

Such was slavery; a State institution, legalised by enactments, buttressed by judicial decisions and foreign treaties. It was lauded as divinely instituted and indispensable to high civilization. With regard to it, the various religious bodies of the South were either indifferent or favorable. What attitude was taken by the Catholic Church? She could only take one, that which history proves she consistently held from her very inception. To the Catholic Church, slavery was a plague; for its removal she applied all her slow, wise but unfailing action. St. Gregory the Great defines her position: "Not being by nature a slave, man has a full right to liberty." The European slave-dealers were excommunicated by Pope Paul III. From this one line of action toward slavery the Catholic Church has never deviated.

Some time elapsed before the public men of the States became impressed with the horrors of slavery. Washington, indeed, stated the policy when, shortly after the Revolution, he declared "Slaves must be freed." The movement needed time. At length the election of Lincoln and the admission of California into the Union as a free State in spite of the opposition of the slaveholders gave token of the approaching abolition of slavery. Several occurrences, notably the prohibition of slavery in 1774 and the Free State ordinance in 1784, indicated the trend of public opinion. The memorable raid of John Brown into Virginia served to open the eyes of the nation to the risks of a possible rising among the blacks. Congress at last set about to end the matter by direct legislation. In 1861 began the anti-slavery agitation which culminated eventually in emancipation. First, Federal officials were prohibited by law from returning fugitive slaves; then slaves in the District of Columbia were made free and their masters compensated. After, the death-blow was dealt successively to the African slave trade, to the inter-State traffic, and lastly to the whole system, when, by a proclamation of the Executive, slavery was abolished root and branch in the United States.

But emancipation was not the supreme boon anticipated. The chief beneficiary of it, the Negro, showed himself strangely indifferent if not ungrateful. Indeed, is this very surprising? Was not his liberty a natural, inalienable right? The restoration of