand together... the North has been growing more and more conservative...the South had nothing to fear, absolutely nothing...."² Lawrence threatened, cajoled and pleaded with them, possibly with some effect, for while Virginia and Tennessee joined their embattled sisters in the Confederacy, Maryland and Kentucky remained with the Union.

¹Amos A. Lawrence to John J. Crittenden, April 13, 1861, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., IV, 417-18.

²Lawrence to Robert Ridgeway, April 16; Lawrence to Rev. R. J. Breckinridge, April 21; and Lawrence to John Bell, April 26, 1861, *ibid.*, pp. 419, 424-6, 428.

While the textile manufacturers had no doubt of their political responsibilities, their economic position was in a state of grave uncertainty. What could be done? Their workers were either going off to war in large numbers, or else they were leaving the mills to take higher paying jobs in defense industries.¹ Hundreds of millions of dollars owed by Southern merchants were no longer collectible, and staggering business losses were being written off by Northern wholesalers. Reports from the South pointed out that most merchants and planters "seemed to delight in the fancied release from their obligations secession gives them."² But the most serious threat of all was the lack of raw cotton. The Union blockade was sure to cut off the export supply of cotton; the Confederacy insisted that she would produce no more; and Great Britain was bidding lavishly for the reserve stocks of cotton held by New England mills.³ Behind closed doors in every textile factory, worried groups of men held worried conferences in a frantic effort to hammer out some solution. What should they do? What could they do?

¹ Savin, Whitin Machine Works, pp. 54-5.

² New York Times, March 2, 1861, and New York Tribune, March 30, 1861.

³ Hunt's Merchants' Magazine, XLIV (1861), 668, 673-688. See also E. M. Coulter, The Confederate States of America (Baton Rouge, 1950), pp. 240-3; Frank L. Owsley, King Cotton Diplomacy (Chicago, 1931), pp. 31-3.

The only possibility which offered any hope at all to the distraught manufacturer, was that the war would be a short one; and with almost childlike naivete they clung fiercely to this comforting thought. Amos A. Lawrence assured his sister that the Union would be maintained, the "stars and stripes" would wave over the entire seaboard "before New Year's, and over the whole country before another New Year's after that." Then he added, with finality: "There is no more doubt about it than that the sun will rise."¹ "The rebellion is crumbling," stated the Springfield Republican confidently; and assured by Senator William H. Seward of New York that "sixty days more will give you a more cheerful atmosphere," many mill owners acted with a confidence born only of fear.² Convinced that the war would be over almost as soon as it had begun, the venerable Merrimack Manufacturing Company took the lead in what was later to be called "Lowell's stupendous blunder," by closing its doors, dismissing its workers, and liquidating its cotton on hand at the high market prices which then prevailed. Other mills followed the leader, reduced their operations, and likewise sold their surplus cotton stocks--all in the expectation that it would be "business

¹Amos A. Lawrence to Mrs. Arnold, May 27, 1861, A. A. L. Letterbook, M.H.S., IV, 434.

²Springfield Republican, July 18, 1861, Feb. 2, 3, 1862; Boston Post May 8, 1862. Also see Stamp, And the War Came, pp. 18-19.

as usual" after a brief but inconvenient interlude.¹

When the cold light of reality finally dawned, when news from the front lines gave every indication that the war between the states would drag on indefinitely, the results were terrifying. Having already dumped most of their cotton reserves on the open market in exchange for short-term profits, the mill owners of Massachusetts could only look on in helpless frustration at empty factories and idle spindles. But their great political dilemma was over. The era of compromise, concessions, Faneuil Hall meetings and elaborate petitions, was a thing of the past. While the manufacturers would have to work out their individual financial arrangements during the course of the war itself, and resort to almost fantastic lengths to obtain their precious cotton supplies, their purpose was now clear and their goal was self evident: The Union must be saved.

¹ Navin, Wetgin Machine Works, pp. 54-5; George S. Gibb, The Saco-Lowell Shops (Cambridge, 1930), pp. 195-6; and George W. Browne, The Amoskeag Manufacturing Company (Manchester 1915), pp. 77-8.

CONCLUSION

War had come to New England. It was a war which many prominent and influential New Englanders had long feared, and a war which many of their number had worked long and hard to avoid. Although the specific efforts of the Massachusetts "Cotton Whigs" in this regard ultimately proved to be unsuccessful and futile, the very fact of their efforts is significant. That these New Englanders were willing to go to such extremes in order to avert a conflict which they considered to be both political and economic suicide, shows quite clearly that at least one significant portion of the North did not regard the economic differences between the North and the South as essentially divergent or necessarily antithetical. On the contrary, it would appear that the cotton textile interests of Massachusetts consistently regarded the economy of the South as basically supplementary and, above all, necessary to the economy of the North. While it is true that these men showed a personal moral aversion to the institution of Negro slavery, time and time again they demonstrated their willingness to forego their personal convictions in order to maintain the political unity and economic stability of the Nation.

The motives of the cotton manufacturer of Massachusetts in pursuing his course of action were not due, solely and exclusively, to reasons of economic self-interest, but to an overwhelming desire to preserve the Constitutional structure of the American Union--as he saw it. This was no haphazard rationalization of political views which he periodically adjusted to suit his temporary financial situation; but, rather, a coherent and logical pattern of Constitutional belief. In the interests of national unity the Northern industrialist, as typified by Amos Lawrence, showed himself ready and willing to compromise with the South on matters of economic policy: he gradually lessened his insistence on a high protective tariff, and even indicated a co-operative attitude toward efforts of the South to become industrialized. Regardless of his personal dislike of slavery, the manufacturer went out of his way to denounce and attack the Abolitionists who sought to tamper with the "peculiar institution" where it was already established under the protective sanction of Constitutional law.

