

CHAPTER XIV

Public Opinion Regarding the Migration

It was to be expected that a movement which so profoundly affected the social and economic life of the South would be widely discussed, and that the resulting discussions, wherein were set forth at length the views of whites and negroes, would throw much light upon the conditions existing prior to the movement. How the South viewed this taking away of a large part of her labor supply was stated in letters to the newspapers and in newspaper editorials. There were two views as to the effect of the migration on the South. One view held that the movement would benefit the South in that the negro population would be more evenly distributed over the entire country and as a result the race problem would be more truly national. The other view was that negro labor was a necessity for the South, and the drawing of a considerable part of this labor north was seriously detrimental to the South's economic interests.

The following are examples of expressions by those holding the view that the migration would benefit the South:

The New Orleans *Times Picayune* said:

Despite the attitude of certain extreme papers of the North that there was a broad conspiracy existing here to prevent the negroes from leaving, the records show that many southern papers and people welcomed the movement, believing that it would have a beneficial effect on the South by removing the negro majorities in many districts and in at least two States, South Carolina and Mississippi. The problems of negro majorities is rapidly working itself out. Louisiana, a State in which the negro was more numerous a few decades ago, is white today by several hundred thousand, and will have a million more whites by the next census. South Carolina and Mississippi expect to report white majorities in the next ten years as they are drifting rapidly in that direction, and negro emigration will help this condition along.

During the first months of this negro movement northward, a number of South Carolina papers, led by the *Columbia State*, instead of expressing