The expansion of slavery into territories, however, was not expressly sanctioned by the Constitution, and for that reason the manufacturer felt he not only had a right but also a duty to fight against expansion. His opposition to the annexation of Texas, and his bitter denunciation of the Mexican War, attested to the violence of his opinions on this

score. Acceptance of the Compromise of 1850 came only after he was morally convinced that the geography and topography of the western lands would automatically prohibit the importation of slaves. In return for granting the South the principle of extending slavery into the territories, the Northern manufacturer felt assured that his Southern brethren would not resort to its practice. In the year 1850, many a mill owner of the Bay State considered his Constitutional position to have been not only justified in theory, but workable in practice: the Constitutional privileges of the South had been upheld, but slavery in the territories had been prevented.

The Kansas-Nebraska Act upset this delicate balance by nullifying the Missouri Compromise, and throwing the Midwestern lands above 36° 30' open to slavery. Despite the sense of personal outrage which characterized the violent reaction of the cotton man of the North, he still continued to operate within the rigid framework of Constitutional procedure. The movement to populate Kansas with "free-soil" settlers was carefully conducted by Amos A. Lawrence and his colleagues as an exclusively volunteer and extra-legal enterprise, disassociated from all contact with the federal government. Even while every effort was being made to establish free government in Kansas, the manufacturer continued his efforts to impress the South with the honesty of his intentions and the sincerity of his purpose. It was with this objective

in mind that Lawrence and his friends worked long and hard in their vain attempts to form a "national" party during the late fifties, and with remarkable persistence tried to find a peaceful solution to the crucial dilemma even after secession had become an historical fact.

As far as the cotton manufacturer was concerned, then, the Civil War came about despite his efforts--certainly not because of them--and in this point lies the significance of whatever value the present dissertation may possess. If, as Philip Foner has demonstrated in his Business and Slavery, the New York merchants were unalterably opposed to war; and if, as this thesis has attempted to show, the Massachusetts cotton manufacturers assumed a similar position--what Northern economic forces did desire an inter-sectional conflict? As more evidence comes to light, regarding the economic policies, political beliefs and personal convictions of the American businessman before the Civil War, it would seem more difficult than ever to sustain the thesis that the war was the product of the "inevitable" clash of two separate and divergent economic systems. On the contrary, the American manufacturer would appear to have been among the most powerful and influential forces consistently working to prevent the disruption of the Union and energetically seeking to establish harmonious relations between North and South.

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ABSTRACT

The disastrous effects of the war of 1812 upon New England commerce led to the rise and development of the cotton textile industry as an alternative to financial bankruptcy. During the 1820's, the textile manufacturers rose to social and economic prominence in the Bay State, and by 1830 had achieved a position of virtually undisputed political power.

The appearance of William Lloyd Garrison and his Liberator in 1831 presented a distinct threat to the political ideals and the economic fortunes of these New England cotton men. Fearful that the Abolitionists would goad the South into secession and war, the propertied men of Boston engaged in a series of efforts designed to assure the South of their good intentions, and to keep the slavery issue out of national politics.

The movement of westward expansion during the late thirties, however, brought the problem of slavery out into the open. Unable to prevent the annexation of Texas, and overridden in their attempts to vote down the war with Mexico, the "Cotton Whigs" directed their energies toward keeping slavery out of the western lands through political means. When the Compromise of 1850 produced a period of relative quiet, Boston's men of business were convinced that although they had conceded the principle of slavery

expansion to the South, topography would make its practice a virtual impossibility.

This relative calm was rudely shattered by the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. Few groups were as outraged as the business elements of Boston, and, directed by Amos A. Lawrence, they sponsored the emigration of free-soil settlers to Kansas. Kansas was to be the supreme test of the "Cotton Whig" policy of upholding slavery in the States, while opposing the expansion of slavery into the Territories.

Seeking a more positive way to avoid conflict with the South, the "Cotton Whigs" tried to develop a compromise political party. When the American, or "Know-Nothing" party failed to meet their requirements, they helped to found the Constitutional Union party. But the course of national events was running in the opposite direction. The election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 produced secession in the South, and although the "Cotton Whigs" continued to work for peace, they worked in vain. With the outbreak of war they backed the Federal war effort and became indistinguishable from any other social or political group in the North.

As far as the cotton manufacturers were concerned, the Civil War came about despite their efforts, not because of them, and in the light of this research it seems difficult

to sustain the thesis that the War was the result of the "inevitable" clash of two divergent economic systems. On the contrary, the American manufacturer appears to have been among the most influential forces consistently working to prevent the disruption of the Union and seeking to establish harmonious relations between North and South.



VITA

Thomas Henry O'Connor, son of John F. and Marie A. O'Connor, was born in South Boston, December 9, 1922, attended the Gate of Heaven Grammar School, and graduated from the Boston Latin School in 1942. After completing his freshman year at Boston College, Mr. O'Connor entered the United States Army, studied foreign languages under the Army Specialized Training Program, and spent eighteen months in India as Staff Sergeant with the 835th Signal Service Battalion.

Mr. O'Connor was discharged from the Service in 1946 and continued his under-graduate work at Boston College, graduating Bachelor of Arts, Cum Laude, in 1949. He then received a Graduate Fellowship in the Department of History and Government at Boston College, and in 1950 was awarded the degree of Master of Arts.

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